

# THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD

## INTRODUCTION

Of all the prophets in Scripture very few were blessed to see God in his glory. In the text for this lesson we see once such example as John is granted the great blessing of seeing God in his glory worshipped in heaven. The only other New Testament writer said have received such a vision was the apostle Paul and he was forbidden to reveal what he saw there (2 Cor. 12:1-4).

There are two other examples of prophets being blessed to receive very similar visions of God's heavenly glory. Both of them were Old Testament prophets and both of them wrote of their visions in a very similar manner to John. While we could include Daniel (Dan. 7:13, 14) and Stephen (Acts 7:55, 56) as two others who saw God and Christ glorified in heaven, it is Isaiah's and Ezekiel's visions that find striking similarity to that of John.

Note the similarity in what these three prophets of God were blessed to see:

## THE THRONE

All three see the throne of God in heaven and give a description of what they saw (Isa. 6:1; Ezek. 1:26). Isaiah says it is "high and lifted up." Ezekiel saw it in appearance as a sapphire stone. John saw what looked like a rainbow of emerald around the throne (Rev. 4:3). Putting them together gives the picture of a high throne of bright blue surrounded by, possibly radiating, brilliant emerald green light.

The description of God's throne is to convey majesty and sovereignty. It is high above all other rule (cf. Eph. 1:20-23). The use of precious stones in the description emphasizes not only the majesty of God but the beauty and purity of his rich grace and mercy. He is the sovereign Lord who has made available to us every spiritual blessing through his Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3).

## THE KING UPON THE THRONE

All three prophets tell us of the one sitting on the throne of majesty. Isaiah refers to the one on the throne as "the King, Jehovah" (Isaiah 6:1-5). Ezekiel also refers to the one on the throne as Jehovah (Ezek. 1:28). John says the one on the throne is the "Lord God Almighty," who lives "forever and ever" (Rev. 4:8, 9).

All three prophets speak of the glory of the one on the throne. Isaiah described the glory of the one upon the throne (Isa. 6:1, 3; cf. Jn. 12:41). Ezekiel says that what he

STUDIES IN REVELATION: LESSON 4  
THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD (REV. 4:1-11)

saw and described was “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of [Jehovah]” (Ezek. 1:28). John describes his glory in terms of precious stones (Rev. 4:3) and describes him receiving “glory and honor” as the one who is worthy to receive such (Rev. 4:9, 11).

### THE AUDIENCE BEFORE THE THRONE

In magnifying the glory of the throne and the one upon it, all three prophets describe the audience before the throne. Isaiah describes the seraphim in the throne room and reveals their declaration of praise to the Almighty (Isa. 6:2, 3). Ezekiel describes the four living creatures and their complete submission to the will of the King (Ezek. 1:12, 20, 25). Where Isaiah describes the seraphim in the throne room, Ezekiel description is of cherubim (Ezek. 10:20). To this audience of heavenly beings John adds the praise of the twenty-four elders before the throne of glory (Rev. 4:9-11).

The very clear emphasis in this section of Revelation is the glory and majesty of God. The key passage sums it up very nicely:

*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4:11).*

Now let us notice several points about God’s majesty and glory from this rich text.

### ON THE THRONE (REV. 4:1-3)

1. What did John see after the Lord had given him the letters to the churches?
  - a. Chapter 4 begins with the words “after this” or “after these things,” indicating that this vision occurred after John had received the letters to the seven churches.
  - b. When he looked he saw a “door opened in heaven” (cf. Ezek. 1:1).
2. What did he hear?
  - a. John heard a voice like a trumpet speaking.
  - b. He was told to “Come up hither.”
  - c. The “first voice” means the first voice he heard in this vision, not necessarily the first voice he heard in the beginning of the Revelation (Rev. 1:10).
  - d. The voice being like a trumpet means that it was loud and clear.
3. What was he to be shown?

**STUDIES IN REVELATION: LESSON 4**  
**THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD (REV. 4:1-11)**

- a. The voice told John that he would be shown things “which must be hereafter.”
  - b. The things that John would be shown were things that would come to pass in the near future.
4. What was John’s condition at this time?
- a. John says that “immediately” upon hearing the voice he was “in the spirit.”
  - b. Here, “in the spirit” refers to being in a state of receiving divinely inspired visions.
5. What did John see that is the theme of chapter four?
- a. John saw a throne set in heaven and the one who sat on the throne (2; cf. Ps. 11:4).
  - b. The throne room of God is the theme of the chapter 4.
  - c. The purpose of the vision is to show the majesty, beauty and sovereignty of God.
6. Give the description of the One John saw upon the throne.
- a. He was to look upon like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance (3).
  - b. Both of these were very precious stones in John’s day.
  - c. The jasper was a green stone, usually transparent, and the sardius stone was a transparent red color.
  - d. We are not to understand this as telling us that God looks like precious stones but as representing his God’s magnificent beauty and glory.

