

POWER HOUR

3/23/2025

Lesson Text:
Revelation 4:1-11

Background Scripture:
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Devotional Reading:
Ezekiel 1:4-28, 10:1-22; &
Revelation 11:15-19

“WORSHIP BEFORE THE THRONE”

NLT TRANSLATION

Golden Text: *Each of these living beings had six wings, and their wings were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day after day and night after night they keep on saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty—the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come.”* Revelation 4:8 NLT

Time: about A.D. 96

Place: from Patmos

Revelation 4:1-11 NLT

1 Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The voice said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this.” 2 And instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it. 3 The one sitting on the throne was as brilliant as gemstones—like jasper and carnelian. And the glow of an emerald circled His throne like a rainbow. 4 Twenty-four thrones surrounded him, and twenty-four elders sat on them. They were all clothed in white and had gold crowns on their heads. 5 From the throne came flashes of lightning and the rumble of thunder. And in front of the throne were seven torches with burning flames. This is the sevenfold Spirit of God. 6 In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal. In the center and around the throne were four living beings, each covered with eyes, front and back. 7 The first of these living beings was like a lion; the second was like an ox; the third had a human face; and the fourth was like an eagle in flight. 8 Each of these living beings had six wings, and their wings were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day after day and night after night they keep on saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty—the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come.” 9 Whenever the living beings give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever), 10 the twenty-four elders fall down and worship the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever). And they lay their crowns

before the throne and say. 11 “You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased.”

INTRODUCTION

Although we have already looked at Christ's return in the previous lessons, the coming lessons will be devoted to the study of Revelation. This will prove to be an interesting and intriguing spiritual adventure. Some may be disappointed that the texts selected for our study do not cover the most controversial sections of the Apocalypse. The goal, however, is to set forth the core themes of the book, not to debate and speculate about its more obscure parts.

There are a variety of approaches to the study of Revelation. Since scholars of equal repute and genuine faith disagree about Revelation, we must not be overly dogmatic concerning our preferred viewpoint. Our knowledge is imperfect, and prophecy does not give us the full picture (I Cor. 13:9).

Biblical prophecy is the only truly reliable predictor of future events. Some Christian groups put little emphasis on it, perhaps fearful of not being accurate in their interpretations. Other Christian groups may overemphasize it to the exclusion of other biblical truths.

It is good to strike a balance between these extremes. As far as interpretation goes, we need to approach the unfolding texts carefully and one at a time. There is adequate scholarship to aid us, and the Holy Spirit stands ready to guide us into all truth.

1. Throne in heaven (Rev. 4:1-3).

We know that the apostle Paul told of a man, probably himself, who was caught up to the third heaven, or paradise, to hear marvelous things. Paul was not sure whether this journey was in the body or in the spirit (II Cor. 12:1-4). We might wonder the same thing about John's experience. He could have remained on earth and been transported in a spiritual revelation. Whatever the case, John was able to see and hear things concerning heaven, a subject about which he would later write many more details in Revelation 21 and 22. Verse 1 of chapter 4 says John's first contact was visual, for he saw a door opened in heaven. This was followed by an auditory contact, as he heard a powerful (trumpet-like) voice inviting him to come up and be shown future things. Dominant in John's view was

the throne of God. God is a spirit (John 4:24) and therefore invisible, but His gemlike radiance emanates from His throne in a panoply of brilliant colors.

2. Enthroned elders (Rev. 4:4-5).

Do we have any ideas regarding the identity of these twenty-four individuals occupying seats (thrones) surrounding the throne of God. They might be special angels or special men who were redeemed and taken to heaven, but we are not told who they are.

We are warned against false cults, especially those making specific, unique claims about the heavenly entities described in Revelation. (One cult leader in the 1990s, for example, claimed that God had chosen him to father the twenty-four elders of Revelation 4.) Paul wrote in Colossians 2:18: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels." This should not be done with so-called human saints, either. Only God deserves worship.

The white raiment of the elders represents righteousness. The gold crowns may represent victory over evil. What the elders will do with those crowns is revealed in verse 10.

The ominous lightnings, thunders, and voices issuing out of the throne may depict judgments on evil. The seven lamps of fire burning in front of the throne are symbols of the seven "Spirits of God." Since there is only one Holy Spirit, it may be that these represent the sevenfold aspects or operations of the Spirit.

3. Four living creatures (Rev. 4:6-8).

Since the term "beast" is often used in the book of Revelation to refer to the antichrist, or man of sin, it might be advisable to call the four beasts mentioned here the four "creatures" or "beings." The interpretations of the identity of the creatures vary widely. They are probably angelic beings (cf. Isa. 6:2-3; Ezek. 1:5-25; 10:1-22), but we cannot say much more with certainty.

4. Heavenly worship (Rev. 4:9-11). All created beings have the same fundamental purpose, which is to worship our Creator in joy coupled with fear and to never cease reverencing and hallowing His name.

As the four creatures praise the eternal God on the throne, the twenty-four elders prostrate themselves before Him in worship and cast their crowns before Him. Using the same terms as the four creatures, they laud Him for His creation of the universe by ascribing to Him glory, honor, and power. There are several allusions in Scripture to the idea of believers receiving crowns, we will join this heavenly scene and lay our crowns before Jesus.

POINTS TO PONDER

No matter what happens on earth, the Lord is reigning in heaven and is in control of everything (Rev. 4:1-2).

God should be at the center of our attention, just as He is the focal point of all heaven (vss. 3-4).

We should never lose sight of the majesty of our God (vs. 5).

Worship is the occupation of the inhabitants of heaven and should be prominent in our lives here on earth (vss. 6-9).

No created being is worthy to receive the glory and praise that belong to the Creator alone (vss. 10-11).

CONCLUSION

The apostle John was told, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19). After compiling letters to the seven churches of Asia, John was told to come up to heaven and be shown "things which must be hereafter" (4:1). There is a shift here from narrative to prophetic Scripture. As we proceed through the book of Revelation, keep in mind the fact that there will be much symbolism to be explained. There will also be parenthetical interruptions from time to time, and the content may move backward or forward in time.

We suggest there are two reasons why John was given his vision of heaven. First, knowing what was coming in heaven would serve as an encouragement to believers involved in earthly trials. Second, it was impressed on him that worship will be the primary activity in heaven. We may deduce two applications from these facts. First, we need to fortify ourselves with the sure hope of eternal blessing in order to face life's challenges. Second, we need to develop our worship capacity now as much as possible in order to be ready for an eternity of praising God.

QUESTION(S)

1. What happened to John immediately after the door was opened in heaven?
2. How is the throne of God described in Revelation 4?
3. What might the twenty-four elders represent?
4. What do the twenty-four elders do before God's throne?
5. What is the meaning of "the seven Spirits of God" (vs. 5)?
6. What are some of the images John saw in this vision?
7. How did John describe the four beasts, and how does the Old Testament help us understand their identity?
8. What is the continual ministry of the four living creatures?
9. Why do the elders "cast their crowns before the throne" (vs. 10)?
10. How would this vision have been helpful to John and the first readers?

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is *"Worthy Is The Lamb"*

Lesson Text: **Revelation 5:1-5, 11-14**

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