

The Book of Revelation

Chapter 4

Introductory Notes

- We now shift our attention drastically from the seven churches in chapters 2-3.
 - We shift from “the things which are” for John to “the things which shall be hereafter” for both John and us today.
 - We shift our setting from Earth to Heaven.
- Chapter 4 sets the stage for the events of Chapter 5.
 - These two chapters give us the best description of what happens in Heaven.

Outline

- The Heavenly Invitation - 4:1
- The Scene Around the Throne - 4:2-11

Notes

- vs. 1 - “Come up hither” - Although this refers specifically to John, I think this refers to the Rapture (I Thessalonians 4:13-18) and sets the timing of following events.
 - Christians and churches are not the focus of what follows, Israel and the nations are.
- vs. 2 - “in the spirit” - same as in 1:10.
- vs. 2 - the one sat on the throne is God the Father. This will be made clearer in chapter 5.
- vs. 3 - I believe it is important to note that while God the Father is on a physical throne He is not described as having a physical form. The only member of the Trinity that is seen as having a physical body is Christ. I think John saw God’s glory and not God Himself.
- vs. 3 - The precious stones described:
 - Jasper - clear in its purest form, also last stone in High Priests’ breastplate in Exodus 28:20
 - Sardine - red, also first stone in the High Priest’s breastplate in Exodus 28:17
 - Emerald - green, also in High Priest’s breastplate in Exodus 28:18
- vs. 4 - the 24 elders are likely representatives of the redeemed of all ages.
 - I think they sit in a circle around the throne.
 - Godsoe - “They are sitting. The servant or slave never sits in the presence of the master. The angels are never pictured sitting in the presence of God. Friends sit together. This signifies terms of utmost intimacy existing between the Holy Father and all the redeemed. Through the Blood of Jesus we are all ‘accepted in the Beloved.’”

- vs. 4 - Types of Crowns
 - Ruler's crown – signifies authority.
 - Victor's crown – a reward for faithful service - this is what they have.
- vs. 5 - "lightnings and thunderings and voices" - compare to Exodus 19:16.
- vs. 5 - "seven Spirits of God" (Holy Spirit) - see vs. 1:4.
 - The Holy Spirit is seen here in Heaven, perhaps in fulfillment of II Thessalonians 2:6-7
- vs. 5 - "sea of glass" - Also used in 15:2. I can't find anyone with a solid explanation of what is being described. My opinion is that this describes the area or floor surrounding the throne.
- vs. 6-9 - the Four Beasts
 - They seraphim (Isaiah 6:2-3) and/or cherubim (Ezekiel 1:5-10; 10:20).
 - Godsoe: "These four cherubims combined constitute the Chariot of God moving on purposes of mercy (I Chr. 28:18. Ps. 18:10). It can travel in air, on land, over sea. They were fitted with eyes, feet, wheels, hands. There is no action into which they cannot enter."
 - The four tribes that camped around the Tabernacle had as their symbols:
Judah – lion, Rueben – man, Ephraim – ox, and Dan – eagle.
- vs. 8-11 – This is what Heaven is like!
 - vs. 8-9 - the ceaseless praise of angels
 - vs. 10-11 – the punctuated worship of the redeemed
 - Walvoord – "The worship of the twenty-four elders has a more particular note. They not only worship and recognize these attributes of God but support their worship by recognition of the fact that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe and, as such, is sovereign over it. In other words they recognize not only the attributes but the works of God which reveal the attributes. Further, in casting their crowns before the throne they testify that if it had not been for God's grace, salvation, and goodness, they could not have had victory over sin and death. Here the creature honors His Maker and accepts the dictum that man necessarily must be subject to his Creator."