

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church

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Pastor's Bible Study

A Bible Study Series

Based on the book

"Revelation Four Views" by Steve Gregg

Part II

The Throne Room of Heaven

Revelation 4:6 – 5:7

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Revelation 4:6–11 (HCSB)
 - ⁶ Something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal, was also before the throne. Four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back were in the middle and around the throne. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion; the second living creature was like a calf; the third living creature had a face like a man; and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings; they were covered with eyes around and inside. Day and night they never stop, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is coming. ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the One seated on the throne, the One who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the 24 elders fall down before the One seated on the throne, worship the One who lives forever and ever, cast their crowns before the throne, and say: ¹¹ Our Lord and God, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things, and because of Your will they exist and were created.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - The sea of glass symbolizes at least three things.
 - a. The glassy sea shows us the value and preciousness of God's presence. In the old days it was almost impossible to make pure glass. Pure glass that was as clear as crystal was considered to be as valuable and precious as gold.
 - "The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold" ([Job 28:17](#)).

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - b. The glassy sea shows us how clearly God is able to see everything that is out before His throne. It stands for His omniscience and penetrating vision into all things. Nothing is hid from Him who is upon the throne of heaven.

- c. The glassy sea shows us the spectacular purity of God, as clear and pure as perfect glass and crystal. The glassy sea shows us how far away God is from the impurities of a contaminated world. He is as far away as a sea made of pure glass and pure crystal.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - **(4:6-9) Creature of Revelation, The Four:** there are the four living creatures who surround the throne of God. Note three things about them.
 - 1. There is their position. They are the closest beings to God. They are the angelic beings who are posted in the middle of each side of the throne. They are the guardians of God's throne and of His holy presence (cp. [Rev. 4:6](#); [Rev. 5:6](#); [Rev. 14:3](#)).
 - 2. Note their description.
 - ⇒ They are always found near the throne of God ([Rev. 4:6](#); [Rev. 5:6](#); [Rev. 14:3](#)).
 - ⇒ They have six wings and are full of eyes ([Rev. 4:6, 8](#)).
 - ⇒ Their function has to do with the holiness and wrath of God ([Rev. 6:1, 7](#); [Rev. 15:7](#)).
 - ⇒ They declare the holiness of God day and night and never cease to declare His holiness ([Rev. 4:8](#)).
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Who are these living beings who are privileged to be in God's presence day and night, and to declare His majestic holiness? These beings who never have to leave God's presence, not even for a moment? Who would be so honored as to have this glorious privilege?
 - Undoubtedly, they are beings who were created for this very purpose. They seem to be the same beings as the cherubim seen in Ezekiel's vision ([Ezekiel 10:4](#)) and the seraphim seen in Isaiah's vision ([Isaiah 6:1-3](#)). Note that John chooses certain animals on earth to describe certain characteristics that he notices.
 - ⇒ One being was like a lion: this symbolizes supremacy
 - ⇒ One being was like an ox (calf): this symbolizes strength.
 - ⇒ One being was like a man: this symbolizes intelligence.
 - ⇒ One being was like an eagle: this symbolizes swiftness.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Note their function: to glorify and honor God day and night. The living creatures show us two things about God.
 - First, they show us the supremacy, strength, intelligence, and swiftness of God. They stand for all that God is.
 - Second, they show us that all of nature owes its worship to God, both animals and man. They picture all the beings of nature standing before God and praising Him. All the world, both animal and man, are represented in the four living beings as they worship God day and night, crying out to Him, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" ([Rev. 4:8](#)).
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - The four living creatures begin the oratorio of worship by focusing on God's holiness; **day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God."** The

threefold repetition of holy is also found in [Isaiah 6:3](#); holiness is the only one of God's attributes so repeated, since it is the summation of all that He is.

