

“Enthroned in Heaven”

(Revelation 4)

Introduction

- God is absolutely the main attraction in heaven, as He ought to be on earth. In heaven, we will not be primarily looking for loved ones who have died, or our heroes in the faith; we will not be preoccupied by the pearly gates, the streets of gold, or the mansions in heaven; we will not be sitting on a cloud playing a harp all day. No, in heaven, we will be engrossed in and enraptured by the presence of the glory of God the Almighty.
- In the fourth chapter of the book of Revelation, we find a rare and precious glimpse into the heavenly throne room of God. It is important to remember that the book of “Revelation” is singular not plural (Revelation not Revelations). This is because this book is ultimately about “*The revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1:1), not eschatological timelines or apocalyptic experiences. If you miss this about the book of Revelation, you have missed the main point of the book.

The book of Revelation was written by the apostle John, in his old age, as he was exiled (as a prisoner) to the island of Patmos “*on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus*” (1:9). While there, God supernaturally revealed the truths found in this book to John through an angelic messenger (1:1-2; cf. 22:16).

In chapter one, John is utterly traumatized when he saw an awesome vision of the risen and glorified Jesus Christ, Son of God (1:9-19). When John “*saw Him, [he] fell at His feet as though dead*” (1:17). Jesus laid “*His right hand*” (1:17) on John and said, “*Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades*” (1:17-18). Then, He told John to write down all that he would see and hear: “*Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this*” (1:19).

In chapters two and three, John dictated seven letters to seven churches (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (1:11).

- Undoubtedly still reeling from His encounter with the risen and glorified Christ (ch.1), John is ill-prepared for what he is about to see and hear. For he is going to be ushered into heaven, and into the sacred throne room of God (if John was not “*in the Spirit*” (4:2) he could not have survived; see Ex.33:20-23). This was/is not a casual or common experience.

Remember when the prophet Isaiah saw a prophetic vision of God (or the Son of God; Jn.12:41) upon His throne:

Isa 6:1-5 ~ “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’ ⁴And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’”

As a prophet, Isaiah pronounced an oracle of “*woe*” (vs.5; condemnation, judgment) on himself as he knew himself to be a sinner in the presence of the holy God. He described his state as being “*lost*” (vs.5), which could be translated “*rendered speechless*” or “*utterly destroyed (ruined, undone).*” This Hebrew word (*damah*) can refer to being silent or stupefied, devastated or demolished. This is a psychological disintegration – a shattering of one’s self-esteem, a crumbling of one’s self-confidence, the ruin of one’s self-righteousness. Like the unraveling of a ball of yarn, Isaiah is unraveling before the very presence of the holy God. Isaiah believed himself to be on the brink of ruin, and seemingly about to be (justifiably) destroyed by God. He, as an unholy person, was completely undone before the holy presence of God.

One thing is for sure, our glimpse into the throne room in heaven is nothing like what is depicted in the movie *The Wizard of Oz*. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. What we see from John's vision is not a little old man frantically pulling ropes and pushing buttons trying to maintain an illusion of greatness and supremacy. No, what we see is the True God in all of His glorious splendor, powerful majesty, and purity of holiness. What we see is not a vision of John's own finite imagination, but a real glimpse into the authority and sovereignty of Almighty God. Scripture does not reveal a small, feeble, and unimpressive God. Exactly the opposite. The Biblical account of God is truly mind-blowing. He is the only One truly worthy of the word awesome!

In reading Revelation four, it seems as though John is verbally handicapped as he is unable to explain fully and clearly all that he is seeing. Hence the repeated use of the words "like" and "the appearance of" – a voice that was "like a trumpet" (vs.1); "the appearance of jasper and carnelian" (vs.3); "a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald" (vs.3); "before the throne there was as it were [‘something like’, (NET)] a sea of glass, like crystal" (vs.6); "the first living creature like ... the second living creature like ... the fourth living creature like" (vs.7).

➤ Like Isaiah, the apostle John is given a vision of God in heaven. It is equally traumatizing and dramatically unforgettable.

Rev 4 ~ "After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, 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.' ²At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. ³And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. ⁴Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, ⁶and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. ⁸And 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!' ⁹And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the 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 honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'"

➤ From this chapter, we can deduce five exclusively divine attributes of God.

I. The SOVEREIGNTY of God (vs.1-2)

➤ First of all, I want to draw your attention to an important transitional phrase used twice in verse one. It is the phrase "after this" (vs.1). The first time this phrase is used it signifies the transition from the letters to the churches. It indicates the end of the seven letters.

The second time this phrase is used reveals to us the transition between the present things ("those that are") and the future things ("those that are to take place"), both identified in Revelation 1:19. These phrases act as signs to help us navigate our way through this great revelation of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we know that when we enter into chapter four of this book we have entered into the revelation (glimpses) of future events that will occur when Christ comes again.

