

Morning Sermon July 18, 2021

“God’s Heavenly Headquarters” – Revelation 4

I. A door opened in Heaven –

4 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. Revelation 4:1 A

John may have seen a door open in the sky, and yet it opens, not to outer space, or to any physical realm, but to God’s limitless, eternal, timeless Kingdom, God’s throne is the centerpiece of this passage, and His rule is what is pictured –

² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. Revelation 4:2

1. *This is not a picture of the future, or the past, or John’s day or now, this is a picture of something beyond time, God’s sovereign rule, symbolized by the word “throne” or “thrones” used fourteen times in this eleven verse chapter –*

Verse :2 (twice) Verse :3 (once) Verse :4 (three times) Verse :5 (twice) Verse :6 (three times) Verse :9 (once) Verse :10 (twice) God’s throne is also mentioned 5 more times in chapter 5!

2. *Of course, God Himself is pictured, yet not pictured in this passage, about God we see:*

A. *He is pictured in His sovereignty, as the Great King, **One sat on the throne.** Revelation 4:2*

B. *We can deduce He is God the Father, because in chapter 5:1-7, the Lamb, the Lion of Judah, our Lord Jesus Christ is pictured taking the scroll from His right hand. Also, the Holy Spirit is pictured in the **Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, ...** Revelation 4:5*

C. *Yet, while it is clear He is on the throne, and that He is separate from the other members of the Godhead, the rest of the description of God is not detailed -*

³ **And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; ...** Revelation 4:3 (NKJV)

D. *There is good reason for this, God cannot be pictured, He is invisible because He is a Spirit –*

- *We see His glory in His creation -*

²⁰ **For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, Romans 1:20 (NKJV)**

- *We see His glory in Christ –*

¹⁵ **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. Colossians 1:15–16 (NKJV)**

But not in Christ’s physical attributes –

¹⁴ **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NKJV)**

- *We know His invisible attributes are glorious: His eternal nature, His immortality, His wisdom ...*

¹⁷ **Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:17**

See Revelation 4:11

E. *Here His glory is compared by John to jasper and sardius stone, most likely to colors or sparkling brilliance! John saw no form or face -*

¹² **And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. Deuteronomy 4:12 (NKJV)**

The primary thing communicated about God is that He is a great King, THE GREAT KING, on a throne! The throne is not a literal chair, but is symbolic of God's sovereign rule over everything -

3. *God's rule is pictured in this chapter as:*

A. *Gracious, symbolized by the rainbow –*

... and *there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Revelation 4:3 b*

¹³ **I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. Genesis 9:13 (NKJV)**

B. *As righteous and just, as symbolized by the lightning, thunder and voices –*

⁵ **And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Revelation 4:5 A**

• *God's righteous law was given with these attending –*

¹⁸ **Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. ¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Exodus 20:18–19 (NKJV)**

• *Yet, not only God's law but with it His judgment –*

³ **The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet. Nahum 1:3 (NKJV)**

C. *God's Holy Spirit (represented as a Sanctifying Influence) proceeds from the throne, and burns around the throne -*

Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Revelation 4:5 B

What the Holy Spirit has in common with FIRE –

• *Both are part of the baptism of Jesus Christ –*

¹⁶ **John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Luke 3:16 (NKJV)**

• Both purify, they are refining influences –

⁹ **I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.' " Zechariah 13:9 (NKJV)**

¹³ **But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)**

D. *The sea of glass, symbolic of sanctification for service –*

⁶ **Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.... Revelation 4:6 A -**

• *The sea of glass must be seen symbolically in connection with the Old Testament "sea of bronze" in Solomon's Temple -*

²³ **And he made the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; it was completely round. Its height was five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. 1 Kings 7:23**

⁶ **He also made ten lavers, and put five on the right side and five on the left, to wash in them; such things as they offered for the burnt offering they would wash in them, but the Sea was for the priests to wash in. 2 Chronicles 4:6 (NKJV)**

II. *The elders gathered around the throne represent the True Church, all of redeemed humanity, redeemed not only from punishment but to their purpose, glorifying God –*

⁴ **Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. Revelation 4:4**

1. *Twenty-four = 12 + 12, Twelve tribes in the Old Testament / Twelve apostles in the New Testament (not Judas, but either Matthias or Paul would be the twelve)*

