

Behold | Sermons through the Revelation

Sermon #10 | Revelation 4:1- 11 | Welcome to the Throne of God

Revelation 4:1 | Transition to Heaven

- John had previously been **in the Spirit on the Lord's Day** (Rev. 1:10). Now he is taken **in the spirit** (v. 2) to the throne room of heaven.
- In his future vantage point of the day of the Lord, John sees an open door in heaven. Whether it is always open, yet unseen, or was recently opened for him is not made known.
- John makes mention of **the first voice which I heard**. It is impossible to tell from grammar alone whether this is the *first voice after seeing the open door* or the *first voice of the revelation*.
 - If it was the first voice of the revelation, it is the voice of God the Father – see Revelation 1:8.
 - However, John could also be saying, “the first voice I heard that was like a trumpet,” in which case it is the voice of Christ – see Revelation 1:10.
- The voice says, **I will shew thee things which must be hereafter**. These words, when compared with Revelation 1:1, lead us to conclude that this is God the Son, not God the Father speaking.

Revelation 4:2-3 | The Appearance of the One on the Throne

- There is no description of the throne. John moves immediately to the description of **he that sat** upon the throne. Ezekiel 1:26-28 gives a deeper description of the throne itself (presuming they are the same).
- The one on the throne was described as:
 - **Jasper** – a semi-opaque stone that is most often red, but can be yellow, green, brown, or blue.
 - **Sardin stone** – so named because it was mined near Sardis. A typically reddish-brown stone.
 - Note: The *Black Israelites*, a militant racist group that claims to be the real Israel, uses these two stones to prove that God is black.
- Around the throne was a **rainbow** that was **like an emerald**. Think “green eyes,” since the word **rainbow** is *iris*.

Revelation 4:4 | Introducing the 24 Elders

- There are many proposals for the identity of the 24 elders. Most center around the tribes of Israel and the Apostles. All are speculation.

- It seems to me that there is no need to place a human identity on these 24. Rather, they are simply 24 elders who surround the throne.
- The number 24 is a number that, in scripture and nature, symbolizes completeness, especially of government. There are 24 hours in a day, and the sun, moon, and stars *govern* the night and the day.
- Incidentally, when David divided the sons of Aaron into regiments, there were 24. See 1 Chronicles 24:3-5.

Revelation 4:5-8 | The Surroundings of the Throne, Including the Four Beasts

- In addition to **lightnings and thunderings and voices**, there are **seven lamps of fire** which are testified to be the **seven spirits of God**.
 - The **lamps of fire** are not *menorah*, as the previous **candlesticks** (Rev. 1:12). Rather, they are the actual lamps which sit on the branches of the menorah.
 - In Zechariah 4:10, there is mention of the seven **eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth**. This connection of the eyes to the spirits is made definitive in Revelation 5:6.
- A **sea of glass** was in front of the throne. These words are alluded to in the hymn, *Holy, Holy, Holy*.
- There were **four beasts**. There is an inability to totally translate the word ζῴων [zoan], literally, *living things*. These beasts seem to represent all of creation.
 - These creatures are likely the *cherubim* of heaven.
 - If so, it appears there are only four *cherubim*, though we cannot say definitively.
 - At one point there were five: see Ezekiel 28:14.

Revelation 4:9-11 | The Worship of the Beasts and the 24 Elders

- The song of the beasts: **Holy, Holy, Holy**.
- The backup choir: the 24 elders, who sing **Thou art worthy...**
- How do we fit in?
 - We marvel at the wondrous worship that takes place continuously around the throne.
 - We are reminded that *God doesn't need us for worship* but that *we have the honor of joining in worship*.
 - We are reminded that God is the ultimate *audience* in worship.
 - We are given information that we, along with all the earth, were created and exist **for thy pleasure**, and so we submit ourselves to His will.
 - We can imagine the day in which we shall **behold, a throne!** (v. 2).