

God's Throne: The Perfection of Beauty

INTRODUCTION

Tonight I'm going to talk from Revelation 4 about the throne of God. Now, you know the throne of God is a real place. It's not symbolic; it's real. It's a real throne with a real Person on it, the Father, and the Son on a throne at the right hand. It's in a real place. It's magnificent, this royal court scene in which the throne of God and all of His attendants gather before Him.

I discovered Revelation 4 over thirty years ago, when I was in my early twenties. I ran into this passage a little earlier than that, actually. It was so exciting to me, because I had a place to focus my mind when I prayed. Up until that time, I was just sort of praying into the air. Sometimes I would picture Jesus according to a picture I saw of Jesus. When I began to see what the Bible gave us, what God wants us to understand about His throne, and where He dwells in the most intense place of His manifest presence, it changed my life. This became one of my favorite chapters. These many years later, it's still one of my favorite chapters. In probably thirty years of ministry, this is the chapter I have used more than any other single chapter in the Bible. Whenever I pray, I bring my mind into this scene.

That's what I want to describe: the scene around the throne. I'll describe it very imperfectly, of course. My goal is to give you a beginning point for focusing your mind when you're talking to the Lord and when you're worshiping. I believe that as you stay with this over the years, you'll look back as I have and say, "This one chapter would change your life." There are several chapters you could say that about, of course. I believe it will be one of the chapters in the Bible you'll use more than almost any other chapter over the years.

REVELATION 4 AND 5: THE BEAUTY REALM OF GOD

Paragraph A. Revelation 4 and 5. Although we're only focusing on chapter 4, this is one scene. I call it "the beauty realm of God." It's the place where the beauty of God is manifest in its most intense and dynamic way. It's His royal court. It's the place the Bible calls the perfection of beauty. "I have seen the consummation of all perfection" (Ps. 119:96). I believe he saw the throne of God, or glimpses of the throne of God.

What a phrase! The consummation, or the fullness, of all perfection. There's no other place that could be called "the consummation of perfection" besides the throne of God that's described in Revelation 4 and 5.

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth" (Ps. 50:2). The perfection of beauty is manifest around the throne of God as described in these two chapters, Revelation 4 and 5. Again, we're focusing on one chapter tonight: Revelation 4. This portion of Scripture is a great gift to us. I want to urge you to determine to take full advantage of this revelation. I mean, determine tonight in your heart, "I'm going to go after these truths. I'm going to go as far as the Spirit will take me and I'm going to give myself to meditate, to study, and to use the truths in Revelation 4 and 5."

"STRENGTH AND BEAUTY ARE IN HIS SANCTUARY"

Psalm 96:6 says four things about God's sanctuary. It speaks of His earthly sanctuary in the temple in the Old Testament in a limited way. This is only a reflection of the fullness of His heavenly sanctuary where His throne is in heaven. The writer says, "Honor and majesty are before His throne. Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary" (Ps. 96:6, paraphrased). In other words, they're in His royal court where His throne is. There's honor

in the presence of God. The honor is the worship He receives. He's honored. It's not only that He's honored. Actually, the saints are honored by being allowed to come into His presence. Beloved, we receive honor by the very privilege of being drawn into His presence, and accepted in His presence by the Holy Spirit and the gift of righteousness.

Majesty is before Him. When we understand what's before Him, it makes our spirit tremble. Strength: when we interact with God around His throne, it gives impartation. It renews us; it strengthens our inner man with might. The power and life that exist at the throne of God are a source of strength to the entire eternal city, the New Jerusalem. Strength is imparted. So is beauty. I love that. Beauty is in His sanctuary. Of course it's the perfection of beauty. It's beauty that fascinates us.

DAVID SET HIS HEART TO BEHOLD THE BEAUTY OF GOD

One of the theme verses of IHOP-KC is Psalm 27:4. David, the man after God's own heart, made this his life vision. He said, "All the days of my life, I'm going to set my life vision to be one who takes time to behold the beauty of the Lord" (Ps. 27:4, paraphrased). To behold the beauty of the Lord means to focus on it, to meditate on it, to gaze on it. This happens in several ways. One, we see what the Scripture says about the throne of God. Then we posture our mind, gazing into that scene, asking the Holy Spirit to give us living understanding. There are several other ways to do that.

Here's my point: David was only in his teens when God called him "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14, paraphrased). He wasn't a mature man when God called him a man after God's own heart. Could you imagine being fifteen years old, whether you're a young man or young woman, and God calling you a person after His heart? We get a secret glimpse into why God called him that: David set his heart to behold the beauty of God; to make that the premier occupation of his life. His heart was occupied. His heart was preoccupied with the beauty of God while his hands were occupied in his assignment from the Lord.

