

MESSAGE NOTES
Revelation Unveiled - Part 13
“Who’s On The Throne of Your Life?”
Revelation 4

Introduction: There is something fascinating to us about getting an inside look at the homes and inner lives of extraordinary people. Examples ----

Revelation 4:1 ... The Apostle John takes us on a guided tour as we are invited into the throne room of God.

John shares this vision with the churches in Asia Minor because they are struggling with problems, threats, persecutions, and at times, martyrdom. He is saying to them: When you have problems, when you suffer, when you are afraid, when you are tempted to give up on God and on your faith in him, you must come to the throne room. Because although life in this world is often random and chaotic, and sometimes catastrophic and horrible, don’t be confused. There is a throne, and there is one who is seated on the throne, and He reigns!! And the day is coming when his reign will be unchallenged. That day is not yet here as Satan and Evil still have their way so often in this world; BUT one day God will win the final victory.

Until that day, if you and I want to stand firm in our faith in the midst of living life in a world of chaos, evil, suffering, sickness, disease, war, hate, and death; the only way to do that is to worship and keep our faith strong in the one who is on the throne of heaven. And then we let him be on the throne of our life so we will be able to overcome Satan’s temptations in our life to turn us against God. We can live with faith, hope and be encouraged by the words of Jesus to the church at Laodicea in **Revelation 3:21....**

How to make our lives a throne room with God on the throne:

Revelation 4:2-3...

Jasper and Carnelian are two of the 12 stones on the breastpiece (something like a vest) that the Jewish High Priest wore when he went into God’s presence in the Holy of Holies; the inner room in the tabernacle (See Exodus 28). The 12 stones represented each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Each stone had the name of one of the tribes engraved on it and the first stone was carnelian and the last stone was jasper. So, the First and Last stones represented all of God’s people; the 12 tribes of Israel.

John is saying: God, the one seated on the throne, carries the names of his children over his heart. You and I are there in the heart of God though all eternity. Because God loves us and carries us in his heart, our response should be to love him back and carry him in our hearts. When we worship, we are saying, “God, I carry you in my heart.”

1. Learn to carry God with you through the day: Tomorrow morning when you wake up, why not make your heart a throne room by letting your first thought be: “God, I will carry you in my heart today.” Then when you go to work or to school; make your desk, cubicle, office, classroom, workspace a little throne room for God. (**See Romans 12:1; Colossians 3:17, 23; 1 Corinthians 10:31...**)

Revelation 4:3b...

John’s readers would think of Noah when they heard this because a rainbow was God’s promise of security and faithfulness to Noah. A rainbow is about God’s promise to be faithful to his people who keep their faith and trust in him. All through the Bible we see God’s faithfulness to his people as He is with them in the midst of the difficulties and trials of living life in a world where Satan wreaks havoc and evil.

2. Trust God’s faithfulness: When you trust God’s faithfulness, your heart becomes a throne room of worship, and you are letting God be in charge of your life. There are rainbows all over our lives; expressions or symbols of God’s faithfulness to you and to me. Do we see them? Do they cause us to trust him as we go through the difficult times in life until that day when we get to be with him in heaven?

Revelation 4:4-6a...

CONTEXT: The Roman Empire had 24 legal and official religions. Each of the 24 state sanctioned religions had a Roman Priest who worked for and with the Emperor. They served as their religion’s imperial representative for Caesar. They often made their appearance at public proclamations, coronations, the Olympic Games and other imperial events like *parousias* – which is not referring to Jesus’ 2nd coming, but the arrival or advent of the Emperor at a city. History describes these Roman Elders as wearing white robes and golden crowns and having large golden sashes around their waist or chest.

TEXT: The 24 elders represent the people of God. There were 12 Tribes of Israel and 12 Apostles. Together they are symbolic of all God's people. The flashes of lightening, rumblings, and peals of thunder take the reader of this vision back to the image of Mount Sinai in Exodus when the people of Israel trembled before God's power as the mountain smoked and rumbled? The 7 spirits of God (also translated as the sevenfold spirit of God) could be an expression of completeness (the number 7), so that it might mean the utter completeness, sufficiency, and power of the Spirit of God. Or it may be a reference to the 7 attributes of the Spirit of God from Isaiah 11:2. OR it may be both.

