

The Great White Throne

What Is God's Throne Like?

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In my opinion, the Last Great Day is the most difficult sermon to prepare for of all the holy days. Compared to it, some of the others (particularly the spring holy days) are a breeze. I think the reason for that is that we are commemorating events that have already occurred and which we can see in our own lives. The fall holy days, on the other hand, are things that happen in the future; and we have to use a bit of imagination. Some of us do not have quite the imagination that others have. But it takes a bit of thinking of what to speak about on these days.

What makes it so difficult on the Last Great Day especially is that--after considering Ezekiel 37 (the Valley of Dry Bones), and Revelation 20 (which is what happens during the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment), and maybe considering John 7: 37-39 (about the living waters flowing from the belly of those who have God's Spirit)—there does not seem to be much to talk about after that.

The well kind of runs dry on things that are directly speaking about the Last Great Day. At least, that is just the way it seems to me as I have to contemplate this every two years or so. *"Man, what am I going to speak about this time? I've already said everything that needs to be said."* But that is really not the case, once you think about the meaning of the day. There are a few events and several principles that are apropos to the day. So it is good to look into things like death (which I did two years ago), resurrection (which I did a few years before that), judgment, equity, mercy, salvation, the world. And then, of course, there are the actual events that surround the time that the Last Great Day pictures.

I think we know more than we think we know about the Great White Throne time—more than 1,000 years in the future. So, after a little bit of introductory material, I want to look into the Great White Throne itself. That is, the throne—God's throne. And though the detail may be slim in the Bible, what is mentioned in the Bible about God's throne is very important. It is very interesting and meaningful to us. And, of course, it will be especially meaningful to the people who come up during that time—the time of the Great White Throne.

The Protestant and Catholic world is quite confused about this time of the Last Great Day--the Great White Throne. I checked a few of the commentaries, just to get a feel of what the belief is about this time; and what I found out is that most of them had a very negative view of this period—very negative. They think it is a time solely when God condemns and executes, or eternally torments, those who have not been reached with the gospel (or, who have rejected it). They do not see it as a positive time, when people have a chance for salvation because they have rejected the idea that God is fair.

They think that, if you have never been reached with the name of Jesus (or, what have you), you are eternally condemned—that there never will again be a time for you to have salvation. It is a very awful thing to think about God—that He would callously allow millions and billions of

people to enter nothingness for the rest of eternity. That is, die eternally without ever having a chance for salvation. That is the kind of God that the Protestant and Catholic world thinks of, or imagines that God is. That is not a god that is worthy of worship, if that was the way He is. But that is not the way He is! He is a God who is fair—who wants sons and daughters in the multiple billions of people. And He wants them to all have a chance to taste eternal life, and the good things that eternal life brings.

In a way, I can understand the Protestants' and Catholics' confusion because they reject the holy days. They do not understand it. They don't have the key that unlocks these prophecies. Without this key, the Bible's hints about the Great White Throne Judgment and the second resurrection mean little to them. I have to admit, though, that the Bible leaves this area a little vague. It is future, and our part in it is small enough (let's say) that it doesn't warrant a lot of attention from God. He's concerned with us here and now, and He just gives us a small foretaste of what's going to happen. So, somebody without God's Spirit is going to be confused and not really understand a whole lot about it.

They understand about the second resurrection. They understand that after the thousand years and after Satan's rebellion that there will be a resurrection. But there's not a whole lot in the Bible about the second resurrection either. Most of the Bible's references to "resurrections" are either about Christ's own resurrection on the third day or about the first resurrection—that is, our resurrection. And the Bible is written for us to reach that point. That's mainly what the Bible is concerned about--Christ's resurrection (which opens up salvation to us, and gives us the hope of that) and then our following in His footsteps to have the same thing happen for us. And there's not a whole lot there about the second resurrection. That comes later. God can give us more detail as the time approaches—when we are spirit beings and can understand more, and can be of better help.