- God's holiness is His utter and complete separation from evil in any and every form. He is absolutely untainted by any evil, error, or wrongdoing—unlike angels (some of whom sinned) or humans (all of whom sinned).
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Not only is God's holiness cause for worship, but also His power. In their song of praise, the four living creatures refer to God as **the Almighty**—a title by which God identified Himself to Abraham ([Gen. 17:1](#)).
 - That term identifies God as the strongest, most powerful being, utterly devoid of any weakness, whose conquering power and overpowering strength none can oppose. Because God is Almighty, He can effortlessly do whatever His holy will purposes to do (cf. [Isa. 40:28](#)).
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - The four living creatures also praise God for His eternity, extolling Him as He **who was and who is and who is to come**.
 - That sets Him apart from animals, who have both a beginning and an ending, and angels and humans, who had a beginning, but will have no ending.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - To know that God is eternal provides comfort for His children, since, unlike a human father, He will always be there to take care of them.
 - God's eternity guarantees that our eternal life in heaven will never cease, that we will receive "an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" ([2 Cor. 4:17](#)).
 - But it also means that the punishment of the wicked in hell will last forever, that their weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth will never cease, that "the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever" ([Rev. 14:11](#)). Such destruction of sinners is a vindication of the righteousness of God.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - The praise of the four living creatures, as they **give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne**, triggers a response from the **twenty-four elders**. They **will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever**.
 - This is the first of six times that the elders prostrate themselves before God ([5:8](#), [14:7:11](#); [11:16](#); [19:4](#)). Such a posture is one of reverential worship, a natural response to the majestic, holy, awe-inspiring glory of God.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Amazingly, after prostrating themselves the twenty-four elders **cast their crowns before the throne**.
 - They are not preoccupied with their own excellence. They are not concerned about their own holiness, honor, or reward.

- All those things pale into insignificance and become meaningless in light of the glory of God.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - “They will cast their crowns before the throne.” What are the crowns? They are symbols of God’s rewards for faithful service. Why do they cast them before the throne?
 - Though the crowns had been given to them by God for faithfulness as overcomers, when they see the worship of the living creatures, they recognize it was all by God’s grace and that no crowns rightly belong to us for we all owe our existence and lives to God.
 - He alone is actually worthy, for all we are flows from what He is as we, by faith, allow Him to reproduce His life in us through the Spirit.
 - J. Hampton Keathley III, *Studies in Revelation* (Galaxie Software, 2002), Re 4:10.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - The elders add their own note to the chorus of praise initiated by the four living beings, crying out, **"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."**
 - Axios (**worthy**) was used of the Roman emperor when he marched in a triumphal procession. The focus of the elders' song is on God's glory manifested in creation; He is presented as Creator throughout Scripture (cf. [10:6](#); [Gen. 1:1](#); [Ex. 20:11](#); [Isa. 40:26, 28](#); [Jer. 10:10-12](#); [32:17](#); [Col. 1:16](#)).
 - The elders are acknowledging that God has the right both to redeem and to judge His creation. Their song anticipates paradise lost becoming paradise regained.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Which principles emerge from a look at the living creatures and the elders?
 - First, those who have eyes to see clearly recognize the true place of giving tribute to God. We can learn from celestial worshipers.
 - Second, to cry “Holy, holy, holy” rises from the perception that God is set apart to all that is beautiful and worthwhile.
 - Third, it is wise to be in step with the God who always will be.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Fourth, God is not as many people suppose a glorified “grab bag” for gratifying wants, but the One on the eternal throne.
 - Fifth, whatever God has given, as victory or a role in serving, is a reason to acclaim Him worthy.
 - Sixth, we too can pray realizing men should come to God not to make themselves happy, but to glorify Him.
 - James E. Rosscup, *An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible: Igniting the Fuel to Flame Our Communication with God* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 2739.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - (5:1-7) **Introduction:** there should be no break between chapters four and five. The same scene of God's throne is being covered. God is seen sitting upon His throne and

holding a sealed book in His right hand. Note again, the book is sealed. It has never been opened.

