Revelation 4:1-11

Review…

- SEVEN letters…
  - SEVEN literal churches in Asia Minor [modern day Turkey]
  - The HISTORY of the church – from PENTECOST to the RAPTURE…
  - Different KINDS of churches – the TOTAL [seven] church!
- The Outline – **Revelation 1:19**
  - PAST - John wrote the things he HAD seen – vison of Jesus – **Revelation 1**
  - PRESENT - the things which ARE – the SEVEN churches – **Revelation 2-3**
  - FUTURE - AFTER these things – **Revelation 4-22**
    - The RAPTURE – **Revelation 4-5**
    - The WRATH – **Revelation 6-18**
    - The RETURN of Jesus Christ – **Revelation 19-22**

Vision of Heaven…

- **1st – Going to Heaven… vs. 1-2**
  - 1st – After these things… vs. 1
    - After these things!
      - [Μετὰ ταῦτα] – a phrase repeated TWICE here in the first VERSE…
      - Marks the END of the SECOND section of the book – and the beginning of the THIRD…
      - Jesus is NO longer going to be addressing the CHURCH – **Revelation 2-3**
      - He moves on to talk about what will happen AFTER the CHURCH [these things]
    - No more CHURCH…
      - The word CHURCH [ἐκκλησία] appears TWENTY times in REVELATION…
      - NINETEEN times in the first THREE chapters – then ONCE in – **Revelation 22:16**
      - It is NEVER mentioned during the Tribulation – **Revelation 6-18**
      - For TWO thousand years God has used the CHURCH as His witness on earth…
      - We have been the LIGHT that shines out into DARKNESS – **Matthew 5:16**
      - But we are in the age of the CHURCH of LAODICEA – the final CHURCH…
      - The time of the CHURCH is coming to an END!
    - The LAST gentile…
      - **Romans 11:25**– "This will last only UNTIL the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ."
      - There are a SET number of people who will receive Jesus as their savior…
      - ONLY God knows the number – or who will be the LAST gentile to be saved…
      - But when the LAST person to believe – receives Jesus – it is time for the RAPTURE!
      - We are NOT waiting for the RETURN of Jesus – we are WAITING for the RAPTURE…
      - And although there is NOTHING we can do take make it come sooner…
      - We can PREACH the GOSPEL to everyone we KNOW…
      - Maybe someone we share with – will be the LAST person to believe – then we go HOME!
  - 2nd - Open Door… vs. 1
    - I looked - and behold - a door standing open in heaven!
    - John looked up – and SAW [εἴδω] – the DOOR to HEAVEN wide open…
    - He commanded [imperative] us to also LOOK [ἰδού] – it is [perfect] INDEED open

- The idea is ANYONE can go to HEAVEN – because Jesus opened [passive] the DOOR…
- But there is just ONE door – ONE way – to be saved…
- Jesus is that DOOR – He is the ONLY way we can get in – **John 10:9**
- When Noah was building the ARK – there was only ONE door – **Genesis 6:16**
- Up until the last moment – the DOOR was open – ANYONE could enter…
- Sadly – most did NOT chose to go in – and they were left to face the WRATH of God!
- The GOOD news – is that Jesus LOVES the whole world – **John 3:16**
- And WHOSOEVER believes in Him – can walk through the DOOR – **Romans 10:13**
- But the DOOR will not stay open forever – today is the day to go in – **II Corinthians 6:2**
- Because for those who do NOT – the WRATH of God is coming!

o 3rd – The Trumpet… vs. 1
- 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!
  - John heard a LOUD voice calling to him again – like a TRUMPET…
  - It was the same VOICE that he heard at FIRST [πρῶτος] – **Revelation 1:10**
  - The VOICE told John he must COME up [imperative] to Heaven…
  - There John would [future] see – what MUST happen AFTER the CHURCH [μετὰ ταῦτα]
- The RAPTURE…
  - This is speaking of the RAPTURE of the church – when we go to meet Jesus!
  - **I Thessalonians 4:16-17** – "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven… with the trumpet of God. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [ἁρπάζω]… to meet the Lord…"
  - There is a DAY coming VERY soon – when the TRUMPET will sound…
  - God will CALL the CHURCH to come HOME to be with Him FOREVER…
  - The KEY is we must be LISTENING when Jesus CALLS us – hear the TRUMPET…
  - No one knows the exact day or hour - only the Father in heaven - **Mark 13:32**
  - But we can be READY – knowing the time is SHORT – the RAPTURE is near!