2. *These twenty-four elders are representatives of all true believers who pray for God's Kingdom (rule) to come and will to be done, they seek God's kingdom first! Jesus told His apostles, ¹⁵“If you love Me, keep My commandments. John 14:15 (NKJV)*

A. *The twenty-four elders represent those who do love Christ and keep His commandments! They pray to the Heavenly Father -*

¹⁰ **Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10 (NKJV)**

B. *They seek first His kingdom -*

³³ **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33**

C. *These elders (and all true Christians) are clothed in white robes – Christ's righteousness –*

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 7:14

D. *They also have crowns of gold on their heads, they rule as kings themselves, remember as redeemed we are now kings and priests –*

E. *Note John as an apostle would have been one of these twenty-four elders, wearing a crown, but he uses the word “us” including all true believers -*

⁵ **and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Revelation 1:5-6**

F. *Those redeemed by the Lamb are made kings and priests, notice it is the twenty- four elders who are speaking (all Jewish Twelve tribes and twelve apostles) yet they represent a bigger group -*

⁸ **Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰And**

have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:8-10

III. *The Four Living Creatures, designed for nearness to the throne, represent all of redeemed creation -*

... **And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” Revelation 4:6 B -8**

1. *Creatures fitted for nearness to God's throne -*

As polar bears are fit for the artic, and fish fit for the sea, so the four living creatures were fit for nearness to God, note –

A. *Their eyes, perfect perception –*

and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. Revelation 4:6 B

were full of eyes around and within. Revelation 4:8 B

B. *They seem the best of creation – :7 a lion's strength, a calf's patience, a man's intelligence, and an eagle's soaring devotion! Or a lion king of wild beasts / calf chief of domesticated animals / man created in God's image and ruler of all / eagle – ruler of the birds or sky!*

C. *There have tireless energy and our in constant rapture, because of their closeness to God and His throne -*

And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” Revelation 4:8

There is no pain, trial or tiredness or any kind of difficulty for these creatures, they dwell near to God. Yet, they also do not wear crowns. They are servants, they serve God's throne but also men – See Isaiah 6:1–9 (NKJV)

IV. *The connection between the four living creatures and the elders / God's people -*

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created." Revelation 4:9–11 (NKJV)

1. *Note there is a connection between the living creatures and the elders, a sort of symbiotic relationship ...*
 - A. *The four living creature's worship is in nearness to God's throne, in Heaven, with sight, strength and energy, no pain or trial ...*
 - B. *They lend their strength to the elders, representing the church on earth worshipping from a far, seeing little, falling, serving in weakness and toiling, despite being tired and needing sleep / rest.*

Ours is a life of pain and dependence, displayed even by Jesus, Who as a Man, lived such a hard and dependent life while on earth. Praying in Gethsemane, we read about Him receiving help from an angel in the middle of His prayer -

⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke 22:43–44 (NKJV)

2. *Note here is meaning in life, we are created for a purpose beyond the visible world, we were created for eternal life -*
 - A. *Our ungodly world knows nothing of this meaning -*

As we go further in the Book of Revelation you should note that worldly governments are called beasts. They are called such because they rule by brute force! They are mindless to spiritual and even moral things -

- B. *Richard Dawkins the atheist says - the universe has "no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind indifference."*

- C. *Shakespeare through his character Macbeth cries -*

"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing."

- D. *Even Solomon, though a wise man saw life on this earth as empty! All the various activities he was capable of as a king, as a rich-man, were vain -*

² "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Ecclesiastes 1:2 (NKJV)

3. *But ours is the Life of the Lamb, Jesus' abundant life, including a cross, adventure that is down and dirty and from far-away places. We live for God's glory -*

¹⁰ **The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.** John 10:10 (NKJV)

- A. *How does the thief steal? By blinding us to the reality, value and glory and worth of a world, and of a God, a REAL God Who is beyond this world -*

¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord

³ **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** 2 Corinthians 4:3–6 (NKJV)

- B. *When we see God's glory, when we see Heavenly things, we are motivated to live for them, even thru difficulty -*

¹⁶ **Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.** 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NKJV)

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