***The Door to the Throne Room of God

RV72-01***

We are continuing our study in Revelation 4.

**Israel and the Church are Two Separate Entities**

The Bible distinguishes very clearly between God's dealings with two primary groups of humanity on the face of the earth. One group is Israel, and the other group is the church. Israel is a special nation which began with the patriarch Abraham. It had a beginning. God has a special program for the Jewish people. God has a terminal point out in the future for this group of people, and for the program that He has for them. The other group, the church, began on the day of Pentecost. God has a special program for that group, and He has a special terminal point in the future for that body, which is known as the church. The church, therefore, is not the conclusion of God's program for the nation Israel. This is a wrong concept – that Israel flows off and becomes the program of the church. It is not true that what began with Israel is concluded under the program of the church. The truth of the matter is that there is an enormous and eternal wall between the two. Israel and the church are completely separate entities. If you miss that important point, the Bible will become a confusing and comparatively useless book to you. This is one of the most important bits of understanding concerning Scripture that you must come to. And most Christians, unfortunately, never grasp that distinction.

Any attempt at uniting the Judaism of Israel with the Christianity of the church results in abandoning the literal interpretation of the Bible. There is no way to pretend that what God has promised to Israel is being fulfilled in the church unless you abandon the literal interpretation of those promises to Israel, because they cannot be treated literally, because the church does not fulfill them in any literal sense. If the words of the Bible are not interpreted in their literal normal meaning, there is no certain way of declaring what God thinks, and what people must believe.

**Literal Interpretation of the Bible**

Literal interpretation of the Bible is at the heart of divine revelation. Nowhere is that more important than in distinguishing between Israel and the church, and in the study of the Revelation. Literal interpretation is vital to the Revelation. It's a hodge-podge, nonsensical book without it. In Revelation 1, Jesus Christ has been introduced to us in symbols which speak of His literal essence and His glory as the God-man Savior, and the head of the church, which is to be His body, and is to be His bride. Revelation 1:19 has given us a threefold division of this book. We find that Revelation chapters 2 and 3 speak to the church on earth, dealing with various local problems and failures. Chapters 2 and 3 in no way apply to the nation of Israel, as such. The only involvement of Jews in chapters 2 and 3 is as they are born-again people who are part of the church. During this period from Pentecost to the rapture of the church, God no longer is dealing with the Jews as a people. Remember that. *God is not dealing with the Jews as a people.* They have been cast off. He is now dealing with the mass of humanity, irrespective of the status of Jew or gentile. He is calling out, from the mass of humanity, a special body (a special bride) for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That group is the church.

So, Jews and gentiles today make up the church. Of course, you see what that means. That means that every Jew on the face of the earth today, who rejects the person of Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, is headed for the lake of fire. Every Jew who rejects Christ as Savior is calling upon a God who is not listening to him, and who will not hear him. The Bible is very clear that Jesus has said, "No man comes unto the Father, but by Me." There is no way to God the Father except through Jesus Christ. So, any Jew today who rejects Him is doomed. No matter how much he talks about the Bible and what his pride is in his heritage, and no matter how much he knows about the Old Testament, he is doomed to the lake of fire. The only people who are involved in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are members of the body of Christ, be they Jew or gentile.

So, in Revelation 1:19, we have this outline: "Write the things which you have seen." And John has already seen, in chapter one, Jesus Christ portrayed in symbols that demonstrate His essence and His glory. The second part of the book says, "And the things which are." That covers Revelation chapters 2 and 3. This is the condition of the local church today, and as it has existed through the centuries. Then the third section in Revelation 1:19 is "And the things which shall be hereafter." This covers Revelation chapters 4 through 19. These chapters speak specifically to the nation of Israel during the period of the Jews' greatest suffering upon the face of the earth – the tribulation era revealed in the time schedule of the book of Daniel. Revelation 4 through 19 do not apply to the church, which at that time will be off of the earth and in heaven. The church will be taken off the earth into heaven someday, just before the tribulation era of divine judgments begins. The people who will suffer the most in the things described in Revelation 4 through 19 are the Jewish people.

