

## **Second Vision**

[Summary by Ruth Smart 2020]

### **Revelation 4**

*After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."*

*At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the centre around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.' Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (ISV)*

- **I have deliberately taken out the verse numbers so the passage can be read as a whole to get the total picture**
- **This second vision is the pivotal vision in the whole book. We need to listen for echoes as the whole Bible flows together and the keys are found everywhere else in the Bible.**
- Remember Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 25 – 27) was summoned by God into his presence by a trumpet, and he saw something. He was told to go back down the mountain and make a model of what he saw. It was a pattern for the tabernacle. Centre was the ark of the covenant containing the commandments of God, On top was a slab of gold called the throne of God. At the ends were two strange creatures, called cherubim,. Between the cherubim was an uncreated light - the presence of God. Immediately in front was a thick curtain, embroidered with cherubim in scarlet, blue and purple - a separating curtain. In front of the curtain was the golden altar where the priests would worship God in an everlasting song of praise. On the right hand side a seven branched candlestick was constantly burning. On the left was the table with 12 loaves of bread, one for each of the tribes of Israel. Also a goblet of wine that spoke of the joy of the Lord. Move outside into the courtyard and you find the laver to wash the sacrifices. Right at the end was an altar of brass where the animals were killed and their blood was shed. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat by a priest who went beyond the separating curtain into the Holy of Holies.
- John saw what Moses saw but taken to its total fulfilment – it was now a reality. He saw the way the universe really is...we won't ever understand the universe from the physical end. We need to understand the invisible, spiritual side to understand the physical. What we see around us are the effects of the spiritual world. John was called into the world of causes – the invisible world. That's what the whole of Revelation is about – understanding the causes behind the physical world. **At the centre of the universe is the Throne of God.** This would have been a great encouragement to the early Christians – "It's OK. God is in control. Yes, you are being persecuted, but God is still in control". The word "throne" is mentioned 17 times in this chapter.

- What he saw was the tabernacle in cosmic size. Many parallels with Exodus – door open in heaven, the sound of a trumpet, a throne/ark of the covenant, sea of glass/separation/ curtain, strange living creatures around the throne - cherubim, real ones not embroidered on a curtain, seven burning flames - seven branched candlesticks etc.
- The one seated on the throne was like a jasper and ruby (carnelian in some texts). Jasper is crystal clear, shining, radiant. Carnelian is fiery red, representing anger against sin(? Or representing the blood?) But around the throne was a rainbow / a sign of a covenant God who keeps his word - his loving kindness – God welcomes man. Lightning as in Exodus.
- John saw an overall picture of the awesome holiness of God.
- 24 elders sitting in the presence of God – numbers give ideas. 12 is 3 x 4. 3 is Trinity, 4 is the totality of the world (4 corners). 24 is 12 + 12 – 12 tribes of Israel and 12 apostles. It represents God working out his purpose in the world. NT often says that the church is built on the foundation of the twelve apostles. 24 elders is a symbol of the church of all ages. We are a part of that.
- Clothed in white garments – speaks of righteousness
- Seated – quite a statement – expect them to be grovelling in such a presence but they are not! *Ephesians 2-6 We are now seated in heavenly places..Romans 8-17 co-heirs with Jesus Christ..*
- Strange living creatures/cherubim. Ezekiel Ch1 to10. The cherubim are the highest order of angels who bring to pass the purposes of God. They guarded the garden of Eden, not so much to keep man out, but to guarantee that one day man could again go the tree of life. These cherubim also were on the curtain in the tabernacle, guaranteeing and working out God's will so that one day man could go beyond the veil and enter the very Throne of God.

## **Revelation 5**

*Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song, saying:*

*"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."*

*Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying:*

*"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!"*

*Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor*

*and glory and power, for ever and ever!"The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshipped. (NIV) Again no verse numbers.*

- John now sees some specifics. He sees a scroll in the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. It is written on front and back and sealed with seven seals. The scroll is so important, especially for those who this book was originally written for. (Futurists think it is about a seven year tribulation). Right hand – hand of power, God's sovereignty. Suggests that in that scroll were the decrees of God, the will of God, all he purposed for mankind, all the joyfilled plans God had for man. At the garden of Eden, man put seven seals on that plan because of his sin.
- Man was made to walk with God and to sit in heavenly places/ Because man wrecked God's plans and purposes through sin, man must open it. Whoever was to take away sin from mankind must be equal to man and be without sin. No-one could be found in heaven (spirits there, under the earth (spirits there) or on the earth – lots of men but none without sin.
- Behind him John heard a voice - " Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has triumphed (conquered).He can open the scroll and its seven seals".
- Lion from the tribe of Judah *Gen 49 You will have a sceptre and a ruler's staff... until Shiloh comes".* Shiloh – he whose right it is or the worthy one.
- Root of David – *2Sam 7: 11-13 "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*
- David was the first king of the tribe of Judah. Out of his humanity one would come and he would sit on the throne of David and rule forever and ever, whose kingdom would never end. That's why we have genealogies at the beginning of the NT.
- *Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.* No-one questions that the Lamb is not a symbol of Jesus. The Greek word here is *dear little lamb*. The Lamb represented all the bloody sacrifices of the OT, He was able to break the seals because he was a sinless man. He has come to shower blessing on the human race. Despite the great gash in his throat, he lives!
- Jesus brings his own blood, as a priest, into the presence of God. It is finished. He has seven horns/ symbolising perfect power, omnipotence. Jesus, the one in the centre of the candlesticks – the one we need to be vitally connected to. He takes the scroll that contains all of God's purposes for the world. And the whole of heaven bursts into song – a new (kind) of song) Worthy is the Lamb! Shiloh has come!

