

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Applying the Vision of the Throne Room

Rev. 4:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

This is the last of a three part series of sermons on chapter 4.

In the first message we looked at the big picture of what is going on. What is obvious in this chapter is that John is being shown a vision of the throne room in heaven. We know so because of the description of the One on the throne. And we know so by the description of what is going on around the throne. Specifically the worship that is taking place around the throne by the four living creatures and the 24 elders. We find them bowing before Him giving Him glory and proclaiming Him to be our Creator, the Lord God.

The second message unraveled the symbols used in the vision to try to make sense of them. **This vision was given so we could see the greatness, the grandeur, the glory, and the splendor of God!**

- We saw the throne of God repeated again and again which represents His sovereign rule over all things.
- We saw the brilliant rare stones and the emerald green halo around God's throne representing the splendor and glory of God.
- We saw the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which indicated that the Holy Spirit is in the throne room as well.
- We saw what looked like a sea of glass like crystal in front of the throne which indicated that there is no turmoil or chaos in heaven. It is a place of peace and tranquility.
- We saw flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder which represented God's authority and power.
- We saw the 24 elders that represents the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles which in turn represents all of the saints in heaven.
- We saw the four living creatures that represented all of creation.
- And we saw all of creation spontaneously declaring God as holy and glorifying His name.

This chapter is like so much of Revelation. We get the big picture of what is going on here but we don't quite understand the details. Thus we do not understand what these details are communicating to us and how we are to apply them to our lives.

This morning I would like to determine the timing of these scriptures and apply them to our lives.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 4 (NASB)

4 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." ² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. ³ And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. ⁴ Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

⁵ Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; ⁶ and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. ⁷ The first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

"Holy, holy, holy *is* the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

⁹ And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

¹¹ "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

Prayer

BODY:

I. THE TIMING OF THIS VISION.

At the end of verse 1 John was told "**Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.**" So the question arises, what is the timing of this vision?

I mentioned last week that you need to have a clear eschatology, the study of last things. Your eschatology will have tremendous implications on how you go about living your life in the world today. You must have a Godly eschatology in order to understand the world we live in and understand the events that are going on in the world so you do not come undone at the seams with every new event that pops up in the news. But instead keep a bearing about ourselves and be able to live our life in this period of time between the first coming and second coming of Christ knowing that God is in control. This is a time that the Bible refers to as the **last days**.

I was brought up believing in the rapture where Jesus is going to come in the clouds and gather up His believers with Him into heaven and leave the unconverted behind to endure a seven year tribulation. This was to be followed by the battle of Armageddon where Jesus defeats Satan. Then Jesus would return to set up a 1000 year millennium where

He would establish a kingdom and reign over the saints. After the 1000 years Satan would be released for a short time and then be banished to eternal damnation. Then the world would be destroyed and the saints would be presented with a new heaven and a new earth.

My studies over the last few years have caused me to rethink these views.

The people who believe in the rapture will say that the vast majority of what we see in Revelation is yet to take place sometime in our future. They base this partially upon the verse in chapter 1 where Jesus tells John to "**write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.**"

They say that the things that John **has seen** refers to the first chapter.

The things **which are** refer to the church age which is represented by the seven letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3. They try to associate the seven letters to a sequential time period throughout history between Christ's first and second coming by having each letter represent a period of world history based upon the actual message to each church.

The things which **will take place after these things** are believed to begin in chapter 4 through the rest of the book. Thus everything after chapter 3 is describing future events beginning with the rapture and the seven year great tribulation in chronological order.

So when they read this little phrase "**after these things**", their mind immediately thinks, "Ah, after the church age!" After the church age this is what is to come. So when John is told to "**Come up here**", they believe it represents the church being raptured and thus the seven year tribulation is triggered to begin.

So as you step into chapter 4, according to them, the church age is now over, the church is raptured, and everything that we will read from this point forward is somewhere into the future from us.

But in my opinion, that is not the correct way to read this. I say this because, for one reason, it fails to recognize that the basic structure of Revelation is not written in chronological order. Thus you see the birth of Christ in chapter 12 after the world has already ended once in chapter 6 and then again several more times.

As we have talked about before, Revelation is full of **recapitulation** which is the process of revisiting the same event many times from a different angle or perspective. **We** use the word "recap" which is an abbreviation of recapitulation.

ILLUSTRATION:

When we recap a baseball game we first view or hear the actual game. We experience all of the plays in the exact sequence that they occur in detail and learn who wins. Then the announcers will **recap** the game by reviewing or showing highlights of what we have just seen. These recaps will summarize the game from different perspectives. The perspective will dictate what unique details will be added.

For example, let's suppose that Mike Moustaches went five for five for the Kansas City Royals. He hit two homeruns and also hit for the cycle. He had a single, double, triple,

and two homeruns. When you heard it the first time, you would have heard it sequentially as the game progressed. After the game, the perspective might be how Moose's five for five compared to other players over time. Maybe he hit the single first, the double second, the triple third, the two homeruns last. That sequence would be checked against major league records to see if it had ever been done before. The second homerun might have set a Royal's record for most homeruns in a season. The two homeruns and the hit for the cycle in the same game may be the first time ever accomplished in baseball. A different perspective provides different details.

The announcers might then go to discussing how important this win was for the divisional race. If the Royals were playing the Detroit Tigers, maybe this win would have put them one game up in the divisional race instead of one game down. They might then go into each team's schedules and determine that Kansas City has an easier schedule for the rest of the season than Detroit and thus their chances of winning has greatly increased.

