

Revelation 4

The Throne in Heaven

When we get to this chapter, we are about to step off into the future. This chapter, and the one that follows takes us into the very throne room of God,

1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

This verse is all about our future. Have you ever buttoned your shirt, only to get down to the last button and find you didn't have a buttonhole to put it in? So, you back up and see what happened and you usually find that your problems begin right at the start. If the right button is not placed in the right buttonhole at the start, then you are in trouble. Things will never turn out right! The same is true with this passage of Scripture. If you do not understand this verse, then you cannot understand the rest of the book. If you mess up here, you will be out of step all the way through the rest of this book.

It is a transitional verse. Notice that this verse begins with the phrase "***after this.***" It signals a time of transition for the people of the Lord. After this point, the church is never mentioned as being on the earth again. Chapters 4 and 5 find the church in Heaven, in His presence, worshiping Him there. Chapters 6-19 deal with the Tribulation period and with the wrath of God as He judges this sinful world and purifies His people, Israel.

John says that he saw a "***door standing open in Heaven.***" This is the 3rd door we have encountered in the Revelation so far. 1st The Door Of Service - Rev. 3:8 – The church in Philadelphia is told a door of Gospel opportunity and service will open that no one can shut. 2nd is The Door Of Salvation – Rev. 3:20 – Those in Laodicea are invited to open the doors of their hearts to let Jesus enter. The lost heart is closed to Jesus, but if it is opened, He will enter and He will save the lost soul.

This door has been opened and it continues to stand open for all who desire to enter. Now, we know who the door is. In John 10:9, Jesus identified Himself as "***the Door***". He is the only way to Heaven (John 14:6). People do not go to Heaven through the door of the church, their good works, their own power. The only door into salvation and Heaven is Jesus Christ. He is the One Who died; the One Who rose again; the One Who paid the price for our salvation. Today, that door stands wide open. It will allow anyone to enter and find peace, rest, salvation and Heaven

"The voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet." What John heard was not an actual trumpet, but a noise like that of a trumpet. It was piercing, loud and demanding attention. John says that this trumpet was "a voice"

Trumpets were very important in the life of ancient Israel. Numbers 10:1-10 gives God's instructions for the use of trumpets in Israel. They were to make two trumpets of silver. There were different types of trumpet blasts for various events. The trumpets were to be blown when it was time to break camp and move. The trumpets blew to announce sacrifices on feast days. Trumpets blew to summon the priests to the Tabernacle. Trumpets were used to sound an alarm in a time of war or danger. It was very important that the people listened to the various trumpet blasts, and that the trumpeters made the right sounds, (1 Cor. 14:8). 1 Thes. 4:16. This verse shows us that there will be a trumpet that will sound

signaling the Rapture. 1 Cor. 15:52 also speaks of a trumpet's sound in connection with the Rapture. Do you see the connection? It appears that God will use a trumpet sound to signal His people when it is time to depart. I don't think unbelievers will hear it, but only the Lord's servants. When that trumpet sounds, it will signal a declaration of war on sin and this evil world system. One of these days, a trumpet blast will sound, and the saints will leave this world behind forever! Hallelujah! John is told that he is going to see ***"Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."*** He is referring to future things.

2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

We are given a glimpse inside the very throne room of God Himself. We are allowed to view some of the activities that take place in Heaven before God's judgment is visited upon the world. The scene that is described in these verses is almost beyond comprehension. You see, we, AS John, need a heavenly perspective of this world. The trials and the problems of this world often make no sense at all. From an earthly perspective, this world appears to be out of control today: war, disease, crime, wickedness, ungodliness, etc. But, when you understand that God is on His throne; and when you understand that He is in control; and when you think that He is working out a perfect, eternal, good plan, then everything falls into place. For example, an embroidery looks like a mess of tangled strings and fiber when it is viewed from the backside; but when it is viewed from above, the pattern becomes very clear.

