

REVELATION CHAPTER FOUR

BOOK OF THE REVELATION

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of the book of the Revelation. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The teachings of the Revelation represent a compilation of things learned from such men as Col. R. B. Thieme, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles Ryrie, Arno C. Gabelein, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsay, Dwight Pentecost, along with an exegesis of the Greek and Hebrew texts.

1. Tonight we will continue our study of chapter four. You can either follow along in your lesson plan or turn to Rev 4:1.
2. Last week I completed the exegesis of Rev 3:20, 21 and 22.
3. When time ran out I was teaching an introduction of Revelation chapter four. Before continuing a study of Revelation four I want to do a bit of review.
4. First let me give you an expanded translation of verses fourteen through twenty-two:

Rev 3:14 And to the Pastor of the local assembly at Laodicea I command you write; "This is what the sovereign God of the universe has ordered me to write; He is the only faithful and true witness, He is the originating source of all things. He is the active agent of both the creation and the restoration.

Rev 3:15 From My omniscience I know of your divine and human good, it is obvious that in the main you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either one or the other!

Rev 3:16 Because you are tepid and are neither hot nor cold--I am about to vomit you out of my mouth for you see your production is insipid, distasteful and an emetic.

Rev 3:17 You have been lulled into a state of hypocrisy by saying "I am rich and because of my acquired wealth I just don't see a need for doctrine. But what you cannot see concerning your condition: you are miserable and wretched, one to be pitied like the poor beggar, sitting naked at the gate of the city.

Rev 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold; gold which has been refined by fire; by doing this you will accumulate divine good for eternity where you will forever wear a uniform of glory and thus cover your shameful nakedness. You need also to buy salve for your eyes in order that you can understand spiritual matters.

Rev 3:19 "As for myself, as many as I love and appreciate, I will reprove in order to bring about a change of mind about doctrine, my little children I will most certainly discipline and correct those whom I love."

Rev 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and am now knocking, soon I will intensify my knocking by bringing you severe discipline. If you listen to my voice and open the door, I will come in and fellowship with you.

Rev 3:21 To those who have accepted Me as Savior, I will give to him the privilege and

honor of sitting with me on my throne, just as I gained the victory and sat down with my Father on His throne.

Rev 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear at once what the Holy Spirit says to the seven churches."

5. Let's first look at the geographical locations of the seven churches of Asia Minor.



First a review:

1. Having concluded the messages to the seven churches culminating in the message to the church at Laodicea, the invitation becomes a personal one to all who will hear the words of warning.

2. The prophetic foreshadowing provided to the seven churches as representative of churches found throughout the entire history of the nominal universal church has special application in connection with the church at Laodicea.

3. The state of this church is typical of the church of the last days and is therefore an exhortation to self-judgment and dedication to the will of God especially appropriate for consideration even today; this given the nature of verse twenty-two "hear what the Spirit says to the churches" a not so unusual an expression as we have seen.

4. To all who will hear, Christ gives the invitation. Christ is seen standing outside the door and awaiting an invitation "to come in."

4.1 The same concept and metaphor is found in James 5:9.

5. This is, of course, true of any local assembly, not just the Laodicean church.

5.1 Christ must be invited to come in and become the center of worship, adoration, and

love.

6. In this present age God does not force Himself upon anyone. No one is compelled to obedience who wants to be rebellious.

7. The gracious invitation is extended, if one opens the door of faith, the door of worship, the door of love then Christ will come in and, having entered, He will dine with the one who permits His ingress. He knocks but only the believer exercising his or her volition by “opening the door.”

8. Few messages are more needed by the church today, which in many respects sadly parallels the spiritual state of the church at Laodicea. The sad truth is that thousands of churches around the world today call themselves Christian but Christ is nowhere to be found in them.

9. Tragically, most of the unbelieving world looks at them and wants no part of their sham. Clearly today you don't either because you are here as serious students of the Word!

10. To sum up the great lessons found in these seven letters to the seven churches, I want to again provide the Seven Churches Comparison chart.

| TIME | NAME | MEANING | SCRIPTURE (Revelation) | REMARKS |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 32-100 | Ephesus | Desired | 2:1-7 | Fair report, trial of Apostle. Time of sowing, organization & evangelism. |
| 100-300 | Smyrna | Myrrh | 2:8-11 | A good report: the church is persecuted & their true enemy is revealed, the Jew. Constantine ascends the throne. |
| 300-800 | Pergamos | Thoroughly Married | 2:12-17 | A bad report as the Church marries the world. Papal domination |
| 800-1517 | Thyatira | Continual Sacrifices | 2:18-29 | A bad report. The worship of Mary develops. Doctrine is corrupted. There are many empty confessions of faith. There is a rise of state religion. |
| 1517-just before Rapture | Sardos | Escaping Brothers | 3:1-6 | The reformation occurs. Terrible report, once alive but now dead. |
| At Rapture | Philadelphia | Loving Brothers | 3:7-13 | Good. Kept from time of trial. |

11. Taken as a whole, the messages to the seven churches of Asia constitute a tremendous warning from Christ Himself, as expressed in the exhortations to each of these churches. He warns the churches today to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

12. The final message to the church at Laodicea is the crowning indictment, a warning against the danger of luke-warmness, of self-sufficiency, of being unconscious of desperate spiritual need.

13. We have now seen the last of the church on earth. In the future all Scripture citations relating to the Church find the church in heaven; a description of eschatological prophecy now begins. This fact is very supportive of the Pre-Tribulation rapture position.

14. Now let's move to heaven and see what we find.

14.1 The events described in chapter four certainly seem to be a continuation of John's experience described in Rev 1:10 and 11: "On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

15. Revelation chapter four through chapter nineteen reveal God's eschatological plan for Israel. We will need to shift gears from the church on earth to eschatology. The rapture has removed the church from earth to heaven. More of this later.

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Rev 4:2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

Rev 4:3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

Rev 4:4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.

Rev 4:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.

Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

Rev 4:6 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

Rev 4:7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

Rev 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Rev 4:9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,

Rev 4:10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

Rev 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

First let's take a look at Revelation 4:1 and see what we can glean:

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

1. Following the divinely inspired outline of Rev 1:19, chapter four begins a major section of the book of the Revelation.

Rev 1:19 "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.

1.1 We here begin the promise of "the things which shall be hereafter."

2. This section is in contrast to what John saw in chapter 1, his vision of the glorified Christ described in the clause, "the things which thou hast seen," found in Rev 1:19, it is also in contrast to the revelation found in chapters 2 and 3, where we saw the messages to the seven churches designated as "the things which are."

