

A Glimpse Into Heaven and A Look At The Book
Revelation 4:1–5:14

Something very dramatic has taken place between Revelation chapters 3 and 4 ... and the Rapture of the Church is the only possible explanation for the shift in emphasis.

We will examine the reasons for this conclusion, and John's vision of heaven, with the throne as its focus of worship.

I. ARGUMENTS For the Rapture Between Revelation 3 and 4.

Although the **Rapture is NOT specifically mentioned in the Book of Revelation**, it is clearly alluded to in this section of the book. It is the only possible explanation for the shift in emphasis from the church on earth (Rev. 2-3) and the scene in Heaven (Rev. 4-5). The KEY to seeing this transition from earth to heaven is the "blowing of the trumpet." There are specific usages of a trumpet at Christ's return.

- A trumpet heralds Christ's coming ... Matthew 24:31.
- A trumpet signals prophetic events ... Revelation 4:1; 6:13; 8:2; 9:14.
- A trumpet blast announces the resurrection of the dead in Christ ... 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

NOTE: The use of a trumpet in Revelation 4:1.

Revelation 4:1 (NASB)

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Here are some **REASONS WHY the RAPTURE of the church occurs between Revelation 3 and Revelation 4.**

A. The TIMING Of EVENTS In The Book of Revelation.

- We were given the inspired outline of the Book of Revelation in Revelation 1:19.
- John was told to ...
 - (1) "Write the things which you have seen" ... the vision of Christ (Rev 1:1-18).
 - (2) "And the things which are" ... the seven churches (Rev 2-3).
 - (3) "The things which will take place after this" ... future things (Rev 4-22).
- The happenings which begin in Revelation 4 clearly take place AFTER the church age is concluded.
- The church is NOT involved in the things which ARE going on down here on earth as described in Revelation 4-19.

B. The CONSPICUOUS ABSENCE Of The Church In Revelation 4-19.

- The word "*church*" appears 19 times in Revelation 1-3. BUT from Revelation 3:22 until Revelation 19, the church is NOT MENTIONED as being on earth.

C. The TRANSITION Of The HOLY SPIRIT From Earth To Heaven.

- There has been a change in location of the Holy Spirit.
- In Revelation 2 and 3 the Holy Spirit is said to be in the midst of the churches on earth, BUT in Revelation 4:5, the Holy Spirit is in heaven.

D. The PROPHETIC STATEMENT Of Jesus To John In John 21:20-24.

In John 21:20-24, the apostle John, is told *he would tarry until the second coming of Christ*. This COULD ONLY BE A TRUE STATEMENT in the sense that John was alive in Revelation 1 when God caught him up in the spirit, sent him through the thousands of years of time, and set him down in the Tribulation, where he was shown the second coming of Jesus Christ.

- John did die, but through his heavenly vision he saw the Lord's coming before he died.

The church age has concluded. Now, everything and everyone are focused on the throne of God.

II. **FOCUS** on **HEAVEN** ... The **THRONE** of God (Revelation 4:1-11) .

- As we begin our study in Revelation 4-5, we are looking through an open door into heaven (Rev 4:1). **Revelation 4 answers the questions ... WHAT IS GOING ON IN HEAVEN WHILE THE TRIBULATION IS GOING ON HERE ON THE EARTH?**
- The word "**throne**" is one of the key words in the Book of Revelation. It occurs 46 times in the book and is found 14 times in Revelation 4.

WHAT do we see in Heaven as we look through the open door in Revelation 4:1?

