



Message Transcript

Worship in Heaven

Jeff Schwarzentraub

- Lord, Jesus, thank you so much for who you are. Lord, We love getting the privilege of worshipping you. Thanks for that invitation. And Lord, we pray today as we hear your word proclaimed, Lord, that you'd be helpful to me that I would be clear on what you want said and Lord that you would do a work in each one of our hearts. And so Lord, we're asking you to speak directly to us so that we can hear you, and then by faith put into practice the very things that you show us to do. And so Lord, for what you're going to accomplish we're all gathered here today and for all that want to hear the Lord and respond to him the way that he would want you to respond, would you agree with me this morning by very loudly saying the word Amen? Amen.

A preview is a glimpse of the real thing. Advertisers spend millions of dollars giving previews so that they can give you a glimpse of what the real thing is going to look like. We see it when it comes to movies, they have movie previews. They give you just enough to whet your appetite so that you'll sit there and say "I gotta go experience the real thing." Advertisers are great when it comes to sporting events. They'll advertise it in such a way saying, "You don't want to miss this. "This is going to be one of the greatest games of all time," they give you just enough to whet your appetite so that you wanna come and experience even more. That's what advertisers do a great job at. And, when there's a preview of what's to come the purpose of the preview is to get you excited or wanting to be a part of what you see. Spiritually this is true as well.

As we're studying the Book of Revelation, for many people and for many commentators when it comes to the Book of Revelation, many people want to start in Revelation Six and following to talk about how's this all gonna unfold and who's the

Anti-Christ, and what's the mark of the beast, and what's the time and space for all these different things, and we'll get to that. But, what I find interesting is when we read about the Book of Revelation, that the revelation is the unveiling of the Lord, Jesus Christ and the first thing, the first one we see unveiled is Jesus Christ in all of his glory, and then we see what Jesus Christ loves.

We took a look at it seven different churches that Jesus Christ loves and wants to be a part of. And now, what we're going to take a look at in Revelation Chapter Four and Five, which in my opinion are the most underrated chapters of this entire Book is on the worship of the Lord, Jesus Christ in heaven and what worship looks like, what the components of worship are, and what they should be. Now, when we study the word of God, studying the word of God, studying theology is very different than any other academic enterprise that we engage in.

If you want to study biology you make observations, scientific observations, you make a study, you look at things you say, "Yep, that's what that means." If you study geology, you look at rocks and you say, "Okay, this is what we understand to be true about rocks." But, when you study the person and work of the Lord, Jesus Christ, you're studying theology. Theos, God the study of God, it's different. We're not studying God and making assessments about him. We're opening his word and letting him reveal who he is, make assessments about us, and then that should cause us to respond to him in a way that declares that he's worthy of our worship.

So every time we gather and hear the word of God proclaimed, or every time

you're studying the word of God, or you're reading the word of God, if we're doing it properly, it should elicit a response in us of our worship directed at God. And so today, what we're going to do is take a look at what worship in heaven looks like. It's a preview, it's not the whole thing. God couldn't give us the whole thing. There wouldn't be enough books that he could write to tell us everything that's going on in heaven, but he's going to give us a glimpse or a preview of what worship is going to be like when you arrive, and it's so fascinating because for me many times when I'm studying God's word during the week and I'm getting ready to proclaim it there's several times, where I either feel chastened by the Lord or need to repent of things, or I'm overwhelmed by the Lord, or I think this is really good, or the Lord shows me love.

As I'm studying Revelation Four and Five, here's the feeling I consistently am getting, I'm overwhelmed. I'm overwhelmed at the God that I serve and realize whatever view of God I have, it's just simply not big enough. And so, as I got ready to preach this week part of me was just like, I think I'm just going to stand up and read Revelation Four and say, "That's it," and go back and sit down, because I don't know that I can add a lot more than what I'm reading in this text because it's so overwhelming and so incredible as who our God is. And so, we can do this with any scripture that we read here but because of the nature of what we're reading to I'm going to invite you to stand as I read Revelation Chapter Four. And as I read that, I want you to look for the components of what you see in this worship. I want you to picture what it would be like if you were invited up to the throne room of God and then how you might respond to him. In Revelation, Chapter Four, starting in Verse One.

Here's what the Apostle John writes to us. "After these things I looked and behold "a door standing open in Heaven, "and the first voice which I heard "like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me said, "'Come up here and I will show you what must take place after these things.' "Immediately, I was in the spirit and behold, "a throne was standing in heaven and one sitting "on the throne, and he who was sitting was "like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, "and there was a rainbow around the throne, "like an emerald in appearance. "Around the throne were twenty-four elders "and upon the thrones, I saw twenty-four elders "sitting clothed in white garments "and golden crowns on their heads. "Out from the throne came flashes of lightning "and sounds and peals of thunder, "and there were seven lamps of fire burning "before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. "And before the throne, there was something "like a sea of glass like crystal and in the center "and around the throne, four living creatures "full of eyes in front and behind. "The first creature was like a lion "and a second creature like a calf, "and the third creature had a face like that of a man, "and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle, "and the four creatures each one of them having "six wings, are full of eyes around and within, "and day and night they do not cease to say, "'Holy Holy, Holy is the Lord. God, "the Almighty who was and who is and who is to come.' "And, when the living creatures give glory, and honor, "and thanks to him who sits on the throne, "to him who lives forever and ever, "the twenty-four elders will fall down before him "who sits on the throne "and he will worship him who lives forever and ever "and will cast their crowns before the throne saying, "'Worthy are you, our Lord and our God to receive glory, "and honor, and power for

you created all things "and because of your will they existed and were created." Amen and amen.

