

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“Come Up Here”

Revelation 4:1-3

Introduction

1. This Book is a direct “revelation” from Jesus Christ by His angel to John to His servants about eschatological events (1:1).

2. The glory of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the churches is indeed blessed (1:12-18). His message to seven selected local churches in Asia Minor are direct and searching (Chaps. 2, 3).

3. Not only are the churches indicative of first century characteristics, but they extrapolate the ecclesiastical development of the Church --

1) Departure from first love at the close of the Apostolic Period -- Ephesus (2:1-7).

2) Martyr time down to and including the persecution under Diocletian -- Smyrna (2:8-11).

3) Increasing worldliness from the accession of Constantine and his patronage Christianity to the seventh century -- Pergamus (2:12-17).

4) The Papal church (Romanism), Satan’s masterpiece on earth, covers the dark Middle Ages -- Thyatira (2:18-29).

5) God’s intervention with the Reformation crippled Papal authority with more or less light for 300 years, but fell short of God’s ideal -- Sardis (3:1-6).

6) A second reformation introduced by missionary concern characterized the church from the last century -- Philadelphia (3:7-13).

7) The present lukewarm professing Church is the last phase of Church history on the eve of judgment -- Laodicea (3:14-22).

4. At this point, with the “Excluded Christ” (3:20) what is next on God’s program is introduced. This is dramatically shown by the key at the door which unlocks the Book of Revelation (1:19). Everything up to now in the Book is earthly in focus. Now the scene moves to heaven (4:1).

5. So what does John record about the future? Mark carefully these plans:-

1. AN OPENED DOOR v. 1

The text “after these things,” is a reference to the record already given (ch. 1-3). A new sequence has begun. This is no mirage for John writes “I saw” and “behold” (= imperative of “to see”) an opened door in heaven is viewed. The verb is a perfect passive participle (). God moved the door so that believers could see what is going on in heaven (ch. 4-19). There are three other openings in Revelation (cf. 11:19; 15:5; 19:11). Learn this: God’s Word is a great opening to those who will read it and believe it (cf. Ps. 119:18; 1 Cor. 2:12).

2. A HEARD VOICE v. 1

One must not be misled. There is no series of voices. The reference is to the earlier one (1:10) which was on earth; here it speaks from heaven. The sound is clear like a trumpet. What does the voice say?

a. Come Up Here

In the chronological order of the Book, the meaning is obvious. This is a word to John, as a representative of a heavenly company, to participate in the Rapture. The church, therefore, is in heaven throughout the following chapters (4-19). This fits in with “after these things” (v. 1).

b. I Will Show You

Here is a promise that God will reveal what will be after the Rapture. Using the key to unlock the Book (1:19), the heart of God explicates the time period between the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18) and the Revelation (Invasion of Rev. 19:11ff). The first scene is heaven itself (chaps. 4, 5).

3. A SET THRONE vv. 2, 3

The adverb “immediately” () points to direct revelation from God. Certain features are brought into focus: 1) About John v. 2. It is stated “in Spirit” (no article), hence the characteristic of John’s state. He became in a different mode -- controlled absolutely by the Holy Spirit for revelation. 2) About Heaven (v. 2). Through John, Scripture records truth about the very place of God’s abode. Here is a view of things from God’s perspective, not from earth. 3) About Throne. This is the thrust of John’s vision. The imperfect verb () notes the established, eternal throne of God. Now look at the picture John saw:

a. What was on the Throne v. 2

The primary meaning of the preposition “on” is “upon.” The “set” throne had “one sitting” (pres. participle). There is no expressed subject with the verb, but that “He” is the triune eternal God Who rules and reigns after the counsel of His own will is obvious from the context. He is described:

1) Like Jasper. This stone comes in a variety of colors (green, buff, red, tan) and is an uncrystalline variety of quartz. This same stone is the last one in the High Priest’s breastplate (Ex. 28:17-20) and the first stone in the foundation of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:11). It may well suggest unapproachable deity.

2) Like Sardis. This is a deep red stone considered by some as “sard,” a variety of chalcedony. It was the first stone in the High Priest’s breastplate (Ex. 28:17-20) and the sixth stone in the foundation of the New Jerusalem. Since the Hebrew for Adam, meaning red, is the same as this word, it may suggest our Lord’s humanity. The two stones, jasper and sardis, appear to speak of Christ as the “God-Man.” Interestingly, the first stone on the High Priest’s breastplate represents Reuben (“Behold a Son”) and the last stone Benjamin (“Son of my right hand”). Obviously, both relate to our Lord.

b. What was round the Throne v. 3

The rainbow completely surrounded the throne, hence it was a full one. The dominating color was green (emerald). In view of the O.T. Covenant with Noah (Gen. 9), the rainbow speaks of grace and mercy in the midst of a scene breathing judgment. These days of judgment are foreshadowed by Noah (Mt. 24:37-41). They are the days of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 4-19). God keeps His covenants, as the rainbow indicates (Gen. 9:9-17).

Conclusion

Within the compass of these few verses, the Holy Spirit has unfolded the events following this present age of grace (Rev. 2, 3). Made known are the Rapture (v. 1) and the Throne of God’s judgement abounding in covenantal grace. Are you a believer? Is it not time for you to accept His grace before judgment falls upon you? Respond, dear friend!