2.1 Beginning in chapter four, things to come are unfolded.

3. That the book of The Revelation, beginning with Rev 4:1 is future seems obvious. There are those who disagree believing the book is instead only a presentation of moral truths.

3.1 A normal interpretation of this section, looks at its prophecies as literal, [though cloaked in allegory] and thus requires that they be viewed as future.

4. The futuristic concept is supported by the similarity of the expression in Rev 1:19, "the things which shall be hereafter" (in the Greek, o mellei genesthai tauta - "the things about to be") compared with the clause in Rev 4:1, "the things which must be hereafter" (in the Greek, o dei genesthai tauta).

5. Walvoord has written: "Chapters 4 and 5 are the introduction and background for the tremendous sweep of prophetic events predicted in the rest of the Apocalypse."

6. The chapter provides an important clue concerning the interpretation of the vision and the prophetic events which will later unfold.

Walvoord goes on to write:

"One of the principal reasons for confusion in the study of the book of the Revelation has been the failure to grasp this point. Since there has been no literal interpretation of the prophecies beginning in chapter four, the events detailed in chapters four through nineteen must therefore be the future."

7. The prophecies anticipated in the angel's promise to "show thee things which must be hereafter" in our verse should be regarded as a prediction of events to occur at the end of the church age. C. A. Blanchard summarized the futuristic position in these words:

"What will follow the church age? Evidently in some form or other the time of the tribulation. Why must the time of tribulation follow the church age? Because when the church has been withdrawn, while Satan, godless governments and Christless religions remain in the world there must be tribulation, and such a time of tribulation as the world has never known in the mixed state which has been from the beginning until now. From the fourth chapter through the nineteenth, speaking generally, there seems to be an account of this time of trouble."

8. Verse one begins with the expression "After this" (Greek, meta tauta), this prepositional phrase identifies the revelation as subsequent to that of chapters two and three. Meta with the genitive means "with" and Meta with the accusative as we have here means "after" - thus "after these things" is correct.

8.1 John, having been the channel of revelation to the seven churches existing in the first century, is now introducing a new sequence of prophecy.

8.2 As he beheld [idou], he saw [horao] a door [thura] opened [anoigo - a perfect passive participle] into the very presence of God in heaven [en ho ouranos].

8.3 The reference to heaven is not to the atmospheric heavens, the aerial, nor to the starry heavens, the sidereal, but to that which is beyond the natural eye which the best

of telescopes cannot reveal. This is the third heaven, the immediate presence of God.

9. John also hears a voice described as "the first voice [o proth phone] which I heard [hos akouo]," that is, a reference to the same voice he heard in Rev 1:10 and following.

9.1 It is described as the voice of a trumpet [hos salpigx] (compare Rev 1:10), and he understands it to say, "Come up hither [anabaino (imperative) ode], and I will shew [deiknumi] thee things which must be hereafter."

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Rev 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

9.2 The adverb ws is not translated in the NIV. It was not the sound of a trumpet but "like a trumpet." It was a voice like a trumpet which communicated a message and not just a sound.

10. The word translated trumpet is used in the New Testament as follows:

10.1 of the natural instrument, 1Co 14:8;

1Co 14:8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

10.2 of the power and judgment of God at Sinai, Heb 12:19;

Heb 12:19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the words; which they heard made them ask that the words be taken away:

Heb 12:20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it had to be stoned, or thrust through with a spear:

Heb 12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am absolutely terrified."

Heb 12:22 But you in contrast have been lifted up and brought to mount Zion unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, even to an innumerable company of angels who serve you as ministering spirits,

Now back to our verse and chapter four of the Apocalypse:

1. The command in chapter four like that of chapter one, does not anticipate any self-effort on the part of John to enter heaven, but it is rather an announcement of the purpose of God to show, in both cases, that which will "be hereafter" or, better

translated, that which will "be after these things."

1.1 The implication is that the prophecies now to be unfolded will occur after the events of the present age.

2. The invitation to John to "come up hither" is so similar to that which the church anticipates at the Rapture that many have connected the two expressions.

2.1 It is clear from the context that this is not an explicit reference to the rapture of the church, as John was not actually translated; in fact he was still in his natural body on the island of Patmos.

3. He was translated into scenes of heaven only temporarily. There is, in my view, no authority for connecting the rapture with this expression; there is however, a typical representation of the order of events, namely, the church age first, then the rapture, then the church in heaven.

4. The book as a whole, recall, is not occupied primarily with God's program for the church.

4.1 Instead the primary objective is to portray the events leading up to and climaxing in the second coming of Christ and the prophetic kingdom and the eternal state which ultimately will follow.

5. From a practical standpoint, however, the Rapture may be viewed as having already occurred in the scheme of God's plan before the events of chapter 4 and following.

5.1 The word church, so prominent in chapters 2 and 3, does not occur again until Rev 22:16, though the church is undoubtedly in view as the wife of the Lamb in Rev 19:7.

Rev 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Rev 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

6. She (the church) is not a participant in the scenes of the Tribulation which form the major content of the book of Revelation. The familiar phrase "what the Spirit saith unto the churches" found in Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13 and 22 is significantly absent.

6.1 Three such examples where the use of "church" is earlier conspicuous:

Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Rev 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Rev 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

7. It seems that the church as the Body of Christ is out of the picture, and saints who come to know the Lord in this period are described as saved Israelites or saved Gentiles, never by terms which are characteristic of the church.

7.1 Saints mentioned from this point on do not lose their racial background as is commonly done in referring to the church where Jew and Gentile are one in Christ.
Gal 3:28

8. At the beginning of chapter 4, then, the church may be considered as in heaven and not related to events which will take place on the earth in preparation for Christ's return in power and glory; and it is then and only then that we find the "church" as the bride of Christ getting involved in earthly kingdom matters.

9. Let's look at a few points related to the Marriage, the Wedding Supper and several events related thereto:

9.1 The body of Christ is now being formed on earth and its formation will continue until the rapture.

Eph 1:22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

Eph 1:23 which is his body, the fullness of him who completed all things in every way.

