

The Throne Room of God

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Date: 29 April 2012

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[0:00] Well, please do keep your Bible open to Revelation chapter 4, and as I begin, I want to bring you greetings from the saints in Toronto at Grace Fellowship Church of Toronto.

One of two Grace Fellowship churches in Toronto now. We had the privilege of planting another church just over a year ago, and the Lord has blessed that work as well. So we give praise to God for what he is doing in a city that 10 years ago had very little gospel witness, and far beyond our own little group of churches, the Lord is at work in many different churches.

And God is in the business of saving sinners, and we delight in what we get to see and what we get to be a part of. It is all his grace and all his goodness, and we give him all the praise.

It is a special delight to be with you because we, of course, have family connections here. We were down for my dear mother-in-law's funeral yesterday, and what a blessed time to recount God's grace in her life.

I feel very humbled to be in your pulpit because I, well, frankly, I'm hypercritical when it comes to preachers. I'm judgmental, I'm arrogant, I'm proud.

[1:16] So very few people pass my test, but it is always a delight to sit under the ministry of your pastors. And in particular yesterday, my soul was blessed to hear the word of God and to just have my own heart fall in love again with my Savior for all that he's done for me, all that he did for mom, all the ways he's shown his grace and his goodness.

So I don't know how you arrive here today. Maybe you come with a sense of grief or a sense of joy. Maybe you come facing some great and major decision in your life.

Or maybe you're here today feeling like everything is hanging on by a thread. Maybe you're here today feeling like everything is hanging on by a thread.

Maybe you come to church every week and this is the part where you choose to think about something else. Maybe you're here today. Maybe you're here today full of regret over some encircling, habitual, darling sin that got you again.

Or maybe you are here today walking in the good of the gospel and glorying in what your God has done for you. However you come, wherever you are, it is my desire that by looking at Revelation 4, we will behold our God.

[3:28] One look at him, and no matter how you came in the door, you will go out the door a different person.

This God is worthy, worthy, worthy of all of your affection and all of your attention.

Now I want us to look at Revelation 4, which in this revelation, this apocalypse, this revealing, this pulling back of the curtains on what is true.

We are given through John a detailed look at what is called the throne room of God. We are about to look at what is real right now.

It is more real than the chair that you're sitting on. It is more real than the financial crisis you find yourself in. What you are about to see is what is truly true.

[4:35] What is really reality. And if we can use this illustration, when I was in high school and in the drama club, we had to learn how to open the curtains.

Because apparently there is a wrong way to open the curtains. And the wrong way is tug, break, tug, break, tug, break. You had to open them smooth. Well, I want to go back to the tug and break a little bit.

For although what John does is pull the curtains back slowly, I think there's kind of five tugs on the curtain. And I want to take each one and just pause and look for a moment to see what we can see as the curtains pull back on the throne room of God.

And the first thing you will notice, the first tug of the curtain, is that lowly man is summoned. Chapter 4, verse 1. And pardon me, I'll be reading from the ESV, the English Standard Version.

I apologize, I didn't bring my NIV. After this, I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. Heaven has a door.

[5:44] Something like a bank vault door. And that door remains closed almost all the time. We are closed off from heaven, aren't we?

We do not see with the naked eye what is true and what is real. Why? Because we are both frail and sinful. You're frail. I am frail.

Mom was frail. And all of us are weak. We're like the grass in the field. Your grass is a little greener than our grass right now. But you know what?

In just a few months, it'll be turning brown again. It'll get covered with the snow again. It's here today and it's gone tomorrow. And I don't know about you, but the older I get, the tomorrows seem to come much more quickly.

We are frail creatures. We are not able in our own strength to save ourselves, to keep ourselves alive. And what's even worse than that? We are sinful creatures.

[6:44] Heaven is closed to us because of our frailty, but heaven is closed to us because of our sinfulness. Isaiah himself, when given a vision of God and his glory, this prophet of God would call down a judgment on his own soul.

Woe is me. Woe is me. He knew what he was saying. I'm cursed. I am unworthy. I cannot behold the glory of God.

And you say, well, but John. John was an apostle. John walked with Jesus. And yet even John has to wait until the door is left ajar to heaven.

Do you find when you're traveling down the highway and there's an accident on the other side of the road and the traffic slows, don't you want to look even if you don't want to look?

