When we reach chapter 4 it is a turning point and does not come to a logical conclusion until maybe Chapter 19. The first 3 chapters are different to the book as these are just epistles. Since there are 7 churches mentioned in the first 3 chapters, it is important to note 7 is the number of completion and perfection, meaning to the seven churches mean there are principles and messages to all the churches Past, present and future.

Now that the seven church have been addressed, John is being presented with a Revelation that is very symbolic, like a scroll with seven seals and a woman waiting to give birth as a dragon awaits to devour the child. A woman dressed in scarlet riding on the back of a beast, a dragon coming out the sea with 10 horns and ten heads. Seven angles with seven trumpets and seven angels with 7 bowls of wrath that will be poured out, and other wonder’s stranger then these.

When things are presented in series of sevens, seven letters to the seven churches seven scrolls etc. But generally speaking these sevens are events taking place on earth. John is taken up to heaven to see the heavenly things that are taking place in heaven, which can only be seen by the spiritual eye. There is a vision in heaven then the events happen on earth.

Things don’t seem to make sense death, destruction and calamity, it requires a heavenly view to make sense of these things. So John is first caught up to heaven to show you “things which must take place” and while in the spirit things are explained then the events on earth are explained, then executed. Somehow the events on earth are explained by what is happening in heaven, and give us a reason why, so things are not nonsensical or scattered.

So to reiterate the sequence of the revelation, we will see John going from a heavenly scene to an earthly scene many times in the spirit, to explain things then back to earth to see the execution of these events.

Revelation 4:1-2 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit:

The prevailing thought among evangelicals is there is a 2000 year gap between the last verse in Revelation Chapter 3 and the first verse in Chapter 4, also this calling up of John to see heavenly things is the rapture of the church.

Let’s look at the two primary verses used to support this particular Pre-Trib Rapture idea and theory.
The last Trumpet

1 Corinthians 15:
In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

If we stay in context of scripture the last trump is where death is defeated and cast into the lake of fire, there is a lot of death after chapter 4:1 of both the saints and the unsaved. This is more reminiscent of Chapter 20 then it is Chapter 4 but we will discuss this later in our study.

With a shout and with a trump of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

When there is a sound of a trumpet and a voice of an archangel like in Revelation 1:10 – John hears the voice as a trumpet where he is in the spirit.

Does John going up represent the Church? Does John coming back down to earth represent the Church? For example, when he goes down to earth, does the Church go with him?

If John’s geography represents the church, “the church” would be going up and down like a yo-yo, perhaps the Rapture as explained in these verses takes place at a later time.

When applying scripture, it must agree with all other scripture and not be taken as individual verses, and build theology outside of scripture, and add to God’s word our own private interpretation.

The Rapture theory where the church is taken from the earth before God destroys the earth in judgment was not presented until the 1800’s. For 1800 years the church always put the catching up or “rapture of the believer as the final resurrection where God ends all things and casts death into the lake of fire.
I believe what John see’s is symbolic in context. When we get to heaven we will see things as they truly are, not symbolic in nature but in our perfected spiritual bodies. We will not see the scroll with seven seals and the four beasts as symbolized in Revelations.

The symbols in Revelations are to describe spiritual things in an earthly manner for man to understand what is being depicted. If shown in true spiritual sense nobody would have any clue what was being presented, even Jesus said if you cannot grasp earthly things how could I explain heavenly things.

"Jesus speaks with “his people” where they are at in a way they can understand”.

The vision in Revelation Chapter 4&5 is setting the scene for the breaking and execution of the seven seals. Also given in a symbolic nature why these things are going to take place.

4 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit:

Ok so verses 1 and 2 place us in heaven to see heavenly things.

“Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter”.

and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

There was a “rainbow” round about the throne, of all the things God would display and he chooses a rainbow a picture of his mercy and his promise to man regarding judging the wickedness of unsaved man and all of creation all at one time, when he destroyed them by water.

("just a foot note and thought") (I do want to mention this and ponder what the rainbow represents and if we overlook who God is, and what his promise was.)

Read Revelations Chapter 4
Sees a throne and One sitting on it – no real description – Just a brief description as "Rev4:3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.”

Same as Jeremiahs description, no really specific description of God?
Maybe so there are no graven images of him? You can’t make a graven image of God because nobody knows what he looks like.
Revelation 4:4
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.

The 24 thrones and 24 Elders

24 Thrones and 24 Elders – 4 heavenly Creatures - very mysterious.

If John was one of the Elders he didn’t state he recognized himself – they have gold crowns, they sit on thrones, they have white robes and later on will burn incense like a priest. So kings, priests maybe the “24 orders of priests”, king David divided the priests order into?

It is apparent that the 24 elders represent 2 sects of people’s of God, as twelve is the biblical number for the people of God. So the first 12 might represent the Old (Covenant) Testament saints and the other 12 might represent the new covenant saints.

Some suppose these 24 represent the 12 patriarchs from the old covenant and the 12 apostles from the new covenant. The first 12 are Jacobs’s sons the patriarchs but notice when mentioned later in Revelation God starts with Judah not the normal order starting with the oldest, because Messiah came from the tribe of Judah, so Judah will hold the prominence. And of course the 12 apostles appointed by Jesus himself given to him from God our father ordained before the beginning of time.

This is not clearly stated so I would stick with my first observation this is just representative of the people (saints) of God, before and after Jesus.

They are probably not 24 specific people at all, but symbolic, when we get to heaven we may not see 24 thrones.

24 kingly and priestly may just be symbolic of the people of God, of all time. This is what a vision is for, explaining heavenly things, in an earthly manner where we can understand.

