

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE:	The Midnight Cry and the Rapture of the Church
SERMON REFERENCE:	Revelation 4:1-5
LWF SERMON NUMBER:	#2340

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Revelation 4 enters the third grand division in the book of the Revelation: the things which shall be hereafter.
 - i) Revelation 1:1
 - (1) John was told to write three things:
 - (a) Write what you've seen.
 - (i) This was a vision of Christ.
 - (b) Write about the things which are.
 - (i) This is the church age.
 - 1. This is the time between the first coming of Jesus and His second coming.
 - (ii) The church age will end with the rapture of the church.
 - (c) Write about the things which shall be hereafter.
 - (i) Prophetic things.
- b) The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is called "the blessed hope."
 - i) Sorrow looks back.
 - ii) Worry looks all around.
 - iii) Hope looks up.
- c) When Jesus Christ comes again, those who are saved and still living will be miraculously transformed, will be given a glorified body, and will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
 - i) The bodies of those who have already died in the Lord will be raised from their graves to meet their spirits in the air and be joined with the Lord.
- d) Revelation 4:1
 - i) Beginning with this verse, the book of the Revelation enters into that area that deals with the future.
 - (1) The rapture of the church and everything that will transpire after the rapture.

2) WHAT: THE SACRED MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE (Revelation 4:1)

- a) The Bible calls the rapture of the church a mystery.
 - i) A mystery in the Bible is a truth that no one can figure out of his or her own accord, but a truth revealed by divine revelation.
- b) In Revelation 4:1, John is caught up and transported from Earth into Heaven.
 - i) This is the rapture of the church.
- c) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
 - i) The church in Thessalonica was waiting on Jesus' return.
 - ii) Some of their members had died, and they were concerned that their brethren would miss the coming of the Lord.
 - (1) For those who have died in the Lord: the body is in the grave, and the spirit is with the Lord.
 - (2) At the rapture, the body will be raised to be reunited with the spirit that comes down with Jesus.
 - iii) Paul expected Jesus to come back in his lifetime.
- d) The word used to describe the rapture is the term "caught up."

- i) We get the word “rapture” from the Latin word that means “to seize or to catch away, to be caught up.”
 - (1) The Greek word means the same thing.
 - e) 1 Corinthians 15:51-52
 - i) The word “mystery” means something that has been hidden but is now revealed.
 - ii) “We shall not all sleep;” meaning not all believers will die before the rapture.
 - iii) When Jesus comes again, those who are Heaven-born and Heaven-bound (those who have the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ), will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
 - f) The rapture is a supernatural event.
 - i) If we believe in Jesus’ death and resurrection, why would it be difficult to believe in the rapture?
 - g) Reasons to believe in the rapture:
 - i) We believe the Gospel.
 - (1) The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - (2) The rapture is linked to redemption.
 - (a) God is not finished.
 - (b) You cannot have the incarnation without the coronation.
 - ii) We believe it because the Word of God teaches it.
 - (1) 1 Thessalonians 4:15
- 3) WHO: THE SELECT MULTITUDE OF THE RAPTURE (Revelation 4:4)
- a) Not everyone will be caught up with the Lord.
 - b) Revelation 4:4
 - i) This speaks of the dead in Christ and those who have been transformed.
 - ii) Elders are representatives of God’s people, the saints.
 - (1) Revelation 5:5
 - (2) Revelation 5:11
 - iii) Why 24 elders?
 - (1) The number 24 represents the rule of God on Earth.
 - (2) These elders have been taken from Earth into Heaven.
 - (3) These elders represent all who are born again.
 - iv) These elders are clothed in white.
 - (1) White raiment represents the righteousness that we have in Christ.
 - c) Only those who are born again, or saints, will be caught up with the Lord.
 - i) Revelation 19:8
 - ii) Revelation 4:4
 - (1) They received their crowns at the judgment seat of Christ.
 - d) Luke 17:34-37
 - i) Just as a thief comes to steal away, Jesus Christ is coming.
 - ii) Where Jesus is, we are going to be gathered together.
 - (1) Those who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus will be left behind.

4) WHEN: THE SECRET MOMENT OF THE RAPTURE (Revelation 4:1-2)

- a) John was caught up to Heaven suddenly, immediately. He was not expecting it.
 - i) The rapture will happen in the same way.
 - b) Beginning in Revelation 4, the word “church” is not found throughout the rest of the book.
 - i) In chapter 4, the rapture occurs, and the church is caught up to meet the Lord.
 - c) Only God the Father knows the exact time of the rapture.
 - i) Matthew 24:36
 - d) We are not waiting for a prophecy to be fulfilled before the rapture can take place.
 - i) The coming of Jesus is always near.
 - ii) Matthew 24:36
 - iii) Matthew 24:38
 - iv) Matthew 24:42
 - v) Matthew 24:44
 - vi) 1 Corinthians 15:51-52
 - (1) The word “moment” is the word we get our word “atom” from, meaning the smallest indivisible period of time known to them.
 - vii) The signs of the times that we see occurring are signs for what will take place after the rapture.
 - (1) The rapture is not Jesus coming in great power and glory; it is Him coming for His church before He comes in power and glory.
 - (2) The rapture is imminent.
- 5) WHY: THE MOTIVE OF THE RAPTURE (Revelation 4:2-5)
- a) Revelation 4:2-4
 - i) We will sit upon these thrones judging the world, administering His justice.
 - ii) If we suffer with Jesus, we will reign with Jesus.
 - b) The motive of the rapture is three-fold.
 - i) Reception
 - (1) John 14:2-3
 - (2) Our Lord will come and receive His bride to Himself.
 - (a) We will see His majesty.
 - (b) We will glorify His ministry.
 - (i) Revelation 4:3
 - (ii) The jasper mentioned is most likely a clear and translucent diamond (Revelation 21:11), and the sardine stone is blood red in color.
 - (iii) These two emblems speak of His purity and blood sacrifice for the church.
 - ii) Rescue
 - (1) Revelation 4:3, 5
 - (a) A rainbow encircles the throne.
 - (b) The rainbow is green in color, symbolizing life.
 - (c) There are lightnings and thunders indicating a storm is coming; the rainbow means the storm is past.
 - (d) The rainbow stands for the covenant God made with His people.

- (e) The circle of the rainbow speaks of eternity.
- (2) The church is taken out before the Great Tribulation.
 - (a) 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10
- iii) Reunion
 - (1) Revelation 4:4
 - (a) The elders represent all of those who will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
 - (2) 1 Thessalonians 4:17

6) CONCLUSION

- a) What does this mean for us?
 - i) We should learn of His coming.
 - (1) We cannot afford to be ignorant concerning the second coming of Christ.
 - ii) We should live for His coming.
 - iii) We should look for His coming.
 - iv) We should long for His coming.
- b) The last prayer in the Bible is for Jesus to come.
 - i) Revelation 22:20
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31