

A Visit to Heaven and the Title Deed to the Earth, Revelation 4-5

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CHAPTER 4

QUESTION: What is your idea of what heaven is like?

QUESTION: What do you do to find a house you might want to buy?

- We want to preview where we are going to live, the more pictures the better!
- This is what John's vision of heaven is like in chapter 4.
- He does his best to describe what he sees, but it is really too wonderful for words!
- John gives us one of the best previews in all of scripture of where we will live forever.

Rev 4:1-2, 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.

- **After what things?**
 - After the letters to the Seven Churches
- **What does "behold" mean? What did John really see?**
 - Behold has the sense of "O wow", "O my Goodness:", or "I can't believe my eyes!"
 - Some kind of door or portal to the heavenly dimension is opened, like portal
 - We see biblical precedent for this
 - **Ezekiel's vision 1:1**, *the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.*
 - **Stoning of Stephen, Acts 7:56**, and he said, "*Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.*"
- **Where have we heard about this before? (see Rev 1:10)**
 - *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,*
- **Come up where? What is Christ going to show John?**
 - What must take place after these things
 - This is the third and final section of the book, what is to come, this is future prophecy!
- **What is our idea of a throne?**
 - Maybe we think of a piece of furniture, a chair. **It means a place of authority**, not a chair.
 - In the OT we saw the presence of God settle on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant
 - *Exo 25:22, There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the covenant, I will deliver to you all my commands for the Israelites.*
 - *Lev 16:2 (NLT), The Lord said to Moses, "Warn your brother, Aaron, not to enter the Most Holy Place behind the inner curtain whenever he chooses; if he does, he will die. For the Ark's cover—the place of atonement—is there, and I myself am present in the cloud above the atonement cover.*
 - So the Mercy Seat is a type of throne.

Who is on the throne?

- God the Father

Rev 4:3-4, 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 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

- **What does a jasper stone look like?**
 - We are not sure that it's like the jasper on earth. The gems and metals seem to be different.
 - *Rev 21:11, And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.*
 - *Rev 21:21, And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*
 - It appears that the precious gems and metals are clear. The glory of God illuminates the entire city (Rev 21:23).
- **What does a sardius look like?**
- **What does an emerald look like?**
 - So Father God is spirit and his appearance is like all these dazzling gemstones
 - And surrounding Him is some type of rainbow dominated by emerald green
- **Twenty-four thrones**
 - Again, these are seats of authority and power
 - Those seated there must have a role in the administration of God's Kingdom
- **Twenty-four elders**
 - These are actual people! "Elders" are always used of men and never used of angels
 - Some say these are the twelve Jewish patriarchs and the twelve apostles, but this cannot be stated with any certainty based on the text. For example, Paul was expecting a crown:
 - *2 Tim 4:8, in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*
- **White garments, and golden crowns**
 - Where have we heard of white garments before?
 - Sardis: *Rev 3:5, He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments*
 - Laodicea: *Rev 3:18, buy from Me ... white garments so that you may clothe yourself*
 - Where have we heard of crowns before (crowns are never promised to angels BTW)?
 - Smyrna: *Rev 2:10, Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life*
 - *James 1:12, Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has [a]been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

Rev 4:5-6, Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; 6 and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

- **What do lightning and thunder represent?**
 - Typically, the presence of God.

- *Exo 19:16, So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled*
- *Eze 1:13, In the midst of the living beings there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches darting back and forth among the living beings. The fire was bright, and lightning was flashing from the fire.*
- <https://youtu.be/8FfTpm2JZLc?si=GOy5hurDTbL6R0lm>
- But also the wrath of God. Lightning is compared with arrows
 - *Psa 18:13-14, The Lord thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded amid the hail and burning coals. 14 He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies; great bolts of lightning flashed, and they were confused.*
 - *Psa 144:5-6, Open the heavens, Lord, and come down. Touch the mountains so they billow smoke. 6 Hurl your lightning bolts and scatter your enemies! Shoot your arrows and confuse them!*
- **Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne**
 - These are not “luchnos” (indoor lamps that would be in the lampstands in Rev 1:12)
 - *Mat 5:14-16, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a [a]hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp (luchnos) and put it under a [b]basket, but on the lampstand (luchnia), and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*
 - but rather “lampas” which are outdoor torches, often used in battle parties
 - *John 18:3, Judas then, having received the Roman [a]cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*
 - Again we see the “Seven Spirits” or the sevenfold spirit of God
- **A sea of glass, like crystal**
 - Probably not a literal sea, but a metaphorical sea
 - The new heaven will have no sea (Rev 21:1)
 - The “floor” in front of the throne was a vast pavement like glass, perhaps the gold of heaven
 - *Rev 21:21b, And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*
- **In the center and around the throne**
 - These beings are stationed at or near the very throne of God
 - In Ezekiel’s vision of heaven they are in constant motion (Ez 1:12, 17)
- **Four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind**
 - A single word in Greek best rendered four “living ones” not “creatures”, but cherubim angels
 - NLT renders them as “living beings”
 - Eyes all around – they don’t miss a thing!

