

Revelation 4 – Visions of the Throne of God

By Holly Effiom

“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” Rev 1:19

This is Jesus’ instruction to John at the beginning of the book of Revelation. If you take this instruction as a layout for the book, you will find that “...which thou hast seen...” correlates to Rev 1-3; “...and the things which are...” correlates to Rev 4-5; and “...the things which shall be hereafter...” correlates to Rev 6-20.

Revelation 4 is John’s throne room vision, which shares a long history with other prophets of God. So, as a preface to our study of Revelation 4, we’re going to look at the throne room visions recorded by other prophets in the Bible, and try to gain insight into John’s experience and his message.

Isaiah 6:1-13

The Throne	Description of God	Purpose of God’s visit	Audience?	Power of words
The Throne was high and lifted up a. Seraphim are above the throne: 6 wings – 2 covering his face, 2 covering his feet, 2 were used to fly b. Crying one to another “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.” c. The posts of the doors moved at the words. The house was filled with smoke.	The Lord sat upon the throne His train filled the temple The voice of the Lord asked: “whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”	“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Answers Isaiah, when asked: “How long?” To go to the people and teach them and explain His ways, though it will be futile.	Children of Israel	Seeing God made Isaiah see his own and his people’s inadequacies in the presence of God. The angel responded to Isaiah’s need.

VV1-4

What vision is Isaiah given?

When did it take place? What did he see? What was being said?

VV5-7

What happened when Isaiah spoke his problem? Why did Isaiah feel inadequate?

Couldn’t he just take a bath and be clean? Why or why not?

What did the angel’s offering do for Isaiah? Did Isaiah tell the angel to do this?

Why did the angel do what he did? Did God stop him? What does this say about God?

What does it tell you about our words?

V8

What does God ask? To whom is He speaking? Who’s the “us”? What does Isaiah say?

How would you respond? What does this say about Isaiah’s character?

VV9-10

What did God want Isaiah to do? What did God mean to “tell this people”?

What was Isaiah to tell them? Was God confident that they would listen?

What would happen if they did listen, and see and understand?

From God’s words, is He being sarcastic? What does this say about God?

VV11-12

What did Isaiah ask? Why? What was God’s answer?

What exactly will be seen in Judah? What do we know happened historically?

V13

What is God describing here?

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How many will be in the land again? How will this group resemble an oak tree?

What does “have your substance within you” mean? What is this substance?

LESSON: Isaiah 6

We get to see several aspects of God from Isaiah’s vision of the throne.

When reading the prophets, we tend to focus on things similar or different from ourselves, as human beings. I tend to think that each and every interaction between man and God gives us an opportunity to learn more about God.

Firstly notice, as soon as Isaiah recognized his problem, an angel responded to heal him immediately. God didn’t stop the angel or even give directions as to what needed to be done. It appears that those in God just do the “right thing”. There’s no discussion of what the right thing is, or if you’re the right one to do it.

Consider, if Israel would just recognize his problem, how many angels would be dispatched to heal him? Imagine how much power is willing and able to respond to our own words, if we would just humble ourselves and speak out our problem?

Secondly, God has a sense of humor! He shows up, in such a glorious manner, before Isaiah and with an entourage, and asks the question: “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” This is too funny!

There was no one standing with Isaiah to whom he could point and say, “Send that guy!”

God knew who He was visiting, and He knew the type of person Isaiah was, that’s indeed why He went to Isaiah. Isaiah was willing and desirous to serve Him – he didn’t hesitate: “Here am I, send me!” His only question was, “How long do I have to do this?” which is probably exactly what I would’ve asked.

I often wonder if I would have the courage to respond like Isaiah. I’m not sure, but I hope I would.

God made me understand something important about the altar as I revisited this study today: The altar is a *two-way* communication. We purpose in our hearts to make a sacrifice and place it on the altar before God. God consumes our open and honest offering, and somehow replaces it with what we need to heal ourselves. The spiritual application being that when we “invest” time, money, prayers, God consumes that investment and replaces it with something that will heal or make whole in a time of need. That’s the importance of “giving” and doing so generously.

Ezekiel 1-2:10

The Throne	Description of God	Purpose of God’s visit	Audience?	Power of words
The Living creatures were a. transporting the throne b. They made a lot of noise c. Had 4 wings each – 2 covered their body d. Had the likeness of man e. Had 4 faces: man, lion on the right side and ox and eagle on the left f. Sole of foot like a calf’s foot; and they shone like burnished brass g. Had the hands of men under their wings.	His voice was like the noise of great waters Appearance of a man on the throne There was the color of amber, like fire from His loins up and from His loins down.	Send Ezekiel to the rebellious children of Israel, to witness to them.	Children of Israel	Seeing God caused Ezekiel’s flesh and corruption to collapse in fear. God spoke His own Spirit into Ezekiel’s flesh.

