

## **THE BOOK OF REVELATION 6**

### **THE MAGNIFICENT THRONE**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Chapter four conveys to the church the assurance that He who is the ultimate source of all existence is on her side. Chapter five says that she may depend upon Christ and His redeeming work. The two chapters together are a cry to the church from her glorified head, before she enters into the tribulation that awaits her. ***“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust in me also” (John 14:1)***

#### **God is ruling, not man!**

This is what the Christians needed to know, because it sure didn't look that way to their human eyes. Now, the curtains will be lifted, and John will begin to see things from heaven's point of view. In rapid succession visions will be presented to assure the persecuted Christians that the cause of Christ is not a lost one. Christ has never promised an easy time, so the struggle will perhaps be long and bitter; but, when the curtain falls at last, complete victory will be demonstrated.

Our kingdom is not of this world, but we do still dwell on earth. The child of God will not be spared the horrors of God's four sore judgments: war, famine, wild beasts, and plague. But these will be used by God both to vindicate His name and avenge His children. Remember this two-fold result as we study God's judgments.

Our lesson text is: Revelation 4:1-11; Ezekiel 1, 10; Isaiah 6.

Our lesson aim is: To learn that the throne with its occupant scene is given to encourage Christians who are under great persecution.

Our lesson preview: We will . . .

1. View the glory of God as he sits on the glorious throne – that He who sits on the throne is the judge who bestows mercy.
2. See 24 elders, four living creatures, and seven Spirits surrounding the throne and learn who they are or represent.
3. Learn that the One on the throne rules in spite of how circumstances appear and no matter who else seems to rule.

#### **I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE THRONE AND ITS OCCUPANT (4:1-3)**

The One sitting on the throne is a pure, precious judge who bestows mercy.

Let us note:

The meaning of after these things I saw does not mean that these things came after those things. It simply means that this seeing came after that seeing. This begins the second vision section of the book.

1. First vision (1:9-20) – Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

2. Second vision (chapters 4-11) – The Lamb and the Book.

A. John and the Voice (vs. 1-2a)

1. John in the flesh is on Patmos.

2. John in the Spirit is before the throne (v. 2a).

B. God and the Throne (vs. 2b-3)

1. The throne – occupies the center of our vision throughout this whole chapter (“Throne” is used 10 times in chapter 4).

2. The throne occupant – is graphically described.

a. He is likened to a Jasper Stone. This stone is said to be clear as a crystal and most precious. This discusses the “purity” and “costliness” of the one sitting on the throne (Revelation 21:11).

b. He is likened to a Sardius Stone – a blood red stone. This depicts the “Judgment” of the throne-occupant.

3. An emerald-colored rainbow – undoubtedly refers to the sureness of the covenant of peace made by the throne-occupant with His obedient people. Thus, in the midst of judgment you have a covenant of mercy. Compare this to Genesis 9:12-17. The green of the emerald also could point to the peaceful thought of green pastures compare to Psalms 23:2.

The picture is,

**II. THE STORM IS OVER! DON'T WORRY! GOD RULES! THE SCENE AROUND THE THRONE (4:4-8)**

Everything before and around the throne is to give glory to the throne occupant.

A. Twenty-four Elders Seated on Twenty-four Thrones (v. 4)

1. These are the overcomers from chapters 2 and 3.

a. They sit on thrones – overcomers are promised a throne (cf. 3:21) – Rulership.

b. They are arrayed in white robes – overcomers promised white garments (cf. 3:5) – Purity.

c. They wear crowns of gold – overcomers promised a crown of life (cf. 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:8) – Victory.

d. They are where the over-comers were promised to be – (cf. 2:7; 3:12, 21) – Before the Throne.

2. They are the representatives for the redeemed persecuted on earth. They have won. They are crowned. They are before the throne.

3. Two possible reasons for “twenty-four” elders.

a. There were 24 courses of priests in the temple (1 Chronicles 23:6-23). These 24 would then be representative of all those saints who have passed from life to greater life, from service to greater service, from an earthly temple duty to a heavenly temple duty.

b. There were twelve rulers in the Old Covenant people (tribes of Israel) and twelve rulers in the New Covenant people (apostles of Jesus). Put together then, these 24 would represent the redeemed of both covenants.

