

# The Invisible Kingdom of God

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Revelation Chapters 4 – 5

Scripture Reading: Revelation 4:1-11

We again refer to the divine outline found in Revelation 1:19. Chapter one showed us **“The things which you have seen.”** John beheld the resurrected Christ in His glory, ready to claim His kingdom and judge this earth. In chapters two and three John was shown **“The things which are.”** He was given messages pertaining to the state of seven different churches, revealing the discerning presence of the living Christ among us. Now, the scene changes dramatically as we go to **“The things which shall be hereafter,”** covered in chapters 4-22. The church on earth, as we know it, will not be mentioned again until the closing statements of Revelation 22:6,16-17. Chapters 20-21 will refer to the “glorious church,” “The bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 20:6; 21:2,9 cp. Ephesians 5:25-27).

So, chapter four shows John being spiritually transported to visions of heavenly and future things. The Church Age is put behind and we now are allowed to know about heavenly things that are normally invisible to us. The phrase “After this” or “After these things” will be used to denote a new vision that is being shown to John. Reading Revelation 4:1-2, allow your imagination to ponder what it would be like to die and suddenly be thrust into presence of God and His heavenly court! See II Corinthians 5:1-8. A second point to ponder is what it would be like to be going about your everyday living and then suddenly, with the trumpet of God, to be summoned from above, transformed into an immortal body and to be caught up in the sky to forever be with the Lord! See I Corinthians 15:51-58; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Now let’s settle down to consider a heavenly scene that is awe-inspiring. John is at the throne room of God. This might be described as “The third heaven” (II Corinthians 12:1-4). A few other times we have glimpses of this place, but none is as detailed as what John is allowed to tell in Revelation 4 – 5 (I Kings 22:14-22; Isaiah 6:1-8; Ezekiel 1:26-28; Daniel 7:9-10,13-14). Note that all of Ezekiel 1 should be compared to Revelation 4 – 5. With the voice like a trumpet saying “Come up here”, a throne set in heaven and The One who sits on that throne – we are thrust into the reality of another realm. At God’s throne there is no worry, fear or anxiety; no pride and selfish ambition. There is joy with trembling (Psalm 2:11), humility and passionate worship (Isaiah 6:1-4). The Greek word for “throne” appears nineteen times in these two chapters (46 times in the whole book of Revelation). Everything that happens in Revelation 4 – 5 is **centered on the throne of God**. This is how we will base our study.

## Revelation Four – Worship at the Glorious and Sovereign Throne of God.

- **On the Throne** (Revelation 4:2 – 3a)  
Our focus is on The Almighty God: creator and ruler of the universe.
- **Around the Throne** (Revelation 4:3b – 4)  
A rainbow reminds us of God’s faithfulness to His promises (Genesis 9:13-17 cp. Ezekiel 1:28). Twenty four elders, on seats (Greek = “thrones” cp 20:4), with robes of white and crowns of gold. Consider that these elders are redeemed people, representing the Lord’s glorious church. This is consistent with Revelation 2:10,26-27; 3:4-5,10-12,18,21.

- **Out of / From the Throne** (Revelation 4:5a)

Thunder and lightning indicate the presence of God (Exodus 19:16; Ezekiel 1:13). This scene is also telling us of God's coming wrath against sin (Romans 2:1-11; II Thessalonians 1:4-10; Jude 14-15). God has prepared His throne for judgment (Psalm 9:7; 77:18). God is about to deliver severe judgments to the earth, during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 6 – 19 cp. Daniel 12:1)

- **Before the Throne** (Revelation 4:5b – 6a)

Seven lamps (or torches) of fire represent the seven spirits of God. This is not teaching that there are seven individual spirits. Rather, that there are seven (perfect) aspects of God's Spirit (Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 5:6). In Isaiah 11:2 count carefully and you will see seven qualities listed.

A sea of glass (like crystal) suggests God's holiness and purity (Exodus 24:10; Ezekiel 1:22).

- **In and Around the Throne** (Revelation 4:6b – 8)

Four living creatures have unique intimacy with God's throne – intently involved with worshipping God. They were also seen by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1-25; 10:1-22 cp. Revelation 4:6-11; 5:6,8-12,14 6:1,6-8; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4). Just a few of the things we can learn about these supernatural beings – They are also called cherubim (Ezekiel 10:15). They have four faces and four wings (Ezekiel 1:6). In Revelation 4 they have six wings and perhaps only one face was visible from John's perspective. Powerful, alert and knowledgeable: they move about rapidly, like lightning, changing direction without turning.

- **To Him that sits on the throne** (Revelation 4:9-11; 5:8-14)

A crescendo of praise goes toward the throne. There are a total of five great hymns to God and to the Lamb in chapters 4 – 5. It starts with a quartet (4:10), which is then joined by 24 elders (4:11). The angels join in (5:11) and finally all creatures of the universe are singing (5:13). Revelation 4:9-10 is a hymn to the Creator. Revelation 5:8-14 has four hymns to the Redeemer.

**Part II – Revelation Five – Worshipping the Worthy One – To be continued.**