

they worship, and they cast their crowns before Him. Here is total and full submission to the Lord. The crowns are victor's crowns and indicate triumph.

b. What they say.

1) Praise This is the same as the living creatures, save for the replacement of "power" for the thought of "thanks." He is addressed as "our Lord and God", the last name is not given in the AV.

2) Reason Why God should be worshipped with such powerful words is recorded. The total universe, "all things," are the result of the "will of God." Who could ever deny creationism after reading that!

3) Purpose God's full purpose is outlined. The creation of all things "were" in the mind of God prior to actual emergence. He had the universe in His will and purpose first and then it was actually made. Thus, the next phrase reads: "were created." The aorist tense shows it was an historical event and not a process (evolution).

NOTE: All of this is directed to the Lord in view of the emphatic personal pronoun "thou." He alone is worthy of worship. Creation is indicated as a reason for worship and not to be relegated to the realm of apologetics. Oh, let us praise HIM!

Christ has received His investiture in this chapter. May it please God for you to find Him thrice worthy of worship from your own heart.

Chapter 4 -- EMPHASES

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|---------------------|---|--------|
| 1. Heaven | } | Praise |
| 2. Rapture | | |
| 3. Elders | | |
| 4. Living Creatures | | |
| 5. Throne | | |

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"The Throne of God"
Revelation 4:2-11

Introduction

1. The thrust of this chapter is the "throne of God." This is the attention-getter God has ordained (v. 2). He aims at getting all eyes on that set throne.

2. The throne is "set" in heaven and this is a continual matter because the imperfect tense is employed. Various prepositions are used to show the centrality of the throne in this chapter. The triune God is "on" the throne. Then, "around" the throne are a rainbow and 24 elders.

3. But there is more concerning the throne. Let your heart be fixed upon this truth and be blessed thereby:

1. OUT OF THE THRONE v. 5.

The preposition which is used here indicates source. Hence, it is the throne (obviously the One upon it!) sources a series of judgments. The present tense "proceeded" is a dramatic historical one. The whole scene is like to Sinai (Ex. 19:16; 24:9) and the experience of Ezekiel (1:22, 27). The actual Tribulation Period of judgment upon the earth does not commence until chapter 6, but the items mentioned here are the precursor of judgment. Note there are lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Items of this nature are to be interpreted in the light of other Scriptures. This is the hermeneutical principle of the analogy of Scripture. To know what God means in one place of the Bible, look to see what He says someplace else! Let the Bible be its own interpreter!

2. BEFORE THE THRONE vv. 5, 6.

a. Torches

The word here must be distinguished from the lamp-stand (1:12, 20) and the hand-lamp (Matt. 5:15). Here is a torch of fire (8:10). These torches blaze before the throne constantly burning before God Almighty. Whereas He is the lamp to guide and give knowledge to the church, here He is the torch for judgment for the world. The Old Testament has much to illuminate this (Ezek. 1:13; Zech. 4:12; Isa. 4:4). These torches are identified as the "seven Spirits." The

thought is of the fulness of God's governmental action, and it expresses moral purity with God and His righteous character. Anything inconsistent with this will be judged.

b. Sea of glass

Since this is before the throne, it is something which is consistent with the holy character of Him Who is on the Throne. It is like "crystal" in its transparent holiness rather than being a matter of tranquility. The picture is of judgment. The word "glass" is used in classical Greek of "ice." The allusion to the O.T. laver is true (Ex. 30:18-21) or the molten sea (1 Kings 7:23-27) or the temple. Here, however, there is no need for washing for the church because the rapture has taken place. The thought of purity and cleanness occupy the mind here for God's holiness is transparently right in its action. The concept of the sea of glass is mingled with fire later on (15:2). There the martyrs who stand on the sea have emerged from a fiery ordeal; here it is unoccupied.

3. MIDST OF THE THRONE vv. 6-8.

The prepositions used here show that the creatures involved are in and around the throne. This means they occupied the four sides of the throne. They are integrally a part of the throne. The word "beasts" is unfortunate. The term does not mean ferocity, but the vitality of the creatures and the rendering should be "living ones." They are described:

1) Four in number. Four appears to be the number of man. Four divisions of the world (Rev. 7:9). Four empires (Dan. 7) and four sore judgments (Ezek. 14:21). So here the number signifies God's dealing with man and creation. The judicial nature of His attributes are demonstrated here through angels or men according to His sovereign will. Hence, the living beings are the judicial authority of the throne in action.

2) Four creations. It is difficult to identify the meaning of the lion, ox, man, and eagle. Some feel they are related to our Lord and the Gospels. Others to various aspects of His attributes. Whatever they mean, they set forth God's faithful and full expression of operation toward man in a judgmental fashion.

3) Six wings. This speaks of supernatural activity. The creatures of Ezekiel had four (1:5, 6). but the seraphim of Isaiah had six (6:2).

4) Full of eyes. Since the eyes are within (v. 7), this provides inward spiritual perception of the governmental purposes of God. The eyes are also before and behind (v. 6) and this suggests the future and the past come equally within the perceptive range of the living creatures.

NOTE: Just who are the living creatures? Since they partake of both seraphim and cherubim, it is likely they are some sort of combination of these two creations of God. Cherubim are concerned with God's glory and the seraphim with His holiness. These creatures take these aspects of God in a governmental fashion towards the earth and in respect to judgment.

Conclusion What is the end of this amazing picture of heaven? The answer is clear: praise to the Lord on the throne! The major actors of the chapter are heard to magnify Him.

1. The living creatures vv. 8, 9.

a. What they say.

1) His holiness is the triple repetition of the word "holy."

2) His Name is the ascription to God of His Name as found in the O.T. It points Him out as the Jehovah-Elohim. There is none else (Isa. 44, 45).

3) His power with the definite article shows that the Lord is omnipotent and He alone is!

4) His eternity. He was, He is, and He will come. The final phrase shows that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is in fact the return of God!

b. What they give.

"Glory, honor, and thanks" are given to the Lord on the throne. The fact of God's vitality is mentioned here.

2. The 24 elders vv. 10, 11.

a. What they do.

Three verbs summarize this: they fall down,