

"Behold, The One Who Sits Upon The Throne!"

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[0:00] This past June, the Salvati family, we went west. And we were able to see the Grand Canyon and Bryce Canyon and Zion National Park, and in a word, awesome.

I'll never forget, standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon, and overwhelmed by its size and its age and its beauty and its power. It's one of a kind.

You can see it from space. It's awesome. Overwhelmed amazement.

How are you feeling this morning? Did you come in feeling awesome? Maybe you're feeling burnt out. You're serving out of obligation, not adoration, and you're like, it'd be good to get some gratitude around here.

Maybe you're strung out. I know there are parents in here who are sleep-deprived, and they're just trying to hold it all together. You're strung out. Maybe you're checked out.

[1:17] You have shelved discernment, biblical discernment, and you've been doing one little compromise after the next, and now you've just kind of glossed over, and you've checked out.

Maybe you're a sellout, indistinguishable from the rest of the non-believing world, and you are ashamed to speak the name of Jesus. Or maybe you're ready to tap out.

You've been living for Jesus. You've been trying to be faithful to him. You've got Thanksgiving on the horizon with your unbelieving family, and you're just thinking, maybe I should just go and just keep my mouth shut and let it all be peace, peace, when there is no peace.

And you just want to tap out. You just want to say, I've tried to do my Jesus thing, and I'm at it. It's too hard. Do you know what you need?

You don't need to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. You don't need to schedule a time better. What you need is awe.

[2:30] Awe. Overwhelming amazement at the one sitting on the throne in heaven right now.

It's time to get your awe on. And you get your awe on by seeing the God on his throne.

Worthy. Join in the chorus of praise. Worthy. Worthy. Worthy. Worthy. Worthy. This morning, whether you're burnt out, checked out, strung out, a sell out, or on the verge of tapping out, you've got to get your awe on.

You've got to see the one sitting on the throne. In Revelation chapter 4 and 5, we're given this vision into the heavenly throne room.

It's quite an inspiring vision. An awe-inspiring vision. And this morning, we're going to focus on chapter 4. And chapter 4 develops in five steps.

[3:42] First, there's the summons to the throne room. Verse 1. Chapter 4. And then we see the one seated on the throne. Verses 2 and 3. And then there's this activity from and before the throne.

Verses 5 and 6. And then the entourage around the throne. Four living creatures with a bunch of eyeballs and 24 elders. Who are they?

I don't know. Well, I do know. I'm going to tell you. They're around the throne. And it all culminates in praise in verses 8 and 11.

Five steps of an awe-inspiring vision of God on His throne. It's time to get your awe on. And you get that by seeing God on His throne.

So let's start with verse 1. The summons. You know, it would really be good to have my Bible. Verse 1 of chapter 4.

[4:48] After this, I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven and the first voice which I heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, come up here and I will show you what must take place after this.

In verse 1, we are to see what John sees and hear what John hears. And what he sees is an open door in heaven.

Now, I don't know what your experience with open doors is in the Salvati house. An open door in our house typically means there is something burning in the kitchen and we need to air it out. And so, that's not what's going on in heaven. Or, in the Salvati house, someone has forgotten to close the door and anybody can just come in at that point.

But it's not like God on His throne is saying, hey, Archangel Michael, please close the door. You forgot to close it. That's not the open door. The open door in verse 1 is an invitation.

[5:50] Come and see. Come. Open door. An invitation. And John not only sees this open door, he tells us, behold!

An open door in heaven. He wants us to see. We're going to have a line of sight into the very throne room in heaven through this vision.

And not only does He tell us to see this, He hears a voice. I heard speaking to me like a trumpet. A voice. Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this. It's the same voice of chapter 1 verse 10. It's the voice of the risen, radiant, and reigning Christ.

And it's trumpet light because it's loud and it's focused. It is a heart-piercing word. And the invitation is to come up to the open door to look in.

[6:59] I will show you what must take place after this. It's no coincidence that this Jesus who had shed His blood for John is the one who's ushering Him into the very throne room of God.

