

## **“A Trip to Heaven” Part 2**

### **Study Guide**

#### **Revelation 4:4-6**

Heaven is simply a name for something very high.

In 2 Corinthians 12:2, Paul speaks of three heavens. He says he was caught up into the third heaven.

The heaven where Paul was caught up, the third heaven, is the home of God, the divine heaven where God dwells.

**Chapter 4, verse 1 “After these things I looked; and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I had heard like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me said, ‘Come up here and I will show you what must take place after these things.’”**

Come up here. John, as it were, is caught up into heaven not for coronation, not for glorification, as we noted last time, but for revelation.

“I will show you” - He says - “what must take place after these things.” What things? The things in chapter 2 and 3; that is, the things that happen in the church age, the things that are characteristic in the church.

Chapter 4 and 5 actually doesn't get into the future prophecy, it just sets the stage.

**Verse 2, “Immediately I was in the spirit,”** that is to say he was in a supernatural, ecstatic, transcendent state, under the influence of the Holy Spirit so that he was lifted above time and space and

he was able to see with spiritual eyes. **“Behold, a throne was standing in heaven.”**

**verse 2, “One sitting on the throne.” verse 3, “And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.”**

**verse 4 “Around the throne were twenty-four thrones.”**

**Chapter 20 of Revelation, “I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given to them.”** So, there is a shared rulership in heaven. There is a shared leadership. Sovereignty is somehow spread among some others. Some others have been coronated and elevated. Who are they? Some might suggest that they’re angels. Well, angels are called thrones in the New Testament, Colossians 1:16. It’s a term for some ranks of angels, but nowhere does it say that angels sit on thrones. Nowhere in the Scripture do we see angels reigning or ruling.

There is no occasion in Scripture where the term “elder” in the Greek or the Hebrew is specifically and unquestionably related to angels. So, the term “elder” is used to speak of men.

Whoever these twenty-four elders are, they have entered into some kind of rest. They have sat down. They have taken a seat. It is the rest of a triumphal rule. They’re sitting with God around His throne in triumph.

**Verse 4, “They’re clothed in white garments.”** . But being clothed in white garments is generally the garment of the saints, the

clothing of the saints. **chapter 3, verse 5, “He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments.”**

**Chapter 3, verse 18, “I advise you to buy for me gold refined by fire that you may become rich and white garments that you may clothe yourselves.”** So, in this immediate context, we would assign, then, the white garment to saints in the church.

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Crowns are never promised to angels anywhere in Scripture, nor do we have any occasion in Scripture to ever see an angel wearing one. Particularly this one, this is not diadēma, the diadem of the king.

This is stephanos, the crown of the one who won the victory, the runner’s crown, the warrior’s crown, the one who went through struggle, the one who went through trial, the victor’s crown, the conqueror’s crown, the laurel wreath that was given to one who was competing and won the victory.

You will notice in **chapter 2, verse 10**, the promise of this crown given to believers. **“Be faithful unto death and I’ll give you the stephanos of life.”** Crowns are for the overcomers.

Now the question comes: If this is some kind of redeemed and coronated humanity, who is it? Who are these twenty-four elders and what do they represent?

Twenty-four, then, is an interesting number that seems to speak of completion. It seems to speak about a representative group.

Whoever these twenty-four are, they represent a larger group. Israel has not - by the time of this vision, Israel has not yet been what? Saved. There is yet to be a divine judgment on Israel, yet to be the sealing of the 144 thousand Jews - that is yet to come.

The multitude saved out of the time of tribulation are not included with the twenty-four elders.

it seems to me best to see this as twenty-four elders representing a coronated, exalted, raptured church. .

**2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 8, “There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.”** Paul says there’s a day coming when believers are going to be coronated, when believers are going to be enthroned, when believers are going to be crowned, and I believe that that glorious day is the rapture.

**John 14, “I will come and take you to be where I am,”** and where He is in the Father’s house, and that’s where He will take us.

