

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 24TH–25TH, 2024 // REVELATION

COME UP HERE (REVELATION 4:1–3) FROM HERE WE TREAD INTO DEEPER WATERS

The 1st vision (1–3) is complete, and now John is transported into the 2nd vision which begins when he looks up and sees an open door. Jesus invites John to “Come up here” so John can see **what is to come**.

- **What happens from chapter 4 on is the certain future.**

INDESCRIBABLE PLACES WE HAVE NEVER SEEN

As John was “in the Spirit,” he is taken up into the heavenly realm, a place beyond our comprehension. We move from earth to heaven, present to future, sinful to holy.

- **With some work and meditation on the Scripture we can make sense of this scene.**

THE CONTROL CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

The first thing John notices is the Throne. Thrones represent **power, sovereignty**, and the place **where all commands of a king are made**. But John’s emphasis isn’t on the throne, but on the One Who sits on it.

- **Maybe this is a subtle reminder that God is the goal and the real prize of heaven?**

“THE APPEARANCE OF JASPER AND CARNELIAN”

Jasper is clear and represents **purity, clarity**, and **brilliance**. Carnelian is a deep red stone that represents strong **love** and **wrath**. It represents the **passion** God has for His people and the **justice** He will inflict on their behalf.

- Of course this is symbolic of the attributes of God.

AN EMERALD RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE

The rainbow was not all of the primary colors, but different shades of green. Rainbows are symbols of God’s **promise (integrity)**, and green represents **peace** and **mercy** and is **often used in therapy to calm people**.

- **It is interesting how God’s integrity, mercy, and peace envelop Him and His throne.**

THRONES & ELDERS (REVELATION 4:4–6A) WE SLOWLY PAN OUT FROM THE CENTER

John notices the throne first but then pans back to reveal more of the scene that is taking place in heaven. **This scene is eternal**. It has been going on since before time as we know it and will continue on forever.

- As John pans out, he notices 24 elders seated around the throne of God.

THE 24 ELDERS AND THRONES

Most scholars believe the 24 elders represent the 12 tribes in the OT, and the 12 disciples in the NT (Matthias or Paul?). They’re probably representatives (angels) not the actual men.

- The 24 connect **heritage to progress**. **They honor the past, but also anticipate what is to come.**
- **“DRESSED IN WHITE CLOTHES, WITH GOLDEN CROWNS”**

The white garments symbolize purity, and the gold crowns show the majesty and power of these angelic beings.

- Later, the beings will lay their crowns down at God’s feet. **This is laying down any success that one has at God’s feet because He is the source of all “majesty.”**

“LIGHTNING AND RUMBLINGS AND...THUNDER”

This shows power and authority.

“SEVEN FIERY TORCHES”

There is debate as to what the “fiery torches” are. We’ve already discussed that the 7 spirits are attributes of the HS. The fiery torches may represent the intensity of the HS. The number 7 shows God’s **completion** and **perfection**.

“SOMETHING LIKE A SEA OF GLASS”

This represents the awe and reverence by which we must approach God. In other words, the throne must be approached with **humility**.

- In Exodus 24:9–10, Moses describes something like the placid blue sky under God’s feet when he saw Him. **We must remember our place in relation to God.**

HOLY (REVELATION 4:6B–8)

ANGELS COVERED WITH EYES?

As John continues to pan out from the throne, we see beings that are also found in Is. 6. The “eyes” all over their bodies and under their 6 wings could be literal but are probably metaphorical.

- This more than likely represents their ability to see all and protect the throne of God.

A REPRESENTATION OF CREATION

One “like a lion” represents the untamed animals, one “like an ox” represents domesticated animals, one “like a man” represents humanity, and one “like an eagle” represents all flying creatures.

- **These beings echo Psalm 150 that calls all of creation to praise God.**

THEY CONSTANTLY CIRCLE THE THRONE

These four angelic creatures seem to be the closest in proximity to the throne. As they circle God, they repeat “**Holy, holy, holy...**”

- *Holy* in this passage is *Hagios*, which means **awe inspiring, sacred, fascinating**, and gives a sense of **never-ending wonder**.

SEEING DIFFERENT ANGLES FOREVER (MIRROR BALL)

The creatures that circle the throne have been doing so longer than we can imagine. But, in all of their time in close proximity to God their wonder and awe never diminished.

- **In fact, the more they see of God the more perplexed and amazed by Him they are.**

“WHO WAS, WHO IS, AND WHO IS TO COME”

The point isn’t to figure out the exact role or hierarchy of the angels but to notice their devotion and awe of God. In this scene, **the volume is turned up! We see that time spent with God doesn’t slow things down but intensifies them!**

- **Are we still awestruck by the Creator?**

CULTIVATING OUR SPIRIT

Maybe we have spent too much time in the physical and have neglected our spiritual health and sight. Maybe we are not enthralled with God because we don’t intentionally place ourselves in His presence.

- **We must repent, pray, read, and make time to meditate on Jesus!**

WORTHY (REVELATION 4:9–11)

BACK TO THE 24 ELDERS

When the angels flying around God give “glory, honor, and thanks,” the 24 elders “fall down before the one seated on the throne and worship.”

- **Glory** means to *show praise*, **honor** means to *show high respect*, and **thanks** simply means *gratitude* for what God has done.

PRaise, RESPECT, AND GRATITUDE

Praise is also lifting God up. If we will **elevate a relationship with God to the top of our priorities** (Matthew 6:33), **respect His power and abilities**, and **show gratitude for what we have, we will not only honor our Creator, but will be able to endure and flourish in every corner of our lives.**

“THEY CAST THEIR CROWNS BEFORE THE THRONE”

Though these beings (or glorified humans) are majestic and powerful, they know that God’s power is far greater.

- **Humility and acknowledging God’s place above ours is the key to salvation and success and contentment in this life!**

THE “CREATION SONG OF THE ELDERS”

V. 11 is a song sung by the elders. We will read about a new song in chapter five called the “Redemption Song from the Elders.”

- God is “worthy to receive glory, honor, and power” because **He’s the all-powerful Creator of all things. He’s also sovereign over the future**, as we’ll see in chapter five.

THINGS THAT CIRCLE THE THRONE

- God’s throne is immovable. This reminds us that He is **all-powerful, all-knowing, and sovereign** (holds all authority) over the future.
- God and the things that envelop Him and His throne room also remind us of His **perfect love, purity, integrity, passion, mercy, excellence, balance, and justice**.

HOW TO APPROACH THE THRONE

- **To approach God, we must be humble.** This means we understand our place in relation to the Creator. It also means the acknowledgement that we need saving.
- We must also be willing to **honor the foundations of God’s Word while desiring to move forward in our relationship with Him.**

THE BENEFITS OF CLOSE PROXIMITY

- Like the angels who closely circle the throne, **the closer we get to God the more we experience the attributes of God.**
- Close proximity to God leads to **fascination, creativity, a never-ending sense of wonder, provision, deeper love and grace**, and the **ability to lead** others to Jesus.

AN INVENTORY

- If proximity to God determines our spiritual experience, the question arises, **“What are we doing to get closer to God?”**
- A relationship takes time, conversation, a willingness to learn, and dedication. Are we **praying, reading, obeying, and taking the time to slow down and be with God?**