

## The 7 Churches of Revelation - A look into Heaven.

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Sister Shelbia offered the opening prayer - Our Father in Heaven we are so thankful that you let all of us get here today, we were able to get here and free to get here. Our physical health is good enough God. We feel bad for Mildred - please let her get back to herself. This is for you, God. We want you to take over for your work, your will to be done; and I thank you that every person you wanted to be here, is here. Our hearts desire is for each of these fine ladies to go home with something they can use for your will. Please anoint every person to hear what you want them to hear. Amen.

Sister Shelbia reviewed the 7 churches with us:

Your Index finger - hold it a few inches from your eye and focus. Move your finger a few inches from your face. Focus your eyes on something in the distance. Focus on your finger again.

The finger is God's word.

Look away from the word and think of a circumstance in your life.

Refocus on God's word.

Look away again and refocus on circumstance.

Repeat as many times as need to gain clarify - we have to focus on God's Word and keep it as the focus, regardless of the circumstances we have.

The **Church of EPHESUS** - the legalistic church - they dotted their I's and crossed their T's. But they lost their first love! **Remember, repent and repeat is the remedy for this.** Remember what it was like in the beginning, repent from straying away and repeat what you did in the first place.

It's easy to go into a lazy mode when we've been a Christian for a long time. We can get complacent. Remember this formula: **remember, repent and repeat is good for marriages that have gotten cold or stale.**

Ephesus was the queen of Asia - very wealthy and beautiful city.

Rev 1 - Eyes of fire is where God is searching the churches to see where they are. What are they really? When he was in the middle of the lamp stands, he was searching the churches.

What Jesus thinks of the church, no professing Christian can ignore. Jesus tells us what he thinks.

7 letters for today's churches.

Restoration begins with remembering - remember, repent - turn back on known sin, and return to the way you were in the beginning.

Jesus doesn't urge the Ephesians to feel bad about their sin, he wants them to get back to how they were. Go back and do the first works.

Remember - I was on my way to the savior and ran into serving and never got to the savior. Be sure not to leave off your personal time with the Lord, and His word.

**SMYRNA** - had to do with myrrh, which was obtained by crushing. They had a lot of persecution. Jesus had nothing negative to say about this church. They had a lot of pagan and Ceasar worship, which the city accepted readily. The city was wealthy, but the Christians didn't go along with this culture.

**PERGAMOS** - a liberal church that didn't care about doctrine. Opposite of Ephesus. They embraced anyone. They were married to the world. Roman Catholics started with Constantine coming on the scene. They married the worlds paganism. This influence increased step by step over the years. There is a list of unscriptural changes in brother Jack's book. Gradually, these changes became more prominent - AD 300 - prayers for dead, and sign of cross; see a list on pages 50-51 of the catholic paganism practices thru the ages.

The doctrine of Balaam was in the church of PERGAMOS. Balaam said, If you can't curse them, corrupt them. King of Moab hired Balaam to curse the Israelite people - Balaam's donkey (Numbers) talked to him. How did that start? The doctrine of Balaam started early in 4th century when two men were in competition to become the Roman emperor. They were going to fight. The night before the battle, Constantine saw a vision in the sky bearing a Latin cross and telling him by this sign you must conquer. Constantine bargained with Satan to join the church and Christianity became the Church of Rome. An unholy alliance resulted. Christianity was forced on subjects unwilling at sword point. Later 400 bishops met and Constantine was carried on a golden throne. There was no evidence that Constantine was ever born again. He urged the church and the world merge. The Roman Catholic Church got its start from Constantine. The reason men don't look to the church today is that she has destroyed her own influence in the world - people say there's so much world in the church that you can't tell the difference between the two. The current Pope came out and said they were accepting abortion and same sex marriage. As we watch political figures that are Catholic, becoming more liberal. The Catholic pope will be part of the one world religion. The current Pope allowed various religions to come into the Vatican and pray according to their own religion. Congress also said, amen and women (to be politically correct) at the end of a prayer. Jan Markel says Pope Francis fits the profile of the false prophet. He is accepting transgenders too. Not all the bishops in the Catholic Church agree with the pope.

The Catholic Church is not the only denomination that's accepting politically correct values. The Catholic Church is in opposition of God's word already, so this should not be a surprise for us. This is what the Bible says is going to happen. We are right there in the last of the last days. AD 607 - Boniface became the first pope. In 1900's they've added new laws to their practices.

**SARDIS** - was a dead church that died from within. Individual members died. Most theologians believe this church represents the reformation period. AD 1520 - AD 1730. During this period, the Catholic Church became intolerable. During Leo the 10th - Martin Luther tacked his 95 theses on a door of a church in Germany. Leo was pope when Luther started the reformation. Leo said every human being must be subject to the Roman Pontiff for salvation. This is when so many people were burned at the stake, crucified, and thrown to the lions because the true Christian would not say Caesar is Lord. The devil was trying to stamp out the real Christianity.

**PHILADELPHIA** - the alive church that Jesus had no criticism at all. This is our model for today. Jesus is HOLY; and Jesus is GENUINE. There's nothing fake about Jesus. They had an open door. They welcomed people. The door was opened and closed by God, like the Arc door because God was in charge of this church. Lots of good information about how we should be living today. They had little strength, which sounds like a strange thing, but they recognized this and depended on God's strength. They kept the word of God. This didn't happen for all - lots of people Dr. Jeremiah said, there are lots of people that don't know how we are to treat Israel. **We are to pray for the peace of Israel. Those who curse Israel will be cursed; and those who bless Israel will be blessed. If you don't know what the Bible says, you lose influence. The church was committed to doing these 4 things:**

- have open door,
- They had little strength - depended on the Lord,
- keep the Word of God
- Did not deny the Lord.

