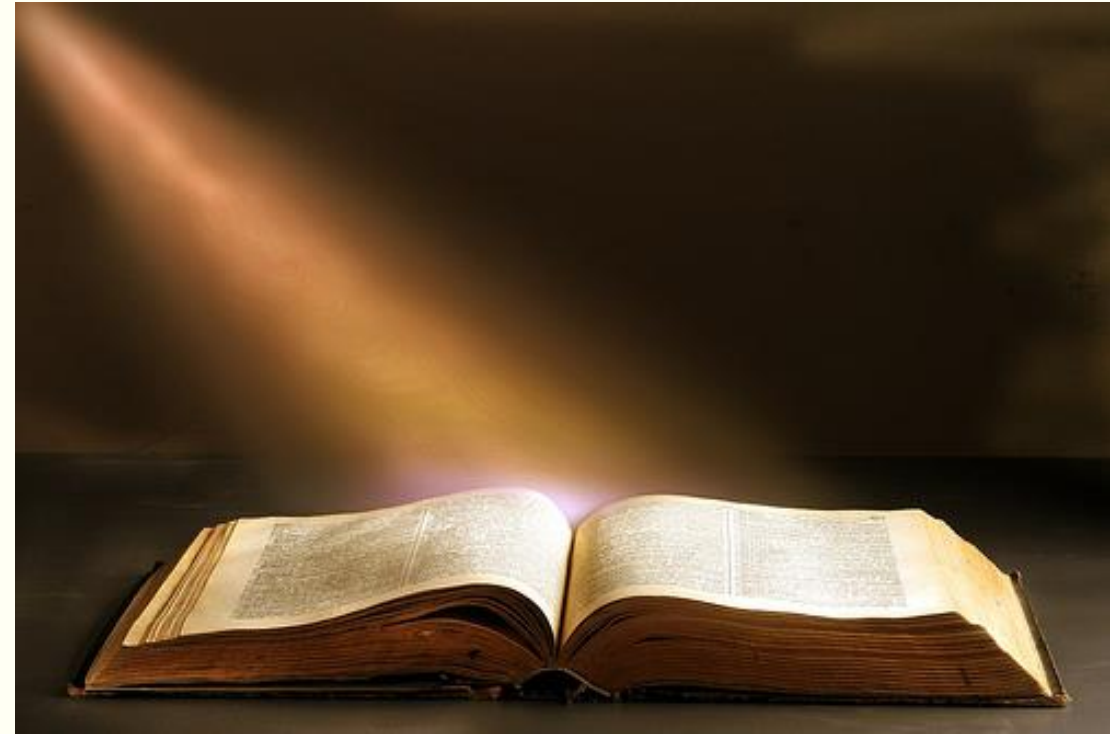




Exploring the Book of Revelation: Verse by Verse

Chapter 4

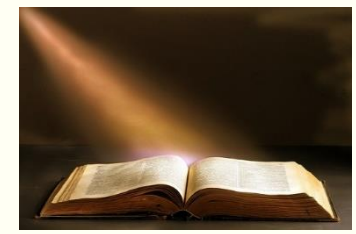




CHAPTER 4

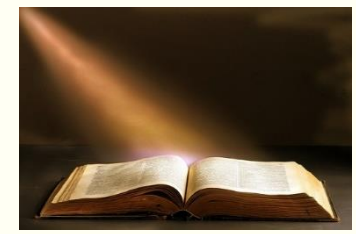
The Throne Room of the Almighty

Revelation 4:1-5



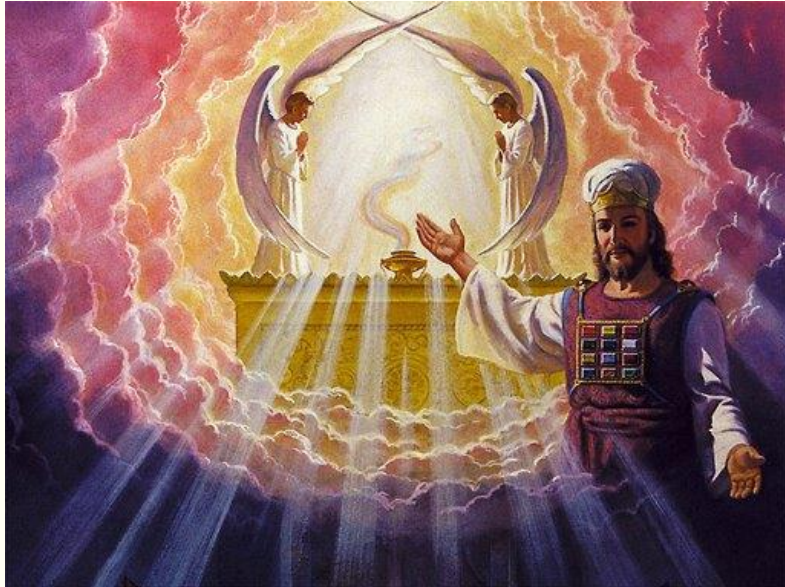
1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” **2** Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. **3** And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. **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. **5** And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 4: 6-11



