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Sermon Notes

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The Throne of God, the Center of the Universe

Revelation 4:1-11

The gift of spiritual vision...

The essence of our faith is spiritual vision, the ability to see spiritual truth with the same clarity with which we see the physical world

Every day we are surrounded by the glory of God visible in the physical realms – the majesty of God displayed in the radiant glory of a sunrise, or heard in the pounding of the surf after a hurricane has just finished, or seen in the grandeur of trees that soar a hundred feet from the forest bed, or studied in the intricacies of a little purple wildflower with its five symmetric petals... the sights and sounds of creation testify to the existence and wisdom and power of a Creator. And God who made all things desired to put his invisible attributes on display, and that glory streams in primarily by our eyes.

John Calvin called the physical world the “theater of his glory”

The normal vision which healthy eyes present to our minds of the glories of God in creation is similar to a HIGHER VISION which Almighty God grants to believers... the vision of FAITH... the ability to see not only the physical world as created by a wise and loving Creator, but to see the SPIRITUAL REALM in which he lives, in which he rules and is continually worshipped. This spiritual vision is granted us as a gift... it is based on scripture as it testifies to the invisible realms of the spirit-world that is infinitely ABOVE US ALL

This spiritual vision of faith is what will allow us to follow the Apostle John’s stunning, miraculous journey by the Spirit from the surface of the earth upward through a door into the very throne-room of Almighty God himself

From that lofty perspective, we will see the earth and its events in a whole new light... we will be humbled ourselves, we will be empowered to serve him with great courage and energy and not fear our enemies – whether Satanic or human.

The rest of the Book of Revelation will unfold from essentially this lofty heavenly perspective.

Revelation 4-5 and are two of the most amazing chapters in the Bible... they should be seen together. They give us an unprecedented glimpse into the throne room of God, and into the purpose of all creation – the worship of God in all his glory – his infinitely majestic person, and his astonishingly great achievements

Revelation 4 focuses on GOD THE CREATOR

Revelation 5 will focus on CHRIST THE REDEEMER

Both will culminate in perfect heavenly worship, and will thus INVITE US into that worship while we are still on earth

Revelation 4 ends with these amazing words of worship:

Revelation 4:11 "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 5 will focus on these amazing words of worship

Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

The WORTH of God the Creator... The WORTH of Christ the Redeemer

And it all begins with a timeless invitation through the Holy Spirit to join the Apostle John on a spiritual flight, a journey no one else has ever described before

I. "Come Up Here": An Invitation into the Heavenly Realms

Revelation 4:1 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."

A. "After this"

1. The vision of Revelation 1-3 is over; the rest of the book of Revelation will focus on events flowing from the throne of God as depicted in these two chapters
2. Review
 - a. John was on the Island of Patmos, off the coast of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), exiled for his leadership in the spread of the gospel
 - b. He has a vision of the resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ walking in the midst of seven golden lampstands, representing seven churches
 - c. Christ dictates letters to each of the seven churches... real churches which were active in that day: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea
 - d. These letters to the seven churches made up the next two chapters, Revelation 2-3, and they have occupied our attention for seven weeks
 - e. They give us the purpose of all that will follow, for the end of all of God's creation and Christ's redemption is his glory in the church of Jesus Christ

So... "After this" = with this first vision established, and the letters to the seven churches dispatched for all to read, God has something more important to say to us

B. What John Saw: An OPEN DOOR in heaven

Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven

1. John looked up and BEHOLD...
2. A sudden revelation of something that he had never seen before...
3. A DOOR... a passageway into the heavenly realms... and the door stood OPEN for him
4. This represents that sense of a WALL, a BARRIER between the physical universe and the spiritual universe
5. This open door is a passageway into heaven itself
6. The doorway is ABOVE HIM... up in the sky... a picture of the infinite loftiness of heaven and the throne of God above all the earth

C. What John Heard: A Voice Like a Trumpet

Revelation 4:1 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."