As you run through chapters 4 through 19, you will observe that the word "church" does not appear anywhere in these chapters which describe tribulation events. There are only references to Jews, and references to gentiles, but no references to Christians, and no references to the church. The word "church" does reappear in Revelation 22:16, but, at that point in the book of the Revelation, we are past the tribulation, and we are again dealing with a condition that involves the church. Revelation 22:16 deals with the era before the tribulation period.

Let me read that section, so that we are sure that we have that straight. Revelation 22:16 says, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify unto you these things in the churches," and so on. He is referring to the churches again, but he is past the point of revealing the things that have to do with the era of the tribulation. He's back talking to John on Patmos, and therefore He is back before the tribulation events begin. So, all during the things that describe the tribulation, the word "church" suddenly disappears, whereas in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, we have it frequently.

The church will return to the earth with Jesus Christ after the seven years of the tribulation period. It is, therefore, important to distinguish between the rapture of the church and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. These are two different events. Beginning with Revelation 4, Jesus Christ reveals to John what is ahead for mankind after Christians are removed in the rapture from the face of the earth. Revelation 4 through 19 discuss things that will be taking place when the church is in heaven.

**The Popular Approach to the Revelation**

What we will find in these chapters is so staggering to the human imagination that the vast majority of preachers go into an apoplectic fit over the thought of explaining Revelation to their congregations. If you want to make the average preacher uptight, ask him questions about the book of the Revelation. Ask him to preach a series of sermons on the book of the Revelation. Most of these preachers will claim that it's a closed book whose meaning is impossible to determine. We have already pointed out to you that that's an amazing statement, and don't make any mistake about it. Most of the preachers of the big denominations will make that claim to you.

When we started this study, I met a pastor who was a member of a large denomination. He asked me what I was doing, and I said to him, "Well, I'm just getting ready to start a series on Revelation." When I said that, he rolled his eyes heavenward, which meant, "Oh, boy." Immediately, he told me by that action that he wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole. He just would not touch that subject. I could tell that he wouldn't know where to begin. It was a closed book to him. I happen to know that it's an area of darkness in his congregation as well.

And yet, Revelation 1:3 says, "Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it, for the time is at hand. Here is a book (the only book in the Bible) that promises a special divine blessing upon believers who study this book, and who will be its teachings. That is a foolish and a pointless promise if the book of the Revelation is an inscrutable writing, and it is not. It is as understandable as the rest of the Bible. But for it to be understandable, you must begin with the principle of literal interpretation. You must not say, "The things that that book describes are so terrible that I cannot believe that a loving Almighty God would do that to human beings. Therefore, I cannot accept this as literal words. Those must be symbols that stand for something other than what they sound like they're saying." Once you have done that, you cannot understand what God has written so that you may obey it. You cannot keep what this book says so that you may receive a special blessing. For this reason, most preachers do reject the principle of literal interpretation, because they simply don't like to believe that the human good efforts of man are doomed to monumental failure and destruction.

We premillennialists are frequently accused of being pessimists. The reason they say that we are pessimistic is because we tell people that the Bible says that mankind is doomed to destruct itself. It's on a course of self-destruction. The end of human history is going to be a catastrophic explosion in which mankind will die by the millions. Yet, the best of minds; the best of politicians; the best of educators; the best of sociologists; and, the best in every field is constantly pouring in its intellectual arrogance as to how man will be able to organize his world into a utopia, which the Bible says will never be realized. Because most preachers are disoriented to where God says that He is leading mankind, they reject the literal interpretation of the book of the Revelation.

Many preachers try to escape the literal meaning of the words by claiming that the revelation describes past world history. I don't want to get into that too much except to mention it, so that it won't come as a surprise when some yo-yo comes along and suggests that to you. The truth of the matter is that the book of the Revelation cannot be fit into past human history at all. You could only do that by enormous twisting and distorting of what the words actually say. Past history does not conform to these events. If you tried to do that, you come up with an Alice-in-Wonderland, spiritualizing situation that takes you anywhere you want to go. But you cannot fit the things of the book exactly, by its words, into past human history.

