

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 25TH, 2024 // REVELATION

COME UP HERE (REVELATION 4:1-3) CHAPTER 4 STARTS THE SHIFT

From here on out, we tread into deeper and deeper waters. The first vision (chapters 1-3) is complete, and now John is transported into the second 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.**

PLACES WE HAVE NEVER SEEN

As John was "in the Spirit," he was taken into the heavenly realm, a place beyond our mind's ability to comprehend. Chapters 4-5 are difficult because John is describing the indescribable.

- We can make sense of this scene. **With work and meditation on the Scripture, we can understand Revelation.**

THE COMMAND CENTER

The first thing John notices in heaven is the throne. Though he doesn't describe it, thrones represent **power** and sovereignty, and they are the place where all commands of a king are made. John's emphasis is not on the throne but on the One Who sits on it.

- **Is this a subtle reminder that Jesus is the real prize of heaven?**

ONE SEATED LOOKED LIKE JASPER AND CARNELIAN

Jasper is clear and represents **clarity, brilliance, and purity**.

- Carnelian is a deep red stone representing deep **love** and **wrath**. It reveals God's **passion** for His people and the **justice** He will inflict on their behalf.

AN EMERALD RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE

The rainbow was not all the colors, but different shades of green. Rainbows are symbols of God's **promise (integrity)**, and green represents **mercy**.

- **Isn't it interesting how the thing that surrounds and envelopes God is His grace and mercy?**

ELDERS AND THRONES (REVELATION 4:4-6A) WE WILL SLOWLY PAN OUT

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 forever.

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

24 THRONES AND ELDERS

Most scholars believe the 24 elders represent the 12 tribes in the OT, and the 12 disciples in the NT. They are numbered but not named. We will find out who they are when we get there. For now, they represent the past and present. They connect heritage to new beginnings and a progression forward. They honor the past and what is to come.

DRESSED IN WHITE WITH GOLD CROWNS

The white garments symbolize purity, and the gold crowns show their victory as "overcomers" (1 John 5).

- Later, they will lay their crowns down at God's feet. **One could see this as laying down any success or "victory" at His feet because it is all from Him.**

LIGHTNING AND PEALS OF THUNDER

This shows power and authority.

7 FIERY TORCHES ARE THE 7 SPIRITS OF GOD

Though there is much debate as to what exactly this is, we've already discussed that the 7 spirits are the attributes of the Holy Spirit. The fiery torches show the intensity of the Holy Spirit. The number 7 shows God's **completion** and **perfection**.

SEA OF GLASS

This represents the awe and reverence with 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 calm blue sky under God's feet when he saw Him.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (REVELATION 4:6B-8) ANGELS COVERED WITH EYES?

As John continues to pan out from the throne, we see beings also found in Isaiah 6. The eyes all over their bodies, even under their 6 wings, proclaim God's wisdom and holiness as He sees all things: past, present, and future.

REPRESENTING ALL OF CREATION

One "like" a lion (King) represents the untamed animals, one "like" an ox (Servant) represents domesticated animals, one like a man (Messiah) represents humanity, and one "like" an eagle (Deity) represents all flying creatures.

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

FOUR CREATURES THAT FLY AROUND THE THRONE

From the scripture, these four angelic creatures seem closest to the throne. As they circle God, they repeat, "Holy, holy, holy..."

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

THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR A LONG TIME

These creatures who circle the throne have been doing so longer than our minds can comprehend, and in all their time being close to the throne, their wonder and awe have never diminished.

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

DON'T MISS THE POINT

The point isn't to figure out exactly the 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 with God hasn't slowed things down but intensified them!**

- **Are we awestruck by the Creator? Do we cry out, "Lord God, the Almighty!"?**

WORTHY OF WORSHIP (REVELATION 4:9-11) BACK TO THE 24 ELDERS AROUND THE THRONE

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

"THEY CAST THEIR CROWNS BEFORE THE THRONE"

Though they are victorious and powerful, they know God's power is far greater.

- Remember, **humility and acknowledging God's place above ours is the key to all success and contentment in this life and the afterlife!**

THE "CREATION SONG FROM THE ELDERS"

V. 11 is a song sung by the elders. We will read about a new song in chapter 5 called the "Redemption Song from the Elders."

- They sing God is "worthy to receive glory and honor and power" because **He's the Creator of, and has power over, all things. He's also sovereign over future events**, as we'll see in chapter 5.

OUR PROXIMITY TO THE THRONE

- **Power** and the ability to truly succeed
- **Purity** in our conduct and **brilliance** that resonates to other people
- **Love** and **Passion**
- **Justice** and accountability
- **Integrity** in all corners of our life
- **Mercy** and **empathy** for others
- **Honor** of heritage, but a longing for progress
- Completion and **Excellence** (Ecclesiastes 7:8)
- **Humility** (We must lay our crowns down!)
- Fascination, **creativity**, and a **never-ending sense of wonder** (Our ability to blaze new trails and lead others into a life changing adventure comes from God.)
- **The closer we get to God's throne, the closer we get to all of God's attributes.**