

Revelation 4 – The Father’s Glorious Throne

1. THE NECESSITY OF ENCOUNTERING THE BEAUTY OF GOD

Psalm 27:4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that I will seek: that I may dwell in the House of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple

- a. We are seeing a worldwide prophetic **worship and prayer movement** that is being orchestrated by the Holy Spirit; this movement is essential in releasing God’s power to the nations before Jesus returns (Malachi 1:11). God promised the restoring of the “Tabernacle of David” that has been forgotten (Amos 9:11). David’s life vision could be summed up in Psalm 27:4 – gazing on the beauty of the Lord. Both Isaiah and John saw this end-times prayer and worship movement in fullness being fuelled by the revelation of Jesus’ beauty (Isaiah 42:10-16, Revelation 22:17). Isaiah prophesied that the revelation of Jesus’ beauty would become prominent in the generation in which He returns (Isaiah 4:2)

Isaiah 4:2 In that day the Branch of the LORD [Jesus the Messiah] shall be beautiful and glorious.

- b. The subject of God’s **beauty** is the same as the subject of His **holiness** (1 Chr. 16:29; 2 Chr. 20:21; Ps.29:2; 96:9) and His **glory**. (Isa. 4:2). Gazing upon God’s beauty answers two of the “7 longings of the human heart”, designed by God to lead us to Himself - the longing to be **fascinated** and longing for **beauty**. Beauty is intrinsic to our emotional and spiritual health. We can’t live to our fullest spiritually without the revelation of it. It is a vast subject - God’s beauty to us and our beauty to Him. There is “transforming power” in the revelation of God’s beauty, actually changing us into the same image from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18)!
- c. The most misunderstood, neglected, challenging and lofty subject in the Kingdom of God is **God Himself**. He is the most glorious and rewarding subject as well. The pursuit of the knowledge of God is the ultimate goal of the Kingdom. Though challenging, we set our face to pursue this goal to comprehend the infinite mind, heart and abilities of God. This journey isn’t for the faint-hearted, but for those resolved to begin a lifetime ascent to the top at a marathon pace without looking back (Luke 9:62)
- d. The study of God’s beauty takes much time, effort and dedication. Be patient as your eyes adjust to the light. Like walking into a darkened room, “seasoned understanding” comes slowly and over time, as we consistently behold these truths with a teachable spirit and talk to Him about them. Persevere in faith, as you go deep, excavating for gold and the precious gems of truth concerning God’s Person (Proverbs 25:2). Our journey is a life-long “treasure hunt” into the beauty of God. John was told to “eat the scroll” (Revelation 10:9-11), like Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3:1-3) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 15:16). We too are given this same invitation.

1 Corinthians 2:9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

- e. The reason people think they do not have time for prayer and the Word is that they do not know what it means to experience fascination. They will see spending time with God as a

bargaining chip to earn God's favour, not as the way to experience spiritual pleasure! But it's the way into power and an enthralled heart! The fascinating God created us with a need to be fascinated. Thus, there is a craving in every human spirit to marvel and to be fascinated. When God the Holy Spirit reveals God the Son to our human spirits - our spirits resonate in spiritual pleasure. It is the deepest and most profound pleasure available to the human race. When our spirit is touched, nothing else compares.

- f. God will answer our craving for awe and wonder by revealing to us the **beauty of Jesus as the Bridegroom God**. He will liberate His people from the tyranny of inferior pleasures by introducing us to superior pleasures; the revelation of His Son to our hearts. In revealing His Son, God will fascinate His people beyond anything they have ever known. This fascination will serve as a holy protection mechanism from the deceptions of the enemy and will impart to believers a godly motivation to love God with all our heart.

2. THE FATHER'S THRONE AND THE BEAUTY REALM OF GOD

- a. Revelation 4-5 give us the **highest revelation of God's beauty** found anywhere in Scripture. They reveal the "Holy of Holies", which is the central reality in the Eternal City, the "New Jerusalem", and the epicentre of the entire universe. Revelation 4-5 is commonly referred to as the **beauty realm of God** and the **heavenly symphony**. Here we see the great **Governmental Centre** of the universe upholding, directing and administrating human history and the entire created order through worship-driven prayer that is fuelled by the revelation of God's beauty (Revelation 4:8). This stands in stark contrast to the "needs-based" prayer model.