So, this should tell us something about preachers, shouldn't it? You should be very cagey of preachers and churches which do not teach the book of the Revelation. If you find that you are associated with a church group which never touches the prophetic area of the Word of God, you should be very cagey of that preacher. If you find that he distorts the literal meanings of Scripture, or that is, that he tries to use the book as a book that has some kind of esoteric, symbolic meaning, you should be very cagey of him. If you find yourself under the authority of a pastor who does not treat this work as future history; the future history of mankind; and, a future history which is very black, and which spells out only tragedy, abandoned him as fast as you can. Do not trust a preacher that does not inform you of the prophetic future. Do not trust a preacher that does not deal with the Bible as a literal book that is inerrant without mistakes. Do not trust a preacher that does not treat this book as the future of the world. Wash your hands of him; wash him out of your hair; and, cut out as fast as you can. If you don't, you will pay for that somewhere along the line for all eternity.

**The National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches**

For this reason, the liberal preachers of the two powerful organizations that represent Protestantism today and Eastern Orthodox churches today (the National Council of Churches and its offspring, the World Council of Churches) are determined to belittle and to discredit the picture of world degeneration and of world collapse which are described in the book of the Revelation. These men are trying to promote a program which is the product of fallen man trying to run his world without subjecting himself to an inerrant Bible. The National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches represent over 300 Protestant and Eastern Orthodox denominations. They support terrorist groups who are seeking to impose Marxism / Leninism on their countries. I want to inform you about this group a little bit in this session.

The National Council of Churches in the United States and the World Council of Churches (the broader group) are based in that citadel of internationalism of Geneva, Switzerland. These groups are going to play a very vital role in the prophetic future. This is going to be the core of the antichrist religious system. The leaders of these groups are receiving offerings from members of their associated churches. They are taking those offerings, and they're supporting terrorist groups. They are financing terrorist groups under the guise that this is a Christian action on their part in order to bring about justice in the world. These people are the kind that despise the concepts that are portrayed in the book of the Revelation. They rise up in rage over the suggestion that man is hopelessly deluded, and that man is going to suffer the consequences of his rebellion against the God who made him, and his indifference to learning doctrine, so that his soul can be transformed from that of an animal into that of a human being made in the image and likeness of God.

Let me tell you a little bit about the World Council of churches. I'm going to a quote from an article entitled "The Crimes of the World Council of Churches" written by Alan Stang and printed in the *American Opinion* magazine:

"In 1973, the World Council of Churches celebrated its Silver Jubilee at services in Geneva's Cathedral of St. Pierre, John Calvin's church. According to *Time* magazine, a dignitary named Papa McKenzie, a drummer from Ghana, dressed in a leopard-skin jacket, played lively percussion solos. As far as your reporter knows, this is the only thing the council has ever done that deserves a smile, and we know now that it was pregnant with menace. Recently, after all the exposés and denunciations, and after all the proof, the World Council of Churches gave still more money to finance terrorism in southern Africa. The amount is $125,000 which goes to the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the communist gang based in Red-occupied Angola from which it strikes into South West Africa, also known as Namibia. In fact, the money came soon after the military forces of South Africa moved into Angola to knock out SWAPO bases there, and kill the number of Soviet army officers in command of the training of terrorists.

"Another world council beneficiary is the African National Congress (ANC), which gets $65,000. The African National Congress claims credit for many terrorist acts, including bombings, in an attempt to destroy the legal government of the Republic of South Africa. The president of ANC is a gentleman named Oliver Tambo. According to Jack Foisie of the Los Angeles Times, Oliver Tambo recently declared that his organization's next step will be assassinations. Remember, we are not accusing him of anything. Mr. Tambo says this himself. This is the sort of man to whom the World Council of Churches is giving money.

"What kind of terrorist is he? Jack Foisie reports that the African National Congress is centered in Red-occupied Mozambique. The ANC leader there is Joe Slovo, a white. Who is Joe Slovo? Writing from Johannesburg, Foisie says this: 'He left here in 1963 after being detained as a member of the Communist Party. South African security officers contend that Slovo is a Soviet agent with the rank of colonel in the KGB, the Soviet security police.' That's right. The World Council of Churches is subsidizing Soviet military operations. The two grants your reporter mentioned are part of $587,000 which the council is sending to 46 groups and 17 countries to combat racism, which is the World Council's euphemism for killing blacks to inspire obedience. Here's what the World Council of churches has been financing.

