

I. Come Up Here!!

- A. John is beckoned to come up to the throne room of God, a place that we all long to see and desire to enter. There is a very real city in heaven that was not made with human hands but by the Father Himself. It stands like a mountain nearly as long and wide and tall as the distance from the coast of California to the City of New York. At the top of this mountain city is a Temple. This Temple is the dwelling place of the author of our existence and the reality around us. John was not the first to see this city or the temple at its pinnacle but rather one of many Saints to tell us about its existence and the Glory that is seen and felt there.
1. All of what came before and follows after is directly related to these two chapters. Everything revolves around the throne room of God. It is from this point that the book moves swiftly from the events that troubled the church in John's day to a *transcendent place* and a *transcendent solution* that is established from that place. This is the place that Jesus wants John to keep his heart focused on as the stabilizing truth that will help him filter the rest of the vision. (Ex. 19:16-20; Is. 6; Ez. 1-2; Dan. 7:9-10)
 2. This chapter gives us one of the most detailed descriptions of the majesty of God's beauty found in the scriptures. Our primary core value, vision, and mandate of this church family is to encounter God. This initial throne room scene reveals 4 different categories of God's glory or beauty. (Ps. 27:4; Is. 33:17)

II. The Beauty of the Person of God (Rev. 4:3)

- A. Jesus revealed Himself and His glory to John in (Rev. 1) through outward symbolic imagery in order that John would understand an inward truth about Jesus, so now the Father does the same. As a smile in its outward beauty reveals our inward reality and beauty, so are the aspects that John is seeing.
- B. The Father first unveils His nature or person to John by revealing *how He looks, feels, and acts*.
1. **The Enthroned One** – There is a very real throne set in heaven which is reserved for the One who holds the authoritative power and will over all reality. This throne is preeminent and observant over the past, present, and future of every situation in the created order. The throne is spoken of 36 times in this vision and the Greek word translated "sitting" speaks of a continuous state.

2. **Like a Jasper** – The Jasper stone of the ancient world was a brilliant stone like a diamond, it was distinguished by its blinding brightness and radiance. Jasper speaks of purity without any defilement. There is only perfection in God's motives and wisdom, and there is no corruption in His power or actions. Therefore, brilliant overwhelming light emanates from the Father as a garment. (Ps. 104:2; Mat. 17:2; 1 Tim. 6:16, 1 Jhn. 1:5)

3. **Like a Sardius** – A Sardius stone is a deep ruby red gem that speaks of God's desirous burning love for His people. He longs for us to be fully His as He is fully ours. The fiery flame of His heart's desire is so vehement that red fiery flames manifest from His presence. Overwhelmingly in the scriptures when God manifests His presence to His people this burning fire accompanies His presence. (Ex. 3:2, 24:17; Dt. 4:24; Song 8:6-7; Lk 12:49)

4. **Emerald Rainbow** - Next John calls our attention to the emerald rainbow that is around the throne of God. Rainbows were given to creation to remind us of God's mercy. Biblically, the emerald or green speaks of the life giving grace of God. Everything that flows from the throne flows through the filter of life giving mercy and kindness. (Gen. 9:8-13; Ex 34:6; Is. 55:7-9; Hos. 6:6; Mat. 9:13; Heb. 2:17)

III. The beauty of God's Partnership (Rev. 4:4)

- A. John's gaze and attention has now moved to the next revealed part of the temple of God. Around the throne there are the 24 thrones with 24 elders who are robed and crowned interacting with the Father. There is much debate about the actual identity of these elders (men or angels). What's important is that these beings represent human governmental partnership that the Father has invited us into.

- Possible identities and meanings of 24 elders - The 12 patriarchs/tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of the church. The 24 priestly divisions in Israel that worshipped and served the Lord (1 Chron. 23:6; 24:7-18). The 24 hours in the day.

1. **Partners Enthroned** - The elders reign with authority hearing plans and helping execute actions. We must stand in awe at the value and dignity the Father places on the redeemed. God's loving salvation so cleanses, equips, and exalts His former enemies that they reign in unity with Him. (Lk 19:12-26; 1 Cor. 2:9)

2. **Partners Robed** – Clothed in robes, biblically, speaks of the priestly order and priestly ministry. The thrones the elders sit on indicates their position of authority, the robes indicate of how they function in their authority. (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6)
3. **Partners Crowned** – The crowns given to the elders are indicative of unique position and status within the kingdom of God. Crowns (eternal rewards) are given based upon our voluntary responses to the loving leadership of Jesus in this age. These crowns will also symbolically represent the indivial intimacy that we have with our creator. (1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10, 3:11)

IV. The beauty of God's Involvement (Rev. 4:5A)

A. John is now takes note of the atmosphere around the throne. There are lightnings, thundering, and noises or voices emanating from the One seated on the throne. The Father is involved with His creation through the release of manifestations of His heart and mind to His people. These very same expressions of divine activity were present at Mount Sinai when the glory of the Lord descended on the mountain to encounter His people. (Ex 19)

1. **Lightning from the Father** – Biblically, Light speaks of the manifestation of the truth of God breaking into the darkness. I believe the light flashing from the throne is symbolic of the Father revealing truth to the created order. (Hab. 3:4; Mat. 17:2; Lk. 1:79; Jhn. 1:4-5, 9; Eph. 5:14)
2. **Thunder from the Father** – Thunder in scripture is almost always associated with God's voice speaking from heaven. He powerfully and intimately delivers personal, and corporate divine messages that shake and move the creation and our hearts. (Job 37:4-5; Ps. 29:3; Jhn 12:29; Rev. 10:4)
3. **Noises from the Father** – The Greek word John used indicates various tones like musical notes or distinct languages also coming from the Father. The noises or voices speak of the other unique ways that He reveals Himself to us such as in music, signs and wonders, and whispers. (Zeph. 3:17, Zec. 9:14)

V. The beauty of God's Burning Spirit (Rev. 4:5B-7)

- A. John's attention is now turned to the fire of God Spirit that's burning before His throne and touching the creatures ministering in His temple. The Holy Spirit manifests His presence to strengthen individuals to respond in burning love to the Father on the throne.
1. **Seven Lamps of Fire** - The menorah that God instructed the craftsmen to build for the temple of Moses symbolizes the reality of the Holy Spirit. It was the menorah that symbolized the role of the temple as the "light of the world". The Holy Spirit functions as the fullness of this reality, operating in the creation with the burning affections for God. The Holy Spirit plays a dynamic role in the regeneration, sanctification, and preservation of the saints. (Ex. 25:31-40; Is. 11:1-3; Zech. 4:1-6; Mat. 5:16)
 2. **Sea of Glass of Fire** – There is a sapphire pavement of fiery crystal like glass like an ocean that is before the throne. This is the place where the saints gather together to worship the Enthroned One. This sea is not chaotic and volatile like the natural ocean but totally calm and at peace. The burning fire of the God's Spirit covers the entirety of the pavement thus touching all who gather there. (Ps. 104:3; Is. 62:1; Mat. 3:11)
 3. **Seraphim – "Burning Ones"** - The Seraphim have one face and six wings, and are covered with eyes. Being covered with eyes speaks of wisdom and their ability to see God. The Seraphim function as high-ranking fiery servants and leaders of the temple ministry. They are a reflection of the One whom they serve. They are a picture of the kind of servants that the Lord is establishing in His Bride. (Is. 6:1-3)