

Have you ever seen a throne room on TV or in a book? The king/queen has a throne in a prominent place. They usually will have people of importance near them while others will be in the main part of the room. Everything is meant to show the importance of the ruler and they are front and center.

We are going to read Revelation 4 and a bit of 5. These chapters were written describing a vision that John had about the throne room of heaven, where God resides. Now some of these descriptions may seem odd, but remember they are metaphors. What John saw was more than our human minds can comprehend, so he explained it the best he could using descriptions we might understand. These descriptions also connect with other descriptions used throughout the Bible to explain God's majesty, power, authority, etc.

As we read, I will pause and let you draw what you think this might look like...although it most definitely will be different from reality. No one truly knows what God's throne room looks like...except John 😊

I will also share with you some of the meaning of these descriptions as we go.

- Rainbow - God's never-ending faithfulness (reminder of God's promise to Noah)
 - Emerald - life, growth, renewal
- 24 Elders on thrones - representatives of 12 tribes & 12 disciples (OT & NT)
 - Cast their crowns before God (all their accomplishment and 'power' is in submission to God)
- lightning/thunder - shows God's power and majesty in OT (also reminder of 10 commandments given at Mt Sinai to Moses)
- 7 lamps of fire - spirit of God - Holy Spirit
 - 7 is perfection and completeness
- Sea of glass - Adds to the splendor and brilliance of the vision. Maybe represents purity and lack of any need for cleansing in heaven. Maybe it stands for God's transcendence and holiness. Could pick up on the fact that the sea usually has negative, wild, and untamed imagery. But here it has been tamed and appears clear
- 4 living creatures around throne (represent qualities/character of God)
 - Lion -King of animal world- emphasizes strength & honor - **God is perfect in authority** (commentary book p.116) majesty and power (Life Application Bible)
 - Calf -Servant - exercises great power for benefit of others - mightiest of domesticated animals - **God is perfect in His activity** (commentary book p.116) Faithfulness (Life Application Bible)
 - Face like man - Pinnacle of creation - intelligent, rational, spiritual - apex of all God made - **God is perfect in His majesty** (commentary book p.116) Intelligence (Life Application Bible)
 - Eagle - Mightiest of birds & swiftest of God's creatures - often represented deity - **God is perfect in His deity** (commentary book p.116) Sovereignty (Life Application Bible)

- Scroll - God's judgement on earth that will set in motion the restoration of creation back to sin-free (like Garden of Eden)
- Lamb as if slain - Jesus
 - Refers to His sacrifice on the cross - but He isn't dead, He is standing!

#TargetPractice: Why does John's vision of heaven give us hope?

Jesus is the lamb standing as if slain! Throughout the Old Testament, the lamb was given as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of the people's sins. Jesus was referred to as the lamb of God multiple times in the New Testament. He died in our place for the forgiveness of sins.

In the throne room, we see the lamb as if slain as the only one in all of heaven and earth for all eternity who is able to open the scroll that God is holding. When the scroll is opened, a series of events will begin that will start the process of sin being done away with for all time. Those who will not believe and trust in Jesus will be judged and sin will be no more.

Creation will be returned back to perfection (like the Garden of Eden). This is the promise shown here that gives us hope of perfect life without the pain and suffering sin causes in our world.

No matter what happens on earth, God is still on His throne and in control. Nothing or no one will be able to throw God off the throne. So no matter how difficult or hard things may get in this world, God is still in control. And as we will talk about more in the next couple weeks, God has some amazing plans for those who are faithful to Him.

So we can find hope when we put our trust in God and follow Him.