

Introduction:

A few weeks ago Pastor Keith began a study in the book of Revelation. So today if you have a bible, and I hope that you do, will you turn with me to Revelation Chapter 4. Today we are going to continue this study as we get a glimpse into heaven, and more specifically, into the throne room of heaven. John will be describing for us what he saw. But some of these things are actually kind of indescribable using human language, because no one has ever seen anything like this before. So as we open up the scripture and try to paint this picture, we will try not to get caught in all of the finer details but keep our focus on the main idea of this chapter:

Main Idea:

› In his person (holy and good) and his work (creator and redeemer), God alone is worthy of all worship and honor and praise.

So lets begin by reading what was revealed to John.

Text:

Revelation 4:1–11 CSB

¹ After this I looked, and there in heaven was an open door. The first voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ² Immediately I was in the Spirit, and there was a throne in heaven and someone was seated on it. ³ The one seated there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian stone. A rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald surrounded the throne. ⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones sat twenty-four elders dressed in white clothes, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵ Flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder came from the throne. Seven fiery torches were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. ⁶ Something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal, was also before the throne. Four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back were around the throne on each side. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion; the second living creature was like an ox; the third living creature had a face like a man; and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings; they were covered with eyes around and inside. Day and night they never stop, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come. ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one seated on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before the one seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne and say, ¹¹ Our Lord and God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because you have created all things, and by your will they exist and were created.

Let us pray.

1. Praise God because: God is on His Throne! Rev. 4:1-5

So the first thing we read is “**After this.**” This begs the question, after what? In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 John was instructed to write letters to 7 churches. In January Pastor Keith will begin his Winter Bible study. He is going to take a more in-depth look at these letters. But for our purposes today we really just need to know that the 7 churches have had some trials and some triumphs.” Much like the church today, there is good that happens, and at the same time there is bad.

But **after this** John hears a **voice like a trumpet**, it simply means a voice that he couldn’t ignore. And the voice said, “**come up here**” and let me show you: “**what must take place.**” Jesus is telling John what is going to happen. It’s not what should happen, or might happen, it is what “**must take place.**” So John is called up into Heaven and gets to see a glimpse of what is going on.

He sees a “throne in heaven” and “someone was seated on it”

John is either protected from or blinded by the fullness of God’s glory, or maybe is at a loss for the right words, so he just says there was “someone seated on it.”

So we hear some great news right away. Even though churches are having trials and triumphs, then and now, **the throne is not empty. God is on the throne** and is in control of what happens and that is why he is called a sovereign God. We may not understand why things happen, but one thing is for sure, it is not happening because God is absent or unaware.

People sometimes want to know what God looks like, well His...“**appearance**” is so majestic and glorious that John has thoughts of precious stones. He names what would be some of the most brilliant and radiant stones. Most of us today might think of a sparkling multi-colored diamond. John can only describe him as beautiful radiant jewels.

Then he describes for us **24 thrones** placed around God’s throne. This gives us an image of a secondary authority that would have some type of responsibility, but ultimately answers to the one seated on the throne. They are described as **elders** so they would be in a position of leadership. There are 24 leaders in a subservient role answering to God. They had on **white clothes** that symbolize purity and redemption. They were adorned with **golden crowns** showing that they had shown endurance and have finished the race well. They have completed the task.

And John continues with his description by saying there are **flashes of lighting and rumbling and peals of thunder.**

This verse just makes me want to sing the “Revelation Song” by Philips Craig and Dean, just not in public.

Praise Him! Revelation 4:1-11

It might remind you of the scene from Exodus 19 where Moses has a meeting with God at Mt. Sinai. God is in control of nature and can cause flashes of light and rumbling and peals of thunder. These aren't bad storms that are out of control, but it is the God of the universe displaying that he is in control of all things.

