

KEEP THY HEART

A Bible-Based Devotional

Turn to: **Revelation 4**
“Improving Our Worship”

Do you ever feel like sometimes you just lose sight of the splendor of God? Sometimes if I'm feeling down, it helps me to start praising God for specific things I know about Him. In this chapter, we learn some really cool things about God which I believe can improve our worship.

1: Approach the throne (v1-2). “**After this I looked,**” writes John; he was having a most glorious church service in this small little island, just him and God and an angel so far. Perhaps he just laid down his quill from writing the letter to the seventh church. As he **beholds**, what bright lights or beautiful sounds does he hear streaming out of this **door** to heaven? Worship is like a door to heaven; we don't have the Old Testament veil between us and God anymore (Mark 15:38). The *only* way to heaven—the only Door (John 10:9) or Ladder (Genesis 28:12 cf. John 1:51)—is Jesus Christ. No other entrance exists for us.

When we die, for those of us who are saved, I believe the **first voice** we will hear is Jesus'. It will be great to have Him show us around and welcome us home. John seems to get a glimpse of the rapture via a call from a **trumpet** saying to **Come up hither**; and he gets the ultimate backstage tour as Jesus **shows him** all of these things.

(v2) The rapture will be **immediate**. Do we approach God's Throne **in the spirit**? When we come to church with a critical, fighting, envying, lustful, or scheming spirit, we are not fit to be around the throne of God (John 4:24). Let's ask God to cleanse our hearts more thoroughly before worship. Imagine as John **beholds** more of heaven as he enters through that Door; his field of vision increases, and maybe his eyes start to adjust to the brilliant light. I like how God's **throne is set in heaven**, implying it is permanent; and perhaps as John is finally able to have his eyes adjust more, he's able to lift his gaze to see that **one sat on the throne**.

2: View the splendor (v3-8). One word John uses a lot is the word “**like**”, because what he sees is awesome and difficult to describe! How can he explain it in words so we can best understand? Human language is inadequate, which must be a little frustrating for him. **Jasper** is probably a diamond (cf. Revelation 21:11); the **sardine** stone is brownish-red, flaming orange, or fiery deep red; and the **emerald** is green and translucent. Imagine the beautiful **rainbow** of light that splashes around God's throne. Have you ever sprayed the mist from a water hose into the sun on a clear day? You will see a misty rainbow form around the sun; and likewise, I think this rainbow is centered around the radiating face of God on the throne, no matter the viewing angle.

(v4) The rainbow circles vertically, perhaps, and these **seats** that are **round about the throne** are horizontal. The number **twenty-four** is a highly divisible number (by 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 12). The **elders** could represent the twelve tribes and twelve apostles; and the **clothing of white raiment** must have been incredibly bright. **(v5)** This throne had **lightnings and thunderings and voices**; I imagine the low rumbles surpassed the best audio subwoofers of today. The sights and sounds will surpass the best multimedia technology here on earth!

The **lamps** probably provided a feeling of being at home, adding beautiful and warm light, similar to that of a fireplace; and **seven** is a prime, indivisible number, in contrast to twenty-four (number of elders). The Spirit of God has been likened to fire elsewhere (Acts 2:3, I Thessalonians 5:19).

(v6) I imagine that **before the throne** was a large sort of “podium”, **a sea of glass like unto crystal**. Imagine the reflection and refraction and color of light from the rainbow and the throne and the lamps as it dances through the glassy sea; it must have been breathtaking! It's difficult to imagine these enormous **beasts** that were **in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne**; you certainly can't “sneak up on” them since they were **full of eyes before and behind** (cf. Ezekiel 1:18). Horses can see in pretty much any direction except directly behind them, but these beasts could see everywhere.

(v7) Daniel 7:3 seems to reference four evil beasts, with some similarities to these good beasts. (v8) Interestingly, **four beasts** times **six wings** each is 24, one for each elder (cf. Isaiah 6:2-3). It's sad to me that even though these beasts **rest not day and night** exalting God's **holiness**, yet many churches avoid the topic of practical holiness almost completely. The chant or song can be divided into three phrases, each with three sub-parts. The first phrase includes the word **holy** once for each member of the Trinity; the next phrase emphasizes God's dominion (**Lord**), deity/singularity (**God**), and power (**Almighty**); and the last emphasizes His eternity, referencing His past, present, and future.

When you're feeling down (see Psalm 46:10), perhaps try thinking about God's splendor; another good time is if you feel a bit cocky (Psalm 8:3-4). Do we think enough about just how *amazing* God is? I know I don't, but I've been trying to more as I study Revelation. Worshiping God is so much more awesome when we think more about Who He is.

3: Worship the Creator (v9-11). When a group of sincere Christians get together, worship can be very contagious! I like it that **when those beasts** praised God, it spread to the elders. We are to worship God *joyfully* by giving Him **glory**, the way we hand out an expensive trophy to someone. We are to worship God *reverently* by giving Him **honour**, the way we would present a regal plaque to someone. And we are to worship God *personally* by giving Him **thanks**, the way we would give a speech about what someone has meant to us individually.

In this verse, a couple of things inspire us to worship God; first, **He sits on the throne**; why do we often honor God less than we would an earthly governor or king (Malachi 1:6-8)? God is a real King on a real throne; and unlike earthly kings, He **liveth for ever and ever**. Can you think of *anything* on earth which will last forever? What about money? It takes wings as an eagle to fly away (Proverbs 23:5). Power? The throne of Pharaoh was brought down by God. Fame? No one remembers or cares about all those former wicked kings mentioned in the book of Joshua. Strength? Not one of us has a body that will live forever down here. But *God*

will last forever, and so will our soul, either with God in heaven, or with the devil in hell.

(v10) These elders aren't "clocking in time" or acting like robots; instead, they are overwhelmed by emotion and excitement. When we worship God, we first lessen our view of ourselves by **falling down**; then we must raise our view of Him by **worshipping him that liveth for ever and ever**. A great exercise my mother taught me was to try to remember all of the names of God and think about them. If you really enjoy a visit to the Grand Canyon, you may say, "Wow! Look how big it is! Look how colorful it is, and how many layers of rock there are!" Why don't we do that enough with God? I certainly need to do that more, but I think it will help us worship God more fully. Third, we attribute our successes to God by **casting our crowns before the throne** as these elders did.

(v11) **God is worthy** of this worship, unlike evil leaders such as Herod, Haman, or Ahab, who received honor they did not deserve. God deserves **glory**, which we could compare to a soldier's ceremonial uniform; **honour**, like a purple heart for valor; **power**, like the clean glittering sword. Jesus Christ's logo is stamped on all creation, in a sense, since **He has created all things**; and His "product manual" states our purpose: **for His pleasure**. If we want to enjoy life to the fullest, we should do what we were made to do. And God's purpose for people has not changed since creation; God should get a "lifetime warranty" on our lives. We receive our greatest pleasure, in the end, in fulfilling our created purpose.

Is our worship of God robotic, dull, or uninteresting? Let's not forget to approach the throne in our quiet times, and let's strive not to daydream while reading the Bible or spending time with God in the mornings. Let's get a fresh glimpse at the splendor of God and recount His awesomeness. Let's worship the Creator, fulfilling His purpose for us as found in our "product manual" (God's Word).