Rev 4:7-8, 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, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night [a]they do not cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who [b]is to come.”

- *Eze 1:4-10, As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire. 5 Within it there were figures resembling four living beings. And this was their appearance: they had human form. 6 Each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight and [c]their feet were like a calf’s hoof, and they gleamed like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides were human hands. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, 9 their*

wings touched one another; their faces did not turn when they moved, each went straight forward. 10 As for the form of their faces, each had the face of a man; [d]all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and [e]all four had the face of an eagle.

- So Ezekiel saw four beings each with four faces, John saw four beings each with a different face.
 - We believe they are describing the exact same beings, Eze 10:15 identifies them as cherubim
 - *Ez 10:15, Then the cherubim rose upward. These were the same living beings I had seen beside the Kebar River.*
- **But all the faces are described in the same way, what do they possibly mean?:**
 - Lion – earth’s wild creatures, the group banner of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun
 - Calf – earth’s domesticated creatures, the group banner of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin
 - Eagle – earth’s flying creatures, the group banner of Dan, Asher and Naphtali
 - Man – given dominion over all creatures, the group banner of Reuben, Simeon and Gad
- The purpose of these beings appears to be to assemble a divine war machine ready to go to battle
- **What do they continually say?**
 - **Worship is the foremost priority in Heaven**
 - *Isa 6:2-3, Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The [a]whole earth is full of His glory.”*

Rev 4:9-11, *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 are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they [a]existed, and were created.”*

- **Music group Casting Crowns.**
 - The saints who are given crowns will cast them at Jesus’ feet in heaven
 - QUESTION, who says they will be given a crown in heaven?
 - *2 Tim 4:8, in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*
 - QUESTION: are there any who hate his appearing?
- **Worthy are you our Lord ... for You created all things**
 - A view back to Genesis, why?
 - Because the original, intended order of the Universe finally being restored is in view.
 - God is setting in motion his plan to take back what was lost in Eden
 - QUESTION: Who created the Universe? Who owns it?
 - QUESTION: Who owns your house? Estimated 1,200 homes in Atlanta have squatters!
 - QUESTION: Who was given dominion over the earth, to rule over it and subdue it?
 - *Gen 1:26, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the [a]sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*
 - QUESTION: But, a usurper has been allowed to rule over the earth. Who is it?
 - QUESTION: Who turned control over to the usurper? We did!
 - *Rom 6:16, Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin [a]resulting in death, or of obedience [b]resulting in righteousness?*
 - We made Satan our slave taskmaster by obeying him and turned it over

- Luke 4:5-6, And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of [a]the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and [b]its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.
- We escape slavery to Satan by obeying Christ, who paid the price to redeem us
- God is getting ready to reclaim what (and whom) is His and destroy the deeds of the devil

CHAPTER 5

Rev 5:1, I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

- *right hand of Him who sat on the throne*, QUESTION: Who is this?
- *a book written inside and on the back*
 - The Greek word for book here is "biblion" a diminutive form of biblos, which means papyrus
 - Even though books as we know them started appearing in the 1st century AD, **this was a scroll**
 - The first books were typically parchment (from animal skin), not papyrus scrolls (from a reed)
- *sealed up with seven seals*
- The fact that is sealed up with seven seals means **it is a legal document**
- God does not act in any way against His moral laws of the universe which He created
 - We sold ourselves into slavery, and had to be purchased (redeemed) to become His possession
 - Titus 2:13b-14, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
 - 1 Cor 6:20, *For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*
 - So, this legal document is like a Roman will, which had as many as seven seals
 - Outside was a summary of the contents, and inside were all the legal details
 - *A sealed will was called a "will under seals". When the will had to be opened, a majority of the witnesses (three of the five, four of the six or seven) had to be present*
 - Each witness had to identify their corresponding seal before the will could be opened
 - *Thanks to a papyrus of 325 A.D. the procedures to be followed when a will was to be opened are quite well known.*
 - *A short extract: "The curator says to the notary "In the presence of whom did you make out the will?", The notary answers "The signatories". The curator asks "How many signatories are there?", the notary says "Seven, and four are present." The curator says "Let the four subscribe that they have recognized their own seals". After the signatories present had subscribed that they recognized their own seals, the will was opened and read."*
 - This scroll, however, is not a will, since a will is only executed after the benefactor has died
 - This is better understood as the inheritance which the Father has already promised to the Son.
 - **This is BEST understood to be the Title Deed to the Earth**
 - QUESTION: what inheritance did the Father promise the Son?
 - Psa 2:7-8, (NLT) *The king proclaims the Lord's decree: "The Lord said to me, 'You are my son. Today I have become your Father. 8 **Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession.***
 - This is the first OT reference to the Father-Son relationship in the Trinity
 - It's also quoted in Heb 1:5-6 and in Acts 13:33-34
 - So, **the scroll John saw doesn't contain "the deceptive detail of what Christ will inherit, but rather how He will regain his rightful inheritance. It will occur by divine judgements about to be poured out on the earth. While the scroll is a scroll of doom and judgment, it is also a scroll**

of redemption. It tells how Christ will redeem the world from Satan and those with him.” – John MacArthur

