

## The Creator is Praised in Heaven!

**The most meaningful realities for us as Christians are faith, hope and love: Faith in the God who saves sinners who trust Him; hope in the promises He gives believers in His Word; and deep love for Him and for others!**

Right now in our own hearts and in the United States there is so much fear and anger, disillusionment and uncertainty.

Some people have lost their jobs; others wonder how much longer they'll have theirs! Some people are wondering if they'll be able to stay in their house, others if their retirement portfolio will ever rebound. Many of us are concerned about America's leaders taking us in a direction that has not worked in other countries.

**In these uncertain times, it's a great time to get a look into Heaven!**

But don't get me wrong – a look into Heaven is not merely an escapist act to avoid uncertain realities down here. A look into Heaven helps give us the “eagle's view” we need to soar above our uncertain circumstances with faith, hope, and love!

**Revelation chapter four begins the third section of Revelation.**

“Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what must take place after this.” -Revelation 1:19

The first section was chapter 1:	“The things John had seen”	<i>The vision of Christ!</i>
The second section was chapters 2-3:	“What is”	<i>The Church Age!</i>
The third section is chapters 4-22:	“What must take place after this!”	<i>The Great Tribulation/ The Second Coming/ The Millennium/ The New Earth!</i>

Read Revelation 4:1-11      PRAY!

### **V. 1 Introduction to the rest of Revelation, after the church age!**

The beginning of verse one says, ‘after this.’ The end of verse one says, “I will show you what must take place ‘after this.’”

After what?      Probably after what chapters two and three talk about!

What did chapters two and three talk about?      The seven churches!

The churches of chapters two and three, taken together, gave us a full portrait of “The Church” in all times and places.

**Chapters four and five are a look into Heaven, and then when we return to earth in chapter six we enter a very different time on earth, the seven years of tribulation. From here until all but the very end of Revelation there is no more mention of churches during the tribulation, or stars as pastors.**

Where are the churches?

Well, as I have told you, I believe based on Revelation 3:10 true believers in churches will be raptured before the Tribulation.

But let me add a word of humility. At the end of Revelation it speaks of receiving curses if you add or subtract from the Book of Revelation. I don't want those curses, so on my chart when I wrote the word rapture here, I put a question mark.

And since there will be those who become believers in the time of the Tribulation, when we get to chapter six I will say some things that will help those who believe during that time. If I am wrong about the timing of the rapture, we'll still be ready!

Now there is one more thing I need to talk to you about before we look at the rest of these verses.

**As we go from here until the end of Revelation we will have a full portrait of Heaven painted for us. Don't form your full impression about Heaven from just one of these chapters; put them together to get the full picture!**

If you took one of the seven churches to represent the entire Church of all times and places, you'd have a messed up picture. But when we put together the seven churches we saw a full portrait of what churches are to be and to do.

**As we begin to learn about Heaven, chapter four takes us to a specific place: the Throne Room of Heaven!**

London is the capitol of England- now there's more to England than just London, but London is the nerve center of England.

The throne room is the center of Heaven and is the place to begin learning about Heaven!

Now John himself tells us he was transported to Heaven “in the Spirit.”

And he sometimes struggles to describe what he saw. In fact, lots of times, he’s going to use the word “like” to describe what he sees in Heaven and in the future.

Interestingly, this fits well with Paul’s description when he went to Heaven briefly.

Read 2 Cor. 12:1-4

*By the way, in the Bible the first heaven is the sky, the second heaven is space, the third Heaven is where God lives!*

### **What did John experience in the throne room of Heaven?**

**First and foremost, John saw God on His special throne!    Verses 2-3**

The word throne occurs 45 times in Rev., after only 15 other times in the N.T!

John sees a literal throne with God sitting on it.

John says God looked like jasper and carnelian stone.  
Jasper glimmers like a diamonds and carnelian like rubies.

Have you ever seen the sparkle of a big diamond?  
Elizabeth says, “Not on my hand!”

Well, at the museum we have, honey! You could gaze at the beauty for hours!

As a king who had a throne King David’s desire was to see this sight!

**“I have asked one thing from the Lord; it is what I desire: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, gazing on the beauty of the Lord.”    -King David in Psalm 27:4**

We also read here that an emerald rainbow completely surrounded this throne!  
Through the power of God this throne is suspended in the air!

And a beautiful rainbow surrounds it, a full circle!  
The biggest rainbows we ever see are semi-circles!

Now what was the first rainbow a sign of in Noah’s Day?

That God keeps His promises! In Noah's case it was that the earth would not be destroyed again with a flood!

**When you think of that rainbow around God's throne, remember that God keeps His promises!**

Amen! I hope that inspires some of you to artwork this week!

**Second, John saw lots of people in Heaven! Verse 4**

Picture this! 24 thrones around the Big Throne!

Who are these elders? There are at least 13 different views!

Well, I take them to represent the people of God of OT and NT times. Elders are always representatives of others, whether Israel, or the Church!

Israel had 12 tribes, the church had 12 apostles!  
Revelation 21 lets us know there will be 12 gates with the sons of Israel's names and 12 foundations with the apostle's names.