And I wonder if that was John's state of being here in this vision, in this being in the spirit. If now the door is open and if there's something in him that doesn't want to look but has to look.

[7:50] For he knows what's behind the door. And if there was any hesitation in John because of his frailty and because of his sinfulness, it is erased by the words of our Lord Jesus.

Come up here. And I will show you what must take place after this. Lowly man is summoned. No one gets to heaven of their own accord.

No one gets to heaven by their own choice. No one gets to heaven by simply deciding to go there. You must be summoned. And there is a sense in which God is summoning you this morning.

Where God is calling from heaven to you through his word. Saying in another way, summoning you, calling you, calling upon you to turn to his son and to believe on his son.

He calls you out of your frailty. And he calls you out of your sinfulness. I'm a visitor here. Perhaps it's your first Sunday here. Perhaps it's your 900th Sunday here.

[8:53] But God, if he has not already, I know for certain this morning he is calling. And he is calling you. He has his mind set upon you. And he's looking to you. And he's summoning you. Because that is the gospel.

That is the good news. God is looking for sinners. And he has done a wonderful thing. He sent his own son to die in your place. To be your substitute. To take upon himself all of God's wrath for your sins.

All the things you've done. All the things you've thought. All the horrible things in your life. God sends his own son to be the substitute. And he summons you. He calls you.

Why should you come? Let's pull the curtain back another tug. It is the sovereign Savior who speaks.

Lowly man is summoned. But the sovereign Savior speaks. John says this. And the first voice which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said.

[9:56] What voice was that? Go back to chapter 1 for a moment. And verse 10. The beginning of this vision that John is given. He says, verse 10.

I was in the spirit on the Lord's day. And I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet. If you were in the school band. You never wanted to sit in front of the trumpets. They're very loud.

Very ear piercing. Very annoying when they're played out of tune. But this is a voice that is powerful. Down to verse 12. I turn to see the voice. To see the sound as it were.

That was speaking to me. And on turning I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the lampstands. In the midst of the churches. One like a son of man. Clothed with a long robe. And with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white like wool. As white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze.

[10:53] Refined in a furnace. And his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars. From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword. And his face was like the sun.

Shining in full strength. If we unpack these things. We see that what is being portrayed. Is Christ in his glory. Christ in his power. Christ as ruler over the church.

Christ as savior. Christ as great king. Christ as sovereign. Christ as the one who will by the exercise of his own will. Unfold the sovereign plan of redemption of God.

And Christ speaks to John in verse 17. He says fear not. I am the first and the last. And the living one. I died. And behold.

I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades. This is the loud voice that John hears again in chapter 4 verse 1.

[11:56] It is the sovereign savior who is speaking. How do we know he is sovereign? What do I mean by sovereign? I simply mean he's in control of everything. How do I know so?

Well, first of all, he commands John to come. He summons John. Come up here. He doesn't say, would you like to come up here? Would you please come up here?

He says, come up here. It is a command from a sovereign savior. And then he says to John, I will show you the things that must take place. He's going to unravel redemptive history for John.

And he says, these are the things that must take place. I will show them to you so that you might give them to my bride, to my church, my persecuted people. So that they can stand and conquer in the face of opposition.

Not only that, look at from where our Lord speaks. He speaks from heaven, the dwelling place of God, the mission control center of the universe.

[12:55] If his authority is not settled in your mind by these three facts, I'm not sure what will.

There are many more scriptures that teach the same thing.

And yet this is only a peek into what will be clear and transparent in chapter 5 when it is the son of man who can take the scroll out of the right hand of God our father.

Do you realize that your understanding of Jesus, your conception of him may be mistaken? I talk to people all the time who tell me about Christ and I think this isn't the Christ of the Bible.

They tell me about Jesus, but it doesn't line up with Jesus as he is revealed in the scriptures. I can recall in my own life having very incorrect views of who Jesus was in his earthly ministry, what he did.

I confused miracles. I had stories over here and there. It was childish. I was childish and spiritually immature. I had to grow. I had to understand.

[13:59] And it is possible that you too don't have a proper perception of who Jesus is. Maybe you have been squinting through your sin.

Or maybe you have been shading your eyes by your shame. So that your comprehension of the true Christ is muddled and messed up.

You might have even grown up in this church and had the best of Sunday school teachers and sat under the best of preaching. And at the same moment been actively fashioning a Jesus in your own image.

