



"DEAR CHURCH", PART 9 HEAVEN'S THRONE: LIVING A GOD-CENTERED LIFE

September 15, 2019
Pastor Randy Remington

BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

"The most revolutionary thing we can do it to refuse to bow before anyone or anything other than Jesus. The meeting of every needs begins with God."

–Pastor Randy

MAIN TEXTS:

After this I looked, and there before me 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 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 twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four 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, 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 stop 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 for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever 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." (Revelation 4:1-11)*

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." (Matthew 6:13)

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

SUMMARY

In chapter four, Revelation shifts from specific messages to the churches towards a scene in Heaven. We see the intersections of Heaven and earth depicted throughout the Revelation of Jesus Christ—revealing a series of scenes, some of which are and some which must take place later (1:19). The main point of what is revealed in Chapter four is that there is unceasing worship of God in song because of what Jesus has done. Even better, we get to participate in that reality. Worship is always happening before God, and the worship we share at church is a brief moment

where we link up with that. God is on his throne and he is worthy of worship. He is the center of all things.

Left to ourselves, we want this to be an us-centered universe, a me-centered universe, where we ultimately worship ourselves and idols that capture our hearts. But God has made this to be a Him-centered universe. In his love, he invites us to join Him in the loving care of His creation. This chapter reminds us that God is in glorious control of all things for all time. As C.S. Lewis put it, "There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch, every split second is claimed by God, and counterclaimed by Satan."

"A low view of God is behind a 100 lesser evils." – A.W. Tozer

This picture in Revelation is important. It shifts our focus away from ourselves and our circumstances and on to a God who is always worthy of worship. As Eugene Peterson says, "Worship is the strategy by which we interrupt our preoccupation with ourselves." Even better, we "become" what we worship. What, or who, we love and desire will shape us. When we're spiritually aware of what chapter four depicts, we will live a leveled-up, God-centered life.

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Have you ever caught an insider's glimpse of a public event, something behind the scenes? What was that like?
2. What, or who do you love most? What's the object of greatest desire in your life?
3. How do you see the connection between heaven and earth?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What is the first thing John sees in Heaven and why is that important?
2. Why do you think God reveals Himself in such an overtly beautiful manner with jewels, etc.?
3. Why do you think God puts the Elders on thrones that surround His?
4. What does worship look like in this scene? What do you notice about it?
5. Reading the "songs" recorded in this passage, what do you think motivates the worship of those creatures who surround God's Throne?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What do people worship today in place of God?
2. Is it possible to worship good things that become "bad" as they take God's rightful place? Why or why not?
3. Do you see people who seem to want worship for themselves? What does that look like?
4. Where do you experience God in a way that finds an echo in Revelation Chapter Four? In church? Out in the natural world?
5. What or who transports you as John was transported?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What do you think might prevent you from worshipping regularly with passion?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.

**DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS,
CONT.**

2. Who or what has captured your heart and now demands your worship?
3. How do we find God to be more attractive than alternatives?
4. Where does God show up for you in a way that catches your gaze and creates a longing in your heart?
5. If you can, describe a time when God revealed Himself to you in a captivating manner. What was that like? What did you feel?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What changes can you make this week that will give space a voice to passionate worship of God?
2. How can you continually cultivate a sense of the God-centeredness of creation?

NOTE: On the following page (for most weeks) you will find a set of sermon notes created by Charissa Burns, an artist who calls B4 home. We include them purely for your enjoyment and encouragement, courtesy of Charissa. You can follow her on the 'Gram @charissaburnsstudio

REVELATION 9:15-19

Chapter 4:1-11

• Work hard to let the Spirit reveal the truth of the Scriptures.

Some imagery in this passage

- sea of glass - no chaos which the sea usually meant
- eyes - represented wisdom which shows how wise they are & they praise God

- **Throne** major theme of who will you bow to? who will you kneel in front of? who will you give your life to? who will you worship? who will you surrender to?

- Jasper: pure (diamond) - light
 (ruby) carnelian: redemption through Jesus;
 emerald: green - life

MAIN IDEA

↳ Something is happening in heaven and we are invited to look in.

**GOD IS ON HIS THRONE!
 AND HE IS WORTHY OF ALL PRAISE!**

2 Cor. 3:18

"The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us." - A.W. Tozer
 - Don't view God low - View him high on his throne.

We become what we worship.

When we worship GOD, it breaks us out of ourselves and our issues & points us to HIM.

Worship says:
 Who are you God?
 What do you think God?
 What do you have for me?
 Make me God-centered!

From heaven's perspective we see it is all a God-centered universe! Not a "me"-centered universe.

↳ What if God was the center of everything in your life.
 (hint: he is... so get with the program 😊)

- Who controls you?
 - Who owns you?

Rev. 4:9-10

All start singing & worshipping the one on the throne & lay their crowns before the throne!

We see in heaven a host... no one does it alone.

In church we sing, we worship together. We gather around God's throne in faith!

This is what forms us and sends us out fresh with God at the center!

- We find our desires satisfied at the throne! -

- When we sing, we ask God to enthrone himself here! -

- our desires & longings will be reshaped in front of the throne. -

"Worship is the strategy by which we interrupt our preoccupation with ourselves." - Eugene Peterson

WORSHIP - MAKE CHRIST THE CENTER!