

# Revelation Chapter 4.

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## The Things Hereafter

Study 8

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### Revelation 4 verse 1

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*After this I looked and behold a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard as it were of a trumpet talking with me which said, Come up hither and I will show you things which must be hereafter.*

After this! John had just experienced the power of the Holy Spirit showing him the Spiritual condition of seven churches and what God thought about each one of them. Still reeling from being God's messenger to seven Pastors, he then is shown a door into heaven which enables him to see what is hidden from man. Ezekiel had the same experience in Ezekiel 1:1 and Paul in 2 Cor. 12: 1-4 where he was caught up to the third heaven where he saw and heard many unspeakable things.

Now John hears a trumpet and the Bible says the *trumpet talking with me* so John was able to understand and even converses with the trumpet which said "Come up hither and I will show you things which must be hereafter." John's experience of the things to come was now as a spectator actually in heaven, being shown, first-hand; the things God had planned for His people in the latter days, in particular the realities of final judgement and the blessed perfection of the New Heaven and the New Earth.

#### Verse 2

*And immediately I was in the Spirit; and beheld a throne was set up in heaven and one sat on the throne.*

There is no doubt that John had to be given special awareness and power to recognise what he saw in heaven or why would he need to be 'in the Spirit'. There is no doubt things are a lot different up there where that world has not been contaminated by sin and Satan hands have not defiled.

The throne he saw was a throne above all other thrones, it is the seat of ultimate power and majesty because He who sits on that throne high and lifted up, is the almighty, majestic, infinite, exalted all powerful God, creator of heaven and earth. The magnificence of it all, the awesome beauty just cannot be described by mortal man.

#### Verse 4

*And around the throne were twenty-four seats and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

These elders represent all the Raptured saints; they were dressed in white raiment, the reference to white raiment is only used in Revelation of Christ and His saints to set them apart from all others. They have crowns upon their heads which are promised to the redeemed who have endured, persevered and overcome trials and temptations of this world and the reward is therefore white raiment and crowns and to sit at His thrown.

Why there are twenty four is not explained to us but we are aware that in 1Chronicles 24 the grouping of the Priests into twenty four courses was done by lot and executed by Eleazar and Ithamar, the two remaining sons of Aaron and overseen by David.

These twenty four elders had 7 special acts which are:

1. To sit on the Throne dressed in White verse 4
2. To worship God verse 4 to 11
3. Cast their crowns before God verse 10
4. Fall prostrate before God verse 10, Chapter 5 verse 8
5. Sing and play harps and Worship God Chapter 5 verse 8-10
6. Act as Priests Chapter 5 verse 8
7. To give John the Revelation Chapter 5 verse 5

#### Verse 4

*And they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

There are at least five types of crowns.

**1.The Crown of Righteousness.** Living a righteous life in today's world is very difficult with sin, wickedness, cheating, fraud, lies being only some of the world's way of life. To be a Christian and to have any moral standards at all makes you the odd one out every time and it is a constant fight to keep Holy before Him.

2 Tim; 4 8.

*Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day (the judgment seat of Christ) and not me only but unto all them also who love His appearing.*

**2.The Incorruptible Crown** This crown is given to those faithful servants who put away their own desires and ambitions to follow Christ in order to win the race of faithful service to Christ. Many Christians compromise their walk with the Lord to keep popular with their work mates or other non-believers, the danger is they know the way the truth, and the life but are not prepared or they are not strong enough in their walk with Jesus, to stand firm in their faith in God. The true Christian will not weaken when in the company of non-believers, but will stand their ground as a testimony to our Lord. In 1st Cor. 9; 25-27 Paul tells us of his experience in keeping his mind and body subject to the will of God at all times. He says that keeping his body mind and tongue under control so that when he preaches to others he will not be a castaway, (or feel embarrassed) or that he has let the Lord down, with Paul there was no compromise. Moses is another example. There came a time when Moses, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, with all the privileges that position held, and chose affliction and hardship with his fellow Jews and because of his decision gave up the temporary earthy riches of Egypt.

