

# The Divine Judge

## Revelation 4:1-5

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### Introduction:

Opening illustration: "Rattling Toothbrush"

i. The three-part **outline** of the Book of Revelation (cf. 1:19) >

a. *"The things which thou hast seen"* (1:1-18).

b. *"The things which are"* (2:1 - 3:22).

c. *"The things which shall be hereafter"* (4:1 - 22:21)

1. The Divine Judge (4:1 - 5:14). 3. The Millennium (20:1-15).

2. The Tribulation (6:1 - 19:21). 4. The Eternal State (21:1 - 22:21).

The church is not mentioned again until 22:16 (though it is implied in 19:7).

The church does not go through the Tribulation, but is in heaven at this point (4:1).

ii. The three-part **omission** of the theme of these chapters (4 & 5): the Holiness of God >

a. The missing emphasis in the preaching of sermons.

b. The missing element in the lives of saints (cf. need for worship).

c. The missing effect in the lives of sinners - see Romans 3:18, *"There is no fear..."*

iii. The three-part **openings** of chapter 4 >

a. Open door - 'A door standing open' (allows John to see into the heavens).

b. Open voice - Same voice as in 1:10, Christ (cf. I Thess. 4:13-18 & I Cor. 15:50-53).

c. Open eyes - John's heavenly perspective on earthly events before judgment falls.

I. The Depiction of God's Holiness (Its reality) (Rev. 4:2-5)

A. God's **Sovereignty** (His throne) (:2)

1. God sits as Ruler & Judge of the universe >

a. A throne is a place of authority & power (used 47 times by John, only 14 times elsewhere).

b. A throne is a picture of supremacy.

"It is first of all important to note that this is a throne in heaven, a reminder of the sovereignty of God who is far removed from the petty struggles of human government. Here is the true picture of the universe as being subject to the dominion of an omnipotent God" (Walvoord).

2. Man scoffs at God as Ruler & Judge >

a. It is not usually God's existence that is denied (though by some - Ps. 14:1) > "There are no atheists in foxholes." - consider the immediate aftermath of 9/11 [yet illustrate Ps. 14:1].

b. It is primarily God's authority that is denied (by many - Luke 19:14).

B. God's **Splendor** (His glory) (:3)

1. *"Like a jasper stone"* (cf. 21:11, *"clear as crystal"* - a diamond?) - God is **Holy** >

a. Reference to God's purity & holiness - He is our Creator.

b. Represented Reuben ('behold, a son'), the firstborn of Jacob (Ex. 28:17-21).

2. *"Like a sardine stone"* (color of a ruby, a beautiful red) - God is **Love** >

a. Reference to God's salvation (redemption) - red speaks of the blood - He is our Redeemer [earthly life - the blood sustains life; eternal life - the blood saves souls].

b. Represented Benjamin ('son of my right hand'), youngest of Jacob's sons..

These 2 stones represent the first & last sons (& therefore all in between)

This speaks of God's relationship to the nation of Israel.

3. "A rainbow round about the throne" (light green of an emerald) - God is **Faithful** >
  - a. Reminder of God's faithfulness (Gen. 9:11-17) - He is our Sustainer.
  - b. Referred to only 4 times in Scripture - each when God's judgments are poured out: Gen. 9:11-17; Ezk. 1:1; Rev. 4:3; & Rev. 10:1.

"The rainbow, as it were, continually reminds God that there is a remnant of believers even in the midst of an ungodly culture ripe for judgment, & that He, as the 'God of all grace (I Peter 5:10) will in wrath remember mercy (Hab. 3:2)" (H. Morris).

C. God's **Subjects** (His people) (:4)

1. Their reign - the rule with Christ >
  - a. Twenty-four "*seats*" - literally 'thrones.'
  - b. Twenty-four elders - represent the Church, redeemed saints (or, all God's people).
2. Their righteousness - the robes of Christ >
  - a. Clothed in white raiment.
  - b. Covered with the righteousness of Christ (cf. 3:5).
3. Their rewards - the recognition by Christ >
  - a. Crowns - 'stephanos': wreath of the victor, awarded the winner of an athletic race or contest [not the 'diadem': ruler or sovereign's crown, governmental authority.
  - b. Crowned at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

D. God's **Spirit** (His presence) (:5)

1. Out of the throne - "*lightnings, & thunderings & voices*" > ["Not the fury of nature, but the firestorm of righteous fury about to come from an awesome, powerful God upon a sinful world."]
  - a. Prophetic of God's righteous judgment upon a sinful world.
  - b. Picture of God's power to judge.
2. Before the throne >
  - a. "*Seven lamps of fire*" - cf. Acts 2:3, "*cloven tongues as of fire*" & Mat. 3:16, "*dove*" [The Holy Spirit is humanly invisible unless embodied in some way].
  - b. "*Seven Spirits of God*" - cf. Rev. 1:4 & 3:1 -- the seven-fold manifestation of God's Holy Spirit (cf. Isa. 11:2-3). [Seven is the number of perfection.]

**Conclusion:** Is the holiness of God the missing emphasis in today's preaching of sermons? Is it the missing element in the lives of saints? Is it the missing effect in the hearts of sinners? John emphasizes this theme in these two chapters (4 & 5) as well as throughout the entire Book of Revelation.

We see the holiness of God depicted in four ways in verses 2-5. We see His Sovereignty, as He sits on the throne of authority & power. Are you guilty of scoffing at His authority by refusing to yield to Him as your Lord & Master? We see His splendor, the glory of God as He is pictured as our Creator, Redeemer, & Sustainer. Have you been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, that you might live to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31)? Are you one of His saints, promised to reign with Christ; pictured as clothed in the righteousness of Christ, one day to be rewarded by Christ? Does the Spirit of God live within your heart? Do you seek to be completely surrendered to His Spirit, to be continuing filled by Him, yielded to His control in your life?

Next week we will see the holiness of God declared & demonstrated. What is your understanding of God's holiness today? How does it affect your worship?