And He says, I will show you what must take place after this. And that word must is a divine must. It is necessarily going to happen. What must take place after this, these future events that are now going to happen after Jesus has dressed these seven churches in chapters 2 and 3.

What must now take place is ordained by God to happen. It's a divine necessity.

It will happen. And so what happens in chapters 4 and 5 is this throne room and what gets enacted from the throne room for chapters 6 through 22 in the book of Revelation is these things that must happen.

[8:10] The outworking of God's will for the fullness of time culminating in His judgment of all things. It's going to happen. So here in this summoning John is summoned to peer into the throne room of God in heaven to see what must happen now that these letters to the seven churches have been written.

So those are written in 96 AD. So John is being brought into what's going to happen is going to happen right after that. And so what we are being brought into is God at work in the world now. The vision to the churches in chapters 2 and 3 is the churches being challenged on earth. And what this is happening in verse 1 is a transition from these churches being challenged on earth to God on His throne unchallenged in heaven.

We go from earth to heaven the throne room. That's what's happening here. And it's very timely.

These seven churches in Asia Minor modern day Turkey 96 AD they were experiencing all sorts of stuff.

And they were being called to overcome and now what happens is they're given this vision of God exalted on His throne. God is on His throne church.

[9:46] And we are brought into this vision too. It's time to get your awe on.

It's time to see the one sitting on the throne. So if you're burnt out, if you're strung out, if you're checked out, if you're a sell out, or you are about to tap out, this vision of God on His throne is coming at just the right time for you.

It was just the right time for the seven churches in Asia Minor, and it's just the right time for you. So we've seen the summons. Now let's look at verses 2 and 3, the one on the throne.

John peers through the door in verse 2. He's empowered by the Spirit. That's also from chapter 1, verse 10. It's a vision given to a prophet, and in the Spirit he beholds, first thing, a throne.

A throne. That word throne is a very important word in the book of Revelation. It appears 46 times throughout the book.

[10:53] 40 of those times is an explicit reference to God on His throne reigning over all. And then here in chapter 4, of those 40 times, throne is used 11 times in chapter 4 alone.

So do you know what that means? Chapter 4 is throne dense. It's emphatic. God wants to get throne on your mind.

His throne. His reign. His working out of all things. As Americans, we don't really think much of kings, throne rooms, thrones.

I mean, we're Americans. But we're familiar enough with it to know. The closest thing we have to a king is a president. The closest thing we have to a throne room is an oval office.

The closest thing we have to throne furniture is the resolute desk sitting in the oval office. Maybe you've seen National Treasure 2. people. And we all know that the one seated at this desk is making decisions for our nation.

[12:15] That this one at this desk, he's exercising authority. He's making plans, setting him into motion. The closest thing that we have to a king in a throne room and a throne is a president in an oval office and a resolute desk.

But the throne that John sees, it's not in a white house. It's not in a palace or a fortress. It's not even on earth. This is a throne in heaven.

The throne in heaven. The throne that from which authority is exercised over all kingdoms. whether that's human, animal, whether that is spiritual or even solar kingdoms, from this throne, everything is ruled over.

When we see that word throne, we need to invest it with sovereignty. Unrivaled, all authoritative, all powerful, rule over all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth and across the galaxies.

We're in the throne room of God. If you're familiar with your Bibles, you've been there before.

Ezekiel chapter 1 and Isaiah chapter 6.

[13:50] If you were the early church in 96 AD, this would have been really good news. You've just been told by the risen Christ they're going to be facing challenges and tribulations you need to overcome.

And now the focus is shifted onto heaven and God on his throne unrivaled and unchallenged.

You see, that throne doesn't have a little sign on it that says, be back after lunch. That throne has someone sitting on it. and we see this someone described in verse 3.

And he who sat there had the appearance of Jasper and Carnelian and around the throne. It was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. The Greek language, which this is a translation of, it's actually more specific.

It would read like this. And he who sat there had the like appearance of Jasper and Carnelian and around the throne was a rainbow that had the like appearance of an emerald.