There are even more references in the Bible to physical resurrections from the dead. For example, the man falling on Elisha's bones. The resurrections that occurred at Christ's crucifixion were physical resurrections—as was Lazarus' resurrection. Those things are even more numerous in the Bible than the second resurrection.

Let's go to I Corinthians 15. This is the great "Resurrection Chapter." If you say "Resurrection Chapter," people automatically think of I Corinthians 15. And so we study this, and we get a great deal out of it. Paul lists the resurrections in order here.

I Corinthians 15:20-26 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Here we have the great Resurrection Chapter and the order of the resurrections; and would you not know—the second resurrection is not mentioned. Of all places where you would expect to find the second resurrection, it is not there—except maybe in a hint, because it says "as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive." But in the order of things, it's not mentioned. It skips right over it—straight from those who are Christ's at His coming to where Christ turns over His throne to His Father and death is destroyed.

Luke 11:31-32 The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the end of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

This is a time when Jesus is speaking specifically about the second resurrection and the Great White Throne Judgment, but it's fuzzy. He just calls it "the judgment." We know what period of time He's talking about, but it doesn't really say what kind of judgment it is. You could walk away with the feeling that the Protestants have. That is, that the queen of Sheba and the men of Nineveh will be condemned just as much as the men of Jesus' generation and that they will all go into the Lake of Fire. You could come away with that impression, if you didn't know any better.

Let's go to Ezekiel 37. This is the Valley of Dry Bones chapter.

Ezekiel 37:3-4 — And He [God] said to me [Ezekiel], "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know." ["I haven't got a clue."] 4 Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6 I will put sinews on you, and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.'" 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. 9 Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'" 10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. 11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' [Sounds like the Protestants.] 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them,

'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. 14 I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoke it and performed it," says the LORD."

This is another very obvious example of the judgment that Christ was talking about, but what is left out here is the time element. We don't know really where it is. I guess you could maybe figure it out from the story flow. But do you know what the Protestants think this is? They are all confused about the time. They say that this is a prophecy of Israel becoming a nation in 1948. That God raised up "Israel" through the Jews, and brought them back into the land of Canaan, the land of Palestine, and made them into a nation. They miss the time element all together.

We know the time element because of the holy days—because we keep them, because we perform them every year, because we've been given an understanding through Herbert Armstrong and other ministers who have faithfully taught this way. If we didn't have Revelation 20: 4-5, we might be stumped about when all this occurs. But, thankfully, at the end of God's revelation to His church through the apostle John (the last apostle remaining of all the Twelve) He—that is, Christ—gave us the time element when all of this occurs. At the beginning of the chapter, the angel comes down with the key to the bottomless pit; and he binds Satan. So, we have an anchor there. This is right at the beginning of the Millennium.

Revelation 20:4 — And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

This links with the other passages in the book of REVELATION that talk about a group of people living and reigning with Christ for a thousand years. And it is obviously the firstfruits. Then, in verse 5, the second resurrection comes in. It is a parenthetical statement that is stuck in here to help us understand the time element of these things.

Revelation 20:5 - But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. [End parenthesis. And then he goes on...] This [what we read in verse 4] is the first resurrection.

So, the parenthetical statement gives us the time element for the second resurrection, when the rest of the dead arise and live again. So, we have the Millennium--the thousand years of

Christ's reign—bracketed by two major resurrections. *The first resurrection* is the resurrection of the saints—hopefully you and me, and all those who have died in Christ. "Those who are alive and remain," it says, "will be caught up together with Him in the clouds, and be forever with the Lord." That's the first resurrection.

One thousand years later, there will be *a second resurrection*, when all the rest of the dead come from their graves—out of the seas or wherever they happened to have died, and their mortal remains were left to feed the worms and the fishes. God will bring them up *to live again*. That's an important clue. They will come and live again—alive again, just like it said in Ezekiel 37. He puts flesh and bone and sinew upon them, and they breathe the breath of life once again. They will live just like you and I live right now—physical life. This is a very direct hint from God that they will live for an extended period of time—a life, a whole life. And during that life they will be judged according to their works, as we'll see just a little bit later.

