

Revelation 4: Pictures of God

Attention

- 1) Who is God? What is He like? How are we to picture Him?
 - a. God is not a man, nor can an image of Him correctly capture His essence and glory.
 - b. Attempts to compress the glory of God into a tangible form are inevitably idolatrous and forbidden.
- 2) Nevertheless, God has revealed Himself to us so that we may know who and what He is as we worship Him.
 - a. It is not a physical appearance that we must visualize, but an understanding of His nature and majesty.
 - b. Revelation 4 gives us a picture of God seated on His throne that can help us understand the Lord better.

I. God is Sovereign

A. *God's Authority*

- i. The focal point in Revelation 4 is the throne of God; the vision emphasizes His sovereignty. **2**
 - a) This message was critical for those anticipating organized persecution from a world empire.
 - b) Though men may oppose the gospel, God is the absolute ruler, the Lord and King of kings.
- ii. No throne will ever be like His throne; No matter who rules among men, God rules over all.

B. *Application*

- i. The confession of faith is a confession of God's sovereignty, not acknowledgment of mere facts.
 - a) It is a confession of Christ's Lordship, acknowledging He possesses all authority. **Ro. 10:9**
 - b) It is a personal acceptance of His authority and a willingness to be governed by it. **1Pe. 3:15**
- ii. Being a Christian is more than just believing and doing right things; it is bowing to that throne.

II. God is Awesome

A. *God's Majesty*

- i. You cannot help but be impressed with the scene in this chapter if you are paying attention. **3-6**
 - a) The appearance of God's throne and glory, the sounds, the attendants, everything is awesome.
 - b) We have depreciated that word, *awesome*, but it is rightly applied to the Lord of Heaven.
- ii. Visualize what you read; our hearts should be filled with wonder at the grandeur of God.

B. *Application*

- i. None would be comfortable in that throne room, but we can be downright casual in worship.
 - a) Our songs and prayers rise to God's throne and the living creatures say, "Amen." **5:8, 13-14**
 - b) Are we awed by God and fully engaged in worship, or is our attention elsewhere?
- ii. Parents may have to care for small children, but the rest should be focused on one thing: God.

III. God is Holy

A. *God's Character*

- i. "Holy, Holy, Holy." That is what the creatures (cherubim?) say day and night without end. **8**
 - a) Whatever attribute God has, He possesses perfectly, exemplifying and defining the trait.
 - b) God's holiness speaks of His purity, sanctity, and uniqueness; there is none like Him.
- ii. God's holiness is the basis for His law, His judgment of sin, and His demand for redemption.

B. *Application*

- i. God is not like us, but we are made, in some respects, to be like Him. **Ge. 1:26-27**
 - a) The image of God given to each of us in the beginning is corrupted by our sin. **Ecc. 7:29**
 - b) Without redemption in Christ, we can never hope to draw near a holy God. **Ro. 3:21-26**
- ii. Even the redeemed are obligated to holiness, for we must be holy just as He is holy. **He. 12:14**

IV. God is Almighty

A. *God's Power*

- i. The four living creatures also praise God's power; He is the Lord God, the Almighty. **8**
 - a) This terminology is not poetic exaggeration; He created the world from nothing. **11**
 - b) You may say evil power is exempt, but even evil beings are subject to Him. (cf. Mk. 5:6-13)
- ii. Nor has God lost any power; men lost the ability to miracles; God has all the power He ever did.

B. Application

- i. Historically men have struggled to apply the truth that God is almighty, so they doubt His word.
 - a) But time and again we see nothing is impossible for God. **Ge. 18:14; 2Ch. 14:11; Lk. 1:37**
 - b) Though it may seem impossible to us, we cannot rationalize away what God has said.
- ii. We can trust God's power to fulfill His word, so accept what He says, without reservation.

V. God is Eternal

A. God's Nature

- i. These four living creatures also describe God's eternity; He was and is and is to come. **8**
 - a) In other words, God always has been and always will be; He has no beginning or end.
 - b) Eternity is a hard (impossible) thing for us to understand, but it is a truth we must accept.
- ii. Something is eternal; the atheist says it is matter, but if matter is eternal, where did life originate?

B. Application

- i. Each of us has an immortal spirit, but God's nature is eternal; He alone falls in that category.
 - a) Thus God is self-existent, needing nothing; we contribute nothing to Him. **Ps. 50:9-15**
 - b) And God is unchanging; we must conform to His attitude, not He to ours. **He. 13:7-9a**
- ii. God always has been and always will be; He is unchanging truth we can base our lives on.

VI. God is Glorious

A. God's Praise

- i. Revelation 4-5 not only show us God's throne in Heaven, they also show us God's praise there.
 - a) God is magnificent and mighty; He deserves worship for *who* He is and *what* He has done.
 - b) Heaven is filled with God's praises; without ceasing they proclaim His greatness. **8-11**
- ii. All creation praises the Lord, every created thing honors Him; only man chooses to abstain. **5:13**

B. Application

- i. Freewill is both a wonderful and a terrible thing; we can choose to love God, or not.
 - a) God is glorious whether we glorify Him or not; He deserves praise whether we give it or not.
 - b) We have the choice in this life to participate in Heaven's praise; one day every knee will bow.
- ii. God is enthroned in praise in Heaven; is He similarly enthroned in praise in your life?

VII. God is Spirit

A. God's Essence

- i. John says the One who sat on the throne was like a jasper and sardius stone, precious gems. **2-3**
 - a) When God appeared by the Chebar River, He assumed a more human form. **Eze. 1:26-28**
 - b) Even then, however, it was only the appearance of the likeness of His glory, and not human!
- ii. No man has seen or can see God as He truly is, because God is not a man; God is Spirit. **Jn. 4:24**

B. Application

- i. God is not merely *a* spirit; He is Spirit. He is not like us; we are made in some ways like Him.
 - a) He can assume a human form (e.g. Jesus), but His essence is spiritual, not physical.
 - b) We greatly err when we think of God as if He were like us: physically, emotionally, mentally.
- ii. God is not pleased with physical things that please us; He is Spirit; what honors Him is spiritual.

Action

- 1) What is God like? He is the King, Majestic, Holy, Almighty, Eternal, Glorious, and Spiritual. **1Chr 29:10-13**
- 2) A correct concept of God will inspire awe, fear, love, and devotion in those who come to worship Him.