

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“So This is the Throne of God”

Revelation 4:4-6a

Introduction

1. The attention getter in this chapter is the key phrase “after these things (4:1). The same Greek prepositional phrase is elsewhere (cf. 1:19) and in the word “hereafter” (4:1). The scene moves from earth (chaps. 1-3) to heaven as indicated by this phrase.

2. The call to “come up here” indicates the Rapture, a significant eschatological event included in the dispensational system of Bible interpretation. This is clearly taught in Revelation (cf. 1:13; 3:10-; 4:1, 2; 5:5, 6; 13:6; 19:11-21).

3. Attention is drawn to the Throne of the triune God which is “set” (imperfect tense). Details concerning this throne are remarkably recorded: a. On the throne () v. 2. b. Round the throne () v. 3. The adverb is repeated in v. 4.

1. ROUND THE THRONE v. 4

In addition to the apparent full emerald rainbow around the throne (v. 3) are “thrones” (KJV “seats” for) where were “elders sitting.” Hot debate centers on the identification of these “elders” (). Consider:

a. They are 24

This figure is used of the porter-Levites (1 Chron. 24:3-5) and the courses for the priests (1 Chron. 24:3-18). Zacharias came into this course structure (Lk 1:5 cf. 1 Chron. 24:10). Now, since O.T. saints are not resurrected until the end of the Tribulation to rule with Christ during the Kingdom (Isa. 20:19, 21; Dan. 12:1, 2; Rev. 20:4), these 24 elders represent the Church (Body of Christ) in heaven. This is pre-tribulational Rapture truth!

b. They are Clothed

The white color is used frequently in Revelation. It speaks of the imputed righteousness which the saints possess (Ro. 3:22; Isa. 61:10), but is not their own (Isa. 64:6). “Clothed” is a perfect tense, teaching eternal security ().

c. They are Crowned

On the heads of the elders are golden crowns. These are victor’s crowns () and not those of the ruler (). This is the Lord’s reward at the Rapture (2 Tim. 4:8).

Note: Keeping the Biblical distinction between Jews, Gentiles and Church (1 Cor. 10:32), it is right to interpret these 24 elders as the Church being redeemed (white),

crowned (victors) and now sitting in heaven round God’s throne! The entire course of King-Priests are in view. There is no such thought of a partial Rapture. Moreover, all is before the Tribulation with the crowning completed!

2. OUT OF THE THRONE v. 5

The preposition “out” () is repeated as a prefix to the verb “proceed” (). The present tense is a dramatic historical one. The pyrotechnical display recorded here is very similar to Sinai (cf. Ex. 19:16; 24:9) and the experience of Ezekiel (1:22, 27). The 3-fold intimation of immediate judgement indicates the One sitting on the Throne is going to assert Himself in power. Terror should come to the guilty hearts on earth (cf. Ex. 19:16). The horrific visitations of judgment to come are clearly outlined in Scripture (Isa. 24:1-23; Lk. 17:22-37).

3. BEFORE THE THRONE v. 5

The preposition “before” () adds another facet to the picture.

a. Seven Lamps

The present tense notes that the fire burned continually before Almighty God. This suggests God, Who always gives light for the believer (Ps. 119:105), also burns with judgment toward the non-believer. Incidentally, the word “lamp” is really a “torch” or “lantern” (), cf. Mt. 25:1; Jn 18:3). This is distinguished from the lampstand (1:12, 20) and the hand-lamp (Mt. 5:15). The O.T. has much to extrapolate on this (Ezek. 1:13; Zech 4:12; Isa. 4:4).

b. Spirits of God

These torches are said to be the “Seven spirits of God,” a figure seen earlier (1:4). Seven distinct Spirits are not meant, but the one Holy Spirit in the seven-fold plentitude of His power (cf. Isa. 11:2).

c. Sea of Glass 6a

A sea of brass was in Solomon’s temple (2 Kings 25:13). Like the laver in the tabernacle (Ex. 30:18), this sea is a symbol of God’s Word. The water of the laver was for priestly cleansing. This is similar to the use of the Word for believers today (Eph. 5:26). The sea here is crystal, therefore not for cleansing. However, Tribulation saints stand on it (Rev. 15:2). It appears, therefore, this is still a sign for the Word which abides firm and on which God’s people stand.

Conclusion The throne of God sets forth the truth of the Rapture, the Judgment, and the unalterable Word of God. If you are truly a genuine believer, rejoice in the hope set forth in His Word for you. If you are an unbeliever consider with all seriousness that God will visit with judgment rejecters of His Son Jesus Christ.