

# All Things

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[ 0 : 00 ] Last Sunday was our first service together in three months of not having anything in person together. And it was a great time. We sure enjoyed being together.

And we looked at a place in God's Word where, long ago, services were disrupted. And then, after a period of time, resumed again.

And we looked at that day when King David led the people of Israel to begin services again at the tent that David set up in Jerusalem. It was a joyful day. It was just a wonderful time.

David encouraged the people to get the instruments out. He got the worship team together. And he shared one of his own songs that day as an example of the kind of praise and song that they were to offer to the Lord.

And we saw last Sunday that the kind of worship that God desires is worship that comes from the heart. We saw, in David's words, that God is worthy of our praise.

[ 1 : 07 ] He deserves it. It's fitting for him to receive that from us. And we looked at a whole bunch of reasons that David put into that song of why God is worthy. Of us coming together and worshiping him Sunday after Sunday.

Well, today we want to add another reason to that list. A reason for why God is worthy of our worship and our praise.

And we find that reason in Revelation chapter 4. Revelation is a unique part of the scriptures. It has some of the characteristics of a letter that's been written to a number of churches.

But it also has characteristics of a vision which God gave to the Apostle John. And not just any vision, but a prophetic vision. A vision in which things of the future are revealed.

And so, up until this point in the book of Revelation, John is on the island of Patmos where he has been exiled because of his preaching the word of God and because of his giving testimony about Jesus.

[ 2 : 20 ] And it's here on the island of Patmos that God gave him an amazing vision. The Lord Jesus himself was who John saw revealed to him that day.

And he saw the Lord Jesus not just in ordinary human form, but in his glorious appearance.

And the Lord Jesus commanded him to write words down, letters to give to various churches. And it's just following this that we pick up the story of this vision that John is experiencing in chapter 4.

After this, I looked, and there before me, says John, was a door standing open in heaven.

And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this. At once, I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven.

[ 3 : 30 ] With someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby.

A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were 24 other thrones. And seated on them were 24 elders.

They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder.

In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also, in front of the throne, there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures. And they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion.

[ 4 : 32 ] The second was like an ox. The third had a face like a man. The fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings.

Day and night, they never stopped saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever.

They lay their crowns before the throne and say, You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

Well, this is a very strange vision. There are a lot of interesting details in it.

[ 5 : 45 ] Lots of things that, if we're honest, we have no idea what John is talking about. But let's look at a few of the details that we see here in this vision.

The first thing that we want to notice is that this is a vision of heaven. This is one artist's rendition of this vision.

John says, There before me I saw a door standing open in heaven, and a voice invites him, the voice who spoke to him earlier, the voice of Jesus, to come up here and see some things, and in some mysterious way that's beyond our understanding, John was in the spirit, in this vision, and it's as though he was taken up through this door into heaven, where he got a glimpse of some very strange things, some very amazing things.

John describes the first thing that he saw as a throne there in heaven, and someone sitting on the throne. He describes the appearance of this one sitting on the throne, and his description is like no person that we have ever seen.

In fact, we almost get the sense that even John is reaching for words to describe this one. Verse 3, The one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby.

[ 7 : 24 ] Perhaps John means to describe something of the way that he's beautiful, he's glorious, he's reflective. There's a bit of color there.

He goes on to describe 24 thrones that are seated around this one throne. Here's another artist's rendition of it.

And an emerald rainbow, you can kind of see it around the throne. Flashes of lightning coming from the throne. Rumbblings and peals of thunder.

You can see there on the picture, seven lamps blazing in front of it, and the four living creatures. A very strange and mysterious vision indeed.

And when we read this, I mean, we have all kinds of questions, I'm sure. Like, why did God give a vision like this to John?

[ 8 : 26 ] Is this actually what heaven looks like? Or is this just a vision that kind of reveals truth or reality of what happens in the spiritual realm?

Is it symbolic? What are the seven spirits of God? What kind of creatures are these with six wings and eyes all over their bodies?

And who are these 24 elders, these kings who sit on these thrones and have golden crowns? Well, I have a short answer and a longer answer.