- A. The **TRIUNE GOD** Is **SEATED** On The Throne (Rev. 4:2-3).
- B. A **RAINBOW** Is **SURROUNDING** The Throne (Rev 4:3).
- The rainbow was a complete circle ... **NOT** an arc as we see it.
 - **In heaven all things are completed.**
- C. The **24 ELDERS** Are **SITTING AROUND** The Throne (Rev 4:4).
- The 24 elders seated upon the 24 thrones **DO NOT** represent the angels or the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - These elders represent the church-age saints, in the same way that the 24 elders of the Old Testament represented the entire body of priests (1 Chronicles 24).
 - **We know they are representative of the church age saints BECAUSE ...**
 - (1) The **PRAISE** On Their **LIPS** (Rev 19:7-8).
 - (2) The **CLOTHES** On Their **BODIES** (Rev 4:4)
 - (3) The **CROWNS** Upon Their **HEADS** (Rev 4:4).
 - **Each of these THREE ELEMENTS is promised to the church ...** Rev 3:18; 3:21; 2:10.
- D. A **SEA Of GLASS** Is **SPREAD BEFORE** The Throne (Rev 4:6).
- The *sea of glass* is a common description of the area in heaven which surrounds the throne of God (Ex 24:10).
- E. The **FOUR LIVING CREATURES** Are **SITUATED IN THE MIDST** Of The Throne Are (Rev 4:6-8).
- These four living creatures represent the angels whose function it is to bring glory to God.
 - They are described in Ezekiel 1:4-14 and Ezekiel 10:14-17 and Isaiah 6:1-3.
 - The four living creatures are the **Cherubim** who that surround the throne of God and serve in **TWO WAYS**:
 1. They minister to the **HOLINESS** of God in **WORSHIP**.
 2. They **EXECUTE** God's **JUDGMENTS** on the world as seen in association with the first four seals (Rev 6:1, 3, 5, 7).
 - It is the four living creature who gave the seven angels the bowls of wrath that are poured out upon the earth at the last judgment of the Tribulation period (Rev 15:7).
- F. The **ANGELS** and The **CHURCH** Are **SINGING PRAISE** To The One Sitting On The Throne (Rev 4:9-11).
- The Book of Revelation is filled with hymns of praise (Revelation 4:8-11; 5:9-13; 7:12-17; 11:15-18; 12:10-12; 15:3-4; 16:3-7; 19:1-6).
 - **This is the worship of the glorified Christ, who is the Creator of the world.**

As we look forward in anticipation to worshipping the triune God on His throne in the beauty of His presence (Revelation 4-5), we also now, should feel sorrow for those who will suffer the consequences of rejecting God's gracious offer of salvation through Jesus Christ (Revelation 6-19). **May this spur us to intensify our efforts of personal evangelism.**

III. **FOCUS** on **THE BOOK** ... The Scroll - The Title-Deed to the Earth (Revelation 5:1-14) .

Chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation should not be divided. The first word of chapter 5 is "**and**," which indicates a **continuation of the flow of thought** from chapter 4.

The picture we must remember from chapter 4 is God, seated on his **THRONE** and surrounded by angelic beings and the elders representing the church of Jesus Christ. Thunder, lightning, and voices are heard, signifying the **JUDGMENT** which is about to fall on the earth.

The **FOCUS** of John's attention is on the **SCROLL** in the right hand of the One who sits on the throne.

A. The Book or SCROLL ... The Title-Deed to the Earth (Rev 5:1).

1. What is the SIGNIFICANCE of The Book or Scroll?

a. It is a legal document like a ... WILL.

The Scroll was rolled up and had on it **SEVEN SEALS**. Roman law required that a **WILL be rolled up and sealed seven times** (as the wills left by Augustus and Vespasian, two first-century emperors).

b. It is a legal document like a ... DEED.

In the OT the prophet Jeremiah purchased land that was under Babylonian control as a testimony to his faith that Israel would return to the land in the future. The **TRANSACTION** was written down and sealed. In like manner, **the sealed scroll in God's hand is the TITLE DEED to planet Earth**.

God gave to Adam and to mankind the right of earthly dominion, BUT man lost that right through his sin (Gen. 1:26; Heb. 2:5-8). The second Adam ... Jesus Christ ... became Man and died on the cross to regain for man, namely Himself, that lost dominion (Heb. 2:9). Just as there was a time lapse between Jeremiah's purchase and the subsequent occupation of the land by the prophet's descendants, so there has been an interval between Christ's first coming to die and to rise again and His second advent to the earth to rule as King. Christ will claim what is rightfully His through the series of judgments revealed in the opening of the seven seals.