Revelation 4:8 *And they [seraphim] do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" (Isaiah 6:1-5)*

- b. Revelation 4 reveals the beauty of the Father's Throne and his court. Chapter 5 homes in on the revelation of God's master-plan to exalt Jesus upon the earth. Often Revelation 4 is the focal point of worship, because this heavenly scene greatly expands our understanding of it; however the context of these two chapters gives insight into the **prayer and worship movement** in heaven and upon the earth, as it relates to God's end-time purpose of bringing both realms together forever (Ephesians 1:10). The Father's ultimate purpose is to dwell in unhindered face-to-face communion with His people in paradise on the earth forever (Revelation 21:1-27; 22:1-5).

Ephesians 1:10 *...as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

- c. The focal point of Revelation 4 is the Father's Throne, giving us the clearest picture of the **Father's beauty** in Scripture, related to His **Person** and His **surroundings**. It is referred to as the "**beauty realm of God**". What the beautiful God set around Himself expresses His beauty to all of creation. He began with an empty white board, able to place anything around Himself that He desired. Therefore, the things that appear were designed by God to reveal specific aspects of His glory to the rest of the created order. Revelation 4:1-7 gives us 15 themes or

“doorways” into the beauty of God, as seen within His heavenly governmental centre. Within each theme there are three distinct elements:

- i **The beauty of the Godhead:** The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (v1-2, 5b)
- ii **The beauty of God’s Person:** how God looks, feels and acts (v3)
- iii **The beauty of God’s Partners:** the saints enthroned, robed and crowned (v4)
- iv **The beauty of God’s Power:** throne manifestations of lightnings, thunderings, voices (v5)
- v **The beauty of God’s Presence:** holy fire upon the sea, saints and seraphim (v4)

3. THE BEAUTY OF THE GODHEAD (v1-2)

Revelation 4:1 *After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice [Jesus], which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with One [Father] seated on the throne.*

- a. **The beauty of the Godhead:** is expressed in their love, unity and order (Revelation 4:1-2). The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in perfect unity (1 John 5:7), being fully submitted to one another in eternal humility and love. To see them harmoniously operate together is inspiring, breathtaking and beautifully glorious (Genesis 1). Together they make up the Godhead (Romans 1:20; Acts 17:29; Colossians 2:9). There is but **one God**, yet within the indivisible unity of the Godhead, there are three distinct Persons. The three are never separated or divided, they are always one.
 - i The **Father** is greatest in authority, as an earthly father is in comparison to his son (John 10:29; 14:28). He has deep plans burning in His holy heart, as He is seated upon His eternal Throne (Daniel 7:9-10). He sits supremely and confidently in Heaven, where His word and will are forever settled, far above the circle of the earth and laughs at the schemes of men (Job. 34:21-30; Psalm 2:4; 94:10; 103:19; 119:89; Isaiah 40:12-17, 21-26, 28-31; Daniel 4:17, 34-35). He changes times and seasons, while He removes kings or raises them up (Daniel 2:20-22).
 - ii The **Son**, fully submitted, delighting to do His Fathers will, speaks out those plans through intercession and declaration (Psalm 40:6-8; Hebrews 10:5-10). He is the eternal Word of God made flesh (John 1:1-3, 14).
 - iii The **Holy Spirit** (Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) in 7 manifestations (Isaiah 11:2), moves in power to execute the eternal plans of the Father, as spoken out by the Son (Genesis 1:1-3) and the saints under the Father’s authority.

Isaiah 11:2 *The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*

4. THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S PERSON (v3)

Rev. 4:3 *And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian [sardius], and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.*

