

The Throne Before The Storm

Before the judgments of Revelation unfold, John is given a vision that anchors the entire book. In chapters 2 and 3, Christ addresses real churches facing pressure, weakness, and compromise. In chapter 4, the scene suddenly shifts from earth to heaven. John sees a throne set in heaven and hears continual praise declaring the holiness, authority, and eternity of God. Only after this vision of worship does the Lamb open the seals in chapter 6. The storm begins — but only after the throne is revealed.

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (**Revelation 4:1-8**).

Introduction:

1. Christ Among The Churches On Earth (**Revelation 1-3**): The book opens with a vision of the risen Christ walking among seven churches in Asia Minor. These congregations face persecution, compromise, false teaching, and spiritual decline. The setting is earthly struggle and uncertainty.
2. A Sudden Shift From Earth To Heaven (**Revelation 4:1-2**): After addressing the churches, John is called up to see heaven itself. Instead of chaos, he sees a throne. Instead of panic, he hears worship. The perspective changes from earthly trouble to heavenly sovereignty.
3. Worship Before Judgment (**Revelation 4-6**): The throne vision in chapters 4-5 precedes the opening of the seals in chapter 6. Before judgment is described, God’s character is declared. Holiness frames everything that follows.

1. The Heavenly Setting And The Living Creatures (Revelation 4:6-8):

- a. The Imagery Connects To Old Testament Throne Visions (**Ezekiel 1:5-10; Isaiah 6:1-3**): John’s description echoes Ezekiel’s cherubim and Isaiah’s seraphim, showing continuity in divine revelation. This is the same holy Lord revealed throughout Scripture.
- b. The Symbolism Highlights Creation’s Strength And Awareness (**Revelation 4:6-7**): The lion (majesty), calf (strength), man (intelligence), and eagle (swiftness) portray the highest forms of animate life. The many eyes symbolise perception before the throne. Creation sees — and therefore responds.
- c. Their Continual Praise Reflects Unceasing Recognition (**Revelation 4:8**): “They rest not day and night” communicates uninterrupted acknowledgement of God’s holiness. This is not mechanical repetition, but the natural response to what they behold.

2. The Character Of God — “Holy, Holy, Holy”:

- a. The Meaning Of Holiness (**Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:16**): Holiness signifies moral purity, separateness, and absolute otherness. God is not merely powerful; He is perfectly righteous.
- b. The Triple Repetition Expresses Supreme Emphasis (**Isaiah 6:3**): In Hebrew thought, repetition intensifies meaning. The threefold “Holy” elevates holiness as the supreme attribute. No other quality is declared in this way.
- c. Holiness Is The Foundation Of Trust And Judgment (**Revelation 15:3-4**): Because God is holy, His judgments are just. The seals, trumpets, and bowls proceed from righteousness, not impulse. If God were not holy, His power would terrify us. Because He is holy, His power reassures us.

3. The Authority Of God — “Lord God Almighty”:

- a. “Lord” — Sovereign Ruler (**Revelation 1:8**): The term affirms absolute authority. When earthly powers appear dominant, heaven proclaims who truly rules.
- b. “God” — The True And Living Deity (**Isaiah 45:5**): He alone is God. Worship belongs rightly to Him and not to any created power.
- c. “Almighty” — The All-Ruling One (**Revelation 19:6**): The term speaks of universal dominion. No empire, force, or spiritual power stands outside His control.

4. The Eternity Of God — “Which Was, And Is, And Is To Come”:

- a. The Echo Of The Divine Name (**Exodus 3:14**): The phrase expands the revelation of “I AM,” declaring self-existence and independence.
- b. The God Of All Time (**Revelation 1:4**): Past, present, and future are equally under His being. He is not caught within history; He governs it.
- c. Eternal Stability In A Book Of Upheaval (**Hebrews 13:8**): In a prophecy filled with conflict and change, the unchanging nature of God anchors hope.

Conclusion:

1. Heaven Is Not Panicked (**Revelation 4:2**): Before the storm of judgment breaks, the throne stands firm.
2. Worship Reflects Reality (**Acts 17:24-25**): God does not need praise, yet He is infinitely worthy of it. Worship aligns creation with truth.
3. Holiness Anchors Hope (**Revelation 16:7**): Because the One on the throne is holy and eternal, His judgments are righteous and His purposes sure.

Before the seals are broken, heaven sings.
Before judgment falls, holiness is declared.
And before we fear what is coming, we are shown who reigns.

Applications:

1. Let Worship Shape Our Perspective (**Colossians 3:2**): When circumstances trouble us, we must lift our eyes to the throne. Earthly upheaval does not remove heavenly sovereignty.
2. Trust The Justice Of God (**Deuteronomy 32:4**): Because God is holy, His judgments are right. We may not understand every act, but we can trust His character.
3. Respond To Holiness With Reverence (**Hebrews 12:28-29**): Worship is not casual acknowledgment but reverent response to the Holy One.
4. Live In Light Of Eternity (**2 Corinthians 4:18**): The One who was, and is, and is to come calls us to fix our attention on eternal realities rather than temporary anxieties.

Questions:

1. What is the first thing John sees when he enters heaven, and why is that significant (**Revelation 4:2**)?
2. What does the threefold “Holy” communicate about God’s character (**Revelation 4:8; Isaiah 6:3**)?
3. What does the title “Almighty” reveal about God’s authority (**Revelation 19:6**)?
4. How does the phrase “which was, and is, and is to come” strengthen believers facing uncertainty (**Revelation 1:4**)?
5. Why does worship in Revelation precede judgment (**Revelation 4-5**)?

Questions & Answers:

1. What is the first thing John sees when he enters heaven, and why is that significant (**Revelation 4:2**)?

Answer: John sees a throne set in heaven, emphasising that sovereignty precedes judgment and that God reigns before events unfold.

2. What does the threefold “Holy” communicate about God’s character (**Revelation 4:8; Isaiah 6:3**)?

Answer: The repetition expresses supreme emphasis, declaring God’s holiness as absolute, complete, and unmatched.

3. What does the title “Almighty” reveal about God’s authority (**Revelation 19:6**)?

Answer: It declares His universal dominion and control over all powers, earthly and spiritual.

4. How does the phrase “which was, and is, and is to come” strengthen believers facing uncertainty (**Revelation 1:4**)?

Answer: It affirms God’s eternal nature, assuring believers that He governs all time and remains unchanged amid upheaval.

5. Why does worship in Revelation precede judgment (**Revelation 4–5**)?

Answer: The character of God is established before His actions are described, reminding us that all judgment flows from holiness and righteousness