

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Revelation: God's Revelation To His Servants Today On Events About To Occur Part IV: "The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter": Events After The Rapture Of The Church A. The Revelation Of God's Heavenly Glory To The Church (Revelation 4:1-11)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

It is obvious that today's world is in great need: Jay Solomon's story, "An Arc of Instability Unseen Since the '70s" in The Wall Street Journal, July 14, 2014, p. A1, noted: "A convergence of security crises is playing out around the globe . . . The breadth of global instability now unfolding hasn't been seen since the late 1970s," and "Sen. John McCain (R., Ariz.), in a CNN interview Sunday, said the world is 'in greater turmoil than at any time in my lifetime.'"

If our current era in Church History, the Laodicean Church era of Revelation 3:14-22, is the last era before the rapture when Christ takes the whole true Church to heaven as typologically pictured in Revelation 4:1, it is important that we know what we will see when we get to heaven to discern if we should make any adjustments in today's world.

Need: Thus, we ask, "If we are close to the rapture, and if our current knowledge of what we will witness when we get to heaven will significantly impact how we function today, what will we witness when we get to heaven?!"

- I. **At the end of the Revelation 3:14-22 Church era, Christ will rapture all believers to heaven, Rev. 4:1-2a:**
 - A. In Revelation 4:1 KJV, John saw a door open in heaven, and he heard Christ's Rev. 1:10 voice like a trumpet say, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter," i. e., things after the Church era.
 - B. John was then instantly put into a spiritual trance to witness events in heaven (Rev. 4:2a), typifying the rapture of the Church when Christ instantly takes all true Christians to heaven, 1 Cor. 15:51-57 with 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
- II. **In heaven, all believers in Christ's true Church will witness the glory of God's great grace, Rev. 4:2b-8:**
 - A. We believer's in the raptured Church will witness God's grace toward the lost world, Revelation 4:2b-3:
 1. John saw a throne set in heaven with God the Father sitting upon it, Revelation 4:2b.
 2. His image was like a jasper and a sardine stone (Rev. 4:3a), contextually revealing the Father's great grace:
 - a. Unlike His image in Ez. 1:26-28 NIV that was composed of fire from the waist down and glowing hot metal from the waist up to signify His wrath against sinful Israel (Ez. 2:1-3), God's image in Rev. 4:3a was (1) as a jasper stone, typifying Jacob's last son and the tribe of Benjamin, and as a sardine stone, typifying Jacob's first son and the tribe of Reuben, stones that were part of the 12 stones in the Ex. 28:15-20 high priest's breastpiece (Gen. 29:31-30:24; 35:16-19; B. K. C., N. T., p. 943). (2) Also, Rev. 4:3a names these stones in *reverse* from the Ex. 28:15-20 breastpiece **order**: the jasper, picturing Jacob's last son, Benjamin, is named first, and the sardine, his first son, Reuben, is named last. (3) Then, in Ez. 1:27c-28 NIV, a regular rainbow surrounded God's image, recalling His gracious promise never again to destroy all flesh with a flood (Gen. 9:8-17), but in Rev. 4:3b the rainbow is emerald, alluding to the stone of Jacob's fourth son and Israel's tribe of Judah in the high priest's breastpiece, Exodus 28:18 with Genesis 29:31-35.
 - b. This all signifies the Father's **grace** to the **world**: (1) instead of His wrath against Israel for her sin in Ez. 1, the Rev. 4:3a first and last stones typify all 12 of the high priest breastpiece stones, so the Father will focus His being on prizing so as to save Israel in the Tribulation, Zech. 12:10-13:1; Rom. 11:26. (2) In saving Israel, God can save the world by His Abrahamic Covenant, Gen. 12:1-3; C. C. Ryrie, A Surv. of Bib. Doc., 1972, p. 159ff. [This revelation of God's great aim after the rapture to fulfill His covenant to Abraham validates dispensationalism, *Ibid.*!] As He prepares to judge the lost world for its unbelief, the Father will yearn to save it (3) by **grace**, seen in the naming of the last stone first and the first stone last, recalling the "first shall be last and the last first" phrase in the Gospels on God's **grace** toward men, B. K. C., N. T., p. 151-152. (4) This grace is through Christ [emerald rainbow] of the tribe of Judah, for by His death, God was reconciled to the world (2 Cor. 5:19) to view it in grace (Rev. 4:3a), not wrath, Ez. 1:1-2:3.
 - B. We believers in the raptured Church will witness God's grace toward ourselves, Revelation 4:4:
 1. Around the throne John saw 24 seats with 24 elders dressed in white and crowned with gold victor crowns (*stephanos*), Rev. 4:4; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 846; Richard C. Trench, Syn. of the N. T., 1973, p. 78.
 2. Elsewhere in Scripture, the godly exist in 24 groups in only the O. T. priests (1 Chr. 24:1-19; *Ibid.*, B. K. C., N. T., p. 943), and the 24 elders, like the Church, are saved from all the world's peoples (Rev. 5:9-10) with the Church being a kingdom of priests in Rev. 1:4-6. The 24 elders thus typify the Church (Rev. 5:9-10), and their attire (Rev. 19:7-8) means they have been judged and rewarded, 1 Co. 3:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:10.