So it's not that they just arise, as the common Protestant idea is. I'm a second generation Christian, so I don't have a whole lot of experience there. But I do remember that, when I was only about six or seven years old, somebody in the church gave me a little pamphlet. It was talking about the coming judgment, and that you would stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. It was this little, maybe ten-paged, pamphlet in cartoon format—showing people rising out of their graves, and immediately they were ushered in before the Great White Throne; and then God said either "chop his head off" or whatever.

And that was the impression that I got—that all of the people in the second resurrection were just going to rise, go into the throne room of Christ, get judged, and either be pitched or kept. Like the fish in a big net—you either keep them or you throw them back in. That's the impression I got. They were really scary pictures. The Protestants—Baptists or whatever—really wanted you to "Repent!" right now. And so they made these scary devilish-looking pictures of these bad angels coming and taking people away. And it was pretty scary for a six or seven year old kid.

I had to wash my brain of that, because it's not true. (They are thinking more of the *third resurrection*.) But they made it sound like everyone is going to be thrown into the Lake of Fire if they come up in that judgment. It's a pretty sad thing. I had nightmares over it for a while. Or maybe they were more like daydreams, where they were scary daydreams. But that's the idea that I had early on, as to what this resurrection was; and that's the idea that normal Protestants have of this time.

Revelation 20:7 — [This continues the time element of this period.]
Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released
from his prison.

So we have Christ returning, Satan being bound; and then the Millennium begins with the raising to eternal life of all of those who are in the first resurrection—the saints. Then you have a thousand years of living and reigning with Christ, and then Satan is loosed for a little season to do his deceptive work. He raises a great army, and God (knowing that His people are unprotected and not prepared for war) performs a great miracle and wipes them out. At this

time, the devil and his angels are cast permanently into the Lake of Fire. That happens right at the end of the thousand years.

Revelation 20:11a — Then...

That's a time element, stuck in there. These things happen one right after the other. Once Satan is put into the Lake of Fire for that final time...

Revelation 20:11 — Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

So, here is validation for the time element of this Great White Throne period. It comes up right after the end of the Millennium and Satan's failed rebellion. And now we get into that area of the sermon where we talk about the Great White Throne. John is rather sparing of his description of the Great White Throne. Do you know what his description of the Great White Throne is? "Then I saw a great white throne." It's pretty bare bones (not to be confused with Ezekiel 37); but that's it—"Great White Throne." But that very concise description of that throne is *very powerful* in itself. It's plenty to get us thinking—to get us comparing notes, to get us looking through the Bible for similarities, and symbols, and types that are there to help us describe this Great White Throne.

Let's take it word by word. All we have is three words. [*Great White Throne.*] So, there will just be three points. The first word is *GREAT*. This is the word in Greek *meegas*. It means big. It means large. And it also has a qualitative aspect to it that means "great." This Greek word *meegas* is part of what we use in normal speech for "megabyte" (For those of you who are more technologically oriented, that's a really big byte.), "megahertz" (We have that in computers too.), "megabar" (For those of you who are interested in meteorology, it's a measurement of pressure), "megalith" (That's a big stone, literally. Stonehenge is made up of several megaliths.), and "megaphone" (We don't use those very often. We have microphones, which are little ones that say big things But megaphones are these big things that make it sound big.). I think you understand that "*mega*" means big, and great, and large.

But we also, in English, use *great* not just for big things but for qualitative assessment of things. We call Mozart a great composer. He stood head and shoulders above his peers. Not literally, because he was a little guy; but musically his talent was such that it was, in many ways, light-years ahead of those of his age. He was a great composer, a great musician. It means that he excelled others in his field. No one compared to him.

