

The book of Revelation

4:1-3

Welcome to the weekly verse-by-verse bible study in the book of Revelation. Make sure you pray before you start this, or any bible study.

Last week we looked at what the world would look like right before Jesus comes back for His Bride, the Church, which we call the Rapture. And as we learned, this will take place between chapters 3 and 4 of Revelation. So, this week we get started in chapter 4. So let's get right into it.

✠ **Rev 4:1** *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."*

We have been studying the book of Revelation for eleven weeks now, and for seven of those weeks, we have read the letters to the seven churches. Now starting in chapter 4 John writes: ***After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven.*** "After these things" After what things? Well, back in chapters 2-3 we read of Jesus talking to the seven churches, so after these things would be after those things that were written to the churches were accomplished.

Jesus says in chapter one:

✠ **Rev 1:19** *"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."*

"the things which are" were in regards to the things concerning the churches as Jesus wrote to each of them. This is the time we are going through right now. So reading the book of Revelation we are in the time of ***"the things which are"***

But soon, we will leave the earth and enter a new time know as ***"the things which will take place after this."*** During our study of this time in the future, we will enter into heaven, and not just heaven but the throne room of God. John tells us what he heard as he stood at the doorway of heaven ***"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."*

So who was speaking to John at this point? Was it an angel or Jesus? I believe it was Jesus, based upon **Rev 1:10** *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind*

me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, with both referring to the voice as *like a trumpet speaking* or *as of a trumpet*

You may have a bible with the words of Jesus written in red and you may notice that what was said to John was not written in red. So then how could this be Jesus? Just like the chapters and verses in the bible were inserted by man, so was the color of Jesus' words. Just because someone decided not to put these words in red does not mean that Jesus did not say them.

At this point you may be thinking as we start off in chapter 4, "*So if we are now looking into the future, and the things are accomplished in the seven churches as Jesus said, then were is the church and what's going at this point?*"

Personally, I believe that at this point is what we call the rapture of the church, as the things concerning the church here on this earth are complete, and God needs to take the church out of the world to deal directly with the world. What we will be reading in the following chapters is God's judgment and wrath upon the earth for rejecting His Son Jesus Christ. The bible says that we as the church will not experience the wrath of God.

† **Eph 5:6-7** *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.*

† **1 Thess 5:9** *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ*

When a new believer or a non-believer hears the word "Rapture" the question comes up of, "*So what is this so-called rapture? I have never read the word rapture in the bible, so how can we call it that?*"

The term "*caught up*" comes from the Latin verb "*raptare*", and the Greek word "*harpizo*", both meaning "*to be caught up*" or "*to be snatched up.*"

So taking the Latin word "*raptare*" we use the term "*rapture*" and we read about this being caught up in:

† **1 Thess 4:13-18** *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

Reading this verse as well as others, the rapture of the church is when Jesus will come back for His Bride, the Church, and take us home to heaven. This will happen so fast, that when it does, before you can even blink your eyes, it is done.

† **1 Cor 15:51-52** *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Vines dictionary has an interesting definition of the term “*twinkling*”, which is: **Usage Notes:** *akin to rhipito, "to hurl," was used of any rapid movement, e.g., the throw of a javelin, the rush of wind or flame; in 1Cor. 15:52 of the "twinkling" of an eye.*

“*The rush of the wind*” always reminds me of the Holy Spirit, and what Jesus says about Him in the bible:

† **John 3:8** *"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

That last sentence says it all: “*So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.*” We as believers will all one day disappear and the world will not know where we have gone (*where it goes.*), just as they don’t understand the things of the Spirit, which dwells in us.