The very first thing John sees is God Himself sitting on a throne in Heaven. What a thrill that must have been! Imagine going to the White House and meet the President. Or going to Buckingham Palace to meet the Queen of England. Now, try to imagine walking into the very throne room of God and seeing Him sitting on His throne. Can you imagine how beautiful/glorious that would be? Yet, that is the honor John was given and it is an honor we will enjoy one day soon!

A "throne" speaks of "sovereignty and authority". We are viewing One Who occupies the place of absolute authority over all the affairs of Heaven and earth, (Ps. 47:8; 103:19.). God's throne is an eternal throne! No foe will ever be able to force Him down from the place where He rules and reigns, (Ps. 45:6).

This world may not recognize God's authority and rule today, but He reigns nonetheless! People may not give a second thought to the existence of God, but He reigns, nonetheless. God notices all, controls all, and He will ultimately judge all. People may not give Him the time of day now, and may not bow to Him today, but they will one day, (Phil. 2:9-11) (Rom. 14:12).

3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.

John attempts to do the impossible: he attempts to describe God. John describes God as being like a "jasper and a ruby stone". God's appearance reminded John of these two precious stones. The "jasper" is clear and bright. Reminds us of purity/holiness. The "ruby" stone is a blood red stone. It reminds us of the blood Jesus shed on the Cross for our sins (1:5). It is interesting to note that the "Ruby" and the "Jasper" were the first and last stones in the breastplate of the High Priest, (Ex. 28:17-21).

The "sardius/ruby" represented the tribe of Reuben, and the "jasper" represented the tribe of Benjamin.

God's throne is encompassed by a rainbow. We know that the first rainbow was given to Noah as a visible sign that God would never again destroy the earth by a flood, (Gen. 9:11-17). How ironic the gay community would choose this symbol. You see, the rainbow speaks of God's mercy. Even as the wrath of God is about to fall on this doomed world, God is still moving in restraint and mercy (Habakkuk 3:2).

The rainbow in Heaven is a reminder that when we arrive there, the storms will be over for the children of God. It is a reminder that while we may not understand everything that happens here, we will when we get there. It is also a reminder that God will judge the earth, but that He will do in line with His promises and His covenants. Every person is headed for an encounter with God. One day, we will all be face to face with Him. We will meet Him in the fullness of His glory, or in the fullness of His wrath/judgment. Has it dawned on you yet that you are going to see Him one day? Has it become clear that you will stand in His throne room and see His face? One day, the long road of life will end, and we will be home. Our journey will be complete; our burdens lifted; our tears dried away; our questions answered, our broken hearts healed forever; and we will be home! Praise God, there is a better day coming!

4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.

Who are these individuals? Some people think they are angels, or cherubim. However, the word "elders" is never used to refer to angels in the Bible. Also, Angels are not given crowns and white robes.

Some believe these elders represent Israel, but at the time of this vision the nation as a whole has not been redeemed. Some split the 24 into two groups of 12. One representing the church, and the other the 12 Tribes of Israel. However, they appeared as unified group and not two groups. The number 24 in the Bible speaks of a complete representation of something. For example, there were 24 officers of the sanctuary representing the entire Levitical priesthood. (1 Chron. 24:4-5). There were 24 divisions of singers in the Temple as well (1 Chron. 25). Whoever the 24 elders are they likely represent a larger group.

Personally, I think they represent all the church, the redeemed children of God. I believe that the redeemed saints are pictured as "twenty-four elders" because they have been raptured, given crowns, and white robes, indicating 2 Cor. 5:10 has already taken place. White garments in the Bible speak of "the righteousness of the saints", Rev. 19:8. When God saved us, He forgave our sins and cleansed every stain of sin away from us forever. He declared us to be forgiven and justified in His eyes, (1 Cor. 6:11) (Rom. 5:1, 9). That is our positional standing. These elders represent us!