## **AROUND THE THRONE (REV. 4:4-7)**

7. Give the description of what John saw around the throne.
- a. There was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald (3; cf. Ezek. 1:28). The rainbow was a symbol that God does not forget his covenant promises (cf. Gen. 9:8-17; Heb. 10:23).
  - b. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones (seats) (4).
  - c. Upon the twenty-four thrones around the central throne were twenty-four elders, clothed in white raiment (robes) and wearing golden crowns.
    - 1) The twenty-four elders are mentioned twelve times in Revelation (Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:5, 6, 8, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4).

STUDIES IN REVELATION: LESSON 4  
THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD (REV. 4:1-11)

- 2) While there are various ideas as to who the twenty-four elders represent, the twelve patriarchs of fleshly Israel and the twelve apostles of spiritual Israel makes the most sense to me (cf. Rev. 20:11-15; Acts 7:8; Gal. 6:16; Matt. 19:28).
  - 3) I believe getting overly concerned with identifying who the elders are is to get distracted from the main point of the picture; i.e., God is worthy of all praise and honor (cf. Rev. 4:11).
  - 4) If it is the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles then it would seem to indicate God's praise and glory throughout history and unto the end the age.
8. Give the significance of the description of the twenty-four elders.
- a. They are described as wearing white robes and gold crowns (Rev. 4:4).
  - b. White garments are symbolic of purification (cf. Rev. 3:4, 5, 18; 7:14; Heb. 9:14).
  - c. The crown was a *stephanos*, a victor's crown. The fact that it was gold instead of the normal laurel leaf indicates the incorruptible nature of the reward gained by the victor in the Christian race (cf. 1 Cor. 9:25).
9. What proceeded out from the throne?
- a. Lightnings and thunderings and voices proceeded out from the throne (Rev. 4:5).
  - b. Keeping the unity of the scene would have us apply these energies and powers as representing God's awesome might, his omnipotence. The four beasts glorified him as Lord, God Almighty (Rev. 4:8).
10. What are the seven lamps?
- a. The seven lamps are the "seven Spirits of God."
  - b. The is symbolic for the Spirit's deity (cf. Rev. 1:4; 3:1).
11. Besides the twenty-four elders, what else was present around the throne?
- a. The sea of glass was before the throne (Rev. 4:6). This would bring to mind the brazen sea in Solomon's Temple before the Holy Place (1 Kg. 7:23-51; 2 Chron. 4:2-22). The priests would cleans themselves in this brazen sea prior to entering the Temple (2 Chron. 4:6). It is used here symbolizing the necessity of purity before being able to enter into the presence of God.
  - b. Also present before the throne where the four beasts, or "living creatures" (Rev. 4:6).

**STUDIES IN REVELATION: LESSON 4**  
**THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD (REV. 4:1-11)**

12. Describe them.

- a. The four living creatures were full of eyes before and behind (Rev. 4:6), representing God's omniscience - He sees everything all the time. (cf. Ezek. 1:4-28; 10:1-22).
- b. The first living creature was like a lion (Rev. 4:7; cf. Ezek. 1:10). This is symbolic of God's strength.
- c. The second living creature was like a calf (Rev. 4:7; Ezek 1:10). This represents God's gentleness. It is set opposite the lion, strength. Though God has all power and might, he is gentle and merciful in grace.
- d. The third living creature had a face as a man (Rev. 4:7; Ezek. 1:10). This is the face of intelligence, conviction, reason and purpose (cf. Jer. 5:1-3; 7:19; 44:11-12; 2 Cor. 3:18). It represents the intelligent, rational and logical purposefulness of God.
- e. The fourth living creature was like a flying eagle (Rev. 4:7; Ezek. 1:10). God's swift action is symbolized by this beast (Job 9:26; Lk. 17:37; 2 Sam. 1:23; Jer. 4:13; Obed. 4; Prov. 23:5).

## **BEFORE THE THRONE (REV. 4:8-11)**

13. What was their activity before the throne?

- a. They rest not day or night (Rev. 4:8).
- b. They praise God as "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

14. What would the twenty-four elders do before the throne?

- a. When the living creatures praise God, they would throw down their crowns and praise him also (Rev. 4:9-11).
- b. This shows that this vision is not of actual literal events in heaven.

15. What would they say, that is the main point of the whole scene, to the One on the throne?

- a. They would praise God as the one who "art worthy...to receive glory and honour and power."

16. What reason did they give for making this declaration?

- a. The reason they gave for their praise was that he "created all things, and for their pleasure they are and were created."