If the 24 elders are those actual people one thing is very interesting!  
John may have been looking at the back of his own head as he saw the elders!

**Over and over again we are told the saints in Heaven will be dressed in white and will receive crowns based on their deeds for Jesus down here!**

There are two kinds of crowns: the crown of a sovereign (Diadem) and the crown of victor (Stephanos). Here it is the crown of a victor!

**Third, John was reminded of the greatness of God! Verse 5**

From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and thunder.

Four times in Revelation we hear of these things in Heaven: 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18.

I don't know about you, but when I hear a loud crack of thunder or see lightning fill up the sky, my heart drops into my shoes!

In Narnia they reminded themselves, "Aslan is not a tame lion!"

John, who Jesus had called the Son of Thunder, was reminded how great God is!

John also saw 7 fiery torches, the seven spirits of God!

**You've got the Trinity in action here! Jesus called John up to Heaven, the Father is on the throne, and the Spirit is active there too!**

The Spirit is a person but is hard to describe! As we have already seen, Isaiah 11:1-2 spoke of the 7-fold attributes of the Spirit. So there are not 7 Holy Spirits, there is one, with the number 7 representing His completeness. But He is still beyond our description, as we'd expect! He descended on Jesus as a dove! He descended on the apostles as tongues of fire! Here He is described as 7 fiery torches! We are also told He indwells each true believer! He doesn't fit in our box!

**Fourth, John sees four angels of praise around the throne Verses 6-8**

Now there have been all kinds of attempts at explaining these very alive creatures.

**We can't overlook that they correspond to aspects of angels called seraphim and cherubim the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel saw around God's throne!**  
See Isaiah 6:1-7; Ezekiel 1:1-10

Being in the presence of God, who is life, seems to energize these angels of praise! It says they never stop singing praise to God! Day and night! They sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!"

When the President of the United States comes in a room, they play hail to the chief! THIS IS A LOT COOLER THAN THAT!

Now we will see more of these angels in Revelation. Interestingly, here and in chapter five they speak as a unit, in chapter six they speak as individuals.

**Why do they sing holy? Because the word holy means "set apart!"**  
They are saying God in three persons, there is No one else like you!  
You are what Heaven is all about!

When we are called to be holy as He is holy, we are called to let the way things will be in Heaven be what we strive for here! To do His will, not our own!

**Fifth, John experiences part of Heaven's unending praise service Verses 8-11**

Verse eight is the first of five hymns by the heavenly choir in chapters 4-5 alone!  
And then there are nine more in Revelation for a total of fourteen!

Now I know how some of you think!

You think: I don't like to sing now- is that all I am going to be doing for eternity?  
**BORING!**

Now before I rebuke you for feeling like that, let me remind you that this is the first of many descriptions of what is going on in Heaven!

You will do many other things in Heaven and later on the New Earth.  
But there will be many times when you are back in the throne room praising!

Have you ever been part of a worship service and you just didn't want it to end?  
I have, and they have been among the sweetest times in my life!

In 1948 a young man named Billy Graham set up a tent in L.A. for a series of meetings. It held over for 8 weeks. They didn't want it to end!

Well, in Heaven, this worship service doesn't end, and no one wants it to!

*When we've been there, 10,000 years bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing His praise then when we first begun!*

I picture Heaven as untold millions coming in from the things they have been doing for God as untold millions go out to do meaningful things for God.

But wherever in Heaven people are, their heart will be right there at the throne!

The angels are in on it, the elders are in on it, all the redeemed are in on it!

**Sixth, John understood what Heaven was praising God for Verses 9-12**

Verse 10: that's where the Casting Crowns got their name!

Do you know what they are acknowledging when they cast their crowns in an act of worship?

They are saying, “Whatever talents we had by birth, whatever resources we acquired, whatever we became after you saved us, whatever we did for you, it was only because of You we are anything!”

### **Heaven constantly praises God for being the Creator of all, the source of all blessings!**

I want to share something with you...

As I was preparing this week, God stopped me right here. And He said, “Danny, right now list out 100 things you praise Me for, that you are thankful to Me for.”

Now here’s what you need to know...

All week long I have been angry because of what is happening in our nation. I wanted to keep thinking about how the world is going to Hell in a handbasket!

But I had been transported to Heaven by Revelation chapter four. By the time I got down to number 100, the agitation in My Spirit was gone. I’m still very concerned about how things are going, but I have Heaven’s perspective again. Jesus holds the future in His hand, and He holds me in His hand- whatever happens in the world, there is faith, hope, and love in Jesus!

To him the attending hosts of angels cease not to say, “holy, holy, holy!” Therefore, we too – the future comrades of the angels, if we earn this reward – become familiar even while here on earth with that heavenly cry of praise to God and the duty of our future glory. -Tertullian, around 200 A.D., ACC, 67

What does this look like on Sunday AM?

Praise with a full heart despite whatever has gone on this week!

Not looking down at your watch hoping for the service to end.

What does this look like on Tuesday AM?

Perspective as the week gets tough!

What does it look like on Saturday morning?

Taking 15-30 minutes for a praise walk or hike, praising your Creator!

Or sitting on the porch, praising God as the sun sets on another week down here.

Let’s Pray!