1. Beyond this vision of an open door was a powerful invitation from Jesus Christ himself
2. Jesus was the One who spoke to John in Revelation 1 with a voice that sounded like a trumpet... LOUD, CLEAR, PIERCING
3. Jesus alone can give to mortals this invitation
4. The command is clear: “COME UP HERE...” An invitation from Jesus Christ to a human being to come up to heaven, to leave the surface of the earth and partake in the heavenly life
5. Notice also the promise Jesus gives: **“I will show you what must take place after this”**
 - a. As we’ve noted before, ONLY GOD KNOWS THE FUTURE... Only God can reveal the future to us
 - b. God’s ability to know and decree the future is tied to his throne—his kingly sovereignty
 - c. In Isaiah, God challenged the idols to predict the future, but they cannot... because God alone is sovereign

Isaiah 14:26-27 This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. ²⁷ For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

6. The Book of Revelation speaks in great detail about the THINGS WHICH MUST TAKE PLACE after this
 - a. There is a great deal of prophecy about the future in Revelation
 - b. The terrible future of the final phase of human sin and rebellion against God, culminating in the blasphemous reign of Antichrist, who will demand worship as though he is God
 - c. The terrible future of the Great Tribulation, a time of distress unlike any that has ever been seen in human history, of devastating plagues and judgments on the earth, displays of the wrath of God
 - d. The clear prediction of the Second Coming of Christ and the judgment on the Antichrist; of the Thousand Years, and of Judgment Day, and of the Eternal State—heaven and hell.

D. The Power of the Spirit

1. Jesus has invited John to leave the surface of the earth and go through the doorway into heaven
2. But unaided, it is an impossible command to obey... so God sends the Holy Spirit to lift him up

Revelation 4:2 At once I was in the Spirit...

3. This is very much like the Spirit-journeys taken by Ezekiel in his ministry

Ezekiel 8:3 He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem

At the end of the sermon, I will speak more about the significance of the Spirit for our own journey to the heavenly realms

II. The Center of the Universe: God Enthroned

Revelation 4:2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

A. The First Thing John Sees: A Throne in Heaven... and Someone Seated On It

1. Many people claim to have “near death experiences”... they see “a tunnel of light” or some other such thing
2. Their testimonies are at best suspect, and they seldom have this God-centered focus
3. Several visions of heaven in the Bible... but not many
 - a. Ezekiel had one in Ezekiel 1 that seemed to stretch language almost to the breaking point... but it seemed more a vision of God on the move, in a chariot coming to bring judgment to the earth
 - b. The Apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven and heard inexpressible things, but was FORBIDDEN from writing what he saw and heard
 - c. So this is perhaps the only real vision in the world of God enthroned in heaven
4. This is the most important reality in the universe... the awesome truth that there is a God who rules actively over heaven and earth

B. The Central Reality of Heaven... of Earth... of the Future... and of Your Life

1. Nothing is more important than God enthroned

2. As we shall see, the word throne is mentioned 38 times in the book of Revelation... but 17 of those mentions are in these two chapters
3. It's as though God really wants to establish his clear sovereignty over all the dreadful and glorious events that are about to unfold in this book
4. God enthroned is the central reality of heaven... and the inhabitants of heaven all know it and worship God for it; God enthroned is the central reality in the unfolding history of earth, and that is almost universally denied by the human race; God enthroned should be the central reality of your life, your marriage, your family, your career, your future... IS HE???

III. Surrounding the Throne, Coming from the Throne, Before the Throne

Revelation 4:3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

A. God is Described in His Blinding Glory

1. Unlike Paul, John is allowed to describe what he saw of God on his throne
2. The description is very brief... overpowering LIGHT and SOUND
3. The light seems to be like the sparkling of a diamond... a jasper is a perfectly clear precious stone, and the only one of those we know is a DIAMOND
4. When a diamond is perfect, it is beautifully clear and its facets give off a fiery, radiant light... like a fierce rainbow
5. The glory of God also looks like a carnelian, which is a fiery red stone; perhaps the color red reminds us of the wrath of God that will be depicted in this terrifying book; or of the blood of Christ as we will celebrate next week
6. John also sees a rainbow surrounding the throne... but it is an unusual rainbow in that it resembles an emerald; an emerald is a GREEN STONE, so perhaps this points to the life that God alone can give to all living creatures, since plant life is the most dominant form of life on earth, and plants sustain all other living creatures

B. Surrounding the Throne

1. There is a continual sense of encirclement of the throne... there is a clear message of the CENTRALITY OF GOD in heaven, ruling over all things... everything focused on him
2. Like the sun as the center of the solar system
 - a. The massive presence of the sun holds the entire solar system in thrall...

