

The Book of Revelation

Chapter 4 – Passages from the *Apocalypse Revealed*

General meaning: This chapter treats of the arrangement and preparation of all things in heaven for the judgment, to be executed from the Word, and according to it; likewise concerning the acknowledgment that the Lord is the only judge.

Verse 1: "After these things, I saw and behold a door opened in heaven," signifies a manifestation concerning the arrangement of the heavens preparatory to the Last Judgment from the Lord, about to be performed according to His Divine truths in the Word. "And the first voice which I heard, as of a trumpet, speaking with me, said, Come up hither," signifies Divine influx, and thence an elevation of the mind, followed by manifest perception. "And I will show thee the things which must be hereafter," signifies revelations of things to come before the Last Judgment, and concerning it, and after it.

"In the spiritual world, the higher anyone ascends, so much the more does he come into purer light, by which the understanding is by degrees opened, that is, the mind is elevated. Therefore it also follows, that he was then in the spirit, by which is meant that he was let into a spiritual state, in which the things which are in the heavens manifestly appear. The voice was heard "as of a trumpet," because it treats of the arrangement of the heavens for the Last Judgment; and voices as of a trumpet are heard in heaven when convocations and arrangements are made. Therefore also among the sons of Israel with whom all things were representative of heaven and the church, it was also commanded:

That they should make trumpets of silver, and that the sons of Aaron should sound them for the calling of assemblies, and for the journeyings, in days of rejoicing, in festivals, in the beginnings of months, over burnt offerings, for a memorial, and for war (Num. 10:1-10)." (AR 226)

Verse 2: "And immediately I was in the spirit," signifies that he was let into a spiritual state, in which the things which exist in heaven manifestly appear. "And, behold, a throne was set in heaven," signifies the Judgment in a representative form. "And One sitting on the throne," signifies the Lord.

"It is said that "the throne" signifies judgment in a representative form, because the things which John saw were visions which represented. They were seen as he has described; but they were forms representative of future things." (AR 229)

Verse 3: "And He that sat was in appearance like a jasper and a sardine stone," signifies the appearance of the Lord's Divine wisdom and Divine love in ultimates. "And there was a rainbow round about the throne in appearance like an emerald," signifies the appearance of the same also round about the Lord.

" 'A stone,' in the Word, signifies truth in ultimates, and "a precious stone," truth transparent from good (n. 915). There are two colors fundamental of the rest in the spiritual world, the color white and the color red, the color white derives its origin from the light of the sun in heaven, thus from spiritual light, which is shining white; and the color red derives its origin from the fire of the sun there, thus from celestial light, which is flaming. The spiritual angels, because they are in truths of wisdom from the Lord, are in that shining white light, therefore they are clothed in white; and the celestial angels, because they are in the good of love from the Lord, are in that flaming light, therefore they are clothed in red; thence those two colors also are in the precious stones in heaven, where they are in great abundance. This is the reason why precious stones, in the Word, signify such things as are of the truth of wisdom, or of the good of love, and that "the jasper," because it is shining white, signifies the things which are of the truth of wisdom; and "the sardius," because it is red, the things which are of the good of love. These stones signify the appearance of the Divine wisdom and the Divine love in ultimates, because all precious stones in heaven derive their origin from the ultimates of the Word, and their transparency from the spiritual sense of the ultimates....The ultimates of the Word are the truths and goods of the sense of the letter. That this is the origin of precious stones in heaven can scarcely be believed by anyone in our world, because he does not know that all the things which exist in the spiritual world are correspondences, and that from thence all the things which exist in the natural world derive their spiritual origin. That this is the origin of precious stones in heaven has been granted me to know from speech with angels, and also to see it with my eyes, but the formation of them is from the Lord alone. But black colors, which are also two in number, derive their origin from hell; one in opposition to white, this blackness being with those who have falsified the truths of the Word; the other in opposition to red, this blackness being with those who have adulterated the goods of the Word; the latter blackness is diabolical, but the former satanic." (AR 231)

"In the spiritual world there appear rainbows of many kinds, they appear of various colors as upon the earth, and they appear of one color; here of one color, because it is said "like unto an emerald." This appearance was round about the Lord, because it is said "round about the throne;" round about Him is also in the angelic heaven. The Divine sphere which surrounds the Lord is from His Divine love, and at the same time from His Divine wisdom, which, when it is represented in the heavens, appears in the celestial kingdom red like a ruby, in the spiritual kingdom blue like the lapis lazuli, in the natural kingdom green like the emerald; everywhere with ineffable splendor and radiance." (AR 232)

Verse 4: "And round about the throne were four-and-twenty thrones, and upon the thrones I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting," signifies the arrangement of all things in heaven preparatory to the Judgment. "Clothed in white garments," signifies from the Divine truths of the Word. "And they had on their heads golden crowns," signifies the things which are of wisdom from love.