- a. The **Beauty of God's Person**: is seen in jasper, carnelian [sardius] and emerald rainbow (Revelation 4:3). There are very few places in Scripture telling us what God looks like. Notice how John continually qualifies what he's describing as being "like" something else that he has seen. He is seeking to bridge the unknown with the known: he just has no way of exactly relaying this information to us.
 - i **Jasper** is a bright brilliant diamond telling us what God "looks like". He shines forth as a diamond that releases unapproachable light. God dwells in the perfection of beauty and He covers Himself in unapproachable light. The light is unapproachable as it functions as a protective shield to those nearest His Throne. The very light that protects us from His Presence is in itself beautiful, but God is even more beautiful than that which protects Him. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). He dwells in unapproachable light (Daniel 2:22; 1 Timothy 6:16), being wrapped in garments of light (Psalm 104:1-2). Every good gift comes down from the Father of Lights in whom there is no variation or shadow (James 1:17). The New Jerusalem, including all the saints, will shine with the bright diamond-like light of God's glory forever (Revelation 21:11), causing there to be no need of the sun (Isaiah 60:19-20; Revelation 21:23; 22:5), who is ashamed at its apparent lack of light, compared to God's glory (Isaiah 24:23), even though it is seven times brighter than its current state (Isaiah 30:26)!

1 Tim. 6:16 *[God] who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power. Amen.*

Isaiah 30:26 *Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the LORD binds up the brokenness of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.*

- ii **Carnelian** is a deep red gem telling us what God "feels like", depicting the burning passion and desire of His heart. God not only loves, but He is love in its essence (1 John 4:8, 16). His heart burns like a fire to both give love by releasing more grace to the responsive (Song 8:6) and to remove everything that hinders His love by releasing judgment against those who hinder it (Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8). Our wholehearted God loves and gives Himself to us with all His heart. He designed us to be like Him. We were created with a longing to be wholehearted and passionate. If we have nothing to die for, then we have nothing to live for. We cannot function properly until we passionately give our heart to God. We long to love God without defilement or compromise. We soar to the heights of our human potential only when we fully love God.
- iii **Emerald Rainbow** is a statement of His covenant mercy and tenderness toward creation telling us what God "acts like" toward all who approach Him on His terms (Genesis 9:12-17). The majesty and passion of God's jasper and carnelian-like glory is tempered by his emerald rainbow of mercy. He is gracious, merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness (Joel 2:13). He is faithful toward us, even in our weakness (2 Timothy 2:13). This full heavenly rainbow is unlike our earthly "half-bows" or "arcs", having an emerald hue

tinting it and literally surrounding the entire Throne – John uses the Greek word “iris”, pointing out that it is fully circular. The rainbow is around God’s Throne - it completely encircles it. The glory of God’s mercy surrounds God’s Throne of majesty. Mercy completely encircles His Throne and all the works of His government. Is it merely circular or spherical? The word “rainbow” is only listed six times in Scripture (Genesis 9:13, 14, 16; Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 4:3; 10:1) and is comprised of seven colours - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet – the part of the electromagnetic spectrum visible to the human eye. The dominant colour that John saw was emerald, representing life and refreshing.

5. THE BEAUTY OF GOD’S PARTNERS (v4)

Revelation 4:4 *Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.*

- a. The **Beauty of God’s Partners**: is seen in twenty-four elders (faithful believers from redemptive history), enthroned – as vessels of God’s authority, robed – referring to their priestly ministry, and crowned – speaking of their leadership, in the immediate presence of God surrounding His eternal Throne (Revelation 4:4). These are the top governmental ministries of the redeemed in eternity. God is sharing His leadership and government with people who were once weak and broken humans like us. Causing the saints to be enthroned before Him, robed in light and crowned with gold gives us insight into the height and transforming power of God’s redemptive genius. The Father, who possesses all things, desires to share it with humans, bringing us into intimate partnership with Him forever. Isaiah saw these exalted men (Isaiah 24:23), described 12 times in Revelation. The elders are described in the terms that overcomers were just promised in Revelation 3, with white garments (3:5), crowns (3:11), and thrones (3:21). Here, we see our eternal inheritance and spiritual identity. The honour, dignity and function of the 24 elders gives us insight into God’s beauty. We see how far God is committed to go in expressing His sardius-like passion toward us.
 - i **Thrones** - All of the saints have been made “a kingdom of priests” (Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5) and will therefore share in varying levels and degrees of administrating God’s Kingdom government upon the earth forever (Daniel 7:18, 22, 27; Revelation 22:5)! The 24 elders play a significant role in the administration of God’s government and therefore, are prototypes of other saints on thrones who have a judicial function (Revelation 20:4). The saints with resurrected bodies who are counted worthy (considered faithful) during their life on earth will be given governmental authority in the age-to-come. With **kingdom** rule, the saints will reign (rule) with judicial responsibility and authority. This role involves authority to evaluate the past (judging) and to determine action plans for the future for the people and areas that they are over. The ruling saints will appoint people into positions in the infrastructure that are within their sphere of Kingdom responsibility. This will include training and managing the people who are appointed. The saints will judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:2).
 - ii **Robes** - All of the saints receive garments for “beauty and glory” (Exodus 28:1-43). The word “white” speaks of the brightness of the garments not the colour. The word “white”

