

Fulfilled Prophecies

[Home](#)

>

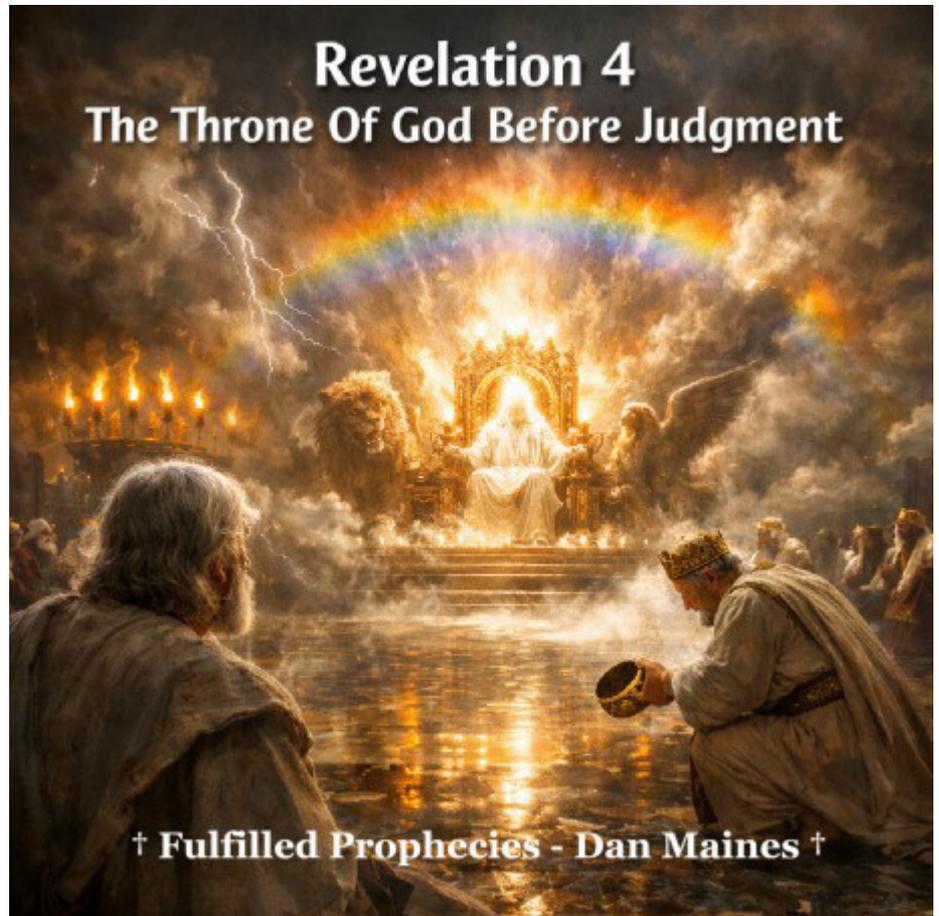
[R](#)

>

[Share on Facebook](#)

[FACEBOOK LINK](#)

Revelation 4 The Throne Of God Before Judgment



By Dan Maines

Revelation 4 The Throne Of God Before Judgment

Introduction

† Revelation 4 shifts the scene from the churches on earth to the throne of God in heaven. The purpose of this vision wasn't to show believers escaping history, it was to show that the coming judgment against Jerusalem and the old covenant order was under God's authority (Revelation 1:1; Matthew 24:34).

† The persecuted churches in Asia were about to face intense turmoil. Christ opened heaven to John so the church could see that God was still ruling. No empire, priesthood, or persecutor could stop what God had already decreed.

† Everything John sees in this chapter prepares us for the judgments that unfold in the following chapters. Before the seals are opened and before the trumpets sound, we are shown the throne. Judgment in Revelation never comes from chaos, it comes from the throne of God.

† The fulfilled perspective recognizes that these visions were written to real churches facing real events that would unfold in their generation (Revelation 22:6, 10).

† Revelation itself emphasizes the nearness of these events. The prophecy was about things that must soon take place and the time was near for those who first received the book (Revelation 1:1, 3).

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.

† The phrase after these things connects this vision to the letters of Revelation chapters 2 and 3. After addressing the churches, Christ now reveals the heavenly courtroom where the coming judgments are authorized.

