

24. The Book of Revelation—4:6-8

(11/11/20)

We have officially entered into the last section of the Book of Revelation according to the outline that Jesus gave us in chapter 1:19—chapters 4 thru 22.

Revelation 4:1-3 (NKJV)

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." 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.**

As I have been saying, chapter 4 verse 1 signals the rapture of the Church and as such the scene now shifts from earth to heaven as John is snatched from earth to heaven.

The Church, once seated with Christ in heavenly places *spiritually* (Eph. 2:6), is now seen safely seated with Christ in heaven *literally* before the judgment of God is poured out upon this Christ rejecting world.

Upon being raptured to heaven John sees the throne of God and describes God the Father—“**like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance.**” (v.3)

This was no doubt John’s attempt to describe multi-colored lights emanating from the throne of God using various colored precious gemstones.

Jasper is a *clear* gem (see Rev. 21:11) and the **sardius** is *blood red*—together they speak of *purity* and *redemption*.

Revelation 4:3 (NKJV)

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.***

The first time we see a rainbow in the Bible is in Genesis 9 where God used it as a sign of His promise (covenant) that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood.

This rainbow is coupled with “thunderings” and “lightnings” (v.5)—which are symbols of a storm coming upon the earth.

Usually, a rainbow appears *after* the storm—but here, we see it *before* the storm.

In Revelation 4 we see that judgment is about to fall once again on the *whole* earth as it did in Noah’s day with the Flood—but the rainbow reminds us that God is merciful even when He judges.

God is going to show mercy to this world in judgment by saving more people during the Tribulation Period (7 years) than He did in the previous 2000 years of the Church Age (Pentecost to the Rapture)—that is God’s mercy in operation!

Revelation 4:4 (NKJV)

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.**

Last time we saw that these 24 elders can only be one group—the Church of Jesus Christ!

Revelation 4:5 (NKJV)

⁵ **And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices...**

In nature, lightning and thunder always indicate that a storm is coming—here they indicate that a “*storm of judgment*” is coming as they remind us of God’s awesome power!

Revelation 4:5 (NKJV)

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.**

The “seven lamps of fire” represent the Holy Spirit in His fullness and majesty.

There is only one Spirit of God, but the number 7 in Scripture represents *perfection* and *completeness*.

Revelation 4:6a (NKJV)

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

The Tabernacle was a model of God’s throne in heaven.

Before the priest could enter the Holy Place, he first had to wash in the *laver* (a large ‘bird-bath’ looking object that stood outside the entrance of the Tabernacle) which represented the Word of God.

Ephesians 5:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

But now in Revelation 4 the Church is in heaven with our glorified bodies that don’t sin anymore, and therefore don’t need to wash the filth of the world away each day by washing in the Word of God.

And so now the laver is no more but the Word of God which it represents is a glassy sea upon which the saints of God stand (“I’m standing on the Word” we often say...).

This signifies that the promises in God’s Word that we stood on symbolically while on earth—we now stand on literally in heaven (completed promises)!

Revelation 4:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ Before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like crystal. 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 [an ox], the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle.

Ezekiel 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, *each* had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.

Ezekiel 10:20-21 (NKJV)

²⁰ This *is* the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they *were* cherubim. ²¹ Each one had four faces and each one four wings, and the likeness of the hands of a man *was* under their wings.

Many commentators see in the four Gospels the four faces of the cherubim that surround the throne of God—the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle.

In Psalm 40:7 Jesus said, “*the scroll of the Book is written about Me.*”

Someone has described this as—Jesus Christ in quadraphonic:

- **The Lion**—speaks of the Gospel of Matthew, the theme of which is, Jesus, *The Lion of the tribe of Judah—the Messiah!*
- **The Ox**—which is a beast of *burden*, speaks of the Gospel of Mark, the theme of which is to present Jesus as *The Suffering Servant*.
- **The Man**—is the theme of the Gospel of Luke, which focuses on the *humanity* of Christ, the theme of which is to present Jesus as *The Son of Man*.
- **The Eagle**—which is the king of the birds and therefore of the heavens, is used in Scripture as a symbol for God. This corresponds to the Gospel of John, which seeks to present the divinity of Christ—the theme of John’s Gospel is Jesus *The Son of God*.