You may be seated. This picture that we get from the Apostle John is clearly from the Holy Spirit because none of us could make this stuff up. We wouldn't see this. This is not what we would picture in our own mind and really where we can talk about the components of worship here in Chapter Four, we're going to talk about four specific components of worship that God designed for worship to be.

And the first is this, God designed worship to be paramount. God designed worship to be paramount. Paramount means chief in importance or impact. It means supreme or preeminent. It means worship is central to everything that's going on in the throne room of God. Notice what happens in Verse Four. He says, "after these things, I looked "and behold a door standing open in heaven, "and the first voice which I heard like the sound "of a trumpet speaking with me said, "'Come up here and I will show you "what must take place after these things.'" Now we see this word twice, these words, after these things, after these things. If you wanna hold your finger there and flip back to Revelation, Chapter One and Verse 19 you really see the outline for the entire Book of Revelation. He is told, "therefore, write the things "which you have seen, and the things which are, "and the things which will take place after these things." He's told to write down what you see. What he saw was a vision of the resurrected Christ in all of his glory. Then he was asked to write down what you see which was what God is doing in the church. Then you see him write down, after these things. I take this text as from Revelation Four onward as future.

This is a picture of what is going to happen. This is a picture that's going to take place after God is finished with the things that he's currently doing presently here. And notice what John saw, "I looked "and behold a door standing open in heaven. What does that even mean? Like, I don't know how big the door was. I don't know what kind of door it was. I don't know what it looked like. Here's what I know about the door, it was open. There's going to be an invitation from one on the other side of the door saying, "Come up here." There's an invitation for John to come and worship.

Now, we have songs that people saying called "Knock, Knock Knocking on Heaven's Door," stuff like that. I've never seen the door. You've never seen the door. Apparently, there's a way into heaven. Jesus said when he was on the earth, he was the door. Jesus said he was the way, he was the truth, he was the light, he was the gate. Through Christ, we're going to be able to have access into his heavenly throne room Without Christ you'll never have access. What we're going to realize is that in Christ and in Christ alone can we have access to his throne room. That's why the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is so important, and it's simple as this, Jesus Christ, God's one and only son came to Earth on purpose to do one thing, to fulfill the law and die on a cross in your place for all your sins. That's why he came. He came because he knew there was no way you could get to God so he came to get you to God by believing in him. He died on the cross. He was buried for three days. He rose from the dead. When he arose, he showed himself as being the one and only Son of God. The only one who had conquered death permanently and begin to make invitation for all who would repent of their faith, repent of their sins, and by faith, trust him that

they could have life in his name.

Here's the thing, before we even talk about worship today, here's the question. Do you even know the Lord, Jesus Christ? Are you even saved? I didn't ask if he came to church. I didn't ask if you were a good person. I don't ask if you have a religion. I didn't ask if you're serving somewhere and I didn't ask if you're in a small group. I ask when was the time in your life that you recognized you were a sinner and you were desperate apart from Jesus and you turn from your sin and by faith, trusted Christ. If you haven't done that make this moment right now where you're seated, the moment that you can know the Lord, because everything we're about ready to talk about hinges on the fact that Jesus Christ is the Lord over all.

The reason John's being invited up is because he himself repented of his sins and trusted the Lord. He was a follower of the Lord, Jesus Christ during Christ's Earthly ministry. He followed the Lord all the way to his death and we know that he's in heaven with the Lord right now. John says, "after these things, I looked," he sees this door open in heaven, and the first voice which he had heard, "like the sound of a trumpet" speaking with me said, "Come up here."

You remember in Revelation 1:10, the voice he heard, the first voice he heard, like that of a trumpet. You're going to hear the word like all throughout this message. It was kind of like that. It was like that, like that. I mean, I picture like a Valley girl writing this. It's kind of like, you know, it was like it was like, it's like, and the reason it's like and the reason he's making similes and metaphors is because what he's seen, he can't

give Earthly words to describe the magnificence of what he's seen, and he saw this door open and he heard this voice like the sound of a trumpet, he didn't hear a trumpet. He heard the same voice he heard in Revelation 1:10 which we know is the Lord Jesus Christ and Christ's voice to him sounded like a trumpet, and here's what his voice said. "Come up here, come up here, and I will show you "what must take place after these things."

He's going to show John how the end is all going to be culminated and how it's all going to come together and he invites John up.

Now think about this. If you were invited into heaven what would you expect to see? What are you looking forward to when you get there? I mean, I've heard people talk about all sorts of things. The home I'm gonna get, right? Jesus said in John 14, "behold I go and prepare a place "for a you, and if were not so, "I would not have told you, but I go and prepare a place, "and because I go and prepare, I'm going "to come back and take you to where I am." So that's true. We can look forward to that, right?

Some people look forward, they have these ideas since we don't know, since no mind has seen, no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those in heaven. I had one of my young life leaders one time tell me about 30 years ago, he had pictures of this huge vat of chocolate that he's gonna be able to jump in and swim in for a hun years or something. I mean, we come up with all these ideas and we really don't know everything that Heaven is going to be like, we don't, but I'm gonna tell you one essential that you're gonna find when you get to heaven is the worship of the Lord. Because notice Verse Two, after John is invited up

by Jesus, Verse Two, "Immediately, I was in the Spirit," and what, "and beheld "a throne was standing in Heaven, "and one sitting on the throne."