- b. the sun is 330,000 times more massive than the earth and 1100 times more massive than Jupiter... altogether, the sun has 99.8% of the mass in the solar system... and by that massive presence, it holds the entire solar system in orbits around it
 - c. So also the throne of God is set up in Revelation 4 as the center of heaven, and in the rest of the book as the center of all the succeeding events
3. "Around the throne": Twenty-four other thrones

Revelation 4:4 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.

- a. These thrones represent created beings who have been invested with the right to rule under God's greater throne
- b. God truly is the "King of kings" and the "Lord of lords" in heaven as on earth!
- c. Delegation of power is central to the way God runs his universe; created beings are given the right and honor to rule under him
- d. Who are the twenty-four elders?
 - i) Lots of theories... archangels, exalted Old Testament saints, angels representing both Old and New Testament saints, or perhaps the Old and New Testament saints themselves... like patriarchs of the Old and apostles of the New
 - ii) The number twenty-four seems especially to link up to the significant number 12, reminding of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and the Twelve Apostles of Christ
 - iii) They are not likely to be angels, because they are called "elders," and angels don't age; their white robes imply the clothing of righteousness and purity given to the redeemed later in Revelation
 - iv) In the end, it doesn't much matter who they are; they represent us all as they rule under God and worship him
 - v) Their crowns of gold represent their honor and right to rule; they also will be gifts they can lay down in worship of God

C. The Sights and Sounds Emanating from the Throne

Revelation 4:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.

1. These signs happen many times in the Book of Revelation... it gives a feeling of dread and terror... a sense of the awesome power of God ready to lash out in judgment on any who would oppose him

A few years ago, on a hot, windy August evening, an awesome electrical storm ripped the air right over our house; there was a strange smell in the air and an almost instantaneous combination of the blue-white lightning flash and the deep-throated BOOM!!!! of the thunder. I was standing on the front stoop of my house, and though I usually enjoy a good storm, I felt immediate terror for my life and went quickly inside

2. God used these same sights and sounds to strike fear into the hearts of the Israelites at Sinai

Exodus 19:16 On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled.

Hebrews 12:21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

D. The Spirit of God

Revelation 4:5 Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

1. This is the blazing representation of the Holy Spirit of God
2. Do not think of a flickering candle in a seven-armed candelabra, but more of a blazing, raging torch, burning with the holy light of God
3. The number seven often means perfection or completeness... this is the perfect Holy Spirit of God presenting all this information to the mind and pen of John

E. The Sea of Glass

Revelation 4:6 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

1. The sea was a source of terror to the Israelites, as they had to cross the depths of the Red Sea to escape the Egyptian army
2. The sea: the dark unknown, the unfathomable abyss
3. Daniel 7 pictures the churning, dark, terrifying sea as the source of the four dreadful beasts that came up to rule the earth

4. Revelation 13: the dragon (Satan) stands by the shore of the turbulent sea and calls forth the final wicked ruler, the “Beast from the Sea” who is the Antichrist
5. So the turbulent dark sea is wicked humanity in rebellion against God:

Isaiah 57:20-21 But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. ²¹ "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

6. But the sea before the throne of God is completely pacified... as still as a millpond... as flat as glass, perfectly reflecting the radiant glory of God coming from the throne
7. Like Jesus, speaking to the wind and the waves, saying “Peace, be still”

F. The Living Creatures

Revelation 4:6-8 In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷ 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. ⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings.