"He who does not know the spiritual sense of the Word, and at the same time the genuine truths of the church, may believe, that when the Last Judgment shall come, the Lord will sit upon a throne, and that there will be other judges also upon thrones around Him. But he who knows the spiritual sense of the Word, and at the same time the genuine truths of the church, knows that the Lord will not then sit upon a throne, and that neither will there be other judges about Him; and further, that neither will the Lord judge anyone to hell, but that the Word will judge everyone, the Lord moderating that all things may be done according to justice." (AR 233)

Verse 5: "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices," signifies enlightenment, perception, and instruction from the Lord. "And there were seven lamps of fire before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God," signifies the New Heaven from among Christians.

"Here by "seven lamps" the same is signified as by "the seven lamp stands;" and also by "the seven stars" above. That by "the seven lamp stands" is meant the New Church upon earth, which will be in enlightenment from the Lord, may be seen above (n. 43), and by "the seven stars," the New Church in the heavens (n. 65); and because the church is a church from the Divine which proceeds from the Lord, which is the Divine truth, and is called the Holy Spirit, therefore it is said, "which are the seven spirits of God." (AR 237)

"In the spiritual world there appear atmospheres, and also waters, like as in our world; the atmospheres, in which the angels of the highest heaven dwell, are as it were ethereal; the atmospheres, in which the angels of the middle heaven dwell, are as it were aerial; and the atmospheres, in which the angels of the lowest heaven dwell, are as it were aqueous; and these last appear as seas at the boundaries of heaven, where they dwell who are in general truths from the literal sense of the Word. That "waters" signify truths, may be seen above (n. 50); hence "the sea," in which waters terminate and are collected, signifies the Divine truth in its boundaries. Since, therefore, by "One sitting on the throne" is meant the Lord (n. 230), and by "the seven lamps," which are "the seven spirits of God before the throne," is meant the New Church, which will be in Divine truth from the Lord (n. 237), it is evident that, by "the sea of glass" which was before the throne, is meant the church among those who are at the boundaries. It has also been granted me to see the seas which are at the boundaries of the heavens, and to converse with those who were therein, and thus to know the truth of this matter from experience. They seemed to me to be in the sea, but they said that they are not in the sea, but in an atmosphere; from which it was manifest to me, that the sea is an appearance of the Divine proceeding from the Lord in its boundaries.... It is called "a sea of glass like unto crystal," from the transparency of the Divine truth proceeding from the Lord." (AR 238)

Verse 6: "And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, there were four animals," signifies the Word of the Lord from first to ultimates, and its guards. "Full of eyes before and behind," signifies the Divine wisdom therein.

"In the Hebrew language they are there called "chajoth," a word which indeed signifies animals, but is derived from "chaja," which is life, whence also the wife of Adam was called "Chaja" (Genesis 3:20). "Animal" in the singular number is also called "chaja" in Ezekiel, therefore those animals may also be called living things. Neither is it anything extraordinary that the Word is described by animals, since the Lord Himself in many parts of the Word is called "a lion," and often "Lamb," and they who are in charity from the Lord are called "sheep"; and the understanding also of the Word, in what follows, is called "a horse." That the Word is signified by these "animals" or "cherubim," is evident from this, that they were seen "in the midst of the throne and round about the throne," and in the midst of the throne was the Lord, and, as the Lord is the Word, they could not be seen anywhere else. That they were round about the throne also, was, because they were in the angelic heaven, where also the Word is. That by "cherubim" is signified the Word, and its guards, is shown in The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Sacred Scripture (n. 97), where are the following words:

