

Throne Room Of God

In Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., there is an arrangement called "The Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nation's Millennium General Assembly." There were 180 pieces in the arrangement—from tables to chairs to small decorative items—all pulled together by James Hampton, a quiet, virtually unknown janitor from the D.C. area. Hampton simply wanted to depict God's throne room.

This extraordinary collection had been found in his garage after he died in 1964. No one knew he had been working on it for some 20 years. All these pieces were made from cast-off items—old furniture, gold and aluminum foil from store displays, bottles, cigarette boxes, wine bottles, rolls of kitchen foil, used light bulbs, cardboard, insulation board, construction paper, desk blotters, and sheets of transparent plastic—all precariously held together with glue, tape, tacks, and pins.

On a bulletin board in the garage he had copied this verse from [Proverbs 29:18](#): "Where there is no vision the people perish." He believed people needed a vision of God's glory, so he set out, singlehandedly, to give it to them.

No one knows much about James Hampton, but we know this: what he imagined as God's throne room has become a national treasure.

In scripture, there are four who were given privileged entry into the throne room of God. Isaiah was one. We have his very brief description in Isaiah 6. Ezekiel was another whose short explanation of what he saw is found in Ezekiel 1. Paul, the apostle was another one. He only mentions of a person who was caught up into the third heaven. Nothing is said of what he saw. Why is that? It may be that words would never do justice to what they saw.

When Dr. R. G. Lee was on his deathbed, he called for his daughter. He said, "I see it. I see heaven. All the sermons I have ever preached in describing what I see never did it justice." He then slipped into eternity.

The fourth person in scripture who saw the throne room of God was John, the Apostle. We have what he saw recorded for us. Turn with me to that passage. It is Revelation 4.

Why did God give John this privilege? I think He did so to give comfort, encouragement, and confidence. After all, John had just been exiled on the Isle of Patmos. One way to hush him up is to exile him so that no one can hear him. They bound his body to an island, but that only released his spirit to places of no boundaries including the things of heaven.

It is fitting for us to come here from time to time. In my years of preaching, I don't recall ever doing a sermon on this passage, though I have preached on heaven. We need the same as what God gave to John. We need this especially in these terrible, dangerous days in which we live. We are only a couple a weeks since the Las Vegas shooting. The madman of North Korea continues to breathe threats to our nation. Sin that once hid in closets is now out, open, shameless, and militant to the point now, we have to be careful of what we say, how we say it, and to whom we say it. Weather

patterns have become destructive to life and property. Some of you are recovering from personal tragedies that have simply rocked your world.

From time to time we need reminder of what is ahead in our future to encourage us in our present.

I find that the best way to understand this chapter is by the use of prepositions. Do y'all remember those from grammar school. They do still teach them, don't they? Here are the prepositions that help us understand this passage: ON the throne, AROUND the throne, IN AND OUT OF the throne, and BEFORE the throne.

On the throne is God Himself, though He is not identified, but only understood.

Around the throne is the rainbow that is like emerald.

Around the throne is also the 24 elders clothed in white and having crown on their heads. We will see them a little later as we find them before the throne.

IN AND OUT OF the throne are these four living creatures. Based on what I have studied, I think these are cherubim.

It is BEFORE the throne that I want to dwell on for a short time we have.

Verse 10 – The twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne saying Worthy are You, our Lord, and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.

The best that we can tell, the 24 elders represent the church. What are the 24 elders doing? They are worshipping the One who is on the throne. They are worshipping God.

They are responding to what they have seen. That is what worship is. It is our response to the revelation of God. I want us to pay attention to two aspects of the worship in Revelation 4.

Content of worship

The subject of worship is found in the two hymns sung or recited in this chapter. Three more hymns are cited in the next chapter.

The worship in these chapters focuses, as all worship should, on the character of God, on the attributes of God, the nature of God. And the first thing that causes them to worship is God's holiness.

“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO ^{is} TO COME.”

Does this sound familiar? It is the song the seraphim sang when Isaiah was in the throne room of God. Holy, holy, holy: It is the hymn we sing from time to time. What does that mean?

No other attribute of God is ever given a three-peat except His holiness. The three-peat of a word is the Jewish way of expressing something as superlative, above all else. The one character trait of

God that rises above all others and is the basis of all others is His holiness. He is holy in that He is absolute sinless and perfect. Because of that, He is holy in His judgment. He is holy in His mercy and grace. He is holy in His wrath that is unleashed on that which is evil. He is holy.

The second attribute that is the content of the worship is God's power. "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty."

El Shaddai, some songs have made that a common name, it just means the Lord, the strong One, the mighty One, the almighty One. It too is a superlative. To put it in a summary statement, "Psalm 115:3 says, "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases."

In the second hymn, His power is praised in creation. You, evolutionist, pay attention to what is proclaimed. "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they \square existed, and were created."

God shows His power in creation. God shows forth His power in judgment and wrath. Perhaps the greatest display of power is the power of redemption. All 24 elders are there because of the redemptive power of God. The 24 elders represent you, church. You are going to be there praising God for His redemptive power.

When you see such a sight before your very eyes or even by the eyes of your spirit and soul, what acts do you want to do? I hear the contemporary songs these days on K-Love and HIS radio that talk of what they will do. Some are good. Some are so contrary to what we will do when we see the very face of God who is on His throne.

Acts of worship

The first act of worship of the 24 elders is in the posture of their worship. They fell prostrate before the throne. It is the act of humility. It is a natural thing for us to humble ourselves. Such were the acts of those who saw the throne room. Isaiah said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined!" John saw the glorified resurrected Jesus in the first chapter of Revelation. He fell as a dead man. Here, the 24 elders fall prostrate before the throne.

I don't know about you, but that is where I am now. I sensed the holiness of God on His throne as I studied and wrote this sermon.

I hope in your spirit's eye, you are getting the glimpse of the throne of God. Respond in worship and holiness.

There is one other act that I need to call to your attention. The 24 elders cast their crowns before the throne and sing, "Worthy are you." We saw in earlier verses as we were introduced to the 24 elders that they were sitting on the 24 thrones clothed in white robes and with crown on their head. Where did they get their crowns?

I believe these 24 elders represent the church after the Bema. Remember the Bema. It is the judgment seat of Christ. We stand before Christ and give account of our deeds. We receive our reward which includes our crowns. These 24 elders take the crowns from their head which they are rewarded and cry to God,

"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they \square existed, and were created."

On that day, you will be one of three people. You want to know what your options are?

Option 1 – Not stand before the Bema, but stand before the white throne judgment of Jesus Christ. If you stand before the white throne judgment, there is only one thing you will hear. “Depart from me, I never knew you.”

Option 2 – Stand before the Bema and have nothing received, because you chose to live your life as you chose instead of serving God in your new state of redemption. The Bible says something of these people. They are saved as by fire. They come into heaven smelling like smoke.

Option 3 – Stand before Bema and because of your life given to serve God in a way that exercised the gifts you were given so as to glorify our Lord. You will receive the rewards for your good deeds.

Revelation 4 is coming. Revelation 4 is coming. Are you ready?