**He promised to keep them from the hour of trial - the great tribulation!** He said, he promised to keep us from the hour of trial. **Rev 3:10 - because thou has kept the word of my patience I will also keep thee from the trial.....the 7 years of tribulation.** He emphasized to keep us from the hour of trial that will come upon the whole world.

**LAODICEA** - however Philadelphia overlaps into today. In all of these churches there were a few people that loved the Lord and kept his word. Even in the dead church, there had to be a few. There was remnants of the church left everywhere. The church at the time Jesus comes back will be like LAODICEA.

**SMYRNA** church was mostly good. Philadelphia was good. LAODICEA was the most pathetic church - neither hot nor cold, it was Lukewarm. They had spiritual poverty - which is the tear down and fall of the church. There is nothing there - no Holy Ghost power. When God is at work in a church, people go there. Jesus said he would spew Laodicea out of His mouth. This church failed to do what it was suppose to. If the church doesn't tell you about Jesus or God, it is nothing more than a social agency. Think about the church...think about your own lives because these letters are not giving us a picture of a historical church; but it also tells us about individual Christians which will help us if we allow it.

### **Characteristics of the last church:**

Compromising church - gay people as clergy in the Methodist, Presbyterian, Southern Baptist, Lutheran, and other main stream denominations.

LAODICEA was complacent and rich. Self satisfied, but they didn't let Christ in. They enjoyed the pleasures of this world vs. a relationship with Christ. These pleasures are temporary and make us indifferent to God's salvation. The people are drawn to the entertainment center (church) will fall apart in the end. It won't last long.

### **There are 3 possible heart temps from which to choose:**

**Burning heart** - 2 men on road to Emmaus

**Luke warm heart** - afraid to be on fire for Christ - emotionalism or Luke warm

**Cold heart** - can be revived if it gets truth and light in it.

We need to be awake with what's going on in our world. Woke - cancel culture people that think the holocaust didn't happen, you wipe out reality and brain wash young people.

David Jeremiah did an excellent teaching of where we are in today's culture. Things are different today because the antichrist spirit has manufactured. He is in the earth and has a voice and things are happening fast.

### **Prescription for all of this is TO STAY CLOSE TO THE LORD. OUR SPIRITUAL NAKEDNESS AND BLINDNESS REQUIRES US TO STAY CLOSE TO THE LORD.**

**Freemasons** - Amir's books - the Last Hour. Freemasonry is NOT compatible with true Christianity.

Keith Harris wrote the book, **THE MASONIC/CHRISTIAN CONFLICT EXPLAINED**. The word is this is a good social organization, but the bottom line is they don't know how it got started and what the higher ranks do. It's a secret organization with a secret handshake.

Jeannie shared that her first husband got saved and quit the masons. He was told that once a mason, always a mason. He had an apron in the closet and told her not to put the apron on him when he died. He would not go to church with his family, but he went to the Masonic Lodge instead of a church.

Jimmy Swaggart works with a pastor, Jim Nations....who wrote a DVD about Masonry. He had been in the Mason's, but got saved and got out of it.

It amazes Dawn the day that Christ died and the vale was ripped and the priests didn't fall on their knees and repent.

**Thyatira and PERGAMOS** - the church and the world got married in these two churches.

Rev is a book of mysterious signs and wonders but the prophesy within is more than just the end of days....delivered by John. The recipients are the early Christians. The letters, like the book of Rev is prophetic. 7 churches. 7 letters. 7 messages for today's believers.

We will have an opportunity to pass this on to somebody.

#### **CHAPTER 4: THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD:**

When we met the last time and we closed our Bible on the 3rd chapter of the book of Revelation, we ended with what we know as the church age.

In the second and 3rd chapters of Revelation, we looked at the 7 churches of Revelation which represent historically, the period of time from Pentecost all the way to the rapture, which is yet to come.

And remember, the last church of the 7 churches is the church of LAODICEA and that's the church the Bible teaches us will be on the earth when Jesus Christ comes back.

So we are at the end of the second section of the book of Revelation and we're only in the 3rd and 4th chapters.

The first thing we are going to learn about the churches is its exit from the earth.

#### **THE CHURCH'S EXIT FROM EARTH**

Although the rapture is not specifically mentioned in the book of Revelation, it is clearly eluded to here in this section of the book and I want to show you how that works with your Bibles open to the 4th chapter.

First of all, here is some reasons why we know that the church goes to heaven, if I can say it in this way: between the 3rd chapter and the 4th chapter. Between the 3rd chapter, where the church is on the earth; and chapter 4 where we see the church is in heaven. Somehow the church got up there and we know how that happened. We know that takes place thru what is called the rapture. How do we know that's true by studying the book of Revelation?

Follow my logic will you, as we look at the scripture:

#### **A. BECAUSE OF THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

The inspired outline of the book of Revelation is in the Chapter 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

This 3 fold division of the book has been noted earlier and we've actually completed now our study of the first two sections.