What's central to everything that John sees? One that's on a throne and one that's in control of the whole world. It's the worship of our God. That's what's essential and whether you study Ezekiel, that's been to heaven, or Isaiah that got to see the glory of the Lord, or Paul that gives revelation to what he saw when he was in the body or out of the body, he doesn't know, whether it's John, what are they talking about? The centrality, or what's paramount or what's most essential is the worship of our God. It's the worship of God.

Many people think that evangelism is the most important thing that we can do here now and I wouldn't necessarily disagree if you understand the purpose of evangelism. You see, the purpose of evangelism, the end game of evangelism is worship. The end game of leading more people to Christ is that more people will worship the Lord, Jesus Christ. How you know that you actually got saved is you went from not worshipping Christ and because you're now in Christ there's a desire to worship God. If there never is a shift in your life from sinner to worshiper, in all likelihood, you haven't been saved. That God wants to see more people saved, God desires all people to be saved, why? So that they can worship him.

Worship is the central activity that is taking place in the heavenly realms. Now think about this. What do you see when you read this text? John said, "as he was in the Spirit," we're called pray in the Spirit, we're called to be in the Spirit, it's in the

realm of the Spirit. Clearly, John was taken to heaven in the Spirit which means in all likelihood, his body was still on Earth, his Spirit is in heaven and he's witnessing all of these great and marvelous things. And what's he see? He sees a throne standing in heaven and one sitting on a throne. But what you're gonna find as we go through this text, nothing's written about what the person on the throne looks like and nothing's written about the throne itself. But the first thing John sees is the throne.

Now here's my question. How big is the throne? What's it look like? I mean, it's as big as this platform? Is that how big it is? I mean, the more and more I studied this this week the more and more overwhelmed I got. 'Cause I started asking questions like doesn't the text doesn't say, but I was asking, okay, God, how big is the throne? Like what did John see?

Think about some of these texts. About the Book of Isaiah 66:1, Isaiah 66:1 Listen to what it says. Thus says the Lord "Heaven is my throne "and the earth is my footstool. "Where then is a house you could build for me "and where is a place that I may rest?" In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth, that's the universe? What's his footstool? The Earth.

Now this week I went skiing with my kids and every year we go back for the first time, we have to get refitted for boot sizes 'cause my kids are still growing. So you have to see is your foot the same size or has it gotten a little bigger? And inevitably, most of my kids grow a size or two every year, so we have to exchange boots, but they're not that big, they're kid's sizes. I mean, imagine if Jesus's foot, his left foot came and he set it down on Denver and it covered everywhere from the North side of

Denver all the way down through Castle Rock, and that's not how big his throne is, because the Earth is his footstool. Heaven's his throne. Now how big is that?

Whatever God created and however big the universe is, he's bigger than that. So whatever your view is of the throne room of God it's much smaller than what it actually is. So, when John comes through that door into heaven and he sees a throne, he sees a throne. He sees one that's bigger than the entire universe. He sees one that Spirit, he sees a throne standing. Now, why is it standing? Because the throne is unmovable. The throne is sovereign. The throne is working out everything in human history. The throne is in control and is bigger than anything John has ever seen before.

Think about some of these other verses. How about Psalm 11:4, Psalm 11:4 says it like this, "The Lord Is in his Holy Temple. "The Lord's throne is in heaven. "His eyes behold, his eyelids test, the sons of men. However big your view of God is, I'm telling you your view of God, It's not big enough. I Kings 8:28 tells us at the prayer of dedication when Solomon was dedicating the temple says to God, "But will God indeed dwell on the Earth? "Behold Heaven And the highest Heaven cannot contain you, "how much less this house, which I have built"

Whatever you think that you can build to contain God, it's just too small. God is Spirit. God stands outside of space and time. However vast the universe is that we find out someday everything that he created, he's more vast than that. John comes through an entry point into Heaven, sees a throne that's bigger than the universe, and there's one on the throne, what would be your response? What you would realize is what's

most central to everything and every activity going on in heaven is the worship of our God.

Let me say it another way. If you don't want to worship God now, here's a question, why would you ever want to go to heaven? The worship of God is central to everything that heaven is.

God was designed to be worshiped. You were designed and made to be a worshiper. And here's what we see in Revelation, 4:1-2. Now a couple of things and we'll spell this out in the coming weeks as we get into Revelation Six and Seven, there's some people that would say in Revelation, Chapter Four, this is where the church has been raptured, that every believer in Christ has been taken up into heaven and we know that we've been taken up into heaven because after Revelation, Chapter Three, we no longer see the word church until we get to Revelation 22:16. So you don't see that word anymore. So clearly we've been raptured. Some would go as so far to say, you know what, John is representative of the church, when John goes to heaven, we all go to heaven. I think that's an allegorization of the text. I don't think we would just read Revelation Chapter 4:1 and say, "Yep, that's the rapture church." To say that, well, because we don't see the word church, it's not for the church, is not very solid exegesis.

Think about this. In Matthew's Gospel God only uses the word church two times, In Matthew 16:18, where he talks about building his church and in Matthew 18:17, that's the only two times the word church is used in Matthew's Gospel. It's not used anywhere else.

Would we go be so bold as to say, well, nothing else in Matthew's gospel is for the church. Sermon on the Mount, that's not for the church. Great commission, that's not for the church. That was for somebody else. If we say if the word church isn't there it's not for the church then we also can't use Matthew, I'm sorry, Mark, Luke or John, II Timothy, Titus, I John, II John, or Jude. If you add all those books up, that's nine different books. That's one third of the New Testament we say is not for the church.

