REVELATION 4

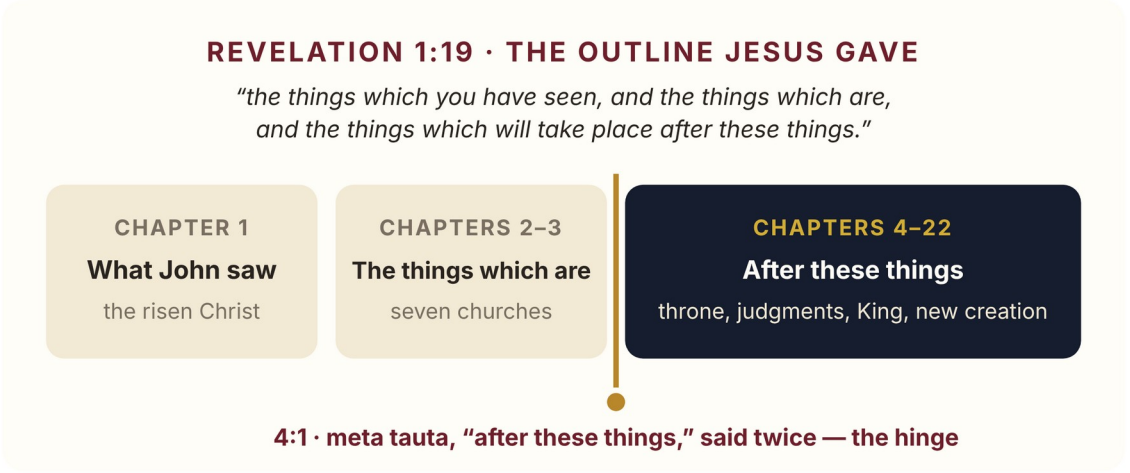
The Throne Room: Holy, Holy, Holy

“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 existed, and were created.”
REVELATION 4:11

Where John has brought us

1. Jesus gave John the outline of the whole book in 1:19: “the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”

2. I read these chapters the way my teachers do, as future: the judgments that come on the world before Christ returns to reign.



A Door Standing Open in Heaven

"Come up here" — and the first thing John sees is an occupied throne.

REVELATION 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."

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik uses 1:19 as the outline of Revelation: what John saw in chapter 1, the things which are in chapters 2 and 3, and the things which will take place after these things in chapters 4 through 22.

DAVID GUZIK

On the throne itself Guzik quotes G. Campbell Morgan: 'At the center of everything is an occupied throne.'

θρόνος
THRONOS · "THRONE"

Thronos is a seat of royal authority, and it is the key word of this chapter.

Elders, Crowns and Fire

Twenty-four thrones, white garments, golden crowns, and the seven Spirits burning.

REVELATION 4:5

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;

DAVID GUZIK

Commentators debate whether the twenty-four elders are angels or glorified people. Guzik says they certainly seem to represent God's people.

