

The Great Throne Room

Revelation 4

INTRODUCTION

- A. Imagine you have a meeting with the President of the United States about an issue very dear and near to your heart.
 - 1. But, the President is so busy that he can only give you a half-hour of his time, and he wants to meet with you in the Oval Office.
 - 2. Imagine your trepidation as you walked into a room that in America is almost sacred and where so much history has been made.
 - a. You are made more nervous by the Marines in full parade attire standing at attention outside the office.
 - b. You walk in to shake hands with the President, and he is sitting at the desk used by so many Presidents.
 - c. Embroidered on the carpet in the room is the presidential seal, and you realize you are in the presence of the most powerful man in the world.
- B. We would be awe-struck by a journey to the Oval Office. But, imagine our trepidation if we were to enter, not the Oval Office, but the throne room of God.
 - 1. The Apostle John had that opportunity while he was imprisoned on Patmos.
 - 2. After he received from Jesus the letters to the seven churches, John saw "a door standing open in heaven," and he heard a voice telling him to go through the door and enter heaven (Rev. 4:1).
 - a. Tonight, we want to go through that door with John and see what John saw.
 - b. Let's think about the heavenly throne room.

THE GOD OF HEAVEN

- A. In his vision, John learns much about God.
- B. He learns that God has authority, v. 2.
 - 1. John sees a throne and One sat on the throne.
 - 2. This would be a throne like a king or judge would sit upon; it is an obvious sign of authority.
 - a. The Christians to whom John wrote needed to know that God was in control. They were going to be called upon to suffer for their faith, and they needed to understand that God, not Rome, had all authority.
 - b. God does have all authority.
 - 1) Rv 15:3.
 - 2) Rv 19:6.
 - c. God is in control of this world; it is he who has all authority and power.
- C. He learns that God has great splendor, v. 3.
 - 1. John sees God's appearance as jasper and sardius, precious Stones in the first century.
 - 2. We cannot say with any certainty what the jasper or sardius are meant to represent, but they show the splendor and majesty of God.
 - a. Many scholars believe the jasper referred to here is what we know as the diamond, and sardius is a bright red gem.
 - b. Imagine seeing a statue made out of brilliant diamonds and sardius stones.
 - 3. Adding to this splendor and might are the lightnings, thunderings, and voices coming from the throne.

- a. A similar event occurred when God descended on Mt. Sinai in the presence of the Israelites (Ex. 19:16).
 - b. Such imagery here leaves no doubt in the readers — or John's — mind that the being on the throne is, in fact, God.
- D. He learns that God is faithful, v. 3.
- 1. Around the throne was a rainbow like an emerald.
 - 2. The rainbow is a sign of God's faithfulness (Gen. 9:12-17).
 - a. Each time God sees a rainbow, he remembers the covenant he made never again to destroy the world with water.
 - b. The rainbow here reminds us that God is faithful, and that we can rest assured he will do what he has said he will do.
 - 3. Illustration about the dying man's not being able to remember any of God's promises, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #4596.
- E. He learns that God is removed from man, v. 6.
- 1. Between John and God stands a crystal sea.
 - a. Without a doubt this sea reflects the glory and splendor of the scene John sees — in this way God's majesty is doubled.
 - b. But a sea is rather large, and as such, this shows the distance between man and God.
 - 2. There is a sense in which God is not far from man — "He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27).
 - 3. But, there is another sense in which God is very far removed from man.
 - a. God is absolutely holy and righteous, and we are sinful.
 - b. Sin cannot be in God's presence; thus, God is far from man.
- F. He learns that God is eternal, v. 8.
- 1. The living creatures praise God, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"
 - 2. Although this boggles our minds, God had no beginning, and he has no end — He has always existed and he shall always exist.
 - 3. An old man was once asked to define God's eternity. He said, "It is duration without beginning or end; existence without bound or dimension; present without past or future. His eternity is youth without infancy or old age; life without birth or death; today without yesterday or tomorrow."
- G. He learns that God is the Creator, v. 11.
- 1. "You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."
 - 2. Everything that is was created by God, and everything exists by God — God could at anytime decide that nothing would exist, and everything would come to an end.

THE WORSHIP OF HEAVEN

- A. In heaven, John sees God being worshiped and adored. We want to examine this worship and adoration.
- B. John sees beings involved in the worship of God.
- 1. John sees 24 elders seated on thrones around God's throne.
 - a. The question has often been raised as to what these 24 elders represent,
 - 1) There are many answers we could give.
 - 2) But, it seems to me that they represent the redeemed of all the ages — the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles.
 - b. These elders sit on thrones and wear golden crowns on their head.
 - 1) The thrones and the crowns show that they have authority.
 - a) This shows that the redeemed shall reign with God in heaven; how

exactly that will occur I do not know.

- b) The fact that these thrones are placed around the throne of God shows that he has the ultimate authority, and the authority these elders have come from him.
- 2) The elders cast their crowns before God's throne, v. 10. This again shows that their authority comes from God, but it also shows that they recognize they don't have the right to reign and they recognize all authority belongs to God.
- 2. John also sees four living beings around God's throne, vv. 6-7.
 - a. Here is a possible interpretation of the four beings: the lion represents wild animal life, the calf represents domestic animal life, the man represents human life, and the eagle represents bird life.
 - b. The meaning seems to be that all living beings come together to praise the Lord.
- C. John sees that the worship of God is continual, v. 8.
 - 1. The four living creatures "do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!'"
 - 2. Heaven is always filled with God's praises — there has never been a time nor will there ever be a time that God is not praised in heaven.
- D. John sees that the worship of God is appropriate, v. 11.
 - 1. When the four living creatures praise God, the 24 elders say, "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power." ·
 - 2. God is worthy of the worship he receives.

CONCLUSION

- A. Indeed, God is worthy of our worship.
 - 1. I am deeply troubled by those who do not worship as faithfully as they ought.
 - 2. We can make arguments from Scripture all day long that their presence in worship is obligatory, but what it all boils down to is that God deserves the worship and praise of men.
- B. But, God deserves more than just the worship and praise of men — he deserves our lives. Do you need to come and give him your life tonight?