A TREASURE HUNT INTO THE BEAUTY OF GOD

Paragraph B. We won't look at all the notes tonight; I'm just giving you the outline of Revelation 4. I believe it's one of the greatest passages in the Bible on the beauty of God. I don't know of another passage that would surpass this in revealing the beauty of God. It describes the Father's throne. I organize the chapter in my own thinking according to four categories. Each of these four categories has three distinct themes. There are twelve specific themes, and the implications are vast. Each one is like the title of a book. I mean, you could take the reality that God is like a jasper stone in His appearance, and write a whole volume on that one distinctive revelation of God. The Holy Spirit is beckoning us. He's saying, "Come after Me. I'll give you more on what this is about if you want it. If you can't live without it, I'll give you more."

Each one of these twelve themes, these twelve truths about God, I've taken one by one and searched throughout the Bible. I'm not saying I've done it well, but I have put some energy into it over the years. I've said, "Now Holy Spirit, escort me." The Holy Spirit is the great escort. He will escort you on this great treasure hunt into the beauty of God. I'm searching it out in the Bible. I'm searching it out through different commentaries and various methods of research, trying to find out what these things mean. I get the natural information from the Bible and, again, some research outside the Bible, to get insight into what some of these sayings mean. Then I say, "Holy Spirit, take me by the hand and escort me on this treasure hunt into the beauty of God."

It's a lifelong treasure hunt. I don't mean it ends when you die; as if, after seventy years, the treasure hunt is over. No, I mean it's lifelong. A billion years from now, you'll still be discovering these twelve themes about the beauty of God. There are layers and layers and dimensions of truth to each one of these.

The first category is about God's person: how God looks and feels and acts. It's very abbreviated, but the Spirit is saying, "Come after Me. Ask Me to teach you more and I will teach you more." It's very abbreviated, but the Spirit has so much more to say for people who are hungry and can't live without more. Determine in your heart that you're a person who can't live without getting more. It's not OK to have business-as-usual understanding. You want to go deeply in these subjects. The second category is God's partners. The third one is the manifestation of His power. The fourth one is His presence in fire.

"BEHOLD, A THRONE SET IN HEAVEN"

Let's look at seven verses here, just to get a quick overview of what John saw. "Behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne" (Rev. 4:2). John is looking at the Father. He's like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance. There's a rainbow around the throne. The rainbow contained every color of the rainbow, but it was predominantly emerald. According to my understanding, the rainbow is arching over the throne. I picture it like a semicircle around Him. Granted, I might have it really wrong. When I get there one day I may say, "Oh well, I missed a few big ones, but that's OK." This is how I've pictured it over the years.

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE ENTHRONED, ROBED, AND CROWNED

"Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting" (Rev. 4:4). Again, I picture a semicircle in front of the throne. I believe these elders are human beings who were redeemed from this age. They're people; they're sitting. Now notice, they're clothed in white robes. They have golden crowns on their heads. They're enthroned, robed, and crowned. Those are significant insights for the redeemed. In the age to come, God's people will be enthroned, robed, and crowned. That's a massive statement about God's heart, that God has so designed His kingdom that broken, weak people like us can end up there, in a place of sitting on a throne, robed in white, with a golden crown on our head. I don't mean you'll be one of the twenty-four; you'll have a like experience in a different application. These dimensions of salvation are available to the redeemed.

SEVEN MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

From the throne proceed lightning and thunder and voices. Then there are seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God (Rev. 4:5). Another way to say it is that there are seven distinct manifestations of the Holy Spirit, but one Holy Spirit. Isaiah 11:1-3 describes the seven manifestations of the Holy Spirit. It's the one Holy Spirit, but in seven dynamic, distinct manifestations.

ALL THE SAINTS WILL GATHER ON THE SEA OF GLASS

"Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal" (Rev. 4:6). This sea of glass is a vast sea before the throne and it's like crystal. It's like a diamond. It's glittering in the splendor and the glory of God like a diamond. It's vast, it looks like a sea, and it's like crystal. We find out later in Revelation 15 that the saints stand on the sea of glass and they worship God. It's like the great conference center before the throne.

I don't know how many believers there will be when it's all said and done. I'll just give you round numbers, and I could be way off. I estimate that there have been a billion believers in all history. There are a billion believers now alive on the earth, and a billion more will come to the Lord in the great harvest before the Lord

returns. Make the math easy: one billion plus one billion plus one billion. Who knows the real number? My point is that there are several billion people on this sea. It's really a big conference, not a small one. It's not a stadium; it's not a pond of glass. John didn't see a pond like crystal, nor a lake, nor a sea. Can you imagine how much space it would take for several billion people to stand on that sea? I don't know how big it is, but it's bright like crystal, like a diamond. It's right before the throne.

We find out later, in Revelation 15:2, that on the sea where the saints stand, there's fire all over the sea. The power of the Spirit is hovering and brooding and moving in power all over the sea. Whoa! We gather before the Lord in strategic times, when all the saints gather in one place. By the way, we don't only worship forever on that sea of glass. You'll actually have work and assignments. You won't be standing there every moment for eternity. Some people imagine themselves floating around on a cloud with a harp, singing, "Worthy is the Lamb, worthy is the Lamb." They pass by their friend: "Hey bro, how are you doing?"

