

Rev 25-12-10a

Greetings, it is Wednesday night here at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 10th of December, 2025. We continue our study in the book of Revelation.

We are at chapter four. We are at the threshold of the door to heaven through which we will pass with the apostle John and see visions transcendent. We'll endeavor to understand the meaning of this very rich, prolific, and metaphorical language that endeavors to make understandable what is completely transcendent.

Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study and we'll begin. Father, how grateful we are for another time of fellowship, another opportunity to learn and grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior. We pray that as we examine these things together, that the Holy Spirit will be our teacher, help us to understand them and see their pertinence and application in the days ahead.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. Reading our passage, great place to start. Chapter four of the Revelation.

After these things, I looked and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard like a trumpet was speaking with me, saying, come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this. We saw last time, this is the trumpet voice of the Lord Jesus described in chapter one.

So the Lord Jesus says, come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this. Write the things which you have seen, the things which are, and the things which must take place after this. So consistent with chapter one in every respect, immediately I was in the spirit and behold, a throne set in heaven and one sat on the throne.

He who sat there was like a jasper and a stardust stone in appearance. There was a rainbow around the throne in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were 24 thrones.

On the thrones, I saw 24 elders sitting, clothed in white robes and they had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings and voices or sounds. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

Before the throne, there was a sea of glass like crystal. Actually it says something like a sea of glass in the better text. You have a text note there in your New King James.

Something like 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. The 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. The four living creatures, each having six wings

were full of eyes around and within.

And they did not rest day or night saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty, who was and is and is to come. Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne saying, you are worthy our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they exist and were created.

That is chapter four. After these things I look and behold a door standing open in heaven. We looked at the concept of doors last time.

We saw that there are doors of opportunity. There is a door of the heart. There is the door of revelation.

And this door serves double duty for John because it is both a door of revelation where he is going to see things that are granted to very few. We have a few Old Testament prophets who have seen the vision beyond this door. We have one or two in the New Testament who have seen it.

But not only is it revelation for John, but it is opportunity as a faithful prophet, he is going to communicate what he sees. And this is of course to our benefit and accomplishes God's purpose. And the things that we learn, the things that are revealed to us as we study the word of God are not only beneficial in terms of revelation to us and personal application for us but we trust and hope that the light of revelation will shine forth from our lives and be used by God as a blessing to others.

So we have this twofold opportunity as we look together at the word of God, both to be illuminated ourselves and hopefully to reflect the glory of God. We are aware of this door because the heavens are opened. And we have a number of examples of this, both Old Testament and new.

Ezekiel says in the very first verse of his book, it came to pass in the 30th year in the fourth month on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Kabar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. There is always a very important purpose in God's revelation. There are people who want to claim that God spoke to them or they were suddenly impelled by God.

In those cases where God actually opens heaven, actually speaks and reveals His will and purpose, it is never just an individual wanting guidance on what to do next. These are national in scope for Israel. They are personal for those who are doing God's bidding, God's will.

You think of Balaam going to bless Israel and there is a national purpose involved in his presence. But when the donkey speaks and there is a revelation from God, it goes beyond Balaam and his personal desires or wellbeing. It impinges on the people of God.

And this is always the case. Anyone who claims that God is speaking to them or through them, you really have to watch and see if this is an occasion where God is going to supernaturally provide revelation beyond what is already in the scriptures and has served the people of God for thousands of years. So there is the opening of heaven for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

And I would argue that the ascent of the Holy Spirit is also going to take place in like manner. We will see more reference to this upcoming, but you will be fascinated to note that there appears to be another reference to the rapture as we understand it in the book of Revelation, some chapters hence. We'll talk about that a bit later.

But when Jesus was baptized by John, you will remember in Mark chapter one, verse 10, he saw the heavens open and the Spirit descended like a dove upon him. When the archangel of God speaks, the heavens are opened. There is the shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God and the dead in Christ rise and those who are alive and remain, join them and ascend to join the Lord Jesus in the air and go with him to the heavens where he has prepared a place.

And that is what restrains the presence of the Holy Spirit in the people of God is what holds back the progress of evil. When we leave, heavens will open and the Spirit will depart even as he descended on the Lord Jesus and on the body of the Lord Jesus. If you think about that baptism, this is a preview of things to come at Pentecost and the body of Christ is going to ascend and things are gonna unfold in a very dramatic fashion thereafter.