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 full of eyes in front and in back. **7** The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. **8** The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” **9** Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, **10** the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: **11** “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

The Heavenly Sanctuary



Primary purpose of our Bible study is to understand each message as it applied to the events in history AND its personal application for us today

The second vision

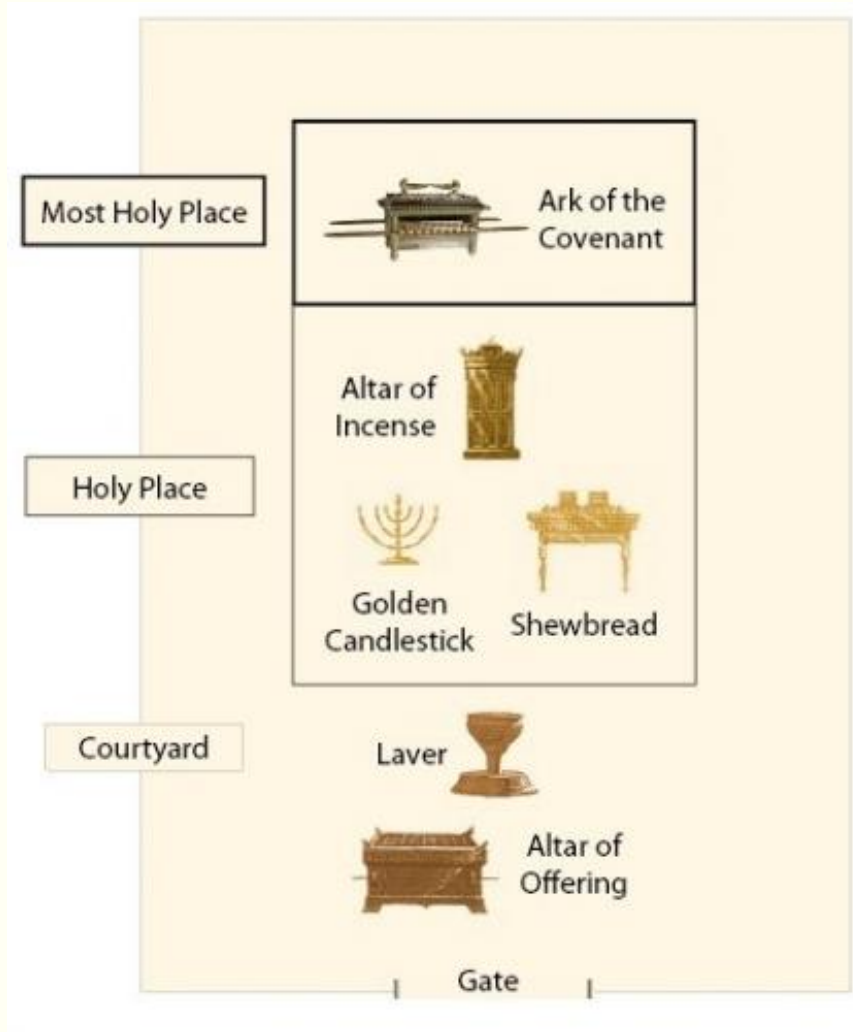
Throne room

Twenty-four elders

Four Living creatures

Adoration and Praise

The Sanctuary Pattern



The Sanctuary has three basic divisions – the Courtyard, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place



According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

Exodus 25:9, 40

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Hebrews 9:23-24

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum; we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”

Hebrews 8:1, 2

Sanctuary typology tapestry - backdrop to Revelation



Prologue: Rev 1: 1-8	
Introductory Sanctuary Scene	Sevens
Lampstands (Rev 1:9-20)	7 Churches (Rev 2-3)
Table of Shewbread: Inauguration of Heavenly Sanctuary (Rev 4-5)	7 Seals (Rev 6:1-8:1)
Altar of Incense: Intercession in Heavenly Sanctuary (Rev 8:2-6)	7 Trumpets (Rev 8:7-11:8)
Ark of Covenant: Judgment in Heavenly Sanctuary (Rev 11:19)	7 Cosmic conflict scenes (Rev 12:1-15:4)
Heavenly Sanctuary closes (Rev 15:5-8)	7 Plagues
Doxology in Heaven (Rev 19:1-10)	7 Cosmic conflict concluding scenes (Rev 19:11-20:15)
Tabernacle of God with men (Rev 21:1-8)	7 Wonders of the New Jerusalem
Epilogue: Rev 22: 6-21	

A Glimpse of God the Father

Rev 1 presents a vision of God the Son ministering in the heavenly temple. Rev 4 presents a vision of God the Father in the same heavenly temple. Rev 5 shows both the Father and the Son present in the temple together.