"Fine."

"Worthy is the Lamb, worthy is the Lamb." A million years passes.

I love this singing. I love it. But I love to do a little bit here and there besides just that. I want to assure you this: that the age to come isn't all in a conference center. You're certainly not on a cloud floating around with a guitar. You're going to have a real, physical, material body. There will be strategic times where the Spirit will call everyone—all two, three, or four billion, or whatever the number is. I have no way of knowing. Everyone will come at those strategic times. Quite possibly it will happen at some times more than at other times. We will all gather together.

Those great convocations, those great worship gatherings, are what John saw. There's a sea of glass like crystal. Around the throne were four living creatures. So, again, I could have it wrong, but this is how I have pictured it over the years. There's the Father on the throne. There's a rainbow, an emerald rainbow arching above Him. Then He has the twenty-four elders in front of Him like a semicircle looking towards Him. Daniel 7:10 says a river of fire flows from the throne. That river of fire is flowing out of the throne. I believe it's flowing onto the great sea of glass like crystal where everyone is gathered. That river is breaking forth. It took me a few years before I found that river. I took my twenty-four elders; I put twelve on one side and twelve on the other side to make room for the river to get through.

SEVEN LAMPS OF FIRE BLAZE BEFORE THE THRONE

The river breaks out in this vast, sea-like, diamond-crystal splendor. Several billion saints are there. The fire of God, the glory of God, is on them. They're worshipping. Then there are seven lamps of fire; the word that's used in some translations is *torches*. There are seven torches of fire before the throne. I picture them in their primary places before the Father's throne, but in front of the elders. So the elders can see the lamps. That's how I picture it. Don't picture a little five-foot lamp. These lamps don't have hundred-watt light bulbs in them. These lamps could be massive. Again, the word is translated by some Bible translations as *torches*. They may be massive and they may be moving in power across the sea, just as the pillar of fire would move in the Old Testament. There was a pillar of fire that reached from the ground to the sky. It's a really big pillar. That pillar would move.

I picture these seven torches, these seven lamps, moving in the midst of the people of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Then I picture the four living creatures. I picture them going around the Lord at the top of His

throne, around His face. They're saying, "Holy, holy, holy." I picture them around Him, at His shoulders and His head, saying, "Holy, holy, holy." Then we have myriads of angels filling all the atmosphere. I imagine a few billion angels in the sky and fill the whole thing out. We're standing on the sea of glass, on that sea with fire on it.

That's the scene you come before when you say, "Father, thank You for this food. I ask You to bless it in Jesus' name." That's where you are when you're saying that. It's true. I admit, I rarely go to the scene in Revelation 4 with hot food on the table. I have a few times. It doesn't always bless the people at the table, but tonight as we're worshipping, or when you're driving the car, with your eyes open, that's the scene you're speaking into. It really is. When I'm sitting in the prayer room, I like to lock into that scene. Then I add several more dimensions, which I won't go through tonight. They're all in the Bible.

THE FATHER AND THE SON ARE SEATED ON THRONES

Then we have Jesus at the right hand of the Father. I see the Father and the Son; They're on two thrones right next to each other, with this emerald rainbow above them. It has all the colors of the rainbow, but green is predominant. When we're worshipping, singing, "Lord, we love You," I assure you that's where you're standing.

I like to say, "Father, I come before You in the presence of Your holy angels..."

Just picture millions and billions of angels on the sea of glass. There's the river of flowing fire and the twenty-four elders, twelve on each side, and the Father and the Son. The angels are filling the atmosphere. The four living creatures are there, and the holy seraphim. When I say, "Father, I love You, I love You," that's really what's happening. If you can set your mind on that, my experience is that it greatly helped my prayer time. I realized I was actually talking to Someone who was sitting on a throne somewhere. I wasn't just sort of verbalizing my ideas to the air; I was actually talking to Someone who sits on a throne somewhere. I was being received. The Father and the Son were listening.

WHATEVER YOU SET YOUR MIND ON OPENS YOUR SPIRIT

The reason God gave us this picture is so that we could use it. One person said, "That sounds like visualization."

I say, "Well, if God gave us the picture, we should use the picture." That's how I end it. Here's a principle: whatever you set your mind on, you open your spirit to. That's an absolute fact of life. Whatever you set your mind on, good or bad, you expose your spirit to the influence of it. Whether you like it or not, it happens automatically. If you set your mind on the throne of God, it will open your spirit to be influenced by these truths. If you set your mind on wrong things, on sexual perversion, on so much of what's going on on the Internet, it opens your spirit, even if you don't want that to happen. That's how the human makeup works. Whatever you set your mind on opens your spirit.