Eph 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called--

Eph 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Col 1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Col 2:18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

Col 2:19 He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported

and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

9.2 When the body is complete the rapture will occur if not immediately, soon thereafter.

1Co 15:51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--

1Co 15:52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

1Co 15:53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

1Co 15:54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

1Co 15:55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

1Co 15:57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1Th 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

1Th 4:18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

9.3 At the Rapture the Bride gets her resurrection body.

Phi 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Phi 3:21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1Jo 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1Jo 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

9.4 At the Bema the Bride is cleansed of all her human good.

1Co 3:11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1Co 3:12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

1Co 3:13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

1Co 3:14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

1Co 3:15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

9.5 The Bride is also adorned in white and thus prepared for the marriage to the Lamb.

Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

Rev 19:8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

End Lesson Taught 2-21-2001

Revelation

Lesson 59

2-28-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of chapter four and the church in heaven. You can either follow along in your lesson plan or turn to Rev 4:2.
2. Last week I finished the exegesis and analysis of Revelation chapter three and began an analysis of chapter four.
3. Before we return to chapter four I want to backtrack and teach the Doctrine of The Indwelling of Christ; this because of Rev 3:20 and the phrase "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

I want to answer the question "what does this mean?" It can best be answered by a categorical study the indwelling of Christ, a phenomena which occurs to every believer.

1. At point of faith in Christ, Jesus indwells the Believer and as long as the Believer is positive to doctrine or "hot" for doctrine Christ remains for fellowship. Being hot for doctrine includes being confessed-up.

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and change your mind with reference to doctrine.

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

2. The Indwelling of Christ is not permanent since we all go through periods of negative volition toward the Word. When we are negative, Christ is not at home in our hearts, He steps outside and knocks with discipline.
3. While we are moving to spiritual maturity Christ indwells us; we are urged to examine ourselves to ensure we are in fact growing spiritually.

Expanded Translation:

2Co 13:5 "You must continuously test yourselves to ensure that you are growing spiritually; you must as an on-going process assay your souls to determine the quality of your spiritual life. Christ will not be at home in your soul unless you are growing from EPIGNOSIS doctrine in your right lobe.

Again when you are negative, Christ is not at home in the confines of the real but invisible you.

4. The purpose of the indwelling of Christ is to provide the special fellowship with all the benefits of a bride protected and sustained by Jesus, the Groom.

4.1 Jesus makes love to His Bride by offering doctrine for her response. Like a good Right Man He is always offering even when rejected.

4.2 The Lord of our life though often the recipient of unrequited love is always there knocking; He is never willing to give up. Paul captures the concept in Eph 3:14-18.

Expanded Translation:

Eph 3:14 For this reason I in humility come face to face with the Father and pray for you

Eph 3:15 because it was the Father Himself Who gave us our family Name -Family of God, for both those in Heaven and those left on earth; this phenomena was made possible by the efficacious sacrifice of His Son.

Eph 3:16 I pray that out from Christ's vast and limitless assets He may be able to demonstrate our Royalty by His very own inherent power through and by means of His very own Spirit Who resides in each of you;

Eph 3:17 in order that as His purpose Christ may be at home in the sphere of your right lobes because you are positive to the Word; having established a foundation in your soul because of His grace provision uniquely designed for our individual benefit.

Eph 3:18 In order that you may have the inherent power, together with all your fellow family members, to grasp the meaning of the whole realm of doctrine.

5. As Church Age believers the Indwelling of Christ is unique to us and was so prophesied by our Savior during the Age of the Kingdom.

NIV

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans without comfort; I will sometime in the future come to you.

Joh 14:19 Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me. Because I shall live, and you also shall live.

Joh 14:20 Now after I leave it is then that you will fully realize from the Word as taught you by The Comforter that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you.

5.1 Notice how important this uniqueness is as part of the Mystery Body of Doctrine.

NIV

Col 1:27 To Church Age Believers God has chosen to make known the glorious riches of this mystery, which is: "Christ in you, the ultimate guarantee of glory."

Col 1:28 We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

Col 1:29 To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.

6. When Christ is in us we are dead to the control of the OSN and this is all part of the desired maturation process. Notice Rom 12:1 and 2 define the two power options.

Rom 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

Rom 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.

7. This concept is amplified in Rom 8:10 where the domination of the OSN is said to be abrogated by DIKAIOSUNE - which is the process of Righteousness. The process of righteousness is the consistent use of the two power options and when this occurs Christ is at home in your hearts fellow-shiping and "supping" with you.

Rom 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

8. Christ like the Scriptural husband is always willing to fellowship with the Believer but He will never violate her volition - we "gotta" open the door.

Rev 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him, and he will feast with Me.

9. Christ then as the Groom will do for His Bride as a husband full of doctrine should do and of course even the more given His divine nature and plus perfection. But He will only be our mentor when we open the door by using 1st John 1:9 and consistently taking in the Word. There are at least six things Christ does for us when He "sups" with us.

9.1 He will protect us.

9.2 He will open His mind to us.

9.3 He will listen to us and appropriately answer us.

9.4 He will respect and permit our volition.

9.5 He takes care of our physical, social, economic and intellectual needs.

9.6 He will love us regardless of what we do.

10. Importantly however this He will do only when we the church permit; Christ can only function when He is made to feel at home in our hearts.

Now let's return to our study of Revelation four:

When time ran out last week I was teaching several principles derived from an analysis of verse one of chapter four. First I want to review some of that learned last week and then continue with a study of several principles related to Rev 4:1.

NIV:

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Expanded Translation:

Rev 4:1 After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw; a door in the third heaven was opened and purposefully left open apparently so I could hear and see what was transpiring inside, and then I heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet, the sound broke what was formerly a veil of silence; and then I was engaged in a conversation with the eerie sounding trumpet, "Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after these things."

1. Following the divinely inspired outline of Rev 1:19, chapter four begins a major section of the book of the Revelation.

1.1 It is here we here begin the promise of "the things which shall be hereafter."

2. This section is in contrast to what John saw in chapter 1, his vision of the glorified Christ, is described in the clause, "the things which thou hast seen," found in Rev 1:19; it is also in contrast, to the revelation found in chapters 2 and 3, where we saw the messages to the seven churches designated as "the things which are."

2.1 Beginning in chapter 4, things to come are unfolded - "the things which shall be thereafter"

3. That the book of The Revelation, beginning with Rev 4:1 is future seems obvious.

4. A normal interpretation of this section, looks at its prophecies as literal, [though cloaked in allegory] and thus requires that they be viewed as future.

5. As he beheld [idou], he saw [orao] a door [thura] opened [anoigo - a perfect passive participle] into the very presence of God in heaven [en ho ouranos].

5.3 The reference to heaven is not to the atmospheric heavens, the aerial, nor to the starry heavens, the sidereal, but to that which is beyond the natural eye which the best of telescopes cannot reveal. This is the third heaven, the immediate presence of God.

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11. She (the church) is not a participant in the scenes of the tribulation which form the major content of the book of Revelation.

11.1 The familiar phrase "what the Spirit saith unto the churches" found in Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6,13, 22 is significantly and conspicuously absent.