"Another case of brutality by guerrillas operating in Rhodesia's north eastern border area has been reported. A tribesman, Mr. Philip Humaine, age 30, had his ears cut off and was forced to eat them. Then most of his toes and fingers were hacked off. Mr. Humaine said a gang of about 17 guerrillas had also gone to his father-in-law's house and beaten him to death. This is the second case of forced cannibalism in the border area. Last December, a tribesman had his nose, ears, lips and chin hacked off, and his wife was forced to eat them. That's how the London Times ... tells it.

"Dr. J.S. Garake, moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape Province of South Africa tells it this way: This is a true account of an incident which occurred in northern Mozambique. Freedom fighters crossed the frontier from Tanzania and liberated a black man's village. Before his liberators riddled him with a Chinese machine gun, they tied him to a tree, and made him watch his wife and two teenage daughters being raped and killed. His two sons were nailed to a nearby tree to die, somewhat like Christ, I suppose, before he died, the man must have looked across the jungle in the direction of the Geneva headquarters of the World Council of Churches to thank the World Council Churches for its aid toward his liberation.

"This is standard operating procedure for communist terrorists. The Reds always maim and murder the people who are supposed to be rebelling in order to terrorize them into silence, and the spurious appearance of unanimous support. To the Point International says of the World Council's terrorists that they hack pregnant women to death with panga knives; they slit the throats of babies; and, they peel the skin off an old man's face and leave him to die in the blazing sun, impaled on a barbed wire fence. They plant land mines that rip off civilian arms and legs. They leave bombs in hotel lobbies, or prowl about with AK-47 weapons to kill innocent villagers. They cut off lips, and gouge out eyes.

"They did the same thing in Algeria. They did it in Vietnam. In country after country, the communist terror is the same. In southern Africa, the incredible reality is that the World Council of Churches is not just paying terrorists to mutilate blacks. That's bad enough. It is also paying terrorists to butcher Christian missionaries.

"For instance, here's the way it was in Rumba, a mission station in Rhodesia, as described in the *Johannesburg Sunday Times* ... by a correspondent who flew in to investigate. We found the scene as the terrorists had left it the night before. The bodies lay in clusters around the school's cricket pavilion. The victims had all been formally abused. All but one of the four adult women had been raped and left semi-naked on the grass. A mother had been assaulted when she clung to her three-week-old baby. Her head had been smashed in by a log which lay beside her. In a cluster lay a woman, two girls, and a boy – all bayoneted and apparently clubbed. The woman had been raped. Near the bodies were blood-covered lengths of rough wood, apparently used to batter the missionaries to death."

The World Council of Churches is financing this kind of brutality on humanity for one purpose – because they are enraged at the concepts of the book of the Revelation, that they cannot bring about a Utopian world that they envision. These madmen religious leaders (the blind leading the blind) use the money that goes in the offering plates to sustain this kind of madness. It is the communists who are responsible for this, who have infiltrated liberal denominations as pastors and theologians. Let me read you another quote from the same article:

"The communists organize what they call The Living Church. Benjamin Gitlow, a founder of the U.S. Communist Party, explained the new technique as follows: The policy in those days was framed in such a way that the members of the Communist Party could infiltrate church organizations for the purpose of conducting their propaganda among them; for enlisting their support for Soviet Russia; and, for the various campaigns in which the Communists were interested. The living church consisted not just of the infiltration of communists into congregations, but of communists posing as preachers, complete with beards, crucifixes, miters, and robes."

In the liberal denominations that are members of the World Council of churches, the pulpits are filled with communist infiltrators. Communism has a vision of a world that it's going to create – a world that's going to be a paradise. One of the reasons that communism so hates Christianity, and so hates the Bible, is because the Bible says they're never going to make it. The Bible says that whatever their efforts are, it's going to come out just the opposite. Only a fool would stand up against almighty God who has already told us where history is going, and say, "I'm going to keep it from being that way. I am going to prevent that." Why would a human being say that? Because the person who controls that human being says it. That is what the devil says. That is Satan's concept. Satan still has in his mind that he is going to frustrate God's plans.

