

Revelation 4

Sunday, September 6, 2020

You may remember that back in Revelation 1:19 we had provided for the us the inspired "outline" of the book.

Revelation 1:19, "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."

"Write the things which you have seen..." (ch. 1)

"...and the things which are..." (chs. 2-3)

"...and the things which will take place after this..." that's the rest of the book, beginning in chapter 4; and if you study your Bible carefully, you'll notice that the grand finale of this stage, the church age, is the rapture of the church, something we even see in Revelation 4.

¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "COME UP HERE, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

John is raptured - a picture of the church being raptured - ...after these things..." After what things? After the church-age as described in chapters 2 and 3, where we've studied the 7 letters to the 7 churches - 7 being the # of completion...so that now there's this transition into the 7-Year Tribulation period, the final 7 years, the final "Week" as described in Daniel 9:24-27 - it's the time when many Jews will be saved, and all the world will be judged.

After these things John **looked** - and there's this open door into heaven.

And then there's this voice, like a trumpet.

Hmmm, sounds similar to what we read in - **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NKJV)**
"16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the **voice** of an archangel, and with the **trumpet** of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

We get a peek into heaven:

² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. ³ And He who sat there was like a jasper and a

sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

Immediately, in 1/11 of a second - John was "in the Spirit,"

Rhodes, "*The Lord supernaturally 'pulled back the veil' so John could see things to come (Acts 10:11).*"

(Paul was caught up as well - in the body or out of the body - we're not sure - 1 Corinthians 12)

The throne is the theme - mentioned 13 times in this chapter.

I. On the Throne

I think it's important to mention that this throne is special beyond measure, unparalleled in all the universe, not only because of **where** it is, but primarily because of Who it is seated on this throne.

John saw God on the throne, but really, there are no earthly words to be able to accurately articulate the vision of God - He was LIKE - a jasper and like a sardius stone in appearance.

Typically, a jasper is a clear gem, and sardius has more of a red radiance.

The sardius was the first stone in the breastplate of the High Priest, and the jasper was the last stone in the breastplate of the High Priest (Exodus 28:17-20)

(A glimpse of God's glory! Prelude to His plan? With **Israel**?)

II. Around the Throne (3-4)

A. Rainbow

^{3b} and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

(Rainbow) (rainbow encircled the throne) (can you visualize that? Rainbows are so beautiful - but here on earth we get imperfect glimpses of them - imagine heaven's rainbow with all those colors all around God's throne!)

But the first time we saw a rainbow in the Bible, and human history was right after the Flood, when God communicates His covenant with His creation, in that He would never judge the world with water ever again (Genesis 9:12-17).

And that's a comforting promise - in one sense - but (and I'm sorry for not focusing only on the bright side of the rainbow) if you consider the context - the rainbow **does** remind the world that God has judged the world before...and He will do it again.

Next time it won't be by flood, it'll be by fire. (2 Peter 3:7, 12)

(There are those who say that since God is a God of love - He would never judge the world, but they should know, look at the rainbow - He **has** judged the world in the past - and He will do it again...that's actually a promise) But we can be spared and saved from the judgment of fire, by yielding to God, and entering into a covenant with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the Throne; Around the Throne - there's a rainbow and...

B. 24 Thrones

⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.

Can you visualize it? 24 thrones around God's throne? 24 Elders on those thrones? Clothed in white robes of righteousness; crowns of gold on their heads, which they will cast down before God's throne - according to v. 10

Some have called this the King's court of angelic beings, but, I don't think that's who or what they are, they seem to possess characteristics that would better fit redeemed human beings.

We see first of all that they're crowned - the Bible frequently speaks of believers being crowned (2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10).

And secondly, we see they're enthroned - **Revelation 3:21**, "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

The third thing we see is that they worship God for creation, but in chapter 5 it's for redemption (5:9). Angels have not been redeemed, only humanity has.

These elders are "Clothed in white robes" - another picture of the redeemed - **Revelation 19:8 (NKJV)** "And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

Some say it's a generic 24 representing all the people, and refer to 1 Chronicles 24:3-5 - there were 24 courses of priests in the OT - and Revelation 1:6 refers to God's people as **Kingdom Priests**.

So, some believe it's representative of all who are saved, but, I have a hunch it's even more specific in that the 24 may very well be (the 12 Patriarchs of the 12 Tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles of Jesus Christ).

Jesus promised His Apostles in Matthew 19:28 that they would sit on 12 thrones in glory.

(12 is God's governmental number)

(Revelation 21:12-14 – 12 gates/tribes of Israel – 12 foundations of the walls/Apostles)

On the Throne; Around the Throne

III. From the Throne

⁵ And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

A. Lightnings

B. Thunderings

(God ruling from His throne – largely in response to prayer)

Revelation 8:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ³ Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

C. Voices (plural – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

Exodus 20:18–20 (NKJV) ¹⁸ Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. ¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." ²⁰ And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

(God's words and God's works)

D. Seven Lamps/Spirits of God (Exodus 37:23; Isaiah 11:2)

IV. Before the Throne

⁶ Before the throne *there was a sea of glass, like crystal.*

(Sea - His ability to see the mass of humanity?) (Ruling over the world)

(Revelation 13:1; 15:2)

V. In the Midst of the Throne and around the Throne

^{6b} And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Four Living Creatures - What are they? Four Living Creatures

I believe they're Cherubim - Angelic creatures who have - instrumental in this mission of Salvation - found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But I do want to mention Wiersbe's view:

1. Creation

Wiersbe, *"I believe that these special creatures symbolize God's creation and are related to God's covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:8-17) The faces of the living creatures parallel God's statement in Genesis 9:10 - his covenant is with Noah (the face of man), the fowl (the face of the eagle), the cattle (the face of the calf), and the beasts of the earth (the face of the lion)."*

2. Cherubim

In the midst of the throne and around the throne are these 4 living creatures...

(Cherubim - Ezekiel 1, 10; Seraphim Isaiah 6)

(Cherubim - as servants of Salvation - ALL over the tabernacle - Exodus 37; 1 Kings 6; 2 Chronicles 3)

Wiersbe, "Some see in the 4 creatures an illustration of the fourfold picture of Christ given in the Gospel accounts. Matthew is the royal Gospel of the King illustrated by the lion. Mark emphasizes Servant aspect of the Lord's ministry (the calf). Luke presents Christ as the compassionate Son of Man. While John magnifies the deity of Christ, the Son of God (the eagle)."

(The Gospel of Jesus Christ - Angels are ministers of salvation) (equipped)

Hebrews 1:14, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"

Why? Holy, holy, holy

How? Lord, God Almighty

Who? Who was, and is, and is to come

Together we worship the LORD God who is worthy because He is our Creator.

How beautiful heaven will be!

Sandy Adams, "Perhaps you have thought of heaven as a series of cumulus clouds. Or that the halls of heaven were hospital white and God appears in sterile scrubs. Discard those mythical notions. Heaven is adorned with a kaleidoscope of color. God is dressed in ruby red garments that sparkle like diamonds. Lightning bolts dart from His emerald green throne. A rainbow stretches overhead...colors on earth look pale when compared to the brilliance of heavenly hues."

I long to be there - this is our home - where we belong - with the Lord.