- The importance of the sealed book cannot be over-emphasized. The book is the key to understanding the rest of Revelation.
- The book or scroll is the official document of the last days of human history, the climactic events of the universe. The world's future is about to be unfolded before one's very eyes (cp. [Rev. 1:1](#)).

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- Revelation 5:1–7 (HCSB)

- ¹ Then I saw in the right hand of the One seated on the throne a scroll with writing on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² I also saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look in it. ⁴ And I cried and cried because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look in it. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Stop crying. Look! The Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has been victorious so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals.” ⁶ Then I saw One like a slaughtered lamb standing between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth. ⁷ He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of the One seated on the throne.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- In his vision, John **saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.** God stretched out His hand, as it were, and in it He held a **book.**
- **Biblion (book)** does not refer to a book in the modern sense, but to a scroll (cf. [6:14](#)). A scroll was a long piece of papyrus or animal skin, rolled from both ends into the middle. Such scrolls were commonly used before the invention of the codex, or modern-style book, consisting of square pages bound together.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- The book is written on both the front and back of the pages. The book was actually a roll or a scroll. Remember: there were no printing presses or books as we know them back then. They wrote on small sheets of paper (papyrus) about ten inches by eight inches, close to the size of our eleven by eight and one half inch sheets. If a large amount of writing was to be done, they joined or taped sheets together. When the writing was completed, they rolled the sheets up and tied some thread or ribbon around the roll. This is what is meant by the book being sealed. They seldom wrote on the back side, for whatever was written on the back side would be exposed when the last sheet was rolled up and tied.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- Again, note that the book or scroll held by God *was written* on both the front and back. This shows us...
 - • that the events of the end time are many and that it will take some time, a great deal of time, for all of them to take place.