12. It seems that the church as the Body of Christ is out of the picture, and saints who come to know the Lord in this period are described as saved Israelites or saved Gentiles, never by terms which are characteristic of the church.

13. At the beginning of chapter 4 through chapter 18 the church is seen in heaven.

13.1 The church is not related to the events which take place on the earth in preparation for Christ's return in power and glory; only at the return of the Lord Jesus at His second advent is the church mentioned on earth and then only as the Bride of Christ being transported from heaven to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

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Rev 19:8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

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Rev 19:6 And I heard and concentrated on the voice of those at the Wedding Supper and there was a large mass of people there. There was a great noise like the voice of a waterfall, and there were loud thunderings, saying "praise the Lord because the Lord God, Jesus, Who is all powerful reigneth; He has become the King."

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Rev 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.

Rev 19:12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.

Rev 19:13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

Rev 19:14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

Rev 19:15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

"He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

Rev 19:16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Before moving forward in our study let me again give you that expanded translation of verse one of chapter four:

Rev 4:1 After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw; a door in the third heaven was opened and purposefully left open so I could hear and see what was transpiring inside, and then I heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet, the sound broke what was a veil of silence; then I was engaged in a conversation with the eerie sounding trumpet, "Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after these things."

Now let's see what we can gather from Rev 4:2 and 3:

Rev 4:2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

Rev 4:3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and sardius. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

Principles:

1. John finds himself in heaven "in the spirit" much the same way as in Rev 1:10

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

2. Though actually on the Isle of Patmos, in chapter four John is experiencing the presence of God and seeing a series of glorious visions. The first object which appears to his startled eyes is a throne in heaven with one sitting upon it.

2.1 The primary impression received by John is that of color, and he describes the presence of the One on the throne as "like a jasper and a sardius stone." The sight of a rainbow around the throne like an emerald further enriches the color scheme.

2.2 This verse is first a general expression of the glory of God. The details furnished, however, though not explained by John, undoubtedly have deep significance.

2.3 The throne in heaven is a reminder of the sovereignty of God who is far removed from the petty struggles of earthly government.

2.4 Here is the true picture of the universe as being subject to the dominion of a sovereign and omnipotent God.

3. The precious stones mentioned also have meaning. It is very difficult to specifically identify each of these stones in terms of modern gemology.

4. These stones had a relationship to the tribes of Israel. Each tribe of Israel had a representative stone, and the high priest had stones representing each of the twelve tribes of Israel set on his breast plate.

4.1 He used the Ephod/Breastplate in his priestly duties before the altar.

4.2 This symbolized the fact that he as the high priest was representing all twelve tribes before the throne of God.

5. Significantly, the sardius and the jasper stone are the first and last of these twelve stones.

5.1 The sardius represented Reuben, the first of the tribes; Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob.

Exo 28:17 And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row.

Exo 28:18 And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

Exo 28:19 And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

Exo 28:20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings.

Exo 28:21 And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.

5.2 The jasper stone represented Benjamin, the youngest of the twelve sons of Jacob.

5.3 In other words the two stones represented the first and the last and therefore may be regarded as including all the other stones in between, i.e. all Israel.

6. Furthermore, the names Reuben and Benjamin have significance.

6.1 The word Reuben means "behold, a son."

6.2 "The word Benjamin means "son of my right hand."

6.2.1 In both cases these terms seem to have a double meaning: first, the fact that though Christ is the representative of Israel, He is also the Son of God.

6.2.2 Like Reuben, Christ is the first begotten son of God.

6.2.3 Second, like Benjamin, Christ is also the "son of my right hand" in relation to God the Father; He was at the right side of God at the time of John's writing just as He is today.

6.3 The person whom John sees on the throne looking like a jasper and a sardius stone is, therefore, an allegory to emphasize the Father bestowing praise on His victorious Son.

7. It is evident that these stones have a peculiar significance of glory and majesty which are characteristic of God on His throne.

7.1 Coupled with the brilliant reflections of the jasper and the sardius stone, the rainbow described as green like an emerald forms a rich background for the glorious scene which John beheld.

7.2 The emerald as we have seen in verse eighteen of Exodus chapter twenty-eight is the stone of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, and the tribe from which Christ came.

7.3 This too helps in the identification of the throne being bathed in the light of Christ Who sits victoriously with the Father.

8. It is evident that the glory of God was the intent of the vision rather than an anthropomorphic representation.

Before moving forward let me give you an expanded translation of verses two and three of Revelation chapter four:

Rev 4:2 Immediately I found myself under the absolute control of the Holy Spirit. I was commanded to consider what I heard and saw. A throne had been placed right there in the middle of the Third Heaven. And there was One seated on the throne.

Rev 4:3 And He who was seated was in appearance like a jasper stone [Benjamin's] and a sardius [Reuben's]. And encircling the throne there was a ring of light which was like an emerald [Judah's] in appearance.

Now let's see what we can learn from verse four:

Rev 4:4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders (presbuteros). They were dressed in white (leuka himatia) and had crowns (stephanos) of gold on their heads.

Principles:

1. In addition to the glory of the throne and the One who sat upon it, John's attention is next directed to twenty-four thrones upon which the twenty-four elders are seated. The term "seats" is properly "thrones."

2. The elders are in a situation of repose, sitting on their thrones, clothed in white raiment and having on their heads crowns of gold. Considerable discussion has arisen concerning the identity of these twenty-four elders.

3. Some have thought they are angels, others Israel and still others Church Age saints.” The latter being my view.

4. That they represent a group seems clear. From parallel Old Testament passages the priesthood was represented by twenty-four orders of priests. There were actually thousands of priests in Israel's day of ascendancy under David and Solomon, but they all could not minister at the same time.

5. Accordingly, they were divided into twenty-four orders. When these priests met together, even though there were only twenty-four, they represented the whole priesthood and at the same time the whole of the nation.

5.1 In a similar way the twenty-four elders mentioned in the book of The Revelation may be regarded as representative, but of what?

6. The text itself does not give a specific statement concerning the identity of these elders. Some help, however, is afforded in the description given here.

7. The elders are described as being clothed in white raiment and having on their heads crowns of gold. There are two kinds of crowns in the book of the Revelation involving two different Greek words. One is the crown of a ruler or a sovereign (Greek "Diadem"), which is a crown of governmental authority.

8. The other is the crown of a victor (Greek, "Stephanos"), such as was awarded in the Greek games when a person won a race or some contest. This crown was usually made of leaves, therefore as we have noted, it is better translated a "wreath".

9. The word here is the crown of a victor rather than that of a sovereign.

9.1 It is significant that the passage states the twenty-four elders already have their crowns of gold as victors. It would seem the crowns were theirs having been tried by fire at the Bema.

