

God Is On The Throne

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- [0 : 00] Good morning. Welcome to the service. It's a good place to be.
- Even though the outside is cold, we're thankful that God allows us to come together to worship. And it's a privilege for us to open His Word and to, especially this morning, look at the future.
- And so that's a privilege as well as we look at prophecy. I was just going to, before we go into the message, this coming Saturday, that meeting that Jake mentioned, some of you might not be very familiar with it, but it's a meeting where we set all the dates for the year. Our Valentine's Supper, our potlucks, our Sunday school picnic, church cleaning, Thanksgiving, Christmas program. Camp out. All those dates get set.
- And we do look after the committees, a few committees, like the social committee. There's a need there. And so right now, I think that's the only one there.
- [1 : 26] Occasionally, we do review our janitor process and talk about that, see how that's going. And anything else that, in general, stuff about our church.
- So we encourage, if you're a regular attender here, come out for that and just take part in that and your input to that. So the Lord bless you with that.
- We are just saying, our sins are many and His mercy is more. And so, Ben, you're forgiven for not doing the bulletins.
- But it's a reminder. The other song about... What was that song you sang, the second one?
- What's that? Count to... No, it was different. Showers of blessings.
- [2 : 36] God's mercy, His blessings. We're reminded each day, all of us, of our sinfulness.
- Or our humanness. We're in Christ. And yet, the flesh is present. And as the Lord is in process of teaching us to live victoriously, yet we're reminded...
- We know. We know who we are. And to think His mercy is more. And that we need those showers of blessings.
- And so, I really appreciated those songs as well. So I have a question for us. What is prophecy?
- Telling the future. So predicting events or telling about events that are yet to happen. That's as basic as it gets.
- [3 : 48] That's what it means to be prophetic. It's to tell of something that will happen in the future. And as we've finished chapters 2 and 3 in Revelations, the letters to the seven churches, and we now shift gears to the rest of this book, chapters 4 right to the end, 22, have never happened.
- None of it. Zero. All of it is prophetic. And it's God telling us what is going to come.
- So when we think of prophecy, what are the possible sources of prophecy? Who all can tell the future?
- Scripture? Trick question? Scripture?

God. God alone. And as He has in the past spoken through prophets who gave us writings of the future, like John wrote here, but God is the author.

[5 : 20] Only God. And when Daniel interprets dreams, who gave him the message? God. Always, always, always.

Let us remember that. And so when there is prophecy that is accurate, it is of the Lord. As He is the only source of biblical prophecy.

So, in chapter 1, I'm just going to read verse 19, chapter 1, as we had that a few months back.

He says to John, write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

So, chapter 1 was the things you have seen. The things that are, were chapters 2 and 3, the church age. And now, we are progressing into the third aspect of his writing, the things which are to come.

[6 : 33] Prophecy. And so, chapter 4 is the start to that. It's interesting that the bride, the church, is not mentioned after chapter 3.

Beginning in chapter 4, the church is not mentioned until chapter 19, where the bride, then describes as the wife of Christ, comes down with him to reign.

And chapters 4 through 18 are silent on the church. And they focus on what's going to happen here on earth, and at the very center of it is Israel.

And so, naturally, we tie this back to the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy. And the 70th week, which has never been fulfilled.

And so, just to jog our memories, the 69th week of years in his prophecy ended on Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem to announce his kingship and that he was willing to die.

[8 : 08] And so, then we have that last week of years left to go and it corresponds with chapters 4 through 18 in Revelations.

And there's at least four or five verses in Revelations, chapters 11, 12, 13, that speak of this time period as two halves of 42 months or in 1260 days in the first half of the trip and then second likewise.

It talks about times and time and half a time in years. It's confirmed to us the length of this fitting the 70th week.

And so, it leaves very little room to doubt that this corresponds, this is God bringing that into fulfillment.

I thought it would be beneficial for us to go back to Daniel 9 and just read the last two verses there. Daniel chapter 9 of that prophecy.

[9 : 26] In that prophecy, he talked about 70 weeks of years and then he breaks it down into the first seven weeks of years, 49 years, where Jerusalem will be rebuilt, happening with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and then it talks about after another 62 weeks and that's where I'll start reading in verse 26.

And so, first the seven weeks and then the 62. And after the 62 weeks, Messiah shall be cut off. And the word Messiah, meaning the anointed one, is a direct reference to Jesus Christ.

