

Revelation Chapter 4 - A Throne in Heaven

Summary - In chapter 4 the worship centers around the THRONE and The LORD as CREATOR

In this chapter, John is given a glimpse of heaven...It is important that we “see” heaven...or at least not forget the reality of what is in heaven...especially when we go through troublesome times. The LORD is preparing the seven churches for what lies ahead...That preparation must begin with the recognition of the reality of the God who has all power and will never change. This gives us hope and endurance in the midst of trial and persecution.

- Rom 8:18 NIV I consider that our present ***sufferings are not worth comparing*** with the glory that will be revealed in us.

There was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it

Rev 4:1 NIV 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.**" 2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there **before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.**

- **“Come up here”** - some teach this comment as a proof text for the pre-tribulation rapture
 - It is only John who comes up -- not all those who are in Christ
 - The purpose of his coming up is to be shown what must take place -- not to meet the LORD in the air
 - He is in the Spirit -- not changed into a glorious body
- **At once I was in the Spirit** ...this experience happened several times in Revelation
 - Rev 1:10 On the Lord's Day **I was in the Spirit**, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet
 - Rev 17:3 Then the **angel carried me away in the Spirit** into a wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.
 - Rev 21:10 And he **carried me away in the Spirit** to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

This “being in the Spirit” is possibly similar to visions of Paul, Ezekiel & Isaiah

- 2Co 12:2-4 NIV I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was **caught up to the third heaven**. Whether it was ***in the body or out of the body I do not know***--God knows. 3 And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows-- 4 was **caught up** to paradise **and heard** inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.
- Eze 1:1 NIV In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, **the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.**
- Isa 6:1-4 NIV In the year that King Uzziah died, **I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne**; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six

wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

The Glory of God seen in the Jasper and the Rainbow

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

Jasper and rainbow speak of the glory of God

- Rev 21:10-11 NIV And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 11 **It shone with the glory of God**, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, **like a jasper**, clear as crystal.
- Eze 1:28 NIV **Like the appearance of a rainbow** in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.** When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

24 Elders

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.

The bible does not reveal who these 24 elders are, but it does reveal this about them:

- They were seated on thrones
- They were dressed in white
- They had crowns of gold on their heads
- They fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him
- They lay their crowns before the throne
- They fell down before the Lamb
- Each has a harp
- Each holds a golden bowl of incense (the prayers of God's people)
- They fall on their faces and worship

Possibly representing OT and NT saints (12 sons of Israel, 12 apostles)

Saints have crowns

- Rev 2:10 ...I will give you life as your victor's crown.
- Rev 3:11 ... so that no one will take your crown.
- Rev 4:10 NIV 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:

Saints have white robes

- Rev 19:14 NIV The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in **fine linen, white** and clean.
- Rev 6:11 NIV Then each of them was given a **white robe**, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.
- Rev 7:9 NIV After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were **wearing white robes** and were holding palm branches in their hands.
- Rev 7:13-14 NIV Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" 14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; **they have washed their robes and made them white** in the blood of the Lamb.

Apostles promised to sit on thrones

- Mat 19:27-28 NIV Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" 28 Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, **you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Gates w/ names of 12 tribes of Israel, Foundations with names of 12 apostles of the Lamb

- Rev 21:12-14 NIV It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. **On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.** 13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and **on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

God has made the two groups one - perhaps these 24 elders are a representative group

- Eph 2:11-16 NIV Therefore, remember that formerly you who are **Gentiles by birth** and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)-- 12 remember that at that time you were **separate** from Christ, **excluded** from citizenship in Israel and **foreigners** to the covenants of the promise, **without hope** and **without God** in the world. 13 But **now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.** 14 For he himself is our peace, **who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,** 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself **one new humanity out of the two**, thus making peace, 16 and **in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.**

God's Power and Glory seen in the Lightning and Thunder

5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.

Lightning and Thunder - Present at God's temple in heaven

- Rev 11:19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came **flashes of lightning**, rumblings, **peals of thunder**, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm.