We are also told of “**seven fiery torches.**” The bible uses the number 7 to represent completion. So this description tells us that the Holy Spirit of God is at the throne in his entirety.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are present at the throne. So we see that **God is fully on His Throne, lacking in nothing.**

While preparing for this message I was reminded of something my first pastor said, “What good would it do for us to understand every aspect of heaven, if we are never going to be able to see it.” Bob Swift

The elders were dressed in white clothes, which shows they had been purified.

So what had they been purified from? Sin.

You can't be tainted from sin and stand before a Holy God.

Romans 3:23 tells us that:²³ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

But I meet people all of the time that think they are going to go to heaven because they have been “basically good.” Or they just simply don't know and they are waiting and hoping.

They act as though God is in heaven keeping score on our good and bad deeds to see if you earn enough points.

This time of year doesn't help any with the “making a list, checking it twice...” song that is being played all around town.

So to settle this lets look at what the bible actually says.

Matthew 7:21-23- *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”* ²² *On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?’* ²³ *Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you. **Depart from me, you lawbreakers!**’*

That actually sounds scary. Those are some pretty good works, prophesying in Jesus name, driving out demons, and doing miracles, I know I can't compete with that.

But who did he say will enter the kingdom of heaven? *“only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”*

So what is the will of the Father?

Praise Him! Revelation 4:1-11

1 John 3:23-- *"Now this is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he commanded us*

Because

Acts 4:12- *"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved."*

So what must we believe about Jesus?

John 14:6- *"Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

We must believe that Jesus is the only way, not just one way, or even the best way, but the only way.

And we must understand that Jesus was sent to save us.

John 3:16–17- *For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

The action that saves us is Christ dying on the cross!

2 Corinthians 5:21- *He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

It is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all sin, not anything we do. That's why on judgment day some people will be told to "depart from me you lawbreakers."

They are still trying to work their way into heaven when all you have to do is confess and believe.

Romans 10:9–10- *If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.*

Romans 10:13- *For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

That is what the elders represent, people that understood they were sinful before a holy God, they turned from their sin, understood that Christ died on their behalf, and believed that God raised him from the dead! They didn't have to do anything to earn salvation; it was the free gift of God.

›So all of the actions that we take are out of our Love for God not to earn his love.

My prayer right now is that maybe this finally clicked for someone.

You finally get it; it isn't what you have done, but what he has done for you.

Praise Him! Revelation 4:1-11

And each of us needs to be reminded of and understand our salvation so we can fully grasp the glory of Heaven.

•In the throne room these 24 elders display that God alone is worthy of our total submission

Summary:

What have we learned so far?

John sees a throne that is not empty, it is filled with the Glory of God all around him, God is good and desires for humanity to be saved, and the redeemed of the world are represented at the throne.

So God is good, and we have redemption.

2. Praise God because: God is Holy. Rev. 6-8

When we talk about the word Holy, we have to think about whom the subject is. For you and I to be Holy, means that we are “set apart” from something, as in being “set apart from sin.” We are told in Le 20:26 that “You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy.” Concerning God, it is a part of his nature. God is separated from sin and is the perfection in character; he is the standard of moral excellence.

We can see this described in the following verses.

There is a: “sea of glass”

He describes it as a sea that is flat like glass but clear like crystal, as in “crystal clear.” Glass in John’s day was cloudy so it is important to recognize that this isn’t cloudy, it’s calm, it’s perfectly still, the flashes of light and peals of thunder are not disturbing it because He is Holy and perfect, beneath God’s feet everything is in perfect submission.

Every time I read this, I can’t help but thinking of a perfect lake first thing in the morning. I know we are in the desert but I grew up around water and water sports. We would get up early in the morning and go out on the lake to try and be that first skier that got to ride on a “sea of glass.”

And then there are: “4 Living Creatures... with “eyes around and inside”...”never stop saying” Holy, Holy, Holy”

These 4 magnificent creatures are situated around the throne. What ever these creatures are it seems as though they represent created animal life. Lion’s are wild and considered “Kings of the animal world”, the ox or calf is a domestic animal and a servant of sorts, then a face like a man would represent humanity, and finally the eagle is the most powerful of the birds. What we see are 4 aspects of created life that are worshiping the one true God.