[15:04] He's playing off of Ezekiel chapter 1 where Ezekiel has a vision of God on his mobile throne and he describes, Ezekiel describes the God he sees as an appearance of his likeness.

He's not even getting close to describing imaging God which would have been forbidden. Though there's reverence here. Did you notice the stones, Jasper, Carnelian and Emerald?

They're very valuable stones. They're going to show up later in 21 talking about the new Jerusalem but all these stones are translucent which means they let light shine through and they bring color. without seeing what's behind them. It's like privacy glass in your bathroom. Let's light out but you can't see anything inside of it. There's mystery here.

But color, light, brilliance, awe, wonder. And did you notice the rainbow around the throne?

[16:14] verse three, and around the throne was a rainbow. Your mind should make a beeline to Genesis chapter nine where after the flood God promises not to send another flood and he marks that promise and we see it every time there's a summer thunderstorm rainbow.

rainbow. You should be thinking mercy. This throne exalted high with the one on it over all things mercy.

Awe inspiring. What we have here is God and his breathtaking beauty sitting on his overall throne in heaven and what the emphasis of this passage is is God is on the throne right now.

Would you mind turning to the person next to you and telling them right now God's on his throne right now? Go ahead. He is on his throne right now.

The churches in 96 AD would have welcomed this despite what they may have been feeling despite the threats and the challenges they were experiencing they were being given a vision of God on his throne and we are too.

[17:48] I don't know what you're going through. I don't know if you're burnt out, if you're strung out, if you're checked out, if you're a sell out, or if you're about to tap out.

God's on his throne and that is to have an effect on your soul which you start crying out, worthy. This awe gives persevering power.

All right, we've been summoned, we've seen God on his throne, are you starting to get your awe on a little bit? The third step now, interesting activity coming from and before the throne.

throne. I'm just going to point out some stuff and I'm going to camp out on something. There are three things here. From the throne are coming lightnings and rumblings and thunderstorms and what you're to be thinking about in light of our Bibles is Exodus chapter 19, Mount Sinai.

God delivered his people, brought them to this mountain, he's going to make a covenant with him, give him his law, and he is theophanizing, he's showing up in dark clouds and rumbling and you know what the people were feeling?

[19:08] A little scared, awe. It's going around the throne, it's coming from the throne. And not just that, we read that there are these seven burning torches and we're told in verse 5 that the seven spirits of God, God.

I'm going to come back to verse 4 in a little bit. These seven spirits of God we've learned earlier from this series, it's actually a reference to the one Holy Spirit in his fullness.

That number seven for the Hebrew mind meant completeness and fullness. And so before the throne in heaven is the fullness of the Spirit's presence lighting up the heavenly temple.

that's what's going on there. But what I want to show you is this sea. There is a sea before the throne.

We read, and before the throne, verse 6, there was, as it were, a sea of glass, like crystal. It's interesting.

[20:27] A sea, am I reading that right? S-E-A, sea of glass. You need to understand that in the book of Revelation, and in the Bible generally, the sea is associated with evil, with chaos.

It's a chaos maker. Do you remember in Mark chapter 4 and 5, chapter 5, Jesus shows up in the area of the Gethsemanes, and there is this guy going nuts.

He's a demoniac possessed by a legion of demons, and he's running around the cemetery naked, and nobody, no human could bind him. Jesus shows up, and he sets this guy free, and he's calming in his right mind.

Do you remember what happened before it? Jesus is on a boat on the Sea of Galilee, making headway to this place to set this demoniac free.

Do you remember what happens on the sea? It goes nuts. It's chaos. Do you remember what Jesus says to the sea? Peace, be still. Be still chaos.

[21:44] Done. It was like glass. glass. And then he sets the demoniac free. There's a connection between demonic, satanic activity in the raging sea.

Let me point to you further. In Revelation chapter 13, the beast, one of the three of the members of the anti-trinity, dragon, beast, false prophet, the beast, do you know where he comes up from?

