

## The Thanksgiving Throne

Revelation 4; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 11-21-21

### Symbolism not Snapshot

*If you were taken to heaven right now, what you do you think you would see?* If you think you would see what we read about in Revelation 4, then you would be mistaken. The scene portrayed in this chapter is not a 'snapshot' as if someone took a picture of what he saw. Rather, it is a picture filled with symbolism that is meant to communicate certain things about truth/reality that we need to know as God's people. – 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

### Speaking into the 'Chaos'

*Why did God give us this 'symbolic picture' of heaven?* For believers in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, in various parts of the world, life was unpredictable, at best, and chaotic, at worst. Persecution was always a possibility and increasingly so as the century progressed. God gave us a picture of the truth/reality that transcends the unpredictability and the chaos in our world. There are things going on behind the scenes. – 2 Kings 6:17; Romans 15:13

- Revelation is about the events leading to the return of Christ to rescue his people, judge all men, abolish all evil and establish heaven on earth.
- Revelation 1 highlights the reign of Christ over all rulers and his care for his people.
- Revelation 2 and 3 highlights the challenges to his people, inside and outside the church.
- Revelation 4 gives us a heavenly perspective on earthly realities: *How do things look from God's perspective?*

### The Throne

In times of unpredictability and chaos, questions naturally arise: *Is there anyone really in charge?* Many begin to question whether there is an all-powerful and all-loving God in charge. *What is the central and predominant image in this scene?* (2) See also Psalm 47:8; 103:19; Proverbs 16:1, 33; 21:1; Lamentations 3:37; Matthew 10:29.

- The throne of God is mentioned 11 times in these 11 verses.
- The throne of God is mentioned about 40 times over all in the book of Revelation.
- The throne of God is a symbol of God's sovereign rule over all.

### The Throne of Thanksgiving

*So why did I focus on this passage as we approach Thanksgiving this week? (9) How should we feel about the reality of who's in charge?* Thankful! *Why?* – Song of Solomon 5:16

### The Throne of Love

*What is the first impression to be made on us?* A picture of merciful love. (2-4) The picture is that there is Someone in charge (the throne is not empty) and He is good/love/merciful. We can be thankful for a loving reign! See also 1 John 4:8; Isaiah 16:5; Psalm 89:14; Zechariah 6:13; Hebrews 4:16; James 5:11.

- The jewels in the breast piece of the High Priest.
- The covenant rainbow after Noah's ark.
- Elders representing the people of God.

### **The Throne of Light**

*What is the second impression to be made on us?* A holy and pure and demanding love. (5-6a) The picture is one of holiness/light. The love that reigns is a holy and perfect love. We can be thankful for a holy reign! See also 1 John 1:5; Psalm 97:2; 9:4; 11:4; Proverbs 20:8, 28.

- The sights and sounds of Sinai.
- The picture of the Holy Spirit.
- Something like a sea of glass that is clear, pure.

### **The Throne of Life**

*What is the third impression we should have?* The source and substance of all life. (6b-8a) The picture is of all living things and therefore of life. A throne that gives life to all. We can be thankful for a complete and lasting reign! See also 1 John 1:2; Psalm 45:6; Lamentations 5:19; Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:16.

- Full of eyes = divine omniscience
- Lion = chief of the wild animals
- Calf (ox) = chief of the domesticated animals
- Eagle = chief of the birds
- Man = chief of the intelligent created beings

### **The Throne of Purpose**

*What is the central message of this passage?* (1, 11b) Picture of the ‘control room’ of the universe and the sovereignty of God over history. History is not random; it has a divine purpose (a divine must). We can be thankful for a good purpose! - Ezekiel 14:23

- After these things = the vision of Christ and the Churches (1-3)
- A door standing open in heaven = invitation into the hidden counsels of God
- What must take place = the sovereign, ordained will of God
- Things were and are because of the One who reigns – for His purpose!

### **The Throne of Perfection**

*What is the central comfort in this passage?* (8b-11a) The picture is of a God who is not only in control and working all things according to his purpose, but who is also worthy of all praise and thanksgiving for what he is bringing to pass! There are no complaints when earth is seen from the perspective of heaven! We can be thankful for a reign worthy of joy-filled worship! See also 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 86:8; 2 Samuel 7:22; 1 Chronicles 17:20; Jeremiah 10:6, 7; 1 Kings 10:9; Romans 3:19; Mark 7:37; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 19:7; Isaiah 25:1; Matthew 5:48; Romans 12:2; Philippians 1:6; James 1:17; 1 John 4:18.

- Holy = separate, unique, pure
- Almighty = omnipotent
- Was, is, is to come = eternal
- Worthy = worship is ‘worthship’

### **The Reason for the Call to Give Thanks**

All these things lay a firm foundation for all the calls to give thanks to the Lord in the Scriptures! – 1 Chronicles 16:8, 34; Psalm 50:23; 69:30; 92:1; 107:8; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:15; 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Timothy 2:1; Hebrews 13:15; 2 Corinthians 9:15