

## ***The Church of the Servant King***

[www.cotsk.org](http://www.cotsk.org)

### **PROPHECY SERIES**

(Proph21C\_Revelation\_chp4\_Throne Room of Heaven)

#### ***THE SCENE IN HEAVEN*** (4:1-4)

4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. 3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. 4 And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

<b>Verse</b>	<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1	"...the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet..."	The first voice is a reference to the voice of 1:10 – "I was in the spirit <u>on the Lord's Day</u> , and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet." <sup>1</sup>
1	"...I will show you what must take place after these things..."	The phrase "...after these things..." occurs frequently in Revelation to note transition in the vision narrative rather than chronological sequence in the vision itself (cf. 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1; 20:3). <sup>2</sup>
2	"Immediately, I was in the Spirit..."	John was transported by means of the Spirit to the throne room of heaven and there is a very obvious connection to the phraseology of 1:10. This connection is not accidental and the vision of the throne room in heaven corresponds from a timing perspective to events transpiring on earth during "the Lord's Day" or "the day of the Lord," i.e. events leading up to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Advent of Christ.
2	"...a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne..."	This is a reference to the heavenly Father, Who, throughout the book is spoken of as "He that is sitting on a throne." (He is distinguished from the Son in Rev 6:16; 7:10). The reference to a throne is a reference to judgment. The emphasis upon God's sovereignty is very

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A to these notes for an analysis of the phrase "the Lord's Day" in Revelation 1:10.

<sup>2</sup> Some have interpreted John's use of the phrase "...after these things..." in 4:1 as an indication that the narrative to mean after the things related to the church, the Body of Christ, discussed in chapters 2 & 3. Thus, the material in Revelation after this point will be fulfilled after the church is gone. Some even believe that John's transportation to heaven in chapter 4 should be viewed as a type of the Rapture of the church and the mention of the voice that is "like a trumpet" here recalls the language of the Rapture passages in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 (which refers to the last trumpet) and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (which refers to the "voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God"). See John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1985).

		pronounced in Revelation. There are approximately 40 references to “throne” or “thrones” in Revelation vs. 15 in the remainder of the New Testament.
3	“...like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance...”	“Jasper” is elsewhere in Scripture said to be clear as crystal (21:11) and is probably a reference to a diamond-like appearance. It can be seen as a reference to the purity of God – without defect, spot or blemish. The “sardius” stone is a red stone and highlights the justice of God expressed sometimes in Scripture, especially Revelation, as the wrath of God.
3	“...there was a rainbow around the throne...”	The reference to the “rainbow” is a reference to God’s mercy in the midst of judgment – pictured by the emphasis upon the green, emerald color in the rainbow (cf. Gen 9:8-17; Hab 3:3; Psa 101:1).
4	“...around the throne were twenty-four thrones...twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns...”	The number 24 recalls the priesthood, which in David’s day was arranged into 24 orders or courses (1 Chron 24:3-5) after this heavenly order. David would say that “all this...the Lord made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans” in reference to all of the courts, ordinances and the division of the priests (1 Chron 28:11-19). The tabernacle and temple and all of the articles, ordinances, and priesthood are called “patterns” or “reflections” of the things in the heavens by the writer of Hebrews (Heb 8:5; 9:23). The temple worship on earth was modeled after that which takes place in heaven. The 24 elders in heaven are the angelic equivalent of princely leaders, rulers, and governors of Heaven’s worship – kings and priests of heaven. They are not representative of the church of God, the Body of Christ. Their “white garments” represent their purity as priests while their “golden crowns” represent their status as kings/rulers.

***THE THRONE AND WORSHIP OF THE CREATOR (4:5-11)***

5 And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seen lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; 6 and before the throne *there was*, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. 7 And the first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, and full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.” 9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying 11 “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our

God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.”

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
5	“And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder”	The throne itself has all of the accessories of judgment – a major focus of the Revelation narrative that occurs during “the day of the Lord.”
5	“...there were seen lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God...”	Some have equated the seven lamps of fire and the seven spirits of God to the Holy Spirit or the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 which have since been raptured. However, it is probably best to understand these “seven lamps” which are the “seven spirits of God” to be the seven angelic counterparts to the seven pastors of the seven “assemblies” of Revelation 2 & 3 (cf. Rev 1:4, 20; 3:1).
6	“...before the throne ... a sea of glass like crystal...”	John can only describe what he saw in heaven by comparing (“like”) it to his earthly frame of reference for such things – “crystal.”
6	“... and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...”	There are a number of opinions of what these four creatures represent. See Appendix B to these notes.

