

# The Throne of God: He Is Worthy

## Revelation 4

**MPS** Jesus, enthroned in Heaven, is the One worthy of all glory and praise of all creation.

**OBJ** Every person should worship Jesus as worthy of all glory and praise because of Four Eternal Realities.

### READ Revelation 4:1-11

*After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." <sup>2</sup>At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. <sup>3</sup>And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. <sup>4</sup>Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. <sup>5</sup>From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, <sup>6</sup>and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.*

*And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: <sup>7</sup>the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. <sup>8</sup>And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,*

*"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"*

*<sup>9</sup>And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup>the twenty-four 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,*

*<sup>11</sup>"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." **Revelation 4:1-11***

**INTRO** What is your expectation when you come to church, when you plan to meet with God? What we have considered so far in chapters 2 and 3 are surely familiar, to some extent. Revelation 4 makes a decisive shift as John reveals his vision of heaven! This serves as the beginning of John's second vision in the book, each one introduced by an invitation to "come and see". We considered the situation on the earth with the seven churches. From here forward, John's attention and writing moves to a heavenward perspective. I love how I heard one preacher describe it, "John writes of infinite realities by speaking in earthly analogies."<sup>1</sup> Let's give ourselves to infinite realities by God's divine revelation.

**[.1] John sees a door standing open in heaven (.1).** Heaven can mean several things in John's writing. "Sometimes it is God's eternal dwelling-place (3:12). But it can also be a heaven which will eventually be destroyed (21:1), and even a place of conflict (12:7). Again, the same word can mean the sky (6:13). Here it is God's dwelling, but also the place where God chooses to reveal himself, the place where heavenly realities are made plain."<sup>2</sup> And once drawn up, John witnesses what must take place; not predictions of future events, but "the outworking of the divine will"<sup>3</sup> where God is in control. **Inside the door John sees God's eternal dwelling place, and realities too glorious for man of God's supreme will made plain to understand.**

**[.2-4]** John was immediately "*in the Spirit*", a phrase used only four times in Revelation (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), to signify that one is under the control of Holy Spirit. Divine revelation would not be left to human capacity. What John was about to see was the Lord's marvelous doing (Psalm 118:23). **John's whole being, all his faculties and senses, the attention of his intellect was not only set on but under the complete control of Holy Spirit.**

<sup>1</sup> Kyle Shearin, "The Throne of God (Revelation 4)". <https://myfaithfamilychurch.com/sermons-roll/tag/Revelation>. Last Accessed January 26, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 87.

<sup>3</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 88.



**John's vision centered on a throne with one seated on it.** John's use of throne is also a dominant theme of Revelation.<sup>4</sup> The appearance of the One seated on the throne is described by fine jewels of jasper and carnelian. More than actual stones, the imagery denotes power and majesty. The throne was wrapped by a rainbow of emerald, a radiance halting the throne which denotes its eternal nature. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones with twenty-four elders seated on them, all clothed in white garments and golden crowns on their heads. These are likely angelic beings of superior order, and representative of the whole body of the faithful.<sup>5</sup> John's description of the throne includes all that surrounds and radiates from the throne because by the presence of the One enthroned everything is made more glorious. **Above all that the reader should understand, though, is that Heaven's throne stands above all others in every way, in power, majesty, and glory.**

**TRANS** And just as the throne description includes all that surrounds it, so it also includes all that exudes from it.

**[.5-8] The One who sits enthroned commands awe-inspiring attention with a voice like thunder.** Seven torches blaze before the throne, most likely a reference to Holy Spirit. And a sea of glass like crystal is also before the throne. Though not completely clear, this symbolism denotes royalty and splendor. **Can you imagine the blinding brilliance of blazing torches reflecting from pure crystal?** In all, commentators believe this depiction to be a "symbol conveying God's ineffable, absolute holiness—holiness in its original sense of separateness".<sup>6</sup>

**Four living creatures inhabit the area around the throne.** One is like a lion. The second like an ox. The third has the face of man. And the fourth like an eagle in flight. They have eyes all around to constantly attend to the throne and the earth. While these four are distinct from the cherubim, their closeness to the throne assigns a special importance to them, as they lead in the constant praise of God (4:8; 5:8, 14; 7:11; 19:4). With six wings each they surround the throne in unceasing praise saying, "*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!*" Be careful that you do not imagine these four creatures as "heavenly energizer bunnies" on constant repeat with unending energy. It is not their capacity that makes them unceasing. **John's revelation is that the unceasing praise of the four creatures is fueled by the majesty, splendor, and glory of the holiness of the One enthroned.**