This is the Jesus that is revealed in the scriptures. The one who says, I died. And I live forevermore.

Do you know what kind of words those are? Those are gospel words. Those are gospel words. Do you know the gospel? I'm happy to see children. I've always loved the fact that your children are in your assembly.

[14:59] They're in ours too. And kids, you're going to help me with something. And you've really got to forgive me. I'm in a multicultural city with a very interactive congregation. And you are extremely quiet compared to what I'm used to.

So I've just got to talk with the kids for a minute because it will put me at ease. But we have a little saying around our church that you can hold the gospel in your hand. Have we ever done that before?

Did you know you can hold the whole gospel right in your hand? So you're going to help me. I'll do it first. And then you'll do it with me. And then we'll make the grown-ups do it. Christ died for our sins. Now don't get freaked out about this part. And was raised. Okay. We're not singing, so it's okay. All right, kids.

Now you try this with me. Christ died for our sins and was raised. We're going to do it one more time so the slow-moving brains of adults around you can get this.

[16:06] Is that they're like me? Here we go. Christ died for our sins and was raised. That means anytime you shake anybody's hand, you've got the gospel right there.

You say, I don't know what to say to somebody. Well, hey, can I tell you the gospel? Christ died for our sins and was raised. That's weird. Let's talk about it. Jesus Christ came into the world. He was a real man. He took upon himself our sins, our sins, and he died for our sins. He suffered in our place. Christ died for our sins.

But more than this, he was raised. God's stamp and seal of approval on what his son had done. And so I want to speak to you the good news of that gospel. C.S. Lewis was writing to a child only days before his death.

And in that letter, he said this, little girl, if you continue to love Jesus, nothing much can go wrong with you. That's so true, isn't it?

[17:17] But we must love the Jesus that is presented to us in the scriptures, not just the Jesus that we have fashioned in our own image. We need the Jesus that is given to us who died for our sins and was raised.

And we need to do what the scriptures command us to do, which is to respond to that news. The gospel is a set of data. It is news about someone, but it is news that we are to respond to.

Have you responded to it? You've heard this gospel. You've heard that Christ died for your sins and was raised. But what difference has it made in your life? Have you activated it to yourself?

Have you appropriated it to yourself? Have you turned to Christ? What about you young ones who've sat here and you say, well, I'm going to stay one foot in the world and one foot in church. Hey, I tried that. It's a miserable existence. You'll never be happy. For you know in your own heart what God requires of you.

[18:15] And if you reject him and reject him, you will live with that conviction of sin and with the shame of your sin and with the knowledge that you are repulsing and actively rejecting the God who made you.

This God we've already sung of this morning. This great God. This great Savior who sent his own son into the world. So if God has brought you here today and if God has announced this gospel today, then why not respond to this gospel today?

Why not cry out to that God right now? Why not seek that God in your heart right now? What would keep you from one who has done all of this for you? What has the world ever done for you?

Nothing. It is a sovereign Savior who speaks. And we believe this gospel. And we believe the one that the gospel speaks of.

The gospel to us is not just the front door to get into the kingdom of God. The gospel is the house in which we live as Christians. We are always asking ourselves, what difference does the death and resurrection of Jesus make to me now?

[19:24] Now, you can bet it made a difference to John when he stood in this vision and the door opened and he heard the voice and he saw Christ. He could remember. It's interesting, isn't it?

John doesn't say what his response was here. Later on, he's going to see an angel fall down and worship it. And the angel picks him up and says, don't worship me. Worship God. So John doesn't describe it because perhaps words failed him.

But I think somewhere in John's heart, John was clinging to the fact that Christ had died for his sins and was raised. And that's the only hope he had to stand in the presence of God.

Now, it is a sovereign Savior who speaks. But then we pull the curtains back a little further. And the glorious God is glimpsed.

Verse 2. At once I was in the Spirit and behold, a throne stood in heaven. Not a conference table.

[20:23] Not a desk. Not a parliament. Not a congress. But a throne. A throne is the place from which judgments proceed.

A throne is a symbol of authority. A throne, this throne, is in the center of the universe. Great kings of old would make massive thrones with many steps to elevate themselves.

And here it's as if the great and elevated God is sitting upon a lowly throne. And yet this throne is very, very unique. This throne, there is one seated on the throne.