Lightning and Thunder - Present when the LORD came to Israel in the desert

- Exo 19:15-17 NIV Then he said to the people, "Prepare yourselves for the third day. Abstain from sexual relations." 16 On the morning of the third day **there was thunder and lightning**, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. **Everyone in the camp trembled**. 17 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

Lightning and Thunder - An expressions of the greatness of His power

- Job 37:2-12 NLT 2 Listen carefully to the **thunder** of God's voice as it rolls from his mouth. 3 It rolls across the heavens, and his **lightning** flashes in every direction. 4 Then comes the roaring of the **thunder**— the tremendous voice of his majesty. He does not restrain it when he speaks. 5 God's voice is glorious in the **thunder**. **We can't even imagine the greatness of his power**. 6 "He directs the snow to fall on the earth and tells the rain to pour down. 7 Then everyone stops working so they can watch his power. 8 The wild animals take cover and stay inside their dens. 9 The stormy wind comes from its chamber, and the driving winds bring the cold. 10 God's breath sends the ice, freezing wide expanses of water. 11 He loads the clouds with moisture, and they flash with his lightning. 12 **The clouds churn about at his direction. They do whatever he commands throughout the earth.**

Lightning and Thunder - Judgement

- Exo 9:23 NIV When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, **the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed** down to the ground. So the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt;
- 1Sa 7:10 NIV While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day **the LORD thundered with loud thunder** against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that **they were routed before the Israelites**.
- Rev 8:5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came **peals of thunder**, rumblings, **flashes of lightning** and an earthquake.
- Rev 16:18 Then there came **flashes of lightning**, rumblings, **peals of thunder** and **a severe earthquake**. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.

The seven spirits of God

In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. 6 Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

Possible 7 spirits of God

- Isa 11:1-3 NIV A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 (1) The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of (2) wisdom and of (3) understanding, the Spirit of (4) counsel and of (5) might, the Spirit of the (6) knowledge and (7) fear of the LORD-- 3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears;

- As stated in last week's session the seven spirits of God also seem to indicate the Omnipresence of God.

The sea of glass is also mentioned in Rev 15

- Rev 15:1-3 NIV I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues--last, because with them God's wrath is completed. 2 And **I saw what looked like a sea of glass** glowing with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. They held harps given them by God 3 and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations.

When the LORD instructed Moses to build the tabernacle it was to be made according to what is in heaven

- Heb 8:5 NIV They [*the priests under the old covenant*] serve at a sanctuary that is **a copy and shadow of what is in heaven**. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you **make everything according to the pattern** shown you on the mountain."
- Moses made the bronze laver - it was used for washing and stood between the bronze altar and the holy place. Afterward, when Solomon built his temple...He was told to make a cast bronze laver which was called the "molten sea".
 - 2Ch 4:1-2 KJV Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof. 2 Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

The four living creatures

In the center, around the throne, **were four living creatures**, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 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."**

Ezekiel and Isaiah had similar visions

- Eze 1:5-1 NIV and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, 6 but each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings, 9 and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. 10 Their faces looked like this: **Each of the four had the face of a human being**, and on the right side each had **the face of a lion**, and on the left **the face of an ox**; each also had **the face of an eagle**. 11 Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body.

- Isa 6:1-3 NIV In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."**

The Worship of Him who lives for ever and ever

9 Whenever the living creatures **give glory, honor and thanks** to him who sits on the throne and **who lives for ever and ever**, 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:

The worship of the 4 living creatures and the elders

- They give glory, honor and THANKS
- To him who sits on the throne and lives forever and ever
- When the 4 creatures worship, the 24 elders worship him who sits on the throne and lives forever and ever
- The elders lay their crowns before the throne
- The LORD is worthy to receive glory, honor and power

The reason for the worship

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."**

- He created all things
- All things were created by his will
- All things are sustained by him

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16 For by him all things were created**, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—**all things were created through him and for him**. **17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Joh 1:1-3 ESV In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.**

Heb 1:1-3 ESV Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.** **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds [he holds everything together] the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high