

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 25TH, 2024 // REVELATION

## AN OPEN DOOR (REVELATION 4:1-3) THE SAME VOICE CALLS OUT

In the previous vision, John was commanded to **write on a scroll what you see**, but now he is commanded to **“come up here.”**

- We are going to be forced to **stretch our imagination past what we know**. We will **see things from a heavenly perspective**, and we **cannot get lost in the details** but must **work to see the whole picture**.

## THE COMMAND CENTER

The first thing John sees is the throne of God, but **his eyes are not focused on the throne itself but on the one seated on it**.

- **The throne of God is not empty**. This image communicates **God's presence**, His **sovereignty**, His **divine reign**, and His **ability to judge**. The big picture is that **at the center of everything is an occupied throne**.

## “THE ONE SEATED THERE”

John does his best to describe what he sees in the heavenly realm by saying, **“The one seated there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian stone.”**

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

## AN EMERALD RAINBOW SURROUNDED THE THRONE

We first see a rainbow as a **promise** to humanity that He would never again flood the earth (Genesis 9:11-17). The rainbow is a **reminder of God's commitment to His people**.

- The green-hued rainbow John sees represents **grace and mercy** that envelopes and surrounds God and these things are **fresh and new for us every day**.

## THRONES AND ELDERS (REVELATION 4:4-6A)

### JOHN SEES 24 ELDERS ON THRONES

Some scholars believe the 24 elders are the **12 sons of Jacob** and the **12 apostles bringing together the whole of the OT and NT**.

- These beings are **dressed in white** symbolizing **purity**, and the **gold crowns** show the **power and majesty** of these beings. Later, **these beings will lay their crowns down at God's feet**.

## CARRYING OUT WHAT MUST BE DONE

Whether glorified human beings or angelic beings, they are situated around the throne of God as **His private council to apply His orders and to issue and execute what He says must be done**.

- These representatives around the throne **connect the past and usher in “what must take place after this”** (Revelation 4:1).

## POWER AND BEAUTY EMITTING FROM THE THRONE

The **flashes of lightning** and **rumblings and peals of thunder** coming from the throne are **the sounds of His orders to His divine council**.

- This communicates the **power and beauty** of God's words. When we hear God's word there should be a **healthy fear because of its power**, yet there is something **beautiful and alluring** in His display of might.

## LOOKING AROUND THE THRONE

The **seven fiery torches** burning before the throne seem to represent **the intensity of the Holy Spirit**.

- The **sea of glass** before the throne was also described by Moses (Exodus 24:9-10) as a pavement below his feet as clear as the sky itself. This represents **the awe and reverence by which we must approach God**.

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (REVELATION 4:6B-8)

### SCANNING THE ROOM

Around the throne, John sees **four living creatures full of eyes on each side**. When we read Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1:4-14, and 10:20-22, we see that these creatures are angelic beings called cherubim and seraphim.

- Their multitude of eyes does not indicate they are blind instruments or autonomous robots, but **they have great insight and perception**.

## CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM

These two types of angelic beings that are **the closest to God in proximity to His throne** were created to carry out His **mercy and judgment**.

- We see these angelic seraphim with Isaiah in the temple touching his lips and saying, **“Your iniquity is removed and your sin is atoned for”** (Isaiah 6:7b). The cherubim were at the gate of the Garden of Eden, **keeping Adam and Eve out**.

## REPRESENTING ALL OF CREATION

John describes one as having a face “like” a lion, the mightiest of **wild animals** (strength); one like an ox, the strongest **domesticated animal** (service); one like the eagle, the king of **birds** (swiftness); and one like a man, representing the highest of all creation, **humanity** (intelligence).

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

## NEVER-ENDING WONDER

Their closeness to God inspires constant worship repeating **holy, holy, holy**. Declaring God's nature with a three-time repetition **encapsulates every word that could be used to describe God and His infinite holiness**.

- They declare that the Lord God is **Almighty** meaning He is **the One Who has His hand on everything**.

## WORTHY (REVELATION 4:9-11)

### IT'S ALL CREDITED TO GOD

John's focus returns to the elders who have joined in worship around the throne of God.

- **The 24 elders fall and worship Him**. To worship means **to credit worth or worthiness to someone or something**. They recognize that their worthiness belonged to God and not them, so **they cast their crowns at the feet of God**.

## SINGING A NEW SONG

V. 11 is John recording a song that is sung by the elders referred to as the “Creation Song,” and in chapter five, we see a new song from the Elders, the “Redemption Song.”

- They sing of God's worthiness to receive glory, honor, and power. **He is the creator of everything and has power over His creation**, and as we will see in chapter 5, **He is sovereign over future events**.

## WHAT IS OUR VIEW OF THE THRONE?

- **No one can escape the reality of a throne**. Even atheists acknowledge a throne but claim that no one sits on it and that there is no authority or greater power.
- **Have some of us (who even acknowledge a throne) attempted to de-throne God and place ourselves or another person there?**
- **Do we see God on the throne?**

## WHAT IS OUR VIEW OF GOD?

- Do we view God as Holy? The Greek word used in this passage is *Haigios*, meaning awe-inspiring.
- **Do we become more amazed by Him the more we discover about Him?**
- Our view of God and proximity to Him determines our ability to experience and display the attributes of God!