And so, Jesus Christ will be cut off after the 69th week, 7 and 62. So, the Messiah shall be cut off but not for himself.

And the people of the prince who is to come, and the prince who is to come is a reference to the coming Antichrist, the ruler of the world that is yet to appear.

and he says, the people of that prince, and it's a reference here to the Roman Empire who ruled at that time, in the time of Christ, the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, the end of it shall be with a flood, until the end of the war, desolations are determined.

[11 : 22] And so this people group, out of whom the prince or Antichrist will arise, they will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

And that's where the year 70 AD comes in, where the Roman Empire destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

and the Jews were dispersed into the surrounding countries and no longer were a nation.

They ceased to be a nation after year 70 until 1948 where God predicted in one day a nation shall be born.

And so the fulfillment of this, the 69 weeks coming to pass, but then scripture telling us what will happen in between. The city and the sanctuary will be destroyed.

[12 : 31] And then verse 27, he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. The 70th week.

And the he is the Antichrist. But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering and on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate even until the consummation which is determined is poured out on the desolate.

And so the prince to come, the Antichrist, will confirm a covenant with many for one week and then he will break that covenant at the midpoint.

And it lines up with scriptures elsewhere where in the middle of the tribulation period he will do an abominable thing.

And the Jews are told and when you see the abomination of desolation then you are to flee to the mountains. And we're also and we'll see this in chapter 12 when we get there but God will protect the Jews that are fleeing miraculously and he will nurture them for the last three and a half years, 42 months it says.

[14 : 03] So we see that last week is predicted here in Daniel and now as we start to go through it we will see more details of it.

So again as we look at prophecy none of it has been fulfilled ever. There are beliefs and theories that the 70th week happened in the year 70 which then means that we are in the extended millennial period.

And all of scripture doesn't jive anymore with that view. And so Satan is not bound not by any means.

And so all of this is ahead of us yet. So we need to understand scripture in its entirety to have the pieces make sense for us.

Okay, one more thought as before we move on. when we look at prophecy we treat prophetic scripture literally in a literal translation unless it is clear that there is symbology being used.

[15 : 44] symbols. The other option is that we treat prophecy as spiritual and that we then spiritualize everything that God says in revelations and when we spiritualize it means it's saying this yes but there is a different spiritual meaning and it's God is speaking unclearly to us and it's up to each one of us to come up what is God saying here.

can you imagine the chaos we could all write a different commentary then and be totally different because it would be as I think so a rule of Bible interpretation you take it literally where possible and where there's word pictures being used we seek to interpret them from the rest of scripture and sometimes we do not have an interpretation and we have to let go of it and a few examples turn back to Revelations with me and we'll get there in a few messages down the road but in chapter 6 and I looked and behold a white horse and he who sat on it had a bow and a crown was given to him what was

John seeing what is he trying to describe is the white horse real literal or is it symbolic and that's where the reader has to determine if it's symbolic what does the white horse symbolize and we'll explain that when we get to that passage down the road but there's an example of we need to see what it is so we have symbology here let's turn to chapter 20 the first three verses in chapter 20 then I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand he laid hold of the dragon that serpent of old who is the devil and satan and bound him for a thousand years and he cast them into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal on him so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished but after these things he must be released for a little while is God going to bind satan why do we say that because it says so right we take it literally where we can six times in this chapter he talks about a thousand year reign the millennium now if we were to spiritualize these three verses then the thousand year reign isn't a real thing it's spiritual satan will not get bound but we don't understand then what's going to happen and then god is leaving us in a void and so here's an example where where people go astray with prophecy or with scripture in general when they do not take literal where possible and then we can make it mean whatever

I want to so that's a word of caution but just also as we walk through the rest of this book that is the basis that we study scripture and that we'll be approaching it from that viewpoint so just thought I would share that as we go all right so going back to chapter four and we will proceed with what was read for us chapters four and five are a throne scene and we're going to cover part of chapter four here this morning it says after these things and and so he has just had the letters to the churches so we can we can say that after the church age

I looked and behold a door standing open in heaven and the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me saying come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this so John come up here he sees a it says a door standing open in heaven whether it was a literal door or not I don't know but he saw a glimpse into glory and a voice saying John come up here I I'm going to show you things that will happen after the church age that's what that's what he is saying and he says immediately I was in the spirit and behold a throne set in heaven and one sat on the throne so