The glory of the Lord Jesus, as I mentioned last time, Jesus talking to Nathanael in John 1 51, says that he would see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. And we should, as heaven opens to us through the study of scripture, through reflection on it and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to help us to understand it, we should see the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Stephen in Acts 7, when he is being stoned, sees the heavens open and the Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father.

When heaven is opened, we hope to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It can happen every time we open our scriptures. They are an open door.

They are a way to enter heaven. As it says in Hebrews 10, a new and living way to the throne room of God has been opened by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on our behalf so that we can approach the throne with our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. And we can come for grace to help in time of need into the very heavens themselves.

Nothing like this was ever offered to the Old Testament patriarchs or the people of Israel. It is unique to us. What a privilege not to be taken lightly, not to be treated casually, not to be thoughtlessly ignored.

The Lord Jesus died to give us this privilege. And it is something to take seriously, to appreciate and to exercise both on our own behalf and those in our periphery. So as John has now seen

the heavens open, he has heard the voice of the Lord Jesus, called him upward, immediately I was in the spirit.

You remember that he was in the spirit previously in chapter one. So did he go in the spirit, fall out of the spirit, and then be back in the spirit again? I've actually seen extended discussions of, well, is this just an iterative short-term thing? He's in the spirit and then he's not. Let me tell you my take on this second reference to being in the spirit.

In the first place, you remember in chapter one, John says, I was in the spirit in chapter one, verse nine, your brother and companion in tribulation, the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. I was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Then in verse 10, I was in the spirit on the day of the Lord.

I would scratch out Lord's day. Everybody thinks he's talking about Sunday. He was in the spirit on the day of the Lord.

And this is, I think, an anticipation of the fulsome description of the day of the Lord that follows. So what happened between chapter one, verse 10, and chapter four, verse two? The same thing that happens to us. We wake up in the morning.

If we are faithful believers, we begin our day with prayer, with reflection on who we are and why we're here. We have a chance to recall a passage of scripture. What was the last thing we looked at in church, at Bible class, in our personal reading, something we heard on the radio or recording that we pulled up? What defines us? What makes us who we are? What tells us why we are here? And we do that in the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit.

I think Daniel's example is wonderful. The praying three times a day. The psalmist who says, evening and morning and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud and he will hear my voice.

Psalm 55, 17. Begin the day, end the day, divide the day, stop in the middle of the day with all of its distractions and tasks and efforts and conversations and requirements. Stop and reflect, go to the Lord in prayer.

This is the minimum prayer structure. We should pray without ceasing and rejoice evermore. But at a minimum, start the day with prayer, close the day in prayer and stop midday and reflect on who we are and why we're here.

Are we being distracted and pulled away by subjectivity, eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on situations, eyes on things, re-center ourselves through prayer. We speak what we know to our Father in heaven and His grace is sufficient for every need. He will enable us to live the supernatural life to which we've been called.

So what happened between? I ask again, you can answer this out loud for yourself. What happened between chapter one, verse 10 and chapter four, verse two? If you flip back a page, in my Bible, there's two pages of solid red ink. So what happened? He was in the Spirit, heard

the voice of the trumpet, saw the Lord Jesus revealed.

He was in the Spirit and he saw the Lord Jesus. This time he's in the Spirit and he's going to see God the Father sitting on the throne, right? Why does he note that he is once again in the Spirit as he approaches this heavenly vision? Because for two chapters, he and the Lord Jesus have been looking at mundane, earthly situations, circumstances, people, failures, opportunities, some taken and others lost. And it is the church in the world in chapter two and chapter three.

It is the people of God facing challenges, synagogue of Satan, Jezebel, Balaam, doctrines, challenges, failures, opportunities, some that are taken, engaging in the work. The latter works are more than the first, losing first love, struggling to make it through the quagmire that often faces us in this life. So John has been in the Spirit the entire time he is listening and taking dictation from the Lord Jesus, but it is a fresh awareness, a fresh infusion of the presence and power of the Spirit that enables him to lift his gaze from the seven churches and all of the attendant circumstances and impending rewards and judgments to enter the throne room of God.

It is a reminder to us as we engage in prayer to avail ourselves of the presence and power of the Spirit to do so. To have the trumpet voice turn into an audible and understandable voice, John has to be in the Spirit. We're going to see this upcoming with thunder.

