A Trip to Heaven – P1

Revelation 4:1-11

Pastor Bill Farrow

**4** After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

2Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.

3And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. 4Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. 5And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. 7The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. 8The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

“Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!”

9Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 “You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.”

# Intro

## A Mistaken Society and Church

**4** After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

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## Many Modern Visions Claimed

* Chapter 4 takes us on a trip to heaven.
* It should be a welcome visit for any of us. In fact, as I noted as I read several of the books I’ve read on the current Charismatic Chaos, there are a bevy of people who claim to have visited heaven.
* Dr. Percy Collett, for example, a Charismatic medical missionary devised an extensive series of detailed messages on heaven.
* They were all drawn from what he claims to have been his extraordinary person experience.
* Collett claimed that in 1982 he was transported to heaven for five and a half days.
* He says he saw Jesus who was supervising the building of mansions there and he claims he was able to speak face-to-face with the Holy Spirit.
* If I may add a parenthetical statement, it's very difficult to speak face to face with any spirit.
* Further a newsletter rhapsodically detailing Dr. Collett's journey to heaven began, incredibly, with these words, quoting him:

While Christianity abounds with accounts of glimpses of the "other" dimension from those who have had "out of body" experiences, Dr. Collett's is unlike these. Obviously he was "caught up in the third heaven" even as Paul was. The difference began, Paul was not allowed to utter the things he saw and heard, while Dr. Collett, almost 2000 years later, was commanded to do so.

* Collett offers videotapes detailing his sojourn in heaven, and his accounts are peculiar indeed. Quote:

"Everything God created upon the earth is in heaven--horses, cats, dogs. Everything that He created upon earth is in heaven--in the way of animals, only these are perfect. For example, the dogs do not bark...You don't need plumbing, You can go to the Banqueting House and eat all you want and no plumbing is needed,".

* Collett...Collett describes quote

"The Pity Department, the place where the souls of aborted babies go, and also some severely retarded babies, and it is here these little souls are trained for a period of time before they go before the Throne of God."

* He claims he also saw the Record Room,

"An immense area where all the `idle' words spoken by Christians are being retained until the Christians give an account of them or are judged, at which time these will be emptied into the Sea of Forgetfulness."

* Collett describes what he calls
* a "Garment Room" where angels are sewing our robes, a place where mansions under construction,
* a "Holy Ghost elevator," and
* many other astonishing sights. He adds one macabre detail,
* He goes on…

"While I was traveling back to earth, I saw two girls, one brunette and one a red-head. We stopped to talk to them--their soul bodies--on the way back. We asked them what had happened to them. They indicated they had gotten killed in a car accident on a California highway. Their bodies (physical) were in a funeral home. They said their mother was weeping over them, so would I please tell her."