But also, whenever Israel set up camp in the wilderness—God had given them very specific instructions on how they were to be grouped.

They were to set up camp with the Tabernacle in the middle—with 3 tribes to the north, 3 tribes to the east, 3 tribes to the south, and 3 tribes to the west.

Each group of 3 had a *lead* tribe and was to rally around the lead tribe's flag containing its insignia (Numbers chap. 2 tells us what tribes set up in each direction)—and so:

- Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were to camp on the east side of the Tabernacle and were known as the “Camp of Judah”— their flag was a **gold lion on a scarlet background**.
- Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin were to camp on the west side, and were known as the “Camp of Ephraim”—their flag insignia was a **black ox on a field of gold**.
- Reuben, Simeon, and Gad were to camp on the south side and were known as the Camp of Reuben. Reuben's symbol was a **man on a field of gold**.
- Dan, Naphtali, and Asher were to camp on the north side and were known as the Camp of Dan, signified by a **gold eagle on a field of blue**.

Why am I making a big deal out of this?—because the Holy Spirit made a big deal out of it to communicate something to us that was a big deal!

You see, every time Israel set up camp in the wilderness as commanded by God—they were a model of the throne of God in heaven!

But not only that, Numbers chap. 2 gives us the total number of each group of three—

- *Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon, numbering 186,400, were to camp on the east side*
- *Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, numbering 108,100, were to camp on the west side*
- *Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, numbering 151,400, were to camp on the south*
- *Dan, Naphtali, and Asher, numbering 157,600, were to camp on the north side*

Now understand, that the Jews back then would have followed God’s instructions to the letter which meant if God told them to camp to the east—they wouldn’t have camped at all to the northeast or southeast—they would have camped strictly to the east as well with all the directions God commanded them to set up camp in the wilderness. (Elaborate)

And so, with that in mind notice that the Holy Spirit goes to great lengths to tell us the exact numbers of each of the tribes in each direction when they set up camp.

With the largest number of people camped on the east, the smallest number on the west, and an almost identical number of people on the north and south sides of the tabernacle—it meant that if you could have looked down upon the camp of Israel in the wilderness from a high mountain or a helicopter—you would have seen a CROSS!!

And right in the middle would have been the Tabernacle—the place where God and man came together for fellowship—as is true of the cross of Jesus Christ. (Explain)

Revelation 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within...

These six wings correspond to the seraphim of Isaiah 6:2.

The eyes speak of comprehension—these are not robots they are highly intelligent, spectacular angelic beings!

In Ezekiel 28:14 we learn how that Lucifer is such a being and that before he fell, he was the worship leader in heaven—a musical being.

As the *‘prince of the power of the air’* he uses the power of music quite effectively to indoctrinate and control the minds of young people (today we could say that he is also the ‘prince of the power of the airwaves...Comment)

Revelation 4:8 (NKJV)

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!"** [i.e.—God is eternal and exists in the eternal present tense—He is the great I AM]*

Notice they say, *“Holy, holy, holy...”* not *“love, love, love”* or *“grace, grace, grace”*—and God is all of those things.

But if there is one attribute that describes God more than any other it is His *holiness*—not love. (Explain)

Why do the cherubim keep saying *“Holy” three times?*

Because God is a Triune God consisting of—Father, Son, and Spirit—3 distinct Persons making up one God—each One being absolutely holy!

In 1 Samuel 2:2 Hannah declared, *“There is no one holy like the Lord.”*

One author defined God’s holiness this way—

“God’s holiness is His utter and complete separation from evil in any and every form. He is absolutely untainted by any evil, error, or wrongdoing—unlike angels (some of whom sinned) or humans (all of whom sinned).”

1 Peter 1:14-16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance;
¹⁵ but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written,
"Be holy, for I am holy."

Hebrews 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

For us holiness doesn't mean moral perfection (unless you're talking about our 'position' in Christ)—it means separation from the world (system) and the world's attitudes, 'values' and our fallen nature's desires.

1 John 2:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.