

REVELATION UNVEILED: CHAPTER 4; THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD

HERE BEGINS JOHN'S VISION OF HEAVEN AND GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE REVELATION, GOD WILL GIVE JOHN (& US) GLIMPSES OF WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND THE THRONE OF GOD. SOME COMMENTATORS REFER TO THEM AS INTERLUDES OR INTERMISSIONS. IT'S A WAY OF SAYING, "MEANWHILE." AND LETTING US PARTICIPATE IN THE CELEBRATIONS IN HEAVEN, WELCOMING THOSE WHO HAVE COME OUT OF THE GREAT SUFFERING ON EARTH.

SO, MEANWHILE, DOES GOD SHOW US? THE THRONE ROOM! GOD IS REVEALED AS LIGHT AND COLOR, SIGHT AND SOUND, TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS (REPRESENTING ALL WHO HAVE SERVED GOD), THE SEVEN SPIRITS (REPRESENTING THE HOLY SPIRIT), AND FOUR EARTH CREATURES (REPRESENTING ALL EARTH'S LIVING THINGS) ARE SAFE IN GOD'S PRESENCE; ALL ARE WELCOME AROUND THE THRONE OF GOD AND WITH THE TRINITY: THE LOVE OF GOD, THE LAMB OF GOD, AND THE POWER OF GOD.

GOD SHOWS US ALL THAT BATTLING AGAINST SATAN AND THE FORCES OF EVIL IS GOD'S WORK. THE LAMB HAS CONQUERED AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE EARTH. WE ARE NOT CALLED TO BATTLE WITH WEAPONS OF WAR. OUR WORK IS TO STAND WITH JESUS AND STAND AGAINST SATAN IN ALL FORMS: IDOL WORSHIP, COLLUSION WITH POWER & WEALTH, CORRUPTION, SEXUAL SINS AGAINST THOSE WITH NO POWER, POLICIES THAT ROB PEOPLE OF THEIR LIVELIHOOD, ETC.

READ REVELATION 4:1-11

1. How does John enter the throne room?
2. Who is at the center?
3. How are the many ways God revealed in this passage (sight and sound)?
4. What do you make of the four living beings, their relationship to each other, and their multitude of eyes? "4" equals the earth, and the 4 living beings represent all living creatures on earth.
5. For what is God worshipped in this chapter?
6. What is the work of the 24 Elders? *Their journey is complete, their salvation is complete. Their task is not to give counsel or to rule, but to assist in worship.*

"WHAT A SOURCE OF COMFORT TO KNOW THAT ONE OF THE MARKS OF HEAVEN IS THAT IT IS NOT A PLACE WHERE OUR DIFFERENCES ARE MARKED BY

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SEPARATION AS IT IS IN THIS LIFE... THERE IS NOT THE FEELING THAT WE MUST RECESS TO OUR ENCLAVES OF DENOMINATIONS, BUT THE OLD TESTAMENT SITS WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW [TESTAMENT] AND THAT ALL CREATURES FINALLY SEE THEIR UNITY IN GOD THE FATHER AND IN THE SON, JESUS OUR LORD" [2]

"ALTHOUGH REVELATION IS USUALLY SEEN AS A BOOK OF DESTRUCTION, GOD'S FUNDAMENTAL IDENTITY IS THAT OF CREATOR. THIS SCENE ANTICIPATES THE OUTCOME OF THE BOOK, WHERE GOD'S PURPOSES CULMINATE IN NEW CREATION. THE WORDS "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY" AND THE IMAGES OF CASTING DOWN CROWNS BY HEAVEN'S GLASSY SEA HAVE INSPIRED MANY OF THE HYMNS WE USE IN WORSHIP. REVELATION FUNCTIONS RIGHTLY WHEN IT INVITES US INTO WORSHIP TOO — WHICH WE DO AS WE ADD OUR VOICES TO THE SONG." [1]

Holy, Holy, Holy!

Reginald Heber, 1826

Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4:8

Holy, Holy, Holy!
Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning
our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy,
Merciful and Mighty!
God in three Persons,
Blessèd Trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy!
All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden
Crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim
falling down before Thee,
Who wert, and art,
And evermore shalt be.

Holy, Holy, Holy!
Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man
Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy;
There is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power,
In love, and purity.

Holy, Holy, Holy!
Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name,
In earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, Holy, Holy;
Merciful and Mighty!
God in three Persons,
Blessèd Trinity!

[1] <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/narrative-lectionary/preaching-series-on-revelation>. Craig R. Koester, Professor and Asher O. and Carrie Nasby Chair of New Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, MN

[2] The Book of Revelation, Lecture #3, Chapters 4-7, Erling W. Hansen