

Link to Lonnie Woodruff's *Revelation for Christians Today*, online:

<http://www.abiblecommentary.com/howtounderstandthebookofrevelation.htm>

## A Study of Revelation 4

### I. Outline.

1. "BEHOLD," John is allowed to view the throne room of God (Revelation 4:1).
2. John attempts to describe the throne which he sees (2-3).
3. There are 24 Elders surrounding the throne plus 4 living creatures (4-8a).
4. Constant worship/praise continues of the one upon the throne (8b-11).

### II. Summary.

In Revelation 4 John looked and saw an opened door. He was invited to see what was on the other side of the door. On the other side of the door was the very throne room of God. From his description of the scene John must have had similar feelings as those of the children of Israel when the glory of God was manifested to them (Exodus 19:16-20). The whole scene seems intended to emphasize that God IS STILL ON HIS THRONE. He is still in control! For the saints of the first century, Domitian may have seemed a **mighty ruler**, and greatly to be feared, but in comparison to the Lord God, he was nothing! Surrounding the throne were four living creatures. The KJV uses "beasts," which might be somewhat misleading at least as 21<sup>st</sup> Century folks think of beasts. The original term seems better translated in the ASV and other versions as living creatures. Also, there were 24 elders seated in thrones surrounding the throne of God. Who were these 24 elders? Lonnie Woodruff (in *Revelation for Christians Today*), suggests the following: "To determine this we must rely on the symbolic number "12" which is used to represent organized religion. God has made two covenants with man---the law of Moses and the law of Christ. The law of Moses was represented by the twelve children of Israel, and the law of Christ is represented by the twelve apostles. If we take "12," the number of organized religion, and double it for the two covenants, the result is "24." These twenty-four elders represent the lawgivers of the Old Testament and New Testament." See more from Lonnie Woodruff at: <http://bit.ly/WSLUU9>

### III. Chronology.

**BIBLE PERIOD:** The Period of the Church.

*If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:*

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

### IV. Words/Phrases to Study

- **Chapter 4...** "It is clear that with the beginning of this chapter one passes into another part of Revelation. As chapters two and three with their short letters are related to the opening vision and concern themselves with the church and its struggles on earth, chapter four pictures to us God upon his throne, with the spiritual beings surrounding him, and the adoration of the heavenly hosts given in worship to God on his throne. The exalted expressions of worship, with their beautiful poetical reminders of Old Testament adorations, lift one above the struggles, discouragements, and strife of the church in the world. To see God as sovereign upon his throne ruling in his universe must have been of tremendous encouragement to the scattered, struggling Christians at the close of the first century" [Frank Pack, *Revelation, Part I*, Sweet, 1965, p. 49].
- **Chapter 4...** Some appropriate songs to sing along with the study of this chapter: #16, "Holy, Holy, Holy;" #111, "Arise, You Saints of God;" #220, "He Is Able to Deliver Thee;" #557, "On Zion's Glorious Summit;" #567, "Watching You;" #655, "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne;" #669, "Though Hosts of Sin Encamp Around;" #670, "Mighty God May All Adore Thee;" #716, "Worthy Art Thou;" #870, "The City on High;" #902, "The Wonder of It All;" #928, "To Thee,

Almighty God, We Sing” [Numbers from Sacred Songs of the Church, W.D. Jeffcoat, editor]. A passage of Scripture appropriate to MEMORIZE along with the study of this chapter: Hebrews 10:19--Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