The first section, which is described as the things which you have seen: Remember, we saw the vision of Christ which John saw in the first 18 verses of the first chapter.

Then the second section, which is described as the things which are - presently, which includes all the material on the 7 churches. The panoramic view of the church which spans the time between Pentecost and the rapture.

Then the third section, is designated (now watch this) **Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. "the things which must take place after this."** This is that section of the book we are about to begin to study. These are the things for the future.

This major section of the book of Revelation covers Chapter 4 through Chapter 22.

Notice what it says in that last phrase in **verse 19: ..... "the things which will take place after**

*this.”*

Read verse 1 of Chapter 4: ***Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.***

The same phrase in the 19th verse of Chapter 1 that we have in the first verse of chapter 4, linking those two things together.

The 4th chapter is the beginning of the prophecy of John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, about all the things that are going to take place after we go to heaven in the rapture.

And what's going to happen when we're in heaven? What's going to take place up there? What's going to take place down here?

So chapter 4 introduces the events that are going to take place after the church has gone to heaven. In other words, chapter 4 is the events that will take place when the rapture happens and we're in heaven.

When we have completed the letters to the churches, which we have just completed, we have finished everything about the church on earth.

And we are going to notice that the sequence of events in the book of Revelation tell us that something dramatic has happened between chapter 3 and chapter 4.

When we end with chapter 3, the church is on the earth; but when we start chapter 4, the church is in heaven.

The only thing that is possible to explain that is that the rapture has happened and God has come to take His own to be with Him.

Now here's another interesting thing that helps us to realize this is true:

#### **THE SILENCE CONCERNING THE CHURCH - CHAPTERS 4-19:**

You would expect, if the church is still on the earth during chapters 4 thru 19, there would be some writing about it. Here's an amazing truth. The word church appears 19 times in the first 3 chapters, and it does not appear 1 time in relationship to the church, in all of the rest of the book of Revelation. In other words, there is 19 times the church is mentioned in chapters 1-3; and there is not one mention of the church from chapter 4 through the end of the book of Revelation.

You remember this little phrase that comes at the end of the churches? Notice, Revelation 3:6 says, He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Do you remember this verse? Its said over and over in the first 3 chapters.

Now, that's only mentioned a couple of other times in the rest of the book, but its not the same.

Look at ***Revelation 13:9 and notice what it says. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.***

And there's nothing about the churches!

You see friends, when you go thru the first 3 chapters, you have the church here on this earth. But when you get to chapter 4, something dramatic has happened. The church has exited the world! The church is now in heaven.

If you follow the sequence of events and the silence concerning the church, you will notice this very clearly.

#### **THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAS GONE FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN**

If you read carefully what we have before us in the 4th chapter, watch this: The Holy Spirit is said to be in the midst of the churches in Revelation 2 & 3. Now look at verse 5 of Revelation chapter 4.

***Rev 4:5***

***And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thundering's and voices: and there were***

***seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.***

The Holy Spirit is in heaven. There's been a change in the place where the Holy Spirit goes. The Holy Spirit no longer has his dwelling place on the earth. Why is that? Where does the Holy Spirit live on the earth? He lives in us, right? Now he's available, obviously, in other ways, but basically the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to live in believers! So you would expect that when Believers are gone, the Holy Spirit is gone too!

The Holy Spirit does not work during the tribulation like He does during the church age, but is the Holy Spirit on the earth during the tribulation? Yes, He is! But He only selectively comes upon people for certain events. Its like He did in the Old Testament. The in dwelling Holy Spirit goes to heaven when the church goes to heaven. When we look inside the door in Revelation, Chapter 4, guess what? The Holy Spirit's there. He's at the throne! He's not down here. He's up there! In Paul's 2nd letter to the Thessalonians Church, he helps us understand that the Holy Spirit is involved in this sequence of events. ***II Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity (lawlessness) doth already work: only he who now letteth (restrains) will let (do so), until he be taken out of the way.***

**Class, who is the restrained in the world today? Its the HOLY SPIRIT! He is the one who restrains evil.** One of the reasons why the tribulation is held on earth is that when you take the restrained away, there's no one left to hold back evil. You think its bad today? **My friend, you'd better examine your heart to make sure you're in Christ cause you don't want to be here during the tribulation.**

**When the Holy Spirit is gone and there's no longer any Holy Spirit whose restraining evil, there will be unbridled iniquity that will make what's going on right now look like Sunday school. The Holy Spirit is in heaven.** Those are just some simple things that you notice when you study this book. Let's just think about it. The events in the book of Revelation are explained to us. The things to which have happened, the things that are happening now; and the things that will happen.

And then when you get to chapter 4, the church is not mentioned on earth. Not one time! Even though its mentioned 19 times in the first 3 chapters as the church being on earth.

And the Holy Spirit is gone from the earth. Where is the Holy Spirit? When we look in the door, we see the Holy Spirit in heaven.

Now notice something else. Do you remember what the Bible says about the rapture? There's certain things that are going to happen with the rapture.

**D. THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN REVEL 4:1-2, I CORINTHIANS 15, and I THESSALONIANS**

**4** There seems to be little question that Rev 4 is a picture of the raptured saints. In other passages that refer to the rapture, and there's really 2 major ones in the New Testament, I Thessalonians 4 and I Corinthians 15.