Nobody would be willing to say that. Even in the Book of Galatians, the word church or churches is only mentioned three times in the first chapter and chapters Two through Six doesn't mention the word church. We would never be so bold as to say, well, Galatians Two through Six that's not for the church. These same people that claim that because the church is not listed, that means it's gone, would never go so far as to say the same about Israel. The word Israel, the last time you see it mentioned is in Revelation 7:4, and you don't see it again till Revelation 22. Nobody would be so bold as to say, well, it's not about the Jews either, it's not about the church, I don't know what God's doing or who he's working with. There's nothing that you would see here, I think it's a strange reading in the text to say that the church was raptured here.

Now, many people, the majority of evangelical scholars would say that's when the rapture occurs. Hang on for a few more weeks. We'll talk about different positions of the rapture. How the rapture is gonna happen. When the rapture is gonna happen. We'll use the plain meaning of the text to show you what it is and you may have a different opinion than I do, and like we went on from the beginning and if you do, you're

just wrong and that's cool, but no, I'm kidding. The point is we can hold the different positions, but just let's make sure that the positions that we hold to are for Biblical reasons, and I see no way that I would read this text and say, "Oh yeah, the church is up in heaven." If John is representative of the church and that's why the church is in heaven, in John chapter 17:3 three, we see him carried away to the wilderness. So does the church go from heaven back to the wilderness? In chapter 10, does the church come back down to Earth so it can see the great angel of the Lord coming down? In Chapter 13, is the church back on the Earth so we can see the beast coming out of the sea. It's just bad exegesis. It's exegesis and I don't see the rapture there. Many people do, we'll talk about that as we go.

But here's what the text is really saying, that God is central and when it comes to worship, it's not a how, it's a who.

I mean think about how Satan works in churches. When people talk about worship and we say, "Hey, we worship at our church." What do most people ask? "What kind of worship do you guys do? "Is it traditional or contemporary?" Like what does that even mean, like compared to what First century, or 1980, Or what is contemporary? What is traditional? Does it mean you're supposed to have musician or not musicians, can you worship acapella? Can you, there's a variety of ways to worship but there's only one that can receive the worship and the purpose of worship is giving glory and honor to the Lord, Jesus Christ, who's the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, and that's what this text is pointing out.

And so John is invited up into heaven and the first thing he sees is a throne, and

then he sees one sitting on the throne and what he's learning is that the worship of God is paramount, it's chief in importance.

The second thing he's going to understand about worship is the second component in this text, which is this, God designed worship to be awesome, awesome. That doesn't sound like a theological term. It's the only place we can really use the word awesome and be authentic. Awesome means causing or inducing awe, inspiring an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, or fear. God is awesome.

I grew up in the eighties, y'all. We used awesome for everything. What do you think of that residence? Awesome. What do you think about food? Awesome. Did you go to the game? Yeah, it was awesome. Did you see that movie? Awesome, everything was awesome. Biblically, awesome is God who is worthy of all of your reverence and praise. Awesome means when you experience God you will be in awe, fear, reverence, joy, everything all of this, you can't describe it. It's the one word that we have that says, it's indescribable, it's overwhelming. He's amazing. He's beyond words. He's awesome.

You say, well, how do you say that? Well, notice what he sees, "And he who was sitting "was like a jasper stone and, and a sardius in appearance, "and there was a rainbow around the throne "like an emerald in appearance." I mean, he can't even describe what God looks like. The only thing he could talk about is the colors that he sees because it's so overwhelming. I mean, he sees this stone, this jasper stone that we read about in Revelation 21:11 that's this clear, transparent stone of some kind,

many scholars think it's reflective of a diamond in nature, clean and pure, and then you have this sardius in appearance which is ruby red, and then guess what you have. There was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald and appearance. Remember rainbows at all? Remember anything about rainbows in this series?

Remember all the way back in the part of the alpha series in Genesis Chapter Nine, where after the flood what did God do, what did he provide in the sky as a sign of his faithful promise? What do we see? We see a rainbow because God wanted to remind the people every time you see a rainbow, it will be a reminder to you and to me that I will never ever flood the Earth again and destroy it that way. What does seeing a rainbow around the throne of God mean in this text at the end of time.

It means God is always faithful to the promises he makes. Isn't it awesome that around God's throne he's not gonna get upset someday and be like, "I'm done with them. "I'm flooding them after all." No, he's got a rainbow around the throne reminding him of this and all John can see is color. This majestic color, it's got green, and clear, and red and all these things going on and different interpreters have tried to say, well, the white's for purity, and the red's for judgment and the green's for mercy and, okay, I mean the Bible doesn't tell us what they're for. I mean, all we're doing is making stuff up. I think what we're saying is God is so indescribable that John can only describe God with colors that he sees. He's beyond words. "I can't tell you, he's just amazing, he's awesome."

Then what does he see? He says "Around the throne were twenty-four thrones "and upon the thrones, I saw twenty-four elders sitting "clothed in white garments and

golden crowns on their head." So who are the twenty-four elders? You guys know know it. It's pretty obvious from the text. We don't know. We can make speculation and it really falls into two different categories. Some think that they're people because they're wearing crowns. Some think it represents the ideal church. Some believe it represents the 12 apostles as well as the 12 tribes of Israel coming together as representation of everything. Some believers it's the raptured church who's there, that those twenty-four elders represent the raptured church. On the other side, some people believe that they're angels, that there are heavenly beings, that they're part of God's divine counsel.

As we go through the Book we'll get into this more and more. I tend to take the latter view that these are angels or angelic beings that are around the throne, and let me tell you this if you disagree with me, I'm totally okay with that.

