

The Throne of God

Rev. 4

Introduction:

1. Have you ever wondered what it will be like in heaven?
2. What if the door of heaven was opened and you were allowed to look in?
3. John received just that invitation!
4. This is what he wrote about the experience: "I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of a trumpet speaking. It said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.' Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. 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. 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. Oh how awesome it must be to peer into heaven and to see such magnificent things.
6. There are three observations I would make with you about what is said in Revelation 4.

Discussion:

- I. The throne of God dominates John's vision of heaven (1-6a).
 - A. Additional description of the throne is given in 5-6a adding to the image given in 1-4.
 - B. Obviously, the kingdom and rule of God is a prominent theme throughout Scripture.
 1. In recent studies we have seen the rule of God expressed in the creation account. Our creation in the image of God suggests our rule over the earth, but God is the sovereign ruler over all creation and us.
 2. Indeed, when Israel demanded a king to be like the nations, God said, "They have rejected Me from being king over them."
 3. The theme of God's rulership permeates all of the N.T. Jesus is anointed by God; seated at the Father's right hand to reign over His kingdom. Recently in our studies in Matthew we have observed the image of Dan. 7:13-14 of the Son of Man coming up to the Ancient of Days and being given dominion, glory and a kingdom. Matthew applies this to Jesus' coming into His kingdom.
 - C. Throne scenes are not unusual in the visions of the prophets.
 1. John's description is paralleled by similar expressions.
 2. Isa. 6:1-5.
 3. Ezek. 1:22-28.
 - D. What meaning are we to give to this emphasis on the throne of God in heaven?
 1. We should be awed by the greatness of our King.
 - a. I see this in Ezekiel, Isaiah and John.
 - b. I see it in the response of the four living creatures in John's vision who praised Him day and night (4:8).
 - c. I see it in the twenty-four elders who fell down before Him and cast their crowns before Him in worship. These rulers acknowledge the sovereignty of God!

2. If that is the meaning that they gave to this great throne scene should we give some other meaning to it? Should our response be any different than theirs? Will we exalt ourselves or humble ourselves before Him? Will we show the appropriate respect?
3. Should we be able to gaze into heaven our profane curiosities would evaporate before the awesomeness of God's throne. Our faces would be drawn to the floor in humiliation. All those great among us would cast their crowns before the King. Our personal requests. . . silenced by praise and thanksgiving.

II. God's holiness impressed the four living creatures (6b-9).

A. These four living creatures impress me.

1. They are full of eyes.
2. The first is like a lion, the second like a calf, the third has a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.
3. Each of them has six wings.
4. Their eyes are in front and behind, around and within.
5. I am awed by these creatures!
6. How awesome the throne of God must be to bring such creatures to worship Him!

B. "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." Cf. Isa. 6:3.

1. God's holiness here represents His uniqueness. He is unlike any other. The sea of glass around His throne represents His separateness from all others. Images of magnificent creatures combining features of various animals characterize ancient artwork. Perhaps they were reflecting the power of each into a combined more powerful image. God is superior to the four living creatures. He is superior to us.
2. Not only do the four living creatures acknowledge God's uniqueness, but they acknowledge His superior power, "the Almighty." These creatures must have power as suggested by the lion, the calf, the face of a man and flying like an eagle. Their power however, is eclipsed by "the Almighty."
3. They are also impressed by His eternity—"who was and who is and who is to come." He is without the time/space limitations that characterize things that are created. The living creatures, as impressive as they are, cannot see with their many eyes the things that God sees. Their powerful wings, the might of a lion or the strength of the calf are grossly limited before the power and eternity of God.

C. The response of these impressive living creatures is to use all their energetic power to give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, and they do it without ceasing. Shall we do differently?

III. God's worthiness as Creator impressed the twenty-four elders (10-11).

A. These twenty-four elders each sit on a throne (4).

1. They are clothed in white garments.
2. They have golden crowns on their heads.

3. They are quite impressive.
- B. They fall down before Him who sits on the throne.
1. It is not a forced subservience. The King does not overpower them with military might.
 2. They have power and they rule, but before the throne of God they are overwhelmed. They fall down before Him in worship.
 3. They cast their crowns before Him and they worship extoling Him as alone worthy to receive glory and honor and power. Nothing is held back.
- C. Why is He worthy?
1. Because He is Creator.
 2. They say, "You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."
 3. Yes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made. We are without excuse if we deny Him (Rom. 1:20).
 4. Yes, we are created in His image and designed to rule, but He is sovereign. He rules over us and all of Scripture is designed to bring us back to this.

Conclusion:

1. God reigns!! This forms the substratum of the entire book of Revelation, and indeed of the entire Bible.
2. Anytime one looks through heaven's open door the feeling that eclipses all others is the supreme sovereignty of God.
3. No vision of heaven or earth is true that displaces the living God from His authoritative throne!
4. The only appropriate response for those with the majesty of the lion, the power of the ox, the wisdom of men, the flight of the eagle is praise.
5. The only appropriate response for those who sit upon thrones with golden crowns is humility before the great and awesome throne of the Almighty.