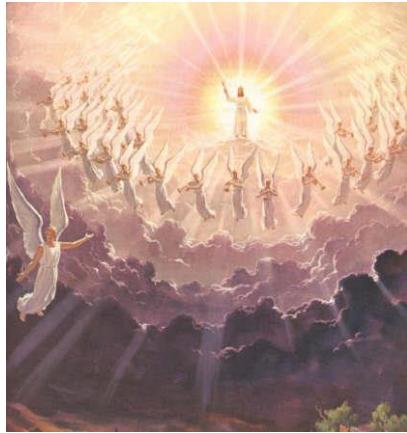


John's First Look Into Heaven



Revelation 4:1-11

1After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

John sees a door opened in heaven and he hears the sound of a trumpet telling him to "come up hither". The Spirit indwelt Church will hear these same words at the rapture. John, as a member of the faithful Church, is taken up in the spirit to see the things in heaven.

2And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

John was in his spiritual body and was taken immediately up to the third heaven. I think the apostle Paul also saw some of these things when he was caught up to the third heaven. He said he did not know if he went in his body or departed from his physical body. Paul could also write about the mystery of the rapture of the Church in his letters because he also had a foretaste of it when he was caught up to the third heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

John tells us about the throne he saw in heaven and the description of the one who sat on the throne. The text in this passage should say "**and there sat on the throne**" not "one sat on the throne"; the word "one" is not in the Greek text. John and the Church are in the spirit looking upon the throne of God. The Father was certainly there with Jesus on this throne but since scripture tells us that no man has seen the Father (except the Son) and that no man could see the Father and live, John could only have seen the Son of God.

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

What is actually seen here by John is Jesus sitting on the Father's throne. Jesus is the express image of the Father.

Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The description that John gives also indicates that he sees Jesus. The description is that of a high priest; the jasper and sardine are the first and last stones in the breastplate of the high priest (Exodus 28:17-21). The Son of God from eternity past to eternity future is reigning upon the throne of the Father. The rainbow around the throne is a refraction of the full spectrum of light coming from God. The emerald is the stone of the tribe of Judah. The rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald did so because the light from God was shining through Jesus who came from the tribe of Judah.

4 And round about the throne were four and twenty 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.

There has been much debate about the identity of the twenty-four elders. Many say that they are redeemed men and most of those say they are the twelve apostles and twelve patriarchs. However, these twenty-four are not likely to be the twelve apostles and the twelve patriarchs. If John were one of the twenty-four, would he not have been among them that cast their crowns before the throne? He gives no indication that he was one of the twenty-four or that he even saw himself or any of the other eleven he knew so intimately.

Scripture says the twelve apostles of the inner circle of Jesus will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel but these twenty-four surround the throne of Father God and apparently rule over all creation. **We also know that most of the twelve patriarchs did not live a lifestyle that would indicate such a reward of honor in heaven. Further, the rewards for the Church are not yet even given at this point. However, these twenty-four are already crowned.**

In 1 Chronicles chapter 24, we are told that King David appointed twenty-four elder sons of Aaron to represent the entire Levitical priesthood. It is likely that David set it up according to a pattern he knew existed in heaven. These twenty-four may be the sons of the mighty in heaven spoken about in Psalm 89:6-7. Thus, the twenty-four elders may be celestial beings of the highest order who assist God in the administration of all creation.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Out of the throne were "voices". **The one God is three divine persons.** Scripture says that God is one because the triune God is one in unity. We have body, soul and spirit and we are still one being. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and yet the three divine persons are one God. The seven lamps are the seven Spirits of God. God does not have seven different spirits but His Holy Spirit has seven different characteristics.

The seven characteristics of the Spirits of God are given to us in Isaiah 11:2:

- The Spirit of the Lord
- The Spirit of Wisdom
- The Spirit of Understanding
- The Spirit of Counsel
- The Spirit of Might
- The Spirit of Knowledge
- The Spirit of Fear of the Lord

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

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

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

The molten sea in the temple built by Solomon was the brass laver. It was here the priests came for their cleansing before they entered the holy place. It is turned to crystal in heaven because no one will ever need to confess their sins. The Church will be changed to be like Jesus and will be like stones of crystal whose lives are totally transparent to God and to others.

The word "beasts" in this passage is not a good translation. The Greek root word is **zwon** (zoon) where we get the word zoo. It should be translated as "**living creatures**". These four living creatures are the Seraphim. The Seraphim are described in Isaiah 6:1-3. The faces of the creatures around the throne reflect the nature that God chose to reveal himself to His creation through His incarnation on earth and in His holy word. Among other things, the four faces of the Seraphim correlate to the four different testimonies of Jesus Christ in the gospels that show us God through His Son:

- Matthew...the lion (the King of the Jews and Messiah)
- Mark.....the ox (the Servant)
- Luke.....the man (the Son of Adam)
- Johnthe eagle (His heavenly origin)

The Seraphim continually tell of God's holiness. They say **holy, holy, holy** each time they praise Him because they are praising a **triune being**.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The living creatures give glory and honor to Jesus on the throne. The twenty-four elders fall down and cast their crowns before the throne. They do this to acknowledge that the authority they have comes from the one on the throne and that only the one on the throne is worthy to receive glory, honor and power because He created all things. If the twenty-four elders were some of the first created beings as I suggest, they probably witnessed the creation of the universe by Jesus and can make that statement with certainty.

So there can be no misunderstanding that it was the Son of God (Jesus) that created all things, the following passages should make this point abundantly clear:

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² ***The same was in the beginning with God.*** ³ ***All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.*** ⁴ ***In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*** ⁵ ***And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*** ⁶ ***There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*** ⁷ ***The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*** ⁸ ***He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*** ⁹ ***That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.***

¹⁰ **H**e was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. ¹¹ **H**e came unto his own, and his own received him not. ¹² But as many as received him, to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And **t**he Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Colossians 1:16-19

¹⁶**F**or by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **a**ll things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷ **A**nd he is before all things, and by him all things consist. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. ¹⁹ **F**or it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;