VV 25-28

What was Ezekiel hearing? What was Ezekiel looking at?

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- Where is the firmament?
- How does he describe the throne?
- Who did he see sitting upon the throne?
- What semi-precious stone does he use to describe the vision of the man on the throne?
- What aspects of amber resembled the “man” on the throne?
- What was surrounding the vision? What was Ezekiel seeing?
- What was his reaction to being in the presence of God?

Ezekiel 2:1-3

- What is meant by the term “son of man”?
- Jesus was called “Son of man” also. Why? Dan 7:13; Matt 13:37; Matt 20:18; Matt 26:24
- What is it to be a son? Are you in charge?
- What happened to Ezekiel when he saw God?
- What happened when God said “stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee”?
- What happened when God commanded Ezekiel to stand upon his feet?
- What does this say about words? About the word of God?
- What does God tell Ezekiel about Israel?
- So, what is the purpose of God’s visit? What is Ezekiel supposed to say to the children of Israel?

VV4-6

- Does God guarantee that the children of Israel will listen to Ezekiel?
- In fact, isn’t God up front about the response Ezekiel will get to his words?

VV7-10

- What did God give Ezekiel?
- What was written on the scroll?
- Why did God have Ezekiel eat the scroll?
- What is it to eat the roll? How did it taste to Ezekiel?

LESSON: Ezekiel 1:25 – 2:10

Though there are similarities in Ezekiel’s and Isaiah’s visions, when God appeared to Ezekiel, the interaction was different – for Ezekiel was a different type of person. Notice, God trusted Isaiah’s response to a request, so He *asked* Isaiah if he would take on the mission; and Isaiah answered as expected. Ezekiel was told what his mission was (Eze 2:3-7) You see a hint of Ezekiel’s personality in chapter 2:8, in which God had to say to him, “Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house...”

Our focus in this section of the study is the Throne specifically, Eze 1:25-2:10, but if you read further into chapter 3, you find that Ezekiel wasn’t exactly overjoyed by this visit from God – “So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.” Eze 3:14 God even uses those who aren’t so inclined to do His will... That’s another Oprah show 😊!

[Aside: In these first chapters of Ezekiel, God allows us to see and hear his frustration with the children of Israel, but we also get to smile at His sarcasm, Eze 3:6. Another section of scripture that makes me giggle is Ex 32:7-14, which were the words God and Moses exchanged after the children of Israel built the golden calf – there seemed to be a difference of opinion about “who’s the children of Israel were”. God allowed Moses to have the last word in that “discussion”.]

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With regard to the “Throne” study, God appears to be and *sounds* like a frustrated parent, sending warning to His children through an elder brother. Isaiah and Ezekiel were different, but their mission the same, and they both performed God’s will regardless of their personality.

Just like Isaiah, in the presence of God, Ezekiel’s flesh was made painfully aware of its inadequacies; but an important thing happens that should not be missed. God commanded Ezekiel to stand, and as soon as He spoke, the Holy Spirit moved to perform His command by entering Ezekiel and strengthening his flesh to stand. Eze 2:1-2. This reminds me of when the vision of Daniel 10:19 merely *spoke* strength into Daniel’s flesh.

Now, consider the *gift* of the Holy Spirit. God has given us, His children, the power to perform our desires, merely by our own words, spoken according to His perfect will. So, can we be healed in our bodies and in our minds? Can we speak healing and wholeness into the lives of others? Can we speak peace into our own homes? Can we bring satan and his wiles under our feet, by our words? Can I get the job that will help me provide for my family? Can I go to a 4-year college or university and get my degree? The list can go on and on and on... God Almighty has gifted us with His own Holy Spirit. Oh, yes, we can! Hallelujah!

What evidence of the Holy Spirit is present in your life?

Daniel 7:9

The Throne	Description of God	Purpose of God’s visit	Audience?	Power of words
Like a fiery flame Has wheels that resemble burning fire A fiery stream issued and came forth before the throne A thousand thousands ministered to Him Ten-thousand times ten-thousand stood before Him	Ancient of Days, seated on the throne His garments were as white as snow His hair was like pure wool	Allow Daniel to see the future – on the earth and in the heavens	Children of Israel, but there was news about the “nations”	The angel had to speak strength into Daniel in order to interact with him.