The World Council of Churches supports terrorism, and justifies it by a term that you should be acquainted with. That term is "liberation theology." More and more, you will be reading and hearing about liberation theology, which is being promoted on a widespread scale in Latin American countries, as well as throughout the countries of Africa. Let me read you another comment from the same article:

"It should now be clear why the World Council of Churches does what it does. It is a communist-dominated organization. It is as devotedly Marxist as the KGB. That is why Clarence W. Hall was able to write in *Reader's Digest* that among the wisdom freely quoted in World Council of Church circles is the revealing gem from William Stringfellow, an Episcopal lay theologian who says, 'According to the gospels, Jesus was not a nonconformist, and not just a protester, but He was a criminal revolutionary.' So, once again, council financing for communist terrorists who specialize in killing missionaries and blacks is not an accident and not just an insane idea. It is an orchestrated part of the Soviet plan to conquer southern Africa for its minerals and strategic location.

"In 1966, in Geneva, the Church in Society meeting of the World Council embraced the principle of revolutionary violence. The Central Committee of the World Council responded by forming its program to combat racism, which funnels your money to Red terror groups in Africa and elsewhere. To justify this communist program, the church Reds have developed what they call liberation theology, which is the latest version of the social gospel. For instance, Harry F. Ward, a top communist in the United States for decades, wrote 'The Social Creed of the Churches,' which was the founding document of the organization now known as the National Council of Churches. In it, he explained that the churches must stand for the most equitable division of the product of industry that can ultimately be devised. Just as a protection racket presents a spurious justification of its crimes, so the social gospel was an attempt to cloak communist confiscation with Scripture.

"Liberation theology is the next step. It says, in effect, that if mutilation and murder are necessary, the churches must endorse them. According to liberation theology, no country can be free until capitalism, racism, and colonialism have been destroyed. If this requires collaboration with communism, it is morally OK. Liberation theology is the putrid fruit of the theory that the end justifies the means."

I alert you to this concept of liberation theology, which is another satanic attempt to frustrate Revelation chapters 4 through 19. I alert you to this because, amazingly, within certain evangelical biblical circles, liberation theology is presented with dignity. Every now and then, you'll hear some missionaries (that ought to know better) come home and present a glowing picture of liberation theology's attempt to bring justice to poor and oppressed people. And it is no such thing. ...

Let me read the summary: how it all adds up – the conclusion of the lie that Satan has imposed upon humanity, that he can lead them into peace and prosperity, through communism, and that he will frustrate the prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ of the catastrophic doom which rests upon the human race:

"It is important to note that the few examples of the World Council of Church's terrorism we have looked at here are nothing more than that – a few examples of what is typical. Your reporter cannot come up with one example of a strong stand that the World Council of Churches has taken in opposition to communism – not one. The council can fairly be called a communist terror gang in the same way that the individual who hires the hit man is regarded by the law as just as guilty of murder. The obvious question arises: from where does the money come? The answer is that it comes from you. It comes from you if you put money on the collection plate of a church that is part of a denomination which belongs to the National Council of Churches. The money goes from your church; to your denomination; to the National Council; to the World Council.

"The members of the National Council of Churches listed in this article. If you have innocently been financing terrorism, show the facts to your pastor. Give him the benefit of the doubt. It is perfectly possible that he doesn't know. If, after he sees the facts, he continues to deny them, emitting the arrogant indignation we have seen so many times, or if he plays dumb; smiles insipidly; and, claims that he cannot understand, no matter how many tons of evidence you bury him under, then you can be very sure that you are not dealing with a true pastor, but with an impostor whose job is to dupe Christians while he lifts the lettuce from their tattered wallets.

"Remember that the leaders of the National Council of Churches were instrumental in organizing the World Council of Churches. It shouldn't surprise us that the offspring is so very like the parent. The National Council was originally known as the Federal Council of Churches. Over the years after, communist Harry F. Ward founded it, worried investigators exposed it time-after-time. In 1935, the Office of Naval Intelligence described it as one of several organizations which give aid and comfort to the communist movement and party. In the same year, Admiral William H. Stanley, chief of naval operations, publicly accused the council of collaborating with communism. By 1950, the Federal Council's reputation was so rancid that it changed its name to the National Council of Churches, a favorite revolutionary trick. The National Council does the same things the World Council does.