I ask the Holy Spirit, very specifically, "Give me insight into these twelve dimensions of the glory of God." I want to see more. I'm on a lifelong treasure hunt that doesn't end in this age. It goes on forever and forever. We have these foundational truths.

Roman numeral II. I wanted to give you the big picture. We won't take so much time on the details. The beauty of God—that's the first category: how God looks. This isn't a complete, comprehensive picture. There are many

dimensions about God that are not in this picture. Again, each one of these twelve themes is like the title of a book. There are volumes to be said. What does God look like? In the most general and vague way, what does God look like?

John doesn't see His face directly like I can see your face and you can see mine. What he sees is the light around the throne of God. At another time, Paul the apostle said, "No man can see God's face, face to face. No person in the natural, with a natural, unresurrected body, can see the face of God directly."

THE RADIANCE OF THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE SPLENDOR OF GOD

When John is looking at what God looks like, he's only seeing the glory of God that surrounds the throne. It says here in verse 3, "He who sat there was like a jasper . . . a sardius stone . . . and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald" (Rev. 4:3).

A modern-day jasper stone is different from the jasper of the ancient world. In the Bible, John himself describes what jasper means to him. In Revelation 21:11, the New Jerusalem is like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. The ancient jasper stone would be similar in appearance to a diamond filled with radiance. This is far beyond a natural diamond; it's the very radiance of the brightness of the splendor of God. This majestic splendor, this brilliant, diamond-like glory, surrounds the being of God. When I stand before the Lord, I picture this Being who is brighter than we can imagine, with dimensions of glory and splendor. That's the Father. I don't see His face, but I talk to Him. He's on the throne and I speak into that. This is just my own way; I'm not saying this is how you have to do it. I see His throne there, His hands there, His feet there. I'm looking at His face, and all I can see is a majesty brighter than the sun. I say, "Father, Father who art in heaven, Abba, I want to see Your face one day, even behind the veil of the fullness of that light."

In the age to come, we will see His face, when we have resurrected bodies and we have the ability to see Him face to face.

THE FATHER DWELLS IN UNAPPROACHABLE LIGHT

Paragraph B. It's a jasper-like stone. That's the one feature that the Spirit gave John. Again, there are many facets about God's appearance, and several in the Bible. That's the one right there, so that's the one I go with.

Paragraph one under B. Here's what Paul said about the Father: that the Father dwells in unapproachable light which no man has ever seen (1 Tim. 6:16). I mean directly. I mean, this is unveiled, where the glory of God is in the way. No man has ever seen God. He dwells, He lives, in unapproachable light. That's a really interesting phrase. No one can approach Him and go by that "shield of glory," so to speak. That's not the best term. These are garments of glory that He cloaks Himself in.

There's a reason God is unapproachable in His light. It's not because He wants to be relationally distant from us. Because when you read that at first, you say, "If He's unapproachable, that must mean He doesn't want us to be relationally near Him."

I believe Paul would say, "No, He's not unapproachable because of His heart and desire for relationship. He's unapproachable because our capacity in this age is so limited. We can't get too near it." If we got too near it, it would be overwhelming beyond measure. I believe this cloak of glory actually protects the saints and the angels that are near His throne. Why? Because the fully unveiled glory of God is more awesome than we can even

imagine. I imagine this garment of light. It's not because He doesn't want to relate closely; it's because it's like plugging a 110-volt electrical unit into a million-volt unit. That 110-volt unit would fry out. I'm not an electrician, but something like that. When Paul the apostle saw the Man Jesus, fully God, fully Man, he fell before the blinding light of the face of Jesus.

Top of page two. I'm going to spend another two minutes or so on this jasper; I'm going to spend less time on the other ones. This jasper, diamond-like radiance that's like a garment around the Father, is terrifying, beautiful, and fascinating. I believe there's music coming out of the Father, and fragrance, and color, and power. All of these dimensions are being communicated by the light, that jasper light that comes out of Him, that radiates from Him. It's not a sterile light. I believe it's fragrant, filled with music and power. Being in the very presence of it is overwhelming to those who get too close. It's the presence of that diamond-like, jasper glory.

THE CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM WORSHIP HIM FOREVER

Paragraph two, top of page two. The seraphim. What's a seraphim? *Seraphim* is plural for *seraph*. *Seraph* is a singular. They're the highest-ranking angels in the Bible. They're higher than archangels. Under the seraphim are the *cherubim*. They're not the same; there are distinct differences. The seraphim are the highest, according to what we can tell from the limited knowledge we have in the Scriptures. The cherubim are next, and somewhere after that are the archangels. They're way up there. Then there are all kinds of other angels of different rank and degrees of glory. The seraphim are the very top of the top of the angelic order—top in authority and top in capacity. That's the key phrase. They have the greatest capacity to be in the presence of God without it absolutely blowing their minds, so to speak—without it absolutely overwhelming them.

The four living creatures are seraphim. The living creatures are also called *cherubim*, but that's in a different context.