NT (Gk “leukos”), means shining or glistening (Matthew 17:2; Rev. 3:4, 5; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:14) and emphasizes the Presence of God’s glory and light contained in one’s garments (Psalm 132:9, 16). The brightness will depend upon our governmental status and stature in the Spirit in the age to come. Each person will have a distinct history in God and will receive clothing that expresses the quality and depth of their devotion to Jesus while upon the earth (Revelation 19:8). The priestly role includes worshipping, interceding and communicating God’s heart to others. We are God’s priests who best represent God forever and who mediate His glory to others in the age-to-come. God’s humility shines brightly in choosing us to represent Him.

- iii **Crowns** - This crown is not related to salvation but to our place of function in God’s Kingdom government and infrastructure. There are nine NT references to the crown that a believer may receive from the Lord. Twice it is referred to as “crown of life” (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10); once as “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8) and once as “crown of glory” (Isaiah 28:5; 1 Peter 5:4). In most places the Greek word used is **stephanos** meaning the crown of the victor, rather than a king’s diadem. The elders wear crowns made of gold that are eternal and incorruptible. Crowns in Revelation are given for endurance or perseverance and are only promised to victors or overcomers (Revelation 2:10; 3:11). These crowns of victory imply faithfulness and endurance.

6. THE BEAUTY OF GOD’S POWER (v5)

Revelation 4:5 *And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices.*

- a. The **Beauty of God’s Power**: is seen in glorious manifestations from God’s eternal Throne in lightnings, thunderings and voices, which include noises, sounds and music (Revelation 4:5a). Beginning at God’s Throne, these manifestations of power impart life to the rest of the created order and break out upon the earth at the close of each judgment series - 7 seals (Revelation 8:5), 7 trumpets (Revelation 11:19), 7 bowls (Revelation 16:17-21). Lightning speaks of the release of divine energy and light. Thunderings speak of personal and corporate divine messages with power. Throughout the Eternal City, divine lightning strikes individuals and corporate gatherings with impartation of His power as does the thunder. The voices or sounds speak of God’s music that fills the City

7. THE BEAUTY OF GOD’S PRESENCE (v4, 5-7; 15:2)

Revelation 4:5 *Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶ Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures [seraphim] full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calves, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.*

- a. The **Beauty of God’s Presence**: is seen in His manifest presence of “holy fire” upon the sea, saints and seraphim (Revelation 4:5-7; 15:2)

- i **Sea of Glass** is the great gathering place and “holy convocation centre” of all the saints in eternity. It must be able to hold billions of saints and is mingled with flaming fire (Revelation 15:2). **Moses** was the first to see this heavenly ocean as the supernatural gathering place of celebration and intimacy, referring to it as a sapphire pavement (Exodus 24: 10). **Ezekiel** saw the same sapphire pavement. He described it as an awesome or terrifying crystal firmament (expanse) before Jesus’ sapphire Throne (Ezekiel 1:16-28). He saw Jesus’ Throne as sapphire (blue). The firmament is a crystal floor extending out from Jesus’ Throne that goes out into the vast Sea. It is the same colour as the Son of God's Throne. It is a sapphire pavement and a sapphire Throne. **John** is the first to call it a Sea because he saw its vastness. Its size probably parallels the Eternal City, which is 1500 miles cubed.
- (1) When we stand on that Sea, we will experience many supernatural dynamics: sights, colours, sounds, waves of glory, fire, the seven lamps or torches, wind, fragrance and the music along with the divine energy that comes with lightning and thunder and wind. The Sea of glass is mingled with the flaming fire of the Holy Spirit that is resting on the saints. The activity on the Sea will penetrate to the deepest parts of the saints who stand there with a resurrected body that is receptive to all that occurs on the Sea. The vibrant presence of God will be experienced in the greatest way on the Sea. The air currents of God on that Sea will go right through our being with power.
- (2) The Sea is before the Throne probably on all sides, thus, it may surround the Throne. There is a vast ocean of beauty that sparkles like a diamond. It is a crystal sapphire sea with deep blue colour radiating through it. It is terrifying in its radiant splendour. It has many supernatural qualities related to it. It is hundreds of miles in each direction and extends beyond what the eye can see. The saints will be on the Sea of glass for long periods with resurrected bodies (without the limitations of our fallen bodies) in face to face worship of God (Revelation 22:4).