Keep your thinking cap on, I'm not going to dwell on this long, but I want you to see the similarities. What kind of things are going to happen when the rapture takes place?

The Bible says, the first thing that happens is there's going to be

1. **A VOICE - of the archangel.** ***Read Rev 4:1....and the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet.... I THESSALONIANS 4:16 says 'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel.... There's a voice in the rapture passage of I Thessalonians 4; and there's a voice in Revelation chapter 4.***

What else do we know about the rapture?

2. **THE VOICE IS GOING TO BE A TRUMPET!**

Remember, and the trump shall sound. Read ***Revelation 4:1....And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet....***

**I THESSALONIANS 4:16...For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven....with the trumpet**

of God.

There's a trumpet in Revelation 4, there's a trumpet in I Thessalonians 4.

What else do we know? The Bible says not only is there going to be a voice and a trumpet, but there is going to be

3. **A CHANGE: Revelation 4:2 says *Immediately (John was speaking), I was in the Spirit....*** In the spirit is not talking about being a spiritual person, its rather an expression that describes the transformation in shape and structure into another dimension. In other words, John says, I wasn't in the body when I saw thru heaven, I was in the Spirit. This was a spiritual experience.

What do we read about the rapture in ***I CORINTHIANS 15:52-53? 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.***

The reason I'm giving you all of this is because I want you to know that something dramatic has happened between chapters 3 and 4. The church, which was present during chapters 1-3 is no longer on earth. We have gone to heaven. We are in heaven and we're going to see our presence there in just a moment.

How do we know these changes have happened? Because of all these ancillary things, I am absolutely convinced that if you read the book of Revelation, the way it was outlined by Almighty God Himself, you will have to understand that after the 3rd chapter, a dramatic shift takes place and the church is no longer on the earth. The church is in heaven. The tribulation hasn't started but its about to start.

Now if you don't understand what that means Friends, it means that we are pre-tribulational. That means the church is going to go to heaven before the tribulation happens on earth.

And that's a good place for an amen!

Whenever I'm with people who don't believe that and I'm with people who believe we are going to go thru the tribulation, some of them even think we're in it right now.

But they haven't read Rev 4 - 19 or they wouldn't make such a statement. You think we're in the tribulation right now? As I said before, this ain't nothing compared to what's going to happen!

What we need to understand is "this is the framework for the rest of the book of Revelation." Here's the framework:

The church of Jesus Christ, made up of all true believers, that's you and me if we've trusted Christ. The tribulation is about to start on earth. 7 years of hell on earth, which is described in detail in chapters 4 - 19.

But we will not be here to experience that for the Bible says '***ROMANS 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus"***'. We will be taken to heaven in the rapture, which could happen by the way, at any moment, even before we are finished with this service and that would be alright with me.

So between chapters 3 and 4 the rapture happens. The church is in heaven. We look thru an open door now, into heaven and Rev 4:1-11 is what John sees as he in visions this time in the future and he looks thru the open door.

***Rev 4:1-11. 1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.***

***2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.***

***3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.***

***4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.***

**5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thundering's and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.**  
**6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.**  
**7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.**  
**8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.**  
**9 And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,**  
**10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,**  
**11 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 first thing we've looked at is the churches exit from the earth and now in these first verses, we see **THE CHURCH'S EXISTENCE IN HEAVEN:**

And now you can follow along in your Bible's and you won't have to jump around very much, and you'll be able to see the argument that's here.

**Rev 4:1 says this, John is speaking as he writes: 'John the apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says The things about the church that we've already studied: 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."**

The very first verse of this chapter describes an open door in heaven. Twice before in the book of Revelation, we've read about an open door. Remember the letter to the PHILADELPHIA church said there was the door of opportunity open to them. And in the letter to the LOADICEANS we have a picture of Jesus Christ standing outside the door of the church, knocking and trying to gain entrance into the church that had become cold and lacking for the Lord. But here we have a door that's open into heaven. The Bible gives us this picture of heaven so we have an idea of what's going to happen there. The door is open into heaven only twice that I'm aware of in the book of Revelation.

First of all, **Rev 4:1 says, 'after these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven.....'**

**In Rev 19:11, we see 'Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse...**

Watch carefully - in chapter 4, a door to heaven opens and somebody goes up; in chapter 19, the door to heaven opens and somebody comes down.

In chapter 4, the door opens and John is invited as a representative of the church to come up to heaven; in chapter 19 we're told (and you know this story) that one day Jesus Christ is going to come back to this earth riding on a white horse and He's going to come back riding out of a door in heaven and take control of planet earth. So the door to heaven opens twice - once when some people go up and once when Jesus comes down!

The key word in chapter 4 is the word throne. The word THRONE is one of the key words in the book of Revelation. Its found in the very beginning of the book in the 1st verse of the 4th chapter; and its at the very end of the book, the 3rd verse of the 22nd chapter.

The word THRONE occurs 46 times in the book of Revelation. In chapter 4, its found 14 times.

**The THRONE of GOD depicts the majesty of GOD! THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE.**

One of the great themes of the book of Revelation is the sovereignty of God over all the world; and I love that theme especially now because when you look around today, it looks like nobody is in charge. Everything's out of control. Every day you read the newspaper and it seems like its worse than it was the day before. And you wonder where is this all going; and I just want to tell you



when you look up into the heavens - when you look thru the open door there is a THRONE there and **ALMIGHTY GOD IS ON THE THRONE!**

I'd just like you to know that. Its a great encouragement to me that somebody in charge. It may not look like he's running things because he's granted some space to people here to do their own thing. But He hasn't lost control, I promise you. There is a THRONE in heaven and that THRONE is occupied by GOD ALMIGHTY!