- **Chapter 4...** Oh, what a tremendous experience it would have been for you and me and all the children of God of all ages to sit with the Christians of Asia Minor and to hear these words and see these scenes. It would assure them again that they were part of the greatest cause that heaven or earth has ever known. They had assurance that the cause they were living for and risking their lives for would be triumphant [W.B. West, Jr., *Revelation through First-Century Glasses*, edited by Bob Prichard, p. 62].
- **Chapter 4...** “The student is quickly aware that some of the terminology of Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1, as well as of passages in Daniel, is used in this chapter, and throughout Revelation. But despite many of the striking symbols being employed, the vision here is distinctly different. This chapter, however, ‘is as much adapted to impress the mind as any of the others.’<sup><3></sup> The terminology John used here in describing what God revealed to him, although found in the Old Testament, is used in an independent manner. ‘We do not find even a single Old Testament quotation, but only adaptations and nothing more.’<sup><4></sup> ... The most important thing that anyone can know about the universe is that there is a control center. It does not exist like some robot machine that has been wound up and left to run itself out. The throne of God and of Christ is the final and conclusive denial of the ‘chance theory,’ regarding either creation or the continuity of the material universe” [Coffman’s Commentary].
- **4:1... ...I WILL SHEW THEE THINGS WHICH MUST BE HEREAFTER**—“Among the things to be ‘shown’ in the following chapters are the Second Coming of Christ and the final judgment of the living and the dead. It is a critical mistake, therefore, to understand this prophecy as already having been fulfilled in its entirety” [Coffman’s Commentary].
- **4:2... ...AND IMMEDIATELY I WAS IN THE SPIRIT...**--“...the phrase ‘in the Spirit’ is a dramatic device used from time to time (see 17:3; 21:10) to emphasize that, during the ENTIRE revelation, John was being guided by the Spirit, or that his spirit was under the Lord’s control ” [David Roper, *Truth for Today Commentary: Revelation 1-11*, Resource Publications, p. 208].
- **4:3... ...A RAINBOW ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE, IN SIGHT LIKE UNTO AN EMERALD**--“Whatever may be the meaning of the bow, it concealed the glorious person of God from the eyes of the prophet. Any effort to try to identify the meaning of these colors with aspects of God’s nature can only be highly tentative and we shall not make the attempt [Pack, p. 51].” ||||| “Note that, ‘There is here no description of the Divine Being, so as to point out any similitude, shape, or dimensions.’<sup><22></sup> If there had been, people would probably have made idols of it and worshipped it. Regarding the stones here mentioned, we do not know exactly what they were, nor their color with any certainty” [Coffman’s Commentary].
- **4:4... AND ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE WERE FOUR AND TWENTY SEATS: AND UPON THE SEATS I SAW FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS...**--“This number is twelve, a number often used to indicate religious completeness, intensified by two. This symbolism suggests that the twenty-four represented all those who were remaining ‘faithful until death’ (2:10)” [David Roper, p. 211].
- **4:6-8... FOUR BEASTS**—“The KJV has the unfortunate rendering ‘beasts,’ which suggests bestial monsters. The Greek text does not use the word for ‘beast’ (*therion*), a word that is later used in 13:1, 11 to speak of the enemies of Jesus. Rather, the Greek text has ‘living[things or ones]’ (*zoa*). ... The creatures may simply be heavenly reminders of the character of God” [David Roper, p. 215-16].
- **4:11... ...WORTHY ART THOU, OUR LORD AND OUR GOD, TO RECEIVE THE GLORY AND THE HONOR AND THE POWER** [ASV]—“Here is something which would be even more meaningful to John’s people than it is to us. The phrase for Lord and God is: *kurios kai theos*; and that was the official title of Domitian, the Roman Emperor. It was, indeed, because the Christians would not acknowledge that claim that they were persecuted and killed. Simply to call God Lord and God was a

triumphant confession of faith, an assertion that he holds first place in all the universe” [William Barclay, Daily Study Bible].

**V. Lessons & Applications.**

1. The following lessons come from Paul Sain in, *The Book of Revelation*, edited by Jim Laws, 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship, pp., 258-59].
  - 1) **God is the supreme authority (ruler), always has been and always will be.** He is in control of human and Divine matters.
  - 2) **The throne of God is indescribably beautiful.** The human mind cannot comprehend the magnitude of its glory. This mere glimpse is but a reflection of what is to come.
  - 3) **Worship is important to God.** God desires to be worshipped. He is a jealous God. Worship must be according to His specifications.
  - 4) **God is worthy of the worship of the saved, angels, and all creation!** He is the Almighty One, the Creator of the universe is “worthy.”
  - 5) **Creation of the universe by Jehovah is emphasized.** Evolution is an ungodly “theory” perpetuated by Satan and his servants.
2. On pages 218-224, of his commentary in the “Truth for Today Commentary” series, David Roper lists ten applications (with footnotes) from Revelation 4. The thoughts below are quoted or developed from that source.
  - 1) **Lift Your Eyes to Heaven.**
    - 1- “John shifted his eyes from this world to heaven. He was empowered by the Spirit to see beyond his exile on desolate Patmos into the majestic throne room of God” [p. 219].
    - 2- The Hebrews writer encourages us (12:1-2) to live the Christian life as if running a race with our eyes on Jesus—“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
    - 3- Jesus was victorious over Satan and death and if we will keep before us in our own race the example set by Jesus and the beauty/power of the throne John saw, we also will be victorious.
  - 2) **God Controls the Universe--**“As we look into God’s throne room, are we given all the answers to the perplexing problems of life? No, but we are given the most important answer: Whether or not we understand what is happening and why, we can be assured that God is still in command and will make everything come out all right. That is His guarantee to us” [p. 220].
  - 3) **Worship God (4:8-11)**—“In verses 8 through 11, the four living creatures were followed by the twenty-four elders in bringing honor to God. Is it not amazing that these wondrous beings in heaven worship God, but many on the earth refuse to do so? Is it not heartbreaking that mankind praises everything from tennis players to toothpaste but widely refuses to praise God?
 