o 4th – In the Spirit… vs. 2
- Immediately I was in the Spirit!
  - The MOMENT Jesus called – John was instantly in SPIRIT [πνεῦμα] – in HEAVEN…
  - This seems to emphasize the idea John was not physically in heaven…
  - It was a VISION the Lord gave to him regarding what was [future] to come…
  - Much the same way Paul the Apostle had his VISION of heaven!
  - **II Corinthians 12:3** – "Whether in the body or out of the body I do not know…"
- This BODY cannot go to heaven…
  - Because FLESH and BLOOD – cannot enter into GLORY – **I Corinthians 15:50**
  - When we are RAPTURED – we are CHANGED…
  - It is believed our bodies will NOT be left – because we will NOT die!
  - **I Corinthians 15:51-52** – "I tell you a mystery: We shall not all [die] but we shall all be changed - in a moment - in the [blink] of an eye - at the last TRUMPET."
  - With NO warning – it will happen in the BLINK of an eye [ἄτομος]
  - All believers who are in the CHURCH will be changed [μεταμορφόω] – **II Corinthians 3:18**
  - Receive eternal bodies - and we will be caught up to heaven - **II Corinthians 5:1**

- **2nd – Description of Heaven… vs. 2-7**

o 1st – The Throne… vs. 2-3
- Behold - a throne set in heaven – and ONE sat on the throne!
  - The FIRST thing John saw when he got to HEAVEN – was the [ὁ] THRONE…

- It was something we MUST [imperative] see [ἰδού]!
- Because if we SEE the THRONE because of the RAPTURE…
- Then we will NEVER have to stand before the THRONE in JUDGEMENT – **Revelation 20:11**

▪ Describing the THRONE…
- This does not appear to be a DESCRIPTION of God…
- Rather this appears to be a DESCRIPTION of the THRONE of God…
- Because the word ONE is in italics – and HE is implied in the original text…
- Also remember when REVELATION uses key WORDS – such as LIKE or AS…
- It is not to be taken LITERALLY – it is FIGURATIVE language!

▪ He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance!
- The THRONE is described as being BRIGHT and COLORFUL…
- JASPER – is a STONE that was very SHINY – from HEBREW [יָשְׁפֵה]
- SARDIUS – is a RED stone – perhaps a reference to the BLOOD of Jesus…
- EMERALD – is a GREEN stone – perhaps a reference to NEW life!

▪ There was a rainbow around the throne - in appearance like an emerald!
- All around the THRONE was a RAINBOW [ἶρις]
- RAINBOWS are ONLY mentioned SIX times in the whole Bible…
- THREE times in relation to HEAVEN – also **Revelation 10:**1 - **Ezekiel 1:28**
- THREE times in relation to the JUDGEMENT – **Genesis 9:13-16**
- It was the PROMISE given to MEN He would never judge the world again with the FLOOD…
- A PROMISE that surrounds [constant reminder] the THRONE of God in HEAVEN!
- God has been faithful to that promise – the world has never been flooded again…
- The next time you see a rainbow remember that God keeps His PROMISES!
- **II Corinthians 1:20** – "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen."

o 2nd – The Elders… vs. 4

▪ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones - on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting!
- Also surrounding the THRONE of God – were TWENTY FOUR thrones…
- Seated on these thrones – were TWENTY FOUR elders…
- ELDER [πρεσβύτερος] – the same term John used to describe himself – **II John 1:1**
- TITLE and POSITION [sitting on thrones] of these ELDERS – speaks of their AUTHORITY!

▪ Clothed in white robes. They had crowns of gold on their heads!
- Their APPAREL undoubtedly marks these ELDERS as MEN who have been REDEEMED…
- They have WHITE robes – which are the righteousness of Christ – **Revelation 7:14**
- And they have gold CROWNS – which are the CROWN of LIFE - **Revelation 2:10**
- So they are BELIEVERS who are in positions of AUTHORITY – but who are they!

▪ Two VIEWS…
- FIRST – generically they represent the CHURCH as a whole…
- Although obviously there are more than TWENTY FOUR believers who get to heaven!
- SECOND – specifically they are the two groups God has ordained to LEAD…
- Referring to the TWELVE tribes of Israel [OT] – and the TWELVE Apostles of Jesus [NT]!

o 3rd – The Spirit… vs. 5

▪ From the throne proceeded lightnings – thundering - and voices!
- This sets the TONE for great POWER coming OUT [ἐκ] of the [ὁ] THRONE…
- And that POWER is SPEAKING [voices] to those who are LISTENING!
- The FIRST time the word LIGHTNING [לַפִּיד] appears in the Bible – **Exodus 20:18**
- Was when God descended on Mount Sinai – to SPEAK to the nation of Israel…
- Bur it caused great FEAR in the camp – because of the display of the POWER of God!
- **Exodus 20:18** – "When the people saw it - they trembled and stood afar off."

- Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne - which are the seven Spirits of God!
  - The SOURCE of all the POWER – SEVEN lamps of FIRE burning before the THRONE…
  - Which REPRESENT [are] the [ὁ] SEVEN SPIRITS of the [ὁ] GOD…
  - SEVEN is the number of COMPLETION - emphasizing we are talking about THE Holy Spirit!
  - Peter denied Jesus THREE times just before the crucifixion…
  - But FIFTY days later – the SPIRIT came down in tongues of FIRE – **Acts 2:3**
  - And that same man stood up and preached a message so POWERFUL – the church was born!
  - God SPEAKS to us from His THRONE – He wants to give us POWER…
  - He desires to set us on FIRE – with the POWER of the HOLY Spirit…
  - Transform us from TIMID failures – to UNSTOPPABLE preachers…
  - The way He does it is by giving us the POWER [δύναμις] of the SPIRIT…
  - POWER that is available to ALL believers – all we have to do is ask – **Luke 11:13**

o 4th – The Angels… vs. 6-7
- The FOUR creatures…
  - The FINAL thing described – is the FOUR angels…
  - This is one of THREE main passages in the Bible describing these ANGELS…
  - Here in REVELATION they are called CREATURES [ζῷον] – meaning to be ALIVE…
  - The prophet Isaiah also described them – **Isaiah 6:2-3**
  - He called them the SERAPHIM [שְׂרָפִים] – meaning the ones who BURN…
  - The prophet Ezekiel gave an almost identical description – **Ezekiel 1:5-14**
  - He called them the LIVING [חַיּוֹת] – because they are full of LIFE…
  - But Ezekiel would go on to call them CHERUBIM [כְּרוּבִים] – **Ezekiel - 10:20**
  - Like the one who guarded the GARDEN after the fall of MAN – **Genesis 3:24**
  - Like those who were carved over the top of the MERCY seat on the ARK – **Exodus 25:18**
  - We are given THREE facts here about these CHERUBIM!
- FIRST - where the CHERUBIM are…
  - Before the throne there was a sea of glass - like crystal.
  - In the midst of the throne - and around the throne - were four living creatures!
  - These ANGELS were BEFORE the THRONE – that looks LIKE [NU] a sea glass – LIKE crystal…
  - They were MIDST the THRONE – and AROUND the THRONE…
  - Giving us the sense these ANGELS do not sit still – they move around a LOT!
- SECOND – what the CHERUBIM see…
  - Full of eyes in front and in back!
  - These ANGELS had LOTS of eyes – both in FRONT and in BACK!
  - Like a mom who seems to have eyes in the back their head…
  - Meaning they seem to SEE everything – you cannot sneak anything past them!
- THIRD – the faces of the CHERUBIM…
  - 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 - the fourth living creature like a flying eagle!
  - These CHERUBIM had FOUR kinds of FACES – lion – cow – man – and bird…
  - This is ONE of FOUR places in the Bible were we see this!
  - FIRST - the TWELVE tribes were commanded to camp on FOUR sides of the Tabernacle...
  - Each side had its own banner – **Number 2:34**
  - We are not told in the Bible what was on these banners...
  - But Jewish tradition tells us: Judah = Lion - Ephraim = ox - Reuben = man - Dan = eagle!
  - SECOND - Ezekiel tells us all FOUR angels had on all FOUR faces – **Ezekiel 1:10**

- THIRD - some see the same imagery again in the GOSPELS...
- Matthew - Lion [Jesus is King] - Mark - Ox [Jesus is the servant of all]
- Luke - Man [Jesus is the perfect sacrifice] - John – Eagle [Jesus is the King of Kings]
- FOUR different part of the Bible - all picturing these around the THRONE of God!

