

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[Rev 4:1-11 NKJV] 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.**"

There are two Greek words that frame our first verse this evening – *meta tauta*

They are the first two words of the verse translated “after these things”

They are the last two words of the verse translated “after this”

Now, when we studied chapter 1, I pointed out that Jesus provided an outline to the book of Revelation.

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

The things you have seen - spoke of the vision of Jesus among the lampstand that we saw in chapter 1,

The things which are - spoke of the spiritual condition of the seven churches – which we saw in chapter two and three

The things which will take place after this – here we see the same Greek word – meta tauta

After this - is in reference to the church age.

I had mentioned previously and it might have also been repeated in our video last week that there is no mention of the church from chapter 4 until Jesus' second coming.

So what we have here at the beginning of chapter four – is that John becomes a picture of the rapture of the church as he himself is caught up to heaven.

So John looks up and he sees a door –

Now, two weeks ago, when we studied chapter three – we saw two different doors –

To the church in Philadelphia, it was a door of opportunity –

And in verse 20, there was the door to our hearts - Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

This door leads to heaven – and it is already open.

And it was opened when Jesus died for us on the cross and paid our sins.

So John looks up and sees the open door and then what happens?

He hears a voice – like a trumpet.

Now, in the Old Testament, there were several reasons that the trumpets were used.

They were used to tell the armies when to advance and when to retreat.

They were used to warn a city of an impending attack

They were used in worship to praise the Lord (Psalm 150:3)

And they were also used to gather the people together.

Which is what Jesus is doing when He raptures the church – He is gathering them together.

[1Co 15:51-52 NKJV] 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 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.

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and [One] sat on the throne.

John is describing a literal “out of body” experience where John’s spirit is caught up into heaven.

Not only is he in heaven – he has gone forward in time - with the date and time synchronized to what takes place after the age of the church.

So what did John see?

A throne set in heaven –

This is the same throne that Moses built a model of at Mount Sinai – when he built the Tabernacle, following the blueprints that God gave him.

Remember, the Tabernacle was where God was going to dwell among His people – and it contained the Mercy Seat – God's throne where He sat.

Turn with me to Exodus 25

[Exo 25:17-22 NKJV] 17 "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits [shall be] its length and a cubit and a half its width. 18 "And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 "Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it [of one piece] with the mercy seat. 20 "And the cherubim shall stretch out [their] wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim [shall be] toward the mercy seat. 21 "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. 22 "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which [are] on the ark of the

Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

And here in John's vision, we are going to the "mercy seat" and the cherubim.

And who is on the mercy seat?

One – God

Church, the throne isn't vacant. God is still in charge.

Sometimes we may feel like the world is falling apart around us – whether it is financial difficulties or physical difficulties or just the lawlessness and chaos that goes on in our world –

And we may even begin to wonder where God is?

[Psa 46:1-5 NKJV] 1 To the Chief Musician. [A Psalm] of the sons of Korah. A Song for Alamoth. God [is] our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; 3 [Though] its waters roar [and] be troubled, [Though] the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah 4 [There is] a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy [place] of the tabernacle of the Most High. 5 God [is] in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.

Beloved, as hard as things are for some of you, the truth is, God is still on the throne.

Things may seem like they are falling apart, but God is our strength.

We don't need to be afraid if we know Him and place our trust in Him.

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.

So who is John describing here in verse three –

He is attempting to describe God in his words –

But notice that he doesn't describe a form.

What he is actually describing is the emanation / the radiance that is coming from He who sits on the throne.

The bible tells us that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

Light speaks of God's purity and goodness.

John also describes the throne surrounded by a complete rainbow with a green tint (like an emerald). It wasn't just an arc like we see after it rains.

In Ezekiel 1 – Ezekiel mentions that rainbow as well.

This rainbow is the glory of God.

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.

Who are they?

1) Angelic beings – the bible never talks about angels sitting or them ever having crowns.

2) The church – because they are dressed in white – speaking of the righteousness imputed on to us by Jesus Christ and because the scriptures speak about believers crowned.

3) Rulers of OT and NT saints = Twelve tribes + twelve apostles

In Isaiah's vision and Ezekiel's vision of heaven, these 24 elders are not included.

This could be because John's vision takes place after the resurrection of Jesus and after the Rapture of the church.

At the resurrection, Jesus took the righteous OT saints to heaven.

By the time of the rapture, all the NT saints will be in heaven as well.

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.

Here in the beginning of verse 5, we see something very reminiscent to what the Children of Israel experienced as they stood before Mt. Sinai.

You might remember that when God gave them the 10 commandments – that the people trembled in fear – so they told Moses to be the mediator between them and God.

The thunder, lightning and the voices communicate the awe associated with the throne 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.