The sense of the letter of the Word serves as a guard for the genuine truths which lie within; and the guard consists in this, that the literal sense can be turned hither and thither, that is, can be explained according to everyone's apprehension, without its internal being hurt or violated; for no harm ensues from the literal sense being understood differently by different people; but it does harm when the Divine truths which are within are perverted, for it is by this that the Word suffers violence. To prevent this, the literal sense guards, and it guards with those who are in falsities from religion, but yet do not confirm them, for from these the Word suffers no violence. This guard is signified by "cherubim," and is also described by them in the Word. This guard is signified by "the cherubim," which after the expulsion of Adam and his wife from the garden of Eden, were placed at its entrance." (AR 239)

Verse 7: "And the first animal was like a lion," signifies the Divine truth of the Word as to power. "And the second animal like a calf," signifies the Divine truth of the Word as to affection. "And the third animal having a face like a man," signifies the Divine truth of the Word as to wisdom. "And the fourth animal was like a flying eagle," signifies the Divine truth of the Word as to knowledges and thence understanding.

"Since all Divine worship is from the affections of truth and good, and thence from the knowledge of them, therefore sacrifices, in which the worship of the church with the sons of Israel chiefly consisted, were made of various beasts, such as lambs, goats, kids, sheep, he-goats, calves, oxen; they were from calves, because they signified the affection of knowing truths and goods, which is the first natural affection. This is what was signified by "sacrifices of calves". The second animal appeared like a calf, because the Divine truth of the Word, which is signified by it, affects minds and thus instructs and imbues." (AR 242)

"By "a man," in the Word, is signified wisdom, because he is born that he may receive wisdom from the Lord, and become an angel; therefore in proportion as anyone is wise, in the same proportion he is a man. Wisdom truly human consists in knowing that there is a God, what God is, and what is of God; this the Divine truth of the Word teaches." (AR 243)

Verse 8: "And the four animals each by himself had six wings about him," signifies the Word as to its powers and as to its guards. "And they were full of eyes within," signifies the Divine Wisdom in the Word in its natural sense from its spiritual and celestial sense. "And they had no rest day and night, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,'" signifies that the Word continually teaches the Lord, and that He alone is God, and thence that He alone is to be worshiped. "Who was, and who is, and who is to come," signifies the Lord.

"By "six" is signified all as to truth and good, for six is composed of "three" and "two" multiplied together, and by "three" is signified all as to truth (n. 505), and by "two" all as to good (n. 762). By "wings" are signified powers, because by them birds lift themselves up, and wings with birds are in the place of arms with men, and by "arms" are signified powers. Since by "wings" are signified powers, and each animal had six wings, it is evident, from what has been said above, what kind of power is signified by the wings of each, namely, that by "the wings of the lion" is signified the power of fighting against evils and falsities from hell; which power is of the Divine truth of the Word from the Lord. That by "the wings of the calf" is signified the power of affecting minds, for the Divine truth of the Word affects those who read it as holy. That by "the six wings of the man" is signified the power of being wise as to what God is, and what is of God, for this is properly man's in reading the Word: and that by "the wings of the eagle" is signified the power of knowing truth and good, and thereby acquiring intelligence for oneself." (AR 245)

"Because the Divine wisdom of the Word in its natural sense is from its spiritual and celestial senses, which are concealed within, it is therefore said, that "within they were full of eyes."" (AR 246)

"The animals had no rest day and night,' signifies that the Word continually, and without intermission, teaches; and that it teaches what the animals say, namely, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," that is, that the Lord alone is God, and thence that He alone is to be worshiped. This is what is signified by holy three times repeated, for the triplication involves all holiness in Him alone. That the Divine Trinity is in the Lord, is fully shown in The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Lord; as also that the Word treats of the Lord alone, and that thence is its sanctity." (AR 247)

Verse 9: "And when the animals gave glory, and honor, and thanks to Him that sat upon the throne," signifies that the Word ascribes all truth, and all good, and all worship to the Lord Who is to judge. "Who liveth for ages of ages," signifies that the Lord alone is life, and that life eternal is from Him alone.

"By "giving the Lord glory and honor," nothing else is meant in the Word than to acknowledge and confess that all truth and all good is from Him, thus that He alone is God, for He has glory from the Divine truth, and honor from the Divine good." (AR 249)

Verse 10: "The four-and-twenty elders fell down before Him that sat on the throne, and adored Him that liveth for ages of ages," signifies the humiliation of all in heaven before the Lord. "And cast their crowns before the throne," signifies the acknowledgment that their wisdom is from Him alone.