Revelation 15:2 *And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast [saints] ...standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.*

- ii **Saints** are enveloped in God’s burning presence as they stand upon the sea, as a heavenly “upper room” (Acts 2:1-4). Even now, when we worship, we connect with this sea by the Spirit, surrounded by holy fire. The Sea of glass is filled with flaming fire and is the place the saints gather together before God. This crystal sea is spectacular and unique. It is the gathering place of the redeemed like a heavenly “conference centre.” The saints will gather from all through the city on the Sea. We will live in the New Jerusalem and will visit the Sea many times. The terrifying, sparkling, awesome crystal fire and glory will penetrate our spirit and body. The power of God will blow like air currents across the Sea. Our humanity will reach the heights of joy and glory on that Sea.
- iii **Seraphim** literally means “burning ones”, who were created with supernatural capacities to behold, comprehend and proclaim the eternal beauties of God, while enduring the power of His manifest presence in burning fire, penetrating light and thunderous sound.

Revelation 1:6-11 *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!"⁹ And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,¹¹ "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

They peer into the mysteries of God that leave them overwhelmed and awestruck. Isaiah witnessed these burning ones. It left him undone and thus gave us insight into how God's beauty is intended to impact us. The angels see His beauty and are overwhelmed, they collapse under the weight of His Presence. There is a tenderizing affect in the weight of His Presence that emanates out of Him. All of the hosts of Heaven and all the redeemed tremble with tenderness in their spirit. Five times in Revelation, the host of heaven around God's Throne collapses.

8. FIVE POSITIONS RELATING TO THE FATHER'S THRONE

- a. The 15 themes or "doorways" found in Revelation 4 can be categorized in five different ways in relationship to God's eternal Throne. They are "**on** the Throne", "**around** the Throne", "**from** the Throne", "**before** the Throne" and "**in the midst** of the Throne". This is extremely helpful in bringing clarity to the worship scene.
- b. **On the Throne** 12 times in Revelation (Revelation 4:2, 9, 10; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 19:4; 20:11; 21:5) In each instance, Scripture is only referring to the Father who is the One seated "on the throne".
- c. **Around the Throne** 5 times in Revelation
 - i Emerald rainbow in appearance like an emerald (4:3)
 - ii Twenty-four thrones (4:4)
 - iii Four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back (4:6)
 - iv Many angels, living creatures and elders, the number of them ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands (5:11)
 - v All the angels, the elders and the four living creatures (7:11)
- d. **From the Throne** 4 times in Revelation
 - i Lightnings, thunderings and voices (4:5)
 - ii A loud voice saying "It is done!" (16:17)
 - iii A voice saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" (19:5)
 - iv A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal (22:1)
- e. **Before the Throne** 8 times in Revelation
 - i Seven lamps of fire burning, which are the seven Spirits of God (4:6)
 - ii A sea of glass, like crystal (Rev. 4:6)

- iii Twenty-four elders fall down and worship, casting their crowns (4:10)
 - iv A great multitude, which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing, clothed with white robes and palm branches in their hands (7:9)
 - v All the angels, the elders and the four living creatures fell on their faces and worshiped God (7:11)
 - vi The ones who come out of the great tribulation, washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, serving Him day and night in His temple (7:15)
 - vii The golden altar of incense (8:3)
 - viii Harpists playing their harps and singing a new song (14:1-5)
- f. **In the Midst of the Throne** 3 times in Revelation
- i Four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back (4:6)
 - ii Stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth (5:6)
 - iii The Lamb who shepherds those who came out of the Great Tribulation (7:17)

9. THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE - HOLY CONSUMING FIRE

- a. The Holy Spirit only gives us insight into the Father's eternal throne a few times in Scripture. Each time the **beauty of God's manifest presence** is seen around Him as "Holy Fire" (Daniel 7:9-10; Revelation 4; 20:11). This reveals that everything within the reach of God's manifest presence is "consumed" (Exodus 24:17; Deuteronomy 4:24; 9:3; Hebrews 12:29), by either the "enabling fire" of His grace or the "destroying fire" of His judgment.