And then look at how John describes him. He has about five, seven brown eyes. No, no, no, no.

John does something very remarkable.

He enters into the land of like. That's what Ezekiel had to do when given a vision of God. He's like a human appearance. It's like this.

[21 : 35] It's like that. Or Daniel saying, I saw one like a son of man. And now John has entered into the land of like. All I can do is compare to what I know.

It's like a man who goes up north to see the northern lights. And he beholds the northern lights. And he comes back to Bremen. And he says, let me tell you about the northern lights.

They were like. It was like fireworks all over the place. But then mirrors reflecting bluish and red and green.

And you say, oh, that's weird. And what does he say? You've got to see it for yourself. So the best John can do here is bring us into the land of like.

And he says, this person on the throne had the appearance. Was like in appearance. To what? Precious stones.

[22 : 35] Jasper. Redstone. Carnelian. Again, brownish red. And he says there is a rainbow surrounding the throne. The words that he uses here seem to be saying that this isn't the kind of rainbow we see cut off by the horizon.

But it's a complete circle. As if like a halo. Kind of radiating out from this glorious throne. And that rainbow has an emerald quality to it.

It is that greener, softer gemstone. And so there's these hues of red and green. And all of this at the same time. And it seems to be speaking here of the fact that, well, the rainbow.

When did we see a rainbow? Well, we saw a rainbow after God had cursed the earth with a flood.

And the rainbow was the first sign of the new creation after the flood. It was to remind us that there is a judgment for sin.

And it was to remind us, every time we see that rainbow, that there is a God who saves from sin.

And perhaps that is carried in here in the imagery as the rainbow and the display of light reflected, reflected rather, through stones.

[23 : 38] One commentator says, God is portrayed by John as the brilliance of light reflected from precious stones.

Remember, it was John who wrote in his gospel in chapter 1, verse 18. No one has ever seen God. The apostle Paul would speak of our only sovereign who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.

In other words, what John says is, I'm just getting a filtered look of God. All of this light imagery, this gemstone imagery, seems to be a picture of his splendor and of his perfection and of his majesty.

As Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock, so John, all he gets is God filtered. God slightly obstructed for his protection, for his preservation. God is that glorious.

He is that majestic. He is that so much dwelling in splendor that no man can see him and live. And so John can simply say, I gained this glimpse of God on the throne.

[24 : 51] And all I can do is compare him to what is most glorious and most precious in this creation. And he was like that. And he was like that. Will you see God?

Only if you are in Christ. My mother-in-law is beholding God in his glory.

God is glimpsed by John. But we pull the curtain back a little further and now the full throne room is seen.

The throne room is seen. There's five different little parts to this. First of all, there are the 24 elders. We read of them, verse 4, around the throne were 24 thrones.

And seated on the thrones were 24 elders clothed in white garments with golden crowns on their heads. Oh, there are many ideas about who these 24 elders are.

[25 : 57] Perhaps the most common being that 12 of them are the sons of Jacob and the other 12 are the 12 apostles. And they therefore represent the completed people of God.

That's possible. I don't think that's what it is, but it's possible. The problem with thinking that Judah and Matthew are there in the 24 elders, or part of the 24 elders, is that there's nothing in this text that tells us that.

And not only that, these 24 elders don't seem to do human-like things. Not the things humans do in this description of heaven. So these 24 elders are interpreting for John.

They're holding the prayers of the saints. They have a much more angelic kind of function. And I think that's precisely what they are. They're created beings called elders that are functioning in this particular role.

And I think, now this is speculation. You can reject it, okay? But if you look through the scriptures, there's a reference to a 24 in the Old Testament, in 1 Chronicles 24, chapter 24 and chapter 25, where David is setting up the worship of the temple.

[27:13] He's not going to build the temple. His son will build the temple. But he orders the priests into groups of 24. And he orders the Levites into groups of 24, 288 of them.

He says, now I'll choose by lot 24, and the rest of you file in underneath. And this will be how we will organize temple worship. And in my own mind, I cannot help but wonder if God and his sovereignty did not move David to do this very thing to be something of a reflection of these 24 elders who seem to function like lead worshipers in heaven.

And so they have a Levitical look to them in that sense that they are responding to what is declared about God. And they are kind of drawing together the people of God and God himself, not in any kind of intercessory way the way Christ does, not at all, but simply in our worship of God.

