

The Church in Heaven, Rev. 4 – 5

INTRODUCTION:

John is writing in 95-96 AD from a Roman prison on the Greek island of Patmos. John has written to each of the seven churches in Asia Minor, or modern day Turkey, in Rev. 1-3. John's focus then was God's Will on earth in His Churches. John's focus now shifts in Rev 4-5 to God's Will in Heaven. Before listening to the Worship in Heaven in chapter four, let's consider a few key questions.

HOW IS REVELATION ARRANGED?

WHAT IS THE TRIBULATION?

Outline

- I. The Things which You Have Seen (1:1–20)
 - A. The Prologue (1:1–8)
 - B. The Vision of the Glorified Christ (1:9–18)
 - C. The Apostle's Commission to Write (1:19, 20)
- II. The Things which Are (2:1–3:22)
 - A. The Letter to the Church at Ephesus (2:1–7)
 - B. The Letter to the Church at Smyrna (2:8–11)
 - C. The Letter to the Church at Pergamos (2:12–17)
 - D. The Letter to the Church at Thyatira (2:18–29)
 - E. The Letter to the Church at Sardis (3:1–6)
 - F. The Letter to the Church at Philadelphia (3:7–13)
 - G. The Letter to the Church at Laodicea (3:14–22)
- III. The Things which Will Take Place after This (4:1–22:21)
 - A. Worship in Heaven (4:1–5:14)
 - B. The Great Tribulation (6:1–18:24)
 - C. The Return of the King (19:1–21)
 - D. The Millennium (20:1–10)
 - E. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11–15)
 - F. The Eternal State (21:1–22:21)

What Is the Tribulation?

The Tribulation refers to that seven-year time period immediately following the Rapture—removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1–3; 1 Thess. 4:13–18), when the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thess. 2:7–12; Rev. 16). These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matt. 24:27–31; 25:31–46; 2 Thess. 2:7–12).

In the Book of Revelation, the lengthy section from 6:1 to 19:21 details the judgments and events of the time of Tribulation from its beginning with the opening of the first seal through the seventh seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments of God, to the return of Christ to destroy the ungodly (19:11–21). The passage of time during this period is tracked in Revelation (11:2–3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). The second half of the seven-year period is specifically called in Revelation 7:14 “the great tribulation.”

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INTRODUCTION:

There are four main views on the Revelation and this author believes in the Futurist View.

Four Views on Revelation	
Interpretive Approach	Basic Thesis
Preterist	All the events of Revelation were fulfilled during the period of the Roman Empire.
Historical	Revelation is a panorama of church history from the apostolic era until the consummation.
Idealist	Revelation is not a representation of actual events, but is rather a symbolic depiction of the spiritual warfare between good and evil.
Futurist	Beginning with ch. 4, Revelation describes future events accompanying the end of the age.

Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996) 488. © 1993 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Another key question many ask is:

What Does 666 Mean?

Numbers are important in Scripture in two ways: (1) they speak to God's exactness and (2) they represent certain recurring ideas. The number 666 is mentioned only in Revelation 13:18. The significance of the number itself is not explained, so speculation about the meaning must be cautious and limited.

The number 6 falls one short of God's perfect number, 7, and thus points to human imperfection. Antichrist, the most powerful human the world will ever know, will still be a man—a 6. The ultimate in human and demonic power is a 6, not perfect, as God is. The threefold repetition of the number is intended to emphasize man's identity. He is emphatically imperfect, not almost perfect. So the number represents the essential number of a man.

When Antichrist is finally revealed, there will be some way to identify him with this basic number, or his name may have the numerical equivalent of 666. In many languages, including Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, letters from the alphabet were used to represent numbers. Beyond these basic observations, the text reveals nothing about the meaning of 666. It is unwise, therefore, to speculate beyond what God's Word gives us. However, it will certainly be someone in the future, not the past.

(“The MacArthur Bible Commentary: Unleashing God's Truth One Verse At A Time”)

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What are the Differences between:
Christ's Rapture of His Bride & the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in Judgment?

Comparisons between the Rapture and the Glorious Appearance

RAPTURE	GLORIOUS APPEARANCE
1. Christ comes for His own (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:17).	1. Christ comes with His own (Rev. 19:14).
2. He comes in the air (1 Thess. 4:17).	2. He comes to the earth (Zech. 14:4-5; Acts 1:11).
3. He comes to claim His Bride (1 Thess. 4:16-17).	3. He comes with His Bride (Rev. 19:6-14).
4. Removal of believers (1 Thess. 4:17).	4. Manifestation of Christ (Mal. 4:2).
5. Only His own see Him (1 Thess. 4:13-18).	5. Every eye shall see Him (Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:30).
6. Tribulation begins (2 Thess. 1:6-9).	6. Millennial Kingdom begins (Rev. 20:1-7).
7. Saved are delivered from wrath (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10).	7. Unsaved experience the wrath of God (Rev. 6:12-17).
8. No signs precede the Rapture (1 Thess. 5:1-3).	8. Signs precede the Second Coming (Luke 21:11-28).
9. Focus: Lord and Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18).	9. Focus: Israel and kingdom (Matt. 24).
10. World is deceived (2 Thess. 2:3-12).	10. Satan is bound (Rev. 20:1-2).

I Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18

“and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come,” (1:10, ESV).

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words,” (4:13-18, ESV).

The Hymns of Heaven

Rev. 4:8: "The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!'"

Rev. 4:11: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Rev. 5:9, 10: "And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.'"

Rev. 5:12: "saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!'"

Rev. 5:13: "And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!'"

Rev. 7:12: "saying: 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.'"

Rev. 11:17, 18: "saying: 'We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because you have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that you should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.'"

Rev. 15:3, 4: "They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: 'Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.'"

Rev. 16:5: "And I heard the angel of the waters saying: 'You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.'"

Rev. 19:1: "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!'"

Rev. 19:3: "Again they said, 'Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!'"

Rev. 19:5: "Then a voice came from the throne, saying, 'Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!'"

Rev. 19:6: "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!'"

and priests. See note on 1:6.
earth. See note on 20:2.

ousand times ten thousand
of myriads." The number is an
ount beyond calculation. The
sion can also be translated
(Luke 12:1; Heb. 12:22).

... and blessing. This denotes
ven qualities intrinsic to God
nb that demand our praise.

n and on the earth and under
note on verse 3.

iving creatures. See note on 4:6.
lders. See note on 4:4.

Tribulation (6:1–18:24)

This lengthy section details the
and events of the time of
(see note on 3:10) from its begin-
opening of the first seal
the seven seal, trumpet, and bowl

als. In chapter 5, Christ was the
und worthy to open the first
ittle deed to the universe. As the
ven seals that secure the scroll,
leashes a new demonstration of
rent on the earth in the future
period (see notes on 5:1). Many
se seal judgments include all the
o the end. The seventh seal con-
en trumpets; the seventh bowl
the seven bowls.

horse. The animal represents the
l time of world peace—a time
s to be short-lived (see note on
ace will be ushered in by a series
essiahs, culminating with the
Matt. 24:3–5). He who sat on the
orses and their riders do not rep-
fic individuals, but forces. Some
entify this rider with Antichrist.
e will be the leading figure. (see note