- • that God is going to reveal a great deal about the end time to man. When? As soon as He can find someone worthy enough to open the book.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - The book is sealed with seven seals. This shows us three things.
 - a. The seven seals show us that the book is the last will and testament of God. In the Roman world a man's will had to be witnessed by seven persons, and each attached his own personal seal to one of the threads of the document. The will could be opened only when the recipient came to claim the will.
 - This book in God's right hand may mean that it is His last will for the earth; the book contains what He wills for those who have rejected and cursed Him and what He wills for those who have accepted and worshipped Him. The book is His last will and testament for the consummation of the world.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - b. The seven seals show us that the book is large; it has a great deal of material in it. It has so much that seven seals are required to bind and hold it together. Again, this means...
 - that there are a lot of events that are included in the end time; that many events are to take place.
 - that God is going to reveal much to man as soon as someone is found worthy enough to open this book.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - c. The seven seals also show us the secrecy of the book. God has sealed the book with seven seals in order to keep the events of the end time from being known.
 - They are not to be known by man until God Himself is ready to reveal them. Man can never figure out the events, not by his own intellect.
 - "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" ([Romans 11:33](#)).
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - ([5:2-4](#)) : there is the search for one worthy to open the book. Note four significant facts.
 - 1. John saw a strong angel—an angel so strong that he could shout throughout the universe and be heard by all in both heaven and earth. He shouted out the most penetrating question of human history: "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"
 - This shows us how supreme and majestic God really is. He is so far above all creatures—even the creatures in heaven as well as those on earth—that a search has to be conducted to find someone who is worthy to approach Him and carry out His will.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - 2. The search fails. There just is no being any place that is worthy to approach God and to execute His will throughout the universe.
 - a. No person in heaven was found worthy to open the book. Imagine! The glorious angels, the seraphim and cherubim, the four living creatures privileged to surround the throne of God, the twenty four elders, all the redeemed—no being in heaven was worthy enough to approach God and open the book.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - b. No person on earth was found worthy to open the book: no statesman, no educator, no scientist, no minister, no prophet, no astrologer, no magician.
 - c. No person under the earth: no person from among the dead—as great as some have been in past history—no person from the past was found worthy to open the book.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - 3. The search fails, and John breaks down and cries bitterly. Why? There were two reasons. Because John saw something that he had never seen before:
 - ⇒ John saw the greatness of God, the supreme majesty and glory of God, how far superior God is to all living creatures.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - There was not a single person or being any place that could be found worthy to approach God and open the book and carry out the events of human history. All creatures were too short of God's glory—all creatures, both of heaven and earth—were so far short of God's glory and majesty they just could not approach God, not apart from His glorious mercy and grace.
 - As stated, John saw as never before the greatness of God, the glory and majesty, the dominion and power of God, how high and how far superior God is to all creatures. God broke John in humility and with a sense of his own unworthiness. John wept bitterly at his own unworthiness before God who is so high and lifted up.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - But John wept for another reason as well: he was not going to be able to see the future of the world, the events of the end time.
 - The promise had been made to him that he would see these things which "must be hereafter," but now he was not going to see them. And why? Because there was no person worthy to approach God and open the book. He and all the other beings of heaven and earth were too far short of God to understand and execute the will of God for the end time.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - 4. The reason no person is worthy to open this book is because of its contents. The book is the destiny of the world—what is to happen in the end time at the end of the world. [Rev. 6-21](#) show this clearly.
 - It is the book of redemption (cp. [Luke 21:28](#); [Romans 8:22-23](#); [Ephes. 1:13-14](#)). God's people are to be redeemed and the evil and corrupt people are to be overthrown and judged. Human history and all matter throughout the universe—all that is corrupt, deteriorating, decaying, and dying—is to be overthrown and consumed.
 - And a new earth and a new heaven are to be created. All the redeemed are to inherit and inhabit the new earth and heavens. This is both the fate and the redemption of the world. This is history written before it happens.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- Therefore, the person who opens this book must be a person who can grasp exactly what the book is saying, and then he must be able to carry out God's will and execute the events. The person must have the very mind and power of God.
 - Who can execute and rule over the events of the end time? There is only one such Person: the Son of God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ and Christ alone is worthy to open the book.
 - This is the book of redemption, the book of historical optimism. The same book is referred to in [Daniel 12:8-9](#) and [Ezekiel 2:9-10](#). The message of this book is now prophesied as the seals are broken and the events of the last days are seen.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Note also, the book is in God's hand. History is in God's hand. He is in charge. He has a plan, a purpose for the universe. Who is worthy to carry out this plan, this purpose? Who can rule and reign over these events? The idea is that Christ and Christ alone is worthy.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Revelation 5:5 (HCSB)
 - ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, "Stop crying. Look! The Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has been victorious so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals."
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - there is the glorious announcement—God has intervened. He Himself has sent One worthy to open the book of destiny. Who is He?
 - 1. He is the "Lion of Judah." This is a title of the Messiah.
 - The symbol of the lion shows that He is the strongest and most powerful member of the tribe of Israel. Judah was the strongest tribe of Israel, the strongest by far.
 - Therefore way back in history, God had prophesied through Jacob that his own son Judah would be a "lion's whelp" (young cub).
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - If Judah himself was only a young cub, then the Messiah Himself must be like the King of beasts, the lion. Very simply, the prophecy predicted that the coming Messiah would possess the strength and power of a lion, the king of beasts.
 - Who then is worthy to open the book? Jesus Christ, the lion of Judah, the all powerful Messiah and King. He and He alone is worthy enough to take the book and carry out the events of the end time.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - 2. He is the "Root of David."
 - The Messiah was to be of the household of David, of the root and seed of Jesse, of his family tree, of his blood, of his stem.
 - Who then is worthy to open the book? The prophesied Son of David, the Messiah and King of the world. He and He alone is worthy to take the book and carry out the events of the end time.
- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- 3. He is the One who has prevailed and conquered and won the victory; therefore, He is able to open the book of destiny. Over what has He prevailed? What is it that He has conquered?
- "He hath prevailed to open the book" ([Rev. 5:5](#)).
 - ⇒ He has conquered sin.
 - ⇒ He has conquered death.
 - ⇒ He has conquered this evil world.
 - ⇒ He has conquered Satan and all other evil forces.
 - ⇒ He has conquered all rule and authority and power.
 - ⇒ He has conquered hell.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - Revelation 5:6–7 (HCSB)
 - ⁶ Then I saw One like a slaughtered lamb standing between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth. ⁷ He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of the One seated on the throne.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - ([5:6-7](#)) **Jesus Christ, Person— Lamb of God**: there is the supreme moment, the first sight of Jesus Christ in heaven. John had seen Christ in his first vision, but Christ was standing in the midst of the churches. But now the supreme moment arrives—the moment when John catches his first sight of the glorified Son of God in heaven.
 - The sight was bound to be the most spectacular sight ever seen in human history, for God was letting a man see His Son at the throne of God. He was showing why His Son is worthy to rule and reign over the universe. When John caught his first glimpse of Christ, he immediately noticed five things.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - 1. Jesus Christ is the center of the heavenly scene.
 - ⇒ He was right before the throne of God, joining God at the very throne of God itself.
 - ⇒ Then the four living beings surround Him.
 - ⇒ Then come the circle of elders.
 - Jesus Christ is the very center and focus of attention: every eye and thought is upon Him. He is the centerpiece of God's throne room, the central figure on the stage of universal history, the history of both heaven and earth.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - 2. Jesus Christ is the sacrificial Lamb of God who has been slain. The picture of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God is seen throughout Scripture.
 - Scripture declares that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who died for our sins.
 - ⇒ The Lamb of God was symbolized in the Passover. The lamb was sacrificed so that the judgment of God could pass over the people.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**
 - The point is this: Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice for our sins. He lived a sinless life when He was upon earth; He was the Ideal and Perfect Man. Therefore, whatever Jesus Christ did as the Perfect and Ideal Man, it could stand