We call Alexander "the Great." He was another short guy. He wasn't a large man, but his presence in history was very large; and civilization after he came and went was different, because of what he did. In just a few years, he conquered most of the known world—up to and past the Indus River. Then he ran into, from what I understand, some Israelites that were over there; and they stopped him. (You might want to check that out for me. But, from what I understand, that was the way it worked. They were people who had left Assyria and migrated

that way. And they became a very great people; and he couldn't get past Israel.)

It's very interesting that, if you look at where he conquered, he never was able to go up into those regions where Israel had migrated after they left Assyria. That's very interesting, and that's off the subject. But Alexander was "great" because of his power, because of his dominion, because of the ideas that he set in motion—that lasted not only through the empire of the Greeks but into the empire of the Romans, and then later on into the empires of the West (the kingdoms and the culture of the West).

Now, this idea of "big" and "large in quality" goes for this throne as well. It may be a large throne in size. I don't know. But that's not what is important. What is more important is that this throne is great because of the One who sits upon it. He makes that throne "great." The One who sits on it is beyond compare. He excels in everything to which He sets His hand. His dominion is not puny like Alexander's, but it is universal. His power --over all people, all material things, and all spiritual things--is absolute. That is why that throne is *Great*.

Let's go to Deuteronomy 10. This is entitled "The Essence of the Law" in my New King James [Bible]. God is describing to Israel what He wants them to do.

Deuteronomy 10:14 — Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it.

This is describing His dominion. I want you to see how He describes Himself.

Deuteronomy 10:17-21 - For the LORD your God is God of gods and LORD of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. 18 He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. 19 Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 20 You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. 21 He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.

God is that great God, and it takes a *great throne* to support Him. That throne manifests, by its greatness, the greatness of the God who sits upon it. These are the attributes, here in Deuteronomy 10, which make God great. Very quickly, after He gives a few descriptors of Himself (God of gods, Lord of lords, mighty and awesome)—the first thing that He mentions after that is that He is a God of justice. He takes no bribe. He shows no partiality.

One of the first things that He mentions is *His ability to judge*—in righteousness, in fairness, in equity, in mercy. That's a part of what makes Him *great*, because He is able to do these things without respect of persons. Nothing sways Him that is not right. He is the One who can give judgment, and it will be right all the time. He has never made a wrong judgment. He always looks to the heart of the matter, and His decisions are perfect. The One who sits on the

throne is the greatest of all! He is fair and equitable, just, merciful, kind, forgiving, loving. *He is perfectly GREAT.* And His throne is "great" in representation of Him.

Okay, let's go to *WHITE*. The Great White... This is the Greek word *leukos*. The evangelist, the beloved physician, Luke—this was his name. They said, "*Hey, White, I need your help. Broke my arm.*" That's what his name was—Luke/White. And it is simply the color "white." But what does "white" represent in Scripture? Remember that I said we were going to have to look at types and symbols for some of these things, because John was so concise in his description.

Let's go back to Psalms 51. (Test: What's Psalms 51?) It's David's prayer of repentance. What was he doing there in Psalms 51? He was asking to be made clean and pure before God once again.

Psalms 51:7 — Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

You know how snow in the sunlight—fresh, clean, white snow—is dazzling to the eyes. Well, that's what David was asking that *his character* appear--that not only would he be white, but whiter than snow; and just as dazzling and glorious. So, we see this hand in hand with "purge me", being clean and "wash me." The idea comes through very clearly that when someone is white, he is clean and pure. (I don't mean that racially, not at all. I'm talking about the character here.) When someone is considered of a "white" character, he is clean and pure. Notice that he's not requesting physical cleansing, but spiritual cleansing.

Ecclesiastes 9:7-8 — Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works. 8 Let your garments always be white, and let your head lack no oil.