Praise Him! Revelation 4:1-11

With eyes around and inside they can see everything, they see God's nature, they see what is happening in Heaven and on Earth.

And after seeing everything they declare that he is "Holy, Holy, Holy"

How long has he been holy?

Forever. "Lord God, the almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come"

God was holy before time began as we know it, he is Holy now, and He will remain Holy. He has been perfect yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Summary:

Now we can easily add Holy to the list. God in his person is holy and good, and in his work we have redemption.

Are there more reasons why we praise God?

3. Praise God because: God alone is worthy! Rev. 4:9-11

Later on in Revelation 19 we are told that John starts to worship an angel and is told not to do that, I too am a servant of the Lord. And here we see 4 living creatures in all of their own majesty representing different aspects of creation, the best of creation, they keep a watchful eye on everything, yet they show humility by giving glory to their creator, they honor him, and have an attitude of thanks.

How often do we think of ourselves as something more than we really are and forget to give God the glory, or honor him, or give him thanks?

Then we see the 24 elders following after the 4 living creatures. Remember they represent the redeemed of humanity, they have finished the race, they have received their crowns, yet they still "**fall down**" and in "**worship**" they "**cast their crowns**" before the throne. And they praise him because he is **worthy to receive** all of the **glory, and honor and power** because **he created all things** and by his will **they exist and were created**.

The 24 elders have a proper understanding of who God is. They see that he created everything and that it exists because he wills it to exist. He is in sovereign control of the universe. And in all of his splendor and majesty he cares for humanity, and sent His son Jesus to redeem us, to bring us back into a right relationship with him.

What an act of worship for humanity. They are casting something that would be the most celebrated thing you could ever earn. They trusted the one seated on the throne and endured to the end. The one true King has given them a crown, yet in a total act of submission they surrender their crowns and cast them before the throne.

Praise Him! Revelation 4:1-11

›In essence they are saying, “Lord I don’t deserve this, you created me to love you and I failed you, but Jesus died for me, he paid the price that I couldn’t pay, my salvation is yours, I am here because of you, Lord, here is your crown.”

And they cry Holy, Holy, Holy is the lamb.

Summary

I have to tell you, preparing this message has been convicting for me.

What do I hold on to that is rightfully his?

Sometimes I think I forget about heaven because I get caught up in things of the Earth. I’ve always tried to be a people pleaser. Even as a little kid. I mean who doesn’t want people to like them or laugh at their jokes, or enjoy a story they tell. We pride our selves in our accomplishments, who we have become, what we have done, how smart we are, how good we are at something, how much we have earned, and even what possessions we may own.

But the reality of it is, at the end of our life none of that will matter. We are going to one of two places, heaven or hell. And for those of us that have believed in Christ we will receive the crown of life, and I have to think that our response is going to be the same as the 24 elders. Won’t we follow suit and cast our crowns before the throne and say “worthy are you our Lord and God, to receive honor, and glory, and power?”

›Hopefully you have seen that in His person God is holy and good, and in his work he created us and redeemed us, and we should also see that God alone is worthy of all worship and honor and praise.

Application

So what is our response to these truths?

If you don’t know him as savior and Lord, then you need to fall down before God and surrender, you have to quit trying to do it on your own and trying to earn your way to heaven, because you can’t be good enough or do enough.

And for those of us that have surrendered our life to Jesus, what earthly thing are we trying to hold onto?

The elders were “casting crowns” at the throne as an act of worship.

›So what prized possession do we need to cast at the throne and give back to God?

- Our time
- Our talent
- Some of our resources
- What would people think of me if I _____ in worship to God?
- Do we care more about what people think of us than how we think of God?

Praise Him! Revelation 4:1-11

Only you know how you should fill in that blank.

Chuck Swindoll is credited with saying “we miss it when our focus becomes horizontal...riveted on people and things...rather than vertical...centered on God and God alone.”

›If you get this right (point vertically) then you will get this right (point horizontal)