

## Revelation 4 Part 1

Hi, this is Richard Oliver, and we are on to chapter four of the book of Revelation, part twelve in our series covering the whole book.

And I think first before we go any further we'll just give a quick recap so we know where we are. The first chapter of Revelation told us about Jesus Christ. First off, this is the book describing Jesus Christ, this is the revelation of Jesus Christ, who He is, what He is and so on. And right at the beginning it sets it out quite clearly He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, He is the all in all, He is the Almighty, the One who was alive and was dead and is alive again. He is Jesus Christ. He is God in a form revealed to mankind, and we know that name as Jesus.

Then in chapter two we had the beginning of the letters to the churches. Both chapters two and three give letters to the churches in Asia. These churches were physical churches, but of course the whole book of Revelation is a book of symbols. Everything in the book of Revelation is symbolic. And the churches not only were physical churches in Turkey at that time, though of course that was called Asia Minor, but they also represent certain points in church history. Each church received a letter pointing out its good points and its bad points, and if you check church history you'll find that the first church age was great, it was going very strong, but it had lost its first love. And then it started to die which is the Smyrna church age and so on. So the letters to the churches are actually prophetic, from when John wrote the book of Revelation, but now looking back we can see them as history. And we, of course, finished up in the final church age, the Laodicean. Now Luther, Martin Luther, had been the Sardis church age, he had a moment of truth, now the churches before had been dying, dying, dying. Jesus had said that unless a seed fall into the ground and die it cannot produce fruit, and that's exactly what happened with the church. It went into the ground and it died. Basically it died. But there was still a germ of life there. And, as with a wheat seed, it has been rotting in the ground but suddenly spring comes and the first shoot comes up, and it's green and alive. And that is Luther. Then came the – the leaves came out, reaching out and taking the sun, growing the stalk, that is Wesley, that is the – how can I put it, the missionary age, reaching out and so on. And then, finally we come to the head, and we have what appear to be wheat, but it isn't wheat. It is the shuck. The shuck is there to protect the wheat. That is the Pentecostal church movement which denominated just the same as Luther's did and Wesley's did, when those original people died out. And denominations, of course, is something that God is completely against. He wants to run His church, rule His church by the Holy Spirit on individuals, not as an organisation. And that's how we got to this state. The Laodicean church age where we're neither hot nor cold. However, God, Jesus Christ, is outside of the church knocking to get in, but not being able to, but those individuals that accept Him He sups with them.

And we move on now to chapter four.

*'After this'*

After all the church ages, after all the revelation of who Jesus is, he says,

*'I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.'*

Now John is also a symbol. Even though he wrote the book of Revelation, what he sees and acts out in the book of Revelation, is also symbolic for us today. The end of the Laodicean church age there is

a voice from heaven, the door is opened, and the believers are called up just as John was called up to be in heaven.

This is what's called the rapture. This is the catching away where Christ has returned in a secret form and is lifting His people up from the world. The world itself is heading for judgement, but God can't judge the world if He's got His people still on it. So He has to take them out of the way first. And the five wise virgins go up in the rapture.

The trumpet is, of course, a message. A trumpet has always been used in Israel to signal feasts, a get ready for war, a time of worship and so on. The trumpets call people. They, in the army, the bugle has different calls for different things, attack, retreat, last post, come to the cook house, it's food. There's always different calls, and exactly the same is going on here. And the trumpet is the message that is calling the people up.

And verse two of chapter four, *'And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.'*

Now that's important. There's only one on the throne. There isn't three different people on the throne, there is only one. And we'll come back to that later on when we get into the seven seals.

Thank you for listening, and may God be with you. We look forward to seeing you next time with session thirteen.