



river west church

The Lord God Almighty

Revelation 4

Pastor Guy Gray

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The Book of Revelation is designed to radically strengthen your faith and cause you to stand strong in Christ. It does this by giving you an awesome vision of the reality of Christ. It also does this by giving you an amazing hope for the future. Hope is an outlook about the future that impacts your experience in the present. If you are strong in hope for the future, you will find strength to face whatever challenges come your way in the present. This is exactly what the Book of Revelation is designed to do for us. This is why John is caught up into heaven in chapter 4 and told that he will be shown things “that must take place after this” (4:1). Yes, the Book of Revelation is about the future. But the point is not to satisfy our curiosity about how events in our world are going to unfold. The point is to give us a vision of the future so filled with hope that it will strengthen us to live out our faith right here and right now, no matter what.

With all the focus on the future, it is significant that chapters 4 and 5 don't actually transport us to events in the future. Instead, these chapters give us another incredible vision of God. This vision is designed to give us an unshakeable hope. It does this, not by showing us the future, but by showing us the “Lord God Almighty,” who holds the future firmly in His sovereign and gracious hand. As future events unfold in the pages of Revelation, it is this God who's always at the helm of history. These chapters contain one vision that unfolds in two parts. The real power of the vision can only be known when both parts are held together. The first part of the vision is the throne of God – chapter 4. The second part of the vision is the Lamb of God – chapter 5.

A Throne in Heaven

The first thing John saw in heaven was a throne. “And at once I was in the Spirit and behold, a throne stood in heaven, and one seated on the throne” (4:2). The key to the vision is the repetition of the word “throne.” The purpose of the vision is not to tell us exactly what heaven looks like, nor is it to tell us exactly what God looks like. The purpose of the vision is to show who God is in His sovereign majesty. He is the Lord God Almighty, the sovereign king of the universe. That is why He is seated on the throne in heaven and why all of creation surrounding Him worships. Everything else in the Book of Revelation is rooted in this reality. All that will unfold in history will be directed by His power and authority. This is the basis of our hope for the future.

But there are other thrones. There are imposters. There are false gods. We will see them too, later in Revelation.

The Truth About Our World

Revelation 4-5 is a fantastic vision. It tells us the truth about our God. But it also tells us the truth about our world. The truth is that our world is the creation of almighty God and is part of His master plan. He is in control and He is working according to His purpose. The problem is that our world refuses to acknowledge this truth. Our world does not acknowledge the throne of God. So, in the place of God we have elevated other things to the status of “ultimate”. The creation itself, the individual and the state. Each of these have repeatedly been elevated and placed on the throne of human thinking. These are the very things that are at the heart of the conflict that will unfold in the Book of Revelation.

So Revelation 4 is setting the stage for us. It paints a picture of truth for eyes of faith. It anchors our hearts in the reality of God and the truth about our world. (Next week we will dig deeper into the vision of chapter 4 and explore how this vision calls us to worship God our creator)

The Lamb of God

Chapter 5 is part two of the vision, and we must always remember to take the two parts together. The sovereign power of almighty God must ALWAYS be joined with the gracious love and mercy of God in Christ the Lamb of God. If we see God and the Gospel as they are revealed in both parts of the vision (Revelation 4 & 5), then our hope will truly become unquenchable. Today as we receive communion, may the hope of the Gospel strengthen your heart in Christ like never before. Amen.