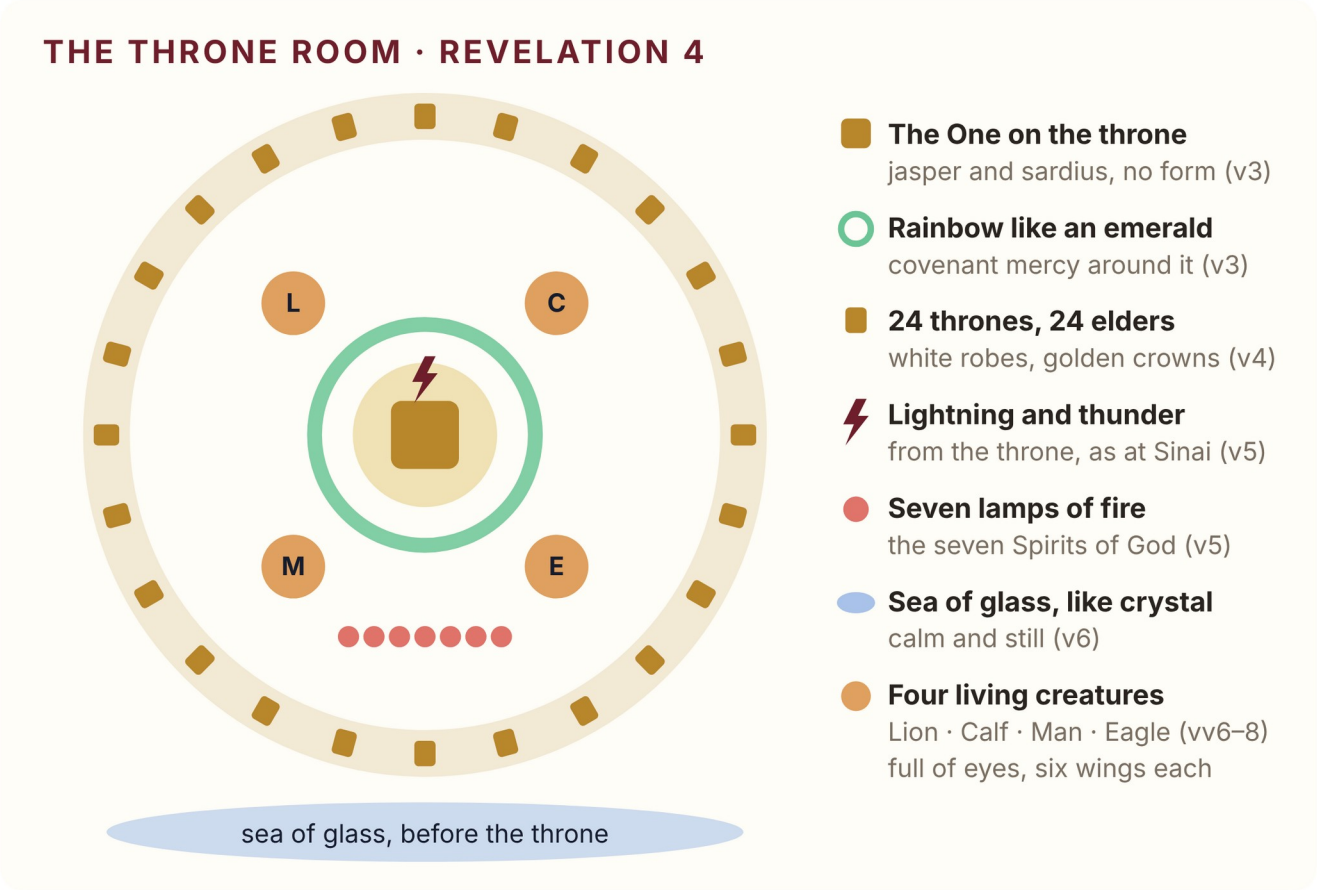
WHAT IT MEANS

Around the throne John sees people who belong there: elders in white, seated on thrones, crowned. I read them as God's redeemed, and that is staggering grace.

στέφανος
STEPHANOS · "CROWN"

The elders' crowns are stephanos, a victor's wreath, not a king's diadem. It is the prize of an athlete who finished the race, like an Olympic wreath.

The Throne Room



Everything in Revelation 4 is placed by the throne: around it, out from it, before it, and in the center of it.

Full of Eyes: Holy, Holy, Holy

A sea of glass, four living creatures, and a song that never stops.

REVELATION 4:6

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.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik corrects the King James “beasts”: these are living creatures, cherubim like those of Ezekiel and the seraphim of Isaiah.

DAVID GUZIK

On the sea of glass Guzik notes that it is calm, clear and still; nothing in heaven is in turmoil.

ζῷον

ZŌON · “LIVING CREATURE”

Zōon means a living being. The King James says “beasts,” but John's word for the wild beast of chapter 13 is a different one, thērion.

They Cast Their Crowns

The elders fall down, give back what they won, and worship the Creator.

REVELATION 4:9

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,

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that the elders worship because the living creatures do; worship in heaven leads to more worship.

WHAT IT MEANS

The elders won those crowns, and they throw them down. That is the strongest picture of a man I know.

προσκυνέω
PROSKYNEŌ · "WORSHIP"

Proskyneō means to bow down, to fall prostrate in reverence. Worship in this chapter is not a feeling but a posture: the elders "fall down" and "worship," and the two go together.

What to carry from this chapter

1

The throne comes before the storm.

God shows John His throne in chapters 4–5 before a single seal is broken in chapter 6.

2

“Throne” is everywhere.

The word appears in verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10; everything in heaven is placed by it.

3

An occupied throne.

Guzik, quoting Morgan: atheism has no throne, humanism puts man on it, but heaven's throne is occupied.

4

Judgment wrapped in a promise.

The rainbow around the throne recalls God's covenant with Noah, a sign of grace before the judgments fall.

More to carry

5

Living creatures, not beasts.

Zōon means a living being; the beast of chapter 13 is a different word, thērion.

6

Failure to worship is failure to see.

The creatures are full of eyes, and what they see never stops their song.

7

Victor's wreaths, given back.

The elders' crowns are stephanos, won in the race and cast before the throne.

8

Learn to worship now.

Guzik passes on Spurgeon's warning that heaven's choir has no place for untrained voices.

Talk it through

1. Why do you think God showed John the throne before He showed him any judgment?

2. The throne is surrounded by both lightning and a rainbow. What do those two together tell you about God?

3. The living creatures never stop worshiping because they never stop seeing. What has closed your eyes to who God is lately?

4. What crowns are you still wearing that belong at His feet?

5. How does knowing you exist “because of Your will” change the way you see your own life?

CLOSING

Before the seals are broken, before the horsemen ride, the throne is standing and God is on it. Lift your eyes there first. Then do what the elders do: fall down, cast your crowns, and say, worthy are You, our Lord and our God.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides, reflection journal and film: see the Revelation study page.