All heaven is involved in the great plan of salvation of man

“After these things” refer to after the first vision of Rev 1-3. Rev 4 begins the second vision

Rev 4 & 5 is an introduction to the second vision of the 7 seals which spans through to Rev 8:1 (interlude in Chapter 7)

Revelation Chapter 1	Revelation Chapter 4
“I was in the Spirit” – vs 10	“I was in the Spirit” – vs 2
“A loud voice as of a trumpet” – vs 10	“The first voice...was like a trumpet” – vs 1
“Seven golden lampstands” – vs 12	“Seven lamps of fire” – vs 5
“Seven Spirits before the throne” – vs 4	“Before the throne, seven Spirits of God” – vs 5
“Write the things...which will take place” – vs 19	“I will show you things which must take place” – vs 1
Description of God the Son	Description of God the Father
Introduces the Seven Churches	Introduces the Seven Seals

Open Door in Heaven

“I looked and behold a door standing open in heaven”. Which door?

The door that opens to the sanctuary (heavenly temple)

“...who serve the **copy** and shadow of the **heavenly things**, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the **pattern** shown you on the mountain.” – Heb 8:5

John sees **seven lamps of fire burning before the throne** – Rev 4:5

“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the **golden altar which was before the throne.**” – Rev 8:3

John sees the antitype of the lampstand and golden altar of incense of the earthly sanctuary indicating that John is looking into the first apartment

Revelation presents future events to inform, edify and comfort the church

The special focus of the book of Revelation is Jesus’ work as our High Priest and the events that occur during and after the completion of His ministry



The Table of Showbread

- Also called the table of shewbread (Ex 25:23-30)
- Made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold
- Three feet long (2 cubits ~ 36 inches) with golden crown molding
- Placed on the **north side in the Holy Place** (Ex 40:22)
- Covered with a **blue cloth** (Num 4:7)
- The Levites made twelve loaves of fresh unleavened bread each Sabbath arranged in **two piles**, six in a row with pure frankincense (I Chron 9:32)
- Also called “Bread of the Presence”
- At the end of the week, the bread was removed and eaten by the priests (Lev 24:5-9)
- Four vessels of pure gold on the table:
 - Dishes – bread plates
 - Spoons/Pans – to sprinkle frankincense
 - Pitchers – for liquid offerings
 - Bowls – vessels containing the frankincense



The Ancient of Days

John is about to be shown what will happen in the future from his perspective – “things that must take place after these things”

Before the throne is a **crystal sea of glass**, mingled with **fire** (Rev 15:2)

“And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of **sapphire stone**, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity” (Ex 24:10)

And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a **sapphire stone**; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a Man high above it. Also, from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the **color of amber** with the **appearance of fire** all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the **appearance of fire** with brightness all around. Like the appearance of a **rainbow** in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.” (Eze 1:26-28)

“I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a **fiery flame**, its wheels a **burning fire**; A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.”
(Dan 7:9,10)



The Throne Room of Heaven

In vision, the two aspects that immediately attracts his attention is the **throne** set in heaven and **One** sat on the throne

The word “throne” occurs 14 times in Rev Chapter 4

We see a few descriptions of God the Father, who dwells in unapproachable light. John could not exactly describe His actual form, only the colors, radiant glory and fire that surrounds Him.

The descriptions of the throne room parallels the great throne visions of the Old Testament by prophets Micaiah, Isaiah, Daniel and Ezekiel.

The light from God’s throne sparkles with dazzling brilliance like diamond with streaks of red. **Jasper** is a precious stone, clear like crystal. **Sardius** (ruby) is the color red. Around the throne is a **rainbow** in appearance like **Emerald**, color green

The Psalmist and Apostle Paul describes the Father as dwelling in unapproachable light (Ps 104:2, I Tim 6:16)

Seven torches of fire burning before the throne symbolize the universality of the work, the gifts, graces, and operation of the Holy Spirit

These three precious stones are the first, last and fourth stones on the breastplate of the High Priest representing the 12 tribes of Israel. They are among the foundation stones of New Jerusalem.