Same event. Different perspectives. Different emphasis on different details.

This vision is here in order to show the church that even as they are assaulted, and opposed, and persecuted throughout the last days, God is still on the throne. **He is on the throne!** And our destiny lies secure with Him. So even as all this other stuff is going on down below, as the beast is assaulting and tormenting and terrorizing the church, and the harlot is seducing us and trying to lead us astray, as all of these things are going on throughout this world, **God is still on the throne!** He is not asleep. He has not vacated authority. Even as all of this is going on, our destiny is absolutely secure.

In a hush voice. That is why it is here. And in that regard this vision is occupying the same period of time as the previous vision. The perspectives are just different. The second vision is showing us a vision of the last days from the perspective of heaven whereas the first vision is showing us a vision of the last days from the perspective of earth.

It is the same time period, we are just viewing events from a different perspective. While the churches down here are getting hammered, God is in heaven getting worshipped and glorified by those surrounding Him. And **this is our** destiny.

We are given this perspective so we do not lose heart when we face all of these hardships in our journey. We have to KNOW that God is on the throne. **When** we know that God is still in control then we can have the confidence that on the other side of this turmoil, there is rest in the presence of His glory.

See, that is the goal of the entire book of Revelation. We saw this same message in the letters to the seven churches. Every one of these letters included a word of encouragement by showing what awaits the one who overcomes.

- We will eat from the tree of life.
- We will receive a golden crown.
- We will not be hurt by the second death.
- We will be clothed in white garments.
- Our name will be written in the book of life.
- Christ will confess us before God.
- And on and on and on.

The visions are telling us "Look! This is what is there! This is what is waiting!" These things are at your finger tips. So you must not give up. You must not give in but press on. **We definitely need that encouragement!** You see, everything is written here to help us remain faithful to the Lord in the face of the opposition and the temptations that we face in these last days. **All of God's people!** Not just the saints living during some seven year time period where they are raptured away from.

This is life as we know it. This is the history of the church. We will see this as we start working through the seals and trumpets and bowls. This vision will help us to press on through the challenges and the difficulties and the hardships that confront us is knowing that something REALLY WONDERFUL is awaiting for us on the other side!

II. THE REASON FOR THE VISION.

John is brought up in the spirit to see these visions so that he could show them to us. So in essence, we are being brought up also. And we see the glory of God and we see what awaits us. And in seeing it, it provides us with the strength we need to press on and resist temptation to sin against God and to grind through opposition.

Think about it! If you were allowed to be caught up into heaven as John was. And you experienced a divine angelic heavenly vision...you actually saw and experienced these things! Tell me. How do you think that would impact you?

Do you think that if you really saw the glory of God, and you experienced the peace and tranquility around the throne, and you saw these angelic creatures glorifying God, do you not think that it would have an **INCREDIBLE** impact on your life? The way you live? Your focus on life? Your witness? Your determination to follow Christ no matter what?

It **ABSOLUTELY** would! We all know that.

This is as close as we get! **(Hush Repeat)** This is as close as we get. God brought John up to His throne room and allowed him to see it, record it, and show it to us, so we can be encouraged to faithfully serve Christ in these last days. So that we can OVERCOME! And that is why we have this vision.

III. EVALUATING OUR FAITH.

This is the essence of our faith! We do not see with our own eyes, but yet we believe and obey.

1 Peter 1:6-9 (NASB)

⁶In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

What is most important in your life? Is it God and His word or is it the things of this world.? Your true answer to this question is not how you answer the question but by how you **live** your life.

Depending on how you actually live your life, you are either building into yourself the characters of God that give you stability in this life and the life to come or you are building into yourself the sinful character of the world which will give you no stability in this life nor in the life to come.

The scriptures remind us that we must not be like some of the rulers in Jesus' time.

John 12:42-43 (NASB)

42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

So often, the purpose of our life is to make a name for ourselves; to receive approval from men. Our real purpose is to show how great God is and not how great we are. Our chief purpose in life is to glorify God so we can enjoy that glory forever. We should find our esteem through His esteem. The self image we should seek for is the reflection of His glory in our lives. The qualities that we seek for ourselves such as integrity and honesty will emulate from us when we truly reflect God's glory.

Is God's word central in your life? Do you spend time daily to read the Bible? If you do not study God's word, then you cannot know what God's qualities are that you are to reflect and how to build them into your own life. It will be hard to glorify God if you do not get into God's word day in and day out.

What do you desire most in your life? What do you think about? What do people say you are fanatic about? God's desire for Christians is for us to glorify Him.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NASB)

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

What area of your life are you doing for your own glory instead of for God's glory? Our prayer to God should be for Him to help us to find pleasure within ourselves for what God takes pleasure in, not what we take pleasure in.

CONCLUSION:

In the throne room, the angels, the 24 elders, and the saints spontaneously want to glorify God! They **want** to! It is nothing that they **have to do** as a duty, but it is a pleased response that they **want** to do. Nobody even has to tell them how to do it. You see, when you enjoy something you do not have to be forced to do it and part of the joy is to tell others about it. Not to just tell them what you do, but that they would begin to enjoy what you enjoy. And that how it should be with our relationship with Christ. That faith is what carries the Christians through their problems in chapters 1-3. They cannot compromise. They cannot help but being faithful. It is coming from their heart!

Trust in God and **Keep Looking Up**, because He is coming soon! The exact day that Christ comes for you, whether it is today or many years from now, is truly insignificant because you are already with Him....Right here! Right now! No rapture necessary!

He is Lord!