(See book page 58 bottom and 59 top, for church.) (See book pg-59 for the different crowns)

You need not worry that your service for the Lord Jesus will go unnoticed. He sees everything you do for His glory. He knows about every sacrifice. He sees every effort. He takes note of every prayer, every witness, and every secret thing you do to bring glory and honor to His Name. He will reward your faithful service one day. You may not receive recognition here, but you surely will over there. In fact, if you do what you do for the praise of men, you have already received your reward, Matt. 6:1-6.)

Also, they are sitting on “seats”. This is the same word translated “throne” in verse 2. They are seen to be reigning with God. As mentioned in Scripture the saints will reign with the Lord one day, (2 Tim. 2:12) (Rev. 1:6) (Rev. 2:26-27). Also, “sitting” signifies rest. Their labors are over and they are sitting, at rest in the presence of God in Heaven. One day, we will be where God has already positioned us! One day, this life with all its burdens, cares, worries and problems will be behind us forever. We will go to a new home where those things can never hinder or bother us again, (Rev. 21:4). We will enter into His rest in Heaven.

5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God

As John watches, amazing things begin to take place around the throne of God. He speaks of lightning, rumblings, and thunder. These things speak of approaching judgment. Heaven booms with the warning signals that judgment is on the way.

John speaks seven lamps of fire – This is the Spirit of God in His fullness, (Isa. 11:2). The 7 lamps of fire are not the same as the lampstands mentioned in 1:12-13. These are blazing torches. John identifies these torches as the 7 Spirits of God. This phrase describes the Holy Spirit in all His fullness. Torches are associated with war (Judges 7:16-20) (Nahum 2;3-4). John’s vision shows that God is ready to make war on sinful humanity and the Holy Spirit is His war torch. The Spirit is no longer a “Comforter”, John 14:16, 26; He is now an instrument of God’s judgment. John is there to witness to the righteousness of the judgments that are about to fall on the earth.

6 Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

That sea is metaphorical as there are no seas in heaven (21:1). What John saw was a pavement of shiny glass shining brilliantly like crystal. Heaven is a world of brilliant light refracting and shining through jewels and crystals in a way that is beyond our imagination. (Rev. 21:10-11, 18)

7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. 8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “ ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, ‘who was, and is, and is to come.’” 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,

Ezekiel 1:4-25, gives a detailed description of these incredible beings. Both Ezekiel and Revelation describe a Divine war machine ready to unleash judgement. Ez. 10:15 identifies them as Cherubim angels. However, in the book on page 59, the author identifies them as seraphim based on the vision in Isa. 6:2-3 because they also cry “Holy, Holy, Holy,” and have six wings. However, that is where the similarities end.

He says that they are “full of eyes before and behind”. This speaks of complete intelligence., divine knowledge (pg-59)

The four living creatures had four facial features:

One was like a lion – This represents wild animal life. One was like a calf – This represents domesticated animal life. One was like a man – This represents intelligent life. One was like an eagle – This represents bird life. These four beasts represent the entirety of God's creation gathered before Him. He is the Creator and everything that was made exists for Him and for His glory, Col. 1:16-17.

10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

It isn't just the four living creatures that lift their voices in praise. When the four living creatures begin to praise the Lord, the 24 elders join right in. They open their mouths and loudly proclaim their love and adoration for the Lord. When they hear their Lord exalted, they cannot help but join right in. They fall down before Him and worship their Redeemer! They don't just praise the Lord "in their hearts", they fall down before Him and offer visible, open, unabashed praise to the Lord. They take the crowns they have been given and they cast them at the feet of the Lord God. They acknowledge all that they are pales in significance in light of the glory of God. They offer Him everything they have. They are not concerned about their own glory, but they are lost in His glory!

Understand, any time we enter into the presence of God, we will always fall down in worship –(Isa. 6:5) (Eze. 1:28) (Dan. 7:15)(Luke 5:8).

Do you want to know what we will be doing in Heaven? We will not be floating around on a cloud, strumming a harp. Neither will we be fishing, hunting, sleeping or any of the foolish things we hear from time to time. If you want to know what we will be doing, look no farther than this passage.