10. If this passage is regarded as chronologically before the time of the tribulation, it would seem reasonable to eliminate the angels, at this point the angels have not been judged.

10.1 For the same reason the elders do not seem to be a proper representation of Israel, for Israel's judgment also comes at the end of the tribulation, and not before.

11. The only judgment which chronologically fits is that of the church where according to 1Co 3:11-15 every man's work is judged to see if it will survive the fiery testing of The Judgment of Christ or Bema.

1Co 3:11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1Co 3:12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

1Co 3:13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

1Co 3:14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

1Co 3:15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

12. Only the church which has by now been raptured would seem to fit.

12.1 Given they are sitting with Christ on thrones, they have their white uniforms of glory and they have their crowns of victory therefore for me it is settled; these are church age saints, the 24 being representative of a unit.

Rev 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

13. I think we now need an Expanded Translation of verse four:

Rev 4:4 And encircling the throne there were twenty-four thrones, and upon the twenty-four thrones, were twenty-four elders sitting like as rulers, they were clothed in white garments and upon their heads sat several golden CROWNS.

End Lesson Taught 2-28-200

Revelation

Lesson 59

2-28-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of chapter four and the church in heaven. You can either follow along in your lesson plan or turn to Rev 4:2.

2. Last week I finished the exegesis and analysis of Revelation chapter three and began an analysis of chapter four.

3. Before we return to chapter four I want to backtrack and teach the Doctrine of The Indwelling of Christ; this because of Rev 3:20 and the phrase "I will come in to him, and

will sup with him, and he with Me.”

I want to answer the question "what does this mean?" It can best be answered by a categorical study the indwelling of Christ, a phenomena which occurs to every believer.

1. At point of faith in Christ, Jesus indwells the Believer and as long as the Believer is positive to doctrine or "hot" for doctrine Christ remains for fellowship. Being hot for doctrine includes being confessed-up.

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and change your mind with reference to doctrine.

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

2. The Indwelling of Christ is not permanent since we all go through periods of negative volition toward the Word. When we are negative, Christ is not at home in our hearts, He steps outside and knocks with discipline.

3. While we are moving to spiritual maturity Christ indwells us; we are urged to examine ourselves to ensure we are in fact growing spiritually.

Expanded Translation:

2Co 13:5 "You must continuously test yourselves to ensure that you are growing spiritually; you must as an on-going process assay your souls to determine the quality of your spiritual life. Christ will not be at home in your soul unless you are growing from EPIGNOSIS doctrine in your right lobe. Again when you are negative, Christ is not at home in the confines of the real but invisible you.

4. The purpose of the indwelling of Christ is to provide the special fellowship with all the benefits of a bride protected and sustained by Jesus, the Groom.

4.1 Jesus makes love to His Bride by offering doctrine for her response. Like a good Right Man He is always offering even when rejected.

4.2 The Lord of our life though often the recipient of unrequited love is always there knocking; He is never willing to give up. Paul captures the concept in Eph 3:14-18.

Expanded Translation:

Eph 3:14 For this reason I in humility come face to face with the Father and pray for you

Eph 3:15 because it was the Father Himself Who gave us our family Name -Family of God, for both those in Heaven and those left on earth; this phenomena was made possible by the efficacious sacrifice of His Son.

Eph 3:16 I pray that out from Christ's vast and limitless assets He may be able to demonstrate our Royalty by His very own inherent power through and by means of His very own Spirit Who resides in each of you;

Eph 3:17 in order that as His purpose Christ may be at home in the sphere of your right

lobes because you are positive to the Word; having established a foundation in your soul because of His grace provision uniquely designed for our individual benefit.

Eph 3:18 In order that you may have the inherent power, together with all your fellow family members, to grasp the meaning of the whole realm of doctrine.

5. As Church Age believers the Indwelling of Christ is unique to us and was so prophesied by our Savior during the Age of the Kingdom.

NIV

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans without comfort; I will sometime in the future come to you.

Joh 14:19 Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me. Because I shall live, and you also shall live.

Joh 14:20 Now after I leave it is then that you will fully realize from the Word as taught you by The Comforter that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you.

5.1 Notice how important this uniqueness is as part of the Mystery Body of Doctrine.

NIV

Col 1:27 To Church Age Believers God has chosen to make known the glorious riches of this mystery, which is: "Christ in you, the ultimate guarantee of glory."

Col 1:28 We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

Col 1:29 To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.

6. When Christ is in us we are dead to the control of the OSN and this is all part of the desired maturation process. Notice Rom 12:1 and 2 define the two power options.

Rom 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

Rom 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.

7. This concept is amplified in Rom 8:10 where the domination of the OSN is said to be abrogated by DIKAIOSUNE - which is the process of Righteousness. The process of righteousness is the consistent use of the two power options and when this occurs Christ is at home in your hearts fellow-shiping and "supping" with you.

Rom 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

8. Christ like the Scriptural husband is always willing to fellowship with the Believer but He will never violate her volition - we "gotta" open the door.

Rev 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him, and he will feast with Me.

9. Christ then as the Groom will do for His Bride as a husband full of doctrine should do and of course even the more given His divine nature and plus perfection. But He will only be our mentor when we open the door by using 1st John 1:9 and consistently taking in the Word. There are at least six things Christ does for us when He "sups" with us.

9.1 He will protect us.

9.2 He will open His mind to us.

9.3 He will listen to us and appropriately answer us.

9.4 He will respect and permit our volition.

9.5 He takes care of our physical, social, economic and intellectual needs.

9.6 He will love us regardless of what we do.

10. Importantly however this He will do only when we the church permit; Christ can only function when He is made to feel at home in our hearts.

Now let's return to our study of Revelation four:

When time ran out last week I was teaching several principles derived from an analysis of verse one of chapter four. First I want to review some of that learned last week and then continue with a study of several principles related to Rev 4:1.

NIV:

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Expanded Translation:

Rev 4:1 After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw; a door in the third heaven was opened and purposefully left open apparently so I could hear and see what was transpiring inside, and then I heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet, the sound broke what was formerly a veil of silence; and then I was engaged in a conversation with the eerie sounding trumpet, "Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after these things."

1. Following the divinely inspired outline of Rev 1:19, chapter four begins a major section of the book of the Revelation.

1.1 It is here we here begin the promise of "the things which shall be hereafter."

2. This section is in contrast to what John saw in chapter 1, his vision of the glorified Christ, is described in the clause, "the things which thou hast seen," found in Rev 1:19; it is also in contrast, to the revelation found in chapters 2 and 3, where we saw the messages to the seven churches designated as "the things which are."

