**Revelation 4**

Introduction

I. The 1st century churches of Revelation were going through pressure and challenges and they needed a revelation of God and his coming kingdom that would open their eyes to His plans and encourage them to remain faithful through thick and thin.

II. Today we face a world with huge problems and we live lives with various challenges, and we too need a revelation of God and his coming kingdom that gives us courage to remain faithful.

III. In Revelation 4 John is given a revelation of heaven itself, and he encounters God in his heavenly throne room being worshiped and praised

The Passage

I. The creatures with God in heaven

A. The 24 elders (v. 4)

1. They may be a special order of angels

2. Or they may represent redeemed humanity

24 = 12 tribes + 12 apostles = the whole of God’s redeemed people

B. The four living creatures (v. 6-8)

1. They are similar to creatures Isaiah and Ezekiel saw when they had visions of God

2. They may be an exalted order of angelic beings who lead the rest of the heavenly host

3. Or they may represent the whole animate creation praising God

-4 is the number of universal creation (e.g. 4 corners of the earth)

-lion, ox, man, and eagle may represent the various types of animate creatures

C. More important than who they are is what they are doing: worshipping the one on the throne. Singing 2 songs (v. 8, 11)

II. God as Creator (v. 11)

A. “You created all things and by your will they were created”

1. Consider how old and how big the universe is. And God is older and bigger.

2. v. 9, v. 10: “the one who lives forever and ever”

3. He spoke the whole thing into existence

B. By your will they have their being

1. Not only did God set the universe in motion in the beginning, but he is constantly, actively holding it all together by his power moment by moment

2. We owe each breath to is ongoing sustaining of our existence

III. As Creator, God is holy (v. 8)

A. Holiness means to cut or separate

1. God is separate and set apart from everything else in creation

2. God is, by definition, one of a kind, in a class by himself, superior to everything else

B. God is set apart specifically from sin and wickedness

1. He is without any trace of evil, blemish, or decay. He is 100% pure goodness

2. The physical descriptions of God are just ways at trying to grasp at his holiness

a. v. 3: precious, rare, translucent, beautiful stones

b. v. 5: lightning, thunder

C. Ps 73: Whom have I in heaven but you, and earth has nothing I desire besides you.”

Do we treasure God above all else?

IV. As Creator, God is sovereign (v. 8)

A. “Almighty” (v. 8) = all might, all power. He possesses unfathomable power:

B. The Sea of glass before the throne (v. 6)

1. In the ancient world, the sea represented the dark, mysterious forces of chaos

-see Genesis 1:2, Genesis 6-8, Matthew Revelation 21:1

2. But the sea is presented as totally calm before the throne. God is in complete control of these forces; they don’t threaten him or rival him in any way

C. The one sitting on the throne (v. 2, 3, 9, 10)

1. This is arguably the central image of the entire book

2. A throne is an image of authority, power, being in charge, in control

3. God is pictured sitting

a. = at a place of rest and confidence

b. he is not pacing anxiously or working frantically, he is in perfect control

4. Passages that express God’s utter control over life

Ps 29:10: The LORD sits as King forever.

Ps 115:3: Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him

Isa 46:10: He says, “My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”

Eph1:11: He works out all things in conformity with the purpose of his will

5. Nothing ever catches him off guard or worries him

Conclusion

I. In the midst of the challenges of life, we need to be reminded of the fact that our God is the Creator, holy and in complete control of everything that is happening

II. Romans 8:28: the one who is in control of the universe is working everything out for our good, so we can move forward with confidence and encouragement, no matter what we’re going through.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Was there a particular image from Revelation 4 or a particular idea that helped you understand who God is or appreciate more deeply some aspect of who he is?

2. Discuss again the options for who the 24 elders are and who the 4 living creatures are. What makes the most sense to you and why?

3. In Revelation 4:11, God is worshipped for the fundamental reason that he is the Creator who created all things. How might we more regularly appreciate and be mindful of this fundamental relationship as creatures to our infinite Creator?

4. The first thing John sees when he steps into heaven is God seated on his throne (v. 2), and we discussed how that is a picture of God’s authority and control over the universe. How do you respond to the idea of God’s sovereignty over the entire universe: is it a source of great comfort to you, does it raise troubling questions for you, or is it something that doesn’t cause much of a reaction in you either way?

5. What challenges or anxieties are you currently experiencing and how does the message of Revelation 4 speak to you in the midst of those challenges?