1. These amazing spiritual creatures are mysterious and awesome
2. Because this chapter celebrates God’s awesome work as CREATOR, it is likely that these beings represent different orders of creation
 - a. The first: like a LION... the King of the Beasts, with its deafening roar
 - b. The second: like an OX... the largest domesticated beast
 - c. The third: having the face of a man, the ruler of all animals on land or sea
 - d. The fourth: like a flying eagle... the king of the birds, able to soar on thermals through the atmosphere
3. They are covered with eyes, meaning they are endowed with a special knowledge by God—they are enlightened, though not omniscient; this fact is reported TWICE, so it’s emphasized
4. They have six wings, like the seraphim of Isaiah 6... able to fly to do God’s will

So, the heavenly scene is set for the chief employment of heaven: WORSHIP!!

IV. Cascading Worship for God the Creator

Revelation 4:8-11 Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ "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."

A. Incessant Worship: Day and night, they never stop!!

1. The worship just flows and reflows from one to the other... as in Isaiah 6, the seraphim are calling to ONE ANOTHER...

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty... the whole earth is full of his glory"

2. God is ever-worthy of their praise... their esteem of him doesn't wax and wane like ours does

B. The Focus of the Worship: The Greatness of God's Person and Achievements

1. The HOLINESS of God is the special focus: so vital that they say it THREE TIMES: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY
2. They celebrate the POWER of God, calling him "Lord God Almighty"
3. They also celebrate the TIMELESSNESS or ETERNALITY of God: **Who was, and is, and is to come**
 - a. God is the same always... he never changes
 - b. He is also the God of history: he did great acts in the past, he is doing mighty acts now, and he will complete his plan in the future

C. The Interconnected Cascading Worship

1. The worship just builds and builds
 - a. It starts with a quartet: the four living creatures
 - b. It expands to the twenty-four elders
 - c. Then in Revelation 5, it expands to include golden harps as musical instruments

- d. Then in Revelation 5 next, it expands again to include thousands upon thousands of angels, and ten thousand times ten thousand (100 million angels)
 - e. And it climaxes at the end of that chapter with every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth praising and worshiping God the Father on the throne and the Lamb of God who redeemed people with his blood
2. The heavenly worshipers spur each other on by what they are saying about God

D. Casting Crowns

Revelation 4:9-10 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ 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

- 1. The falling down displays the GREAT HUMILITY of these glorious heavenly rulers
- 2. They are not like Satan trying to seize the throne of God
- 3. The casting of their golden crowns is a clear recognition that all their glory and power and position is nothing compared to God's, and actually all of their glory comes from God himself

E. Celebrating God the Creator and Sustainer of All Life

Revelation 4:10-11 They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ¹¹ "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.

- 1. The focus of their praise is God's direct action in creation of all things
- 2. God is worthy of worship because he is the Creator of the universe... he deserves to RECEIVE glory and honor and power
 - a. Understand what this means: we do not in any way ADD to God's glory and honor and power
 - b. Rather its that we celebrate and extol the glory and honor and power he ALREADY HAS!! He becomes magnified in our own estimation
- 3. God's will was essential in the creation of all orders of life... God willed at the beginning of the universe what orders of species would come into being, and so they did

4. There is nothing in all the universe, not in the heavenly realms or in the physical realms that was not created from nothing by the word of God
5. Furthermore, it is by the ongoing will of God that everything continues to have its existence... Jonathan Edwards made so much of this that it is as if by his powerful word God continues every fraction of a second to create the universe in the pattern he has already established... for not one instant does anything in the universe have an independent existence... not even Satan or wicked men

Acts 17:28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'

V. Applications

A. Stand in Awe of Christ's Salvation... and Follow Him to Heaven

Revelation 4:1-2 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." ² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

1. John's journey from rocky Patmos to heavenly glory is a picture of our own salvation
2. The door standing open in heaven is only there because of Christ... by him alone we have ACCESS to God; he is infinitely above us and holy; we are of the earth, fleshly, sinful, and INCAPABLE of rising to heaven
3. This doorway was opened for us sinners by the shedding of the blood of Christ

Hebrews 10:19-22 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained ACCESS by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

4. Jesus is the only one who can INVITE US to come up to him

"Come up here!"