2.1 Beginning in chapter 4, things to come are unfolded - "the things which shall be thereafter"

3. That the book of The Revelation, beginning with Rev 4:1 is future seems obvious.

4. A normal interpretation of this section, looks at its prophecies as literal, [though cloaked in allegory] and thus requires that they be viewed as future.

5. As he beheld [idou], he saw [orao] a door [thura] opened [anoigo - a perfect passive participle] into the very presence of God in heaven [en ho ouranos].

5.3 The reference to heaven is not to the atmospheric heavens, the aerial, nor to the starry heavens, the sidereal, but to that which is beyond the natural eye which the best of telescopes cannot reveal. This is the third heaven, the immediate presence of God.

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Rev 19:10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Rev 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.

Rev 19:12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.

Rev 19:13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

Rev 19:14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

Rev 19:15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

Rev 19:16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Before moving forward in our study let me again give you that expanded translation of verse one of chapter four:

Rev 4:1 After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw; a door in the third heaven was opened and purposefully left open so I could hear and see what was transpiring inside, and then I heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet, the sound broke what was a veil of silence; then I was engaged

in a conversation with the eerie sounding trumpet, "Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after these things."

Now let's see what we can gather from Rev 4:2 and 3:

Rev 4:2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

Rev 4:3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and sardius. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

Principles:

1. John finds himself in heaven "in the spirit" much the same way as in Rev 1:10

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

2. Though actually on the Isle of Patmos, in chapter four John is experiencing the presence of God and seeing a series of glorious visions. The first object which appears to his startled eyes is a throne in heaven with one sitting upon it.

2.1 The primary impression received by John is that of color, and he describes the presence of the One on the throne as "like a jasper and a sardius stone." The sight of a rainbow around the throne like an emerald further enriches the color scheme.

2.2 This verse is first a general expression of the glory of God. The details furnished, however, though not explained by John, undoubtedly have deep significance.

2.3 The throne in heaven is a reminder of the sovereignty of God who is far removed from the petty struggles of earthly government.

2.4 Here is the true picture of the universe as being subject to the dominion of a sovereign and omnipotent God.

3. The precious stones mentioned also have meaning. It is very difficult to specifically identify each of these stones in terms of modern gemology.

4. These stones had a relationship to the tribes of Israel. Each tribe of Israel had a representative stone, and the high priest had stones representing each of the twelve tribes of Israel set on his breast plate.

4.1 He used the Ephod/Breastplate in his priestly duties before the altar.

4.2 This symbolized the fact that he as the high priest was representing all twelve tribes before the throne of God.

5. Significantly, the sardius and the jasper stone are the first and last of these twelve stones.

5.1 The sardius represented Reuben, the first of the tribes; Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob.

Exo 28:17 And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row.

Exo 28:18 And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

Exo 28:19 And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

Exo 28:20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings.

Exo 28:21 And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.

5.2 The jasper stone represented Benjamin, the youngest of the twelve sons of Jacob.

5.3 In other words the two stones represented the first and the last and therefore may be regarded as including all the other stones in between, i.e. all Israel.

6. Furthermore, the names Reuben and Benjamin have significance.

6.1 The word Reuben means "behold, a son."

6.2 "The word Benjamin means "son of my right hand."

6.2.1 In both cases these terms seem to have a double meaning: first, the fact that though Christ is the representative of Israel, He is also the Son of God.

6.2.2 Like Reuben, Christ is the first begotten son of God.

6.2.3 Second, like Benjamin, Christ is also the "son of my right hand" in relation to God the Father; He was at the right side of God at the time of John's writing just as He is today.

6.3 The person whom John sees on the throne looking like a jasper and a sardius stone is, therefore, an allegory to emphasize the Father bestowing praise on His victorious Son.

7. It is evident that these stones have a peculiar significance of glory and majesty which are characteristic of God on His throne.

7.1 Coupled with the brilliant reflections of the jasper and the sardius stone, the rainbow described as green like an emerald forms a rich background for the glorious scene which John beheld.

7.2 The emerald as we have seen in verse eighteen of Exodus chapter twenty-eight is the stone of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, and the tribe from which Christ came.

7.3 This too helps in the identification of the throne being bathed in the light of Christ Who sits victoriously with the Father.

8. It is evident that the glory of God was the intent of the vision rather than an anthropomorphic representation.

Before moving forward let me give you an expanded translation of verses two and three of Revelation chapter four:

Rev 4:2 Immediately I found myself under the absolute control of the Holy Spirit. I was commanded to consider what I heard and saw. A throne had been placed right there in the middle of the Third Heaven. And there was One seated on the throne.

Rev 4:3 And He who was seated was in appearance like a jasper stone [Benjamin's] and a sardius [Reuben's]. And encircling the throne there was a ring of light which was like an emerald [Judah's] in appearance.

Now let's see what we can learn from verse four:

Rev 4:4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders (presbuteros). They were dressed in white (leuka himatia) and had crowns (stephanos) of gold on their heads.

Principles:

1. In addition to the glory of the throne and the One who sat upon it, John's attention is next directed to twenty-four thrones upon which the twenty-four elders are seated. The term "seats" is properly "thrones."

2. The elders are in a situation of repose, sitting on their thrones, clothed in white raiment and having on their heads crowns of gold. Considerable discussion has arisen concerning the identity of these twenty-four elders.

3. Some have thought they are angels, others Israel and still others Church Age saints." The latter being my view.

4. That they represent a group seems clear. From parallel Old Testament passages the priesthood was represented by twenty-four orders of priests. There were actually thousands of priests in Israel's day of ascendancy under David and Solomon, but they all

could not minister at the same time.

5. Accordingly, they were divided into twenty-four orders. When these priests met together, even though there were only twenty-four, they represented the whole priesthood and at the same time the whole of the nation.

5.1 In a similar way the twenty-four elders mentioned in the book of The Revelation may be regarded as representative, but of what?

6. The text itself does not give a specific statement concerning the identity of these elders. Some help, however, is afforded in the description given here.

7. The elders are described as being clothed in white raiment and having on their heads crowns of gold. There are two kinds of crowns in the book of the Revelation involving two different Greek words. One is the crown of a ruler or a sovereign (Greek "Diadem"), which is a crown of governmental authority.

8. The other is the crown of a victor (Greek, "Stephanos"), such as was awarded in the Greek games when a person won a race or some contest. This crown was usually made of leaves, therefore as we have noted, it is better translated a "wreath".

9. The word here is the crown of a victor rather than that of a sovereign.

9.1 It is significant that the passage states the twenty-four elders already have their crowns of gold as victors. It would seem the crowns were theirs having been tried by fire at the Bema.