There's good reason to leave a church. There's bad reasons to leave a church. Leaving the church because we disagree on who the twenty-four elders are, that's a bad reason to leave the church, okay? "I'm not going there anymore. "They don't even understand the twenty-four elders." You can have your own opinion about who they are. Even the best scholars that I've read differ in opinion. That's okay. We're not going to die on a hill for this.

But, I think there are some reasons why I tend to go towards their angelic beings and not the church, and we'll get into some of them as we continue to go. But, if you look in Revelation Chapter Five, what we're going to study next week, It's really

interesting because in Verse Eight, and following it says, "when he had taken the Book," that's Jesus, "the four living creatures "and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, "each one holding a harp and golden bowls of incense, "which are the prayers of the saints." You're going to see in Revelation 8:3 that's an angelic job to take the prayers of the saints to Jesus. The twenty-four elders are always linked with the four living creatures and other angelic beings. And, they're distinct from the redeemed because even when they sing their song they sing a song to God, and they say "Worthy are you to take the book "and to break its seals for you were slain, "and purchased for God, with your blood, "men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, "you have made them to be a kingdom and priest to our God, and they will reign upon the Earth." What's their worship saying? God, you said people, God, you delivered them. They're not saying God you redeemed us, and God you delivered us. They're praising God for what he's done in the world and what he's going to accomplish and what he's going to bring to fulfillment. So I see 'em more as heavenly beings of some sort.

Also, you'll see in Revelation Chapter 7:9-10 they're grouped with other angelic beings. And, in Revelation 7:13, when John sees the great multitude come out of the great tribulation and one of the twenty-four elders asks him, "Do you know who these are?" "And he's like, sir, you know." Sir or Lord is not how we would approach each other in heaven. We're brothers and sisters in Christ. It seems that he is giving reverence and honor to some of these. We see angels wearing white garments in John 20:12, Matthew 28:3, Acts 1:10, Mark 16:5, and what we read about in the Book of

Colossians is rank and order of what God created, For the Lord created all things, things visible and invisible, whether Thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities all things were created by him and through him, that God created all of this. And, while we don't get a full understanding of all the dimensions of angelic beings and what they look like, it seems to fit what God's done. Some people say it can't be angels 'cause they're wearing crowns. But you'll see, even in the Book of Revelation in Revelation 6:2, when you see the Anti-Christ going out to make war, you see him wearing a crown. You see the locusts in Revelation 9:7, who are really demons wearing crowns. You see a woman in Revelation 12, one wearing a crown, and you see Jesus in Revelation 19 and another places, he's wearing a crown. Wearing a crown doesn't depict that you have to be a person. So I tend to go that way. I also look at the Psalms in the Old Testament and Psalm chapter 82:1, it says "God takes his stand in his own congregation. "He judges in the midst of the rulers." It could be translated gods or judges. And, in Psalm 89:7, we read "A God, greatly feared "in the counsel of the Holy ones and awesome "above all those who are around him.

Now, what does all this mean? It simply means that there are angelic beings that we can not describe that are around the throne giving worship and honor to God, in the same way he set up the priesthood in the Old Testament, I believe it's in I Chronicles, 23 and 24, with twenty-four orders of priests, perhaps, perhaps, you know it's similar to what he had already set up in heaven and that what they were doing on the Earth, "Let it be done on earth as it is in heaven," perhaps he set it up that way, again, no matter who you see the twenty-four elders being, they're doing worship of our God, I

see them as angelic beings 'cause I see that as being most aligned with scripture and what the text of God would teach. But notice what they see. They have crowns on their heads. They're clothed in white garments and notice what happens in Verse Five. You think that's awesome enough? "Now out of the throne comes flashes "of lightening and sounds and peals of thunder."

Okay, when you came to worship today for those either been here before you're aware of how we lead worship, you're aware of the instruments we have. How would you feel if coming out from the platform were bolts of lightning and claps of funder. Don't cheer, You'd be writing me an email saying there's way too many decibels. I know I get 'em. I agree with you sometimes. Whatever it is, it's intimidating and it's loud. I mean, what we see coming from the throne we see God's terror, and every time we see flashes of lightning, peals of thunder, and all that in the Book of Revelation. we're going to see God's judgment. Later, you're going to see an angel put a sensor in there and cast it to Earth. We're seeing that God is Holy, he's righteous. He's good, he judges.

Now picture who you are. If you're John you've been taken up into Heaven, Jesus says, "Come up here." He gets up there, he sees the throne bigger than he's ever seen, one sitting on the throne. He sees all these colors. He's got around this throne, twenty-four elders. They're all sitting on thrones and they're all going down on their face, and while they are out from the throne comes flashes of lightning and peals of thunder. What are you gonna do? Probably not this, "This is pretty cool." I mean, it's engaging. It's getting our attention that this God is worthy of being worshiped. "And

there were also seven lamp-stands of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God," and we talked about this in Revelation I, I'm interpreting that as seven as the number of completion of the spirits of God, of being the completed spirit, the Holy Spirit of God right there around the throne. "And before the throne, there was something "like a sea of glass, like crystal." It didn't say there was a sea of glass. It didn't say it was crystal. It said I saw something that looked like a sea of glass. It was like crystal. I mean, picture the lake you're getting ready to water ski on, it's just calm I mean, with all of this judgment going on, there's a calm in front of God. I mean isn't that awesome He doesn't even know how to describe it. It's like this calm crystal. It's like this sea of glass. It's amazing. So all these things are going on and yet it's calm all at the same time. That's who our God is. And, if that's not awesome enough, check out this next passage, "And in the center "and around the throne four living creatures "full of eyes in front and behind."

