

Revelation 4:4-8 Handout

Revelation 4:4-8 ESV

⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, ⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

WHY IS A VISION OF HEAVEN IMPORTANT?

This vision of Heaven is supremely important for many reasons.

- For the unbeliever it is a picture of what they are forfeiting for the fleeting desires of sin.
- For the believer it is a picture of the glory to come.

This is not a dream, this is REAL!

What entices you about this world?

- Are you enticed about television, games, people, money, fame, comfort, human intelligence, secret knowledge, health... what is it that entices you and draws you to the items that are predisposed to be obsessed with this world?

So what is more real to you on this day?

- **These images of Heaven, the white garments you will be given, the 24 elders around God's throne... or things here?**

TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

Revelation 4:4 **ESV**

⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.

Let's talk about these elders.

- **There is quite a bit of theological debate on who they are.**

The Greek word for "elder" is "presbyteros" (PRES-VEE-TEAR-O's) roll r

DISPUTE #1: WHITE GARMENTS

Revelation 3:5 **ESV**

⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

Revelation 3:18 **ESV**

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

DISPUTE #2: GOLDEN CROWNS

- **Crowns are never promised to angels anywhere in Scripture.**

Revelation 2:10 **ESV**

¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Angels don't receive garments and crowns, and they are never referred to as elders.

NOW WHO ARE THESE ELDERS?

Now, this we don't know.

Revelation 21:12-14 **ESV**

¹² It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— ¹³ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

I think we will find out who they are someday, but more important than who they are is this: **GOD ALWAYS FULFILLS HIS PROMISES.**

PROMISES FULFILLED

PROMISE #1

Revelation 3:21 ESV

²¹ The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

PROMISE #2

Revelation 3:5 ESV

⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

PROMISE #3

Revelation 2:10 ESV

¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

BACK TO WHY A VISION FROM GOD IS SO IMPORTANT

These promises that God makes **HAVE** to be more important than what the world offers!

- You have to want these promises more than you want sin.
- Your boredom is only your fault... because the love you have for the world has caused your heart to wax cold and forget about the amazingness of these visions.

THUNDERBOLTS AND LIGHTNING

Revelation 4:5 **ESV**

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,

Psalm 77:18 **ESV**

¹⁸ The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook.

Exodus 19:16–20 **ESV**

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. ¹⁹ And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. ²⁰ The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

GOD IS IN A MOOD

God is in a mood... a _____ mood.

Please note that these manifestations of lightning and thunder are not the fury of nature... they are the fury of a God possessing white-hot wrath.

Revelation 4:6 **ESV**

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind:

SEA OF GLASS

This sea of glass like crystal is also seen in

Ezekiel 1:22 **ESV**

²² Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads.

Revelation 21:1 **ESV**

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

The Greek word for living creature here is “zoon” (Z - O - On)

- It's only used twice and it means living animal.

Ezekiel 10:15 **ESV**

¹⁵ And the cherubim mounted up. These were the living creatures that I saw by the Chebar canal.

Revelation 4:7 **ESV**

⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight.

- LION = WILD CREATURES = STRENGTH
- CALF/OX = DOMESTIC ANIMALS = SERVICE
- EAGLE = FLYING CREATURES = SPEED
- MAN = PINNACLE OF CREATION = REASON

But the role of the four creatures right now is clear:

Revelation 4:8 **ESV**

⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

Revelation 6:16–17 **ESV**

¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

WHY DO THEY PRAISE GOD?

Because they have all the _____!

CONCLUSION

RESIST

FLEE

CONQUER

HONOR CHRIST