Who hears thunder? Who hears an audible, discernible, and understandable voice? Depends on where you are with regard to the Spirit. If we want understanding, if we want to be people of the truth, people of the Lord Jesus who is the way and the truth and the life, we have to be in the Spirit. And when we're having our gaze dragged down to the earth and all of its calumnies and its failures and distractions, it is good to be refreshed and be renewed and restored in the Spirit.

So he is once again in the Spirit. Immediately, it's that quick. Just remember, in the Spirit.

And behold, notice this is the second behold. We had a behold in verse one. I looked and behold, there's a door open in heaven.

There's a voice to listen to. Come up here, I will show you things which must take place. Circle the word must.

Because what we're about to see, the first thing John sees when he is in the Spirit, passes through this open door and enters the heavenly realm. What's the first thing he sees? He says, look, idu, behold, a throne. A throne.

The first most important basic definitional thing in heaven is the throne. Look at it, pay attention to it. It is the throne of God.

One sat on the throne and he who sat there is like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance. There is a rainbow around the throne in appearance like an emerald. Throne is authority.

Throne in heaven is absolute authority. And the one who sits there, John does not even attempt a physical description. There is a presence on the throne and it is described in terms of light as it is reflected and refracted and enhanced and magnified through gemstones.

John reaches here for the maximum description of God in his heaven. And you have these three stones that are given by way of description. The first that he mentions is the jasper.

In Greek, this is I-A-S-P-E-R, jasper. The Germans can't say a Y, they can only say a J. This is the opposite. The Greeks can't say a J, you always get a Y. And so it's jasper.

And this is going to be followed by the sardius and the emerald. What is called a jasper today is probably not it because when you go to Revelation, you can put a note in your margin here. This stone reappears in Revelation 21, verse 11.

And it says, jasper, clear as crystal. Clear as crystal. So most people that have tried to suss this out believe that in the ancient world, jasper is a reference to the diamond.

It is a crystal clear, brilliant, flashing, crystal-like stone. I'm with them, I think this is the diamond. So this is clarity and purity and brilliant reflection and refraction of light.

The light is not diminished, it is not filtered. It comes through in full strength. And if anything, well-cut diamonds are brilliant.

This is the thing that the British say. I've been watching the occasional British program. I love the one called the Repair Shop where they take old stuff and bring it in and fix it up.

And whenever people see really good work that is done in Britain, they say, it's brilliant. It's brilliant. It's one of their favorite adjectives.

We say great, they say brilliant. But it means it shines beyond compare. That is the first thing.

He who sat there was like a diamond. Not a diamond, like a diamond. John is reaching for something to compare it to.

It is ineffable, it is indescribable. It is unsurpassed, incomparable. So he says, if you've ever seen a brilliant diamond, that's what he who sits on the throne is like.

It is almost unbearable brightness of light. That's just the first stone. That's the jasper.

The second description he gives is like a sardius. This will sound familiar. We saw the church at Sardis, right? The fifth church in Sardis.

And this stone is thought to have originated or have been mined to some extent in that region. But the sardius is blood red. It is a brilliant red.

In some cases, a translucent red. And incredibly intense red stone, the sardius. And surrounding the throne, there is a rainbow in appearance like as emerald.

You know the color of emerald? This is brilliant, vivid green. As John travels through, picture it, imagine it. Let's accompany John as he ascends through the sky, through this door in heaven, and immediately is in the throne room of God.

The first thing he sees, there is a throne, but he doesn't describe the throne. There is one seated on the throne that is defined by brilliant, vivid white light with red light and green light surrounding him. This is really fascinating.

Let me give you a real quick review of light and its colors. There are different kinds of light. You think of primary colors.

If I ask you, what are the three primary colors, what would you say? We learned this when I was a kid, kindergarten, first grade. If you wanna mix a color, you start with the primary colors. They told me when I was little, the primary colors are red and yellow and blue.

Mix red and yellow, you get orange. Mix blue and yellow, you get green. Mix green and red, you get brown.

And you can mix almost any color you can think of if you start with red and yellow and blue. So it mystified me when monitors came out, color monitors for computers and color televisions went from cathode ray technology to what we have with the MOLED and LED and LCD and so on. And they weren't RYB screens.

They're RGB, red, green, and blue. And I thought, what's with the green? Why isn't it RYB instead of RGB? Why green? Light acts differently depending on if it is being reflected or if it is being transmitted. Paint that you mix, this is an additive process.