**Chapter 7, verse 11. “And all the angels standing around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God saying, ‘Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever.**

**Amen.’ And one of the elders answered, saying to me, ‘These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they? And from where have they come?’” My lord, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘Yes.’”**

**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”**

**You have the church in heaven welcoming the tribulation saints. Again, that speaks of a pre-tribulational rapture. They are there in heaven already, watching the accession of the tribulation saints coming up out of the tribulation.**

**chapter 11, verse 15. Seventh angel sounded and now you’re really getting near the end. Verse 15, “There arose loud voices in heaven saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He will reign forever and ever.’” Now Christ is going to take the world over. This is the end. This is the last moment, the seventh trumpet immediately followed by seven bowls of wrath in a brief period of time, and the world becomes Christ’s.**

**Then Verse 16, “And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God saying, ‘We give thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who was because thou hast taken thy great power and has begun to reign.’” There are the twenty-four elders. They’re in heaven when the tribulation saints are converted and come into glory. They’re in heaven when the seventh angel sounds, and the kingdoms of the world become the Kingdoms of Christ.**

**Chapter 14. In chapter 14, verse 1, “I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion and with Him 144 thousand.”** You remember, that’s twelve thousand out of every Jewish tribe. The Jews don’t know what tribe they are but God does, and they’ll be His witnesses during the tribulation.

**“And there are 144 thousand of them, they have His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the voice of many waters, like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one could learn the song except the 144 thousand who had been purchased from the earth.”**

**Chapter 19. “After these things I heard, as it were” - “a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven and they’re saying, ‘Hallelujah, salvation and glory and power belong to our God because His judgments are true and righteous. He has judged the great harlot’” - that’s Babylon, the false religious system - “who was corrupting the earth with her immorality. He has avenged the blood of His bondservants on her.’ And a second time they said ‘Hallelujah, her smoke rises up forever and ever.’**

**“And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, ‘Amen. Hallelujah.’” .**

The “elders” are the new priesthood, as it were, they are the new kings and priests, as we are called in Revelation chapter 1. We as the church are represented in the twenty-four elders, having been caught up into glory.

**Verse 5. “And from the throne”** - you can see you can outline this whole chapter with prepositions. **“From the throne proceed flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder.”**

“From the throne” is a reverent way of referring to God. He is the throne. He is the temple. He is on the throne.

From God proceed flashes of lightning, sounds and peals of thunder. What’s the point here? The point is God is in a judgment mood. Coming out of Him is fury. John see coming from the throne evidence of the judgment fury of God.

What you’re seeing in heaven is just a preview of the explosion of thunder and lightning that’s going to tear up the whole world. And it isn’t the thunder and lightning men are used to, it’s the thunder and lightning of the fury of God, not the fury of nature. Ref: Chapter 8:5, Chapter 11;29

So, what do you have? The throne, on the throne, around the throne, from the throne - fifthly, before the throne - before the throne.

**verse 5 “There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God.” Verse 6 And before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal.”**

Two things, then, are before the throne. First, seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. This is not a lampstand used indoors, this is a torch used outdoors. The idea of the language is the sevenfold spirit.

These torches were used for war. .

The sevenfold Spirit of Isaiah - wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, reverence, deity - the sevenfold Spirit of Zechariah is power. The sevenfold Spirit of Revelation 1, grace and peace. But the sevenfold Spirit here, fiery judgment. Could this be the fulfillment of the words of John the Baptist?

The Holy Spirit, then, known to us as the comforter becomes the consumer. And He will consume you if you do not know Christ.

**verse 6, "Before the throne," "a sea of glass like crystal." .**

Sea is metaphorical. What John saw at the base of the throne was crystal glass. It's very important to note that. **Revelation 21** says, **"I saw a new heaven and a new earth" - verse 1 - "and the first heaven and the first earth passed away and there was no longer any sea."**

Revelation 21 says there's no sea in heaven. What John saw here was not a sea - there's a river, not a sea. What he saw here was crystal glass like a sea.

**Exodus 24:10 "And under his feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire as clear as the sky itself."**