There are four seraphim in the Bible. They're really high-level angelic beings. I imagine they're flying around the throne. They have six wings—three sets of wings, with two for each set. I picture them flying around the face of the Father. They cry, "Holy, holy, holy."

Look at this, though. Isaiah saw the seraphim (Isa. 6:2). They each have six wings. Cherubim only have four, if that's interesting to you. There are only four seraphim. With one set of wings they cover their eyes because they get so close to that jasper light. It overwhelms them. We're talking about the angelic beings with the greatest capacity for God. They get close and they cover their eyes. When they cry, "Holy," what they're really saying is, "Transcendent beauty, infinite superiority; there is none like You." That's what they're saying. They do this forever and forever. *Holiness* in this context means more than purity. He's not just separated from sin; that's what purity is. He's separated from everything that exists. He's infinitely superior. He's holy in that sense, is what they're saying here. They're saying, "Infinitely superior." Contextually, that's what *holy* means here: they're looking at God and His jasper-like glory; they're getting a fresh revelation. They cover their eyes with one set of wings because they're so overwhelmed by God. This isn't the best way to say it, but it's like the power of it goes through their being. After a while they come up for air again. That's a weird way to say it, but they come up for air again and they get another glimpse of His glory, another impartation of revelation. It overwhelms them again. They cover their eyes again. Then, after a while, they look again. "Oh my God." It overwhelms them. Throughout all eternity, they never exhaust the splendor and the glory of the One who said, "Call Me: your Father who art in heaven" (Mt. 6:9, paraphrased). This is your Father. This is the One who

wants you. This is the One who sent Jesus. It was God the Father's idea. He's the One who sent Jesus: "Go and win them for Me. I want them."

I mean, a million years from now, we will be out working in the New Jerusalem, the new heaven and the new earth. There will be times when we all gather on the sea and worship. Everyone comes. Many times you'll be reigning, ruling, working, fellowshiping, and eating. You'll be doing all kinds of things: studying, learning, relating. You'll be eating with a physical, resurrected body. We'll be out there talking. I can just picture it. There's Allen Hood. Allen and I are out there. Allen will come down and visit me from his level: "Tell me what it's like up there. Allen, what do you think about the glory of God? I'm so moved but we have been here a million years now. Is there any chance we will ever outgrow this?"

Allen will say, "Look, Mike," and we will look at the throne. The seraphim will be bowing down yet again, overwhelmed. He says, "We're not even close! Look: they're still overwhelmed. They're still completely overwhelmed at new discoveries of the vast ocean of the beauty of God."

"Thank you, Allen. You can go back up and be with Cory and the other folks."

Number three. Look at this. God puts these garments of light around Him. He puts garments of light around Him. Without this, the kings of the earth, when they see the face of God, hide themselves. The very earth will flee from the face of God when God takes this covering, this veil of light off of Him (Rev. 20:11). According to the Scriptures, God covers Himself in light like a garment. We spent more time on that than we wanted to. I'm so fascinated by this dimension of God.

Paragraph C. That light that's around Him is also like a sardius stone. Some translations put the word *ruby*, because it's a deep, red gem. It's a deep, red precious stone. Not only is there a bright, diamond-like light, but there's this red, deep, burning, flame-of-God light that's also coming out of the realm and the throne of God. This is on Him as well. I believe it speaks of His fiery desire—that He's like a consuming fire. So we're fascinated by His splendor and we're terrified by His fire and His power. All these things are operating together.

EVERYTHING THAT GOD DOES IS COVERED IN MERCY

Paragraph D. Then, I imagine arching over the throne is an emerald rainbow. The rainbow speaks of God's tender mercies. Look at Genesis 9:13; God set a rainbow in the cloud. When the flood came in Noah's generation, and the flood was over, God said, "Put a rainbow in the sky, and it will be a sign that I will look on them in mercy, and I will never destroy them with a flood again, ever" (Gen. 9:13-17, paraphrased).

The rainbow in the cloud, in the earthly realm, is a picture of the truth of the rainbow that's not in a cloud, but over the throne. In other words, everything that God does is covered by that emerald rainbow of mercy. Everything that God does is covered with mercy to those who will cry out for the mercy. I don't have this on the notes, but David says, "His tender mercies are over all His works" (Ps. 145:9). He has this terrifying splendor, and this fire, and this thunder, and this power. But He assures us, "Don't worry. Over all My work in your life, all the work to which I've called you, is the covenant, the rainbow of mercy. I will be tender in the way I relate to you."

THE SAPPHIRE THRONE AND THE GARMENT OF LIGHT

Paragraph E. I'm just going off of Revelation 4 for one moment here. Ezekiel saw the throne of Jesus; it was like a sapphire. The throne of Jesus is at the right hand of the throne of the Father. Ezekiel the prophet in the Old Testament saw that Jesus' throne was like sapphire. That's blue. When I picture it, I picture the Father in this bright, diamond-like, radiant light with this fiery, red light coming out of His presence. Next to Him, Jesus is on a sapphire throne. I picture Jesus in His humanity. The glory is still on Him. His face is bright like the sun, His eyes are like fire, but He's on this blue, sapphire throne. That's the way I picture it when I come before the Lord.

