

Revelation 4

4 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."

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. 3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. 4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. 5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. 7 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, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. 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!"

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the 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, saying:

11 "You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created."

Second Vision: ch. 4-16. Structured around the symbols:

- I. Four part introduction of the second vision:
 1. 'In the Spirit' (see also 1:10; 17:3, 21:9)
 2. Someone (an angel: 17:3, 21:9; or a voice like a trumpet, 1:10, 4:1)
 3. 'Come up' (4:1, 17:1, 21:9)
 4. 'I will show' (4:1, 17:1, 21:9)
- II. Throne Room: 4-16 all happens in the throne room:
 1. Seven seals (God holds back His wrath)
 2. Seven trumpets (alarm: warning of the coming of God's wrath)
 3. Seven bowls (God's full wrath)
- III. 4:5 : lightnings, thunderings, voices: See 8:5 (7th seal), 11:19 (7th trumpet); 16:18 (7th bowl (all four times the same words!))

- IV. Ch. 15: Back to the throne room in heaven:
1. Sea of glass (4:6 and 15:2)
 2. Harps (5:8 and 15:2)
 3. Bowls (5:8: prayers of the saints; and 15:7 : God's wrath)
 4. 4:2 : Him seated on the throne; 16:17 : voice from the throne: it is done!

Question:

The Book of Revelation is beautifully built around the symbols. It truly is a work of art, just like the entire Bible. Do we see that enough? How much do we focus on enjoying the beauty of God's Word? Or are we too much focused on 'what is the application'?

The Throne Room in Heaven:

4:1 : open door: see 3:8

4:1 : Voice like a trumpet, "Come up here": Exodus 19 and 20

4:1 : the first voice: ESV: *the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet*, see 1:10

4:2 : In the Spirit: See Ezekiel

4:2 : throne in heaven: see 1:4, 3:21 ↔ throne of Satan (2:13)

Structure vs. 3-10:

Vs. 3: He Who sat ON the throne

Vs. 4: AROUND the throne

Vs. 5: FROM the throne ← Centre

Vs. 6: BEFORE the throne

Vs 9-10: Him Who sits ON the throne

4:3 : He Who sat there : Psalm 11, 47, 93, 103, 1 Kings 22, Isaiah 6, Daniel 7: God Jasper and Sardius

Exodus 24:9-10: like sapphire stone, like the very heavens in its clarity.

Jasper: clear as crystal

Sardius (from Sardis): deep red colour: sign of God's fiery holiness.

Rainbow: not correct. IRIS: coloured circle. Here: like emerald: soft green

Stone colours describe God's majesty.

4:4 : Twenty Four thrones, with twenty four elders:

Around the throne: as in a semi-circle, see 4:10

Who are the 24 elders?

- Elders: those who know the past, Deut. 32:7, eye witnesses.
- 12 Apostles as elders? eyewitnesses of His suffering (1 Peter 5:1) and majesty (2 Peter 1:16)

24 elders: from OT and NT

OR: 1 Chronicles 24 (the priest divisions) or 1 Chronicles 25 (24 musicians with harps)

4:5 : lightnings, thunderings, voices: God descending on Mt Sinai. Ex. 19:16.

4:5 : seven lamps of fire: the seven Spirits of God: lampstand in the temple
omni-presence of God's Spirit: He does not sleep.

4:6 : before the throne a sea of glass, like crystal:

God's holiness: Ezekiel 1:22, 26.

Sea as crystal: serenity, tranquil: Peace: *Be still and know that I am God* : Psalm 46!

Contrary to the wicked world: Isaiah 57:20-21 : *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*

Question:

The sea of glass: reflecting the holiness of God, the distance: What does this teach us about our worship of God? (See also the praise of the four creatures: their words in vs. 8, and also Hebrews 12:18-24).

4:6 : in the midst and around the throne: four living creatures

Inner circle, within the circle of 24 elders.

See Ezekiel 1: God's creation:

Lion : the wild animals

Ox (calf): the livestock: tamed animals

Eagle: the birds

Man: ruler over the creatures

six wings: see Isaiah 6.

Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1, Ezekiel 10 combined in these four creatures.

They do not rest, day or night

Contrast with 13:8, 12

See 13:15 ↔ 4:8-11

Question:

We see how Satan uses science to make an image of his beast (Revelation 13) and gives it breath. However, it is only an image, and a false image. The real Creation praises God! How does this encourage us to again use science to praise and glorify God and take it away from this world, which uses it to glorify itself? How can we do this practically?

4:9-10: the twenty four elders fall down before Him

4:10 : Cast their crowns before the throne: Gen. 1:28

See Romans 1:22-23 : *Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*