

PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Pray that God would increase our knowledge of who he is so that our awe of him deepens and our lives change.
 - Pray for believers who are suffering, that the vision of God's throne would strengthen their endurance and assure them that he sees and reigns.
 - Pray for believers who are compromising, that God's holiness, justice, and power would lead them to genuine repentance.
 - Pray that our gathered worship would reflect the reality of the throne room - attentive, wholehearted, reverent, and joyful.
 - Pray for courage to carry the gospel to the people God has placed around us and, when he calls, to the ends of the earth.
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THE SCENE CHANGES

Three clues mark a new vision: "After this," "I was in the Spirit," and "what must take place after this." The setting shifts from the seven churches to the throne room of heaven, but the message is still connected to the letters.

Two kinds of hearers need this vision: suffering Christians need to see God's sovereignty, justice, and power so they can endure; compromising Christians need to see the same realities so they will take his call to repentance seriously.

KNOWLEDGE THAT IS REVEALED

Who is on the throne matters. For the suffering, the one in charge must be good and powerful enough to protect. For the compromising, the one in charge must be powerful enough to make good on his warnings.

John shows us who is on the throne.

The vision echoes scenes God's people already knew: a throne, brilliant jewel-like light, a rainbow, fire, a shining expanse like crystal, and four living creatures. The imagery recalls Ezekiel's vision of the glory of God. The trumpet-like voice, lightning, rumblings, and thunder also recall God's presence at Sinai.

John tells us who is on the throne.

The living creatures never stop declaring, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" The song echoes Isaiah 6. Then verse 11 identifies the one on the throne by his work: he created all things, and by his will they exist.

AWE THAT IS EXPERIENCED

John is trying to put the glory of God into words. The Father is spirit, not a human figure John can simply describe, so he reaches for images that communicate radiance, power, holiness, justice, covenant faithfulness, and stillness.

Light: jasper and carnelian blazing with color.

Color: an emerald-like rainbow surrounding the throne - a sign of God's covenant-keeping love.

Thunder: lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder - power and justice you can almost feel.

Fire: seven torches before the throne - the fullness of God's Spirit.

Stillness: something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Four living creatures: John borrows from Ezekiel's throne-room vision, where similar beings are identified as cherubim. Real heavenly beings who also symbolize creation.

Twenty-four elders: Powerful heavenly beings seated on thrones, clothed in white and crowned with gold. Real heavenly beings who also represent the whole people of God - twelve tribes and twelve apostles.

BEHAVIOR THAT IS CHANGED

The beings closest to the throne do not respond with boredom or casual familiarity. The living creatures never cease to worship, and the twenty-four elders fall down, cast their crowns before the throne, and declare that God alone is worthy.

HOLY He cannot tolerate sin.	ALMIGHTY No one rivals his power.	SOVEREIGN He reigns over all people places, and situations throughout all time.
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Three ways this vision should change our behavior:

1. ON SUNDAY

Don't come as a spectator. Come ready to worship. Sing like you mean it. Put the phone away. Listen to the Word like it matters. If you don't feel it, worship with what you know and ask God to stir what you feel. We join a song that is already happening in heaven.

2. IN DAILY LIFE

Compromise happens Monday through Saturday: in the email, the conversation, the way you speak at home, the secret no one else sees. Live like the real Teacher is in the room - because he is. For the compromising, that is a warning; for the suffering, it is comfort: he sees you.

3. TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

We can take the gospel to everyone, everywhere because the One who is in charge of everything goes with us. Pray for someone by name. Invite them. And remain open to wherever God may call you to go.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

WHAT CROWN - CONTROL, COMFORT, REPUTATION, AMBITION,
PREFERENCE - DO I NEED TO CAST BEFORE THE THRONE THIS
WEEK?



A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

WEEK 6 - SYMBOLISM & TERMS

After this / In the Spirit / What must take place: Three markers that signal a new vision and scene while continuing the message of Revelation.

Open door in heaven: John is granted access to heaven's perspective on reality - the viewpoint the churches need in order to endure or repent.

The throne: The visual center of the chapter. It communicates God's rule, sovereignty, and ultimate authority over every earthly circumstance.

Jasper and carnelian: Jewel-like imagery used to describe the radiance and blazing beauty surrounding the One seated on the throne, not a physical portrait of God.

Emerald-like rainbow: A rainbow encircling the throne. In the sermon, it highlights God's covenant-keeping love alongside his overwhelming glory.

Twenty-four elders: Heavenly beings seated on thrones, robed in white and crowned with gold. Probably representing the whole people of God: twelve tribes and twelve apostles.

Lightning, rumblings, thunder, trumpet: Images that echo God's manifestation at Mount Sinai and communicate divine presence, power, justice, and authority.

Seven torches / seven spirits of God: The sevenfold image represents the fullness of the Spirit of God.

Four living creatures: Throne-room beings drawn from Ezekiel's imagery and identified there with cherubim. Probably representing the whole created order: wild animals, domesticated animals, birds, and humanity.