What I'm not a big sci-fi person. My family is, like all the Star Wars, all the Harry Potter all that kind of stuff. I mean, what would you think today? I mean, you come in When to worship here at BRAVE church and all of a sudden you see four flying creatures all over the room with eyes all over them. I mean, and you're got lightning and thunder coming out from the throne and there's a calm in front of it, and there's all these different colors and there's a rainbow I mean, you'd be in awe. You would think to yourself, that's awesome. I mean, whoa, that's what it's going to be like to worship our God.

What is coming and the worship we're going to experience in heaven is beyond

anything that we've ever experienced here. And John, as he's describing this, he keeps saying it's kind of like this, and there were that, and there was noise and there was lights, and there were flashes and thunder, and there's these creatures floating all around these angelic beings, and it's too hard to describe. See God's worship, he designed it to be paramount. He designed it to be awesome.

But notice what else God designed? God designed the worship of him to be transcendent, transcendent, transcendent means going beyond ordinary limits, surpassing, exceeding, superior, supreme, great, majestic. He's saying this, whatever you think worship is and the best worship you've ever been a part of, it's way better than that, Like all the time it's better than that. He's going to go ahead and describe these creatures, notice what he says, "The first creature was like a lion, "and the second creature like a calf, "and the third creature had a face like that of a man, "and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle."

What? I mean, you get a picture here that this is just overwhelming and they have eyes all over them and they're flying around. I mean, if you see Ezekiel's vision, you'll see he saw similar things. He had a slightly different picture. If you see Isaiah's vision in Isaiah Chapter Six you're gonna see that he was ruined by what he saw. Now, notice these creatures, there's these four creatures flying around and the four living creatures, each one of them had six wings are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night, they do not cease to say "Holy Holy, Holy is the Lord God, "the Almighty who was and who is and who is to come." I mean this is glorious.

Now picture how big the throne is. We don't know but whatever we think it is, it's bigger than that and God's on his throne, and then there's these four creatures, one like a lion, one like a calf, one had the face like a man, and one looked like an eagle, and they're all floating around with eyes all over them, going all through this, and they have six wings floating around. What are you gonna do? I mean, when Isaiah saw something similar that had six wings with two, they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew, because no one could see the face of God and live. So, they were covering themselves because God is so Holy and they were covering their eyes because God's too Holy, and they were flying.

Can you imagine worshiping in an environment like that? I mean, even if we tried our best to put a picture like that on the big screens during worship, I can't imagine how many emails I'd get. "What in the world was that beast flying around for?" "Just getting you ready for heaven, bro. "It's going to blow you away." See, most of us think we're going to enter heaven and there's this throne room a little over there like if you want to go into a church, you can go to church, but I'm here for the chocolate and I'm here for the music, and I'm here for all that fun stuff. The throne room's central. The throne room is it. The throne room is paramount. The throne room is awesome. The throne room is transcendent. The throne room is bigger, better than anything that we could ever picture.

Now being human, most of us like to find out, who's the lion, who's the calf. Who's the man, who's the eagle? How did they get there? So some have worked really hard at trying to figure this out and some say it's representative of the four gospels, in

Matthew Jesus was King. So that's the lion. In Mark, he was a servant, that's the calf. In Luke he was the Son of man, that's the face of the man. In John he was the Son of God, that's represented by the eagle. Okay, I really don't think John was reading through the Gospels trying to depict Jesus in that way. I think he was just reporting as to what he saw. Some have gone further and said each of these beings represents a certain characteristic of our God. That being the lion that represents majesty and omnipotence, the calf represents faithful labor and patience, This one made me laugh out loud, man represents intelligence. Of course, we'd say that. The eagle represents the greatest bird, or supreme sovereignty, we don't know what they represent.

We know who they represent and we know what their heart is when they're representing him, it's to give him worship and call out that he's Holy. The best commentary I saw on this was a person that he was saying that what this really is representative of is that all creatures were made to worship God, and that one day we're all gonna worship God.

Do you remember when Jesus entered Jerusalem and people were telling him to be quiet because everybody was quoting the Psalms, "Blessed is he "who comes in the name of the Lord," calling him God, and the Pharisees told Jesus, "Shut them up. Don't let them talk like that. And Jesus said what? "Even if they keep quiet, the rocks will cry out. "Bless be the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

You can't suppress the worship of God. He's going to be worshiped by everyone in creation. We're even gonna see a picture of a little bit of this next week, where we're

going to see that everyone in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth will bow their knee and claim that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Everybody's going to worship him, because he demands our worship and it's transcendent. Here's the problem that we have on our side of Heaven. we have a wrong view of worship. We think worship is an act based upon what we can see around us. So if somebody invited you to a worship night at their church and said, "Hey why don't you come worship with us?" Most of us would picture a band, maybe some screens, or maybe we'd have a song sheet or hymnals that we would sing with, nobody would describe what we just read. "Hey, come to our church. "God's on the throne. "You won't even see him. "There'll be flashes of light, peals of thunder. "It's super loud. "There's all these angelic beings all "around the throne that are falling down on their face. "You'll be scared to death, but it's totally exhilarating "and awesome, just come, I can't even describe it." That's not what you would tell people.

And, here's the challenge for worship in our culture and I just want to talk to the men just for a second because I need to, because for many people in our culture that are men, that are masculine they think that worship is a feminine activity. I remember preaching in North Carolina once when I got asked to speak at a men's conference there and the wife of the guy who invited me when we were having dinner before the conference, she said these words, "I'm so glad you're here because you know, "we as women are so much more spiritual "and it's easier for us to connect with God than men." And I didn't throw up at the time or anything like that, but I was feeling a bit nauseous. And I said, "That's because we have the wrong definition of worship."