The sea. Chaos maker. And then maybe you remember when you read in your Bible at the end of Revelation, Revelation 21, you're reading about the new heavens and the new earth being created, and there's this little line there that says, in the sea was no more, and usually what I do is like, I don't know what that means, I just keep on reading.

Here's what that means. Chaos is done. So now we come back to the throne room. And before the throne is a sea of glass like crystal, smooth as ice.

Oh, there's no chaos in the throne room of God. There's no crazy making going on. It's at peace, tranquil.

[23:13] God is in control. What we see going on around here, the thunderstorm's power, the fullness of the Spirit's presence, and a peaceful sea right in front of the throne.

It's supposed to get your awe on. It's good news for the burnt out, the strung out, the checked out, the sell out, and those about to tap out.

God's on his throne right now. You may not feel like that, but he is. Now I want to go back to verse 4 and verses 6 and 8, because this is the fourth move.

There is this entourage around the throne, and I'm guessing many of you have been like, what are these living creatures with all those eyeballs? Well, this entourage around the throne is encircling the throne.

Think of two concentric circles. The group around, the furthest out, is 24 elders, and then inside that, right almost on top of the throne, are four living creatures.

[24:26] They're surrounding the throne. So who are these 24 elders? Well, there's a lot of debate. Scholars say, well, they might represent the 24 Levites worshiping the temple in the Old Testament.

Or there's some really smart folks that think that this is a distinct class of angels around God's throne that are kind of like God's angelic advisors.

But there's another option, an option that I tend to be persuaded of, key word, persuaded, lean to. I wouldn't die on this hill, but I think you'll see why in a second.

That these 24 elders are actually representing redeemed humanity. That they are representing saints of old and new.

Now, why would I say that? When you read the descriptions of these 24 elders in verse 4, you read that they're seated on thrones, that they're clothed in white garments, that they've got gold, gold crowns on their heads.

[25:43] It should ring some bells. The letter to the church of Laodicea, you remember what Jesus said, come by for me.

Come by for me. Gold refined by fire, white garments. And then, towards the end of three, he says, the one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my father on his throne.

Throne, white garments, gold. I think that this beleaguered church is given a vision of their representatives around the throne.

Throne. There are 24 of them. What's up with the number 24? Well, it's a clear doubling of the number 12, as in the 12 tribes of Israel, as in the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

And when you get back into Revelation 21, the new Jerusalem, this glorious city coming down from heaven, what you see is described as this gigantic wall around the city has 12 gates, and there are names on those 12 gates, the 12 tribes of Israel.

[27:04] And this same one city has 12 foundations, and on those 12 foundations are 12 names, the 12 names of the apostles of the Lamb.

This one city, together, representing all of God's redeemed, 12 tribes, 12 apostles, God's people who believe in Jesus, Jew and Gentile.

These 24 elders are representatives of the Old Testament and New Testament saints reigning with God in His presence. And that's just the first part of the entourage.

entourage. Let's turn to the second group around the throne, those within the circle. And verses 6 and 8, we read about them.

They are described as living creatures. And when you read their descriptions of having eyeballs all over the place and wings, you're kind of left shocked.

[28:15] This is really weird. It's meant to have that effect on you. And it's meant to stir your thinking. These symbols often point back to the Old Testament as these are right now.

These creatures, living creatures around the throne, these four living creatures, they have so many similarities to the angels of Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6 that are surrounding the throne visions there.

Winged creatures with really odd features. In verse 7, we read that the first of these living creatures is like a lion. The second is like an ox.

The third is like a man. And the fourth is like an eagle. Do you know what those four creatures have in common? they are the strongest of their species.

They represent their species. And when he put four of them together around the throne, you have representation of all species, all creation around the throne.

[29:34] four carries the sense of the four winds, the four points of the compass. These four living creatures are representatives of all of God's creation.

And these creatures have six wings like the seraphim in Isaiah 6. In verses 6 and 8, we read that they're covered with eyes.

You kind of think it's kind of grotesque until you realize why they're so eyeballed out. Look at verse 8.

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are filled out with so many eyeballs. It's who they're around. All of their eyes are fixed on the one sitting on the throne.

