

Our Mission:

*To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus*



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

John makes a shift in chapter 4. In the first three chapters he writes to the seven particular churches. Now the vision expands. We need to remember as we read through John's Revelation, that he is writing while in a Roman prison, and desires to get his letter past the censors to the churches facing persecution. So, he must utilize code language that is understood by his readers but seen as innocuous by his guards. For example, in verses 6 and 7 John provides a description of the four gospels without naming them. The result is that John is encouraging the churches to remain true to God's Word as nothing the world might offer compares in glory to the God revealed in Christ.

Theology Connection:

Some might say that John's vision is of a promised day when there will be a rapture and tribulation and ultimately the destruction of this world. Historical theology, however, would suggest that John is presenting a contrast to the reign of Caesar. As glorious as Caesar's throne room may be, God's is greater. As proclamations will be sent throughout the empire that Caesar is Lord, the four Gospels give witness to Jesus as the true servant Lord. While the empire may revolve around Caesar, the universe revolves around Christ. The question is, to whom do we offer our allegiance?

Application:

Revelation is a reminder that our allegiance to the Gospel will be challenged and tested. The promise of Revelations is that no matter what the world says, God wins, Love wins. So, when we look around and shake our heads at what is happening, John wants us to keep our focus upon the good that God might be doing in disguise. Ultimately, it is God alone who gives us the keys to life abundantly.

The Text: Revelations 4: 1-11

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also, in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

"Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come."

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

ADULT

The world can be a scary place. We need only to catch the daily news feed and find ourselves wondering, 'what is going on?' Yet, the Book of Revelations is intended not to scare us into believing, but to give us comfort knowing that no matter how we perceive what is happening in the world, God has not abandoned us. God is the one who can take tragedy and turn it into triumph.

YOUTH

Please read revelations 4:1-11

Did you notice that almost everything in these verses revolves around the throne? The writer is trying to get across the beauty of the throne. He is painting a picture.

The author describes creatures in front of the throne. Do you find it interesting that the author makes a point to say each creature has eyes on the front and the back of their head? Almost like, they are God's surveillance, like our ring doorbells we have at our doors.

This chapter is an open door into reality, the way things really are. But our eyes get blinded, and we get distracted. Think of this as an open door to a vision that is above and beyond us.

Let us pray,
Dear God, thank you for revealing who you really are.

CHILDREN'S

Have you ever wondered about heaven? Where is it? What's it like? Who lives there? The Bible talks a bit about heaven and God has given us some hints about what it will be like. However, a lot of it is still a mystery to us because God is still preparing a place for us, that is what Jesus told His disciples before he went up to heaven. He said he was preparing a place for us with many rooms. Which makes me think, if God created the entire universe in six days, how amazing will heaven be if He's taking longer than that?! Think of a beautiful mountain, waterfall, or even the prettiest flower that you've ever seen. Now think of a place even more amazing than that, I think that's what heaven must be like. God can use whatever he wants gold, diamonds, and amazing things that we haven't even seen here on earth! Maybe that's why the Bible doesn't give us a complete description of heaven, because we wouldn't even be able to understand how amazing and beautiful it really is!

1. What did you learn from this story?
2. What is your favorite part of the story?
3. Draw a picture of what you think heaven will look like.

Remember:

Heaven is a wonderful place where we can be with God. He loves us even more than anyone and promises to take the best care of us!

Pray:

Dear God,

Thank You for giving us the promise of eternal life in heaven with You. We love You with all our hearts!

In Your name we pray. Amen.