“If we would ‘worship in spirit and truth’ (Jn. 4:24), we must learn to praise God, for the heart of worship is praise. The word ‘worship’ comes from an Old English word which means ‘to ascribe worth.’ The essence of worship is recognizing and declaring God’s worth. The Psalmist gave this decree (cf., Psalms 96:7-9).

“When we praise Him in this way, at least four blessings will be ours: We will have a renewed reverence for God, a deeper sense of His presence, and increased awareness of our need for Him, and a closer kinship with our fellow worshipers” [pp. 222-23].

- 4) **The Greatest Questions (4:11)**—“... Revelation 4:11 praises God as Creator: ‘You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.’ This verse brings to mind three of the greatest questions ever pondered: ‘Where did I come from?’; ‘Why am I here?’; ‘Where am I going?’ Our text answers two of these directly and implies the answer to the third.

“Where did I come from?’ I came from God: ‘You created all things.’ I am not the product of blind chance or the result of some imagined evolutionary process. Rather, I am God’s special creation. I am made in His image—and so are you. ‘He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things’ (Acts 17:25).

“Why am I here?’ I am here as the result of God’s will: ‘because of Your will they existed.’ Since this idea is true, my purpose in life is to fulfill His will. I was not placed on this earth to pursue a life of comfort, to fill my days with frolic, or even to be successful as the world defines success. To use the KJV phrasing, we are here for His “pleasure” (v. 11).

“Where am I going?’ Someday I will face the God who made me, and I will give an account of how I fulfilled my purpose on earth (see 20:11-15). ‘So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God’ (Rom. 14:12); ‘Moreover, it is required ... that one be found trustworthy’ (1 Cor. 4:2). We will never contemplate more awesome truths” [pp. 223-24].

## VI. Questions.

### True or False

01. \_\_\_\_ In chapter 4, none were found worthy.
02. \_\_\_\_ The four living creatures (beasts), each had four wings.
03. \_\_\_\_ The four living creatures could see in all directions.
04. \_\_\_\_ John saw something on the heads of the 24 elders.
05. \_\_\_\_ If frequency of use of a word tells us something about the theme of a chapter, then the theme of chapter four involves a THRONE (used 12x).

### MATCHING

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Smoke                  | F. Had a face as a man    |
| B. 24 Elders              | G. Like a trumpet talking |
| C. Round about the throne | H. Above the door         |
| D. Like a flying eagle    | I. Voices                 |
| E. Loud and demanding     | J. John                   |
06. \_\_\_\_ Said, “Thou art worthy.”
  07. \_\_\_\_ The third beast.
  08. \_\_\_\_ Out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thundering and...
  09. \_\_\_\_ The voice John heard.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Position of the rainbow.

**WHO Said or Did It?**

11. \_\_\_\_\_ Gave glory, honor, and thanks to the One on the throne.

12. \_\_\_\_\_ Was “in the spirit.”

13. \_\_\_\_\_ Cast crowns before the throne.

14. \_\_\_\_\_ Were clothed in white raiment.

15. \_\_\_\_\_ Did not rest day and night.

*Each Question is worth 7 Points*

**My Score is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Answers will be found on next week’s handout*

**ANSWERS to Revelation 3 Questions...** **01**—True (19); **02**—True (17); **03**—True (9); **04**—False (7-13); **05**—True (4); **06**—c, (17); **07**—c (14); **08**—c (9); **09**—a (1-6); **10**—a (2); **11**—watchful, strengthen, die (2); **12**—ear, hear, (6); **13**—take, crown (11); **14**—lukewarm, spew, mouth (16); **15**—overcometh, sit, throne (21).

**VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.** The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. –DRL



<b>BEAST</b>	<b>BEHOLD</b>	<b>COME</b>	<b>CREATED</b>	<b>CROWNS</b>
<b>DOOR</b>	<b>ELDERS</b>	<b>EVER</b>	<b>EYES</b>	<b>FIRST</b>
<b>FOUR</b>	<b>FULL</b>	<b>GLORY</b>	<b>HEARD</b>	<b>HEAVEN</b>
<b>HITHER</b>	<b>HOLY</b>	<b>HONOUR</b>	<b>LIKE</b>	<b>LIVETH</b>
<b>LOOK</b>	<b>LORD</b>	<b>OPENED</b>	<b>SAID</b>	<b>SAYING</b>
<b>SEATS</b>	<b>SEVEN</b>	<b>SHEW</b>	<b>SPIRIT</b>	<b>TALKING</b>
<b>THERE</b>	<b>THINGS</b>	<b>THRONE</b>	<b>TRUMPET</b>	<b>TWENTY</b>
<b>VOICE</b>				

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