#### **Hebrews 11;24-26**

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.*

**3.The Crown of Life** Revelation 2;10 indicates that there is a crown for Christians who suffer persecution for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. Let's read it;

*Fear none of those things which you shall suffer; behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.*

This is also sometimes called the martyrs crown for Christians who are persecuted and killed for righteousness sake. God in His sovereignty has chosen to allow persecution and cruel death for some Christians who are fervent in their testimony for the Lord. We do not understand this and feel this is very unfair but we must remember our life on earth is short and very limited. The world we live in is not the world that God intended. Neither can we understand the concept of

eternity. Our finite minds cannot grasp living for ever. So when Jesus says, for faithfulness, overcoming, perseverance, and endurance He will give us a crown, and in this case a crown of life we are unable to fully take it in.

**4 The Crown of Rejoicing.** *For what is our hope, or joy or Crown of Rejoicing? Are you not in the presents of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*

Here Paul was pointing far beyond the minor problems and difficulties of the present day, he was looking forward to the coming time when there will be no more setbacks and hindrances by Satan and he reminds the Thessalonians that they are in the presents of the Lord so are safe, in spite of trials and tribulations at His coming meaning the Rapture. It's as if Paul is saying we all have problems, trials, temptations, sickness, and disappointments and at times we do not feel like praising or even praying, but if we remain faithful and true to our Lord He will give us a Crown of Rejoicing to enjoy for eternity. It is worth remembering that in the light of eternity all our activities, some of which we hold very dear pale into nothingness when we get to heaven, they will be burned up and forgotten and only that which is done in the name of Christ will last. There are a few people in our church who love to witness to the unsaved. One man was on the chaplain team of a local prison for some 26 years and he tells many stories of leading hardened criminals, broken and in tears to Christ. He has led many to the Lord and I am sure he will receive a Crown of Rejoicing. Also it is comforting to know that the angels in heaven rejoiced at each one that my friend has led to the Lord, it is that important (Luke 15:7).

**5.The Crown of Glory** Sometimes referred to as the Victory Crown. This is the Elders crown which is a special crown for those who faithfully share the word of God. You don't have to be a Pastor of a church to share the word of God but you must know what it is you are sharing, get the Bible into your spirit. Ezekiel was told to eat the scroll (God's Word) before God let him loose on the Children of Israel with what God wanted to say to them. All of us must 'eat' the Word of God and get these words of life into our spirits. When we have done that God will put people our way to share that Word just as He did Ezekiel. Whether you are an Elder, Pastor, Minister, Sunday school teacher, Evangelist, or as some in the modern church call themselves Bishops, they seldom get rewarded maybe because most times their work is private and individual, behind the scenes, in a corner on their knees praying with a sinner. These folk will one day, at His glorious appearing will receive a Crown straight from the hand of the Lord.

Take some time now and prayerfully consider which of these crowns you may receive when you meet Jesus. Don't be proud and think you may not get one at all, and don't feel you are not worthy of a Crown. If you feel like that you need to take up your Bible and get into His Word and use it together with living a Spirit filled life so when you meet Jesus and your works for Him are examined you will be worthy of a Crown, and then with all the others lay your Crown at Jesus feet in His honour because our Crowns may be the only thing worthy of ourselves to offer Him.

Revelation 4; 5

*And out of the Throne proceeded lightning's and thundering's and voices and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne, which are the Seven Spirits of God.*

Exodus 19, 10-16 This had happened once before.

*And the Lord said to Moses go unto the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, let them wash their clothes, and be ready for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And you shall set bounds unto the people round about saying, take heed to yourselves that you go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever touches the mount shall be put to death. There shall not a hand touch it but he shall surely be stoned, or be shot through; whether it be man or beast it shall not live; when the trumpet soundest long they shall come up to the mount. And Moses went down from the mount unto the*

*people and sanctified them and they washed their clothes and he said unto the people be ready against the third day come not at your wives, and it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there were thundering and lightning's and a thick cloud upon the mount, exceedingly loud so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.*

The thundering expresses God's threats against the ungodly and the voices predict the special judgments that were needed.

