

August 8, 2021

Revelations 4:1-11

Children's message: this morning's passage is very wild. Almost like an episode of Rick and Morty. Yet still more wilder than Rick and Morty could be. So what did we just listen to and where did our minds go?

Well St. John is actually describing what he saw take place in Heaven. He saw the heavenly liturgy take place in God's throne room. John was called or invited to be in the most Holy of Holy places in Heaven. To be in the presence of God. Not even Moses, Isaiah or Ezekiel were invited up to Heaven to experience this. Yet John was and he recorded his experience for us today.

John saw God sitting on His throne while the seraphim flew around Him worshipping Him. They were the living creatures in verses 7-10. They have huge wings and many eyes. So, that they can see everything. They are constantly praising God with the words, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come." It is interesting that the Prophet Isaiah records the exact words in Isaiah 6:3.

Then there is the twenty four elders. These are the twelve elders from the Old Testament and the twelve disciples of Jesus. They too are worshipping God. They are doing it in a physical way by prostrating themselves before God. Think of doing a burpee without the jump at the end. The whole body is involved in worshipping God. Prostrations

signify humility before God. The seraphim and elders worship God but in different ways. Their intent is to praise God and worship Him.

This passage reminds us that God is still in charge and in control. Regardless of how great we think we are. God still sits on His throne in Heaven. It has been said that our altars are His earthly thrones in our churches. Both the seraphim and elders remind us to praise and worship God whenever we can. We can do this either with words spoken out loud in prayer or in our heads silently. We can also praise God physically with our bodies. The best way to do this is to just live good lives which turns our lives into living prayers. We can pray daily with our lives and not even know it.

Adult's message: This is my first venture preaching on revelations. I will try to keep things on the rails and stick to the more traditional interpretations of the book. Keep in mind that this is a historical document expressing the beliefs and thoughts of the early church in a Roman occupation. This piece of scripture is written in code because of Roman censorship. They were checking the mail back then too. For the first century Christian this book would make sense in their situation.

One scholar said to look at Revelations as the past, present and future playing out as one reality. As one point of time in eternity where all time comes together. This will help to understand it a little bit better. Also keep in mind that the symbolism's meanings may have changed over the past two thousand years.

St. John starts chapter four as if he was writing from inside of an apocalyptic tornado. He records end time events that whirl by him in a

flash. There are many Old Testament references and even expansions on some. They point to the future but concern the present. The single open door in the vaulted firmament is a reference to Genesis 1:7-8. “ So, God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome the sky.” This allows John to have visions into the depths of all the mysteries. Most importantly he has a direct vision of the Celestial Throne of God. The same place where God designed creation before He created it. This is pre creation and post creation at the same time.

Since earthly events have their origins in the heavens, true insights into history can only happen from this vantage point. John is invited up to this vantage point by God. Who tells him to “come up”. This does remind us of Moses who was invited by God to climb Mt. Sinai. To have an experience with God. John is invited to enter God’s sanctuary. The throne room of Heaven. I wonder if Moses saw that on Mt. Sinai. He certainly does not describe it as John has.

Revelation is seen as a continuation of Genesis. It is the new beginning and the fulfillment of the Old Testament Genesis. That is why there are so many cross references to it. The Gospel of John contains a creation story in the first chapter mirroring the Book of Genesis. It is no surprise that John continues this writing style in Revelations.

God is often seen in biblical visions as sitting on a throne. John continues the image because it symbolizes the sovereignty of God as creator and lord. Ezekiel wrote of it also. Ez 1:26, “ And above the dome over their heads there was something like a throne, in appearance like sapphire, and seated above the likeness of a throne

was something that seemed like a human form.” The image of the throne appears forty times in Revelation. It was a very important image for the first century Christians. The Throne will be described as the “Great White Throne” and later as the Throne of Judgement. In this passage it is surrounded by a rainbow. The sign of God’s everlasting covenant with us and as a reminder that He will not judge us as He did in the flood. The rainbow reminds us that mercy triumphs over judgement.

These beautiful images in these passages reminds us that God is still in control. He has everything in the palm of His hand. He is Our Lord, the Creator of the universe and most importantly we are His children. We are to draw comfort from this in difficult times. Just as the early church did during their difficult persecutions. Have we been merciful with others during these difficult times that we have just come through? Are we continuing to be merciful in this new reality? Pastor D