[22 : 34] John says I was in the spirit and so I I'm assuming his body stayed on Patmos on the island and he was caught up to heaven in spirit now Paul in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 talks about knowing a man he's talking about himself who was caught up to the third heavens and he says whether in body or out of body I don't know but I do know I was caught up to the third heaven and I heard things inexpressible now John is having his turn he's caught up to heaven and he is going to receive the vision of the end and it's his job to write what he sees trying to make us on earth understand and so that's that's the picture that we have here okay the vision behold a throne set in heaven and one sat on the throne and he who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance and there was a rainbow around the throne in appearance like an emerald around the throne were twenty four thrones and on the thrones

I saw twenty four elders sitting clothed in white robes and they had crowns of gold on their heads and from the throne proceeded lightnings thunderings and voices seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God before the throne there was a sea of glass like crystal and in the midst of the throne and around the throne were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back and the first living creature was like a lion the second living creature like a calf the third living creature had a face like a man and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle the four living creatures having six wings were full of eyes around and within would someone be able to come up and draw me a picture of this scene that'd be that'd be difficult right that'd be difficult what did

John see he saw the glory of God he was caught up into the presence of God and he sees his majesty and his glory and he's attempting to describe it does this scene exist today God exists does he have a throne up there I believe so maybe not just like revelations four because it's still future it may have the scene may have changed a bit but do we remember

Isaiah chapter six Isaiah was caught up in a similar way and actually let's turn there Isaiah chapter six just a couple verses Isaiah six starting in verse one it says in the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple and above it stood seraphim each one had six wings with two he covered his face with two he covered his feet and with two he flew and one cried to another and said holy holy holy is the

Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory and Isaiah said woe is me I've come into the presence of God but it's a it's a similar throne scene making us or giving us evidence that yes it exists today but it may be a variance of or not in the fullness of chapter four in revelations where we're at the end of the church age and the church has been raptured and so but as we think of this as you go to work Monday morning God is on his throne he's in charge and I think as we look at this scene and as

[28 : 57] John is prepared to write the judgments that are going to come on the earth he is shown this picture first to remind him God is in control he is supreme and and for me a reminder as I go through life God is there on his throne he is ruling he is king he is our creator and as we look at these kind of scriptures I think the purpose is to remind us that God is there and so John had the privilege if we can use that word of being there and seeing and seeing let's briefly look at some of the aspects I'm not going to spend a lot of time on the details there verse three and he who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone

I want to use like a it's a word picture it's symbology so he who sat on the throne was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance and so John is attempting to describe the radiance of him who sat on the throne well the sardius and the jasper stones a jasper is almost like a diamond I think it's crystal it's clear whereas a sardius is a a ruby red a beautiful red the the sardius was I find this interesting in the Old Testament on the on the Levitical priesthood on their vests that they wore they had the twelve stones marking the twelve tribes of

Israel well the first one was a sardius and the twelfth one was a jasper stone and so is there a connection here that the one who sits on the throne has the entirety of Israel before him of his chosen people it it's I'll let you ponder on it it doesn't tell us that but it tells us about these two stones and there was a rainbow around the throne in appearance like an emerald and rainbows were given a rainbow the covenant of the rainbow was given as a promise

I will never again destroy this world and if I stop there then we'd be false I will never again destroy this world by water by a flood God never said I will never destroy this world again but he said by water and so hence a rainbow before the throne of emerald God's promise around the throne were 24 thrones I immediately picture 24 small thrones because the one in the middle was big right but it doesn't say that and it's me jumping to conclusions because it's the Lord sitting on the throne but the throne were 24 thrones and on the thrones

I saw 24 elders sitting clothed in white robes and they had crowns of gold on their heads and so we have elders these would be people and very unlikely that they're angels they're very like people because they have white robes and they have crowns on them were they 12 12 tribes of Israel and 12 apostles we can't be certain many commentators will say they may all represent the church because they have white raiment signifying their righteousness and the crowns of gold they've already been through the judgment seat of

[34 : 19] Christ and have been rewarded now that's also some perhaps speculation on what exactly this means but nonetheless whoever's represented there they have crowns of gold and they're sitting around God's throne and then from the throne proceeded lightnings thunderings and voices what did Israel do back on Mount Sinai when God was going to give the law and there was lightnings and thunderings and voices they fled in terror here John is witnessing and the elders are seated around there's no mention of terror here but rather of holiness