Sometimes we rush into the presence of the Lord without any preparation, heart cleansing, or thought as to whom we are addressing. The Children of Israel were required three days to prepare to meet God which not only required heart searching and washing of the body and prayer but the washing of their clothes which was a custom of the Jews and allowed by God. Israel was given boundaries round the Mount which they were not to cross or they would die. Nothing unclean could approach even the presence of the Lord without thorough cleaning. I know we live this side of the cross and I know there is more freedom in our church life but I think we could learn a lesson here and approach the Lord with much more reverence. John saw a giant spectacle of shouts, lights, thundering's and fire all coming out of the Thorne of God to demonstrate His Power, His Majesty, Glory, and Supremacy over evil.

### Verse 6

*And before the Throne was a sea of Glass or of crystal, a translucent, transparent expanse of crystalline beauty and purity that human analogies are inadequate to describe the full majesty of. It stands before the Throne a sea of glass, not as the ancient, imperfect, common glass but like rock crystal.*

There is in this sea before the Throne a depth and transparency unlike the natural sea. It stands solid, calm and clear, God's judgments are called "great and deep" (Ps.36.6). The pure clean water is symbolized by those who have been baptised in such water and are made kings and priests unto God. This sea of crystal must be crossed to reach the Christ on the Throne.

### Verse 6,7,8

*And in the midst of the Throne and round about the Throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.*

So at each side of the Throne stood a beast who had special acts to perform. The Greek has two renderings for 'beast', one is Therion translated beast and Zoa meaning living ones, John saw the Zoa round the Throne, they were literal angelic beings as described here.

### Verse 7

*And the first beast was like a lion, the second beast was like a calf, and the third beast had the face of a man and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.*

According to early Rabbinical writers these beasts or 'living creatures', which is a better Greek translation than beasts, is thought to refer to the four standards or ensigns of the four divisions of the tribes in the camp of Israel. The first Zoa or living creature was likened to a lion. According to the early writers this was the standard of Judah on the east with the two tribes of Issachar and Zabulon. The second was like an ox which was the ensign or emblem of Ephraim who pitched his tent on the west with the two tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin. The third was a face of a man which was the standard of Reuben who pitched his tent to the south with the two tribes of Simeon and Gad. The fourth which was like a spread eagle and according to these same writers was the emblem of Dan who pitched his tent on the north with the two tribes of Asher and Naphtali. This traditional description agrees with the four faces of the cherub in Ezekiel's vision.

These four Zoa had six wings about them and they were full of eyes all around them and they had no rest day or night saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty which was, and is, and is

to come. This speaks of the Lord God as always has been, always is now and always will be in eternity.

Next Study; “will this Book ever be opened”?

Be Blessed

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## **Revelation Chapter 5.**

The things hereafter

Study 9

Bill Holdstock

### **Chapter 5 God’s Book**

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Verse 1.

*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the Throne a book written within and on the backside sealed with seven seals.*

These seals must be broken before the book can be open and read.

Lying in the right hand of God who was sitting on the Throne was God’s Book of Life; sometimes called the Lambs Book of Life, in it were the names of all of God’s creation who had acknowledged His Son to be their Saviour and Lord, Creator of Heaven and earth whose Son, Jesus Christ had given Himself to be the Saviour of the world at the cross. The people whose names were in the Book were those who will live forever with Christ in heaven. In the Greek the opening of this chapter has the Book lying in God’s open outstretched hand, on God’s part there

was no withholding of His future purposes for those whose names were written therein. This very important Book was the title deed of man's inheritance and contained the necessary steps by which God shall recover the Redemption of the Earth from the usurper and obtain total possession of the Kingdom already purchased for Himself. No-one knows or understands the Book; no-one knows its contents but God Himself. He knows the name of every believer man or woman boy or girl written in this legal document each one purchased by the blood of His only Son Jesus.

#### Revelation: 20:15

*Anyone's name who was not written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire.*

Just as you chose God's offer of Salvation you are asking Him to put your name into His Book of Life and you surrender your heart and life to live for Him. So you can choose to remove your name by turning your back on Jesus and going your own way again. We have dealt with this subject many times in many other studies, here it is again, it must be very important to God for His followers to get it settled in your heart before the Rapture, after the Rapture it will be too late. It is not God who has removed your name from His Book it's you!