It's speculation. Perhaps it's right. Perhaps it's wrong. But we can see exactly what they are here by the way that they are described. They are clothed in white. It is a symbol of their purity.

They have crowns upon their heads. They are set apart to a unique duty. And so these 24 elders, whoever they are, exactly whatever they represent, here they are surrounding the throne and the one who is seated on the throne.

[28:35] There are also here expressions of God's awesome majesty. God sits on that throne, and yet that throne thunders. The awesomeness of God himself expresses itself to John by this deafening cacophony of sound.

Simply think of how loud it was in this vision. He hears a voice like a trumpet, later called like rushing waters. And now there are thunders, rumblings, flashes of lightning.

You ever been close to a flash of lightning? I mean, she just cracked right beside you. The light and the sound all happened at the same time. That ever happened to you?

And I'm sure you were very, very brave about it, weren't you? Yeah, I was on the phone with my nephew one time, and for some reason he was recording our phone calls, so there is existing a phone call of me screaming like a schoolgirl when a crack of lightning went off just over my head.

To my shame. Imagine what it was like for John. I don't even know what he's trying to say here when he says that there's these cracks of thunder, but there's also rumblings, just kind of like a rolling earthquake, or just like those annoying people that pull up beside you at the red light.

[30:02] Well, you've got two red lights in Bremen, but it happens all the time in my world, and they just, boom, boom, boom, boom, they've got the bass going on their radio, and you're just like, do I have to endure this?

But that's the kind of experience that perhaps John is having where it's shaking and rumbling, and there's the flashes of lightning, and this is something otherworldly, this is something great and glorious, and it's expressing to us the awesome majesty of God.

There's no mistaking it when you see God. In fact, the scriptures say it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But he goes on. From the throne, verse 5, came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven lamps or torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God.

I won't take the time this morning, but I would argue that this is a representation of God's Holy Spirit, the one Holy Spirit, the number seven being a number of completion and perfection in this New Testament book, this revelation.

[31:09] And so, speaking to the perfection of the Holy Spirit, he is now saying that right there with the Father is also the Spirit, and this image has already been used in the revelation.

And the fact that he is a burning fire, a burning torch, a burning lamp speaks about his presence, but also the fact that the Holy Spirit sees, and the Holy Spirit knows, and the Holy Spirit judges accurately.

He sees you on your dates. He sees you in your den. And he sees you when you die. And he knows your thoughts.

He knows the very intentions behind your thoughts. And he is never, ever, ever fooled.

Oh, you'll fool mom and dad. You'll fool your friends. You'll fool your spouse. You can put on a spirituality that will deceive all of us. You could be a great actor and completely fool us all.

[32 : 14] But you will not fool the Holy Spirit of God. Then he goes on, this little phrase at the end, in verse 6, Before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal.

Notice what John says there. There was, as it were, a sea of glass. Something like a sea of glass. It's the only way I can describe this great expanse that stretches out into the horizon and seems to separate God from everything that is unholy.

It is like a sea of glass. Perhaps you know that to the Jewish mind, at least, the sea is not, it's not like us and going to the ocean.

We frolic away in the waves. Even though they live by the sea, the sea to the Jewish mind is something unpredictable, wavy. It is unsafe. It is deep.

It is threatening. There are storms, and there is a vastness to the ocean. And it's really of no value. It's salt water. You can't drink it. You can't water your crops with it.

[33 : 19] We're an agrarian culture. And so, throughout redemptive history, the sea often carries with it this idea of connected to evil and to danger.

And as you go through the revelation, you see this same kind of thing. It's as if John is saying that he has calmed the sea. He has settled with his divine power, worldly chaos.

It has been brought to a halt. In chapter 8, the sea on the earth is turned to blood. God judges the sea. He judges what is evil.

In chapter 10, in verse 2, the mighty angel stands with one foot on the sea and one foot on the land. He is over them. And then, in chapter 15, in verse 2, the overcomers stand by the sea like a vanquished foe.

They stand over and above the sea. And then, in chapter 21, and verse 1 of this revelation, we are told there no longer was any sea in that new creation. God has done away with what is evil.

[34 : 19] He has defeated it, and he has eliminated it. In fact, that sea has been replaced by a river, the river of life. In Ezekiel's vision, that river grows deeper and deeper and deeper.

