

Union Chapel M.B. Church

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REVELATION 4

(Resource: The Bible Exposition Commentary New Testament)

The key word in Revelation Chapter 4 is *throne*; it is used 13 times (NASB). In fact, this is a key word in the entire book appearing 46 times (NASB). No matter what may happen on earth, God is on His throne and is in complete control. Various teachers interpret Revelation in different ways, but all agree that John is emphasizing the glory and sovereignty of God. What an encouragement that would be to the suffering saints of John's day and of every age in history. The focus of this chapter is all about the throne.

A. The Throne In Heaven

1. On the Throne – Almighty God, vv2-3a

- i. God, the Father (the Son approaches the throne Rev 5.6; the Spirit is before the throne in verse 4)
- ii. Human words cannot fully explain what God is like in His essence, Ps 104.2; 1 Tim 6.16

2. Around the Throne, vv3b-4, 6-7

- i. *A Rainbow, v3b*
 - a. Reminds us of God's covenant with Noah, Gen 9.13
 - b. Judgment is about to fall, and the rainbow reminds us that God is merciful, even in judgment (Hab 3.2); usually rainbows appear after storms; here, it appears before the storm
- ii. *Elders and Living Creatures, vv3-4, 6-7*
 - a. Elders – 12 tribes of Israel + 12 Apostles; perhaps the #24 may symbolize the completion of God's people
 - b. Living creatures – nearer to God than the elders; these special creatures symbolize God's creation and are related to God's covenant with Noah, Gen 9.8-17

3. Out of the Throne – Storm Signals, v5a

- i. Indications of a coming storm and reminders of God's awesome power, Ex 9.23, 28; 19.16 (these signals are repeated during the time of judgment, proceeding from the throne and temple of God, Rev 8.5; 11.19; 16.18)
- ii. We do not like to think of God as a God of judgment. We prefer to look at the rainbow around the throne but let us not ignore the lightning and thunder out of the throne. God's grace reigns through righteousness, Rom 5.21

4. Before the Throne – Lamps and a Sea, 5b-6a

- i. The seven lamps convey completeness and symbolize the Holy Spirit of God, Rev 1.4; Eze 1.13
- ii. The pure crystal sea symbolizes God’s holiness, which is the foundation of God’s throne (compare with Eze 1.22; we will see this sea again Rev 15)

5. Praise to the Throne, vv9-11

- i. Revelation is filled with hymns of praise: Rev 4.8, 11; 5.9-13; 7.12-17; 11.15-18; 12.10-12; 15.3-4; 16.5-7; 18.2-8; 19.2-6
- ii. The emphasis in this section is praise to the Father on the throne (as Creator, Ps 19.1-6); and we should praise the Creator for His creation too!

| The heavenly sanctuary parallels the earthly tabernacle and temple | |
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| <i>Earthly tabernacle/temple</i> | <i>Heavenly sanctuary</i> |
| Holy of Holies | The throne of God (Rev 4) |
| Seven-branched candlestick | Seven lamps of fire before the throne (Rev 4) |
| Bronze laver | Sea of glass (Rev 4) |
| Cherubim over the mercy seat | Four living creatures around the throne (Rev 4) |
| Priests | Elders (kings and priests) (Rev 4) |
| Brazen altar | Altar (Rev 6.9-11) |
| Incense altar | Incense altar (Rev 8.3-5) |
| Ark of the covenant | Ark of the covenant (Rev 11.19) |

Resource: *The Bible Exposition Commentary New Testament*, Warren Wiersbe, 2007

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