

Read Revelation!

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” (Revelation 1:3)

Chapter 4 and 5: Vision of God’s Throne!

I. Praise the Lord God (Chapter 4)

After writing down the messages for the seven churches, the Apostle John is caught up into Heaven for a vision of God’s throne!

A. Rapture (v. 1).

Bible students refer to the future catching up of believers *“to meet the Lord in the air”* with the theological term, “the Rapture of the Church.” It is described rather thoroughly in I Thessalonians 4:15-17, and is promised by Jesus in John 14:3.

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

The Rapture (from the Latin for “caught up”) is the next event on God’s prophetic timetable! The Lord Jesus will come to take His own out of this world before the Tribulation period (Study II Thessalonians 2:1-8). We will ascend to Heaven with Him, and it could happen any day now! The terms *“shortly”* (1:1), *“at hand”* (1:3), and *“quickly”* (3:11), used in Revelation in connection with Christ’s coming all have the idea in the Greek of “suddenly” or “any time now.” The coming of Christ for His saints will be sudden and without warning (Read what Jesus said in Matthew 24:35-42). A trumpet will sound to announce the Rapture, and we see that trumpet symbolized in Revelation 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.”

We also hear John called to go up to Heaven. From Chapter 4 through the end of the Bible, the word *“church”* is never used! Earlier in the New Testament, this important term is used either of a local Christian congregation in

the present or of the great congregation that will assemble with Jesus at the Rapture. The period covered in Revelation after the third chapter will occur after the “church” is removed.

B. God's Throne (vs. 2-8)

John sees the “throne-room” of God! This vision should be compared with the visions Isaiah and Ezekiel had of the same heavenly place (in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1). Notice 4 things that John noticed:

1. God on the throne (vs. 2-3). Notice the rainbow and look up Genesis 9:9-16.
2. The elders (v. 4). These are glorified and rewarded saints sitting around God's throne. Revelation 21 seems to indicate that they will be the twelve patriarchs of Israel, and the twelve apostles of Jesus.
3. The seven lamps (v. 5). They symbolize the Holy Spirit (Remember 1:4). Compare this verse also with the scene in Exodus 19 (v. 16).
4. The four creatures (vs. 6-8). They were created to lead the worship of God in Heaven. Isaiah called them “*seraphim*” (Isaiah 6:1-3). Ezekiel saw them, too. Their appearance seems to symbolize the four roles Christ played on earth: King of Israel (lion—as in Matthew); Servant of the Lord (calf or ox—as in Mark); Son of Man (man—as in Luke); Son of God (eagle—as in John).

C. The Worship (vs. 9-11).

1. The elders join the “*beasts*” (creatures) in praising God as Creator. We owe God everything because He made us!
2. Believers “*cast their crowns before the throne*” indicating that God deserves the glory for the rewards they received. Look up I Corinthians 3:14 and 9:25.
3. For the first time, the Bible gives us a clear statement about *why* the Lord God made us.

“ . . . *thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*” (v. 11)

We were made for His pleasure—to please God! Genesis tells us *how* everything was created, and Revelation tells us *why*.

II. Praising the Lamb of God (Chapter 5)

In Revelation 5, we see one of the most thrilling scenes in the Bible! John notices that God on the throne has “*a book*” in His hand.

A. The Sealed Redemption Book (vs. 1-4).

The Book of Jeremiah makes it clear what this sealed book was. Chapter 32 tells the story of a relative who comes to the prophet asking him to redeem some property he had forfeited by debt in those hard times (vs. 6-8). Jeremiah could buy it back (redeem it) from the creditor who had foreclosed on it. This was his right as a kinsman-redeemer in Israel. Read about this law in Leviticus 25:25. So the prophet did buy the property, and he signed (“*subscribed*”) all the proper legal papers to restore the land to the family (vs. 9-12). These papers were “*sealed according to the law and custom.*” Some of the “*evidence of the purchase*” was sealed inside the scroll, and some of the written

stipulations were “*open*” on the outside. Then Jeremiah gave the sealed redemption-book to his friend Baruch (vs. 13-15) to put away for a future day. This act was a testimony to the prophet’s faith that, after the war and the captivity, “*Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.*” The sealed book had an inscription on the outside indicating the qualifications for a rightful heir to open the document, and the writing inside gave the details of Jeremiah’s transaction. Only a qualifying individual could claim the land by opening the seals. Now do you see why John wept in Revelation 5:4? He understood the symbolism of what he saw. God held the sealed redemption book of mankind. Much “property” had been forfeited because of Adam’s sin: fellowship with God, life in Paradise, the image of God, dominion over creation. The Lord was looking for a Redeemer Who could pay the price of our sin, open the seals of the book, and redeem us.

“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.” (v. 3)

B. The Lion Who Was the Lamb (vs. 5-10).

Then “*one of the elders*” told John to stop weeping because “*the Lion of the tribe of Juda*” had “*prevailed to open the book.*” A Redeemer has been found! He is both a King and a Sacrifice. This Lion is called “*the Root of David*” and is the promised King, the Messiah (See Isaiah 11). Then John saw the One to which the elder was referring—and it was a Lamb! The Lion who was a Lamb is Jesus Christ (John 1:29). As the Lamb of God, He was “*slain*” as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. John watched as the Lamb came and took the redemption book out of God’s hand. Then the elders “*fell down before the Lamb*” and praised Him as “*worthy*” to redeem mankind by His blood. People in Heaven credit Christ alone for their salvation! Notice in verse 10 that glorified saints in Heaven will be anticipating their future reign on earth.

C. “Worthy is the Lamb” (vs. 11-14).

The vision in Chapters 4 and 5 closes with a magnificent chorus of praise to Christ as the Lamb of God! Millions of angels praise Him in verses 11 and 12 of Chapter 5, and “*every creature*” in the universe joins the praise in verses 13 and 14. Notice that they say that the Lamb is “*worthy*” to receive everything from his creatures, especially His redeemed ones. Verse 11 of Chapter 4 said that the Lord was “*worthy*” to receive all “*glory and honor and power.*” In Chapter 4, the Lord God is praised as worthy of all things because He *created* us. Chapter 5 says that Christ is worthy to receive all things because He *redeemed* us. These are the two great reasons for Christians to give God everything. He made us and He bought us with His blood. We owe Him all.