All attention, all attention in the heavenly throne room is on the one sitting on the throne. All eyes on the one sitting on the throne. All of their eyes are on him.

[30:52] All of creation is bearing witness to the creator on the throne. these four creatures represent all of creation and they make up the second half of the entourage around the throne.

Let's put it all together. Because if you put it all together, and this is why I think they represent what they do, you have representation of all of God's works of redemption and representation of all of God's work of creation in the throne room paying close attention to the one on the throne.

It's an entourage of representations of those who are blood bought and those who God has called into existence.

we are being given a glimpse into the throne room of God and those attending him and it is awesome.

It's what's happening right now. We're going to wrap up this service maybe at 1120, 1125. we're going to go our different ways. But the heavenly worship service never ends.

[32:22] It never stops. Because the entourage, they're not indifferent into whose presence they're in.

they're not burnt out. They're not strung out. They're not checked out. There's no sell out.

They're not about to tap out. Oh, they're dialed in. We've seen the entourage. They've got their awe on.

Because awe always culminates in praise. And that's what we see happening in verses 8 and 11.

It's the final move of this chapter. Summons. We've seen the one sitting. We see what's going on around the throne. The entourage. And now the praise.

[33:21] Both the four living creatures and the 24 elders offer up praise to the one sitting on the throne. It starts with the four living creatures.

They read in verse 8. They never cease to say, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come.

This is what they do. They keep on praising God. They've got their awe on. And it culminates in praise. It's what the seraphim are doing in Isaiah.

6. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. And that's what we see happening here. There's a three-fold praise for who God is.

His holiness, His power, and His eternity. Holy, holy, holy. It's the distinct character trait of God. It's the only word used three times to describe God in worship of Him.

[34:23] There's no other word repeated three times. We don't have, oh, you're God of love, love, love. Oh, you're God of power, power, power. We have a God who is holy, holy, holy. It's emphatic.

It means set apart in one's nature, in one's essence, other. And these four living creatures recognize it.

There's no one like you. No one like you. God doesn't think that His holiness is boring, and neither do these four living creatures around the throne.

There's no boredom in God's presence. There's no boredom in God's presence. Not only is He holy, holy, holy, He is almighty. And we're very familiar with this word almighty.

Maybe overly familiar. It means all-powerful, unlimited, unrivaled. There's no other created being or thing that even comes close to rivaling God in His power.

[35:32] Let me give you an example. I like sci-fi things. I like movies about black holes and spaceships coming to black holes and they gotta put all their thrusters on in order to get away from the black hole.

Black holes are like mysterious, gigantic things that nobody wants to deal with. They can have kind of like this almightiness to them. But if this is true, God the Creator not only thought up black holes, not only has them named all throughout the universe, He's the one who flicked them into existence with His pinky.

God doesn't get sucked into black holes. There is nothing, no one, that comes close to the power of the Lord God Almighty.

He speaks things into existence with just words. He saves sinners from the consequences of their sins.

There's a power, no one has a power like that. And not just is He powerful, He is eternal who was and is and is to come. Here are four created beings around the throne and they are basically kind of reiterating Psalm 92, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

[36:59] God, there's no one like that. You may have an eternity in front of you, you do not have an eternity behind you. God does.

He is the ancient of days, no beginning and no end. He is the everlasting I am set apart in all that He is.

In a very real sense, time owns you. You are bound by time. We've got 70, 80 years if we're strong. We've got to be places. We've got to hit our marks. But isn't it good to know that the one sitting on the throne, He is timeless.

He owns time. Time serves God's purposes. That's why Jesus can say, I will show you what must take place because I've got time as a tool.

[38:10] God owns time because God is timeless. It's three-fold praise. these living creatures are praising God for His holiness, for His power, for His eternality and none of them are bored.

It's a glorious sight. And then these four living creatures in verse 9, they're like worship leaders. they're saying, holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. He who was and is and is to come and whenever they say that because they keep on saying it or things like it.