**[.9-11] And finally, John reveals the worship around Heaven's throne.** Their worship is a fully-engaged participation. Marked by declaring the glory and honor of His nature and being, along with giving thanks to Him for his marvelous works, they fall down before Him in worship. They completely humble themselves before Him as they bow down and cast their crowns before His throne. Their praise declares the worthiness of His being in glory, honor, and power, as Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign over all things. **The One enthroned fuels the worship that fills Heaven by the declaration of His worthiness.**

**Jesus, enthroned in Heaven, is the One worthy of all glory and praise of all creation.**

**ILLUS** If you really want to get to know someone, go in their house. In our home you see how we live, the décor that adorns our life, the way we organize and pattern our lives, our celebrations and remembrances, our joys and often sorrows of life.

**TRANS** **The purest picture of God is best found at the closest proximity to His habitation.** Jesus brings John in the Spirit to reveal in closest proximity the very nature of His being. And here John beheld no inkling of lesser glory, but only that which is unimaginable and indescribable. Revelation confounds us NOT because John poorly describes but because all human language is incompetent to describe the fullness of His excellencies, human intellect incapable of comprehending the fullness of God, and imagination incapable to contain the majesty and glory of His presence. **Jesus who is worthy of glory and praise from all creation is worthy of all your worship too!**

<sup>4</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 88. Morris notes, "He uses the word throne forty-seven times out of a total of sixty-two times in the New Testament."

<sup>5</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 90. "Morris notes, "the elders are angelic beings indeed, but angelic beings who are 'the heavenly representatives of the whole body of the faithful'."

<sup>6</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 91. Morris cites Martin Kiddle in this quote.



**OBJ** Four Eternal Realities that reveal Jesus as worthy of all glory and praise in worship.

**Eternal Reality #1: The Splendor of His majesty.**

Like Moses in the cleft of the rock, John is “*in the Spirit*” to behold what is too wonderful for human comprehension and too marvelous for words! The Spirit holds John both to bring him to a place He could not go otherwise and to show Him what He could not see without the Spirit. But the Spirit also holds John to guard Him from what he could not withstand alone! God wills to reveal Himself. This whole book (letter) tells us as much. But it is as dangerous to us as it is overwhelming for us. There is not one aspect of our being suited to behold the most minute fraction of Jesus enthroned. **No matter how casual we’ve crafted our image of God, He is never less than pure splendor in majesty and holiness.**

**[Song]** I Stand In Awe You are beautiful beyond description, too marvelous for words, too wonderful for comprehension, like nothing ever seen or heard. Who can grasp your infinite wisdom? Who can fathom the depth of your love? You are beautiful beyond description, Majesty, enthroned above.

**When was the last time you were stunned in awe by God’s presence surrounding and filling you? God’s not playing hide-and-seek.** But He will only be found not when we search for Him, but when we seek Him with our whole heart. (Jeremiah 29:13) The difference is that searching looks for the unfound, while seeking pursues to follow what is known. “*With my whole heart I seek you*”, the Psalmist declares (Psalm 119:10), by submitting Himself to God’s Word in his life. **The splendor of God’s majesty is only beheld by the hold of Holy Spirit as you humble your whole being to God’s Word.**

**Eternal Reality #2: The Awe of His glorious presence.**

John describes an ever-expanding glory that emanates from the Throne like heat from a fire. The appearance of the One enthroned could only be described by the most precious and valuable of comparisons. Wrapping the Throne was a rainbow of equal precious value. Still further, the Throne was adorned all around in glorious splendor with more occupied thrones of radiated glory, but whose purpose was intended only for the One enthroned. And the sounds of the Throne were as awe-inducing as the sights. And all this was not stagnant but alive with never-ending glory. And still further, the whole surrounding was an endless sea of brilliant, unending glory. Notice this: when John stood in awe of the glorious presence of God, he does not bother with what it did to him, but was only consumed by WHOSE presence he stood in.