B. Decrees from the Throne (v. 5a) Lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder.

1. This indicates the presence and power of God. Read Exodus 19:16ff; Psalm 29:1.

2. More often it indicates the manifestation of divine wrath proceeding from heaven. Read Revelation 8:5; 1 Samuel 2:10; 7:10; Psalms 18:13-14; Job 37:4.

C. The Holy Spirit (v. 5b)

1. Lamps are very suggestive of the Spirit’s work in bringing the light of God into the world made dark by Satan and sin. His first work in bringing order to the chaos of the original creation was to bring light. Let there be light! (Genesis 1:3).

2. Why are there seven lamps representing the seven Spirits of God? The Bible claims clearly there is “One Spirit” (Ephesians 4:4). There seems to be two possibilities.

a. The number seven denotes perfection. So, seven would indicate the perfect Spirit of God.

b. In Isaiah 11:2 the Spirit (singular) breaks down into seven manifestations – wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, reverence, judgment.

D. The Sea of Glass (v. 6a) Here are two possible interpretations

1. John was separated from his brethren by the Aegean Sea, a clear, “glassy” sea. God’s throne is so holy that there is a sea—a separating sea—between Him and the most holy of his creations, his redeemed children.

2. The word sea can easily be translated laver or basin. In the tabernacle and temple the laver was used by the priests to wash themselves before entering the Holy Place to serve Jehovah. So, the 24 elders (priests) have washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb to qualify them to serve God (Read chapter 7:9-17).

#### E. The Four Living Creatures (vs. 6b-9)

1. These verses should be compared with Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10.

a. These beings are called living ones (Ezekiel 1:5; Revelation 4:6).

b. The number is the same – four (Ezekiel 1:5; Revelation 4:6).

c. Their faces are compared to that of man, lion, ox and eagle (Ezekiel 1:10; Revelation 4:7).

d. They are associated with the throne (Ezekiel 1:26; Revelation 4:6).

e. Fire moves to and from among them (Ezekiel 1:13; Revelation 4:5).

f. They are said to be studded all over with eyes (Ezekiel 1:18, 21; 10; 12; Revelation 4:8).

g. In both cases, a rainbow encircles the scene (Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 4:3).

2. We are told, Ezekiel 10:20, that these living creatures are the Cherubim— angelic forces of the highest order that guard the holy things of God (Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:20) and bring Him and his judgment to earth (2 Samuel 22:8-16; Psalm 80:1; 99:1).

3. Description of the four creatures.

a. The first is like a lion – symbol of power or strength. NOTE: An angelic quality (Psalm 103:20-21).

b. The second is like an ox – symbol of service

NOTE: An angelic attribute (Psalm 103:20-21; Hebrews 1:14).

c. The third is like a man – Symbol of intelligence.

NOTE: An angelic quality (Luke 12:18; 15:10; 1 Peter 1:12; Ephesians 3:10-11).

d. The fourth is like an eagle – Symbol of swiftness NOTE: An angelic quality (Daniel 9:21).

e. Each have six wings – this is rooted in Isaiah 6:2. ***“Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.”***

(1) Two to cover their face – reverence?

(2) Two to cover their feet – humility?

(3) Two to fly with – service? f. Notice the eyes – “. . . covered with eyes all around even under their wings.”

g. Hear their song – “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” They never stop praising and thanking God.

**III. THE CLIMAX (vs. 9-11) – PRAISE TO THE THRONE-OCCUPANT** God is worshiped and acknowledged as the one from whom victory comes.

A. Glory, Honor, Thanks from Angels (v. 9)

1. Because He reigns.
2. Because He is eternal.

B. Worship from the Redeemed (vs. 10-11)

1. Because He is eternal.
2. Because He created all things and sustains all things. Read Psalm 148.

THINGS TO WATCH FOR

1. Chapter four ends with all eyes toward the throne and the one sitting thereon.
2. The song in verse 11 is the song of creation.
3. The significance of “. . .**because of thy will they were and were created.**”

**Conclusion:**

**The Lesson – Caesar May Appear to Be on the Throne That Controls Their Destiny – But, Not So, God Rules on His Throne, the Entire Universal Creation!**