Now there will be talk and speculation on where we went. They may say that we were taken away by aliens or that there was this awful disease that just took millions of people all at one time (think COVID that has affected everyone on the earth). False religions will say that God has taken away the bad people from this earth. Who knows what other crazy ideas will come into their heads to explain the disappearance of millions of people and all the children. But the world will just say that those darn Christians are finally gone and now we can have a good time. But as we will read in the rest of the book or Revelation, the world will not be having a good time, in fact the bible says:

† **Mark 13:19** *For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.*

† **Rev 6:15-17** *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

But before we start looking at that, we will get a glimpse of Heaven and the Throne Room of God, as was mentioned in verse 1. ***I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."***

So, lets enter into this open door into heaven.

✠ ***Rev 4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.***

Four times in the book of Revelation, John states that he was “*in the Spirit*” in Rev 1:10, 4:2, 17:3 & 21:10. This term means that John was not there physically because if he was there, then he would have died.

✠ ***Ex 33:20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."***

Therefore for John to have seen God and the things in heaven, it would not have been a physical sight but rather a spiritual one.

The first thing that John saw “*a throne set in heaven*” Note the word “*set*” is different then if it were to be placed. This would appear that God’s throne is not meant to be a permanent fixture, but rather one that would move about. Think of Daniels vision of heaven and the throne of God and the way Daniel describes this throne.

✠ ***Dan 7:9 I watched till thrones were put in place,
And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment was white as snow,
And the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame,
Its wheels a burning fire;***

To me, wheels do not represent a permanent setting, but rather a constant movement. So why does God’s throne need to move about? Think of the president of the USA, when he is in an airplane, no matter what plane it is, it is now called “Air Force One”. It could be a little two-seater or a huge 747, but no matter what kind of plane it is, you know it is important because of who is on the plane, not because of the plane itself.

God is not contained by anything or anyone. Is there any throne that can contain our God? King Solomon even prays:

✠ ***1 Kings 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!***

God also tells king David:

† **2 Sam 7:4-7** *But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' " "*

Finally God says:

† **Isaiah 66:1-2** *Thus says the LORD:
"Heaven is My throne,
And earth is My footstool.
Where is the house that you will build Me?
And where is the place of My rest?
For all those things My hand has made,
And all those things exist,"
Says the LORD.
"But on this one will I look:
On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.*

Simply put, wherever God is, there is God's throne.
God is not just sitting up there watch things happen, Jesus even said:

† **John 5:17** *But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."*

God is not sitting around looking at TV or a computer or His cell phone or a crystal ball and trying to figure out what's going to happen next. God is in full control of all things, not you, not me, not the devil, not the president, not any religion, not the judges on the Supreme Court. No one is in control, only God is!

God knows just what you and I are going through right now, and He's not worried, even though we may be. Our worrying does not change things; in fact, to worry just makes things appear worse than what they really are. My God is on the throne in Heaven, and He knows all things and is in control of all things. How about yours?
Let's see how awesome our God is as we read on in Revelation!

✠ **Rev 4:3** *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.*

The *jasper* stone is said in the bible to be a most precious stone, clear as Crystal The *Sardius stone* was also transparent, but was also red in color.

† **Rev 21:11** *having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

There is also a rainbow as well as an appearance like an emerald mentioned here as well. Ezekiel also describes this same vision.

† **Ezek 1:26-28** *And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.*

*Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.
So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.*

When you read both of the accounts of what Ezekiel and John saw, notice the word “like” is used several times when they describe God’s throne, which means that it is not jasper, or sapphire or even a rainbow. But they were trying to use earthly terms that people could understand to describe what they saw. It would be like trying to describe to someone who lived in the desert all their life, what the ocean looks like. Since they have never seen a massive body of water or the waves crashing on the shore, how would you describe it to him or her? That’s what John and Ezekiel were faced with, so they used some of the most precious materials to describe God’s thrones and appearance

Another thing I find interesting is if you read back in the book of Exodus and about the breastplate that the Aaron wore. You will read of how the twelve tribes of Israel each had a stone to represent them placed in this breastplate. There were four rows of three stones in each row (4 x 3 =12). And the first and last stones were sardius and jasper.