This sea of glass – in the Tabernacle, one of the furnishing was the laver. The laver provided water for the priests to wash their hands and feet.

When Solomon built the first temple, the temple was supposed to also be a model for heaven – he put in a bronze swimming pool that was 15 foot across and 8' deep and contained 12,000 gallons for the priests to cleanse themselves in – (1 King 7) .

So, if one is to approach the throne of God – cleansing is a requirement.

And then we also have a description of these four living creatures. (we see these creature in Ezekiel's vision as well)

These are cherubim. (Ezekiel 10)

And these cherubim are described as being full of eyes.

Eyes speak of knowledge -

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.

Now, in Ezekiel's vision, each Cherubim have four faces.

However, it appears here that John was only able to see one of the four faces pointed in his direction.

The four different faces of the cherubim are often taken as symbols of Jesus as represented in each gospel.

Most have seen Matthew as the "Lion" gospel, showing Jesus as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Mark is seen as the "Ox/calf" gospel, showing Jesus as a humble servant, a worker.

Luke is seen as the "Man" gospel, showing Jesus as the perfect man, the second Adam.

John is seen as the "Eagle" gospel, showing Jesus as the man from heaven, the sky.

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!"

So the first question asks is why do the cherubim need six wings???

Guess what? The bible gives us the answer.

[Isa 6:1-2 NKJV] 1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His [robe] filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

With two he covered his face – why did they need to cover their face? Because angels are created beings and cannot look on the fullness of God’s holiness without being consumed.

They covered their feet - for the ground on which they stand is holy.

And with the two remaining wings, they hover.

And they worshipped God day and night.

How did they worship???

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!

Now what does it mean, “Holy, holy, holy”?

Well, first of all, it is the only attribute of God repeated three times like that.

The Bible never says God is love, love, love; or God is mercy, mercy, mercy; God is grace, grace, grace; wisdom, wisdom, wisdom; justice, justice, justice. But it does say He's holy, holy, holy.

There is no one who can approach God's holiness.

Not even the angels can come close to God's holiness – because the scriptures do reveal that angels fall.

He is utterly separate from evil in any form in His nature and in His being.

He is absolutely free and untouched by any mixture or presence of evil of error or wrong.

It is absolutely impossible for His nature to ever be tempted and to succumb.

Not only do they worship regarding His holiness –

They also worship regarding His power.

He is Almighty God!!!

God can do whatever He wills to do.

There is nothing He can't do.

[Isa 40:28-31 NKJV] 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the weak, And to [those who have] no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew [their] strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

In the midst of our hardest trials, we need to remember that God is all powerful. He is able to deliver us.

There is nothing He can't do.

Think about creation.

God worked without tools to create the universe.

He worked without elements, He worked without materials, and He worked without help.

Psalm 33:9 says, "He spoke, and it was done."

He controls everything in His creation at all times, and no one can help Him, and no one can hinder Him. He is sovereign in everything, and absolutely competent and absolutely powerful to control it all.

The last thing that they worship about is that God is eternal.

Who was and is and is to come!"

He was – He has a great track record.

He is – He's here. We can depend on Him.

He is coming – He's in our future. He's on His way.

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

Church, seeing someone worship God should move us to worship God.

Sometimes people show up to church and do things at church to be noticed by other people.

They jump around church or run up and down the aisles and simply bring attention to themselves.

Jesus speaks of this in the gospel of Matthew regarding people that would pray in the synagogues and street corners with the only intention was for other people to notice them. (Matthew 6:5) and Jesus said that they were hypocrites.

When we are genuinely worshipping God – when we are genuinely giving God glory and honor – it will move others to worship Him.

And that is what we have here – the cherubims are worshipping God and we will see the elders see the genuine worship and they respond to it.

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."

We've seen that the "crowns" in the Bible speak of the rewards we are to receive when we get to heaven (Rev. 2:10)

Yet here are these elders, taking the very things that they've worked so hard on earth to receive in heaven, and they're giving them to God.

because they knew and proclaimed that He was worthy... to receive glory and honor and power.

And verse eleven is important when we consider what's coming up in the next couple of chapters.

Because what the elders are saying is this – "You are the Creator – everything exists because of You – therefore, You have every right to judge and redeem Your creation.

They are celebrating God as Creator, and at the same time celebrating His judgment on His own creation, as He restores it, as He brings it back.

In fact, in the next chapter we'll see a title deed, which is the title deed to the creation. It belongs to God; and as He unrolls it, Jesus Christ step-by-step takes back what is rightfully His.

God is the Creator.

Scripture says it again and again.

And He has every right, because it is His world and His creation to set out to redeem it.

Amen.

Let's pray...