* So, apparently, he was having conversations as he was moving back to earth.
* Another up-and-coming young leader in the Charismatic Movement is Roberts Liardon,
* says he took an extensive tour of heaven as an eight-year-old,
* supposedly with Jesus as his personal guide.
* He recalls,
* "Many people have asked me what Jesus looks like.
* He's five-feet-eleven to six-feet tall.
* He's got sandy-brown hair. It's not too long, it's not too short.
* He's a perfect man.
* Whatever you picture as a perfect man, that's what Jesus is.
* He's perfect in everything, the way He looks, talks, everything, that's the way I remember Him.
* "We walked a little farther.
* This is the most important part of my story. I saw three storage houses, 500 to 600 yards from the Throne Room of God.
* They're very long and very wide.
* We walked into the first, as Jesus shut the front door behind us I looked around the interior in shock.
* On one side of the building were arms, fingers and other exterior parts of the body.
* Legs hung from the wall, but the scene looked natural, not weird.
* On the other side of the building were shelves filled with neat little packages of eyes...green ones, brown ones, blue ones, etc.
* "This building contained all the parts of the human body that people on earth need.
* But they haven't realized these blessings are waiting for them in heaven and they're for saints and sinners alike.
* Jesus said to me,
* These are the unclaimed blessings.
* This building should not be full,
* it should be emptied every single day.
* You could come in here with faith and get the needed parts for you and the people you'll come in contact with that day,'"
* Liardon describes many other incredible sights he witnessed in heaven,
* the river of life,
* a stadium full of people who he says were the cloud of witnesses spoken of in [Hebrews 12:1](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Heb%2012.1),
* and a medicine cabinet with pill bottles labeled "Peace and overdose of the Holy Ghost."
* Here is Liardon's description of what took place at the River of Life, quote:
* "Jesus and I visited a branch of the River of Life.
* This river was knee deep and crystal clear.
* We took off our shoes and got in.
* And do you know the first thing Jesus did to me?
* He dunked me. I got back up and splashed Him and we had a water fight.
* We splashed each other and laughed.
* That meant something to me for the King of glory, the Son of God to take time out for a little eight-year-old Roberts and dunk him in the River of Life.
* "When I get back to heaven I'm going to put up a historical marker on that spot.
* It's going to say, `This is the spot where Jesus Christ because not only my Lord and Savior but my Friend.' Yes, He became my friend and now we walk and talk together.
* When I hear a good joke I can run to Jesus and listen to Him laugh at it.
* When He gets a good one He tells me."
* Liardon also claims that while in heaven he was ordained to the ministry by Jesus Himself.
* We walked a while and were quiet then Jesus turned around,
* took both my hands in one of His,
* placed His other hand on top of my head and said,
* "Roberts, I'm calling you to a great work.
* You'll have to run like no one else,
* preach like no one else,
* be different from everyone else,
* go, go, go like no one else has gone,
* go and do as I have done."
* Liardon's trip to heaven supposedly happened in 1972.
* He says he didn't tell anyone about it for eight years though.
* He Says Jesus appeared twice more to him.
* The second time, he says, it was too sacred, he can't talk about it.
* The third time, however, was a bit more mundane.
* Quote:
* "The third time I saw Jesus was when I was about eleven years old.
* Jesus walked in through the front door of my home while I was watching `Laverne and Shirley' on television.
* He came over and sat down beside me on the couch, kind of glanced at the TV and everything in this natural world clicked off.
* I couldn't hear the telephone or a television set, all I heard was Jesus and all I saw was His glory.
* He looked at me and said, `
* Roberts, I want you to study the lives of My generals in My great army throughout time.
* Know them like the back of your hand.
* Know why they were a success.
* Know why they failed and you'll want nothing in that area.'
* He got up, walked back out through the door, the TV clicked back on and I resumed watching `Laverne and Shirley.'"
* Liardon's account of heaven, of course, is bizarre to the point of silliness and it is utterly inconceivable that someone who saw Jesus face to face could go back to watching "Laverne and Shirley."
* But that's what he says.
* And then if you don't write those stories off as fanciful and absurd, you're probably going to write them off as blasphemous.
* Also, we have a Dr. Richard Eby who claims to have died, gone to heaven and come back again.
* He said he fell off a balcony, struck his head, supposedly died.
* Reportedly he experienced paradise.
* He was the first one that I ever heard.
* There are more, all these fanciful fabrications attempting to tell us what heaven is like.
* God did take Paul to heaven.
* It tells us that very clearly in 2 Corinthians.
* He was caught up into the third heaven and he saw things too wonderful to speak.
* But there was another who was taken to heaven and that is John.
* And we find that occasion right here in chapter 4 of Revelation, our text.
* And John not only was caught up into heaven but he was commanded to write it.
* In fact, all the way back in chapter 1 and verse 11, Jesus said,

"Write in a book what you see...write in a book what you see."

* That was the mandate to him, to put down his visions.

## A Beginning to the 3rd, largest and FINAL part of the Book

* This chapter begins the third, the largest, and the final division of the book of Revelation based upon threefold division of Revelation given in Revelation 1:19 which told John what to write.
* The three parts of Revelation, according to Revelation 1:19, are as follows:
* **Part One:** *“The things which thou hast seen.”* This takes in Revelation 1.
* **Part Two:** *“The things which are.”* This is the letters to the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3.
* **Part Three:** *“The things which shall be hereafter.”*
* This starts with this fourth chapter of Revelation and goes through the rest of the book of Revelation.
* It is the main theme of Revelation and is prophetic in nature.
* Revelation 4 and 5 are **both introductory** to this last section.
* Revelation 4 can be divided into three major parts as follows:
* The Precept (Revelation 4:1, 2)
* The Place (Revelation 4:2–8)
* The Praise (Revelation 4:8–11)

# The Precept (4:1, 2)

* This chapter begins with a precept that summons John to move in spirit from earth to heaven to obtain the prophetic message.

## The Sequence in the Precept (Revelation 4:1)

“After this” (Revelation 4:1).