Paragraph F. In Psalm 104:2, God covers Himself with a garment of light. Isn't that interesting? God puts a garment of light on Himself. Again, I believe that's to protect creation. He's not trying to hide in the sense that He doesn't want people to interact with Him around His throne. He's saying, "If I take that garment of light off and all you have is the full, unveiled glory of God, it will absolutely overwhelm you."

He puts a garment of light on. This light is the diamond-like jasper color—the red, fire-like color sardius, and the sapphire throne of Jesus. That's this garment of light that's around the throne.

GOD RELATES IN MERCY TO EVERYONE WHO WANTS IT

Top of page three. Every one of these facets has so much more in the Bible on them. Now we go from what God looks like to what He feels like. He feels. That's the fiery desire. I didn't take time on that. It's the way God acts in His mercy. He relates in mercy to everyone who wants it. If people don't want mercy, then He'll give them only justice. That's terrifying to me, to get what I deserve.

Someone said, "I don't get what I deserve!"

I said, "Trust me, you don't want that."

"No, you know what I mean. I want what I deserve."

"You want what you deserve? But you don't really want what you deserve, just the good side of it."

"I guess so."

Throw away the notion of, "I want what I deserve." Get what you don't deserve, mercy, and be grateful.

So we get a revelation of what God looks, feels, and acts like in an abbreviated way. These descriptions aren't comprehensive. The next thing that John sees is the partners; he sees the partnership of God's people. It's the beauty of God's people who are in partnership with Him. This is remarkable. That's the next thing He sees as the beauty unfolds. Here He sees elders who are enthroned; they have such dignity.

Beloved, think of what it means to be on a throne in the presence of God. No one is going to be one of the twenty-four elders. They're already there. The rest of the saints, those who have thrones, regardless of where they are—what a dignity! What a value, that our weak and broken lives can be translated into thrones forever. Because you don't receive a throne based on how big or famous your ministry was, or how people were impressed by it. You receive a throne based on your heart responses, not how big your impact was. You receive

a throne based on how big your heart was. You may have a ministry where almost no one hears of you, ever, your whole life, but your heart grows massively. When you stand before God, you'll be surprised by how God responds to that. We're impressed by big impact; God is impressed by big responses from the heart to Him. That's what He rewards.

Well they have robes and they have crowns. I'm not going to go into that right now. I have the notes there; they're dynamic. I remember a few years ago, I spent a whole message on being enthroned, robed, and crowned. There's a lot to say about each one of these facets of our destiny and our dignity before God.

“FROM THE THRONE PROCEEDED LIGHTNING, THUNDER, AND VOICES”

Roman numeral IV. The beauty of God's power. So we've looked at God's person; we've looked at God's people, or partners. Now we're looking at God's power. I love this verse: “From the throne proceeded lightning, thunder, and voices” (Rev. 4:5). Out of the throne come these beautiful, glorious, and even terrifying manifestations of God's heart and God's mind. He makes known what He's thinking and feeling through these different manifestations. Because the lightning and thunder break forth, I believe, as an expression of what He's thinking and what He's feeling.

Paragraph B. Lightning breaks forth out of the throne. I don't believe it's random lightning. Nothing around the throne is random. The Father is the most intelligent and the most purposeful Being that exists. It's not random lightning. When you study lightning throughout the whole Bible, I believe that we can have confidence in this facet of lightning I've written here. The flashes of lightning go forth from the throne. They're distinct impartations of revelation. I pray all the time, “Lord, let the lightning of Your Spirit touch me.” I don't mean that I want physical lightning to hit me. I don't mean that I want a lightning bolt that someone can see. What I mean is, when we stand on the sea of glass, the lightning and thunder touches the people of God when they gather before Him. I say, “Lord, in that limited way, let the lightning strike of revelation touch my spirit.”

What does lightning do? It strikes and releases energy and power. When I worship, I say, “Let the lightning of God strike my spirit.” Again, I don't have a particular way that I measure that or know when that happens. I say this regularly: “Let the lightning flash of revelation touch my spirit. Whatever that looks like in this age, I want more of it.”

I have a greater vision. I want more Holy Spirit, like a lightning strike of light, power, and fire to touch my spirit. I want to say, “Whoa, I've got it.” I don't mean you have to know in that moment, but I want my heart alive with revelation.

GOD'S MESSAGE REVERBERATES THROUGH OUR SPIRIT LIKE THUNDER

Paragraph C. Thunder. When you study the thunder related to the throne of God, it's often related to specific messages. The thunder is related to a message. When the saints stand on that sea of glass like crystal, that diamond sea, the lightning of revelation strikes them. These impartations of the Holy Spirit strike them. Also, they hear the thunder.

