



Life More Abundant Bible Study

Bible Prophecy: Revelation Chapter 4

Revelation chapter 4 takes the Apostle John and the reader into the very presence of God, within the heavenly portals where the eternal God resides. After beholding the vision of Jesus walking among the seven prophetic churches, John is shown a door that he is commanded to enter by one whose voice is as the sound of trumpets. The voice commanding John instructs him to “Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” Therefore it is yet another prophetic revelation that John is to be given for things to come.

John is said to be taken in the spirit, where he beholds a throne and One who is seated upon the throne. Describe the appearance of the One seated on a throne.

Consider that the One seated upon the throne has a rainbow above His throne in the appearance as an emerald. Who is this One and what is significant of the rainbow?

Read the following for details:

1. Genesis 9:12-16
2. Ezekiel 1:27, 28
3. Hebrews 6:13-18
4. Revelation 10:1
5. Revelation 18:1

The One seated on the throne is none other than God Himself and the rainbow is a symbol of His glory. God is identified as the God of the covenant, One who makes promises and is faithful to fulfill them based on His own immutability and inability to lie.

Surrounding the throne of God were twenty-four thrones upon which were seated 24 elders, clothed in white raiment, having crowns on their heads.

Who might these 24 elders be and to whom are they elders? Consider the following verses before giving your answer:

1. Genesis 6:2
2. Leviticus 23:15-17, 20
3. Psalm 68:18; Ephesians 4:48
4. Matthew 27:50-53
5. Revelation 5:8-10; Exodus 19:5, 6; Revelation 20:4,6; 21:3

(For further details, read the [Desire of Ages](#), “To My Father, and Your Father” pp. 833-835 and the [Great Controversy](#), pp. 647)

The actual, confirmable identify of the 24 elders is a mystery, however, by the context

of the verses provided one may deduce that the elders described are of earthly origin, called to be priests and kings of God and are of a select group that represent the great multitude of redeemed before the Lord. The elders most likely are among those whose graves were opened at the time of Christ's crucifixion and who came forth after Christ's resurrection, as first fruit with Christ of the resurrection. These make up the wave offering, presented during the typical Feasts of Harvest under the Jewish system, that antitypically were presented at Jesus' Coronation in heaven as a first fruit of the redeemed to the Father, offered by Jesus our High Priest. These like the redeemed at Christ's Second Coming, would have once had sin (leaven) in their lives but through the refining fires of the Holy Spirit, have had all traces of sin baked out. The 24 Elders' role as eyewitnesses to the proceedings in heaven, particularly those involved with God's Investigative Judgment (Daniel 7:9, 10; Revelation 15:3, 4; 16:5, 6), are most vital in confirming the truth, justice and righteousness of God's dealings towards men.

John beholds lightnings, thunderings and voices that proceeded from the throne of God as yet another manifestation of God's glory. Consider the experience of the Children of Israel before Mt. Sinai and notice the similarity in that which John beholds (Exodus 19:16-20). Consider also the experience of Elijah in the cleft of the mountain and God's Self-revelation (1 Kings 19:9-13). What can be said regarding the method in which God speaks to us?

John beholds seven lamps of fire burning before the throne of God, which are described as the seven Spirits of God. The composite vision John is beholding is that of the antitypical sanctuary, from which the earthly sanctuary was only a model. There, the lampstand with seven candlesticks and the golden altar, all contained in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary, are portrayed as seven lamps of fire burning before the throne of God.

Compare the vision given to Zechariah the prophet in the time following the Babylonian captivity and the rebuilding of the earthly temple of God (Zechariah 4:1-10). What similarities can you see in his vision?

John then beholds a sea of glass as of crystal before the throne of God. Later in the book of the Revelation, the 144,000 redeemed of God are said to stand before His throne, arrayed in a perfect square upon the sea of glass (Revelation 15:2).

The vision is climaxed with the appearance of four beasts, also called living creatures, whose appearance was such that it could not be decisively identified. John describes them as being covered with eyes, a symbol of intelligence and the ceaseless vigilance of the heavenly beings (Matthew 18:10). Further, each beast is described as having face(s) that resemble earthly creatures, namely, the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of a cow and the face of an eagle. Undoubtedly these beings, who continually abide in the presence of their Creator, were of a dazzling brilliance as with two wings

they flew, two wings they covered their faces, and two wings they covered their feet. The order of angels thus described by these four beasts is seraphim (compare Isaiah 6:2), though by description, their appearance is as the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision having four wings (Ezekiel 1:6; 10:21).

The beings are said to utter praises to the tune of "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come", all to the One seated on the throne that "liveth forever and ever". For what reason may these utterances of praise be given? Consider the following verses (2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 34:15; Isaiah 6:3, 57:15, 16; 1 Kings 8:27-29)

This tri-fold statement of awe and honor to the God of the Universe by those who see all things, being covered with eyes, may in truth be a response to the continual blessings and mercies showered upon the sons of men by God as beheld by the four beasts.

The hallowed praise of the celestial quartet of living creatures is said to be matched by a chorus given by the 24 elders. The 24 elders, upon hearing the continual praise of the living creatures are said to fall down before the throne of Him who lives forever and ever, casting their crowns before the throne while singing "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*" The bible is giving evidence to one of the most fundamental reasons why all the creation must praise God, because He is the Creator and has made all things for His pleasure. Consider the following verses in support of this truth: Isaiah 43:7-13, 44:6-8; Revelation 14:6, 7

Summary:

John the Revelator and all who read these sacred writings are privileged to be taken into the very throne room of God where the Father, the Holy God of Creation, and Supreme Potentate dwells. That the Almighty God would seek to reveal Himself and His glory to men is a subject of wonder that can only be rationalized by love. God's desire is that all will come to know, honor, and love Him as He has first loved all men through Jesus (John 3:16). Revelation Chapter 4 also introduces us to two other types of beings present in the courts of heaven, the Seraphim, called the four Living Creatures, as well as the 24 elders or heads of God's creation. We will behold other important characters in the Majesty on High in subsequent chapters of the Revelation.

For a better understanding of prophetic imagery, terms and symbols used in this bible study, refer to the study, [Interpreting Bible Prophecy](#), also located on the Life More Abundant Bible Study website.