for and cover us. When He died for our sins, He died as the ideal and perfect sacrifice. His sacrifice for our sins was perfectly acceptable to God. Therefore, His sacrifice for sin stands for and covers us.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- What happens is this: when we believe in Jesus Christ, God takes our faith and counts it as the sacrifice of Christ. God counts the sacrifice of Christ for us. This means that we are free from sin. We stand sinless before God, acceptable to Him—all because Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, removed our sins from us. We are cleansed from sin by the sacrifice of Christ. We are made perfectly righteous by the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who has taken away our sin and clothed us in the white robes of righteousness before God.
- This is the reason Jesus Christ stands in the center stage of heaven. But even in heaven He stands as the One who has loved and given Himself for us; He stands as the Lamb who was slain as the *perfect sacrifice* for our sins.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- 3. Jesus Christ is the omnipotent power of the universe.
 - Remember that the number seven in the Bible means completeness, fullness, and perfection. Jesus Christ is seen with *seven horns* which symbolizes complete and perfect strength and power. He stands in heaven as the supreme power and force of the universe.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- 4. Jesus Christ is the supreme intelligence of the universe.
 - The *seven eyes* symbolize complete and perfect knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom. He is omniscient; He knows all and sees all. Absolutely nothing escapes His sight and knowledge.
 - Note: this is a symbol of the seven spirits of God which is the Holy Spirit (see note—[Rev. 1:4](#) and note—[Rev. 3:1](#) for discussion). In the person of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is everywhere, seeing and knowing all.

- **The Throne Room of Heaven**

- 5. Jesus Christ is sovereign.
 - He alone walks over and takes the Book of Destiny out of the hand of God.
 - He and He alone is worthy to execute and carry out the events of the end time.
- This views the great, culminating act of history, the act that will signal the end of man's day.
- The ultimate goal of redemption is about to be seen; paradise will be regained, Eden restored.
- Before John's wondering eyes the Lamb **came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.**