Verse 11: "Saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power," signifies that the kingdom is the Lord's by merit and justice, because He is the Divine truth and the Divine good. "For Thou hast created all things, and by Thy will they are, and were created," signifies that all things of heaven and the church were made and formed, and men reformed and regenerated from the Lord's Divine love by His Divine wisdom, or from His Divine good by His Divine truth, which also is the Word.

"This is the spiritual sense of these words, because by "creating" is signified to reform and regenerate by the Divine truth, and by "the will of the Lord" is signified the Divine good. Whether you call it the Divine good and the Divine truth, or the Divine love and the Divine wisdom, it is the same, because all good is of love, and all truth is of wisdom. That from the Divine love and the Divine wisdom are all things of heaven and the church, yea and the world itself was created from them is shown in many places in The Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom; also that love and good is of the will, and wisdom and truth of the understanding; hence it appears, that by "the Lord's will" is meant His Divine good or Divine love." (AR 254)

Memorable Relation - Apocalypse Revealed #255

"Here I will add this Relation. Lest anyone should enter into the spiritual sense of the Word, and pervert the genuine truth which pertains to that sense, there are placed guards by the Lord, which are meant by cherubim in the Word, which are the four animals here: that guards are placed, was thus represented to me.

It was given to see great purses, which seemed like bags, in which silver in great abundance was stored up; and as they were open, it was perceived as though anyone might take the silver out of them, and even carry it off. But near the purses there sat two angels who were guards. The place where they were deposited appeared like a manger in a stable; in the next apartment were seen some modest virgins with a chaste wife; and near that apartment stood two infants; and it was said, that they were not to be played with in an infantile manner, but wisely; and afterwards there appeared a harlot, and also a dead horse.

On seeing which I was instructed, that by these was represented the sense of the letter of the Word, in which is the spiritual sense. The great purses full of silver signified the knowledges of truth and good in great abundance. Their being open, and yet guarded by angels, signified that anyone might take from thence the knowledges of truth, but that care is taken lest anyone should falsify the spiritual sense, in which were nothing but truths. The manger in the stable, in which the purses lay, signified spiritual instruction for the understanding; this is the signification of a manger, and the same is signified by the manger in which the Lord lay when an infant, because a horse, which eats therefrom, signifies the understanding of the Word.

The modest virgins, who were seen in the adjoining apartment, signified affections of truth, and the chaste wife, the conjunction of good and truth. The infants signified the innocence of wisdom in the Word. They were angels from the third heaven, who all appear like infants. The harlot with the dead horse signified the falsification of the Word by many at this day, by which all the understanding of truth perishes; a harlot signifies falsification, and a dead horse no understanding of truth.

It has been granted me to speak with many after death, who believed they should shine like stars in heaven, because, as they said, they had held the Word as holy, had read it frequently, and collected many things from it by which they had confirmed the dogmas of their faith, and were therefore celebrated as men of learning in the world, for which reason they thought they would be Michaels or Raphaels. But many of them were explored, as to the love from which they had studied the Word, and it was found, that some had studied it from self-love, that they might appear great in the world, and be revered as primates of the church; but others from the love of the world, that they might gain wealth. When they were examined as to what they knew from the Word, it was found, that they knew nothing of genuine truth therefrom, but only such as is called truth falsified, which in itself is falsity, and this, in the spiritual world, is a stench to the nostrils of the angels. And it was said to them that this was the case with them, because they themselves and the world were their ends, or what is the same, their loves, and not the Lord and heaven; and when themselves and the world are ends, then, when they read the Word, their mind cleaves to self and the world, and therefore they think constantly from their own proprium, which is in thick darkness as to all things of heaven. In this state man cannot be withdrawn from his own light, and so elevated into the light of heaven, nor thence receive any influx from the Lord through heaven.

I also saw them admitted into heaven, and when they were found to be without truths, they were stripped of their garments and appeared in nakedness. And they who had falsified truths, were, by reason of their stench, expelled, but still their pride remained with them, and the belief in their own merit. It was otherwise with those who had studied the Word from the affection of knowing truth because it is truth, and because it subserves the uses of spiritual life, not only to a man's self, but also to his neighbor. These I saw taken up into heaven, and thus into the light, in which the Divine truth is there, and at the same time they were then exalted into angelic wisdom and its felicity, which is life eternal."