➤ It is clear, from verse one, that John hears the voice of Jesus, the Son of God, *“speaking ... like a trumpet”* (vs.1; cf. 1:10) calling him *“up”* to *“the door standing open in heaven!”* (vs.1). This *“door”* is not like a door that we would find in our house, but rather a porthole or entrance way into paradise; access to the very throne room of God. It is through this opening that John makes his way (*“in the Spirit”*; vs.2) into heaven. There, with the risen and glorified Christ as his guide, John is ushered before the throne of God: *“... and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne”* (vs.2). The Greek word translated “throne(s)” (*thronos*) is used over 60 times in the New Testament, over 40 of those are in the book of Revelation, and 14 of those appear in Revelation chapter four (with 12 referring specifically to God’s throne).

➤ When you picture a throne, most people probably picture some sort of ornate and opulent chair that is both large and luxurious. Often the throne itself would engulf the king as its height and width would be enormous. Its frame was made of the most expensive wood, its seat was made of the most valuable fabrics, its decorations would be of the most precious jewels. Together, all these elements came to symbolize the importance and authority of the one who had the right to sit on that throne.

A throne is a symbol of honor and authority. The person who has the right to ascend a particular throne is the person who has supreme power over which that throne represents. Therefore, the throne that is in heaven, in the temple of God, is symbolic of the person who has all authority over, and in, all things whether in heaven or on earth. This throne is not a place where God sometimes hangs out, but a symbol of His infinite and eternal presence.

Ps 103:19 ~ “The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.”

Isa 66:1 ~ “Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool ...’”

➤ God’s throne is in heaven. Clearly, heaven is a real place (as is hell). Heaven and paradise are the same thing. They both describe the dwelling place of God. The throne of God is in heaven. Where is heaven? To put it simply, heaven is *“up”* (vs.1) – beyond earth’s sky and atmosphere, and beyond interplanetary and interstellar space, beyond our known universe.

While John does not specifically mention anyone by name, it is unquestionably obvious that the One who sits on the throne is none other than God Himself (see vs.8-11; cf. Is.6; Dan.7:9). Not only did John see the risen and glorified Christ (ch.1), and experience a tour of the throne-room of God in heaven, but also was enabled to see the sovereign and supreme ruler Himself: God Almighty! What John sees is not the full majesty and glory of God’s presence, for no man can see that and live, but rather a radiant splendor of his awesome power, authority, and sovereignty (see Ex.33:19-20; 1Tim.6:15-16; 1Jn.4:12). John is not physically present before God but transported to heaven *“in the Spirit”* (vs.2).

➤ Notice that God is *“seated”* on His throne: *“and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne”* (vs.2). God is not pacing back-and-forth in heaven, biting His nails, or wringing His hands together in worry and fear. He is not at His wits’ end jumping up and down, or pulling out His white hair in a frightful panic at the way things are going in the world. The Lord of heaven is not running around in utter chaos and confusion. No, God is seated on His throne in sovereign power and authority.

Ps 2:2-4 ~ “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, ³‘Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.’ ⁴He who sits in the heavens laughs the Lord holds them in derision.”

Ps 11:3-5 ~ “if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” ⁴The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man. ⁵The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.”

Ps 47:8 ~ “God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.”

Ps 103:19 ~ “The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.”

➤ It must be noted that heaven is not governed by a democracy, but by a theocracy. That is, it is not people-governed – or even governed by heavenly/spiritual beings – it is governed by the one and only sovereign God. It is not Caesar on the throne; not Satan, and not the president of the United States.

Ps 115:3 ~ “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.” (see Ps.135:6)

Isa 46:9-10 ~ “... I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’

Eph 1:11 ~ “... [God] works all things according to the counsel of his will”

➤ In simple terms, God’s sovereignty is His ultimate power and authority over all things (i.e., His might and right to whatever He pleases). God is not mostly, or most of the time, sovereign. He is either sovereign over all or not sovereign at all. Scripture clearly and repeatedly declares that God is “sovereign” over all creation (Acts 4:24; 1Tim.6:15; Rev.6:10). God rules and reigns over all.

No matter how bleak or evil the world is, or seems to be, we can know for certain that God is alive and sovereignly working to accomplish His perfect will. “The cross and the tomb are empty, but the throne of God is not!” We need not give in to worry or fear at the things we see going on in the world. For God is enthroned in heaven, reigning and ruling with all sovereign authority and power.

2. The GLORY of God (vs.3-4)

➤ When it comes to what John saw, we are not completely left to our own imaginations. John provides us with an analogous description of the One who sits upon the throne. In verse 3, we read that God “*had the appearance of jasper and carnelian*” (vs.3). Both of these (jasper and carnelian) are two precious and brilliant stones (both mentioned again in Rev.21:11, 19-20 in connection with the foundation of the city). Keep in mind, John is not stating that God is made of jasper and carnelian but trying to describe the brilliant radiance of His divine glory.

“*Jasper*” was a clear, crystal- or diamond-like gem, translucent rock. The root meaning of the Hebrew word, translated Jasper, is “to be bright” and describes a clear stone that is dazzling and sparkling bright and white that brilliantly reflects all the colors of the spectrum. There can be little doubt that this stone symbolizes the purity of God’s holiness, and the brilliant splendor of His glory.

