

## The Worthy Lord upon His Throne

Revelation 4:1-11

In Revelation chapters 4 and 5 we are told *how* to answer the question that everyone wants to know: "What is going to happen next?" According to Biblical prophecy, according to the Book of the Revelation, what is going to happen next? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could look up and see an open door in Heaven in order to see into the future? And seeing the future, wouldn't we want the wisdom to know what to do with the revelation we receive? What is the main point? Since Biblical prophecy is true, what should we do? Simply put: When you see His wonders, worship the Sovereign Lord who is the Creator and Judge of all.

In Revelation 1:9, we read, **"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."** Not everyone agrees, but many have pointed out that this is an interesting outline for the visions in Revelation: The exalted Christ, the churches, and the things that will be hereafter. The vision for the seven churches is found in Revelation 2 and 3. One interesting note: no church or churches are mentioned again after chapter 3; this has interesting implications, and understanding this helps to explain the term "church age." Personally, I do not believe that the 7 churches represent 7 periods within the church age. I would find it very difficult to tell our tortured Chinese brethren, meeting in house churches, that they live in the Laodicean period. But the churches, so prominent throughout the New Testament, are not even mentioned after Revelation 3.

The next vision begins in chapter 4, verse 1 and runs through the end of the book.

**<sup>1</sup> After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.** (Revelation 4:1)

When John wrote the word, "Behold!" he meant for it to capture our attention the way it captured his. And the Apostle John received revelation which was a precise communication in words he clearly understood. Sometimes critics will dismiss this book as mere imagery that can be interpreted in any way that one wishes to do so. But note that John said the voice spoke to him in words he understood. Liberal critics argue that the infinite God could never be understood by finite man. But passages such as this show us that God, in His infinity, is able to condescend to speak with absolute clarity. In verse 2, John tells us that this was by the aid of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. God's Word does not need to be decoded in some secret manner. The voice said, "Come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this." This is John's vision from heaven, not John's ascension into heaven.

### THE THRONE, vs. 3-11

When you think about the future, what should your mind dwell upon? What should you concentrate on as you consider the things that will be? Chapter 4 draws out attention to the throne of God. What happens around the throne and what can we learn about the One who sits upon that throne? "Throne" is the single most important word in Revelation chapter 4. The Throne of God is central to this vision, occurring 12 times in 11 verses. (Two other references, in verse 4, refer to the subordinate thrones of the twenty-four elders. Chapter 5 includes 5 more references to the throne.) This vision of the throne is introduced to us in verse 2.

with volcanos (as many pictures of the 2010 volcano in Iceland remind us). Pictures that include rainbows and lightning are rare. One storm chaser, Greg McCown, captured both together in a photo taken in Marana, AZ in 2015. Around the throne of God, the rainbow, the elders, the lightning and thunder and voices, all communicate the awe-inspiring majesty of our God. We are looking at the wonder of those persons and things around His throne in order that we might rightly worship the God who sits upon the heavenly throne.

#### **The sevenfold Spirit of God, vs. 5**

**“... and *there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*”**

Also around the throne will be seven lamps of fire. These are the seven Spirits, or seven-fold Spirit of God – the third Person of the trinity. The letter that we call, “The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ” was actually sent by the One “**who is, and was, and is to come, and from the seven Spirits before His throne**” (Revelation 1:4).

#### **The sea of glass, vs. 6**

**“<sup>6</sup> And before the throne *there was a sea of glass like unto crystal ...*”**

Surrounding all these other wonders will be a transparent sea of glass which is crystal clear. Now notice how the vision takes us from the far outer edges of the sea of glass back to the inner circle, closest to the throne.

#### **The four living creatures, vs. 6-9**

**“... and in the midst of [closest to] the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [living ones] full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who lives forever and ever ...”** (Revelation 4:6-9).

These remarkable beings are described by the Greek word [zoa] meaning, “living ones.” (“Beasts” is an unfortunate translation of these beautiful ones.) The prophet Ezekiel described these same living beings in Ezekiel 1:4-25. There they are described as being in constant motion. Ezekiel 10:15 explains that these are cherubim – a type of angel. Micaiah saw a similar vision, 1 Kings 22:19.) These beings are “full of eyes” indicating their awareness and discernment. They are alert and cognizant of everything within their realm of responsibility. They are not all-knowing, like God, but He made them to be aware of everything necessary for them to serve Him. In Ezekiel 1, the prophet described each of them as having the same characteristics. From John’s perspective, he saw each characteristic individually: like a lion, a calf, like a flying eagle and like a man. When God created the world, He said that it was “very good.” These angels – created beings – reflect God’s creation: wild animals, domesticated animals, flying creatures and the pinnacle of creation, mankind. But here is the important emphasis: How and where do these magnificent angels direct our attention? In a ceaseless manner, they proclaim, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!” Their worship directs all of our attention to the One who sits upon the throne of heaven. All these wonders combined do not communicate calm serenity. They communicate a terrifying majesty, designed to induce the fear of God in all who read this.

#### **The One Who Sits upon the Throne in Heaven, vs. 2b, 3a, 8-11**

**The appearance of the One who sits upon the throne  
“One sat on the throne ...”**