**APPL** We’ve reduced the awe of worship to a casual comfort that leaves us undisturbed. We approach God’s presence with little thought of anything other than what we can take away rather than Who we come to behold. Our expectation is for one thrill of lightheadedness from adrenaline rush to the next stomach turn like a roller-coaster. **The One on Heaven’s Throne knows nothing of what we so often call worship.**

John witnessed the Throne, but he didn’t even participate, not yet anyway, let alone concern himself with his experience. He was paralyzed by commanded attention, unmoved NOT because He couldn’t but because he wouldn’t. **The glorious presence of God commands the peak of every sensory perception tuned and consumed to Jesus in complete awe to testify of WHO we have beheld, NOT to testify to what it did to us nor judge its value for us.**

**Do you approach worship to evaluate and assess its value for you, or to testify of the glory of the One who brings you near to His habitation?**

**Eternal Reality #3: The Posture of His glory in worship.**

When the elders worship, they fall down and cast their crowns at Jesus’ feet in worship while the four living creatures sing unceasingly. Their song is one of unending testimony to the holiness of the eternal One. Neither coerced nor manipulated, pleaded with nor prodded, the purpose of their existence around the throne is to declare the glory of the One enthroned as worthy. **Everything around Heaven’s Throne attends the whole of its being to declare the worthiness of Jesus and His glory!**

**APPL** **How comfortable we have become in our worship.** There is immense debate in designing a worship service today, but almost none of it considers God. We have reduced our discussion of worship to personal preferences, wants and needs.



Worship has become too much like grocery shopping; we send a list to God and tell Him when we will come by for Him to serve us, so we don't have to be bothered. If someone bows down, we look for what was dropped or wonder what is wrong. The pressure to keep everyone comfortable, satisfied and unoffended is unceasing. Contrite hearts seldom visit our services. [We live in a day when more resource is dedicated to accessing elements of worship instantly, with less participation.](#)

John describes the worship of Heaven by two postures and two actions. **Do you see them?** Those elders around the throne fall down before Him, cast crowns and sing / speak. That's one posture and two actions. **"Where is the other posture?"** you ask. Jesus is the first posture, seated on His throne! Until we behold the One worthy who sits on the Throne in glory we will never be move to fall down and cast all before Him in praise. Until our worship is all-consuming of the One enthroned in true majesty and glory, we will never understand what is to come, only entertain it in a way that tickles our ears and tantalizes our fancies. We come to Revelation to get answers for our questions. God reveals Himself to show the worthiness of His glory. [Until the same Spirit that brought Him in rules in us, we will not regard what He saw as anything worthy of our great attention.](#)

**When you walk away from this gathering today, what worthiness of Jesus will the posture of your life acknowledge?**

**Eternal Reality #4: The Power of the Praise of His Name declared.**

**The resound of heaven is the praise of God's worthiness.** True glory demands praise! And praise of God empowers ever more! Many have read this passage and said, **"Is singing praise all we're going to do in Heaven?"** The short answer is "yes", because of the same glory that empowers eternal praise from those who inhabit Heaven now. No amount nor extent of praise for God will never outpace nor surpass the worthiness of God's glory. [Praise begets praise, without weakening or weariness God's worthiness poured out through praise of His name empowers even greater praise!](#)

**Two principles of praise from Heaven's throne is true for us too. First,** the power and majesty and glory that fuels Heaven's Throne is the same power and majesty and glory that fuels our lives in Jesus Christ to live as real Christ followers. **Second,** the more we praise God, the more of God's glory fills our life, in joy, love, power, wisdom, and strength for our every need and desire of heart. The glory of God will never be outdone by any measure of praise but only multiplied unto greater glory compounded within us. You will not because you cannot out-praise the worthiness of God's glory! [The praise of God is the resound of His people, with our tongues and our whole lives, because by His praise He empowers our whole life.](#)

**APPL** **Are you feeling weak spiritually?** Praise the Lord, praise His holy Name! Let the depth and extent, the measure and intensity to which you press your praise be equal to the weight of your burden or need, and see if God will not pour out greater glory that far surpasses your praise, to meet your need for the glory of His Name!

**CLOSE** Our study of Revelation should be fueled more by its power to fuel our hope in Jesus above any interest in the peculiarity of the unknown. Too many focus on the freakish of the unknown to predict what cannot be known, and all to the demise of acknowledging what is clearly revealed. Until we've bowed before the One enthroned we have no capacity to receive His revelation. Revelation 4 & 5 serve as our anchor, the truth that tethers us for the remainder of all that is revealed.

