

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 – vision 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 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 [εἶδω] – 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 [ἀρπάζω]... 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 [άτομος]
 - All believers who are in the CHURCH will be changed [μεταμορφώω] – **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 [ό] 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 [הַשְׁמִינִי]
 - 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 [ἰριζή]
 - 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 [ό] THRONE...
 - And that POWER is SPEAKING [voices] to those who are LISTENING!
 - The FIRST time the word LIGHTNING [לִפְנֵי] appears in the Bible – **Exodus 20:18**
 - Was when God descended on Mount Sinai – to SPEAK to the nation of Israel...
 - But 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 [ό] SEVEN SPIRITS of the [ό] 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 [שְׁרָפִים] – meaning the ones who BURN...
 - The prophet Ezekiel gave an almost identical description – **Ezekiel 1:5-14**
 - He called them the LIVING [חַיִת] – because they are full of LIFE...
 - But Ezekiel would go on to call them CHERUBIM [כֶּרֶבִים] – **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 parts 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**

- o 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!**

- o 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."

o 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 [ἀξιος] – 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 not 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!