

Revelation- Chapters 4:1-7:17 (First Vision of Heaven & First 7-Fold Vision)

The Throne of God and His Heavenly Court- Revelation 4:1-11

- V1 'after this' refers to the events and vision that Jesus Christ has just revealed to John and transitions into the Prophetic Message. 'A door' into heaven is opened for John to see heaven. Thus remember Jesus Christ is the faithful-witness of the Father and Mediator of the heavenly vision of God.
- V2 'I was in the Spirit' refers to the Holy Spirit's role in the mediation of the heavenly vision that John is having.
- The one seated on the throne in all these verses is God the Father. V3 says He 'had an appearance jasper and carnelian,' this means NOT that God looks like these precious stones, but that His Glory reflects His person and presence just as these precious stones reflect the Sun's rays. These stones were worn by the Jewish High Priest in his role as mediator between God and the people.
- The 'rainbow that had the appearance of emerald' conveys and reminds us of God's majestic mercy. The rainbow was the sign of God's covenant with Noah and all creation that He would not again destroy the world through a terrible flood like He did destroying all except Noah, his family, and the animals that were saved through the ark (**Gen. 9:13-16**).
- '24 elders on 24 thrones' refers to all God's people or saints in the OT and NT, thus the fullness of Israel. 12 OT Patriarchs = Israel of OT and 12 NT Apostles = Israel of NT. This is the entire Church of Jesus Christ from all times and places.
- The elders are on thrones in white with crowns because they have been redeemed by Christ and made holy (white) and thrones and crowns because they now reign with Christ as He reigns and is victorious.
- The 'four living creatures' are cherubim, special angelic beings who are always in God's presence. They appear in various places in the OT where God's heavenly throne and majesty is depicted (**Isaiah 6; and Ezekiel**); they were carved out on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. These creatures lead the proper worship and praise of God that all creation is to give God. Some people have also thought that the 4 may represent the 4 Gospels/Evangelists.

The Lamb and the Scroll- Revelation 5:1-14

- ‘the right hand’ of God works salvation for God’s people; see **Exodus 15:6, 12** (The Song of Moses after Yahweh leads Israel through the Reed Sea). Thus the scroll in God’s hand is something that is good and benefit God’s people.
- How many seals?
- Who can open the scroll? ‘no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it,’ but the ‘Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.’ Who is the Lion of Judah, the Root of David? **Read Genesis 49:8-10 and see 2 Samuel 7**. Why can only He open the scroll?
- ‘a Lamb standing, as though he had been slain’ refers to whom? Where was this Title used for Him before?
- The Lamb has ‘seven horns’ and ‘seven eyes’- the horn was a symbol of power in human affairs and the eyes are symbols of the all knowing power of God. Remember seven is symbolic for the Holy Spirit present with the people of God, thus Lamb is the bearer of the Holy Spirit for God’s people and ruler for them.
- **Read Daniel 7:13-14**, where the Son of Man approaches the Ancient of Days and notice the parallels. If the Lamb is the one worthy to open the scroll, what does this mean for us the Church?
- In verses 9 and 10 a new song of worship is sung to the Lamb from the 4 creatures and the 24 elders, what does it mean? Have you heard or read these words anywhere else in Scripture?
- **Read John 5:23 and 8:54**, is the Father jealous of the worship of the Lamb?
- What does it mean that the Father and the Lamb are praised and worship together?

The First Six Seals- Revelation 6:1-17

- The Four Horsemen = the first four seals that are unsealed by Christ the Lamb. They are not literal people that will come, but are symbolic of War, Pestilence, Famine, and Death- which are in turn God's judgment against sin.
- The First Horseman conquers through military victory or war (the bow) and symbolizes God taking back His reign over a rebellious earth.
- The Second Horseman likewise conquers through war (the sword) and symbolizes God taking back His reign, but also the blood letting of murders etc. that ultimately serve God's purpose.
- The Third Horseman is black and has a scale in his hand of inflated measurements- prices for goods will rise extremely because of famine in the land, which in turn kills.
- The Forth Horseman is revealed as Death- death is the final result or end for all God's enemies, for all in rebellion against Him.
- Why should a Christian not fear these?
- The Fifth Seal is the Saint beneath the altar. It refers to believers in Christ who have "died for the word of God and for the witness they had borne". They call out to God to take vengeance upon those who killed them; they take no vengeance themselves. The white robes they are clothed with are symbolizes the salvation they have been give in Christ which they first received in Baptism. See **Gal. 3:26-29 (esp. verse 27); Isaiah 61:10; and Eph. 4:24**. Christians will die and suffer specifically because they are Christians and give witness to Jesus Christ!
- The Six Seal is the End of this world and its terror. The heavenly bodies and the earth, the entire cosmos will be shaken. The wicked will try to run and hide, but will not escape the judgment of God through Christ the Lamb. See **Joel 2:30-32; 3:15 and Isaiah 34:1-4**

The Church Militant and Triumphant- Revelation 7:1-17

- After hearing about terror, destruction, and judgment against the enemies of God that is unleashed through the first 6 of 7 seals the vision turns to one of comfort and hope for God's people. Yet another reminder that this revelation is for the good of God's people even though there may be suffering and terror at times. Remember, which hand of the Father was the seven sealed scroll in and what does that mean?
- The Four Winds are to be associated with the four horsemen as bringers of destruction and terror and refer to this pervasive power throughout all the earth (not that the earth is flat). They are held back so that the work of sealing God's servants or people might be complete.
- Sealed- to be marked as belonging to God and under His authority, care, and protection.
- How are people sealed by and for God?
- The Holy Spirit through The Word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper works according to the words and promises of God in them to seal God's people- that is to confirm that they are His people by giving them forgiveness and renewal. The sealing here is not just the initial sealing, but throughout the entire life of the believer as he/she mature in faith in Christ and is equipped for mission and service.
- Christians can experience times when the Four Winds are against them and times when they are held back.
- 144,000- is symbolic for the Whole body of Christians, Jews and Gentiles, in Old or New Testament times, who are the Church Militant on Earth- that is in spiritual warfare and not at rest. 144,000 is a multiple of 12 (12 times 12 thousand)- picture this as a battle formation of legions ready to engage the enemy.
- The 12 Tribes of course refers to the Christian Church as a whole. Note that 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes is chosen to be part of the 144,000 for battle (this was common in OT times that God select portion from each tribe to serve in the army; see Numbers 1:1-46; 26:1-64; 31:1-6; and 1 Chr. 27:1-15).
- The 12 Tribes listed here are different than the 12 Tribes listed for birth order and land allotment (Gen 35:23-26 and Numbers 13:1-16). Dan and Ephraim are missing in this list because in times past they became associated with worship of pagan idols.
- The Multitude from Every Nation- this is the great uncountable host of people saved by the Lamb, clothed in white- this is a picture of the Church Triumphant!