#### **APPENDIX A**

##### ***AN ANALYSIS OF THE PHRASE “THE LORD’S DAY” IN REVELATION 1:10***

Most conclude this to be a reference to Sunday and conclude that Sunday equals “the Lord’s day.” However, Scripture always refers to Sunday as “the first day of the week” (Matt 28:1; Mk 16:2, 9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1, 19; Acts 26:7; 1 Cor 16:2). Prior to the book of Revelation being written, there is no evidence that the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week was called “the Lord’s day.”

Early church fathers were influenced by their pagan backgrounds and brought their influence from “sun” worship into their Christian lives – thus “sun” day. It is interesting that early Christians were sometimes accused of being sun worshippers. However, we find no evidence of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week being referenced as “the Lord’s day” until many years later. The first day of the week came to be called “Sunday” by virtue of syncretism with pagan religions.

- Dominus Sol – “Lord Sun”
- Dies Dominica – Lord’s Day
- Sun-day

#### **APPENDIX B**

## ***AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES OF REVELATION 4:6-8***

The word translated “living creatures” is Ζῶον (Gr. ζῶον) and a better rendering would perhaps be “living ones.” (The plural of this Greek word is Ζῶα). The first time Ζῶα are mentioned in the Bible, they are named; however, they are not described. In Genesis 3:24, they are named the “Cherubim.” The Zoa are described in Ezekiel 1:5-14 and identified in Ezekiel 10:20 with the Cherubim. The two terms are used interchangeably in Ezekiel (cf. Ezek 1:22; 10:1, 15).

Some have indicated that the four “Zoa” of Revelation 4 represent the Godhead; however, it is not very likely that God, who commanded that no emblem of Deity should be made, should make one Himself – especially one that resembles animals (cf. Deut 4:15, 16; Rom 1:22, 23; Psa 106:19-20). In addition, they offer worship and are not the recipients of worship.

Some interpret them to represent the four Gospels; but it is difficult to see the point of the four Gospels guarding the Tree of Life as we see them serving that purpose in Genesis after the Fall (cf. Gen 3:24).

Some have interpreted them to represent the church, the Body of Christ. However, later in Revelation, we see them calling for judgment (Rev 6) and giving the bowls “full of the wrath of God” to the seven angels who carry the seven vials of judgment (Rev 15). This is certainly not the work of the Body of Christ – past, present or future.

They are not any ordinary angelic beings since they are distinguished from the angels in Revelation 5:8, 11. They do not receive orders, but they give orders.

As noted, we first see them in connection with the Fall and serving in a guardian capacity relative the Garden of Eden which contains the tree of Life. All of creation was affected by the Fall of man and is described to be eagerly awaiting its redemption and restoration (Rom 8:19-21).

With all of these observations that have been noted, it is quite possible that these Zoa represent the present groaning creation and serve as a surety that its groaning will one day be removed followed by a restoration to its redeemed and original state. The hope for the future redemption of the earth was given when they were first placed in the garden of Eden.

When God established the Tabernacle in Israel, He desired to dwell among Israel as His chosen people, set them apart and work through a redeemed Israel to accomplish salvation of the Gentiles (Ex 25:8). The first thing that was made was not the Tabernacle itself, but the Ark of the Covenant with its mercy-seat and the representative images of the Cherubim (Exod 25:10-12). Representative images of the Cherubim were also woven into the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the remainder of the tabernacle. It is very likely that the prominence of the cherubim representations was to serve as a reminder that the hope of creation was tightly bound and related to the hope of Israel. The hope of both was bound to the atoning blood of the animal sacrifices that covered sin until the reality, the ultimate sacrifice of the Messiah of Israel, would occur. It was from between the Cherubim and above the mercy seat that God would speak to the High Priest of Israel and it was there that His glory dwelt (cf. 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Psa 80:4, 7, 14, 19; Isa 87:16).

In Revelation 4-5, the hope of creation is on the verge of being realized. The Zoa speak of creation and the fact that its deliverance is at hand (4:11). They also speak of redemption on which the coming deliverance is based (5:9-10) – thus connecting them to the object with which they had been associated – the blood sprinkled mercy seat.