***Psalm 103:19 says it this way, "The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all."***

***Psalm 9:7-8 says ....'The Lord shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment. He shall judge the world in righteousness, and He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.'***

Today, in the church age of the church, we come to the throne, don't we? We call it the Throne of Grace. We come to the throne of Grace. The Bible tells us we are to come humbly to find help for our needs.

***Hebrews 4:16 says 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.***

But the throne in heaven that we are about to envision is not a throne of grace. The day of grace is over. The church age is finished. The church no longer is in a period of grace. When we look into heaven in Chapter 4, the age of grace is done. The day of judgment is at hand and the throne in heaven that we are about to see and describe from Rev 4 is not the throne of grace, believe me. **This is the THRONE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT!**

Now, let me give you the key that will help you stay focused. Everything from now on is about the THRONE!

About things that happen on the throne, things that happen around the throne, things that happen in front of the throne, all of its related to the throne. As you look into the door of heaven the one thing that just grabs your attention immediately, is there is a throne right inside the door. Its magnificent and everything we are going to see as described in chapter 4 in Revelation is all about the throne.

Let's begin:

**A. SEATED UPON THE TRONE IS THE TRIUNE GOD. John says**

***4: 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.***

***3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardius stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.***

Now we know that this is GOD! The Bible tells us this is **GOD, THE FATHER, in HEAVEN.** Seated upon his throne. And John uses some stones to tell us what it is like. He said that He was like a Jasper stone in appearance. And we don't know for sure what that means. I think we call that diamonds sometimes. Sometimes we call them other things. The Bible says that when you saw God upon the Throne, he looked like a Jasper stone. And the word Jasper has connected with the kinda material the Bible described as being on the streets of heaven. So its kinda like a clear glass. The Bible says the streets of heaven are like gold, but its not the gold you have around your wrist. The streets of heaven are translucent. You can see thru the streets of gold. Can you imagine walking down the streets of heaven and looking down and being able to see thru the streets of glass? And a Jasper stone is kinda like that quality. And the Bible says its magnificent and its used here to describe God because there's no other way to describe it. You have to find some way to describe God. He's on this throne and the brilliance of who he is - you can only describe it in terms of these beautiful stones. Now the Bible says when you look in thru the door of heaven, there is the throne of God and seated on the throne is the triune God, primarily God the Father.

Notice Secondly, **B. SURROUNDING THE THRONE IS A RAINBOW**

***Rev 4:3 ....'and there is a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.'***

Are you painting this picture in your head? You gotta recreate this. You have to have a little

imagination. Sanctified I hope. Recreate this picture. There is a throne as you walk thru the door, Almighty God's presence is so amazing you can't look at it. So brilliant. And then all of sudden you realize around the throne is a rainbow. The rainbow is different shades of emerald green. It's not just a half rainbow like we see on this earth. The rainbow in heaven is a complete rainbow. A circular rainbow. The rainbow was a reminder in the Old Testament of Gods great covenant with Noah that he would never again destroy all the world by means of the flood. The rainbow here is a reminder to John that even though judgment is about to fall on this earth, GOD will still be merciful. Usually the rainbow comes after the storm, here in heaven you see the rainbow before the storm. The Bible says here is Almighty God on the throne; and this emerald rainbow surrounding the throne.

Seated upon the throne is the triune God. Surrounding the throne is a rainbow of emeralds.

### And **C. SITTING AROUND THE THRONE ARE THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS**

**Notice Rev 4:4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats (thrones): and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.**

Who in the world are these guys? Who are the 24 elders? And of course, if you've read a lot of literature on the book of Revelation, you've probably read as many interpretations of that as I have, but I want to tell you, I know who they are!

The Bible tells us the answer to these questions if you just read it. Let me show you who the 24 elders are:

The 24 elders, seated upon the 24 thrones do not represent the angels or the 12 tribes of Israel. The elders represent the church age. They represent the saints. How do I know that? Well, let me just help you with it. First of all, I know it because of

#### **1. THE PRAISE THAT IS ON THEIR LIPS**

The 24 elders are part of the choir of heaven. And over in the 5th chapter of the book of Revelation, we are given an opportunity to hear them sing.

Listen to these words - **Rev 5:8-9 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts (living creatures) and four and twenty (24) elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials (bowls) full of odors (incense), which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;**

Who does this sound like people? It sounds like the church, doesn't it? Redeemed out of every tongue and every tribe and every nation. All of our missionaries, all over the world, preaching the gospel; and out of all of these nations and all of these languages, people coming to Christ and they are part of the universal church. And the universal church is represented in heaven by this picture by the 24 elders.

**Rev 5:9-10 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;**

**10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.**

Who is that? Its the church. One of these days we are going to reign with Jesus in the millennium. When the Lord Jesus comes back thru that door on a white horse, the Bible says in the end of the age, for the battle of Armageddon, He's going to be accompanied by His angels and by all the saints. That's you and me if we're Christians. We're going to come back to this earth and we're going to reign on this earth, so I'm pretty sure. In fact I'd like to be very dogmatic that the 24 elders who are in heaven, represent the church of Jesus Christ and what are they doing? They're gathered around the throne to worship God.