* This shows the sequence of the revelation to John (cp. Revelation 7:1, 9; 18:1; 19:1).
* It Is NOT a temporal reference
* After the letters to the churches, prophetic events are revealed to John.

## The Situation for the Precept (Revelation 4:1)

“I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven” (Revelation 4:1).

* The situation John saw prepared him for the precept to come to heaven to learn of the prophetic truths.
* Divine providence is used to prepare us for the revealing of the will of God for our lives.

## The Speaking of the Precept (Revelation 4:1)

“The first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said” (4:1).

* The speaking to John came in the form of a trumpet.
* The manner of the speaking to John was one that would arrest his attention and inform him that what was said was very important.

## The Specifics of the Precept (Revelation 4:1)

“Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter” (4:1).

* John was ordered to come to heaven to hear the prophetic message.
* The prophetic message is going to be from heaven’s point of view, not from the earthly prognosticators.
* Therefore the message will be much different than the message the world would give us.
* **The world tells us things are getting better**, but heaven says they are getting worse.
* **The world says** we are headed for peace; heaven says we are headed for war;
* **The world says** we are going to experience prosperity; heaven says we are going to experience punishment (judgment).
* So it is important that John get his message in heaven if he is to have the true message.
* Preachers can learn from this; they need to get their message from God’s Word, which is the message of heaven, if they would have a true and faithful message for man.

## The Subjection to the Precept (Revelation 4:2)

* *“Immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven”* (Revelation 4:2). John was immediately translated to heaven in his spirit, not his physical body. This is not the same as the expression in Revelation 1:10 which speaks of the attitude of mind and heart not of the attributes of a person. This speedy translation indicates that John was completely submissive here and offered no arguments or resistance.

# The Place (2–8)

* Some details of the place of heaven is described by John.
* Not all the details about heaven are given but just the initial scene that John witnessed when he entered heaven. The scene is related to the prophetic message he will receive from the Lord.

## The Chair in the Place (Revelation 4:2, 3, 5, 6)

“Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne” (2).

* The chair or seat here is the throne, and
* it is a chair of majesty in appearance and location.

## *The Seeing of the Throne.*

“Behold, a throne” (Revelation 4:2).

### The first thing John saw when entering heaven was a throne.

* Its prominence is because of Who sits on the throne.

### The Sovereign on the throne.

“One sat on the throne, and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone” (Revelation 4:2, 3).

* The two stones mentioned are especially glorious and in a figure tell us the One on the throne was glorious.
* In heaven God is not mocked, but God is honored.
* God is glorified in heaven.
* On earth He is despised, but not in heaven.

### The splendor of the throne.

“And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald” (Revelation 4:3).

* A typical rainbow has a multitude of colors, this one is simply a beautiful emerald green.
* This rainbow speaks of the splendor around the throne.

### The steadfastness of the throne.

“There was a rainbow round about the throne” (Revelation 4:3).

* The rainbow was first given to Noah as a pledge that God would not again destroy the earth by water.
* The rainbow is a portrayal of God’s faithfulness.
* The prophetic truths to be revealed to John which emphasize judgment are not contrary to the faithfulness of God.
* God is faithful to His Word.
* Judgment is not a result of the lack of His faithfulness but a result of the lack of man’s faithfulness.

### The scene at the throne.

“Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices” (Revelation 4:5).

* This was all “the precursors of coming judgment” (Scott).

### The Spirit before the throne.

“Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God” (Revelation 4:5).

* We noted in Revelation 1:4 this reference to the Holy Spirit as *“seven Spirits.”*
* The Holy Spirit is but One, but the seven lamps speak of the fullness and completeness of His ministry.
* He will be involved in the Divine judgment work.

### The sea before the throne.

“Before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal” (Revelation 4:6).

* The transparency and truthfulness of Divine government is seen in this sea of glass like crystal.
* It reflects the glory of the Lord.

## The Church in the Place (Revelation 4:4)

“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” (Revelation 4:4).

* Around the throne were twenty-four seats upon which sat twenty-four elders.
* We note five things pertaining to these twenty-four and their seats.

### The chairs.

“Seats.”

* The word translated *“seats”* is the same word earlier translated “throne.”
* These would obviously be lesser seats but would be places of honor in heaven.
* Unlike the earth, God’s people sit in high places of honor in heaven.

### The chiefs.

“Elders.”

* These are representatives of the church, for later Scripture identifies them as the redeemed.

