

Questions For Discussion And Further Study

1. Chapter four begins with an open door. Does this hold any significance?
2. The phrase beginning verse 1, “after these things” was used before in the Book of Revelation. Where? Why is it important?
3. The phrase “after these things” occurs again in this transition. Where? Who speaks the phrase?
4. John says he was “in the Spirit”. What does this indicate?
5. The focus immediately goes to the throne. What do we know about this throne? Who is seated on it? How do we know this from the context?
6. What are the precious stones that are mentioned? Do we know the colors? What would be the impression received?
7. Twenty-four elders are mentioned and given prominent treatment. What support was given by the pastor for who these men are?
8. If the elders mentioned here are representatives of all elders of the church, are there any implications for today?
9. What are the four living creatures? What proof do we have? Cf. Ezekiel 1 and 10.
10. In 4:8-11 what occurs? How should this influence us in our walk with God? Why? Why not?



Revelation 4: The Transition to Unprecedented Judgment: Worship

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Introduction

In chapter 4 of the Book of Revelation the subject matter shifts to give us a view of heaven, the throne of God, twenty-four elders, four living creatures and splendid beauty.

We cannot say with certainty who the twenty-four elders are, but there are some hints in Scripture that may apply. Some interpreters have regarded them as angels. This is unlikely as angels are not called elders any other place in the Bible. Then there is the issue of how they are clothed: white robes and crowns. How are these issues treated in other places in the Bible?

The four living creatures are easier to identify. While we should not read anything into the description of their appearance, the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel describes similar creatures in Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10: They are cherubim, angelic beings of immense power, knowledge and abilities. From Ezekiel 28:14 we learn that Satan was the cherub who “covers” – presumably the throne of God Himself. In Ezekiel cherubim are connected with the throne of God and the announcement of judgment on Israel. In Revelation they are again associated with God’s judgment.

We are also introduced in chapter 5 to the seals that will be opened beginning the judgments from God at the end of the Age. It is significant that these seals on a scroll are in the right hand of God and will be transferred to Christ who opens the seals. Repeatedly in the Scriptures the right hand of God indicates power and strength. These judgments to come derive from God’s strength and determination and cast in this language the impact is both awe inspiring and ominous. Christ, who is regularly portrayed in the Book of Revelation as the Lamb is here described as the Lion of Judah, the promised greater son of David whose Kingdom will never end. He is the one worthy to open the seals of judgment.

It is difficult to find language to express the awesome power, dignity, holiness, and solemnity of this prelude to judgment.

The Participants in Worship

The Priority of Worship