By the praise on their lips we know this is the church. But, next notice...

#### **2. BY THE CLOTHES ON THEIR BODIES**

We know this is the church. Read again, **Rev 4: 4 - Notice how the elders are dressed. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and**

**twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment(robles); and they had on their heads crowns of gold.**

I remember once when I taught on the battle of Armageddon I mentioned the fact that when we come back with the Lord to fight the battle of Armageddon, we're the saints that come back with him. And the angels. It says in the later part of Revelation that the saints are dressed in white. And somebody asked me, who goes to war dressed in white? And I had to respond to them, we're not going to go to war, we're going to watch the war. How many of you know Jesus doesn't need us to fight for Him? He just brings us back so we can have ringside seats for the final engagement. That's it, we're spectators. We don't fight! He does this with the word of His mouth; and its done. He doesn't need us! We can dress in white and watch.

But over and over again in the scriptures, it speaks of the church of Jesus Christ dressed in white. Notice **Rev 19:7-8** **7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour (glory) to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife (the church) hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness (righteous acts) of saints.**

So we know the 24 elders are the church because of the praise that's on their lips; and the clothes that's on their bodies.

And thirdly, we know this is the church because **OF THE CROWNS THAT'S ON THEIR HEADS** **Rev 4:4 says, 'and they had crowns of gold on their heads'...**

Take note of the crowns they wear upon their heads...There are two kinds of crowns in Revelation. They are identified by two Greek words:

One is the crown of a ruler or a King. **That is a DIADEM ' CROWN OF GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY'**

**The other is the crown of a victor. That's called A STEPHANOS.**

This is like those that were awarded in the Greek games when someone won a race or an athletic contest.

**The word crown used in this passage is the second word. Its STEPHANOS.** These crown of gold have been awarded to the elders who are seated around the throne, who represent the church. This in itself, eliminates everyone except the church because the angels or the Old Testament saints haven't been rewarded or judged yet. They couldn't have any crowns. They haven't had their day in court.

**Each of these three elements describe the elders that are before the throne.**

**The praise that's on their lips.**

**The clothes that's on their bodies.**

**And the crowns that's on their heads.**

We know who these people are. This is the church of Jesus Christ. These people Represent you and me. They are there in advance of us. They're there to represent us. They're there to picture us.

Isn't this interesting how this all ties together? If you go back to the churches that were on earth in chapters 2 and 3, I'll just read this to you and you can see how cool all of this is if you study the Bible.

**Revelation 3:21 "To Him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne.....**

**The church was promised a throne.**

**Revelation 3:18..."I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed....**

The church on planet earth was given a promise of white raiment.

And then in **Revelation 2:10..."Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."**

**The 24 elders represent the church so lets just back up for a moment and take a breathe and notice what we've seen.**

We haven't been able to walk thru the door of heaven literally, but we've been able to look into

heaven. When we walked in the door, we saw a throne. It was magnificent. And Almighty God was setting on the throne and it was so brilliant that all we could see is like a Jasper stone - translucent gold. And the Bible says that around the throne were 24 elders. Around the throne of God in heaven was the church. Did it ever dawn on you, men and women, that if you are believer in Jesus Christ...if you've asked Jesus Christ to be your savior that when you get to heaven, you're going to get to be around the throne of Almighty God? What an awesome thought that is. But let's go on. Seated upon the throne is the triune God. Surrounding the throne is a rainbow, setting around the throne are the 24 elders. Notice Rev 4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thundering's and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

#### **D. SURROUNDING FORTH FROM THE THRONE ARE LIGHTNINGS AND THUNDERS AND VOICES**

**REV 4:5 - 'And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thundering, and voices....**

Do you remember when the Lord met with the Israelites at Mte. Sinai and gave them the law? And Moses went up and got the law and came down - and do you remember what the Bible says happened at that time?

**EXODUS 19:16 - And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice (sound) of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.**

That's the way it was when the law was given. Because the law has been so immeasurably broken the sounds will occur again from heaven as almighty God is about to move to this earth and mete out judgment on those who have rejected Him and His Word.

Because of Jesus the throne of lightnings and thunders has become the throne of grace for us. In the presence of God the Christian has an attitude of confidence, not fear; but I'm glad I'm going to be in heaven with God when the throne begins to spew out lightning and thundering against the rebellion that's on the earth.

In Rev 4, the church is in heaven and the throne of God is in heaven. But the throne of God in heaven in Rev 4 is not the throne of grace. It's the throne of judgment. And this is a recurring theme throughout the book of Revelation.

Let me give you a couple of representative verses:

**Rev 8:5 - And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thundering's, and lightnings, and an earthquake.**

**Rev 11:19 - And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thundering's, and an earthquake, and great hail.**

**Rev 16:18 - And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.**

Part of the judgment during the tribulation period (for those who have rejected the Lord, who have rebelled against Him) is going to be these cataclysmic things that are going to happen as described in these verses as God metes out His judgment upon this earth.

All of this is spelled out in gruesome details in some of the chapters that are before us in the book of Revelation.