3. God's emerald rainbow of grace in Christ Jesus exists "all around" (*kuklothen*) His throne, so the Church sits "all around" (*kuklothen*) Him in His grace to them in Christ, Rev. 4:3-4. (U. B. S. G. N. T., 1966, p. 845-846; Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of N. T.*, 1967, p. 457) [*Kuklothen* exists **only** in Rev. 4 in the N. T. **only** to extol God's grace, Moulton & Geden, *Conc. to the Grk. Test.*, 1974, p. 564.]
- C. We believers in the raptured Church will witness God's grace as He prepares to judge the world, Rev. 4:5-8:
 1. God in grace longs with His total being [jasper and sardine stones] to save the world, but His righteousness demands that He judge it for rejecting Christ in the Church era (2 Thess. 1:3-9). The lightening, thunder and noises coming from the throne thus warn of God's imminent judgment upon a lost world, Rev. 4:5a.
 2. However, **with** that judgment, God will seek to lead the lost to eternal salvation signified in Rev. 4:5b-6a:
 - a. Before the throne, John saw seven lamps, the Holy Spirit typified in Zechariah 4:2-6 (Revelation 4:5b).
 - b. He also saw a glassy, crystal-like sea (Rev. 4:6a), upon which Rev. 15:2-4 has men later standing for overcoming by faith in the Great Tribulation! As Peter once walked on the troublesome sea by faith (Matt. 14:25-31), men in the Tribulation will gain victory by faith over that era's trials, Rev. 12:11; Luke 18:1-8!
 3. In and about the throne were 4 creatures identified in Ez. 1:1-26 with 10:15 as cherubs, the **first** like a **lion**, the **second** like a **calf**, the **third** like a **man** and the **fourth** like an **eagle**, Rev. 4:6b-7. The nearest context referring to any such creature, Rev. 5:5, calls **Christ** the **Lion** of the **tribe** of **Judah**, and the Father in Rev. 4:3 identifies His own image with **Israel's tribes**, so the cherubs, reflecting God's glory, point to **Israel's tribes**. Then, Christ as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" in Rev. 5:5 is also there the "Root of David" that points to Isaiah 11:10 where He as that Root **also** acts as a **rallying BANNER**, and Jewish tradition explains for us how the Num. 2:1-34 **Biblically OBEDIENT** marching and camping-about-the-tabernacle **ORDER BANNERS** for **Israel's tribes** were: **1st, Judah's lion** (east); **2nd, Reuben's man** (south); **3rd, Ephraem's calf** (west) and **4th, Dan's eagle** (north), Jam., Faus. & Br., *Com. on the Whole Bible*, 1977, p. 1543. Yet, this **order differs** from that of Ez. 1 **and** Rev. 4, so we explain: (a) in Ez. 1-2, the Davidic kings (Judah's lion) and most of their subjects seen in the 10 tribes that followed Ephraem (calf; 1 K. 12:16-25), went apostate, so the (east) lion and (west) calf cherubs switched places in **disorder** typifying this **sin!** (b) In Rev. 4, Jesus had come as the **upright King** and **Lion** of **Judah**, so the **lion** cherub is **rightly first**, but His **subjects**, Ephraem with the 10 tribes still not heeding the Davidic king (Zec. 11:7-11) and Reuben that had only subjects, no national leaders (*Z. P. E. B.*, v. Five, p. 86), **rejected Him**, so Ephraem's (west) calf and Reuben's (south) man cherubs switched places in **disorder** to signify this **sin!**
 4. Thus, John saw the Rev. 4:6c-8 NIV cherubim with eyes "all around" (*kuklothen*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich) that behold such sin, and their unbiblical disorder around the throne that pictures Israel's and the world's unbelief in Christ cause them as holy angels to feel such great tension, they constantly say God is "holy, holy, holy" or **separate, separate, separate** (*hagios*, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 846; T. D. N. T., v. I, p. 88-110) from it all **in witness of God's great longsuffering grace in wanting to save the lost**, 2 Peter 3:9.

III. Moved by this great display of His grace, the angels and raptured Church will worship God, Rev. 4:9-11:

- A. Whenever the four great, holy cherubim around the Father's throne give glory, honor and thanks to Him Who sits on the throne as eternal God, the whole raptured Church will worship the Father, falling down before Him and casting their crowns of honorable victory before Him in submission to Him, Revelation 4:9-10.
- B. They will claim the Father is worthy to receive glory, honor and power, for He has created all things, and for His pleasure they exist and were created, Revelation 4:11.

Lesson: *When Christ takes His true Church to heaven and we believers face His evaluation and He seats us on thrones as rewarded victors in grace, we will be deeply moved by God's infinite grace toward all men and realize the purpose of each created life's existence is to glorify God, and we will eagerly worship Him from the heart!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Jesus, the Father's Unique Son, for eternal life, John 3:16. (2) In view of the world's ripeness for judgment, but equally in view of the Father's infinite longing to save men and in view of His infinite worth as God, may we use the time we have on earth to fulfill His assignments for us in great reverence.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

On July 16, 2014, I heard a radio talk show host lament the many problems our world faces, and he asked his callers, "How do you deal with all of this?" He was not saved, so the lesson of my first draft of this sermon hit me hard! I told myself, "Don, God has you here to fulfill His calling to pastor and expound His Word! So, keep at it!"

In today's world of great need, may we trust in Christ for salvation, and by faith keep doing God's will.