These two verses are linked together, and the implication is that *white* here ("Let your garments always be white.") is talking about being joyful. That's what verse 7 begins with. "Eat your bread with joy." So "white" implies being *joyous, blessed, prospered, happy*. "Blessed and happy is he..." The reason for this joy—that is, why people would have joy—is found in the last phrase of verse 7. "For God has already accepted your works." One's joy, in the right and proper way, should spring from the knowledge that God has accepted him, that God is happy with the way we live our lives. That should be what makes us happy! We should be very pleased that we are following God's way of life--and know that, because we are doing that, God is happy with us. That should fulfill our joy. Remember that is what Paul says in Philippians 2—"fulfill you my joy." Do all these things that please God. That's what makes us joyful.

So *white* here is really very similar to what it represents in Psalms 51:7. It's talking about cleanliness again—purity, righteousness. Because these things are evident in your life, you are happy! These things can only make you happy. They don't cause you sorrow, because doing what is right always winds up in good. (Romans 8:28.) And so we are happy. We are joyful. We can feel good. And so *white*—even though it is talking about the results here—still represents purity and righteousness.

Let's go to the book of REVELATION. It's in REVELATION, once again, that these things are made very clear. We'll just pick up one verse here, which is describing Christ Himself.

Revelation 1:14a - His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow [Ah-ha, back to Psalms 51: 7 —except now we've thrown "wool" in there too.], and His eyes like a flame of fire.

Now, let's go to chapter 19, and this time Christ is returning from heaven.

Revelation 19:11 — Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse [was carrying our God]. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Revelation 19:14 — And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

So, not only is Christ Himself and His horse white—representing righteousness and purity; but those who are coming with Him are also clothed in white and riding white horses—showing that they too are clean and pure.

Revelation 19:7-8 — "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

So what we have here is validation of what we found in the Old Testament. *White* represents righteousness, purity, and cleanliness--not being stained by this world and its sin. We have to carry this thought, this idea, of cleanliness and purity and righteousness into the Great White Throne Judgment. *That Throne is white!* Not only is the Judge "great" that sits upon it; but He is holy and righteous and pure and good. Once again we have the idea coming up in this description that He is not going to make a wrong decision. What He decides at that period of time is going to be perfectly proper. So we don't have to fear. The people who come up in this Judgment don't necessarily have to fear that God is going to be swayed at all, or make a wrong decision. *The Judge is great.* He is holy and righteous and good and perfect. So, what He decrees from His throne will be right.

Now, let's go to the word *THRONE*. When I was studying this, I said, "*Oh, no,*" because the word for throne is *thronos*; and I thought, "*What am I going to say about that?*" It's the same word in Greek as it is in English. It means the seat on which a person of importance sits. It doesn't seem to add very much. A *thronos* is a seat on which a sovereign sits—a person of great importance who has the abilities and the right to make judgments--to rule.

That God is sitting on it presents the idea of "judgment." When a ruler sits on his throne, that means he is prepared to judge. And what he says then, from that seated position on his throne, is the 'end all' of pronouncements. I get the impression of what Yul Brunner said in "The Ten

Commandments" [movie]. "*So let it be written, so let it be done.*" When he said that from his throne, it was law.

In DANIEL, we have the law of the Medes and the Persians. And when the king said something and it became law, it could not be changed. You know what happened there in ESTHER. They had to make another law that when around the one that had originally been given, to allow the Jews to fight back. They couldn't rescind the old law, which allowed everybody to kill the Jews. He just made a new law that said the Jews could fight back. And so these two laws balanced one another, and the Jews were saved.

That's the impression you get from God's throne. When God speaks, seated at His throne, then that is the decision. Total authority and decisive judgment—and, of course, we have *Great* and *White* which means that it's going to be a perfect decision. It's going to be a just decision. It's going to be a holy, righteous, pure, and clean decision.

All of the indications from these descriptions are positive. They are not something that should strike a negative fear in those who come before it. They should be awed, but they needn't fear that they are going to get a "bad" judgment.