When John saw thru the open door in heaven, he saw the triune God of heaven circled by a full rainbow; and out of that throne were coming these awesome sounds and sights. They were a reminder to John that God was about to judge this world for rejection of His Son, Jesus Christ. And those who have not rejected His Son are in heaven with Him, so they will not be a part of the judgment.

Once again, let me go back from the beginning - seated upon the throne is the triune God. Surrounding the throne is a rainbow. Setting around the throne are the 24 elders. Sounding forth from the throne are lightnings, and thunders, and voices.

Now notice **Rev 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in**

***the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.***

### **SPREAD BEFORE THE THRONE IS A SEA OF GLASS**

We're getting some more ancillary details about this picture. Although it is not possible to determine the actual meaning of the sea of glass it is a common description of the area in heaven which surrounds the throne of God. Its almost like Don't come into this zone! This is a protected zone around the throne of God.

***EXODUS 24:10 - And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven (the very heavens) in his clearness.***

***It is possible that this is the same material as I mentioned that will be in the streets of gold. But as you look into heaven now, back up for a couple of steps. You see the throne and the rainbow and the thundering's and lightnings and the sounds coming from the throne and the 24 elders are gathered as near to the throne as they can be. But as you look you notice that around the throne is this sea of glass, sorta like a protective sea of glass that makes this throne stand out in its picture. Its possible that this material is the same material mentioned in Rev 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.***

Remember what I told you, the streets of gold are not like just 24 carrot Gold. This is like a gold that is transparent, like something more beautiful than you and I could ever imagine. If you like jewelry and precious stones, you are not going to believe what Heaven is all about. In fact, I'll just give you a little nugget to think about as you go forward. The Bible says the gates of heaven are made out of pearl. And I remembered as I studied this, I realized the gates of heaven are not made out of many pearls together, but the gates of heaven are A PEARL! The huge gates of heaven are just one pearl. I have to believe...all I could think about is, that is some kind of oyster! I mean. You know God can make pearls out of anything. He doesn't need oysters to make pearls. The Bible says the gates of heaven are out of pearl. The streets are out of translucent glass. The throne is surrounded by this incredible translucent glass.

***Notice in REV 4:6-8 6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.***

***7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.***

***8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.***

### **F. SITUATED IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE ARE THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES.**

The picture is getting more full. Now, who are these four living creatures? Who are they? Well I've read all the interpretations. Some people think they represent the 4 gospels. I guess you could make the case for that but I don't know what you'd do with that after you get it done cause what are the 4 gospels going to do in heaven?

No, again, remember I've told you that the book of Revelation is a self interpreting book. Do you know how to understanding the book of Revelation? When you see something that you don't understand, get a concordance and see if that something appears any place else in the Bible. And see if wherever else it appears in the Bible, you might get a clue as to what it is.

So I'm going to do your homework for you and tell you I've done that. And there's another passage like this that is in the book of Ezekiel 1: and this passage tells us who the living creatures are in heaven.

**Ezekiel 1:4-7. 4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, (with raging fire) and a fire enfolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.**

**5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.**

**6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.**

**7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass.**

The description of the beast in Ezekiel 1 is a little different than that which is in Revelation 4, but we are dealing with the same creatures. The creature in Ezekiel 1 are the same as the living creatures in Revelation 4.

And a few chapters later, Ezekiel tells us who these creatures are. **Ezekiel 10:14-15 14 And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.**

**15 And the cherubim were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar.**

**Ezekiel said when he saw them, one of them was a Cherub and he said all of them were the Cherubim. They were the angels.**

Standing in the midst of the throne of Almighty God are the angels. And just as there were cherubim and seraphim before the Garden of Edens door when the couple was kicked out, in heaven John sees this awesome throne and on the throne was this Triune God and circling is the awesome throne and a green rainbow and around the throne are the representatives of the church, the 24 elders. And out of the throne comes thunder and lightning and voices; and all around the throne is a glass like substance that separates the throne from the other creatures. But standing in the midst of the throne are 4 angelic beings who are about to enter into the judgment of the world.

How many of you know that when God judges the world during the tribulation, He uses His angels to carry out the judgment?

Listen to this...

**Rev 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying (with a voice like thunder), Come and see.**

**Rev 6:3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second (living creature) beast say, Come and see.**

**Rev 6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.**

**Rev 6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.**

And as you go down in the chapter, you will see that the 4 living creatures are involved in the execution of judgment on this earth during the tribulation.

And they are now standing with God in heaven and lightning and thunder and voices are heard and God is about it dispatch these 4 living creatures to the earth to carry out the judgment upon this earth which is so righteously deserved. So the 4 living creatures are angels that do specific things for God. And the first thing they do is execute judgment, but they also lead in worship!

They are involved in one of the great scenes in heaven and that is

## **G. SINGING TO THE ONE ON THE THRONE ARE THE CREATURES AND THE ELDERS**

And that leads us to the last couple of verses in chapter 4. Now watch carefully.

**Rev 4:9-11 9 And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him (God) that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,**

**10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him**

**that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**

Ladies and gentlemen, this is nothing more than a heavenly choir and John looks thru the door of heaven and he sees it.

Notice that the theme of the praise is basically the creatorship of Jesus Christ. God is about to destroy the earth, created by his Son, but before he does, he wants to make sure that everybody understands that the problem with the earth is not the one who created it. He created a perfect world. And so praise in heaven is to the creatorship of Jesus Christ.