And my short answer is I have no idea what all of these things refer to. The slightly longer answer is that God doesn't waste his breath in anything he says or reveals.

And so I trust that there is some important meaning and purpose for revealing just what he did to John that day. But sometimes God gives us more of a glimpse than an opportunity to gaze and fully understand.

[ 9 : 38 ] And I think that's what's happening here. Who are these four creatures? What are they? Are they real? Or are they symbolic? I think we're wise not to make too much of them.

Or presume in pride to know just what they are. But I think it's also wise not to make too little of them. They show up 11 times in this vision, this story which God has given.

And we can speculate. We can guess. We can look at all the details of the crowns and the clothing that they wear and the types of creatures that they are.

But I think it's safe to just admit that we don't know just what this is all about. It appears as though God is just giving us a glimpse into something that is beyond us.

He does that sometimes. Sometimes he does it in order to reveal something but also conceal something for a later time in which we will know more fully.

[10:47] So what can we take from this very strange vision? And really this is just a piece of the whole thing. Well I think that we can start by concluding that wherever God rules from in the heavenly realms, it's glorious.

It's beautiful. Not only that but he, the one who sits on heaven's throne, is glorious and beautiful. He is someone who is to be feared. John describes flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder coming from the throne.

Can you imagine how John would have felt in the midst of that, witnessing that? Just a couple weeks back we had some storms come through Davidson. And I still remember seeing the living room window just lighting up with flashes of lightning.

And hearing the booms of thunder. And we just had to pause what we were doing and just kind of stand in awe and listen like, Wow, this is powerful. Even little Caleb, his attention was captured.

[12:01] And he had to come over to the window and talk about the booms that he was hearing. Can you imagine how John would have felt in this vision? To see and hear that coming out of this glorious throne in heaven.

The Lord is glorious. He is beautiful. He is someone to be feared. And all of this vision, in some ways, really points to the truth that he is holy.

That he is other. He is above. He is beyond. He is distinct from us. Superior. Here he is.

And he is being worshipped day and night by creatures the likes of which we have never seen in our world. They are declaring this truth.

That he is holy. Holy. Holy. The repetition of that word signals that it's not just a little bit of holy. It's a lot of holy.

[13:06] So far above us. And all other beings. Holy. Holy. Holy. Holy is the Lord. God.

Almighty. Holy. The story goes on. John sees these living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who sits on the throne.

And we just get the sense that we, through John's eyes, are seeing a worship moment. A moment in which God is receiving worship.

And it goes on from here. The 24 elders, John tells us, they, when they see the creatures giving praise to God, they fall down before this one seated on the throne.

They lay their crowns before him and they worship him. Just think of that for a second. You, as a human being here on earth, what would it take to get you to bow down before another person here on earth?

[14:14] I mean, we can hardly even imagine a situation where we would do that. It would have to be the greatest of rulers, a powerful man, a person worthy of great respect, a person who is truly worthy to get us to bow down before him.

Now, flip that around and imagine that you are such a king. And you have a kingdom and you have a crown of gold on your head that represents your rule and reign over your kingdom.

What would it take to get you to fall down on your face before someone else? And to take the crown, the symbol of your authority and power and rule, and lay it at the feet of another.

You would only do that before the greatest of kings that this world has ever known. This is the kind of moment that we see happening here through John's eyes in his vision.

Not only do they bring, do they take up the posture of worship and fall down before the one on the throne and lay before him their crowns, but they speak words of worship.

[15:37] Verse 11, you are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power. Just think about those words for a moment.

Worthy. It is fitting. It is right that you receive glory, worship. It's what you are due.

Why? They give one reason. Also in verse 11, For you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

This is an awesome statement. And it's worth taking a time to just slow down and ponder it. For you created, you made everything.

And it exists and continues to exist because of your purpose and intention, your will. You are worthy for doing that.

[16:45] You are worthy for doing that. I love that little phrase. Created all things. That's a big little phrase.

All things means a lot. Let's consider for a moment what is included in all things. It includes the things of heaven.