Many scholars believe the sea of glass, clear as crystal, represents the Old Testament Laver (Complete Purification). The bronze basin (laver) was used by priests in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple to wash before approaching God in their divine temple duties. Here in Revelation, it is representing how the cleansing or washing of sin through what Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross is eternally finished. No more spiritual washing is needed when we are in heaven and in the presence of God. WHAT A DAY THAT WILL BE when we stand before Jesus having been made righteous by His love, mercy, forgiveness and grace, and never needing cleansing from our sin again.

But in the meantime, as we live life here in this world of chaos, evil, suffering and sin, we can live with absolute peace because the sovereignty of God over chaos. In ancient Hebrew thought, the sea often represented chaos, danger, and evil. A calm, glassy sea with no waves or ripples means that God brings about total peace. The storms and chaos of the world have no more power or movement before His throne.

3. Acknowledge God's power instead of living in fear: The overall picture of these verses is quite clearly about the sheer power of God. As we think about living with God in charge of our life and making our heart and life a throne room, when you and I go through life facing all the difficulties and disappointments that life throws at us, we can acknowledge his power instead of living in fear. God is able to rule nature, calm storms, raise up kings, and transform human hearts. So why do we get caught up worrying about the future and what is going to happen in our life? Why do we get so obsessed about stuff over which we have no control?

Revelation 4:6b-8...

CONTEXT: In the Roman Empire, the Caesars would choose different animals to represent themselves and Domitian who was the Emperor at the time chose the Ox and the Lion -- the strength of an ox, and the ferociousness of a lion. The eagle was the symbol for the Roman Empire. Also, whenever Domitian would visit a city, historians have said, boats would arrive in the harbor and soldiers would disembark dressed in their shining armor with brand new medallions that read, "Emperor Domitian Flavius, Lord and God." A courier would read the pronouncement and the introduction of Emperor Domitian. Then the 24 priests of the legal Roman religions would begin to lead the people in song, dressed in white robes and wearing golden crowns. Like we have the song, *Hail To The Chief* when our President is introduced, the Emperor had his imperial music. And the common song for the emperor was one that sounded like it came straight out of the Prophet Isaiah. The song that was sung about the Caesar on these occasions was, "*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.*"

TEXT: This vision in Revelation subverts the Emperor as it is also drawn from the Old Testament. The images are the exact same ones spoken of in Ezekiel 1. In Ezekiel 10, they are called cherubim, so they are an exalted order of angelic beings whose task is to guard the throne and lead in adoration of God. The imagery of being full of eyes, in front and in back, all around and inside; means that nothing confuses them or escapes their notice. Day and night without ceasing they sing endless praise to God.

4. Offer ceaseless worship and praise: To offer constant worship, we will have to learn to make our life a throne room regardless of the circumstances; regardless of when things are going well and when things are going badly.

Question: Do things have to be going well in your life for you to worship, or can you praise God even when things are not going well? John is in prison and stuck on an island. He has chains on his hands and chains on his feet. His only crime is to be a follower of Jesus, and he doesn't know if he will ever see his family and friends again. But he is in the presence of God, and so it is enough for him to be in the throne room. In your inner heart can you say, "Holy, Holy, Holy", when your world is utter chaos? Can you be in the throne room day and night offering ceaseless praise?

Revelation 4:9-11...

Crowns are symbols of rewards – honor, prestige, power, position, glory, status, opportunity. The Elders don't hang on to their crowns like people in our world hang on to them with a grip that won't let go. They lay them down at the foot of the one who is on the throne. This is a familiar image to John's readers as in John's day when a king was defeated, he would lay his crown at the feet of the victorious general or be taken to Rome and lay his crown at the feet of Caesar. It was a gesture of submission, humility, and surrender.

5. I give up the right to have things my way in order to serve God: This means that worship is not just being in a room with a bunch of other people, hearing soaring music, saying wonderful words, and then walking away. It means purposing in my heart that I will submit my life to the one who gave his life for me; even when obedience is difficult and

painful. All my behavior, thoughts, possessions, relationships, dreams, hopes, fears, are given to Jesus. We do acts of service for others and say in our heart, "God I lay my crown before you."

Tomorrow at work or school, do a random act of kindness for someone who is beneath you on the organizational chart, or is not popular or part of the "in crowd". Do it for someone who can do nothing to strategically enhance your career or popularity. And in the quietness of your heart say: "God I lay my crown before you."

Does this action remind you of anyone? Does it remind you of the God we worship; the Jesus who left his throne and gave up his crown of glory for a crown of thorns?