

# The Revelation of Jesus Christ

## Revelation 4:1-11



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## **The Throne Room of God**

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*When was a time that you were in awe of something? How did you react to that moment?*

The letter to the church in Laodicea ends with Jesus knocking asking to come in. Yet, for John, the door is wide open for his invitation to the throne room of God. In chapters 2 and 3, we see the explicit commands for the church on how they should be the church. Starting in chapter 4, John describes the visions God gives to him. It seeks to answer not the how but the why. Thus, John is caught up in the Spirit and given an image of the Throne room of God consistent with other biblical depictions of the Throne Room of God in Isaiah and in Daniel. From the specifics of the gems, the nature of the angelic presence, and various other details, John's vision aligns with previous apocalyptic literature. This should not lead a person to feel that the work was plagiarized or simply a parroting, but rather speaks to the internal consistency of John's vision with the rest of scripture.

For the whole of chapter 4, God asserts his position as the proper recipient of praise by revealing the effects His mere unrelenting and unfiltered presence has on even the throne room of God. Through the vision that John has, it seems evident that the room in which God sits can barely sustain the holiness of the Almighty. Furthermore, the response to the glory of God is always worship. When faced with the truths and reality of God, worship is the only understandable response.

## **The Splendor and Glory of God**

The Throne Room of God is filled with incredible imagery depicting the nature of God. The appearance of jasper and carnelian (vs. 3) indicate, through their usage in the Old Testament priestly breastplates and other areas (vs. 3), the glory of God. The twenty four thrones with the twenty four elders (vs. 4) represent the fullness of the old and new covenant (with some believing that this represents the 12 sons of Israel and the 12 disciples as

representations of each) who adhere and submit to the fullness of God. The throne shot forth thunder and lightning (vs. 5) in reaction to the very presence to the power of God who sat upon it. The seven torches (vs. 5) representing the seven spirits representing the Holy Spirit presented in fullness to the entirety of the church. Finally, the four creatures (vs. 6-8) represent the angelic beings that minister before the throne of God.

From the vision that John penned, the reader gets a sense of the awe inspiring scene that represents every facet of creation. The spiritual and the physical find their home in the throne room of God, with the door having been opened for those who are in Christ. The fullness of the Gospel finds worship to be the response of being welcomed into the presence of God. The Christian does not serve a weak or impotent God. The image of God we serve stands in stark contrast to the image John has painted of the church in chapters 2-3. As we stand through the final days, we must continually hold to the image of God presented here. The reaction to understanding God is worship to the God who, although beyond comprehension and beyond approachability, invites us towards Him through the Holy Spirit that has been placed inside of us by Jesus Christ.

## **Worshipping God the Father**

The Elders, for all their riches and glory of their crowns, cannot compare to the greatness and holiness of God. Any authority or power they have been given is nothing compared to the irrevocable power of God. Thus, the elders lay down their crowns before the Lord proclaiming His holiness. They surrender to the magnificent of God, seated on the throne. In appearing before the High King of Heaven, it seems that things began to make sense. God is worth because He is the originator of all life. It was by the hands of God that creation came into being and existence and by His hands that mankind is saved. Life finds its meaning only in God and not in any other materialistic or works based substitution of God. All of creation proclaims that God is above all things.

In understanding our relationship with God, the result is worship and obedience. We cannot help but bow down before God and

admit our total dependency on God as our Lord. Throughout Revelation 4, God says nothing and does nothing. Yet, God being the supreme ruler of the heavens and earth, His mere presence elicits the obedience in following Him. Just as the elders laid down their crowns, whatever supposed authority we have must be laid at the foot of God. All our authority comes from the true authority and all Kings, no matter how great, fall under God's sovereign rule. This is both a prophetic warning for those who would follow after God and for those who refuse to; at some point all the crowns will fall before the heavenly throne. It would be much better for them to fall as we exclaim together "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:11, NIV)

## Discussion Questions

- How do you think you would react to seeing the scene that John describes in Revelation 4?
- What qualities of God do you see on display throughout this passage? What comfort is there in understanding these qualities are on our side?
- What does it mean to worship God? How do you see worship displayed in the vision that John is given of the throne room of God?
- What does it mean to be obedient to God?
- How do you see obedience displayed in the vision that John is given of the throne room of God? How are worship and obedience the only proper responses to the glory of God?
- Why should you respond in the same way that the elders and those around the throne of God?
- Where do you need to submit to God in worship and obedience?