The Throne Room of Heaven

Rev 4 sets the stage for the scene in Rev 5 of the sealed scroll

We glimpse a view of the heavenly throne room and the heavenly host worshipping God

The rainbow represents the union of mercy and justice

“As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of **mercy and justice**...It is the mingling of **judgment and mercy** that makes salvation full and complete.”

SDA Bible Commentary Vol 6, page 1072

The ten commandments form the foundation of God’s throne

“The ten commandments on the two tables of stone were in the ark, under the mercy-seat, thus showing that the law of God is the basis of His throne and government. Accordingly, we read, “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him; **righteousness and judgment** are the foundation of His throne.” “**Justice and judgment** are the foundation of Thy throne; **mercy and truth** go before Thy face.”

The Everlasting Covenant, page 316



The Twenty-four elders in the Throne Room

The twenty-four elders appear in six chapters in Revelation

- Their identity is open and ambiguous
- They each sit upon a throne surrounding the throne of God
- They continually worship and give praise to God (Rev 4:10)
- They are clothed in **white robes** with **golden crowns** on their heads (Rev 4:4)
- They bring to God the prayers of the saints (Rev 5:8)
- One of them help John understand the vision (Rev 5:5)



Crowns symbolize kingship and authority

Different views exist on their identity. They are not angels because angels do not share God's throne, but stand in God's presence

They are ushered unto the scene during the set up of the ceremony before Jesus is inaugurated in Revelation chapter 5

The Twenty-four elders in the Throne Room

Evidence strongly indicate the twenty-four elders are redeemed and glorified saints of God

They wear white robes denoting purity and faithfulness

They have golden **crowns of victory** (Greek - stephanos) for the overcomer rather than royal crowns (Greek - diadema)

Like the twenty-four sets of priests who took turns during the sanctuary services (1 Chron 24:4-19)

Like the twelve tribes (Old Testament) represented by the twelve gates of New Jerusalem and twelve tribes (New Testament) represented by the twelve foundations of the city

Theirs is a two-fold **priestly** and **kingly** work of worship and presenting prayers

The robes, crown, and thrones are all promised to the overcomer

Symbolic group representing all redeemed and faithful people of God and the church through the ages



The Twenty-four elders in the Throne Room

When did these elders get to the heavenly places?

Never mentioned in the Old Testament in Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah or any other prophets' vision of the heavenly throne room

Most likely arrived with Jesus after His resurrection

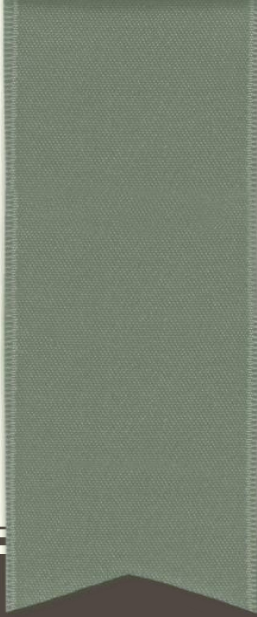
When Jesus died on the cross, tombs were opened and many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised (Matt 27:51-53)

Paul says when Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection, “he led captive a host of captives” (Eph 4:8)

These resurrected saints possibly ascended with Jesus to heaven as the **firstfruit** of harvest representing redeemed humanity in heavenly places

“And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, and have **redeemed us** to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have **made us** kings and priests to our God; and **we shall** reign on the earth.”
(Rev 5:9,10)





Then the moon will be disgraced
And the sun ashamed;
For the Lord of hosts will reign
On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
And before His elders, gloriously.
Isa 24:23

“And around the throne in a circle are 24 thrones, and on the throne, 24 elders...representing the whole body of the saints...Clothed in white raiment, this and their golden crowns, show that they had already finished their course, and taken their places among the citizens of heaven...and hence it is probable that they had glorified bodies already.”

John Wesley's Commentary on Rev 4:4

Cherubim, Seraphim and the Four living creatures



CHERUB WAS PLACED AT THE GARDEN OF EDEN TO GUARD THE WAY TO THE TREE OF LIFE GENESIS 3:24



TWO CHERUBIM OF GOLD ON THE ENDS OF THE MERCY SEAT EXODUS 25:18,20,22



GOD'S PRESENCE DWELLS BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM 2 KINGS 19:15, PSALMS 80:1, ISA 37:16



