

Revelation 4:1-4

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rev/rev-4/revelation-41-4/>

The letters to the seven churches are concluded, but John's vision continues. He is invited into the throne room where he encounters God on the throne, an indescribable sight.

Chapter 4 transitions into what most people think of when they think of Revelation: prophecies of what is to come. We have just finished the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor in Chapters 2 & 3 that had lessons for us to learn, based on what the churches had done. Now, the invitation is to be a faithful witness and follow Jesus every day. It is the same admonition in a different format:

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things" (v 1).

The previous section of John's vision was the letters to the seven churches. Now after *these things* (the information in the seven letters), he is picking back up with the vision. He describes seeing a *door standing open in heaven* (v 2).

This imagery explains the location in which John finds himself in this vision: he is *in heaven*. He sees a *door*, through which he hears a voice, which was *the first voice which I had heard* (v 1). The *first voice* that John had heard was back in Revelation 1:

"I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." (Revelation 1:10-11)

In both places, the voice is described as *like the sound of a trumpet*. This time, in Revelation 4, the *voice* is calling John to *Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things* (v 1). Remember, this vision is picking up after the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor, so *these things* would be the promises to those churches.

After John hears the voice, *Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne* (v 2). We are now in God's throne room, and God is sitting on His *throne*. He is One. We will see Jesus, the Lamb, and the Spirit, because God is three persons. But God is still One.

Much of the rest of the book of Revelation will take place here in the *throne* room. This is to remind us that God is the one who is in control. Many terrible things will take place, but God is on the *throne* through them all.

Next, John attempts to describe the *throne* room:

And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads (vv 3-4).

The *throne* room of God appears to defy description, so it is difficult to gather a full picture from John's words. *He who was sitting on the throne* is so magnificent that the best thing we have to describe the scene is colorful, shiny precious gemstones—a *jasper stone and a sardius* (possibly a ruby).

There is also a *rainbow* around the throne. This might indicate a great eminence of light. It could also be a reminder that God keeps His promises (Genesis 9:13-17; Romans 11:29).

So God is on the *throne* because He is in charge, but there are also *twenty-four elders* sitting on their own *thrones*. It is not explained who these *elders* are, but we are told that they are *clothed in white garments* and have *golden crowns on their heads*.

The *white garments* are an indication of purity. Possession of a white garment is a reward given to those who overcome—those who are victorious in living life as a faithful witness (Revelation 3:5, 18). The *golden crowns* and being seated on *twenty-four thrones* would be symbols of authority. These *elders* could be certain humans who were granted the reward promised in Revelation 3:21, that all who overcome as Jesus overcame will be given to share His throne with Him, meaning to share in His authority.

Because Jesus overcame temptation and learned obedience even unto death, He was given all authority over heaven and earth. (Philippians 2:8-9; Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 1:8, 13, 2:9-10). Jesus desires that many follow His example and share in His sufferings, to follow His ways regardless of rejection from the world.

Because Jesus was faithful to accomplish His Father's will, He was given the reward of "adoption" as a "son" ([see commentary on Hebrews 1:5](#)). Jesus desires to bring "many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10), which is to recover the "glory and honor" of reigning over the earth (Hebrews 2:5-8). Those who suffer the sufferings of Christ will gain the reward of sharing His authority (Romans 8:17b).

The *twenty-four elders* could be the most highly decorated of the overcomers. Or perhaps they are a symbol of those who overcome and share authority to reign.

Biblical Text

¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing open in heaven*, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound of a trumpet speaking with me*, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." ² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. ³ And He who was sitting *was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.* ⁴ Around the throne *were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.*