We cannot take it upon ourselves to invite ourselves into a King's Throne Room...

Even Queen Esther, beloved wife of the King of Persia, was taking her life in her hands to enter the throne room uninvited... she risked being put to death; and she had done no wrong against the laws of Persia

But we have consistently rebelled against the Laws of the King... we have broken the Ten Commandments... we have been idolaters and have committed murder and adultery in our hearts and have coveted others' goods; we have failed to love God with all our strength and our neighbors as ourselves; we are covered with sin and guilt

We have no right to come up into heaven without an invitation from the Savior

But Christ has called anyone who will listen "Come up here!"

Similar to this:

John 7:37 Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink"

Jesus is calling sinners all over the world to COME UP TO HEAVEN in his name

So... we have the invitation, BUT...

5. The command is IMPOSSIBLE for us to obey in our own strength
 - a. We have no power of flight; No power to ascend up through the air and pass through a spiritual doorway, no strength to respond
 - b. The invitation is like to a paralyzed person to get up and run
 - c. The invitation is like to a blind person to view the glories of the Grand Canyon
 - d. The invitation is like to a DEAD PERSON, to get up from the tomb
6. Some theologians, commonly called ARMINIANS or those emphasizing FREE WILL, say that if God gives a command to a human being, that human being MUST BE ABLE TO OBEY... innately able, with our own unaided ability
7. This command to John is an illustration of a command given that it is IMPOSSIBLE for the natural man to obey
8. BUT GOD in his infinite goodness, sends his powerful Spirit to enable us to obey the command

Revelation 4:2 At once I was in the Spirit

- a. The Holy Spirit of God takes the finished work of Christ and applies it to the souls of the elect when they hear the gospel
 - b. The Holy Spirit of God CONVICTS US of sin and makes Christ appear GLORIOUSLY BEAUTIFUL to us
 - c. The Holy Spirit gives us life and power to follow Christ to heaven
9. The final destination of the journey by the Spirit is the THRONE OF GOD, submission to God's Kingly rule... his YOKE upon us!

B. Delight in God's Sovereign Throne

- 1. Don't fight it; humble yourself before it

Isaiah 66:1-2 This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? ² Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

- 2. Submit to his rule in your life
- 3. The natural man HATES God's kingly rule and wants to fight against it; the essence of our salvation is that we are DELIGHTING in God the King

Charles Spurgeon:

There is nothing for which the children of God ought more earnestly to contend than the dominion of their Master over all creation – the kingship of God over all the works of his own hands – the throne of God, and his right to sit upon that throne.

On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of which they have made such a football, as the great ... doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah.

Men will allow God to be everywhere except on his throne. ... when God ascends his throne, his creatures then gnash their teeth; and when we proclaim an enthroned God, and his right to do as he wills with his own, to dispose of his creatures as he thinks well, without consulting them in the matter, then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on his throne is not the God they love.

But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon his throne whom we trust.

4. So... rest in God's providential control over earth's events and the unfolding of human history

Revelation 4:8 "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

- a. He WAS... he is the God of the Old Testament, who ruled over kings and empires to achieve his purpose
- b. He IS... He is alive today, ruling over heaven and earth to achieve his ultimate purposes
- c. He IS TO COME... He rules over the future, and everything will unfold exactly as he has planned
- d. He created all things and by his will they continue to exist at every moment
- e. "By your will they have their being" = Only by the continual will and purpose of God does every atom in the universe continue to exist; only by the continued word of God does every angel, demon, Satan, man, woman, boy and girl continue to exist
- f. we should realize then the absolute power of God over the unfolding of the events of your life

Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

- g. In light of the awesome sovereignty of God enthroned, do you see how sinful worry/anxiety is? Do you see how important it is for us to learn to be content with what his sovereign providence decrees for our lives?
5. Rest in God's sovereign power over the nations and their kings
6. Understand the judgments that flow from his holy throne
- a. The Book of Revelation is going to depict awesome judgments that will flow from this throne
 - b. Clearly when the seven seals are broken, and when the seven trumpets sound, and the seven bowls are poured out on earth, and judgments flow from heaven to earth, and people die, it is a display of the justice and wrath of God enthroned
 - c. So BOTH death and life flow from the throne of God... a river of FIRE and a river of LIFE

Daniel 7:9-10 His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.

Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city.

C. Live to Worship God Every Day: “On earth as it is in heaven”

1. Let this chapter teach you how to worship: **“Day and night they never stop!!”**
2. The essence of worship is to understand the WORTH of God, what his infinite value is, in his true nature and being
3. Ponder the holiness of God to the depth of your being...

Revelation 4:8 Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

- a. Holy = separate...
 - i) first, infinitely above all his creation
 - ii) second, perfectly separate from all evil
- b. this is the attribute we arrogant humans need to hear the most... God is infinitely ABOVE us, superior to us... there is a gap between us and God that cannot be measured; though we are fearfully and wonderfully made, though we are created in his image, though we are vastly superior to all the animals in our thoughts and capacities, yet we are infinitely BELOW God in every way... He is the Creator, we are the creature... Satan tried to ascend to the highest place and take the throne of God... but that is impossible!

We joined him in our rebellion and try to take his place... but we must seek to comprehend the infinite gap between God the Creator and all the creatures:

- c. This holiness of God is also the attribute we SINFUL human need to hear the most; we are so accustomed to this present darkness

1 John 1:5 God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

Hebrews 12:29 our "God is a consuming fire."

4. We need to learn to worship like the heavenly beings do

Matthew 6 “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name... may your Kingdom come, and may your will be done ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”

- a. We worship sporadically, rarely, in fits and starts
- b. The heavenly being use their immeasurable strength in a continual work of worship and find unspeakable delights in it
- c. We need to WORSHIP BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD much more continually than we do!!

D. Stand in Awe of God’s Creation

1. The array of creation is absolutely staggering
2. We should walk through the various vistas of nature and celebrate the creativity and uniqueness of God in making each one
 - a. Think about the various National Parks you’ve ever toured
 - b. Yellowstone, with its magnificent mountain valleys and its “Old Faithful” cone geyser, which spouts as much as 8000 gallons as high as 106 feet in the air every 45-125 minutes
 - c. Great Smokey Mountains lush old growth forests, with their rich musty smell
 - d. Acadia National Park in Maine, with its dramatic rocky coastline and stunning fall foliage
 - e. Cape Cod with its rolling sand dunes and fragile beach grass
3. Think about all the wildlife you’ve ever seen
 - a. I’ve been to a game preserve in Kenya and seen wild lions prowling, as well as rhinos and the most deadly of all African wild beasts, the Hippopotamus
 - b. Think about visits to the zoo, with all the staggering variety of animal and bird life there—the incredible array of sizes, behaviors, mating habits, capabilities ... the cheetah with its staggering speed, the strange looking ostrich
 - c. God openly boasts to Job about all the animals, birds, and aquatic life he fashioned by the word of his power
4. Think about the weather patterns God controls: the hurricanes, and breezes and zephyrs and sirrococ—the hot desert wind, and the wild Nor’Easter... the dry spells and the monsoon seasons in the jungles of Southeast Asia

5. Think about the starry host... the Milky Way and all the stars that Isaiah says God created and calls each by name, and because of his power none of them is missing
6. I could go on and on... the heavenly worshipers DELIGHT IN CREATION... they are in awe of what God has made and how he sustains it all moment by moment
7. Think of the fact that all this creation will be free from bondage to decay in the New Heavens and New Earth and be perfect again!!

E. Draw Near to the Throne of Grace in Prayer

1. The best application for us in this chapter is to DRAW NEAR to the throne of God in prayer... not ignore his throne or run away from it
2. Hebrews clearly invites us to this

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

3. Everything you lack, everything you need is found in the throne of God... we are commanded to draw near by faith

F. Cast Your Crowns Before the Throne

1. Begin now to live in humility before God

Isaiah 26:12 all that we have accomplished you have done for us.

2. Give him all the credit in your mind for anything you ever achieve or could ever boast in