We think that to worship, we need to change who we are, sometimes as men, in order to worship. Now God wants you to be fully male and worship him. God wants you to be fully female and worship him. You worship him however you want. You don't need to be an artist. You don't even need to wear skinny jeans to worship the Lord. You can worship God and be all male. I was sent a YouTube not too long ago from a guy that served our country. I'm thankful for his service and he sent me these US Marines that were singing "The Days of Elijah." Remember that song from the 80's? That was contemporary baby. It was awesome, I loved that song. still get moved by it, but these guys were singing as Us Marines arm-in-arm, hugging each other, doing the song motions and singing, , and all this kind of stuff. And I was like, I had tears in my eyes and goosebumps, like that's how men worship.

And here's all I'm saying to you guys. Listen, listen, listen, listen, men, listen, ladies I'll get to you in a second. But men listen, your husbands your daddies, your granddaddies, your leaders your single guys that want a wife, you're either going to be the head of your home or you are the head of your home, and that's not enough authority position to take lightly. That means you should be leading your family in worship. If your wife wants to know what worship looks like, amen. Praise God for that. If your wife wants to know what worship looks like, if your kids wants to know what worship looks like, if your grandkids want to know what worship looks like, they should just watch you. You say, "Well, I can't sing very well." Then make a joyful noise. God gave you a bad voice, give it back to him, he loves it.

All I'm saying is for many of us who's men, I don't really raise my hands, but you

were at a football game and you would at a concert and you would have a police officer said, "Stop right there, put your hands up." You'd go. Even those of you that are incapable could do that. But, why is it when we get to church, we start thinking, well that's the activity that just kind of warms us up for the preaching, and that's good, I'm hoping to feel good.

Listen, listen, worship is good engagement to hear the word of God, but worship is not warming up for the preaching, good preaching causes us to respond in worship. When you get to heaven, don't start looking for who the preachers are that are going to be there, they're not going to be there, and the ones that are going to be there are going to be on their face worshipping. I'm not looking forward to get to heaven, to preach. I'm looking forward to getting to heaven, to worship. Worship's the end game. It's what we want to do. You say, "Well, I'm just not really into that." I'll tell you this. If you give worship your best effort, you will be into it and God's calling all of us to do that.

Women, the reason I'm not picking on you is because I find that in churches, women you do a pretty good job of this automatically. You engage, you do this, men, we've been tricked and duped into thinking that singing is not for us. Singing is totally for you. Just ask your wife. She'd love you to sing her a song sometime, because when you sing and when you worship it's giving an expression, that's deeper than just saying the words, and whether you're a man or a woman, or a boy or a girl, what does God want? He wants you to experience his transcendence and worship, and here's

what I know. I can't make God show up, quote, unquote, I can't make God come and if we do this, then God will.

But I do, I do believe that when a group of saints gathers together, whether it's a small number or a large number, and that group of people says, "God we just wanna to give you worship, "and we'll abandon ourselves to you "'cause you're so worthy and we want "to become less of that so that You can become great, and you get a group of people that will do that. The manifest presence of God says I want to be a part of that, let's go. and that's what we want our church to be.

And, we experience that here. It doesn't mean that every time we worship we get goosebumps and we're all tingly every time, but I do believe we can experience more of God if we give him our whole heart when we worship. I do believe at First Tuesday when we gather and sing praises and worship to him more as accomplished than anything else we do as a church family, and that's what God wants, he wants us to experience his transcendence. Think about this "Four living creatures, each one of them having six wings "all full of eyes around and within, "and day and night, they do not cease." They don't stop.

God's worthy of worship all the time. Holy Holy, Holy, you're like no one else. You're the Lord. You're the Almighty who was, and who is, and who is to come. You stand outside of time and space before the world began you were there. After this age is done, you'll be there. You dwell on the present. That's who you are and that's why God gives us the fourth and final component in this section, that he wants worship to be this, satisfying. God designed worship to be satisfying.

Now, why is that important? 'Cause even when some of you are hearing the theology of this, you're like, "Yeah, I get it. "Maybe I should sing a little more. Maybe I should raise my hands. Maybe I should clap. I'm telling you, there's no greater satisfaction in life than the worship of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Let me say it another way, there's nothing in this life that can satisfy you person or thing like the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Notice this, Verse Nine, "And when the living creatures "give glory, and honor, and thanks to him "who sits on the throne to him who lives "forever and ever," what happens? The twenty-four elders will fall down "before him who sits on the throne "and will worship him who lives forever and ever "and will cast their crowns before the throne saying, "'Worthy are you our Lord and our God to receive glory "and honor, and power, for you created all things "and because of your will, they existed and were created.

What happens? When the four living creatures worship causes the twenty-four elders, those angelic beings to fall down, worship him, and what do they do? They cast their crowns before him. What does that mean? It means any honor that may have been bestowed upon them, they're giving the honor back to the one who gave it to them. It gives them great joy to say God, everything that I have and every good thing in my life, it's yours. You have it. It's for you.

I haven't done any research on this, but I'm guessing guessing that the band "Casting Crowns," it's a great contemporary worship band, this is probably where they

got that verse for their name of their band, casting crowns, giving glory to God, giving honor to him, that everything you have belongs to him and they're getting great satisfaction in doing this. Why? Because the true worship of God can satisfy you like nothing else can satisfy you.