VV9-12

What thrones were cast down?

Who is the Ancient of Days?

How is the Ancient of Days described? What were His garments like? What was His hair like?

Where else have you read this description? Who was being described there?

Who else has described God’s throne?

Which prophet described wheels on the throne, Or fiery flames as associated with the throne of God?

What other prophet described thousands ministering to the Ancient of Days or even tens of thousands standing before Him?

Where must Daniel have been standing in order to see this great crowd? Was he near or at a distance?

What will happen to other nations?

Where must Isaiah or Ezekiel have been standing? What does it mean the judgment is set and the books were opened?

What was Daniel witnessing, if the books were being opened and the judgment was set? What is the order of future events that Daniel was seeing?

How far out into the future did Daniel see?

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V13

Was this a different vision or is it an event during the same vision?

Who is the son of man?

What are the clouds of heaven? Who is “they”? Did the “they” present the son of man to God?

What did the Ancient of Days give to the son of man?

When will this take place? Matt 11:27

What’s unique about the kingdom of the son of man?

LESSON: Daniel 7

Daniel’s vision is different from both Isaiah’s and Ezekiel. God had not appeared to personally interact with Daniel, per se, though He was allowing Daniel the opportunity to peer far into the future. The question that keeps coming to me is, Why? Why Daniel? Why a vision of God’s throne from this perspective?

This made me think about Daniel, and where he was at this point in his life. It was in the third year of Jehoiachim’s, the king of Judah’s, reign that Nebuchadnezzar conquered and deported the royal house to Babylon. I would assume that Daniel was in his early teens at that time because he was old enough to understand the need to not defile himself with the Babylonian king’s food. He survived the conquest of Babylon by the Medo-Persian kingdom, a hostile work environment, resulting in a night in the lion’s den under the Median king, Darius, and also serves under the Persian king, Cyrus. I should think that Daniel’s prayers were full of longing for the return of the kingdom of Israel. He was probably very tired of dealing with these idol-worshipping people, with whom he had to constantly watch his back!

God gave Daniel a ringside seat to the dismantling of Gentile kingdoms, and it wasn’t going to be pretty; nor did he see the kingdom of Israel emerging dominant, as Isaiah prophesied. What he did see is dominion being placed into the hands of the Son of man, Jesus Christ, of whom he didn’t have a clear concept yet.

Imagine Daniel’s emotional disposition in this circumstance, and God gives him a vision that addressed his longings, yet it confused him further. So, God sends an angel to help Daniel to understand. Why? God wanted Daniel to understand – not just him but all, at that time and long after, who yearn in their souls for God’s kingdom to come, for a new and better Jerusalem – the order of events. To provide comfort and encouragement to His remnant, barely hanging on, that He is working all things together for their good.

And, how did this vision bring comfort? It let His remnant know that He sees their suffering and pain resulting from their desire and commitment to be faithful to God. It let them know that God is actively bringing the rebellious, idolatrous kingdoms to an end. Furthermore, God is hearing their prayers – He was allowing Daniel to see the future, even though it is a long way out and he would not get to touch it in his earthly lifetime. Similar to how Moses got to see the Promised Land but not allowed to enter it.

And, God assured Daniel that Israel will indeed have a part in the kingdom of God, in the very person of Christ Jesus – and, those of a like mind and like spirit of all mankind will rule and reign with Him over the whole earth. Hallelujah!

Did Daniel understand all of this at the time? No, but he faithfully wrote it down.

V 1

What was John getting ready to see?

How is this related to what Jesus wanted John to write in Rev 1:19? Is this “...the things which are”?

If this section is dealing with the things that “must” occur hereafter, what was John seeing before?

What did the things before deal with?

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If verse 4:1 is the church's rapture, what was the point of Rev 2-3?

VV2-3

What happened to John as soon as he heard the voice from heaven?

Did that voice, at any point, say Jesus is mistaken and that He is not the Alpha and Omega, First and Last, the One who was dead and is now alive forever more?

What did John see once in the Spirit?

How was John's view similar to one of the other prophet's view? Which prophet saw the rainbow around the throne?

Which prophet described Him who sat on the throne as a semi-precious stone?

V4

Which of the other prophets saw 24 seats and 24 elders sitting on those seats? Where were these seats located?

What is an elder? Where is the term elder commonly used? In a religious or secular community?

What did the 24 elders wear on their heads? What is it to wear a crown in God's throne?