† The open door in heaven shows that John was allowed to see God's perspective on events about to unfold. Heaven isn't distant from earthly events, it governs them (Daniel 7:9-10).

† The trumpet voice recalls Sinai where God spoke with thunder and trumpet sounds. The same covenant God who spoke at Sinai is now announcing the end of the covenant age (Exodus 19:16).

† The statement what must take place shows divine necessity. These events weren't symbolic of distant ages, they were decreed by God and were about to unfold soon (Revelation 1:1).

Revelation 4:2-3

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and someone was sitting on the throne. 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.

† Being in the Spirit means John was carried into a prophetic vision similar to Isaiah and Ezekiel when they saw God's throne (Isaiah 6:1; Ezekiel 1:26-28).

† The throne is the central feature of the vision. Before anything else is described, John sees the throne. This emphasizes that God rules over history and judgment.

† Jasper and sardius were precious stones associated with brilliance and fire. They symbolize both the glory and holiness of God.

† The rainbow surrounding the throne recalls the covenant promise after the flood. Even when judgment comes, God's covenant mercy remains (Genesis 9:13).

Revelation 4:4

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.

† The twenty-four elders represent the fullness of God's covenant people. The number reflects the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles (Matthew 19:28).

† Their white garments symbolize righteousness and victory given by God (Revelation 3:5).

† The golden crowns show that the saints share in Christ's reign, yet their authority ultimately comes from God.

† Victorinus of Pettau identified the elders as the patriarchs and apostles together, showing the completeness of God's redeemed people.

Revelation 4:5

Out from the throne came 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.

† Lightning and thunder echo the appearance of God at Mount Sinai when the covenant was given (Exodus 19:16).

† The imagery shows that the coming judgments originate from the same covenant God who established Israel.

† The seven lamps represent the fullness and perfection of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2).

† The heavenly lampstand reminds us that the earthly temple was only a shadow of the true heavenly reality (Hebrews 8:5).

Revelation 4:6-7

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. 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.

† The sea of glass reflects the bronze sea in Solomon's temple which symbolized purification before approaching God (1 Kings 7:23).

† In heaven the sea appears calm and crystal clear, showing that God's presence is perfect order and holiness.

† The four living creatures resemble the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision who guarded the presence of God (Ezekiel 1:5-10).

† The four forms represent the fullness of creation, wild animals, domesticated animals, humanity, and birds, all acknowledging God's authority.

† Jewish writings from the Second Temple period and the Dead Sea Scrolls describe similar heavenly beings, showing that this imagery was familiar to the first-century audience.

Revelation 4:8

And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are 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.

† The six wings connect these creatures to the seraphim described in Isaiah's throne vision (Isaiah 6:2-3).

† The repeated declaration holy, holy, holy emphasizes the absolute purity and perfection of God.

† The phrase who was and who is and who is to come proclaims God's eternal nature.

† While empires rise and fall, God remains the same sovereign ruler over all creation (Psalm 90:2).

Revelation 4:9-11

And when the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and they will throw their crowns before the throne, saying, 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.

† The elders casting their crowns shows that all authority ultimately belongs to God.

† Even those who reign with Christ acknowledge that their authority comes from Him (Romans 11:36).

† The declaration worthy are You affirms that God alone deserves worship because He is the Creator of all things.

† Chrysostom observed that the worship described in heaven reveals the pattern for worship on earth.

Historical References

† Victorinus of Pettau wrote that the twenty-four elders represent the patriarchs and apostles together, showing the

unity of God's covenant people.

† Irenaeus explained that John's heavenly visions reveal the divine order behind earthly events.

† Eusebius recorded that early Christians saw the fall of Jerusalem as fulfillment of Christ's prophetic warnings.

† Tertullian wrote that Christ reigns from the heavenly throne even while earthly kingdoms rage.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that Revelation reveals divine realities governing earthly history and the judgment of the old covenant order.

† Lactantius explained that the heavenly worship scenes demonstrate God's authority over kings and nations.

How It Applies To Us Today

† The throne in heaven reminds us that God still rules over history. Nations rise and fall, but God's throne remains (Psalm 103:19).

† Worship connects earth with heaven. When believers gather to worship, we join the same praise that fills heaven.