It would also be interesting to note that in Revelation 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

“The song of Moses” and “The song of the Lamb” being sung. Song of Moses they sang walking through the Red Sea along side of those singing the song of the Lamb, which are the New Testament saints, maybe representative of Gods people of all time.
Revelation Chapter 4

Additional Thought: Also these 24 might represent ALL of God's people living and dead, not only those in heaven, this is symbolic.

Lightnings and Thunderings and Voices

Revelation 4:5
And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Lightning and thunders and voices each time mentioned something is added
Lightning's thunders voices and an earthquake then lightning's thunders voices and an earthquake and hail.

The important thing is they are coming from the throne. These are judgment images, they are not random, they are coming from the righteous judge to accomplish their ends.

Seven Spirit of God

Revelation 4:5b
there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God

Seven spirits, Seven lamps burning before the throne of God, which are the seven spirits of God.

Introduced first in Chapter 1:4 “and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;”

No explanation of who they are, then in Revelation Chapter 3:1 “ These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;”

Seven spirits related with the seven stars in some way Revelation Chapter 4:5 “there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God”

Now associated with the seven lamps – in chapter 1 lamp stands were the seven churches assuming, each lampstand had a lamp – chapter 5:6 “stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, “which are” the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” Lamb seven horns, seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God, Associated with the God the father and God the Son. Horns represent authority, eyes represent knowledge, seven represent perfection. So the seven spirits of God are perfect authority and perfect knowledge.
Revelation Chapter 4

Symbolic of Perfection

Sevenfold may also be connected with the Biblical understanding of the number 7 representing perfection.

The "Seven Fold Spirit of God" could be the "perfect" Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.

An alternative view is that the seven graces ("charisma") of Romans 12:6-8 reflect the seven spirits of God. The Holy Spirit manifests in humankind through these graces, reflecting the seven spirits of Yahweh. The seven graces are: 1) insight (prophecy); 2) helpfulness (service or ministry); 3) instruction (teaching); 4) encouragement; 5) generosity (giving); 6) guidance (leadership); and 7) compassion. This agrees with Isaiah 11:2-3 if "the Spirit of the Lord" is recognized as categorical and "the delight in the fear of the Lord" is added.

Romans 12:6-8 (KJV)
6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;
8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

In addition The "Sevenfold Ministry of the Spirit" interpretation holds that the seven Spirits refer to Book of Isaiah 11:2. In this interpretation, "The "seven Spirits" represent the sevenfold ministry of the Spirit as depicted in Isaiah 11:2." As it is written in the Holy Bible in the Book of Isaiah, 2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; Isaiah 11:2 (KJV).

Note: if "the Spirit of the Lord" is recognized as categorical and or "the delight in the fear of the Lord" is added from older translations.

The reference to the lamb in Revelation 5:6 relates it to the Seven Spirits which first appear in Revelation 1:4 and are associated with Jesus who holds them along with seven stars.[5]

In Revelation 5:6, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

This is further explained as Christ’s vessels deliver light to the world, they go out to the world to spread his Word. Message gospel. Again also notice in the heavenly what eyes and horns represent.
Revelation Chapter 4

Scripture Reference of the Seven Spirits of God in Revelation

Revelation 1:4 - John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

Revelation 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

2 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Revelation 3:1 - And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.
Revelation 4:5 - And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.
Revelation 5:6 - And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.
7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf; and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.
8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.
9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,
Revelation Chapter 4

The four creature were in the midst and round about the throne. Lets focus on the faces, a Lion an Eagle an Ox and a Man. In Ezekiel ch1 and ch10 cherubim are not exactly these creatures, but the cherubim each had four faces, 16 faces total, these in Revelations have 4 faces. Plus in Ezekiel the creatures had 4 wings, these creatures have 6 wings more like the Seraphim in Isaiah (6:2–6, 14:29, 30:6) that say, “holly holly holly Lord God almighty”, Are they Seraphim or Cherubim?

My impression is this is symbolic of both the cherubim and Seraphim, which are symbolic descriptions of creatures in heaven, not literal. Every vision Ezekiel saw was not the literal thing it appeared to be, Cedar tree represented Messiah, eagles represented the of kings of Judah. In Zachariah Joshua and Zerubbabel are represented as two olive tress with golden pipes feeding into golden lamps on golden lampstands, a symbolic picture that leads to representing an idea to get across. “See Attachment”

So what do these represent we have an Ox, Man, Eagle and Lion – Rabbinical thought was the Cherubim’s 4 faces represented in Ezekiel, the Lion (Chief of wild beasts), Ox (Chief of domesticated beasts), the Eagle (Chief of the birds), Man (the chief of all creation). This simply represents all of the created realm, all the beings in the created realm.

Tribes are represented by their chiefs, the 4 living creatures represented creation singing Gods praises. Maybe not literally “do not stop day or night singing this song”, good theology but day and night these three lines all day and night, but whenever they sing this song, the elders respond by casting their crowns. So every time, is this literal or is there an idea here we are supposed to be seeing? By casting their crowns possible they are acknowledging all achievements are Gods, and through his power he deserves the Glory and power and praise, again heavenly realities but not in their literal form.

Acknowledging God is creator of everything for his purpose, for his will and he made everything for his good pleasure. Our only reason to exist is to perform the pleasure of God.

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.
Take a ways and thoughts.

1. God speaks to “his people” where they are at, in a way they can understand.

2. Spiritual creatures and things in heaven can only be explained in a symbolic manner until we are in our glorified heavenly state.

3. What is explained in a symbolic manner in scripture is probably not what we will actually see when we are capable of seeing and understanding heavenly things in our glorified bodies, in our perfected glorified state.

4. Without a heavenly perspective things on earth can seem very chaotic and cruel.