10. If this passage is regarded as chronologically before the time of the tribulation, it would seem reasonable to eliminate the angels, at this point the angels have not been judged.

10.1 For the same reason the elders do not seem to be a proper representation of Israel, for Israel's judgment also comes at the end of the tribulation, and not before.

11. The only judgment which chronologically fits is that of the church where according to 1Co 3:11-15 every man's work is judged to see if it will survive the fiery testing of The Judgment of Christ or Bema.

1Co 3:11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1Co 3:12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

1Co 3:13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

1Co 3:14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

1Co 3:15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

12. Only the church which has by now been raptured would seem to fit.

12.1 Given they are sitting with Christ on thrones, they have their white uniforms of glory and they have their crowns of victory therefore for me it is settled; these are church age saints, the 24 being representative of a unit.

Rev 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

13. I think we now need an Expanded Translation of verse four:

Rev 4:4 And encircling the throne there were twenty-four thrones, and upon the twenty-four thrones, were twenty-four elders sitting like as rulers, they were clothed in white garments and upon their heads sat several golden crowns.

End Lesson Taught 2-28-2001

Revelation

Lesson 60

3-7-2001

1. Tonight we will continue our study of chapter four and the church in heaven. You can either follow along in your lesson plan or turn to Rev 4:4.

2. First let me give you an expanded translation of verses one, two, three and four and then we will continue beginning with a study of Rev 4:5.

Expanded Translation:

Rev 4:1 After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw; a door in the third heaven was opened and purposefully left open apparently so I could hear and see what was transpiring inside, and then I heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet, the sound broke what was formerly a veil of silence; and then I was engaged in a conversation with the eerie sounding trumpet, "Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after these things."

Rev 4:2 Immediately I found myself under the absolute control of the Holy Spirit. I was commanded to consider what I heard and saw. A throne had been placed right there in the middle of the Third Heaven. And there was One seated on the throne.

Rev 4:3 And He who was seated was in appearance like a jasper stone [Benjamin's] and a sardius [Reuben's]. And encircling the throne there was a ring of light which was like an emerald [Judah's] in appearance, all of which portrayed Christ at the right side of the Father as the Son of David.

Rev 4:4 And encircling the throne there were twenty-four thrones, and upon the twenty-four thrones, were twenty-four elders sitting like as rulers, they were clothed in white garments and upon their heads were golden crowns. The elders represented the church in their uniforms of glory proudly wearing their crowns of gold.

Now let's take a look at Revelation chapter four verse five:

Rev 4:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

Let's see what principles we can glean:

1. The all inspiring scene described by John in this verse is in keeping with the majesty of the throne and the dignity of the twenty-four elders.
2. The lightnings, thunderings, and voices which proceed from the throne are prophetic of the righteous judgment of God upon a sinful and chaotic world.
3. They are similar to the thunders, lightnings, and voice of the trumpet which mark the giving of the law in Exodus 19:16 and are a fitting preliminary to the awful judgments which are to follow in the great tribulation as God deals with the earth in righteousness.

Exo 19:16 On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled.

4. John's attention is also directed to seven lamps of fire which are seen burning before the throne. These are identified as "the seven Spirits of God" mentioned earlier in Rev 1:4.

4.1 These are best understood as representing the Holy Spirit in a seven fold way rather than seven individual spirits as some have asserted.

Rev 1:4 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,

5. Joining the Father and the Son in the salutation are "the seven Spirits which are before His throne". It is my view the seven spirits refer to God the Holy Spirit.

5.1 There are those who believe the seven spirits are seven angels in places of high privilege.

5.2. Isaiah 11:2 and 3 would tend to support the seven spirits as being a reference to God the Holy Spirit. The message then originating from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Isa 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

6. Ordinarily the Holy Spirit is not humanly visible unless embodied in some way. When the Holy Spirit descended on Christ on the occasion of His baptism, the people saw something like as a dove descending.

7. If it had not been for the "dove", they could not have seen the Holy Spirit. In a similar way on the day of Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit would not have been visible if it had not been for the "cloven tongues like as of fire' (Acts 2:3-4).

Acts 2:3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

8. The seven lamps of fire therefore are the means by which John is informed of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The number seven is characteristic of the perfection of the Spirit and is in keeping with the revelation of Isaiah 11:2.

9. In the heavenly scene it may be concluded that all three Persons of the Trinity are in evidence, each in a particular form of revelation.

10. As we have seen the Father and the Son both sit on the throne and now the Holy Spirit is seen there also.

Let's take a look at an expanded translation of verse five:

Rev 4:5 And out from the throne proceeded lightnings and voices and thunders; a picture of the power and sovereignty of God . There were seven blazing torches burning before the throne; these are them seven Spirits of God, a representation of the presence of God the Holy Spirit.

Now let's take a look at Revelation verses six, seven and eight:

Rev 4:6 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

Rev 4:7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

Rev 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

1. Occupying an important part of the scene before John is a sea of glass described as "like unto crystal," and in the background are four living creatures.

2. Apart from indicating that the sea of glass is like crystal, John gives us no explanation of the meaning of this sea.

3. As in other portions of the book of the Revelation, however, John expects the reader to draw conclusions from similar scenes or concepts found elsewhere in the Bible; or in the light of the context.

4. The context here would seem to carry the day.

5. From verse five where there is thunder and lightning, a metaphor for the power and sovereignty of God, we move to Rev 4:6 where there is a peaceful setting, a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

5.1 This would seem to indicate the divine efficacious outcome of God; there is peace and stability in heaven because God has won out over the chaos and turmoil of the activities of Satan and his minions on planet earth.

5.2 God gives us a preview of this in numerous Scriptures, not the least of which is Psalm two:

Psa 2:1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

Psa 2:2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.

Psa 2:3 "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

Psa 2:4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

Psa 2:5 Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

Psa 2:6 "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

Psa 2:7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Psa 2:8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

Psa 2:9 You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

Psa 2:10 Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Psa 2:11 Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.

6. John, however, is not occupied at this point with the sea of glass, but rather with the four living creatures described as in the midst of the throne and round about the throne.

7. He records that they are full of eyes before and behind, and each of them has six wings. Further, each of the four beasts is to be distinguished from the other.

8. They are described respectively as like a lion, a calf, a man, and a flying eagle.

8.1 Their ministry before the throne of God is that of ceaselessly ascribing holiness to the Lord.

9. The translation "beasts" in the KJV is quite inaccurate and should be changed to "living ones." In the Greek the word used is Zoon, which means "living ones."