2. What The Book or Scroll CONTAINS.

Revelation 5:9 speaks of a book with seals to be opened., **As we look at chapter 6, the seals begin to be opened, and we see the judgments of God poured out upon the earth**. These indicate the beginning of the Tribulation period on the earth.

The "**number 7**" is mentioned three times during the Tribulation period ... referring **FIRST to SEALS, SECOND to TRUMPETS, and THIRD to BOWLS**. These three series of seven judgments are related to each other as in a **telescope** ... the 7th Seal Judgment is actually all of the 7 Trumpets Judgments and the 7th Trumpet Judgment is all of the 7 Bowl Judgments. Thus, the **SEALS** contain **ALL** the judgments for the entire Book of Revelation, from the beginning to the end of the Tribulation period.

3. What the Book or Scroll REPRESENTS.

• There are **THREE DIFFERENT VIEWS** as to what the **Book or Scroll** represents.

(1) Some hold the Scroll is the book of the new covenant.

(2) Others feel that this is the revelation of God's purpose and counsel concerning the world.

(3) I believe the correct identification of the scroll or book is the Title-Deed to the Earth.

• Ezekiel 2:9-10 sheds some light on the scroll's meaning.

• The fact that this scroll was written on both the front and the back is an indication that it was full and nothing more could be added.

B. A PROBING QUESTION ... WHO Is Worthy to Unseal or Open The Book or The Scroll? (Rev 5:2-4).

1. The ISSUE is ... WHO has the moral worth to open the scroll?

2. The RESPONSE ... was that no one in Heaven or earth ... no angel or no human being was worthy.

The classification in Rev 5:3 would included such angels as Michael and Gabriel and such saints as Abraham, David, and Paul.

C. The WORSHIP Begins (Rev 5:5-14).

1. IDENTITY of The One Worshipped (5:5).

Three names are given in the text to identify the One who takes the scroll.

a. The LION of The Tribe of Judah.

b. The ROOT of David.

c. The LAMB Who Was Slain.

Jesus is now presented as the lamb who was slain. The word "*lamb*," referring to Jesus Christ, is used in the **Book of Revelation 28 times**.

There are **FIVE IMPORTANT FACTS** about the Lamb.

- (1) He saw a **tiny lamb** ... one that had not reached full life (indicated by the Greek diminutive form). Christ died at an early age.
- (2) The **Lamb had been slain** ... a reference to the crucifixion.
- (3) The **Lamb is standing in the midst of the throne** ... a picture of the resurrection.
- (4) The **seven horns** ... seem to refer to the prerogatives of total kingship and strength over the seven continents of planet earth. (See ... 1 Kings 22:11; Zechariah 1:18; Daniel 7:24).
- (5) The possession of the **seven spirits** ... shows that He is the Anointed One.

2. **LOCALITY** of The One Worshipped (5:6) .

The Lamb is found in the midst of the throne of God ... we worship Him because of where He is.

3. **ACTIVITY** of The One Worshipped (5:6-7).

- a. He takes the Book out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. He receives the kingdom from His Father and takes control of it through the Tribulation period in preparation for the Millennium, when He will reign forever and ever.
- b. He receives the worship of Heaven. When the Lamb takes the scroll ... the weeping ends and the praising begins. The central focus of this chapter is on worship. It is a treatise on worship.

D. **ASPECTS** of The Worship in Heaven (Rev 5:8-14).

1. The **Redeemed** Worship (5:8-10).

- a. It included **PRAYER**. (See also ... Psalm 141:2 and Matt 6:10.)
- b. It included **SINGING**.
 - They sang about Christ's crucifixion.
 - They sang about Christ's redemption of them.
 - They sang about Christ's appointment of them to be kings and priests.

2. The **Angels** Worship (5:11-12).

3. All **Creation** Worships (5:13). (See also ... Romans 8:19-22.)

4. The **Four Living Creatures** and **24 Elders** Worship (5:14).