“The … four and twenty elders … sung a new song … thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Revelation 5:8, 9).

### The count.

“Twenty-four.”

* Why twenty-four?
* In answer, Strauss quoting Ironside said,

“There are twelve patriarchs in Israel, and twelve apostles introducing the new dispensation. The two together would give us the complete four and twenty.”

* The twenty-four represent all the redeemed—

“every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

### The clothing.

“Clothed in white raiment.”

* Revelation 19:8 speaks of this group as “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.”

### The crowns.

“They had on their heads crowns of gold.”

* In the epistles we learned of various crowns given to the believers for their faithfulness and service.
* These crowns represent rewards and honor for the redeemed.

# The Creatures in the Place (6–8)

“In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts” (Revelation 4:6).

* The word *“beasts”* is an unfortunate translation.
* The word simply means “living creatures.”
* It is true that three of them are depicted as beasts, but they are not to be considered beasts but living creatures of all entities.

## Their number.

* There were *“four”* living creatures around the throne.
* The number *“four”* suggests universality (north, east, west, and south)—all creatures of the earth.
* Everything will praise the Lord.
* The ACLU will not be able to stop this universal homage of God.

## Their nature.

* The nature of the four creatures is instructive.

### **First,** their depicting.

“Lion … calf … man … eagle” (Revelation 4:7).

* The depicting of the four creatures in different ways gives praise to God’s greatness. These speak of His strength (*“lion”*), His steadfastness (*“calf”*/ox), His sagacity (*“man”*), and His swiftness (*“eagle”*).

### **Second,** their design.

“Each of them [had] six wings, and they were full of eyes” (Revelation 4:8).

* The strange design of these creatures emphasizes the care/protection (*“wings”*) and cognizance/omniscience/perception by God (*“eyes”*).

# The Praise (8–11)

* The chapter ends with everything around the throne giving praise to the One on the throne.
* This is heaven! God is praised.
* Only on earth is God dishonored.

## The Praise by the Creatures (Revelation 4:8–10)

* The four living creatures spoke much praise to God.
* They gave

“glory … honor … thanks to him that sat on the throne, who lives for ever and ever” (Revelation 4:9).

### The purity in the praise.

“Holy, holy, holy” (4:8).

* The holiness of God is emphasized in the praise given Him by the four living creatures.
* Holiness is God’s fundamental attribute.

### The power in the praise.

“Lord God Almighty” (8).

* God is supreme and Sovereign. He is omnipotent.

### The perpetuity in the praise.

“Which was, and is, and is to come” (8).

* The eternality of God is recognized here.
* He is the great *“I am”* of Exodus 3.

### The permanence of the praise.

“They rest not day and night, saying” (8).

* These four living creatures do not act like most church members who often quit before the job is done.
* These living creatures simply *“rest not day and night”* but continue on permanently praising God.

### The prompting of the praise.

“And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne” (Revelation 4:9, 10).

* The praise given by the four living creatures prompted the twenty-four elders to also give praise to God.
* Do our lives prompt others to honor God or dishonor Him?

## The Praise by the Church (Revelation 4:10, 11)

* The twenty-four elders, who represent the church, the redeemed ones, also give much praise.
* We note several things about their praise as recorded here in our text.

### The prostration in the praise.

“The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne” (10).

* The prostration was acknowledgement of the greatness and glory of God and the smallness and sinfulness of man.

### The piety in the praise.

“Worship him” (10).

* Honor, devotion, respect, awe are all involved in worship.

### The position in the praise.

“Cast their crowns before the throne” (10).

* To cast their crowns before God, they must first take off their crowns.
* Doing so acknowledges that when compared to God, man is nothing.
* Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### The proclamation in the praise.

“Saying” (10).

* What the church said in praise to the Lord is instructive.

#### First, the worthiness of God.

“Thou art worthy, O Lord to receive glory and honor” (11).

* The world gives many honors to people who are not worthy—Obama’s Nobel peace prize, as an example. But God is worthy of all sacred honors.

#### Second, the work of God.

“Thou hast created all things” (11).

* As Lehman Strauss said, “There are not songs of evolution in Heaven, only of creation.”

#### Third, the will of God.

“For thy pleasure they are and were created” (4:11).

* The word translated *“pleasure”* means “to will” (Zodhiates).
* The statement says God created according to His will, as He wanted, as He planned, etc.
* God is Sovereign and will do as He Himself wills, not as others dictate.