

## The Throne Room Vision Revelation 4:1-3 The End Times

In my last post, we examined a summary of the **Four Views** of all **Seven Letters** and begin to look at the **Four Views** of the **Seven Sealed Scroll**. In this post, we begin our journey into the heavenly visions that Yochanan recorded beginning in **Revelation 4**.

There is an abrupt shift in setting between chapters 3 and 4, from the **Seven Messianic Communities** in Asia Minor to **God's Throne Room** in heaven. At the beginning of the vision of the horrible disasters to come, God reassures His people through Yochanan that He is still on the throne and in control. Regardless of what terrible things are about to happen, the final stage is set for the redemptive work of **Yeshua**.

*"<sup>1</sup> After these things, I looked; and there before me was a door standing open in heaven; and the voice like a trumpet which I had heard speaking with me before said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after these things.'<sup>2</sup> Instantly I was in the Spirit, and there before me in heaven stood a throne, and on the throne Someone was sitting.<sup>3</sup> The One sitting there gleamed like diamonds and rubies<sup>1</sup>, and a rainbow shining like emerald encircled the throne."* ~ Revelation 4:1-3 (CJB)

Chapters 4 and 5 seem to detail the events that occur in *heaven* after the **Rapture**, and chapters 6-18 the events that occur on the *earth* after the **Rapture**. It is the same event told from two different vantage points.

*After these things* takes us into the third section of the **Revelation**, as outlined by Yochanan in chapter 1. *"<sup>19</sup> So write down what you see, both what is now, and what will happen afterwards."* Revelation 1:19 (CJB) *Write down what you see* chapter one; *what is now* chapters two and three; *what will happen afterwards* chapter four through the remainder of the book.

In this new division of the **Book of Revelation**, something most dramatic is transpiring: the **Rapture**, the removal from the earth of all true Believers, **The Bride of Messiah!** It is interesting that the **Messianic communities** are mentioned nineteen times in the first three chapters and then is completely omitted and not mentioned again until chapter 22. *<sup>16</sup> "I, Yeshua, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the Messianic communities. I am the Root and Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star."* ~ Revelation 22:16 (CJB). Therefore, now one of two things must have happened: either the body of Believers has been completely wiped out by Satan, or God has taken it from the world in an act that is known as the **Rapture**. This is the pre-tribulation viewpoint to which I personally subscribe.

These words of **Yeshua** assure us: *"<sup>18</sup> I also tell you this: you are Kefa," [which means 'Rock,'] "and on this rock I will build my Community, and the gates of Sh'ol will not overcome it."* ~ Matthew 16:18 (CJB emphasis added). Therefore, we cannot conclude that Satan has overcome it, and indeed must conclude that the **Messianic Communities** have been taken from the earth by God.

In deliberating the **Rapture** question, it would be good to consider briefly the other two views of the **Second Coming of Yeshua** held by some theologians. One is the mid-tribulation view and the second is the post-tribulation view. The interesting thing about these two views is that they differ only as to the time placement of the *final shofar*. The mid-tribulationists place the sounding of the seventh trumpet in the middle of the tribulation, whereas the post-tribulationists place it at the end.

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<sup>1</sup> Other translations frequently use "jasper and carnelian or rubies."

Both groups make the claim that the **final shofar** mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:52 and the **shofar** of Revelation 11:15 are synonymous. The **shofars** of Revelation are different from those of 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16. The **shofars** of Revelation are clearly identified with judgment, whereas the **shofars** of 1 Corinthians 15:51 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 signal a call to the elect of God. The **shofars** of Revelation are sounded by angels, but in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 it is called the **God's shofar**. John Walvoord (a **Futurist**) explains why understanding that these are two different **shofars** is so important. Understanding this one concept alone greatly undermines the positions taken by mid-tribulationists and post-tribulationists:

*The most damaging fact in the whole argument, however, is that the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11 is, after all, not the last trumpet of Scripture. According to Matthew 24:31, the elect will be gathered at the coming of Jesus to establish His earthly kingdom "with a great sound of a trumpet." While post-tribulationists hold that this is identical with the seventh trumpet, mid-tribulationists cannot do so. In fact, it is not too much to say that this one reference alone spells the doom of mid-tribulationists.*

Note that the **open door** in heaven Revelation 4:1 contrasts with a **closed door** on earth Revelation 3:20.

**Instantly I was in the Spirit, and there before me in heaven stood a throne.** As you read this, your attentions immediately drawn to the **throne**. The **throne** is mentioned nine times in the first six verses and a total of seventeen times in chapters four and five. It appears forty-six times throughout the book of Revelation. The activity around the **throne** is one of the key themes in Revelation.

**The One sitting there gleamed like diamonds and rubies, and a rainbow shining like emerald encircled the throne.** The one sitting upon the throne is God the Father. Later, the Son approaches the throne in Revelation 5:6, and the Spirit is pictured before the throne in Revelation 4:5. A rainbow is a real event that appears even in earthly skies. Warren Wiersbe adds to this:

*The rainbow reminds us of God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:11-17), symbolic of His promise that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. God's covenant, as we shall see, was not only with Noah, but with all of His creation. Usually, a rainbow appears after the storm; but here, we see it before the storm.*

Ask yourself, how could you even begin to imagine how you would describe God's physical appearance? My head hurts just asking the question. Does He even have a physical appearance or is He a spiritual entity? Based on B'resheet 1:26 (CJB), God must have a physical appearance as He said, **"Let us make humankind in our image, in the likeness of ourselves..."**

## Special Comparative Note on Chapter 4:1-3 <sup>2</sup>

### Historicist and Preterist Approach:

**Historicist** and **Preterist** interpreters see in chapters 4 and 5 an interlude before the appearance of the first rider (on the white horse) in chapter 6, which is the victorious Roman army on its way to Jerusalem in 67 CE.

**Preterist** interpreters also point out that Yochanan's vision is very like Ezekiel's vision in the first-half of his book. The only major difference being the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE (Ezekiel) and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE (Yochanan). In addition, they interpret the repeat of **after these things** at the end of the first verse to imply a first century fulfillment. The **Seven-Seal Scroll** beginning in chapter 5 is God's judgment against Jerusalem and the subsequent breaking of the first seal depicts the war between Israel and Rome from 66-70 CE.

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<sup>2</sup> Material in this section is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg

### **Futurist Approach:**

**Futurist** interpreters believe that at the end of chapter 3, the **Rapture** of Believers takes place: ***Come up here.*** (4:1). The period that follows, beginning with chapter 4 and ending with the **Battle of Armageddon** (19:19) and the 1000-year reign of **Yeshua** on earth (the Millennium; chap. 20), covers a terrible seven-year period at the time of the end referred to as the **Great Tribulation** (see 7:14 and Matthew 24:21). These seven years are the same as the 70th set of seven years the prophet Daniel spoke about (see Daniel 9:27).

### **Idealist Approach:**

***After these things,*** does not mean *this is what will happen next*, but *this is the vision I saw next* to the **Idealist** interpreters. The entire church age depicted in chapters 1-3 from an earthly standpoint will now be viewed again from a heavenly viewpoint.

In my next post, we will continue to explore **Revelation Chapter 4.**