- What do all FOUR have in common – God is at the CENTER…
- The CHERUBIM circle around the LORD – Israel gathered around the LORD…
- The GOSPEL message – is all about Jesus – who is the LORD…
- The point – this life has ONE purpose – and that is to put God at the CENTER – **John 17:3**

- **3RD – WORSHIP IN HEAVEN… VS. 8-11**
  - 1st – Song of the angels… vs. 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!
      - These FOUR creatures [cherubim] – each with SIX wings full of MORE eyes…
      - Were created to SING constantly [day and night] before the LORD!
    - Their SONG…
      - SINGING – HOLY [ἅγιος] – which they repeat THREE times [Father – Son – Spirit]
      - This is the SAME song that Isaiah heard before the Lord called him – **Isaiah 6:3**
      - Calling Him the Lord [κύριος] – meaning He is the MASTER
      - THE God [ὁ θεὸς] – because He is THE one and ONLY God – **Deuteronomy 6:4**
      - THE [ὁ] Almighty – a compound word meaning ALL [πᾶς] and POWERFUL [κράτος]
      - The God who WAS [past] – IS [present] – and is to COME [future]
      - Is it no wonder our TRIUNE [holy 3x] God should be worshiped…
      - He is our MASTER – who is the ONLY God – who has ALL power…
      - Who has ALWAYS been – and will ALWAYS be forever!
  - 2nd – Casting Crowns… vs. 9-10
    - Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne…
    - Who lives forever and ever - 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!
    - As often as the ANGELS sing – worshiping Him who lived FOREVER [2x for emphasis]
    - Meaning this WORSHIP has been going on since the beginning – and will continue FOREVER…
    - And recall that the ANGELS sing a LOT - DAY and NIGHT…
    - The TWENTY FOUR elders all BOW and WORSHIP – and CAST their CROWNS!
    - This passage is the ONLY mention of CASTING crowns in the Bible…
    - It is where we get the IDEA – after our WORKS have been TESTED - **I Corinthians 3:12-14**
    - We will cast the CROWNS we received as a REWARD - before the THRONE of God…
    - But there are TWO problems with this INTERPRETATION…
    - FIRST – we do NOT know for sure who these TWENTY FOUR elders are [church?]
    - SECOND – CROWN [στέφανος] is always singular when it refers to REWARD - **Revelation 2:10**
    - So we do NOT receive CROWNS [plural]– we only receive ONE crown [singular]!
    - God is WORTHY of ALL our praise – and we may well cast our CROWN [singular] – at His feet…
    - But the idea of CROWNS [plural] as REWARDS - focuses on the wrong thing...
    - It leads us to believe we EARNED extra rewards [CROWNS] for our efforts…
    - But when we get to HEAVEN there will be NO boasting – just giving THANKS…
    - To the ONE who deserves all the GLORY – all the HONOR!
    - **Ephesians 2:9-10** – "For by grace you have been saved through faith - and that not of yourselves - it is the gift of God - not of works - lest anyone should boast."

- 3rd – Song of the Elders… vs. 11
  - Saying: You are worthy - O Lord - to receive glory and honor and power.
    - The SONG of the ELDERS emphasizes WHO the focus will be in heaven…
    - It is NOT those who have CROWNS – it is the One who sits on the THRONE…
    - He is WORTHY [ἄξιος] – to WEIGH something and see it has WEIGHT!
    - If we got to the STORE and buy some VEGETABLES – we first WEIGH them…
    - We want to find out how much WORTH they have before we BUY!
    - If God is WORTHY to be worshiped in HEAVEN – He is also WORTHY now…
    - Because He is our Lord [κύριος] – we should give Him THREE things…
    - GLORY [δόξα] – to THINK about the Lord – give Him our MIND…
    - HONOR [τιμή] – to consider Him as valuable – give Him our HEART…
    - POWER [δύναμις] – to work for Him – give Him our STRENGTH!
    - **Deuteronomy 6:5** – "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart - with all your [mind] - and with all your strength."
  - For You created all things - and by Your will they exist and were created!
    - The REASON why He is WORTHY – He CREATED all [πᾶς] things – **Hebrews 1:2**
    - **Genesis 1:3** - God SAID – the WORD of God [Jesus] - and the UNIVERSE was created…
    - Not just the things we can see – Jesus also created the ANGELS – HEAVEN…
    - **John 1:3** – "God created everything through [Jesus]… nothing was created except through him."
    - But it is also by the WILL of GOD - that ALL things still [εἰσί] EXISTS…
    - Meaning Jesus did make EVERYTHING – He keeps it all working – **Colossians 1:17**
    - We are continually bombarded with LIES about what LIFE is all about…
    - We are enticed to chase after MONEY – BEAUTY – POSSESSIONS…
    - But NONE of these things are the REASON why we were CREATED…
    - God made us – and keeps us – for one purpose – to WORSHIP Him…
    - The MEANING of life is to KNOW Jesus – because He is WORTHY!