Hebrews 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

- b. "Holy Fire" surrounds the Lord in Scripture: His Person (Hebrews 12:29) with eyes, (Revelation 1:14; 2:18; 19:12), feet (1:15) and countenance (1:16) like a consuming fire, standing in the midst of the lampstands of fire (1:13). His throne, with its wheels (Daniel 7:9-10) are on fire with lightnings proceeding from it (Revelation 4:5) and a river of fire coming forth from it (Daniel 7:9-10). Seven lamps of fire burn before the throne (Revelation 4:5) upon the Sea of Glass which is mingled with flaming fire (15:2), as four seraphim [burning ones] stand above it (Isaiah 6:1) with four cherubim ablaze beneath it (Ezekiel 1:13-14) surrounded by fiery angels all around it (Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:7), whose feet are like pillars of fire, having authority over fire (Revelation 14:18). There are fiery coals on the altar before His throne (8:5), releasing judgment of fire (8:7,8; 9:17, 18; 11:5; 16:8; 17:16; 18:8; 20:9) upon those headed to the Lake of Fire (14:10; 19:20; 20:10,14, 15; 21:8), giving gold refined in the fire to those who overcome (3:18).
- c. **Definition of fire:** fire is a chemical reaction that releases energy in the form of heat and light accompanied by the brilliance, beauty and brightness of flame. There are spiritual and natural implications to God's holy fire. Natural fire, in a very dim way, speaks of the energy, heat, light, brilliance, beauty and brightness of God's person. The "fire of grace" or the "fire of

judgment” is released, according to the condition of the heart and the response of the people in relation to Him. *“The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay”* - African proverb.

10. GOVERNMENTAL WORSHIP: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY - THE TRISAGION (v8–11)

- a. In Revelation 4:8-11, the top governmental leaders of the Kingdom of Heaven, **human** [24 elders] and **angelic** [seraphim] worship God. Whenever the seraphim give “glory, honour and thanks” through prophetic oracles concerning the Father, the elders are so impacted by the revelation and overwhelmed by the glory released by the Spirit that they “cast their crowns” before the throne, declaring that God is truly worthy to receive all things. They obviously sing collectively, but may occasionally sing individual oracles as well, declaring their confident delight and affection in God. This foundational hymn, called the “trisagion” (3x holy), forever magnifies God’s transcendent beauty and holiness (Isaiah 6:3). There are 14 hymns in Revelation.
- b. The seraphim do this, not because they are mandated to, but because it is a holy compulsion that explodes out of them. God is so vast and inexhaustible in His Being that those nearest to Him will forever be discovering new facets of His beauty, receiving new impartation of His grace and declaring them by His Spirit to all of creation in the overflow. Can you imagine what insight the seraphim can declare about God?

Isaiah 6:1 I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one cried to another and said: *“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”* ⁴ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

- c. **Two-fold Holiness:** The word “holy” means to be “totally separated from”. **First**, God is separated from everything sinful, thus He is pure and beautiful, as David says, “the beauty of holiness” (1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Chr. 20:21; Ps. 29:2; 96:9). **Secondly**, God is also separated from everything created or common, thus He is infinitely superior to all that exists, He is “transcendent”. In other words, He is “wholly other than”. This twofold holiness points to His transcendent beauty. The seraphim are declaring, “There is none like you!”

Psalms 50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

- d. One of the primary reasons that the **Father** seated upon His **eternal throne** was revealed to John in Revelation 4 was so that His identity as the Omnipotent Creator-Sustainer and Transcendent Eternal Sovereign would convince John of the certainty of the following events of the book of Revelation coming to pass.
- e. The Holy Spirit reveals to John **how the Father feels about Jesus**, including His full endorsement and commissioning, as well as, the Father’s plan to exalt Him as a human King over all the earth forever, along with the infinite resources of His eternal throne made available to Him for the execution of this “master plan”. Revelation 6-22 is the unfolding of Jesus’ battle plan that is introduced and initiated in Revelation 4-5.