STAND AMONG COALS OF FIRE (FIERY STONES). CHERUBIM ARE ALSO CALLED "WATCHERS" EZE 10:1,6,7



AROUND GOD'S THRONE (ALSO CALLED "LIVING CREATURES") – EZE 10:15,17,20, EZE 1:5,13-15, REV 4:6-9



WINGS, HANDS, WHEELS, FACES, FULL OF EYES, FEET EZE 10: 8,9,14,16; EZE 1:7, 8



LUCIFER WAS AN ANOINTED COVERING CHERUB EZE 28:14,16

Cherubim (singular: cherub)
Seraphim (singular: seraph)



Cherubim, Seraphim and the Four living creatures

Seraphim are one of the highest order of angelic beings near the throne of God

The cherub has four wings and four faces (ox or cherub, lion, eagle, man). Two wings stretched to touch another and two to cover their body – Eze 1:11, Eze 10:21

“This is the **living creature** I saw under the God of Israel” – Eze 10:20

“He rode upon a cherub and flew” – Ps 18:10

“Above the firmament (platform) over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone” – Eze 1:26

God is transported by the cherubim in the form of a **glorious flaming chariot**

The seraph has six wings (only found in the book of Isaiah). They use two wings for flying, two to cover face and two to cover their body – Isa 6:2-3

(Bright and Glorious) Seraph meaning “**Burning ones**” or “fiery flying serpents” (Num 21:6, Isa 14:29)



The four living creatures are covering the cherubim but also have six wings like the seraph (Rev 4: 6-8). They are part of God’s moveable throne

“He [Satan] who was once a covering cherub remembers whence he has fallen. A shining seraph, “son of the morning”, how changed, how degraded!” (GC page 669)

Cherubim, Seraphim and the Four living creatures

Four living creatures (beings) are an exalted angelic order with six wings and full of eyes around and inside symbolize swiftness of movement, great intelligence, and discernment

Similar to the cherubim in Ezekiel chapter 1 and 10, they have four faces: lion (**strength**), ox (**service**), eagle (**swiftness**) and man (**intelligence**). These are characteristics used in the Bible to describe angels

Each of the four gospels and faces represent Christ: Matthew (**King** – lion), Mark (**Sacrifice** - ox), Luke (**Humanity** – man), John (**Divinity** – eagle)

God is described in the Bible as sitting on the throne between the cherubim (Ps 80:1, Isa 37:16)

As guardians of the throne, they lead the heavenly hosts in ceaseless worship and praise to God (Isa 6:3, Rev 4:8)

The great ceremony about to commence is Christ's enthronement on the heavenly throne as King surrounded by hosts of angels and the representation of redeemed humanity

The four living beings speak with voices of thunder as Jesus opens the first four seals of the scroll (Rev 6:1-7). They are also involved in the manifestation of God's wrath upon the earth (Rev 15:7)



Though the account of the organization of Israel in the wilderness as given in Numbers 2 does not so state, non-Biblical records indicate that these symbols were used as follows: the section grouped around Judah were under the lion standard; those standing near Ephraim, under the ox; those around Reuben, under the standard of a man; and those around Dan, under the flying eagle.

Roy Anderson (Unveiling Daniel and Revelation)

The Throne Room of Heaven

In describing the awesome scene, John adds more details

“From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices.” (vs 5)

The atmosphere surrounding the throne of God is full of splendor and majestic with unceasing activity. It is the **control center of the universe**

There is movement of millions of angelic beings around the throne. As these heavenly messengers flash to and fro from the throne, across the vast universe, it is lightning accompanied by sounds of thunder

In the description of Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, there were thunder and lightning flashes and very loud trumpet sound (Ex 19:16)

The description of the transcendence scene culminates in a climax of ceaseless praise from the **four exalted angels** (living beings) similar to the songs of the seraphim in Isaiah's vision exalting God's holiness

Spontaneous praise from a sense of God's holiness, goodness and love and His awe-inspiring, impressive, overwhelming presence

The **songs of the elders** that follow show that the essence of true worship is to recount and celebrate God's mighty acts – the act of creation (Rev 4) and redemption (Rev 5)

There is an atmosphere of expectancy as they prepare to welcome Jesus who is about to be enthroned at the right hand of the Father



“We mortals are likely to tire of the repetition of the simple testimony we bear here to the goodness and mercy of God. We are sometimes tempted to say nothing, because we cannot continually say something new. But may we not learn a profitable lesson from the course of these holy beings above, who never grow weary of the ceaseless repetition of these words, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;" and to whom these words never grow old, because their hearts ever glow with a sense of His holiness, goodness and love? Praise does not become to them monotonous, for with every utterance they gain a new view of the attributes of the Almighty. They reach a greater height of comprehension in their vision of His perfections; the horizon expands before them; their hearts enlarge; and the new emotions of adoration draw from them a fresh utterance of their holy salutation, new even to themselves, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!"

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