

## Chapter 4:

“After this” is speaking to what comes next. Notice there is a door standing open in heaven. This door helps illustrate the transition that happens going between the physical world and spiritual heavenly world. “And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said...” This is the same voice from Chapter 1 which is the voice of God. It is a commanding voice and it instructs John to come to heaven to be shown by God what must take place after the “Church Age” or period of grace has ended. John was immediately in the Spirit and witnessed the next events in heaven. Please note at this point, many believers see this “calling to heaven” as the rapture. They reference this trumpet with the trumpet from 1 Thessalonians 4:16: “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” I do not believe this is rapture, although I have yet to find scripture that confirms one way or the other. I believe this is God commanding only John to come to heaven. I believe this way for 3 primary reasons: First, 1 Corinthians 15:52 “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” The last trumpet is referenced in this verse and the previous and following verses speak to the receiving of glorified “spiritual” bodies that are necessary that we may enter heaven. Secondly, the events that John describes later in Revelation show the appearing of different “groups” in heaven around the throne; we aren’t seeing these groups in Chapter 4. Lastly as previously discussed about Matthew 24, there are certain events that must occur prior to the coming of the Son of Man.

The jasper and ruby descriptors represent the magnificence of God sitting on the throne. The rainbow is used to show that this is God on the throne and remind us of the covenant God made with man never to destroy the earth again with a flood. The earth, however, is about to witness the wrath of God coming upon the earth and every living creature on it, and it will be terrible.

Surrounding the throne were 24 other thrones and seated on them were the 24 elders. The number 24 is associated with the priesthood. A “course” of priests, or division/group, all served together at the same time. These 24 thrones represent the division of priests that will be around God’s throne. 24 is also a multiple of 12 and takes on some of the meaning of 12. 12 is one of the fundamental numbers of the Bible and symbolizes God’s authority and power. It symbolizes completeness of the nation of Israel, 12 nations, and serves as the perfect governmental foundation, therefore representing perfection. There are many people that believe these 24 elders represent the overcomers from the church or the bride of Christ. I do not agree with this, however, there isn’t any scripture that I have found that specifically states who this group is. We see that these 24 elders are dressed in white, speaking of righteousness, and have crowns, speaking of overcomers who have received their rewards, and they are reigning with God. I believe these 24 elders are Old Testament saints that were found righteous in the sight of God and are reigning with him right now in heaven. If you look at Revelation 4:4 in the Greek you will find the word for “elders” being “presbyterous”. If you go to Hebrews 11:2, you will see “elders” used in the KJV and “ancients” used in the NIV. The Greek word from the original text is “presbyteroi” which also represents “elders”. Matthew 27:52

speaks of saints that arose after the resurrection of Christ and were seen in the holy city by many. I believe these saints were received by God in heaven and are currently reigning with Him as these 24 elders.

“From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder”. This speaks to the judgment that is preparing to begin. In front of the throne 7 lamps were blazing. These are the 7 Spirits of God, or the Holy Spirit. In front of the throne was what looked like a sea of glass as clear as a crystal. We do not know what John was referring to. It could have been the floor of heaven, transparent and extending as far as the eye could see. It could have just represented a calmness in heaven all around the throne.

The 4 living creatures are going to be quite something to see. Covered with eyes represents that they are all seeing and knowing. Nothing can escape their view. Each one has 6 wings. If you take 6 times 4 you get 24. 24 again is associated with priesthood and Christ is our Great High Priest as referenced in Hebrews 4:14. Christ is further represented in these living creatures: Lion – Messiah from the gospel of Matthew. Ox – servant from the gospel of Mark. Man – Son of Man from the gospel of Luke. Eagle – divinity; Son of God from the gospel of John. These living creatures continually worship and praise the Lord and lead the 24 elders in that worship. The 24 elders kneel and lay their crowns before the throne and praise the Lord for creating all things. Laying down of crowns and kneeling before God is showing absolute submission to God. Recognizing God as the absolute authority is imperative for being allowed in His presence.