Singles, listen to me. You don't want to get married. I hope you get married. I'll pray for you to get married by I'm gonna tell you your marriage can never be fully satisfied unless your heart for Jesus is worshiping him. You want kids, that's great, I think it's great that you have kids, but I'm telling you without the worship of God, your kids won't satisfy you. And that job you're looking for, it's gonna be like the perfect career, that won't satisfy you. And the money that you need, won't satisfy you either. And that dream house, and that car, and all those different things, they can't satisfy you at the deepest level, like the Lord Jesus Christ.

You were made to worship and if you don't worship the Lord, you'll worship someone or something else.

See, when I read this last part of this section of Revelation Chapter Four, where it says "Worthy are you our Lord and our God to receive glory, "and honor, and power for you created all things, "and because of your will, they existed and were created." It's giving full allegiance to him.

Unlike our generation which is similar to Jeremiah's generation, in Jeremiah 2:27 we read Jeremiah who's talking about his generation of people and who they worship. He said, "As who say to a tree, you are my father, "and to a stone, you gave me birth,

"for they turned their back to me and not their face, "but in the time of their trouble "they will say 'Arise and save us." They're worshiping the trees. They're worshiping stone. they're worshiping inanimate things and then when things get difficult in our life, like God help me, God save me, and he's like, why did you turn your back on me? Why do you want me now? You didn't want me before. How come I didn't get your allegiance and worship sooner?

Now you might say, well, I wouldn't ever worship stone. I wouldn't say a tree gave me birth, give me a break. No you would not. But the question is, who do you worship? Are you seeking to worship God? Or are you seeking to be worshiped?

See, I think if we were to read Revelation 4:11 into our culture, many would people people would say "Worthy. are you, oh, home, "to receive glory and honor and power, "for you provided me great happiness, "and I will give you my money to decorate you "in a way that brings me great resources and happiness. "I love you home. "Worthy are you oh, car, to receive all my worship "because you get me from point A to point B, "and not only do you do that but you made me look "really good while I'm riding in it. "Worthy are you oh, food for you satisfy "some of my deepest longings. "Worthy are you, oh sex. "Worthy are you, oh alcohol. "Worthy are you, oh drugs. "Worthy are my a favorite athlete. "Worthy are you my favorite politician? "Even though I don't know you "and you really don't do anything personal for me. "I want to tell you how great you are." And what about this one, "Worthy are I. "Worthy am I to receive glory, and praise, "and honor, for God created me so that you would worship me. "I want you to tell me how awesome I am. "I want you to tell me how good I am. "I

want to feel good based upon your praise of me." I mean, isn't how would the text would read if some of us were a little more honest?

See. the purpose of worship is that we would put Jesus as paramount, what we'd make him central, that we'd be engaged with the awesomeness and transcendence of his worship and that it would be satisfying to us because truly when Jesus Christ is Lord of our life and we're giving him praise, and glory, and honor regardless of circumstances, here's what we know.

Presently, God dwells with me, and he's taking care of me, and he's saved me from my sin for all eternity. He's prepared a place for me that I'm going to spend with him forever, and he is good, good, good, And, he's merciful and kind and faithful to all generations, and I love him with my whole heart, and my circumstances are so temporary, that all I want to do is worship and honor him.

Friends, Jesus Christ is worthy. He's worthy of your worship. He's worthy of your adoration. He's worthy of your praise. I wish I could say that from the moment I trusted Jesus Christ. I knew how to worship. I didn't. It's still a growing area in my life where I want to bring God more glory, honor, and praise. I knew how to worship sports. I knew how to worship athletes. I knew how to worship successful people. I knew how to worship money. All those things came pretty natural to me. It was unnatural to learn how to become a worshiper of God.

I remember being at a Promise Keepers Conference hearing 62,000 men worshiped the Lord. I'd never heard anything like that before and I remember leaving

the group that I was with, because we're in a big football stadium and walking to the other side, down on the ground hoping nobody would put like a camera on me. If I got too serious, I didn't want anybody see me but it was the first time I ever worshiped, saying, "I'm gonna raise my hands. "I'm gonna go down on my face. "I'm just going to worship 'cause this is so awesome," And that began to change my life.

Worshiping is not just in community. You can worship alone. Your lifestyle is a worship of God, but the way I wanted to end our service today is by giving God worship. I'm hoping that we'll stay here and give him worship and that we'll sing loudly to him, and that you wouldn't just walk away, and you wouldn't just leave, and yet you've got many other things that you can do today, I totally realize that, but if we can just give God a couple of songs as our worship team guides us to the throne and we say, God, you are worthy. You increase, well decrease. God, you are the one that we want to worship. God, you are the one that we want to praise and men you lead this, it's not the worship team's job to lead, it's our job to lead.

We're the body of Christ. Men, women, boys, and girls, we're singing to the Lord. We're preparing ourselves for that day when the door of heavens opened and we enter that and we praise him with every single thing and every fiber of our being. Amen. And so, as we prepare ourselves, would you stand?

Lord, we've heard your word today. We've seen what is going on in your throne room and what's going to be going on in your throne room. We're amazed Lord, It's awesome. Lord, It's transcendent. Lord, it's paramount. And Lord, we know it's satisfying and you invite us in, you say, "Come and worship me." So Lord now with our

whole hearts, with everything we have, with every fiber of our being, we focus entirely upon you, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords for the salvation that we share in Christ Jesus, and we give you all the glory, and we give you all the honor. We give you all the praise because you and you alone are worthy and it's in Jesus Christ's matchless name that we pray. Amen and amen. Can we give God praise this morning?