It includes the things of earth. It includes the physical. It includes the spiritual. It includes the really big things like clusters of galaxies.

It includes the really little things like protons, neutrons, and electrons. It includes the laws which govern our world like gravity, thermodynamics, the laws of motion and physics.

It includes the systems which we see happening all over. The rain cycle. The tide. The ebb and flow of the tide.

[ 17 : 46 ] The way the moon affects those things. All of it. All things includes that liquid we call water in which there are countless different kinds of living creatures.

Swimming. Living. It includes the sky and all the flyers which navigate the currents of wind that we can hardly even imagine.

It includes all plants and trees. It includes light. It includes sound. Everything. All things.

You are worthy, our Lord and God, for you created all things. Everything. What a statement. Let's think a little more about some of these things and just how they show the worthiness of God.

Plants. Such an amazing thing. There are so many different kinds all over earth and they all grow and look a little different and have so much variation and color, different conditions in which they thrive.

[ 19 : 07 ] You look up close, even at the back of a leaf, and look at the detail, the complexity of what's going on there. I've got a massive poplar in my backyard and it just floors me that that whole tree grew out of a seed this big.

It's amazing. Those of you who farm, that tiny little canola seed, isn't it amazing that the whole canola plant is packed into that?

You can store it. You can activate it whenever you want just by putting it in the ground and putting some water on it. It's amazing. Those of you who are doing some gardening, maybe you've got some of these that you're hoping to see in your garden later this season.

Isn't it amazing that out of a tiny little tomato seed, you can get a whole plant full of these ripe, beautiful, red, juicy tomatoes. God created all things.

Here's an example of something that we've created. Let's talk about machines. Some of you fix machines. Some of you drive machines. Here's a machine that's been made by man, a combine, and it's pretty impressive.

[ 20 : 33 ] It can do some pretty amazing things. It's got lots of processes, lots of mechanisms, lots of systems. It's got GPS. I don't know if that model does or not, but probably not.

It looks like an older one. But what's amazing to me is that all throughout our world, we see that God has created all kinds of machines, living machines, with all kinds of parts and programming that function in all kinds of ways that blow this out of the water, that make this look primitive.

I mean, think for a moment of this. A dolphin. It's got one of the most amazing systems on the planet for sonar, echolocation.

I just have to tell you a little bit about it. Apparently, this thing is able to create clicks of all different kinds and project them out into the water through an acoustic lens in its forehead.

It can bounce those sound waves off a fish up to 200 meters away, get the waves back through its jawbones, and interpret that information into a 3D image.

[ 21 : 53 ] Like, that's astounding. And what will blow our minds even more is that it's so fine-tuned and it works so effortlessly, so naturally.

It's part of the programming and wiring that it can do this to objects far and near, back and forth so quickly. It can see a whole swarm of fish just going like this and zero in on a single fish with those waves and just zip right in there and grab it.

Not by sight, but by this crazy sonar system that's wired into its head. God created that.

It blows our minds. It's amazing. Here's another example of something amazing. Birds. What a creature.

A creature which can go from standing still and just start flapping and climb right up into thin air and just hover through the air.

[ 23 : 02 ] We've done the best we can to replicate flight. We've made our machines, but they look big and clunky and they're primitive compared to this. I mean, you think of what a bird can do.

The engineering, the design. Birds are as common as anything. I mean, we see them all the time and yet the acrobatics that they can do in the air.

They can snatch an insect out of the air in mid-flight. It's amazing. A bird like this can zero in on a fish down in the water and dive and grab that fish right out of the water.

And all of that's wired into this little package. All the programming is there. The mechanisms are there. It has just the right parts. It's amazing.

Another example of the awesome creativity of God. While we're on the subject of birds, I just had to put one of these in there, a hummingbird.

[ 24 : 11 ] What an amazing creation. This thing can fly up to 50 kilometers an hour and then in an instant stop mid-air and just hover.

And then if it wants to, it can fly backwards. This particular kind of hummingbird can do in-flight fueling. Come right up to the flower, hover.