Now, we'll go to Isaiah 45; and I want to take you on a little trip through the thrones that are shown in the Bible—particularly God's throne. God is speaking here. If you think of this from the standpoint of God speaking from *His great white throne* it makes a lot more sense.

Isaiah 45:22-25 — "Look to Me [He says], and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. 23 I have sworn by Myself: The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. 24 He shall say, 'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him. 25 In the LORD all the descendants of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory.'"

What He is saying here is that, from His throne upon which He sits, in holiness and righteousness He is offering salvation to all the earth. They will get their fair shake. When God makes such an offer, He tells you here that it is wise to accept it. And all the people, from all the millennia of this earth—all of man's history—will finally have that opportunity during the time of the Great White Throne.

Let's go back to II Chronicles 9. Solomon made a throne; and I wonder if God inspired him to make this throne like this?

II Chronicles 9:17-19 — Moreover the king [Solomon] made a great throne of ivory [What color is ivory? Well, it's pretty white--most of the time.], and overlaid it with pure gold. [Wow! Could you imagine a throne, able to seat a man, not just made of ivory but then overlaid with gold!] 18 The throne has six steps, with a footstool of gold, which

were fastened to the throne; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. 19 Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom.

This was the kingdom of God's chosen people, Israel; and it had a throne worthy of its true King. Who knows if God actually did inspire this? He probably did—to represent Him and the Prime Minister that He appointed, from the line of David, to sit upon it.

Now, off to EZEKIEL. You'll recognize this throne. This is God's portable throne. It's a very interesting throne. I am reading this one because I want you to see all the cherubim, and the seraphim, and the brightness and the glory that Ezekiel tries to describe here. As you can tell, just by the description that Ezekiel makes, he had a hard time searching for words about how this thing actually looked.

Ezekiel 1:4-14 — Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. 5 Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. 6 Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. 7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. 8 The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. 9 Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward. 10 As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. 11 Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies. 12 And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went. 13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. 14 And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.

Ezekiel 1:26-28 — And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. 27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I

saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

Amazing! Ezekiel didn't have the ability to describe it. He kept having to say, *"It's kind of like this. And, you can understand, it was kind of like this other thing."* It was just incomprehensible! But he gets across the brightness, and the strangeness, and the glory, and especially that it was all really emanating from this One who was above it. This was the reason why there was so much glory on this throne.

Now, let's go to Daniel 7. This is very much like the Great White Throne Judgment period; but, from the time period, it seems like it's at the beginning of the Millennium--in heaven.

Daniel 7:9-10 — "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire [similar to what Ezekiel saw]; 10 a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands [millions] ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."

And a judgment takes place—on the Beast, on the false prophet. This is just like the Great White Throne, as I mentioned before. And the fiery stream that issues from it may be an illusion to the Lake of Fire. It comes directly from God—right from His throne. That shows you where the judgment issues from. It shows you that the punishment upon these wicked people comes from God Himself, and He makes a righteous judgment. They had had their chance; and they had rejected it, in rebellion. We can also see that God alone is worthy to condemn and pass this judgment; and He does it equably, justly. It's deserved.

Let's go to Revelation 4. This entire chapter--and part of chapter 5 as well--just describes God's Throne in heaven.

Revelation 4:2-11 — Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. 3 And 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. 4 Around 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. 5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. 6 Before 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 [very much like Ezekiel saw in the portable throne]. 7 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. 8 The 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!" 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the 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."

Revelation 5:11-12 — Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousands, and thousands of thousands [reminds you of Daniel 7], 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

This whole chapter (plus) is devoted to God's Throne and His glory. It should give us a feeling for the splendor and the majesty of God and that place. It's really beyond our imagination. These men that God had transcribing His words, let's say, were doing their best to describe something that is just awesome, breath-taking, stunning. It's hard to imagine it. But they try to bring out and emphasize God's holiness, His worthiness, His glory, His honor--all the praise that is going on because of what He is and what He has accomplished. And, of course, His Sovereignty—that He is over all and He is worthy to do these things that He must do in judging.