I wish I could create in my mind the awesomeness of this scene.

John is seeing all of the threatening and the thunder and the lightning; and all of a sudden as if captured by the majesty of it, the angels began to say Rev 4:8...Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!

And the representatives of the church, the 24 elders, hear the angels begin to sing and they fall down on their knees and they take the crowns that they have just been given in judgment for their faithfulness to Almighty God and they take the crowns off of their heads and they bring them to Jesus and to the Father; and they lay their crowns at the throne as a gift of love to the one that has loved them so much. And they throw them at the feet of God and of Christ and they began to sing. And this is what they sing.... **Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (by your will) they are (exist) and were created.**

Sometimes I hear people say there's no sense of working for a crown because you are not going to have it anyway. Its gonna belong to the Lord. And you're gonna get this crown and this passage says you're just gonna give it back to Him, but the Bible says we are going to get to wear those for a while - those crowns. And we'll be walking around in heaven as the church and all of a sudden the angels are going to break forth with Rev 4:8....Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty...

And the first thing we are going to want to do in humility and honor to our Savior is take our crowns off of our head and bring them as a gift to our Lord.

When the angels begin to sing its going to trigger something in the heart. We'll run to the throne of God and fall down on our knees and begin to worship the Lord; and the only act of worship that we can give to the Lord is to take the crown that's been given to us off our head, and throw it at His feet.

Lord, I give you this as an act of worship to you for all you have done for me and you say 'well Pastor Jeremiah, I'm not interested in trying to get a crown'.

I'll tell you one thing my friend, I WANT ONE!

I don't want to be empty handed when that moment comes. I want to have something that I can take off my head and throw at the feet of Jesus. And say thank you for all that you have done!

Don't let anyone ever minimize the importance of your crown.

I don't know about you, but I don't want to be left out at that moment!

I'm gonna ask God to show me how to get a crown! Hope I'm working on a couple of them already, but if I'm not, I'm gonna do the research I need to do cause I want to be in on that ceremony. I want to be in on that ceremony!

Well, let me bring our study to a conclusion by pointing out something very interesting. Did you know that the angels praise God differently than the elders do? The angels glorify God in a declaration and I want you to notice 2 verses in how different they are, because this is really important to what we are about to do guys.

**Rev 4:8 says .... "holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"**

These are the angels praising God in the third person. The angles are talking about who God is, and they are saying He is Almighty, He was, He is, and He is to come. That's who God is. That's what the angels are singing.

But watch what happens when the church gets involved. **Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure**

***they are and were created.***

That's second person praise! There is an intimacy in the worship of the church that the angels cannot participate in. The angels cannot worship God the same way we do because they don't know anything at all about redemption. The angels have never been saved, because the angels have never been lost!

And they can't appreciate what it's like to have been lost and then have Almighty God love you so much that His Son would come to this earth and pay the penalty for your sin so you could be saved. So the angels, they can sing praise about who God is; but they really can't sing praise to God as the church does. We worship God with our hearts and minds because we know that He sent Christ into this world to give His blood for us that we might be redeemed. We know that heaven is ours because of Christ's death and resurrection; and Peter understood this difference because in his first letter, he said ***1 PETER 1:12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.***

The angels desire to look into salvation but they can't. They don't understand it. You can't understand what it's like to be saved unless you've been saved. And you'll never be able to praise God in heaven unless you've been saved because you won't be there.

But if you're there because of the church your worship to God will be a lot different than the angels. They'll be singing one set of lyrics and you'll be singing another one. They'll be singing about God but you'll be singing to Him.

When it comes our turn to worship, it's not enough for us to talk about who God is in the third person; we have to fall on our faces and say "Lord, you are worthy. You are deserving. You are the one. There's an intimacy in second person praise that goes beyond talking about who God is, describing what He is like, second person praise is directed to God Himself and only the redeemed can do that. If you are not redeemed you can't know anything about second person praise!

Over the years as the pastor, I've watched this carefully as an observer and as a participator. When we sing to the Lord, it's a whole different thing than when we sing about the Lord. Actually, one day I took the hymn book that we used to have in our church and I went thru and marked every hymn that is second person praise. And there are many of them. All of these courses that are directed to the Lord, all of this worship, and I instructed our worship team to find as many of those as you can find because when you worship the Lord, when your worship is directed to Him, and it's not just music about Him, something happens in the experience and you actually feel the presence of the Lord come down in the situation. I do believe that the Lord inhabits the praises of his people!

Pauline says that she watched Jonathan Kahn last night and he says worship is like **the kiss of God.**

**The word Awesome is reserved for God.**

Awesome means extremely impressive or daunting. Inspiring, displaying all or worthy of all. In a striking, literal sense, only God is truly Awesome!

There were a lot of things that were very thought provoking and we have looked forward to the throne room of God and the thing I appreciated is that he pointed out that the one who set on the throne is God; but I've read that it's God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit on the throne. Jesus sets on the right hand of God where he intercedes for us.

The church has their crown's so they have already received their awards before CHRIST returns to the earth. One of the first things that happens is that we will participate in the marriage of the lamb.

When a person dies, they sleep in the Lord until He calls us in the rapture. Your body goes to sleep in the grave. To be absent from the body, is to be with the Lord.... your spirit raises up to heaven to be with the Lord. Jesus told the man next to Him on the cross, that today 'you will be with me in paradise'.