

Visiting the Throne of God

Thomas Robinson, *Apocalypse Today 4*, June 24, 2018

Revelation 4-5

4:¹ After this I **looked**, and there, a **door** standing open in heaven (into the realm of God)! And **the first voice** (Jesus), which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “**Come up here**, and **I will show you** what must come to be after this.”

² At once I was **in Spirit**. There in heaven was a **throne**, and on the throne **someone seated**.
³ And he who sat there had the **appearance** of **jasper** and **carnelian**, and around the throne was a **rainbow** that had the appearance of an **emerald**.

⁴ **Around the throne** were **twenty-four thrones**, and seated on the thrones were **twenty-four elders**, clothed in white garments, with **golden crowns** on their heads. ⁵ From the **throne** came flashes of **lightning**, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning **seven torches of fire**, which are the **seven spirits of God**, ⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a **sea of glass**, like crystal.

And in the midst of the throne and **around the throne**, are four **living creatures**, full of **eyes** in front and behind: ⁷ the **first** living creature like a **lion**, the **second** living creature like an **ox**, the **third** living creature with the **face of a man**, and the **fourth** living creature like an **eagle in flight**. ⁸ And the four **living creatures**, each of them with **six wings**, are full of **eyes** all around and within, and day and night they **never cease to say**,

*“Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD God the Almighty,
who was and who is and who is coming!”*

Song 1

⁹ And whenever the **living creatures** give glory and honor and thanks to **him who is seated on the throne**, who lives into the ages of ages, ¹⁰ the **twenty-four elders** fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives into the ages of ages. They **cast their crowns before the throne**, saying,

¹¹ *“Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things, and by your will
they existed and were created.*

Song 2

5:¹ Then I **saw** in the **right hand** of him who was seated on the throne a **scroll** written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

² And I saw a **mighty angel** proclaiming with a loud voice, “**Who is worthy to open the scroll** and break its seals?” ³ And **no one** in **heaven** or on **earth** or **under the earth** was able to **open** the scroll or to **look into it**, ⁴ and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to **open** the scroll or to **look into it**.

⁵ And one of the **elders** said to me, “**Weep no more**; behold, the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**, the **Root of David**, has **conquered**, so that he can **open the scroll** and its seven seals.”

⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I **saw a Lamb standing, as slain**, with seven **horns** and with seven **eyes**, which are the **seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth**. ⁷ And he went and **took the scroll** from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.

⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the **four living creatures** and the **twenty-four elders** fell down before the Lamb, each holding a **harp**, and **golden bowls** full of **incense**, which are the

prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying,

***“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,
because you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed for God
those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
¹⁰ and you made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”***

Song 3

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice,

***“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom
and might and honor and glory and blessing!”***

Song 4

¹³ And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

***“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”***

Song 5

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Stepping into the Realm of God – The Ancient Story

John began with a vision of Jesus glorified (ch 1). Then Jesus’ letters to Seven Churches (ch 2-3).

Amazing promise to struggling believers: *“Those who conquer, I will grant them to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat with my Father on his throne.”* (3:21) John is invited to begin to learn what this means. A door opens, Jesus invites, John steps through.

A vision experience of God’s throne like Ezek 1 or Isa 6, but distinct. God is “One seated on the throne” described like gems, rainbow, lightning. Torches of fire – Spirits of God. Crystal Sea.

Vision widens. Twenty-four elders: humans, gold crowns like high priest. 12+12, people of God.

Four “living creatures” (animals), eyes all over: like Isaiah’s seraphs, 6 wings; like Ezekiel’s cherubim: lion, ox, human, eagle (later 4 Gospels.) Their worship identifies God’s nature.

1. Four LC, the seraphs of Isaiah. “Holy, Holy, Holy!” Yahweh. The God of Being, God of history, God of Advent, coming. God who creates and engages time, encountering creation.

2. Elders, God of creation, which exists only because of God’s desire. God defines all existence.

Lion and Lamb – God engaged with His Creation

But then something happens. A scroll, full, seven seals! Who is worthy? God is worthy but no one else. John weeps. Humans forever shut out. John hears an Elder: A great human hero: Lion of Judah, Root of David has conquered! John sees: A Lamb slain but standing. Seven horns, eyes = Spirits of God. He takes the scroll of God’s story, purpose, will for creation.

What cannot happen, happens. God is not just being, but story and encounter, coming. 4LC & Elders, with harps for song and bowls of prayer sing a new song (3) to a God who changes.

The Lamb is worthy as God is, embodying in his death and new life God’s engagement with his human creation, sharing their brokenness and death, bringing their transformation and elevation as God’s kingdom and true worship. They will share his resurrection life, kingdom.

4. The whole realm of angelic beings recognize the Slain Lamb deserves worship with God.

The God of the Very Full Throne

5. Reality: Everything created worships God & the Slain Lamb. This is conquest. This is the true hero story. The Glory that gives totally, that loves through death. You, Come, Sit with me!