Step in. It's up to my ankle. Go a little further. It's up to my knees. Go a little further. It's up to my waist. Go a little further. I'll drown. God's great life-giving grace.

It all flows from his throne. But also, surrounding that throne are four living beings.

Verse 6. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, now check this out, full of eyes in front and behind, which means all over.

So whatever these creatures are, these beings, might be a better translation of that word, these beings, these beings are covered with eyes.

[35 : 23] The first living being like a lion, the second living being like an ox, the third living being with the face of a man, and the fourth living being like an eagle in flight. These are somewhat strange to us representations of angelic beings that seem to be saying, here are the noblest, the strongest, the wisest, and the fastest.

And they are surrounding the throne of God. And what John has done is he's picked up the visions of Isaiah and of Ezekiel, and he's sort of added to them.

Everyone is slightly different. And so he's taking parts and pieces of that, as if God is only ever revealing parts to us, little glimpses to us. And now he takes his little part, and he describes this.

And what Mount says is, their description is not meant to yield to the drawing board, but it is to stir the imagination. In other words, we're not to try and imagine in our minds some flying creature with eyes all around it, as much as we are to consider what it represents.

And clearly, any creature, any being with eyes all about it, speaks about its constant vigilance. And these beings that are closest to the throne stand between all other and God himself, beholding that God and beholding all that is around.

[36 : 47] And they worship. Oh friend, if you ever thought that God needed you to sing, let this correct you. For there are four perfect living beings that are in constant praise of our God.

So we pull the curtain back one last time, and we see worship in progress. What is already a very loud and overwhelming and active scene is shaken by the voices of the four.

Verse 8, The four living beings, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night, they never cease to say, which I think means when nothing else is happening in heaven, this fills the gap.

Because there's going to be some other things that interrupt this and that happen, but I think what John is saying is this is kind of, can you say this, a lowest common denominator? I don't even know if that's the right way to put it, but this is what is going on in heaven almost all of the time.

The four living beings, holy, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come.

[38:17] Holy, thrice holy, three times holy. What does holy mean? You know, separated from us. This God is holy, holy, holy. Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit.

This is his essential attribute. What distinguishes him above all else? He is not love, love, love. He is not mercy, mercy, mercy, but he is holy, holy, holy. He is other than us.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, the all-powerful, the omnipotent, the one with boundless strength, the one who can't be stopped.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is this God is eternal. This God never had a beginning. This God has no ending. And not only that, he is the God who is to come, which I don't think speaks so much to his future eternal existence as it does in this book speak to his future certain return to this creation.

So it is the other God than us. It is the omnipotent God. It is the ongoing God. And it is the returning God. And that is what sums up these creatures covered with eyes.

[39:32] And they boil it down to its essence and say, this is our God. They make this statement of objective truth about God. This is our eternal King, the one who lives forever and who sits on the throne.

He is other than us. He is omnipotent. He is ongoing. And he could come back today. You would think those who were closest would see the best.

And they do. John says, whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who was seated on the throne who lives forever and ever. They give glory. They esteem and they praise.

It is the esteem and the praise that God deserves. They give honor. It is the respect and the recognition that God deserves. And they give thanks. It is the gratitude that God deserves for all that God has done.

That is what they are doing. When they are stating this in the throne room. When they are saying, holy, holy, holy. They are giving glory and honor and thanks to their eternal King.

[40:33] it is objectively true whether you like it or not that God is King. And as this objective truth is stated, it is so wonderful that it bears constant repetition.

It is the kind of thing you could meditate on as a believer in this life and never grow tired of. You could never exhaust. And it is a statement of objective truth that is so wonderful it draws out a response from the 24 elders.

Verse 9 again. Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who is seated on the throne who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before Him who is seated on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever.

they cast their crowns before the throne saying, worthy are you our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they existed and were created.

Domitian was likely the ruler the Roman ruler at the time in which John wrote this revelation of Jesus Christ.

[41:59] Domitian demanded that in His presence as you entered in you would say in Latin Dominus et Deus Noster Domitian Our Lord and our God Domitian And as the revelation is given to the angel to give to John to give to the churches who are being persecuted under that Roman system of persecution can you not see the wonder and the glory of it?

Domitian is not our Lord and God. Let me tell you about our Lord and our God. And so His glory is stated there in verse 8 and then glory is given in verse 11.