† **Ex 28:17-20** *And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row; the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings.*

The clear pure crystal like stone called the Jasper would represent God’s purity, and the red Sardius would represent the blood of Jesus that atoned for our sins so that we could come before the throne of God.

So what was the rainbow all about? I bet you know if you ever read the book of Genesis, and NO, it has nothing to do with gay pride

† **Gen 9:12-17** *And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."*

Notice God says, *I set My rainbow in the cloud* not “a rainbow”, but rather “**My rainbow**”. Every time you see a rainbow, not only are you to remember God’s promise that He made in Genesis, but also know that you are seeing, right here on this earth, a small glimpse of God’s throne.

The rainbow represents God’s promise that never was, nor will ever be, broken. We have all broken promises to someone at one time or another, just as we have had promises broken to us. But you can rest assured that God always keeps His promises. I never read or have heard of God ever breaking a promise to anyone. They say that there are two things we must do in life, pay taxes and die. But the truth is that there is one thing we really must do, and that’s to trust in God who cannot lie nor break a promise.

† **Titus 1:2** *in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began* (underlined for emphasis)

So we have seen a glimpse of God and His throne, but one thing that really spoke to me was in the book of Ezekiel as we read of what Ezekiel saw.

† *Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.*

Just reading this description of God, it reminded me how we put so much emphasis on things here on this earth. How we have prized possessions and covet the things of this world, including money. Have you ever really thought about that, money? You go to work eight or more hours a day, five or six days a week to get money. And why do you want to get this money? So you can give it to other people who are trying to get your money. You give it to the bank to pay your mortgage, or to your landlord to pay your rent. You give it to the utilities companies and to the grocery store. We work hard so we can get something and give it away to people we really don’t want to give it to, but we do it because we have to.

When we are before God's throne, are we expecting to say, "Hey God, I made \$25,000.00 a year and gave 11% to you." Maybe you are planning on asking God why He gave you so little when you needed more money and stuff. But read this verse again and this time put your money, all your possessions and anything of this world you may want, right next to God's Throne.

† *Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.*

When I read that it reminds me of another passage in the bible.

† **1 Cor 3:9-15** *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

So set your home, your car, your job, your clothes, your food, your shoes, your toys, your TV, your cell phone, your computer, your earthly desires and dreams next to God. How much of it do you think will burn up and you will no longer have in heaven?

Now a lot of these things can be used for good, like your home to help those in need, or your car to help those who don't have one. Even your TV can be good as you watch bible teachings and praise and worship music and movies that lift the spirit and not bring it to the level of this earth. Even your money you can use to minister to others. But the question is not, can you, but are you?

I just asked the question: *How much of it do you think will burn up and you will no longer have in heaven?* Maybe you shrunk back thinking about the fact that you would barely make it into heaven by the skin of your teeth. But it may not be too late to change that, the question is, how precious is what you have and are they more precious to you than God or Jesus?

So maybe stuff is not your problem and you may be expecting a lot of it to pass through the fire as you use it for good. But what else is going on in your life? Maybe you are having problems with a friend or family member. Maybe even in your marriage with your spouse. Possibly with your children, or it could be a neighbor or co-worker? How about a stranger, someone you don't even know? What about someone you know by seeing them on the news, on TV or on social media, maybe the way they are treating or doing things

to others just makes you upset. Who or what is trying to take your joy away from you, that joy that you should be having as a child of God?

Once again, read this verse and place that person(s) or thing(s), or trial(s) and temptation(s) right next to the throne of God.

† *Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.*

Compared to our God, how small and insignificant does it all seem? How much bigger and stronger and wiser is our God than our problems!

I thought we would make it through this entire chapter this week, but I suppose the Holy Spirit had other things in mind. It could be because they are words that both you and I needed to hear. May we heed the words of the Spirit, and may the Holy Spirit give us the strength and ability to become what God wants us to be!

May the Lord richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy and may you keep looking up to Jesus, because if you do, you won't have time to look down at your problems!