You add yellow to red and you get orange. You add blue to yellow and you get green. And without going into the way our eyes work, we have three different kinds of cones in our eyes and they respond to red and green and blue.

Oddly enough, light that is being transmitted, where do you get yellow if you have red and green and blue? In transmitted light, you add red and green and it turns yellow. That's not what happens with paint, but that's what happens in transmitted light. And our red cones and our green cones, when they see those two lit up, our brain says yellow.

Why am I belaboring this? Because here in the throne room, we have red, which speaks in the Bible of both judgment, blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. There has to be judgment.

It also speaks of redemption because being sprinkled with the blood, being covered by the blood, our hearts having been sprinkled, the purity and the holiness that characterizes the giving of the law, the commissioning of the Levitical priests, the book itself of the law was sprinkled with blood. And the red isn't added to blue, it isn't added to green. We are going to see this throughout the book of Revelation.

Those who wash their robes in the blood of the lamb, which is brilliant red, emerge with white robes. This is not natural, this is supernatural. Whether you're using additive light or combined light, emitted light, or the kind of light that we perceive with the different kinds of cones in our eyes, nothing on this earth takes something and washes it in red and turns it white.

This is God's power. This is the heavenly, creative, redemptive, through judgment, power of God. Though your sins be as scarlet, God says, they shall be white as snow.

Psalms 51, purify me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Remember, hyssop is what was the sponge. That's what you used to dip into the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it.

Purify me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me using blood and I shall be whiter than snow. So the diamond brilliant light speaks of the purity and the holiness of God.

The red, the sardius, indicates both the necessity for judgment and the opportunity for redemption. We as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, members of his body, redeemed by his blood, can constantly claim redemption through the judgment that he bore on our behalf. That's what the sardius speaks of.

And you do not approach God without a heart having been sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water, living water, crystal clear water. Remember the opposite in Egypt, the clear waters of the Nile turned red with blood because they were under judgment and there was no opportunity for redemption apart from leaving Egypt and joining Israel. Whole separate picture there.

So then you have the emerald, which is this vivid, translucent, brilliant green. What does that speak of? The green is the color of life. It is the color of restoration.

It is the color of blessing. The green grass, the green leaves of flowers, speak of life. The grass withers and the flower fades.

It is only the word of God that lives and abides forever. Along with the purity and holiness of God, along with his ability both to render judgment and to offer redemption, he is the God of life and he exists as the creator God. Let the earth bring forth.

What's the first use of the color green? I just gave you the answer. What's the first use of the color green? It's in the Genesis creation account. Let the earth bring forth the herb yielding seed, green things, and let them reproduce after their kind.

They will be for food to the animals. They start out being herbivorous, but it is green that speaks of life, that sustains life. The tree of life will have green leaves.

So immediately in symbolic terms, without attempting any physical description, the approach to the living God is immediately impressed upon John in terms of his absolute holiness, absolute clarity. The approach necessitates that purity and that only comes through judgment and

through redemption, the sardius. And as a result, there is life.

And surrounding God's throne, God's presence emanates, reflects, reveals, and sustains life. This is why those who separate from God inevitably trend to death. Connection to God is connection to life, eternal life.

What a powerful symbol, but it is a rainbow. It is predominantly green. It's interesting, if you look at a rainbow, the green is in the center.

If you've ever memorized as a kid the colors of the rainbow, it's Roy G. Biv is the mnemonic. Roy is red, orange, yellow. G is green.

And then Biv is blue, indigo, and violet. But green is right in the center. And that's a different kind of light.

Refracted light that separates out of white light mixes differently and is adjacent to different colors. But green is in the center. There are three colors before it.

There are three colors after it. There are seven colors in the rainbow. Isaac Newton felt like the seven colors of the rainbow corresponded to the seven notes in an octave in music.

And all of these are reflections of the character of God, but green is at the center. We can see red in the sky. We can see red at sunset, at sunrise.

You can see blue in the sky. You see blue in the water. But where do we see green? Do you look up in the sky and see green anywhere, but in the rainbow that speaks of God's covenant grace? Green is the color of life.

It's not an abstraction in the sky. It's not attached to the heavenly bodies. You don't look up in the sky and see green stars.

Green is what we see in the earth. It's connected with that which God created and commanded to reproduce. So what a beautiful picture.

We haven't even gotten one verse into heaven and the character of God is manifest. What a great and glorious privilege it is for us to approach the throne for grace to help in time of need. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we will continue our journey with John into the throne room of God. you