

VISION TWO, 4:1-16:21

III. THE PICTURE OF THINGS HEREAFTER 4:11-5:14

A. THE THRONE OF GOD: THE FOCAL POINT OF HISTORY (4:1-11)

Introduction: The vision about the churches is now over and John sees another vision. It is time for the churches to see the future events that are coming to the earth. It is time to know that *Jesus Christ is coming back to earth. He is going to end the world and establish the kingdom of God forever and ever in a new heavens and earth.*

In this vision two great things are seen: first, the throne of God is seen. Second, God, Himself is seen holding a book which contains the destiny of the world in the end times. However, this book is sealed, and no one is found worthy to open and reveal the contents of the book. Just as John dispairs, One steps forward who is worthy to open the book. That Person is the Lamb of God, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the earth, Jesus Christ, Himself.

I. JOHN IS GIVEN THE VISION

1. He saw a door opened in Heaven.
 - a. What he saw was real, not his imagination.
 - b. What he saw was of God Himself.
 - c. There are three open doors mentioned in the Revelation:
 - the open door for evangelism (3:8)
 - the open door of the human heart (3:20)
 - the open door of revelation (4:1)
2. He heard a commanding voice. The same voice he had heard in the first vision.
3. He is commanded to "come up here."
 - to see future events, things that *must* take place.
 - things that happen do not just simply happen. They are of God.
4. He was immediately *in the spirit*. A deep, intense spiritual experience, in an ecstatic state with his mind and spirit taken up and above this earth into heaven.
5. He saw the most astounding sight imaginable: GOD and the throne of God.

II. THE ONE ON THE THRONE DESCRIBED

1. God is sitting upon His great throne.
2. His appearance is indescribable.
 - dazzling light, brilliant and blinding
 - like translucent crystal, similar to laser of today perhaps.
 - a rainbow surrounding the throne

III. THE TWENTY FOUR ELDERS AROUND THE THRONE

(Opinions vary and differ drastically. Two are given.)

1. They are thought to be the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and the twelve Apostles of the New Testament.
 - the patriarchs' names are on the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem and the apostles' names are on the twelve foundations of New Jerusalem.
 - they are numbered and crowned, whereas spirits and angels are never specifically numbered or crowned.
2. They are thought to be angelic beings, a council of angelic beings surrounding God.
 - angels are organized into ranks or orders.
 - angels with thrones are high ranking angels
 - angels are more likely to know about future events.
 - Twenty four angels are more likely to serve as counterparts of the elders of Israel and the twenty four orders of priests than are Christians.
3. The twenty four elders represent *all the redeemed of the Lord*.
(John nowhere says who the elders are. He only speaks of them as part of the vast array of heavenly beings who worship and serve God around His throne.)
4. They were clothed in white and wore crowns which were promised to the faithful.

IV. THE AWESOMENESS OF THE THRONE OF GOD

1. God's voice sounded like a combination of many voices and of thunderings and lightnings.
2. There were seven torches of burning fire, indicating the fulness and completeness of the presence of the Holy Spirit.
3. There was a "sea of glass" stretching out before the throne. As a transparent glassy sea, as if crystal.

V. THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

1. They are the closest beings to the throne of God, guardians of His throne.
 - always found near the throne of God
 - have six wings and are full of eyes
 - they declare the holiness of God constantly
2. They were created for the purpose they were fulfilling. To John they had the appearance of:
 - one was like a lion
 - one was like an ox (calf)
 - one was like a man
 - one was like an eagle
3. They show us two things about God:
 - His supremacy, strength, intelligence and swiftness
 - all nature owes worship to God...animals and mankind

VI. THE FUNCTION OF THE TWENTY FOUR ELDERS

1. They fall down before the throne of God. They yield all they are and have to Him.
(What a lesson for us.)
2. They worship God as the eternal God.
(If one fails to worship Him, then eternal life is missed.)
3. They show the supreme worthiness of the Lord.
(They cast their crowns before the Lord in humility and thankfulness.)
4. They vocally declare His worthiness and praise Him as the Lord God of the universe and creation.