

Nick Tarter / General

Revelation 4 NASB 2020

After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was in *the Spirit*; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and *someone was* sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

Out from the throne came flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God; and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second creature like a calf, the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

And when the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

Intro

The fleeting kingdoms of men and the forever kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of Powys

Somewhere in the countryside of Wales is a meadow filled with grown over stone foundations which were once a great castle and fortress city called Mathrafal. For 300 years this city stood as the capital of a Welsh kingdom until it was conquered by a coalition of other Welsh kings and completely destroyed. Now where a great king's throne once stood, the seat of his power, cows graze and if archeologists had never dug here no one would even know that a great castle once stood here.

So are the kingdoms of men, but God is a different sort of King. He is a permanent King whose majesty is so far beyond that of any human king. His kingdom will never be sacked and razed and His throne will stand forever.

Today we behold the glory of our God and King. We have the privilege of peering into His throne room to a picture that will one day be common to those of us who are in Christ. This throne room will be revealed in the world one day soon. If we have trusted in Christ He will bring us to this place in reality just as He did for John in this vision.

Discover

I. John saw an open door in heaven, and received an invitation from Christ

Revelation 4:1 NASB 2020

After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

In Revelation the image of open doors is a common and important motif.

Jesus has revealed Himself to be the one who opens doors that no one has the power to close. He opens doors to those whom the world has closed its doors on. He calls upon us to open our doors to Him and He will come into us and dine with us. Here Christ opens a door to John and invites him to come up to where He is in order to receive instruction directly from Him.

II. John saw the Heavenly throne room with God seated as King

Revelation 4:2–3 NASB 2020

Immediately I was in *the Spirit*; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and *someone was* sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

Here we see a wonderful trinitarian revelation of God. John is in the Spirit, receiving instruction from the Son, and beholding the Father seated on His throne.

John can only describe the Father as appearing like jasper and carnelian, two vibrant and crystalline stones. These stones are radiant and beautiful by nature, therefore they represent the Father to us in terms we can understand. His true glory is indescribable. He is anything but common and we must treat Him as the Holy Lord that He is.

A rainbow like an emerald encircles the Lord. It is a complete circle which signifies the completeness of God's divine character. The fact that it resembles an emerald means that the predominant color is green. Historically, green has been considered a color of serenity. In this case, it most likely signifies the consolation of the Lord towards humanity and especially towards God's people.

The rainbow itself represents the forbearance of God. He is staying His hand of judgment until all who belong to Christ are brought into His fold. The fact that a rainbow surrounds Him alludes to His mercy towards humanity and His grace which is extended to us. Though in sin we should be destroyed swiftly, He is patient with us not wanting any to perish but that we would repent and return to Him through Christ.

III. John saw the court of the King

Revelation 4:4–6 NASB 2020

Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

Out from the throne came flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God; and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

Here we get a picture of God's divine council of elder angels. Each of these elders occupies a throne symbolizing dominion emanating from the great throne which belongs to God who is the ultimate power which all other authority originates in. The elders also wear which symbolizing purity and crowns symbolizing authority. These elders cast their crowns before The Lord because their crowns actually belong to Him and are only theirs by His grace and by His decree. God does not need help ruling the universe, but He chooses to create creatures of many kinds and to include us in His work. That is an amazing truth!

The number of the elders is important. Note that there are 24, a number representing the completeness and unity of God's people. Twelve elders correspond to the 12 patriarchs of Israel and 12 correspond to the 12 Apostles of Christ's Church. All of Israel, both the natural branches and the grafted in stand in unity before the Lord as one. Israel is God's Church and God's Church is Israel. We are on people in the Lord.

By the way, we don't believe in a so called replacement theology where the Church replaces Israel but rather in an expansion theology where the Church is Israel expanded to the gentiles. True national Israel still stands before the Lord and His promises to them are active and to Israel God has grafted in many gentiles as members of His complete nation.

The lightning and thunder represent God's power over the natural world and His judgments upon all ungodly rebels.

The torches represent the perfect Holy Spirit who is perfectly with His church, who gives light to the world, life to believers, purifies the godly with fire, and consumes the ungodly with fire.

If we walk in Christ, we will walk through His fire and be purified as well as tempered but if we do not walk in Christ we will be utterly consumed and destroyed by the Spirit's presence.

The sea before the Lord is like glass. That's significant because in contrast with the seas of this world, God's sea is calm. Because the God of peace rules over His realm, His sea is still. This picture is likely here to show us that His rule is pure, peaceful, and glorious beyond anything we can imagine. When God's rule is finally established on this world and all evil is vanquished, this sort of peace and calm will rule here too. We look forward to this as we wade through this world of calamity! In God's realm, nature is at rest because those who rule with Him there are not in active rebellion against His rule.

IV. The worship leaders were four living creatures

Revelation 4:6–8 NASB 2020

and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second creature like a calf, the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

My thoughts...

Lion- Power/Authority

Ox- Strength

Man- Wisdom

Eagle- Scope/Range

Wesley thought these were what these symbolized...

Lion- Undaunted courage

Ox- Unwearied patience

Man- Prudence and compassion

Eagle- Activity and vigor

Full of eyes, symbolizing complete wisdom, knowledge, and unceasing activity before the Lord. I don't think these are literal eyes, but rather are symbolic of both perfect material and spiritual sight. These creatures stand before the Lord and have perfect vision.

Their eternal job is to lead worship before the throne of the Lord.

V. Everyone was worshipping God

Revelation 4:9–11 NASB 2020

And when the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

The elders cast their crowns before the One to whom they owe their fidelity.

He is worthy because...

He created everything

By His will all things exist and subsist

By His will the entire enterprise continues

Nurture

Who is God? He is the glorious King who is seated upon the eternal throne.

What has He done? He has created everything and He continues to hold everything together.

Who are we? We are those who have been called up with Christ, to be seated with Him on His throne.

What will we do? We will orient our lives now around worship, living out the reality of our future place with Christ now.

Act

Let's orient our lives around worship as if we are already seated with Christ in His throne room. We don't have to wait until we are in heaven. We can bring heaven here as a people dedicated to God's glory in our world now.

I believe that Jesus wants us to build a culture of worship and call others into it. Our job is not a common job because we serve a God who is far from common.