When I stand before the Lord and worship, I say, “I want my being to resonate with the message of God. I want it to reverberate throughout my whole being like thunder. I want your heart. I want your message to touch me. I want lightning and thunder to touch my life, even now. I don't want to wait until the resurrection.”

Again, in the resurrection, on the sea of glass, it's far more definitive. I know those truths are true now. However, what it means in this age is that I want the message to touch my heart and I want the anointing of the Spirit to touch my mind. That's really what I'm talking about. I want that thunder reverberating in my being. I want to be deeply impacted by simple truths like, "God loves you." "Whoa, that shook my being!" I don't mean just in a moment, in a single experience. I want to be shaken and changed and moved by it throughout my life. Thunder will move you. Have you ever heard thunder, and your whole body shook?

Paragraph D. Voices are manifestations of power. When you study the book of Revelation, and of course the whole Bible, the voices constitute this realm of sound. The voices are only one dimension. John is only giving one very brief description of a category that includes much more. For example, when he sees jasper, there's much more surrounding the subject of the light of God. When it says, "The emerald rainbow," there's more about God's tenderness than the rainbow.

When it says voices, it's the whole category of the sound and music, noises and songs and instruments that come out of the courtroom of God. The royal court and the throne itself release music that will fill the entire city. We want those songs and that music to touch us a little right now. I believe that when we stand before God, we're going to be surprised that some of the songs that some of you are singing now, and those you'll sing in the future, because you're going to write them in the future, will be sung in the age to come, because they're songs that begin up there, and the Spirit gives them to you down here. I think some of you are going to be shocked when they're singing your song. You're going to say, "That's my song!"

The Lord will say, "Yes, yes it is. It was Mine first and I gave it especially to you. They're singing your song, but it's the one I gave you. It was here in heaven before it was sung on the earth."

I believe that many of the sounds and chord progressions that are being released on the earth start in heaven. That's why we don't want the imitation. We don't need the devil's music to inspire us. We don't need unbeliever music to get us going. We need to play our instruments and ask the Spirit to lead us where no one else can take us.

I know a lot of people who say, "I hear that to get ideas."

I say, "You don't need dark, defiled music to get Holy Spirit ideas. The chord progressions are already up there in heaven. Ask the Spirit to take you on the journey." There are a lot of voices, songs, and power. There's so much about that.

THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE

Top of page four. The fourth category: the beauty of His manifest presence. Fire (Rev. 4:5). The seven lamps of fire. Again, several translations say *torches*. I don't picture a little five-foot lamp with a 100-watt light bulb inside it. These are massive. I think of the pillar of fire when they went through the wilderness out of Egypt. They were in the wilderness for forty years. That pillar of fire was, I believe, a small version of these torches, these lamps of God. There are several billion saints that are gathered on that sea. These aren't little lights; these are big ones. They're powerful. I imagine they're in front of the throne. That's their standard position.

This is just a theory, but I believe that they move over the vast congregation and the fire of God. They may be 100 miles wide; I don't know. They have fragrance, music, and sound, and the fire of God moves across. The

reason I say all of that is because, when I worship, I say, “Lord, I want to touch one of those realms of fire.” I don’t mean it will look a certain way outwardly when someone looks at me. I’m talking about something that ignites me and tenderizes me on the inside. Fire tenderizes; it makes soft. It will tenderize your heart. Fire cleanses. Fire will cleanse away dirt and disease. Fire will change things. I mean, if you put a metal, steel rod in front of the fire long enough, that metal will turn into liquid. It will change you, it will ignite you, it will warm you. It will terrify you; it will fascinate you. The fire does all these things.

I ask the Lord for fire. Again, I’m not trying to be over-zealous. I’m not saying, “Lord, I want to touch one of those lamps.” That’s not my point. My point is this: whatever is true around the throne is true in a certain measure of the ministry released to us in this age. Whatever is true in fullness there, we receive it here in smaller measure. Whatever little it is, I want it. I want as much as God will give the human spirit in this age. Some of you have already determined that you want as much as God will give the human spirit in this age. What will He give a human in this age? That’s what you’re going for. Your goal isn’t to be the most on-fire person in your youth group; your goal is to be as on-fire as a human being can in this age.

I’m not trying to outdo anyone. I want to go to the limit of where a human can go in obedience to the Spirit. I know there’s a lot of fire around the throne. Whatever is happening around the throne in fullness can happen in part in this age: thunder, lightning, fire, sounds, music, and the light of Your glory. Even if it’s only in small portions, whatever that means, by the Holy Spirit, let me have it. The most that You’ll give me, I want it. I don’t want to stand before Him one day and have Him say, “I would have given you more if you had insisted on it. You didn’t insist on it. You didn’t stay with it. You were casual about it, so I gave you a casual portion.” I want to be ravenous in my hunger so that He gives me an extravagant portion to answer an extravagant hunger.