- Ezekiel was handed a VERY similar scroll in his vision about Israel, and he reveals its contents!
 - Ez 2:9-10, *Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it. 10 When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe.*
 - The NLT renders it “*funeral songs, words of sorrow, and pronouncements of doom.*”
- Back to the squatters living in people’s houses in Atlanta:
 - It’s such a problem that people have actually paid squatters to leave their homes!
 - This comes from the *New York Post*, Feb 6, 2024
 - *Squatters are ruining entire neighborhoods in Atlanta and police response to evict is so slow, some homeowners have resorted to paying nuisances to leave.*
 - <https://nypost.com/2024/02/06/news/squatters-take-over-1200-homes-in-atlanta-terrorize-neighbors/>
 - QUESTION: What do you do if you pay squatters and they don’t leave?

- **Parable of the Vine-growers, it explains itself!**

- *Mark 12:1-12 (NLT), Then Jesus began teaching them with stories: “A man planted a vineyard. He built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to another country. 2 At the time of the grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop. 3 But the farmers grabbed the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed. 4 The owner then sent another servant, but they insulted him and beat him over the head. 5 The next servant he sent was killed. Others he sent were either beaten or killed, 6 until there was only one left—his son whom he loved dearly. The owner finally sent him, thinking, ‘Surely they will respect my son.’*

7 “But the tenant farmers said to one another, ‘Here comes the heir to this estate. Let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!’ 8 So they grabbed him and murdered him and threw his body out of the vineyard.

9 “What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do?” Jesus asked. “I’ll tell you—he will come and kill those farmers and lease the vineyard to others. 10 Didn’t you ever read this in the Scriptures?

‘The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. 11 This is the Lord’s doing, and it is wonderful to see.’[a]”

12 The religious leaders[b] wanted to arrest Jesus because they realized he was telling the story against them—they were the wicked farmers. But they were afraid of the crowd, so they left him and went away.

- So, judgement is coming!

*Rev 5:2-4, And I saw a **strong angel** proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the ^[c]book and **to break its seals?**” ³ And **no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth** was able to open the ^[d]book or to look into it. ⁴ Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the ^[e]book or to look into it;*

- **The angel is not identified**, but it is a “strong angel” with a loud voice, loud enough to reach every corner of the universe.
- **to break its seals**

- Who is allowed to break the seals (only the one for whom the scroll it is intended)
- **No one was found** and John began to weep. QUESTION: Why was he crying?
 - He wanted to see a world without evil, sin, and death
- QUESTION: Why was no one found? Who were they looking for?
 - No human or angel can redeem the Universe
 - It's almost as if all creation has been waiting for God to provide the right One
 - *Gen 22:7-8, Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.*

*Rev 5:5-7, and one of the elders *said to me, "**Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.**" 6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders **a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes,** which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And **He came and took the book** out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.*

- **Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah**
 - QUESTION: Where does this phrase come from?
 - This term comes from Jacob's last words and blessing to his son Judah. It's a prophecy:
 - Gen 45:8-10, "*Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. 9 "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? 10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*"
 - Whelp: a lion's cub, or the son of a Lion
 - Couches: to lie down, bow down or submit to authority (as Jesus did to His father)
 - *who dares rouse him up?* (do not provoke a sleeping lion)
 - **Shiloh: the One to whom it belongs**
 - And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (his people will obey Him)
 - QUESTION: is Jesus a Lion or a Lamb? YES!
 - At the first advent, the Jews expected a ruler to lead them from bondage to Rome
 - *Acts 1:6-7, So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;*
 - Jews mostly rejected Him because he came as a humble servant and a sacrificial LAMB
 - *Isa 53:7, He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.*
 - *John 1:29, The next day [John] *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*
 - He is referred to as a Lamb once in the OT and 4 times in the NT outside of Rev
 - In Revelation is is referred to as a Lamb 31 times!
 - But He is also a LION, and will destroy their enemies, but on his own timetable!
 - **a Lamb standing, as if slain**
 - With the marks of having been killed, yet alive!
 - **having seven horns**, horns symbolize strength and power, complete, absolute power

- **seven eyes**, the Holy spirit in all his fulness seeing and discerning all things
- **He came and took the book**. The title deed to earth has been given to Jesus (Shiloh)
 - **Shiloh: the One to whom it belongs**

*Rev 5:18-24, When He had taken the [a]book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the [b]saints. 9 And they *sang a new song, saying,*

- Harp and incense. God invented music, incense represents our prayers

“Worthy are You to take the [c]book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

- The purchase price for us was Christ’s blood. The term is used for slaves bought in a marketplace!

10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

- Priests to our God, we will have complete access to God
- We will reign upon the earth (not some ethereal place in the sky)

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice,

- Myriad literally means 10,000. There are at least 100 million singing the Song of the Lamb

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

- Jesus is the only One in the universe that is worthy to open the scroll and reclaim ownership of earth
- He created it
- He redeemed from the usurper
- He will now reclaim it

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

- Amen. Let it be, or make it happen!
- The stage is now set in heaven for God to roll out his plan to reclaim ownership of the earth!