Think of the precision on that. Its beak is like a tiny needle. It can suck the nectar right out of a flower. In-flight fueling. Give SpaceX a run for its money.

Another amazing creation of God. And all of that packed into this tiny little body. It blows our minds. How can it sustain that kind of muscle activity, that kind of energy requirement?

the fuel that it would need, the energy output of this thing is amazing and it's all in this tiny little thing. The best of drones that we have engineered doesn't even come close to this.

[ 25 : 16 ] You get maxed 10 minutes of flight before the battery's dead. Or consider the caterpillar. Another thing that God has created.

I love these. They give, they baffle the minds of scientists over and over and over again. It's the only creature in our world that we know of that forms a chrysalis, turns all of itself into a chemical soup. all of its organs gone into chemicals and then re-emerges as a totally different creature. A thing that eats differently, a thing that moves differently, flies differently.

It's nothing like what it was when it went in. It baffles the minds of the best of human biologists. How could something do that in just two weeks' time?

It's amazing. And we're just getting started here. The whole world is full of all kinds of stuff like this. This is one of my favorites. A living cell.

[ 26 : 27 ] This is one of the most complex things on earth. A single living cell has, and these are not my words, and these are not just the words of Christians, it has all kinds of micro machinery inside of it that are at work performing their various functions all the time.

And I don't think they've just chosen those words because, you know, that's our experience. So, yeah, it kind of looks like machines. No, they're machines. According to microbiologists, there are biological motors and rotors and bushings and walking mechanisms and all kinds of stuff going on all the time inside just one of these little things.

There's factories called ribosomes that help produce proteins. There's a storage center where all the information and blueprints are kept on strands of DNA.

There's little machines that go in there and make copies of various strands and bring those copies to the factories and then the factories call for all these other machines to bring the various pieces that are required to form these massive chains of amino acids that then get carried over to this other machine that folds them into the perfect shape so that they can function as the protein that they are.

And all of this is happening all the time in this complex world of the living cell. It's mind-blowing. It's breathtaking. God created it.

[ 28 : 14 ] I just have to say here there's one guy that I just I couldn't help but I came across his stuff this week and he's working at stuff on a very tiny level. He's a Nobel prize winning scientist and he's working on a nano car or he's actually made it already.

It's a car that's got a little carbon helix kind of spherical thing for wheels on each side. It's so tiny you can't even see it without a microscope and he's trying to figure out how to get this to move on various surfaces how to coax the wheels to roll and maybe we can even load it up with a little cargo. That's machinery and engineering on a whole nother level but it's nothing compared to what's already going on and the kinds of machines God has already wired into every living creature. not only has God made this world and everything in it so functional so complex but he has made it beautiful.

It's not just all of his masterpiece blueprints enacted he's made the world the universe his canvas and I mean just think of it all the birds could be grey all the butterflies could be black and yet God has put patterns and all different kinds of colours sunsets and sunrises he's infused beauty into all

of his creation it's amazing foxes this is the start of the summer months we're about to hopefully all of us get outdoors and see more of what God has made and I just want to encourage us to look a little closer to gaze a little longer to open our eyes a little wider and to ponder a little deeper as we have opportunity to look at all that God has made right in front of us we're surrounded by it in fact we are ourselves creations of God that cell that I showed you just a moment ago that was you when you started you were one of those and yet all you are today a living breathing human being was packed into that one little thing everything needed to form you was there it's amazing there's a part of the scripture where it says the whole earth is filled with his glory and it is this earth this universe is

[ 30 : 59 ] God's masterpiece and it's a reason why he is worthy of our worship you are worthy our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things it's amazing it's a reason to celebrate to worship day after day it's a reason to continue coming and gathering together as we are today to sing to praise and to honor our Lord Jesus Father in heaven we thank you for your word we thank you that in a sense you have given us a glimpse of heaven and the glory where you dwell we thank you that you have made this beautiful world for us to live in and that it's good and that we can enjoy it as a gift from you and we ask that you would open wide our eyes to see your fingerprints over all of it and that we wouldn't take it for granted we love you we pray this in Jesus name amen