SEATED IN HEAVENLY PLACES WITH CHRIST

Paragraph C. We’ve already talked about the sea of glass. This is the verse where it has fire. It’s not a pond, it’s not a lake; it’s a sea filled with fire. Several billion saints are there. The fire of God is over them. Beloved, when we worship, we’re entering into that scene. It’s called being seated in heavenly places with Christ (Eph. 2:6).

Let’s look at paragraph D. The living creatures. Here the living creatures are seraphim. In Revelation 4, Isaiah 6, and Ezekiel 1, they’re cherubim. The word *seraphim*, which is plural for *seraph*, means “the burning ones.” Those who are nearest to God in the angelic realm are the most on-fire. They’re the ones most focused on the glory and beauty of God. Now in this age, I believe that God will give more fire. We want to be burning ones. We want to be inspired by the seraphim. I mean, they’re of a different order; they’re angelic beings, but whatever God gave them in fullness, we know He’ll give us a measure of that, an application of that, in this age. I want to be a fiery one; I want to be set on fire. I want to be locked into the throne.

THE LION, THE MAN, THE EAGLE, AND THE OXEN

Notice that the seraphim have four faces: the lion, the man, the eagle, and the calf—Ezekiel 1:10 calls them oxen. These show four different faces of God in redemption. It’s not just four ways that God touches us; it’s four ways we relate back to God. It’s also four ways we operate in the Spirit to one another.

Let’s go through them. Number one: the lion. There’s that warrior courage dimension of how God touches us and how He uses us to touch others. There’s the calf or oxen. That’s that persevering, servant spirit in the midst of the mundane and routine. We’re called to that dimension, and we walk in it. There’s the man, the dignity of relating deeply to God’s heart: because only humans relate to God from the family position of the bride, as His

sons and daughters. Human beings have the highest dignity of all the created order. They're made in the image of God, and they relate deeply to God's love. They're a part of the family in the way the angels are not.

The eagle soars in the Spirit. Some people want to do the eagle. They like the man, too—the relating to God in dignity at the family heart level. They like the lion with courage as long as the situation isn't scary. They like the idea of the lion. When the situation is a little unnerving, that sort of disappears a little. But most people don't like the calf, or the oxen, persevering in the midst of the mundane. "I want to be an eagle!"

The Lord says, "Those around My throne manifest all four dimensions of this relationship with Me."

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR ONLY ESCORT INTO THIS GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Roman numeral six. I'll end with this. John said, "I was in the Spirit and then I saw this vision" (Rev. 4:2, paraphrased). The Holy Spirit is our only escort into this greater knowledge of God. In other words, we have to walk with the Spirit to grow in understanding of this. It's not a matter of just studying the Bible. I've studied this over the years, and I've researched every place I can find. It's more than intellectual knowledge; it's encounter. We must cultivate a relationship with the Spirit in order to gain insight into this realm that I call "the beauty realm of God."

WE WORSHIP TO THE DEGREE THAT WE SEE

Paragraph B. The three songs in the Scriptures that are "worthy" songs say, "Worthy, thou art worthy," or, "Worthy is the Lamb." There are only three in the Bible. All three are in this scene in Revelation 4 and 5. From the whole Bible, all three are there. There's a reason. Worship is a response to revelation. We worship to the degree that we see. This is the place of the most extravagant worship, where the worthiness of God is declared; and it's the place of the greatest revelation, the beauty realm of God. You want to grow in worship, and grow in the revelation of the beauty of God in these two chapters.

Revelation 4. Amen and amen.

MINISTRY TIME

What I want to call you to is this: how much will God give the human spirit in this age? How much will He give a human? Beloved, I don't want more than the youth pastor, the pastor, or the prophet. I want as much as God will give a human. It's not about being known by someone else; it's about connecting at the deepest level possible. I want to call you to have a life vision, to live before Revelation 4. Get a life vision that you're going to go deeply in Revelation 4. How much do you want?

Let's just wait on the Lord for a moment. I believe the Lord is actually putting His hand on some of you tonight. He's saying, "I want you to be separated in a unique way, in an extravagant way, to be a Revelation 4 gazer on the beauty of God, like David was. I don't want you to do it a little; I want you to do it in an extravagant way. I have more to give than My people understand. Their vision is too low."

I want to say this in a really intense way. I hope everyone wants a little more of this. I hope everyone says, "I want to grow in this a little."

But I mean you're saying in your heart, "No, I think the Lord wants me to go after Revelation 4 and 5 in an extravagant focus for years; I think He wants me to live in that realm. Yes, I want to obey my assignment that

He gives me, but I want to have an unusual devotion. I want an unusual revelation. I want to live in the worthiness of the Lamb. I want that cry in my spirit, like they have in those two chapters.”

If that's you and you're saying, “No, I want this as a major calling of my life, not something I throw in with the other stuff”; if that's a new cry in your heart, I invite you to come up here and make that commitment to the Lord as we worship here.