10. An entirely different word, Therion, meaning "a beast," such as a wild animal, is used in Revelation 13 to speak of the beast, the Antichrist who comes out of the sea, teaching he will come out from a gentile nation and therefore is most likely a gentile.

Rev 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Rev 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

Rev 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

Rev 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

11. There has been much speculation concerning the identity of these living ones and the significance of their presence and ministry in this heavenly scene.

12. As Alford states, "In inquiring after their symbolic import, we are met by the most remarkable diversity of interpretations."

13. Over the centuries, these winged figures became associated with the four Gospel writers. From the fourth century A.D., they were commonly used in illustrated manuscripts and in mosaics and other elements of church architecture to represent Matthew (a man), Mark (a lion), Luke (an ox) and John an (eagle).

14. The "four creatures" are also similar to the creatures the prophet Ezekiel saw in Eze 1:5-11; the vision seen by Ezekiel would tend to support the identification of the four "living beings" as angels who do the bidding of God.

Eze 1:5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

Eze 1:6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

Eze 1:7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass.

Eze 1:8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

Eze 1:9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

Eze 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

Eze 1:11 Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

Eze 1:12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

Eze 1:13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

Eze 1:14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Eze 1:15 Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.

Eze 1:16 The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

Eze 1:17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.

Eze 1:18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

Eze 1:19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.

15. There are those who believe the creatures represent the people of God.

15.1 Those of this persuasion believe the lion, bull, human and eagle faces represent authority, strength, wisdom and swiftness, all valued things in creation.

16. The best interpretation in my view is that the four living creatures are angels whose function it is to bring honor and glory to God.

16.1 This would seem to be in keeping with Isaiah's six winged creatures of Isaiah chapter six.

Isa 6:1 In B.C. 740 Uzziah, King of Judah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Isa 6:2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.

Isa 6:3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isa 6:4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

Isa 6:7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

16.2. Additionally, angels are frequently seen in Scripture, especially in the apocalyptic books such as Ezekiel and the Revelation.

16.2.1 The fact that the living creatures have six wings as do the seraphim of Isa 6:2-3 adds weight to the interpretation that they are angels.

16.2.2 We know little about the seraphim except that they are elect angels and rank high in the angelic table of organization.

17. The living creatures in Revelation 4 and the seraphim of Isaiah 6 have a similar function in that both ascribe holiness to the Lord of the armies (compare Isa. 6:3).

18. The ministry of the living creatures is designed to emphasize the holiness of God and His eternity, in that according to the Scripture, "they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

18.1 Their presence in the heavenly scene contributed much to the overall impression of the majesty, holiness, sovereignty, and eternity of God. In keeping with this thought let me give you one plausible alternative, a hybrid of several of the postulations listed:

18.1.1 The four angels represent the four portraits of Christ that we find in the four Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

18.2 The "Lion," king of the beasts, pictures Christ as the King of the Jews. This is especially emphasized in the Gospel of Matthew.

18.3 The hard-working Ox pictures Christ as the fully obedient servant of His Father. This quality is highlighted in the Gospel of Mark.

18.4 The Living Being with the face of a man represents Christ as the ideal and perfect man, as vividly portrayed in the Gospel of Luke.

18.5 The Flying Eagle suggests Christ's heavenly origin, in other words, His complete oneness with the God of heaven. This is the special message of the Gospel of John.

18.6 The four Living Beings, with their continual song of praise, "Holy, holy, holy . . . ," this perhaps to remind us night and day of the sublime nature and work of the Lord Jesus Christ while He was on earth.

19. Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 4:9-11.

KJV

Rev 4:9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

Rev 4:10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

1. Evidently whenever the four Living Beings begin to praise the Lord, it's the cue for the twenty-four elders to fall down before the throne and worship God.

2. As a part of their worship of Him, the elders throw their crowns at His feet.

3. I said earlier that the crown which each elder wore was a victor's crown.

4. Actually there are many crowns promised as rewards to faithful believers, and the victor's crown seems to symbolize them all.

4.1 It may be that a believer who has earned more than one crown will be given stars to attach to his victor's crown to designate how many crowns he has won. This is a common practice in the parlance of military decorations.

5. It may be that the faithful elders, who are symbolic of all church age believers, will somehow be able to wear more than one crown at a time.

5.1 Whatever the case, though the crowns of the elders have been honorably won, each elder realizes the source of his or her divine good was the Word of God - the Mind of Christ, accordingly out of gratitude and love the **Stephanoi** are cast at the Saviors feet. That the Bible is the mind of Christ is made clear in several passages:

1Co 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that the Spirit might instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Phi 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

1Pe 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind...

5.2 That doctrine in the soul of the believer produces is also clear.

2Pe 1:8 For if doctrine abounds in you, you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful because of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ resident in your souls.

2Pe 1:9 But the believer who has neglected doctrine is virtually blind and has great difficulty seeing, soon this same nearsighted believer forgets that he was purged from his old sins.

Jam 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

Jam 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Jam 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Jam 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Jam 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

Jam 1:24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Jam 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2Ti 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

6. In sincere gratitude they will cast their crowns in praise at the Father's feet! An act we will all do someday.

7. Before leaving chapter four and as a fitting introduction to chapter five, let me read you what Wycliffe has to say in his commentary on the chapter:

"With the introduction of the four living creatures, we have the first of twenty hymns, as they might be called, sung by various heavenly groups throughout the book of Revelation. Five of them are in chapters four and five prefacing the opening of the seals. The first two are hymns to God: one sung by the living creatures ascribing holiness to God (Rev 4:8) and the other by the twenty-four elders acknowledging God as Creator.

Rev 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

"The opening words of the first hymn remind us of Isa 6:3, technically known in ancient hymnology as the Trisagion.

Isa 6:3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

“The third and fourth are hymns to the Lamb, sung by the two groups just mentioned, acknowledging that the Lamb is worthy to open the book (Rev 5:9 and 10 and Rev 5:11 and 12).

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Rev 5:10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Rev 5:11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

Rev 5:12 In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

“The fifth hymn is sung to both God and the Lamb by "every created thing in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth" (Rev 5:13), and ascribes blessing, honor, glory, and dominion" to the Lamb.”

Rev 5:13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

8. And now an expanded translation of verses nine, ten and eleven.

Rev 4:9-11

And whenever the seraphim gave glory and honor and thanksgiving to the One who is seated on the throne, the Christ who lives forever, the church age believers also fell down before the throne and worshipped our Lord eternal. And they placed their crowns of victory before the throne saying, Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because it was You who created all things; it was You Who willed all which now exists.

9. This concludes our study of Revelation chapter four.

End Lesson Taught 3-7-2001