You might want to write down Isaiah 6:1-5. It says something similar, because when Isaiah saw God he was undone—because of the pure holiness that emanated from the One on the throne. It mentions that he saw Him on His throne, and that was the reaction that he had. It just unglued him—because of God's righteousness and Isaiah's dirtiness, filthiness. And Isaiah was a good man; but it still was enough to cause him to just lose all control.

You may want to jot down Isaiah 16:5. I'm skipping over those for a lack of time; but this verse speaks of Christ's throne in the Millennium, and how it represents mercy, and truth, and judgment and justice. One thing that is interesting there is that it talks about "hastening righteousness." It means that He will give speedy trials. He'll make His decisions known quickly; and you won't have any of this lingering "justice" that we have in this country, because He has the qualities of the perfect Judge. This comes out in Psalms 89:14 as well.

This is something else that occurs at the throne of God.

Revelation 22:1 — And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Not only does judgment proceed from the throne of God, but also salvation and eternal life. There is a good, perfect balance of His severity and His goodness; and that is something that a perfect Judge must have—the proper balance of severity and goodness. On the one hand, you have this burning river coming from the throne, in which the Beast and the false prophet are thrown (as it mentions there in Daniel 7). But also emanating from the throne is the river of the water of Life. It shows the two sides—the severity and the goodness—of God. They both begin at His throne.

Revelation 20:12-13 — And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

What we see here is that the dead have their chance to hear God's way. Those are the books that were opened—the books of the Bible. They will be able to judge themselves according to those words, and be able to learn the things that you and I are learning, and then be able to practice them. And over this period of time, this wonderful Being that sits on the throne—this righteous throne, this great and awesome throne—will judge them (just like He is judging you and me). That will be their time. They will have the chance to sit before ministers, like you do, and learn. They will have the chance, like you do, to have stumbling blocks thrown in the way and learn how to hurdle them or smash through them—just like you are learning, and I am learning, to do in this time now.

God wants to give salvation and eternal life to as many as will accept it. It says in II Peter 3: 9 that God wants none to perish. He wants all to repent and embrace eternal life. That's the kind of God we have. Not the one who wants to raise all these people up, just to throw them into the Lake of Fire. He wants to raise these people to give them the opportunity to live properly and be joyful—and then, of course, to live joyfully forever with Him. That's the kind of God we have.

Right now, we--as members of the Church of God--are standing before *the great white throne*. I don't know if you have ever thought of it that way; but that is where we are. Just like these people will come up someday before it and live their lives under judgment, we now have been called to live under judgment and stand before that throne and live to please that great One who sits upon it in righteousness and holiness.

Hebrews 4:14-15 — Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. [Let us hold fast to those convictions that we should have during this time of trial.] 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

We have an Advocate, who is sitting there with Him on that throne--One who is willing to come to our defense; One who willing to explain to Him the weaknesses of the flesh; One who is willing to say, "*Why don't We give him another chance? Why don't We infuse him with this? It might help him. What don't We see how he reacts to this, to make him pure and white--as We are?*"

Now, verse 16. This is the concluding statement. Knowing that we have come before the throne, and that Jesus Christ is there as our Advocate, as the Mediator, this is what we should do.

Hebrews 4:16a - Let us therefore come boldly...

That is, confidently, with our understanding of what we know. We know that this God is perfect and righteous; and He will give the best judgment for us, and for everyone else.

Hebrews 4:16 — Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

This is so encouraging! The wonderful and holy and pure *great white throne* is nothing that we need to dread. Fear—yes. Godly fear—certainly. But dread—no. We can come boldly before it because the One who sits upon it is pure, and righteous, and holy, and just, and merciful. He is kind, loving, forgiving, and willing to dispense grace upon grace—because He favors us, because He loves us and He wants us there with Him. And one day, if we continue in that way, we too... (Think of it!) We too will sit with Him on that GREAT WHITE THRONE.