"If your pastor won't take action, then your choice is to continue to finance terror and become guilty yourself, or get out. Whatever the reason, it is exciting to note that membership in some of the big liberal denominations in the National Council of Churches is continuing to collapse. Indeed, the Salvation Army recently notified the World Council during the latter's meeting in Dresden, East Germany, that the army is quitting the council precisely because it is financing terror gangs in South Africa. Onward Christian soldiers."

There is a great deal more to be said, but I hope that those few excerpts will alert you to where the World Council and the National Council of Churches stand today, and that, when you hear of those organizations, you recoil in the horror and the disgust that you should. And I'll tell you one reason you may not: because important men who bear great influence, such as Dr. Billy Graham, has no compunction about fellowshipping with the World Council of Churches; speaking at their meetings; and, having complimentary statements to make about them. Tell that to some poor mother who has been gutted on her front lawn by the terrorists who have been financed by the money that came out of the offering plates of the World Council of Churches.

These people, as is Satan's whole plan of communism, are dedicated to prove that God is wrong, and that what the Revelation describes is not going to come to pass. You should apply that principle everywhere. We have got to fight. We, on the political scene, must hopefully struggle to maintain in this country our stability in the world, and our personal prosperity, so that, as God's current client nation chosen to inform the world of the Word of God and to propagate the doctrinal truth of the gospel and the full council of the Word of God of where history is moving, will be able to perform its task. Therefore, we should seek to put into office people that can be trusted to move in that direction. In time, the nation will destroy itself with its own evil. But hopefully, as with Jonah's situation, a nation turning to repentance, and a nation where the salt (we Christians) are doing our job, will delay that final judgment, and give us a little more opportunity, on the one hand, to snatch people from the burning of the lake of fire, and to store the treasures in heaven that are so going to affect our personal eternity.

I have no doubt that the National Council and the World Council of Churches are destined to become part of the antichrist's world religion, and that they're part of that religious group which the Lord Jesus Christ described in Revelation 3:16 as religious groups that nauseate Him, and which he has spewed out of His mouth.

**Revelation 4**

The apostle John comes to record now, beginning with Revelation 4, that which the almighty living God is going to bring about on the face of this earth, no matter what the religious leaders and the opposers of our day think. They will be destroyed. They will be defeated. What John is experiencing here is a real vision from God in the very throne room of God. John is not having a nightmare. What he describes in these chapters is not somebody whose mind is wildly going through some nightmarish experience. John is not writing here that which is the product of an undigested piece of fish that he had for supper that night. John is given the sight of what actually exists in God's throne room, and what is actually coming upon the face of this earth. Once we know this, we know where it's all going to end. We know the end of the story, and we act accordingly. Therefore, we realize that the only salvation that society has is to be found in the principles of the Word of God. We realize all the more that the battlefront today lays at two places. One is in education. It's the capturing of the mind. It's the informing of the mind, from the youngest to the oldest. The other is the saturating of people's understanding with the Word of God – with doctrinal principles.

Revelation 4:1 begins: "After this, I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven." "After this" means after these things, and it refers to the vision of the age of the church on earth which is described in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. It relates to the expression in Revelation 1:19 of "The things which shall be hereafter." We have come to the third division of God's planned revelation. After this, He notes a sequence in divisions which John is experiencing. It is the next sequence after the one he has just experienced ("The things which are") which were the seven letters. It also marks a change now from a sequence of things that he is seeing on earth to a sequence that he is now seeing in heaven.

"After this, I looked." The word "looked" is the Greek word "horao." This is the word that the Bible uses for seeing in terms of seeing in a panoramic overview. The Bible speaks about seeing things in terms of focusing down to a specific point. That's a different word. That's our word "blepo" which we've had before. But when you have the word "horao" used, immediately you know that you're talking about an overview. This is a panoramic overview. John also connotes, by this word, seeing with a discerning mind. John is clear about what he is seeing in his vision.

The phrase "After these things, I looked" is used in John in the book of the Revelation to introduce new and important visions. This statement is used in that way in Revelation 7:1; Revelation 7:9; Revelation 15:5; and, Revelation 18:1. In all these places, it indicates a new and important vision. So, it's almost a technical phrase.

