

Throne Room of Heaven

Revelation 4:1-11

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What are the three major parts of Revelation?

Rev 1:19 – *Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.*

“Write about the things that you have seen”

John saw “one who was walking among the lampstands” – the exalted and glorified Lord

“the things that are”

The “things which are” are the seven churches – present and future

“the things that will take place after this”

The things which shall come after the “church period” – when the evangelical churches are no more. (At the end of Chapter 3, there is no more mention of the church on earth)

- Significantly, the word church never occurs in the chapters describing this period of judgment on earth, nowhere in Revelation chapters 4 through 19.

What does it tell us that the voice John heard was like a trumpet?

The voice spoke loud and clear to John. It was like the trumpet that gathered the congregation of Israel together, or gathered an army for battle.

1 Thess 4:16-17 – *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. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*

Revelation 4:1 – John is called up into heaven.

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.”

v1 – What does the open door to heaven symbolize?

- Door to heaven: God gives us the opportunity to be with Him in heaven
- Come up here: a type of the rapture of the church
- Like a Trumpet speaking: the voice of God...
“with the trumpet call of God” (1 Thess 4:16)
- Things which must take place after this: generally chronological order of events

What is significant about the timing of John’s call to “come up here”?

Jesus finished dealing with the churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, and all churches are comprehended in the seven. Now, after dealing with the church, Jesus called John up to heaven, “catching him away” with a voice that sounded like a trumpet.

- All this happened before the great wrath that will be described beginning at Revelation 6.
- As that great judgment on the earth unfolded, John — a representative of the church — was in heaven, looking down on earth

Revelation 4:2-3 – John goes up, to the throne.

Immediately I was in the Spirit; And behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. 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.

v2 – What does it mean that John was immediately in the spirit?

John’s human spirit given a vision by the Holy Spirit

- John already said he was in the Spirit at Revelation 1:10. This was yet a different experience, as John came to heaven and a heavenly perspective.

Was John’s body in heaven also, or was it just his spirit?

This is impossible to know. Paul, when he had his heavenly experience, didn’t know if he was in the body or not (2 Corinthians 12:1-4).

v2-3 – What did John see & what is represented by what John saw?

- throne: a vision of Father God
- jasper, sardius, emerald: solid, precious, beautiful
- rainbow: promises of God (as following the flood)

What does the throne in heaven represent?

The throne is a powerful declaration of not merely God's presence, but of His sovereign, rightful reign, and His prerogative to judge.

- We can't think rightly about much of anything until we settle in our mind that there is an occupied throne in heaven, and the God of the Bible rules from the throne.

What is the significance of the jasper and sardius stones?

John described emanations of glistening light in two colors: white (**jasper** may mean "diamond") and red (**sardius**).

- Perhaps these two colors are meant to communicate the glory of the empty tomb (white, Matthew 28:1-3) and the sacrificial love of Calvary (red, indicating blood).
- Or, perhaps they are linked with the first and last gems in the high priest's breastplate (Exodus 39:8-13).

Revelation 4:4 – What John saw around the throne

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.

v4 – What might the 24 thrones & elders represent?

The 24 courses of the priesthood represented all the priests (1 Chronicles 24), and the 12 tribes and the 12 apostles represent all the faithful.

- 12 sons of Jacob + 12 disciples = Israel & Church ruling with Christ
- clothed in white: righteousness (has resurrected bodies; not angels who don't wear crowns)
- crowns: have received rewards for good works
- THE REDEEMED ARE IN HEAVEN WITH GOD!

What do the following activities of the elders tell us about the church during the Tribulation?

- They watch the Lamb take the sealed scroll in Chap. 5
 - They watch the mighty accession of those who are coming out of the Great Tribulation in Chapter 6
 - They watch when the Seventh Angel sounds his Trumpet and the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord in Chapter 11
 - They watch when the 144,000 are gathered on Mt. Zion in Chapter 14
 - They rejoice over the conquest of Babylon in Chap. 14
- We will see and know the activities transpiring on earth when we are in heaven!

