**The Book of Revelation**

**Study Notes: Session 4**

*Revelation 4:1-5:14*

*The Worship and Praise* *of* *God the Creator* *and* *the Redeemer Lamb*

**Revelation 4:1-3: A Vision, God and His Heavenly Throne**

*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."  2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.  3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.*

**Preterist**

A heavenly courtroom, with divine judgment about to begin.

The plaintiffs are Christian martyrs (Rev 6:9-10), and the defendant is Jerusalem:

Rev. 6:9-10: *I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony, which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt though refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*

V. 1, *what must take place after these things,* demands an immediate fulfillment.

Only the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 66-70) fits the time frame.

The six seals (Chaps 5-8) depict divine judgment of Jerusalem at the hands of the Roman Empire

**Historicist**

These verses depict the heavenly throne, immutable

The church of the redeemed invited to enter the throne of God.

**Futurist**

V.4a, *After these things*, refers back to the church age symbolized in the seven letters to the seven churches (chaps. 2-3)

V.4b, *Come up here,* implies church has been raptured; thus, Paul’s prophecy fulfilled:

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18:** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.  17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.* (see also 1 Cor. 15:51-54)

Note the one calling John has a voice, *like the sound of a trumpet.*

Dispensationalists find no reference to “church” until 22:16, a heavenly scene.

**Idealist**

V. 1, *After these things,* simply means the next vision, from a heavenly viewpoint.

V.2, *Heavenly throne*,(mentioned 40 times in Revelation) is meant to give reassurance to the persecuted church that God is still sovereign over history.

V.3, *Jasper, sardius (carnelian), emerald*, depicting God’s purity, wrath, and mercy.

**Revelation 4:4-5: The Church Gathered with Her God**

And around the throne *were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.  5 And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;*

**Preterist**

The twenty-four elders represent the New Testament church

*flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder,* remind the reader of God at Mt. Sinai establishing His covenant with Israel.  (See Heb. 12:18-29)

The seven spirits, represent the Holy Spirit.

**Historicist**

The twenty-four elders represent the church triumphant, redeemed, saved.

The seven spirits represent the Holy Spirit of God.

**Futurist**

The twenty-four elders may be an angelic order, or more probably the raptured church in heaven.

*And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne,* this verifies conclusively that the church, which is symbolized as the seven golden lamps, is now in heaven (See Rev. 1:12, 20)

**Idealist**

The twenty-four elders are celestial representatives of all redeemed throughout history.

**Revelation 4:6-11: Creation Worshipping the Creator**

And before the throne *there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.  7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.  8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."  9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,  11 "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created."*

**Preterist**

*Four living creatures*, are angels, archangels, or Cherubim (Ezekiel 1). However, one sees the four faces as pointing to the four corners of the Zodiac (Leo, Taurus, Aquarius, Scorpio).

**Historicist**

*Four living creatures,* beings representing God’s power, intelligence, vigilance, and energy

Rabbinic interpretation: *Face of a lion (chief wild beast), calf (Chief domesticated animal), man (Chief sapient creature), eagle (Chief of flying creatures)*, thus symbolize all earthly creatures.

**Futurist**

*Four living creatures,* symbolizing the attributes of God, depicted as living entities. Others see them as four aspects of the created order, beasts, domesticated animals, humans, flying animals, all rendering worship to God (see Rom 8:19-23)

**Idealist**

*Four living creatures,* unusual celestial beings, or symbolic picture of creation worshiping God.

Note: God worshiped as creator would seem to support these interpretations.

**Revelation 5:1-5: Who can Open the Sealed Book?**

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.  2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"  3 And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it.  4 And I *began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it;*

**Preterist**

*The sealed book,* represents the sentence handed down by the judge against Jerusalem for her part in shedding the blood of the martyrs (Matt. 23:35)*.*

**Historicist**

*The sealed book,* represents the purposes and designs of God with respect to his government of the world and His church.

**Futurist**

*The sealed book,* represents the title deed to the earth itself. The tribulation unleashed as the seals are broken represent God’s reclaiming for himself, the control of the earth (Eph. 1:14).

To redeem the earth, forfeited by man, Christ is a kinsman redeemer (Lev. 25:25)

**Idealist**

*The sealed book,* represents the redemptive plan of God, His last will and testament, in his right hand, thus powerful and authoritative.

*Written inside and on the back*,leaving no space to add—the plan is perfect and complete!

**Revelation 5:5-6: The Powerful Lion & Lamb**

And one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."  6 And I saw between the throne (four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

**Preterist**

*A Lamb standing, as if slain,* reminding the reader of Israel’s rejection of Christ

**Luke 11:50-51**: in order that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation…

**Matthew 27:25**: Israel answered and said, "His blood *be on us and on our children!"*

**Historicist**

*Tribe of Judah, root of David*, thus Jesus is seen representing his fleshly and divine nature.

*Seven horns, seven eyes,* represent perfect power, knowledge, and wisdom.

**Futurist**

*Behold the lion…and I saw …a lamb,* meant to create maximum dramatic effect and surprise!

*Tribe of Judah, root of David*, Israel remembered in mercy, as judgment sweeps over the earth.

**Idealist**

*Tribe of Judah, root of David*, underscoring Jesus’ messianic qualifications.

*Behold the lion…and I saw …a lamb,* showing Jesus alone can be judge, executioner and savior.

**Revelation 5:7-10: Worship of the Worthy Lamb**

And He came, and He took *it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.  8 And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.  9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.  10 "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."*

**Preterist**

*They sang a new song,* replacing old song of creation (4:11) with the new song of redemption.

*And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God,* thus the original kingdom of priests—Israel—has been replaced by the church (Heb 7:12; 8:13)

**Historicist**

*And they will reign upon the earth,* after the millennium, with Christians governing the world in righteousness, ushering in Christ’s second coming*.*

**Futurist**

The arrival of the Lamb marks the beginning of the end of this present evil age.

*The prayers of the saints,* prayers of the church for 2000 years, yearning for Christ’s return.

*And they will reign upon the earth,* refers to the millennial reign of church co-ruling w/ Christ.

**Idealist**

Passage fulfills Daniel 7:9-14

*And they sang a new song,* represents the song of the church throughout history.

*And they will reign upon the earth,* happens now, spiritually through worship and witness.

**Revelation 5:11-14: Worship of God and the Lamb**

*And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."  13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."  14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.*

**Preterist**

The whole company of Heaven joins to worship God and the Lamb.

Jesus alone is worthy to unleash the seven seal judgments upon Jerusalem and also to receive glory in His own rite.

**Historicist**

Jesus shares in the worship God also receives, thus reinforcing His total divinity.

Song of praise in three parts; 1), the church; 2), the church and angels; 3), every creature.

**Futurist**

Daniel 7:10, referring to countless, innumerable angels

*Worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory,* were not revealed to humanity at Christ’s first coming, but will be in full display at His 2nd coming.

**Idealist**

*And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,* this cannot be taken literally, for many in the world do not praise Christ. Thus, this language is symbolic of ecstatic praise.