

CHAPTERS FOUR – SEVEN

3. DARKNESS HATES THE LIGHT.

- a. The light shines in the darkness: the churches are lampstands. But the darkness hates the light: the world persecutes the church.
 - i. Whenever in history the church is faithful to its calling and bears testimony concerning the truth, tribulation is bound to follow.
 - ii. The church needs these tribulations for its own purification and sanctification.
 - iii. Though we are persecuted, we must not lose sight of the throne, and the one in control. We say that to them that love God all things work together for good, but do we really believe it.
- b. “After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven” (4:1).
 - i. Ezekiel 1:1 “Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.”
 - ii. With wide-eyed wonder John beholds a door standing open in heaven. While he is looking, the same trumpet-like voice that spoke to him before, 1:10, addresses him. It is the voice of Christ. The voice says, “Come up hither.” John receives an invitation to ascend to the Throne above.
 - iii. It is not until we view all things from the aspect of the Throne will we gain a true insight into history and our tribulation. John is going to get to see the unfolding of history from the throne perspective. He is told, “I will show thee things which must be hereafter.”
 - iv. Though we are not told the details of what it means to be “in the spirit,” we might rightly conclude that John no longer sees with his physical eye; he no longer hears with his physical ear.
 - v. Though the various objects which John beholds do not exist in the physical, material form, they express an important, spiritual truth. They teach one main lesson. Let us not lose ourselves in detail-interpretation: let us not try to find a “deeper meaning” when there is none. Chapters four and five teach one main lesson. The picture is ONE; the lesson is ONE.
 - vi. These chapters do not merely give us a picture of heaven, they describe the ENTIRE CREATION FROM THE ASPECT OF HEAVEN. The purpose of this vision is to show us, in beautiful symbolism, that all things are governed by the Throne-Occupant. ALL things. Hence, also our trials and tribulations. The point is that God knows about the struggles we are in.
- c. “Behold, a THRONE” (4:2). The most important thing in this entire vision is the throne. Notice throughout the vision that everything is described in respect to the throne. The entire creation has as its center the THRONE of God. This is a vital understanding. When John begins to see the things which must be hereafter, he first sees the throne. Nothing is excluded from the dominion of the throne.

ALL CREATION GOVERNED BY THE THRONE
It is one single picture. It teaches one main lesson.

The square in the center represents the Throne with steps leading up to it. In the center of the Throne sits the Father, Revelation 4:2.

- 1. The Throne of God.
- 2. The lightening, thundering and voices.
- 3. The emerald rainbow, 4:3.
- 4. The four beasts or living ones full of eyes, 4:6.
- 5. The four and twenty elders with crowns of gold, 4:4.
- 6. The many angels about the Throne, 5:11.
- 7. Every other creature, 5:13.

Notice also the seven lamps of fire, the sea of glass before the Throne, 4:5,6.

Finally, observe that the Lamb is standing between the Throne and the living ones on the one side, and the four and twenty elders on the other, 5:6. The lamb, however, did not remain there. He advanced to the Throne, 5:7, and - symbolically speaking, of course - is now seated upon it together with the Father, 22:1.

Take another look at this diagram. Notice: *The throne rules over all!* TAKE THIS LESSON TO HEART.

..... *Death Is Swallowed Up In Victory*.....

4. Revelation 4:2.

- a. “. . . and one sat on the throne” (4:2). Upon the Throne sits in majesty God the Father. What the apostle describes is not God himself, for he cannot be described (Exo 20:4 “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:”), but his effulgence, his radiance.
 - i. In the vision God is represented by the luster of stones.
 - (1) We know of green, yellow (amber), and black jasper (ISBE).
 - (2) We know of transparent, red, and honey colored sardine.
 - ii. The rainbow round about the throne looked like an emerald (green).
- b. “And round about the throne were four and twenty seats . . .” (4:4). Around the central Throne John sees twenty-four thrones, and upon these thrones twenty-four elders.
 - i. You might think of the twelve patriarchs and the “twelve” apostles representing the entire church of the old and new dispensation (these twenty-four are mentioned later in Rev. 21:12-14).
 - ii. Since they are in heaven, it does not surprise us to see that they are clothed with white raiment (the figurative clothing of the saved – Rev. 3:4-5; 6:11; 7:13-14) and wearing crowns of gold (the figurative reward for the righteous – 1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev. 2:10).
 - iii. Though the twenty-four elders are a part of the whole vision, it is not the elders themselves that are important, but what they and all the rest are doing. They are falling down before the one on the throne, worshiping him, and casting their crowns before the throne.
 - iv. **Do not miss the complete, glorious picture of all worshiping the one who is sitting upon the throne.**
- c. John’s description of the throne is not unlike Ezekiel’s.
 - i. Ezekiel 1:26-28 “And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. 27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. 28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.”
- d. There is a very close connection between John’s throne vision and Ezekiel’s throne vision.

| EZEKIEL | SIMILARITY | REVELATION |
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| Ezekiel 1:5 "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures . And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man." | Living ones around the throne | Revelation 4:6 "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." |
| Ezekiel 1:5 "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man." | There are four of them | Revelation 4:6 "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." |
| Ezekiel 1:10 "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man , and the face of a lion , on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle ." | The faces are of man, lion, ox, and eagle | Revelation 4:7 "And the first beast was like a lion , and the second beast like a calf , and the third beast had a face as a man , and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle ." |
| Ezekiel 1:26 "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." | Living ones close to throne | Revelation 4:6 "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." |
| Ezekiel 1:13 "As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire , and like the appearance of lamps : it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning ." | Fire moves to and fro among the "living ones" | Revelation 4:5 "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." |
| Ezekiel 1:18 "As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four." | "Living ones" studded all over with eyes | Revelation 4:8 "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." |
| Ezekiel 1:28 "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about . This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake." | Rainbow encircles the throne | Revelation 4:3 "And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." |

- a. Though we cannot speak exhaustively on the “four beasts,” “four living creatures,” Ezekiel 10:20 all but tells us that they are the cherubim. The cherubim guard the holy things of God.
- i. Gen 3:24 (KJV) “So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”
 - ii. Exo 25:20 (KJV) “And the cherubims shall stretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces *shall look* one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.”
 - iii. Hence, it is altogether normal and natural that we find them here in this vision in close proximity to the Throne.
 - iv. Observe also that the song of these “living ones” is the song of angels. In Isaiah the seraphim sing it: Isa 6:1-4 (KJV) “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.”
 - v. Why are these “living ones” mentioned? They are introduced for the very same reason as the twenty-four elders, that is, to enhance the significance of the Throne. So great is the Throne that even the holy cherubim arrange themselves around it in reverence, humility, and awe, ever ready to carry out the will of the Sovereign of the universe! They ascribe glory and honor and thanksgiving to the ever-living one who sits upon the Throne. No wonder, for they dwell in his immediate presence.
- b. With this understanding, let us remember once again that the entire vision is making a statement. We are not to ask what the details have to mean, we are to see the throne as Ezekiel and John saw it. When John describes heaven, we are not to ask what the gold of the street represents nor the pearls of the gates, we are, however, to see the vision as a whole.
- c. The real message of this whole vision is not in what everyone looks like, but in what they are saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is and is to come.” John tells us “and they rest not day and night” making this acclamation.
- d. Again, we could speculate all day on the 24 elders, but let us not fail to hear what they say. They “fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”
- e. **Take another look at the diagram. Notice: The throne rules over all! TAKE THIS LESSON TO HEART.**