This is the same Book that God mentioned in Chapter 3 verse 5 of our study on Sardis (5) this is the same Book from which your name could be blotted out if your garments have become contaminated by the world you have chosen to go back to. Mortal man cannot understand the importance of this Book. In its pages are the names of the true Saints of God who have a legal right to enter heaven. Revelation 21: 27 says that: *There shall in no wise enter into heaven anything that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or make a lie but they which are written in the Lambs Book of Life.*

But there was a major problem, the Book was closed and sealed with seven seals.

#### **Who is worthy?**

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##### Verse 2

*And I saw a strong Angel proclaiming with a loud voice who is worthy to open the Book and to loose the Seals thereof?*

Then John saw a strong angel come whose loud voice penetrated heaven, earth, and Hell everyone could hear it, everyone, in heaven and on earth and under the earth was given the opportunity to open the book. Once the Book was opened Satan could not accuse God of not offering any other being including himself, to open the Book so the Angel's voice had to be heard by everyone wherever they were.

*Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the Seals thereof? And no man in heaven nor in earth neither under the Earth was able to open the Book neither to look thereon.*

The cry goes out and it is a heartfelt cry, who is worthy, the Bible translators say 'no man' but the original Greek says 'no one' not just any man but any one of any other order of beings anywhere in the world or under the world, under the sea or even in Hell, the invitation of 'who is worthy' was given.

John and indeed all others who are witnessing this scene were spellbound, shocked and dismayed that it was necessary to shout for someone to open the Book. In the quietness of the waiting moment for someone to step forward, most hearts had stopped as it were, in anticipation.

John who had been given the promise of revelation of “things which must be hereafter” now weeps in frustration in his earnest desire to see future events unfold apparently brought to an abrupt stop.

We are not told how many onlookers were involved in this sorry state of affairs; we know there were 24 Elders and the four living creatures; it could be that all heaven looked on; my guess is that every heart was pounding with anticipation, would that Book of Life ever be opened? In any earthly scenario like this we would look to the biggest, the strongest, and the one with the most muscles to be our hero and come forth and open the book, but none came, even the World’s Strongest Man was strangely absent when needed the most.

### Verse 5

*And one of the Elders said unto me, Weep not Behold the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David has prevailed to open the book and to lose the Seven Seals thereof. And I beheld and lo, in the midst of the Throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the Elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain. Having seven horns and seven eyes which are the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*

The one who did come forward however was a Lamb, called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of Jesse. A Lion and a Lamb, yes the former title Lion, depicts the power and authority of the Son, the later Lamb depicts His humility and self-sacrifice. As the Lamb steps forward the weeping stops, all weeping stops when we look away from our defeated and unworthy selves and look to the Lamb the Saviour of the world. The tribe of Judah was the tribe of David and whose kingdom would be established for ever. (Isaiah 9 verse 6 and 7.) It is through this tribe of David the kingly line preceded and to who the promise was given that this Kingdom would last forever. (2. Samuel 7. 13).

### Verse 7

*And He came and took the Book out of the Right Hand of Him who sat upon the Throne.*

Can you imagine the sighs relief, maybe even the great intake of breath as one of the greatest problems in history was solved by the Lamb from the cross of Calvary?, This legal Document, brim full of names, including mine and my families and I hope yours, came away from His Fathers hand easily, without a struggle as though it was meant to be, which of course it was. Now the pages can be opened, the names read out giving each one a passport stained with the blood of Christ to enter God’s heaven.

Thank you Jesus that you shed your blood to bring us back to God and save us from our sins. The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world is mentioned 27 times in Revelation alone. He has seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Horns in the Bible denote dominion, seven denotes God’s perfection, His perfect number, and seven horns denote total perfect dominion all embodied in Christ Jesus. When we accept Christ we also accept His total dominion over sin and we can walk in victory. He also had seven eyes and this denotes total perfect watchfulness of all spiritual things including His church, and against her enemies also made possible to us by the death of Christ at the cross.