"After this, I looked, and, behold." The word "behold" is added to indicate that an important statement is about ready to follow. It means "observe carefully for your own benefit." Most Christians, of course, ignore the major instruction of the book of the Revelation, and the reason for that is because it spells out Satan's doom. The very thing that John says right off the bat here, starting the description of the tribulation era, is, "Pay attention to this for your own benefit." We say "for your own benefit" because this word "behold" is in the middle voice, which indicates that it is a personal benefit. When the Greek is in the middle, it is referring back to something that is going to benefit you in a very important way. So, paying attention to this book, here again we have stressed to us, is very important. The devil doesn't like it because it's a revelation of his doom, and he thinks he's going to be able to escape it.

**A Door**

The other thing that John is telling us to pay attention to is that he looks up here in the sky, and there, suddenly, he sees a door standing open. It's an amazing sight. The word he uses is "thura:" "Behold, a door was opened." This refers to a literal door, and it symbolizes here entrance into heaven through a specific doorway. John is now going to enter heaven and the very way that he enters it, through a door, emphasizes that entrance to heaven is through a very specific way.

John 10:9, for example, identifies to us that specific way of entrance into heaven, and consequently, to eternal life. Jesus says, "I am the door. By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture." This identifies Jesus Christ as the doorway into heaven, and consequently, into eternal life.

Just think of all the people who are in the world today in all the religions of the world who think that they are to come into some kind of heaven or into some kind of nirvana on some other basis than the specific doorway of Jesus Christ. Are they ever going to be surprised? Think of all of the accommodations to the religions of the world, or to a very significant religion, like Judaism. All of these Jews think they have some kind of contact with God, and think they are going to go out into eternity and find blessing with Jehovah Elohim, the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And they have rejected the only door, which is Jesus Christ, and they are not going to get in.

So, John suddenly sees, up there in the sky, a door, and it's ajar. It's standing open. It's not a door that's slowly creaking open like a mystery is about ready to unfold. This door has already been opened. He looks up there, and it's standing ajar. The Greek language indicates that it's in that particular condition. It is very important to know how to pass through this solitary entrance into heaven. The means, of course, is faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, apart from all human works, and apart from human ritual. That's the only way you can enter through this door into heaven. You, therefore, must be very exact about understanding God's way of permitting you through.

For this reason, Romans 11:6 says, "And if by grace, then it is no more works. Otherwise, grace is no more grace. But it would be of works, then it is no more grace. Otherwise, works is no more works."

Ephesians 2:8-9 tell us, "For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, lest any man should boast." You are saved by grace, apart from works. Paul says, "If you interject any human effort, you have neutralized the grace basis of salvation, and you cannot be saved." So, this is a rather significant thing – this door, standing ajar, waiting for someone to come through, but it can only be entered upon God's basis.

**God's Throne Room**

This door was "opened." The word "opened" is "anoigo." "Anoigo" here is in the perfect tense, indicating that it was previously opened before John looked up, and now it's standing open. He didn't see it opening. It's passive because the door didn't open itself. It was opened by Jesus Christ. Now John looks up, and he sees this door open. The church is in heaven at this point, so we might call this The Church of the Open Door. The place that he sees this door is "In heaven." The word "in" is the Greek word "en," indicating location, and the place that he sees it is "ouranos." This refers here to the third heaven, which is God's throne room.

The Old Testament refers to the third heaven under the words "the heaven of heavens." You have this in Deuteronomy 10:14 and in 1 Kings 8:27. "The heaven of heavens" refers to the third heaven. The apostle Paul called the third heaven "paradise" in 2 Corinthians 12:4. The first heaven, as you know, is the atmospheric space around our earth. The second heaven is the interstellar spaces where the stars and the planets exist. The third heaven is the very throne room of God. And one thing, I understand, that the astronomers tell us, that is rather interesting, is that out behind the North Star is a blank space. And there are Scripture passages that connect the North with the throne room of God.

You and I can look up at the North Star. We get that end star that rests in the in the handle of the Little Dipper, and follow it up from the stars of the Big Dipper. So, we can identify that North Star. When we look at it, perhaps we're looking at the very throne room of God, out there behind, in an empty space in space itself. Job chapters one and two deal with something that took place in the third heaven.

John sees, in heaven above, a door standing open, and his vision, thus far, has been dealing with things on earth. Now it shifts through this door into heaven itself. In a moment, he is going to be commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ to leave the earth, and to come up through that door. What happens then? We shall see next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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