



## **REVELATIONS FROM CRISES:**

### *REVELATION 4: VISION OF THE THRONE OF GOD*

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#### **Verse 1: We Live Under An Open Heaven**

- When Heaven Opens:
  - We hear the **authoritative** voice of God (things that **must** take place)
  - God is in supreme control at all times, therefore we receive new visions, Ezekiel 1: 1
  - The Holy Spirit descends, Mark 1: 10
  - The Revelation of the glory of Christ is revealed, John 1: 51
- Heaven: A Place of Open Doors
  - Door of opportunity, Revelation 3: 8
  - Door to human heart, Revelation 3: 20
  - Door of access to eternal glory **through** worship, Revelation 4: 1

#### **Verses 2-3: The Throne of God**

- The throne of God stands for the majesty of God
  - (Word throne mentioned 62 times in New Testament; 47 in Book of Revelation)
  - John establishes truth that there is another throne above Caesar's (word of Comfort to believers suffering persecution)
  - No attempt made to describe God in any human form (no mention of eyes, hands, ears, feet, etc.)
  - God is spoken of as light (unapproachable light, I Timothy 6: 16), which flashes from precious stones:
    - Jasper, translucent rock crystals or diamonds: represents purity or brightness of God's glory
    - Sardian, blood red, found near Sardis, similar to modern carnelian; represents God's avenging wrath
    - Emerald, gentle green that represents God's mercy

#### **Verse 4: The Twenty-Four Elders**

- Possibilities:
  - Council of heaven
  - Twenty-four courses in Jewish priesthood (I Chronicles 24: 7-18)
  - Twelve patriarchs of twelve tribes and twelve apostles
- Representatives of the faithful people of God:
  - Robes promised to faithful (Revelation 3: 4)
  - Crowns promised to those who are faithful unto death (Revelation 2: 10)
  - Thrones promised to those who have forsaken all (Matthew 19: 27-29)
  - Number twenty-four represents Jews and Gentiles who make up the whole church that will one day worship in the presence of God

**Verse 6: The Sea Around the throne**

Meaning is unclear

Vast surface which back the light as the Aegean Sea during the summer

Reminder that we should never forget God's transcendent distance

Crisis of this age is that we have made God too common and have lost perspective in terms of God's holiness or separateness

As we have lost a sense of God's holiness and separateness we have also lost sight of our call to be holy and separate

**Verses 6b-8: The Four Living Creatures**

Biblical reference, Ezekiel 1: 4-26, especially verse 10

Cherubim, angelic beings that are always found near the throne of God

Close proximity emits constant praise inasmuch as closeness to fire emits heat and warmth and closeness to ice emits chill and cold

Closeness to God also means special functions:

They invite the dreadful manifestations of God's wrath (6: 1 & 7)

One of them hands over the vials of God's wrath (15: 7)

The four living creatures stand for everything that is noblest, strongest, wisest, and swiftest in human nature. The lion is supreme among beasts; the ox is supreme among cattle; the eagle is supreme among birds; and man is supreme among all creatures. They represent truth that anything that is fulfilling its purpose is praising God. (Barclay)

The Four Living Creatures in the life of the Early Church

The lion symbolizes the powerful and effective working of the Son of God, his leadership and royal power. The ox, his priestly side as animal of sacrifice. The man represents his incarnation.

The eagle represents the gift of the Holy Spirit hovering over the Church. (Barclay)

St. Augustine's classification:

Lion, Gospel of Matthew, the Lord Jesus as Lion of Judah

Man, Gospel of Mark, nearest approach to factual account of Lord's life

Ox, Gospel of Luke, The Lord Jesus as sacrifice for all humanity everywhere

Eagle, Gospel of John, Flies highest of all birds and said to be the only one can look directly at the sun

**Verses 9-11: Anthem of Praise**

Tossing of crowns was act of submission

"Kurios kai Theos" means Lord and God and was title of Roman Emperor Domitian.

Christians were killed because they refused to acknowledge that claim.

This expression then was a defiant confession of their faith in God

God ALONE Creates