Revelation 4:5 – Sights at the throne of God.

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.

v5 – What came from the throne of God?

lightnings, thunderings, and voices – commands from God

- The lightning, thunder, voices and fire are reminiscent of God's fearful presence at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19 and 20:18-19). They communicate the awe associated with the throne of God.

What might the seven lamps of fire represent?

- 7 lamps of fire = 7 spirits of God... the complete Spirit of God

- The 7-fold Spirit of God:

The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. (Isaiah 11:2)

The lamps of fire are important because the Holy Spirit is not ordinarily visible. To become visible, He represents Himself in a physical form like a dove or a tongue of fire.

Rev 4:6-8 – The living creatures around the throne

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. 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. 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!"

v6 – What does the sea of glass bring to mind?

- A calm, solidified body of water – water used for washing the sacrifices... but solid in heaven because not needed for cleansing the Saints
- sea of glass: an earthly representation of this heavenly feature was the "Molten Sea" in Solomon's Temple (2 Chronicles 4:2-6)

v6-8 – What are these living creatures?

special angelic beings (cherubim)

Ezekiel 10:20-21 – These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar River, and I realized that they were cherubim. Each had four faces and four wings, and under their wings was what looked like the hands of a man.

Cherubim were prominent in the tabernacle, particularly in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 25:17-22 and 26:1-31).

- The Scriptures show us that the tabernacle is a model of the throne of God, in some manner (Exodus 25:8-9).

What do the characteristics of the cherubim reveal about God?

- They prefigure the four aspects to which God would reveal Himself when He was incarnated, i.e. became human flesh as the Messiah
 - Lion – Symbol of Kingship (Matthew)
 - Ox – Symbol of Servant (Mark)
 - Man – Represents His perfect Humanity (Luke)
 - Eagle – Symbol of His Deity (John)
- Full of eyes: do not miss anything; reflects omniscience of God in His presence
- Holy, Holy, Holy... leads worship of God
- Is to come: praising Jesus

Where else do we see these cherubim in Scripture?

- They were at the Garden of Eden guarding the East Gate
- Symbolically represented as the Hebrews traveled out of Egypt during their 40 years of wandering; Standard of:
 - Flying Eagle (Dan, Asher Naphtali),
 - Lion (Judah, Issachar, Zebulun),
 - Man (Ruben, Simeon, Gad),
 - Ox (Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin)
- Likeness of two “Cherubim” were placed on top of the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 25:10-22)
- Likeness of the “Cherubim” were woven into the curtain of the Tabernacle and Temple (Ex 26:31)

What do the cherubim do?

- They stand on the steps of the Throne of God and they praise Him
- They carry out God’s decrees and His elective purposes

What is significant about the cherubim saying, “holy, holy, holy”?

The cherubim declare God’s **holy** nature and character and emphasized with a three-time repetition.

- In Hebrew, the double repetition of a word adds emphasis; the rare threefold repetition designates the superlative calling attention to the infinite holiness of God.

What is meant by the cherubim declaring that the Lord God is Almighty?

As in Revelation 1:8, the ancient Greek word is *pantokrator*, with the idea of “the One who has His hand on everything.”

Revelation 4:9-11 – The 24 elders worship God.

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 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: “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.”

v10-11 – What do the 24 elders do?

- They worship God: Israel & the church give honor to Whom honor is due
- Cast crowns: acknowledge our blessings are all by the grace of God
- Worthy: God is the Almighty Creator
- By Your will they exist: God is in control of all things

What do the elders say about what God is worthy for?

Glory – recognition for what He has done

Honor – praise for what He has done

Power – authority because of what He has done

What do the elders say about why God is worthy?

He created and sustains all things.

He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
(Colossians 1:17)

What applications should we take from John’s vision of the throne room of heaven?

- God is on the throne and in control of all things.
- There is honor given to God in heaven... so we should be honoring Him now on earth.
- Our blessings are all due to God.
- The church will be present with God in heaven prior to the pouring out of God’s wrath during the Tribulation.