† The elders casting their crowns reminds us that every success and blessing ultimately belongs to God.

† The holiness of God calls us to live lives of reverence, knowing the One who sits on the throne is the One who redeemed us.

Q & A Appendix

Q: What does the open door in heaven represent in Revelation 4:1?

A: The open door shows that John was allowed to see the heavenly perspective behind earthly events that were about to unfold in his generation (Revelation 1:1; Revelation 22:6).

Q: Who are the twenty-four elders described in Revelation 4:4?

A: They represent the complete covenant people of God, the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, symbolizing the unity of God's redeemed people (Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 2:19-20).

Q: Why are lightning and thunder seen around God's throne?

A: These signs echo God's appearance at Mount Sinai when the covenant was established, showing that the same God who gave the covenant was bringing its judgment (Exodus 19:16; Hebrews 12:18-24).

Q: Why do the elders cast their crowns before the throne?

A: The crowns represent authority and victory given by God. Casting them before the throne acknowledges that all authority belongs to Him alone (Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6).

Q: Why does Revelation begin with a throne scene before the judgments unfold?

A: The throne vision establishes that all judgments come from God's authority. Nothing in Revelation happens outside His sovereign rule (Daniel 7:9-10; Revelation 5:1).

Q: What does the sea of glass before the throne represent?

A: It reflects temple imagery of purification and separation before approaching God. Through Christ believers now approach God's presence with confidence (1 Kings 7:23; Hebrews 10:19-22).

Q: Why was John told to come up into heaven to see the vision?

A: John wasn't physically taken to heaven. He was shown the heavenly perspective behind earthly events. God was revealing that the coming judgments were decreed from His throne (Revelation 4:1-2; Daniel 7:9-10).

Q: Why do the living creatures constantly proclaim God's holiness?

A: The repeated declaration holy, holy, holy emphasizes the absolute purity and authority of God. Creation continually acknowledges the holiness of the One who sits on the throne (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8).

Q: Why is God called the One who was and who is and who is to come?

A: This phrase emphasizes God's eternal nature. While earthly kingdoms change and pass away, God remains the unchanging ruler over all history (Psalm 90:2; Revelation 1:8).

Q: Why is the throne the first thing John sees in heaven?

A: The throne shows that God is sovereign over everything that follows in the book. The seals, trumpets, and judgments all proceed from the authority of the One seated on the throne (Revelation 4:2; Revelation 5:1).

Q: Does Revelation 4:1 teach a future rapture of the church?

A: No. The command Come up here was given to John alone so he could see the heavenly vision. The text never says the church was raptured. John was simply shown the heavenly perspective behind events that were about to happen in his generation (Revelation 1:1; Revelation 4:1-2; Revelation 22:6).

Q: Why are the twenty-four elders already crowned and seated before the judgments begin?

A: The elders represent the completed covenant people of God, the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles. Their crowns and thrones show that God's redeemed people already share in Christ's reign before the judgment of the old covenant system

(Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 2:19-20; Revelation 3:21).

Q: Do the twenty-four elders prove the church is already in heaven after Revelation 4?

A: No. The elders symbolize the complete covenant people of God, represented by the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. Their presence around the throne reflects the unity of God's redeemed people, not a secret removal of the church from earth. The churches are still addressed throughout Revelation and believers are still seen suffering persecution on earth during the visions (Revelation 7:14; Revelation 13:7; Revelation 14:12).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

© Fulfilled Prophecies - Dan Maines.

Source Index

† Revelation 4; Genesis 9:13; Exodus 19:16; Isaiah 6:1-3; Ezekiel 1:5-10; Daniel 7:9-10; Matthew 19:28; Romans 11:36; Psalm 103:19; Revelation 1:1, 3; Revelation 3:5; Revelation 22:6, 10

† Victorinus of Pettau, Commentary on the Apocalypse; Irenaeus, Against Heresies; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History; Tertullian, Against Marcion; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata; Lactantius, Divine Institutes; Chrysostom, Homilies on Revelation

Share on Facebook

Links

Facebook Link

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/posts/1967714687449996/>

Fulfilled Prophecies <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/>

Dan Maines

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/user/100001027365819/>

You may share this article freely without permission as long as you include credit to Dan Maines and/or a link to the Fulfilled Prophecies Group.