## **Revelation Ch 6**

*I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder,  
"Come!" I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say,  
"Come!" Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large(?) sword. When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say,  
"Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say,  
"Come!" I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.  
When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud*

voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

*I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?" (NIV)*

- This vision is about principals that occur after the Lamb has been slain and is seated on the throne. It unfolds in history, but is not specific to any particular moment in history. It is a blessing to anyone who reads it, at any time in history. These are the inevitable results of the declaration that the Lamb reigns.
- The white horse – the one who sat on it had a bow and a crown and he went out conquering and to conquer. (Scofield's bible says this is the antichrist. NAS says a false christ)
- There is more than one white horse in Revelation, and chapter 19:11-16 makes it clear who the rider is. The code must be consistent.

*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre" He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

- This represents the good news that the Lamb is risen and has been crowned. Matt 28" 18-19 says "...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.."
- Crown represents his rulership
- Red horse – rider held a sword (Greek word says it was a sword of sacrifice, not a sword for battle) It is not a sword for war as some bibles say – you don't conduct a war with a short sword of sacrifice. This vision says that hard on the heels of the gospel is the sacrifice of the saints and persecution. This was certainly true for the first Christians and is still true for millions of Christians around the world today.
- The rider was granted to take peace from the earth – God is still in control. The Lamb still reigns.
- Black horse - Some bibles say famine, but there s plenty of food – if you have the money for it. This is another type of persecution, economic persecution.
- Grey or pale horse - representing sickness, death, famine, war etc in a world dominated by sin and man. Again, authority was granted. Death and Hades are not in control, God is. We are not isolated from these, but our hope and trust is in God.
- Vision of the slain under the altar. Under the altar in OT times ws a gutter to catch the blood of the sacrifices, so this is a picture of those martyred for Christ. They want to be avenged.
- Context – a god who is not just is no god at all. God is good – if he is not just, he is not good. Salvation cannot be understood and be absolutely complete until sin has finally been judged. Sin was defeated on the cross, but it will be completely done away with by judgement when Satan is finally defeated. There is justice in heaven. Good example is in Psalm 52:1-5 David states: *Why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero?*

*Why do you boast all day long,*

*you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?...*

*Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin:* David knew that Doeg would not get away with his terrible deeds. He was saved from bitterness and judgement because he could safely leave the judgement of man to God. So the martyrs under the altar were appealing to God for justice, as any of us would!

- Verses 12 – 14. Massive pictures. Stars falling to earth – can't be literal as stars are bigger than earth. Gigantic horrific picture of the earth appearing to cave in. An angry lamb is incongruous. These are judgements that can happen anywhere and at any time in history. This is not the final judgement

## **Revelation Chapter 7**

*After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.*

*From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.*

*After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.*

*They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying:*

*"Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"*

*Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water. 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'(NIV)*

- Four angels at the four corners of the earth – now universal. Going to be the end, the finale but then it says "Stop". We need to protect the church by giving them the seal of the living God. There is a holding back of God's judgement because of the church. God's mercy is impressive. eg. Enoch's son Methuselah was the walking patience of God – God's judgement of the flood only came after the death of Methuselah and he lived almost 1000 years
- John *heard* a number – 144 000 – (NAS says its the remnant of Israel) but its an idea. It is not the 12 tribes of Israel as some are left out, others added in, Reuben should be first, Levi included, Joseph added, Ephraim left out etc. It represents a company of people – the complete Israel. Israel means "conquered by God"

- When Israel was numbered, they had to pay atonement money which meant that they belonged to the God of Israel. 1Peter 1:18-20 says we are redeemed not by silver or gold but by the precious blood of Christ. *He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. (NIV)* Every person in this company is a numbered/redeemed person.
- 144 000 is  $3 \times 4 \times 3 \times 4$  – representing 12 of the OT, 12 of the NT as mentioned before.  $\times 1000$  which is  $10 \times 10 \times 10$ . 10 is perfection or completion – we count to 10, then start again for the next 10. 1000 represents absolute completeness/ It gives an idea of the completed church, old and new.
- God in Trinity (3) working in the totality of the world (4).
- $3 \times 4$  = God working His purpose out in the world
- So struggling little Christian, I've got my complete church – not one will be lost.
- Names are significant – their significance arranged by God. Their inclusion gives a picture of who is in this company.
- Judah - means praise
- Reuben - behold a son (we are all sons).
- Gad - a great company – God has many sons.
- Asher - happy, joy-filled.
- Naphtali – possessors/overcomers.
- Manasseh – forgetting - Joseph gave it to his first son, forgetting his troubles and bondage/
- Simeon – hearing – ears open. My sheep hear my voice.
- Levi – joined/ to Lord/ one spirit.
- Issachar – a price was paid.
- Zebulun - a dwelling place. This company is the habitation of the spirit of God.
- Joseph – add/fruitful. Jacob said his son would be so fruitful that his boughs would hang over the wall into his neighbours yard. Foretold of the Gentiles being part of God's family/people.
- Benjamin – son of my right hand. Originally called Benoni by his mother, meaning son of my sorrow, but his father changed his name to Benjamin. A beautiful picture of Christ – He is the Benoni/Benjamin.
- John then saw a crowd so large that no-one could count them. From every nation, tribe and people. Each one is sealed. A seal represents ownership. An “owned” person is secure and protected. We have been sealed by the Holy Spirit who is the living guarantee that we are God's property and he'll take care of us. (even if we die) What a comfort for those first century Christians, and for us!