When Jesus was giving the messages to the 7 churches, to whom did He offer crowns? Can just anyone obtain a crown – go to the store and buy it?

What is the difference between a horn and a crown?

LESSON: What is a crown? A crown carries a connotation of leadership in today's culture. In Jesus' messages to the 7 churches in Asia, He promised crowns of life to those individuals who remained faithful and overcame. Why wouldn't he offer a "horn"? A horn carries a connotation of leadership also. In Daniel 7, an angel explains that the horns Daniel saw in his vision were kings. Kings rule over kingdoms or nations. The point of Daniel's vision was that all kingdoms and nations and individuals will ultimately be destroyed or submit to the one everlasting kingdom of God. There is only 1 horn, 1 kingdom, one King – Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

Crowns of leadership are prizes for faithfulness that are bestowed upon individuals by One who is higher. God shares His glory with no one!

V5

Which other prophet saw lightning and thunder proceeding from the throne of God?

Which other prophet saw the 7 lamps before the throne of God?

What do the 7 lamps signify?

What was Jesus walking among in Rev 1:13?

What did the 7 lampstands or candlesticks signify? Rev 1:20

LESSON: In Exodus 25:31-39, God gave Moses careful instructions on how the lampstands or candlesticks for the tabernacle should be crafted, and their function – to give light beyond itself, when the lamps were lit. We even learn that Moses had seen the model for the candlesticks in the tabernacle while in the mount.

Each lampstand was made from a single talent of gold – the metal being a beaten and molded work into a functional, multi-branched unit, that was able to not only receive the light, but to uphold the light. Each lampstand was valuable in and of itself, the labor invested to make it functional, notwithstanding.

[Some authorities say that the talent typically weighed about 33 kg (75 lb) varying from 20 to 40 kg. In June, 2018, the international price of gold was about US\$41,155.69 per kilogram - One gram costs about \$38. At this price, a talent (33 kg) would be worth about \$1,400,116.57. (Source: [https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talent_\(weight\)\)](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talent_(weight)))].

Now, consider that Jesus Himself gave the interpretation that the lampstand represents a church. It's not the work or functions that the church performs that makes it valuable; it is valuable because God invested His treasure and His time and His very own Son, Jesus Christ, to plant this light for the world in the earth.

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The Church is the receptacle for the Holy Spirit (the 7 lamps, which are the 7 spirits of God) – with which God has gifted us liberally – to uphold, so that It can shine (or bless) upon and beyond the church, to the world. The church itself is not the Light, it is the receptacle and upholder of the Light.

How is this understanding related to the lampstands of Exodus 25?

VV 6-9

What was also in the midst of the throne?

Which other prophet said that there were beasts surrounding the throne?

In God's kingdom, is the throne just a really pretty chair?

Did each beast, according to John, have 4 different faces?

How many wings did these beasts have?

Which other prophet saw "beasts" with 6 wings?

What does the human eye do? What if you didn't have eyes? What wouldn't you be able to do?

Why all the eyes? What do they signify?

What were these beasts saying?

Would you say the beasts were seraphim or cherubim?

VV 10-11

What did the elders do whenever the beasts magnified God?

What did they do with their crowns? What does this mean?

What is it that they say to God?

Why is this significant?

Did Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Daniel mention "elders" in their Throne visions?

Who is it that the beasts and the 24 elders are acknowledging? Is it Jesus?

What is the mouth's motivation to speak? What does it mean for those in the throne?

LESSON: None of the other prophets' visions of the throne of God included seeing 24 elders, wearing crowns, whose seats are in the throne of God. Why would this be? The visions of the other prophets took place BEFORE Christ Jesus. John's vision, as far as I know, is the only one to take place AFTER the death and resurrection of Christ.

Why is this significant? When Jesus died, the veil that separated the most holy place from the congregation was torn in two, providing one who enters by the blood of Jesus access to the throne of God. That veil was an earthly type of Adam's sin that blocked his access in heaven to the throne of God. Jesus' death paid the price required to break the curse of that sin that kept us separated from God. Therefore now, faithful ones who enter by the blood of Christ Jesus – "elders" – can abide and stand in the throne of God Almighty; their flesh does not collapse in the presence of God. Hallelujah!

Why 24 elders? The number 24 reminded me of David setting up the 24 courses of the priests. 1 Chr 24. If this is indeed from where the 24 elders originate – the 24 chiefs of the priests, governing over the sanctuary and over the house of God – this is significant, in that the commands set in place in the earth by David, over a couple of millennia ago, in heaven, stand for eternity.