I believe this thunderings and lightnings and voices represents the power of God and also a reflection on the coming judgment the power of God and then seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God and we had that in chapter one the seven spirits of God the Holy Spirit is one spirit the Spirit of God is one spirit but the seven spirits is maybe a reflection of seven aspects to God's spirit as we read back then in Isaiah chapter 11 verse 2 we read about the seven spirits the spirit of wisdom the spirit of this spirit of that and so that's likely what he was seeing there okay the wisdom of God verse 6 before the throne there was a sea of glass like crystal and sometimes when we look at a water body and it's there's no wind and it's we say like it's a sea of glass a lake probably rarely the ocean but but a calm body of water well here he sees a sea of glass like crystal and that would be transparent you can see through it and it's before the throne doesn't say how big it was in in Luke chapter 16 we have reference to the to the beggar

Lazarus and the rich man and they both die and and Lazarus is carried to Abraham's bosom and the rich man is carried to or goes to Hades where he is in torment right and the dialogue there is that the rich man looks up and he says to Lazarus bring me one drop of water to cool my tongue but then the scripture says there was a great gulf fixed between so they could not go from here to there some believe that is the sea of glass separating we have no more to go on but it's a possibility

I'll just leave that but we know that they could see this is transparent the sea of glass the rich man could see Lazarus but he could not go there it's separated okay and then we have an interesting description before the throne there was a sea of glass like crystal and in the midst of the throne and around the throne were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back and the first living creature was like a lion the second like a calf the third had a face of a man and the fourth like a flying eagle and the four living creatures had six wings in Isaiah chapter 6 what were they called seraphim sixth winged angels seraphim having eyes all around inside and out it's what did

John see what is he trying to describe can you imagine how hard it would have been to put this on paper so that we would understand things yet to come there's a lot of speculation on what this could have been the best one that that I've come across that like like the seven spirits of God representing seven aspects of God's spirit these creatures represent God's character and fullness a representation of God the eyes front and back and all around and within would be a representative of

[40 : 39] God's all seeing and all knowing we cannot hide from God part of his character and that could very well be that his omniscience and omnipresence and then the four features the first like a lion and in scripture lion is used as to present king kingship as the lion is the king of animals and it represents God's majesty God's majesty and his power and so it's a word picture again the second like a calf now how could that relate and another word for calf used some of your versions may have the word ox and used as a domestic animal the patience and continuous labor of an ox represented in that the second like a calf the third he had a face like a man well man was the last item that God created and to be more exact the woman was even more last but

God created mankind male and female and he crowned creation with mankind saved them for the last and they alone are made in his image and so thus the face of a man God's intelligence and his ability or his rational aspect of him the ability to reason to think that's who God is and we reflect that and then lastly like a the fourth like a flying eagle and the eagle is the king of the birds or the greatest among birds and a picture of sovereignty and being supreme and if you watch an eagle you will get that impression and so hence that's a possibility we we wrestle with that but I think we let go because we we do not know for certain the pictures that we see here but it's glorious and it's worthy of worship that is what we need to take away and as the elders do verse eight and they do not rest day or night saying holy holy holy lord god almighty who was and is and is to come whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne who lives forever and ever the 24 elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne saying you are worthy oh lord to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they exist and were created so a true worship scene in heaven as the four living creatures the seraphim and the elders bow down and worship and give god credibility as the creator god and uh and so we here on earth as we learn about these things that are in heaven are to reflect in our daily worship acknowledging him as creator knowing he is all powerful and that the things that he has promised will come to pass and namely the tribulation period along with that the rapture of the church the judgment seat of christ the rain for a thousand years with him the eternal state in the new heavens and the new earth all of this is future promised and sure and and as we worship as we worship we know who made the promises and who will keep them we'll stop with that and the lord willing will for the next message we'll go to chapter five let us pray father as we as we read and contemplate a passage like this we stand in awe before you for us as human beings it is too

much for us we don't grasp the fullness of your glory but father these descriptions they help us they give us a glimpse and so lord for each one of us that we would retain this in our in our minds in our hearts as we go through life one day at a time to know that you are there that you are supreme that you alone are all powerful to your glory to your honor in Christ's name amen