Worthy are you our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for the reason you created all things and by your will they existed and were created. This is antiphonal worship.

One group says one thing another group responds with another thing. One group speaks in the third person he is the other group responds in the second person you are and that ought to be a

good lesson to us in our own corporate worship.

It is wonderful to state what is true about God and yet it is equally necessary to address God and to give God that praise. You are this you deserve it you are glorious.

[43:26] We need to speak to that God in the second person. You are worthy you are deserving all glory and honor belongs to you all esteem all respect all praise all power he says because as the creator you are the source of everything.

He made you you didn't make you your parents didn't make you God made you by the exercise of your will they say your own free and sovereign will you created all things nothing that exists exists outside of God by him through him in him are all things he is your soul and your great creator when the 24 elders hear this refrain that they've heard apparently for a very long time they were created at some point in time but I assume it's thousands upon thousands of years when they hear it again they get down on their knees and they throw their crowns down which would and we don't really understand that in our day it's not how cultures usually work today but in this day you would be a king of a city state and there would be a great king over all the other kings and this is what you would literally do when you would go see the great king at perhaps some annual meeting of the kings you would walk in and you would kneel down and you would take your little crown and you'd throw it before the guy with the big crown and so it was a very understood image you are the highest one you are the king of the kings you're the lord of the lords and in an ultimate sense god is portrayed in this way you are king of kings you are lord of lords you are maker of everything you are creator and we are not he is worthy of all praise aren't we strange in our stiff and wooden and reserved ways as we worship our god i just think it's strange here are creatures in heaven that bow down before god i wonder why we don't bow i'm not being picky i'm speaking to myself i wonder why i don't shake i wonder why i don't cry out i wonder why i don't shout like they shout i wonder why i can't sing with the same kind of passion that these ones never grow tired of oh not hymn 32 again i don't know what your hymn 32 is but i trust whatever hymn 32 is it's true oh for the grace of god to behold our god because whether you love him now or not whether you've been looking for him or not whether you've been paying attention to him or not he is your maker he is your creator he is your sovereign and he is your king and he's worthy of your glory and your honor and your thanks and you will give it to him whether you want to or not and it is so so so much more important to give him this glory on this side of eternity rather than to stand before him in the day of judgment you will give him glory but then you will be cast into a

Christless eternity got any regrets imagine regret that never ends because on this day you heard the gospel but you did not respond to the gospel Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners which means he came into the world to save people like you and people like me oh if you put all of your confidence in him you don't need special words you don't need a formula you don't need some action of your body just in your own heart to do business with God and say God I need to be saved I want to see you like this I want to see you in your glory I want to see you in your splendor I want to see you in your majesty and not collapse in a heap but rejoice with great joy because you are my maker and you are my savior and you are my redeemer and that will be true of you friend if you are in

Christ oh even better than seeing angels and elders we will see Jesus the hymn writer said face to face with Christ my savior face to face what will it be when with rapture I behold him Jesus Christ who died for me face to face I shall behold him far beyond the starry sky face to face in all his glory I shall see him by and by only faintly now I see him with a darkened veil between but a blessed day is coming when his glory shall be seen what rejoicing in his presence when are banished grief and pain when the crooked ways are straightened and the dark things shall be plain face to face a blissful moment face to face to see and know face to face with my redeemer so this is reality this is truth so

Christian enough with half heartedness enough with half hearted convictions enough with a weak faith enough with one foot in and one foot out come all the way to God behold your God what on earth do you need more than your God come all the way to Christ so that this vision of God in your day is one of joy and not one of abject terror for eternity let us pray oh Lord we are like children playing with great science in trying to describe you our words fail us our thoughts fail us our emotions fail us our hearts fail us we are so weak we need you to reveal yourself to us in your greatness and in your glory what we read we love but we want to know it more we want to feel it more we want to understand it more we want more and more and more of you because you are our

greatest delight and our greatest treasure and so

[50 : 39] Lord we pray shake us free from all these silly preoccupations that take up our thoughts and distract us from the gospel and that let us live our lives munching away on the cotton candy of life when the eternal glory of God is right before us make us men and women who live in the true reality oh Lord wash us clean of all of our sins we plead only the blood of Jesus the one who died and lives forevermore we pray in his name amen amen to to to one to!

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