

## INDUCTIVE STUDY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION - PART FOUR

To many people any real meaning in the book of Revelation ends with chapter 3. The churches of Asia had their problems diagnosed, and their treatment prescribed. Put very simply they were to come back to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, and let Him transform their fellowships. While there is broad agreement on the meaning of chapters 1-3, consensus falls apart once we enter chapters 4-22.

Let us see if we can travel safely where others have got lost, by sticking firmly to the 'map' in chapter 1. John promised blessing to those who read, heard and heeded this book, in Revelation 1:3. He was suffering for his testimony to Jesus. They were also, or they would be soon. Blessing would surely help them in their present suffering. To help them, first he reminded them of Jesus, crucified and risen, and revealed all through the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. Then he applied Jesus as they already knew Him, to their situation - but in every one of the seven letters he also promised something of Jesus they did not yet know. (2:7,11,17,26-28; 3:5,12,21) All of these promises anticipated chapters 4-22, so let us explore these coming chapters as an expansion of the promise of blessing to those who are having a hard time because they are faithful Christians. Do not worry about their future significance. Look at this stage only for their present helpfulness.

4:1 Q.1 What was the first object John saw? What two things does a door allow us to do? What therefore is the point of showing us this particular door?

4:1 Q.2 Jesus described Himself as 'the door'.(Jn.10:9) What does He invite us to do in response?(Jn.14:6)

4:1 Q.3 How did Paul describe a door being opened by God for him?(II Cor.2:12; Acts 16:9) What was his response? Paul had another experience which was similar to John's in Revelation.(II Cor.12:1-4) What was its purpose?(II Cor.12: 9,10) What light does all this cast on the meaning of the door of Revelation 4:1? How does God want to open a door for us every day?

4:1 Q.4 Whose was the voice which spoke to John?(1:10) Notice how the trumpet was used in Bible times when God wanted to attract attention.(Num.10:2; I Thess.4:16) What does this tell us about how God wants to use us to get a clear message across?(I Cor.14:8,9)

4:1 Q.5 What was the message? How does it now explain the significance of the door? Is there any indication how much time was meant by "after these things"? Is there any reason why it should not have been immediately the principles of chapters 1-3 had been grasped?

4:2 Q.6 What according to this verse is the secret of seeing exciting new possibilities in our Christian lives?(Rev.1:10; II Cor.12:2) How do we do this?(Jn.15:4-7)

4:2-3 Q.7 Whom did John see? How do you know?(Ezek.1:26-28) What was the significance of the throne, the precious stones and the rainbow?(Isa.6:1; Exod.28:17-20; Gen.9:13) How does each new step in understanding our Christian faith begin with some such vision of God?

4:4 Q.8 Who occupied the 24 thrones? If Matt.19:28 identifies the occupants of 12 thrones who might be sitting on the other 12?(Eph.2:20) What significance, if any, do the thrones have for us?(Matt.28:18) What were the elders wearing, and why? What had the Lord just promised to the

church in Laodicea if they repented of their lukewarmness?(Rev.3:21) And what to those in Smyrna if they were faithful rather than fearful?(2:10)

4:5 Q.9 When and why had God previously used thunder and lightning to indicate that He had something to say?(Exod.19:16) What was the meaning of seven lamps back in chapter one?(1:20) Has the meaning changed? How can there be seven Spirits of God? Surely there is only one Holy Spirit?(Isa.11:2)

4:5 Q.10 What might be the picture of the sea of glass like crystal? How would it be different from normal sea? What could you do on such a sea?(Rev.15:2; Matt.14:25,29) How would such a picture help those suffering persecution?

4:6,7 Q.11 Where have the four living creatures featured in the Bible before?(Ezek.1:5-25; 10:1-21) Who or what are they? What might be the meaning behind the four faces on each one? Where else does the Scripture present us with four views of Jesus? What might be the reason for them being 'full of eyes'?

4:8,9 Q.12 Why might they have six wings? What do you suppose they did with them?(Ezek.1:11; Isa.6:2) What is their message? Why would God want to be praised in this way?(Isa.6:3) How would knowing this was going on in heaven help people suffering on earth? Give practical examples in your own life.

4:10,11 Q.13 What effect did all this have on the 24 elders? What then had been the value of the whole exercise? What is the secret of effective leadership in the Christian church? What did they do with their crowns? Why do this when the crown had been so hard to win in the first place?

4:1-11 Q.14 It may seem like studying this chapter required an excess of imagination. Having completed the chapter what would you see, without getting too complicated about the symbolism involved, is the clear point of it all? Check again on the messages to the seven churches. To which of them would the promises of this chapter apply? How then would its message bless those suffering for their testimony of Jesus?