Verse 10, the other, those outside the circle, the 24 elders, they hear that and then they respond. They've got their awe on and it culminates in praise.

They hear these words, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. He who was and is and is to come and you don't see the elders. What time is it?

[39:27] They're falling down. They're worshipping Him. They're lifting their voices. They're casting their crowns. This crown is mine because you gave it to me.

I'm giving it back. You be praised and glorified. Oh, it's such a good picture for us of how to respond to who God is.

When we are awed by God, the response is dropping down. It's humility. It's giving back. It's a great picture for us and look what they're saying.

worthy are you, our Lord and God. You don't know this, but that same phrase was used to greet the Emperor Domitian in 96 A.D.

worthy are you, Emperor, Roman Emperor. Worthy are you, our Lord and God, Emperor. You see what's going on here?

[40:33] The 24 elders surrounding the throne, they're like, uh, no. There is only one who is worthy.

He is no created thing. He is no man or woman. He's not sitting on a human throne. He's the one lifted up.

He's the one on the throne in heaven. These elders representing all of the redeemed are saying there is only one who is worthy to receive glory and honor and power.

It's a pile up of praise words words. Words just can't get all the way around it. It's, they're seeing His majesty and their worship is reserved for no other than Him.

They give a reason for it. For you created all things. Worthy are you for you created all things. there is no one else who speaks things into existence and then by their will keep them existed.

[41:53] That's the claim. Not only did He create, He sustains. And for these churches and for us, that means He is keeping alive all of our friends and enemies.

God reigns over it all. He keeps all things in existence by His will.

Okay, take a breath. God's will. Take another breath. God's will. He's keeping you alive. He's keeping all things alive.

just to let you know. Chapter 5 rolls around and the four living creatures join their voices with the 24 elders.

They're no longer singing by themselves. They're together with one voice singing a new song, no longer to the one on the throne, but to the Lamb who was slain. We're going to learn about Him in two weeks.

[42:57] They form a chorus because they got their awe on. And then chapter 5 verses 11 and 12 joining the entourage are all the angels, myriads of angels all in heaven and they join the four living creatures and 24 elders to sing a song to the Lamb who was slain.

The angels got their awe on and it culminates in praise. And then in 5 13, all of heaven is joined by every creature on earth and under the earth to bless the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb. It all culminates in praise of all things on heaven and on earth and around. It's awesome. The throne room of God is filled with the glory of God and awestruck attendants who see Him for who He is.

Awe culminates in praise in heaven and on earth. It's from this throne room as we go through the book of Revelation.

This throne room filled with beautiful glory and ceaseless praise. It's from this throne room that the Lamb will execute the very plan of the one sitting on the throne for the fullness of time.

[44:23] He's on His throne right now carrying out His purposes. That's good news. Are you feeling burnt out?

Strung out? Checked out? Sell out? You want to tap out? Maybe you're just bored out of your mind. right? It's time to get your on because God is on His throne right now.

So join the chorus of praise. The cure for burnout is awe. The cure for getting strung out is awe.

The cure for getting checked out is awe. The cure for a sell out is awe. The cure for being wanted to tap out is awe. The cure for the one bored out of their mind is awe.

Get a line of sight on the throne room. Get a line of sight on the one seated on the throne. throne. You need to get your awe on.

[45:40] And the way to get your awe on is beholding the one sitting right now on the throne. And when you do you're going to join the chorus of praise.

Let me leave you with this final thought. the heavenly worship of God right now. The heavenly worship service that is going on right now it's going to continue.

You're going to leave this building but the 24 elders and the four living creatures and the myriads of angels they're going to continue to worship Him. It is our glory and joy to enter into the ceaseless praise of all attending Him and to cry out to Him worthy.

Worthy are you. Worthy is the one who is holy. Worthy is the one who is almighty and worthy is the one who was and is and is to come who is on His throne forever and ever.

Amen and amen. God we thank you so much for revelation 4. God would you use this to give persevering power to our souls to get through this week and this day for you.

[47:09] For the glory of your name the good of all people and all God's people said amen. amen.