

## “The Throne Room (Chap. 4:1-5:14)”

### NOTES

1. Jasper & carnelian (4:3) - God is often described in terms of the reflected brilliance of precious stones (cf. 1 Timothy 6:16). Both stones are translucent and vary in color.
2. The rainbow (4:3) - in Genesis 9:12-17 the rainbow is given as a sign of God's faithfulness to creation. A fully encircling rainbow suggests perfect, complete, undending faithfulness.
3. 24 elders (4:4) - 24 divisions of priests and 24 divisions of Levites were the traditional leaders of Israel's worship in the Temple. These 24 elders may be angels or special redeemed men who represent the whole of redeemed humanity in the throne room. Sometimes the number 24 is used to sum up the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of the Christian church. Their crowns of gold imply royalty and holiness.
4. Lighting...thunder (4:5). In the Old Testament, God is often revealed in a storm (1 Sam. 2:10, Job 37:13, Psalm 18:7-25). On Mt. Sinai, Moses entered the storm and was brought into God's presence to receive His law. Thunder, lightning and earthquakes accompany each series of judgments in Revelation (cf. 8:1-5; 11:19; 16:17-21).
5. The Four Living Creatures (4:6; 5:11) - there are about 2 dozen interpretations of these creatures, such as:
  - i. The four creatures represent the entirety of creation (birds, domesticated animals, wild animals, humanity)
  - ii. The four creatures are an exalted order of angelic beings who serve as guardians of the throne.Being “covered with eyes” probably signifies unceasing vigilance. Compare John's vision with Ezekiel's in Ez. 1:6,10.
6. Scroll with writing on both sides (5:1). In John's day, papyrus scrolls were more common than modern books. On the front side, fibers ran horizontally which made writing easier. On the back, fibers ran vertically. If the scroll has writing on both sides, it usually means its filled to overflowing. Sometimes, like in the example of a contract, the front side would be rolled and sealed for confidentiality, but the outside would have reference notes.
7. Lamb (5:6). In most apocalyptic literature, a lamb is a young deliverer which arises out of God's people, or “flock.” But John's vision of the lamb is unique in that it is one associated with expiation of sin (like the Jewish passover lamb) and one not associated with strength but suffering and death. The Greek for “as if it had been slain” means “having throat cut” in the manner of a sacrifice. However, he is standing as a victor.
8. Seven horns and seven eyes (5:6) - In the Old Testament, the horn is a symbol of power, authority and strength. Seven would symbolize full strength and authority. The eyes would represent full knowledge or wisdom - omniscience.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What impressions of God and Jesus do you get from John's descriptions here? What can you learn about both from their descriptions?
2. Based on these chapters, what seems to be the number one occupation in heaven? Why are God and Jesus worthy of this?
3. How would you like your worship life to be affected by this depiction? Is it easy or hard to enter into this kind of worship? What can you do to begin letting your worship be transformed?