

Commentary on Revelation 4-6

by Chuck Smith

Transcript

Revelation chapter four begins with the Greek word "meta autos". And the first verse begins and ends with the same Greek words. The words literally from the Greek are "after these things". So as we come to this phrase, "after these things," our minds should flash back to chapter 1:19, where the book of Revelation was divided into three basic divisions. "Write the things which you have seen, the things which are, and the things which will be after these things", "meta autos". So obviously we are coming into the third section of the book of Revelation, after these things. After what things?

Well, it seems to me that it would be quite apparent and obvious. It would be after the things that he was just talking about. And the things that he was just talking about were the things of the church; so, after the things of the church. For we had in chapters two and three, the messages of Jesus to the seven churches of Asia, which as we pointed out represent seven periods of church history.

So, after these things, the things of the church,

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

I believe that when the church has completed its purpose upon the earth and has finished its witness, or as Paul describes, "when the fullness of the gentiles is come in," that the Lord is then going to catch away His church into heaven.

Paul said, "behold, I show you a mystery. We are not going to all sleep, but we are all going to be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. The trump of God shall sound, the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible." First Thessalonians 4:16-17, Paul said, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

So, I believe that the church is to be raptured. And I believe that the point of the rapture in the book of Revelation is in here in chapter 4:1. I believe that John was taken by the Spirit unto the day of the Lord and experienced through the Spirit the rapture of the church. When the Lord had completed His messages to the churches, then the call to John was "come up hither and I will show you things, which must be after these things, after the things of the church".

So as we enter then into the fourth chapter, we enter into the post-church era upon the earth. We will be coming back to the earth in chapter six, but it is the post-church era, when God now judges the world for its ungodliness and unrighteousness and for its rejection of His Son. But the church, with John here in chapter four caught up into heaven,

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat upon the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald (Rev 4:2-3).

So the basic color that emanates from the throne is a green, along with the sardine red, along with the jasper which is a clear crystalline-type of a stone with a purple hue.

Now, Paul told us in Timothy that God dwells in a light that is unapproachable by man. And here in heaven, even in our glorified bodies, we only see the radiance of the glory of God as it emanates from His throne like a brilliant light, the predominant color being green, the rainbow about the throne like an emerald, green in color, with the sardine red color and the jasper stone in brilliance in coloring and light.

And round about the throne there were twenty-four lesser thrones: [thronus in Greek translated seats] and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold (Rev 4:4).

The twenty-four elders clothed in white raiment are representative of the church according to most Bible scholars. These twenty-four elders are representative. The fact that they are in white robes is the church is to be clothed in white robes, the righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said to the church of Laodicea, "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"(Rev 3:21). The twenty-four lesser thrones. Now we see the heavenly scene sitting in white robes upon their thrones.

And out of the throne [that is the throne of God] there proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God (Rev 4:5).

Now again it is important that we place in our mind the tabernacle that Moses built in the wilderness, because we are told in the book of Hebrews that the tabernacle was actually a model of heavenly things. If you want to know basically what heaven is going to look like, you can go back to the tabernacle and you can get an idea of what the throne of God is like in heaven.

And there in the tabernacle we remember when the priest came into the holy place on the left-hand side, there was the seven candlesticks coming out of the one base. And these seven golden candlesticks, we now know from the book of Revelation, are representative of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the Holy Spirit there before the throne of God, the seven-fold work or the complete work of the Holy Spirit. We remember that in the Holy of Holies there was that Ark of the Covenant that Moses made covered with the gold lid, which was the mercy seat, upon which there was carved these golden cherubim with their wings touching the corners of the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle.

And so as we go on in the reading of the description here of heaven, we next come to these cherubim. These angelic beings created by God who seem to be the highest order of angelic beings.

And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second was like a calf, and the third had a face as a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle (Rev 4:6-7).

Now, there are those Bible scholars that see in this the four phases of Christ as represented in the Gospels. The first, Matthew, presents Jesus as the lion of the tribe of the Judah. The lion, of course, is known as the king of the beast. The second, like a calf, as Mark presents Jesus as the suffering servant. The ox is considered the top of the domesticated animals. The third, like a man, as Luke presents Jesus as the Son of man, and man the crowning order of God\

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