The “*carnelian*” (or “sardius”, named for the town of Sardis where it was discovered) stone, is fiery red. This stone was blood red which can represent God’s wrath and justice, and/or His redemptive work through Jesus’ blood shed on the cross.

➤ Encircling the dazzling, brilliant, and magnificent throne of God are two amazing and symbolic features. The first is “*a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald*” (vs.3). This is a glorious symbol of God’s mercy and grace arched over the God as He sat on His throne. The covenant faithfulness of God is seen in the rainbow He provided for righteous Noah and his family after God saved them from the flood that destroyed the whole earth. The beauty of the rainbow, after the rain, continues to be a symbolic reminder of God’s love, mercy, and grace in the midst of His judgment and wrath (see Gen.9:12-15).

➤ Likewise, Ezekiel’s his vision of heaven describes this rainbow that surrounds the throne of Almighty God and gives for us the reason for its radiance:

Ezek 1:27-28 ~ “Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.”

➤ The second feature that was “*around the throne*” (vs.3) “*were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads*” (vs.4).

There is much discussion as to who these elders were and what they were doing around the throne of God. Some see them as representing angels, others interpret them as exalted Old Testament saints, some perceive them to represent the raptured, glorified, and coronated church, and still others identify them as representing a combination of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles.

What we know for sure is that these *“elders”* (*presbyteros*) represent spiritual and godly leaders. The fact that they were seated on *“twenty-four thrones”* (vs.4) suggests that they are appointed to reign with Christ in some fashion. Also, we note that they are pure and holy as they are *“clothed in white garments”* (vs.4), which means that have received, by faith, the righteousness of Christ through His substitutionary death and resurrection (2Cor.5:21). The *“golden crowns on their heads”* (vs.4) most likely reveals that these elders represent a victor’s crown. In the Bible, it is referred to as “the crown of life,” “the crown of righteousness,” and “the crown of glory.” The golden crown is a symbol of receiving an eternal reward from Almighty God.

Encircling God’s throne are these lesser thrones, which direct our attention to God’s glorious throne in the center of it all.

3. The AWESOMENESS of God (vs.5-6a)

➤ I have often said that the word “awesome” should be reserved for God alone. For He alone is truly awesome. We see an example of this in verses five and six. What came *“from the throne”* of God is truly breathtaking and spectacular. John described it as *“flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder”* (vs.5). This awesome display is emanating from God’s throne! This certainly represents God’s divine essence and character, but also specifically refers to the ominous stirrings (brewing) of God’s wrath. While there is something beautiful about a lightning storm, it can also be quite terrifying (especially if you are not safe from it).

Here we see God’s imminent judgment of God on a sinful world (Rev.6-19). God is not ignorant of, nor is He amused by, the sin of this world. He has not grown more acceptable (or tolerant) of sin, nor changed His view of sin. While it may appear to us that the unrighteous and evil are prevailing, we can be assured that God will justly and eternally judge all sin and every evildoer. We need not be discouraged, and we must not be deceived. No unrepentant sinner will escape God’s wrath, and evil will not ultimately triumph.

➤ In the Bible, thunder and lightning are vivid symbols of God’s awesome presence, and are associated with the power of His wrath and judgment.

Rev 8:5 ~ “Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.”

Rev 11:19 ~ “Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.”

Rev 16:18 ~ “And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake.”

Ex 19:16 ~ [at Mount Sinai]: “On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.”

➤ One thing is for sure, heaven is not a dark and quiet place, and it is certainly not unimpressive! From the throne of God itself is seen an awesome display of flashing lightning and roaring thunder as God’s powerful presence is manifested for all to see and hear. God, through His Son, will perfectly and eternally judge the world (Jn.5:22-29; Acts 17:30-31; Rom.1:18-32; Rev.19:11-16).

➤ The end of verse five is possibly the most confusing verse in this entire chapter: *“and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God”* (vs.5). We know that these *“seven torches of fire ... are the seven spirits of God”*, but what are *“the seven spirits of God”* (cf. 1:4)? We can deduce what this means by understanding what it certainly does not mean. This does not teach that there are literally seven different and distinct (Holy) Spirits of God. The Bible is clear that there is only one Holy Spirit.

Eph 4:4 ~ “There is one body and one Spirit...” (cf. Matt.28:19; 1Cor.12:4-13; Eph.2:18)

While this verse may be referring back to the *“seven golden lampstands”* in Revelation 1:12 and 2:1 – which are the seven churches (1:20) – it seems more likely that *“the seven spirits of God”* (vs.5) refers to the fullness and perfection of God’s Holy Spirit.

Isa 11:2 ~ “And 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 the fear of the Lord.” (see Zech.4:1-10)

➤ Here we can see that the *“the seven spirits of God”* are more clearly understood as the seven-fold Spirit of God, which John associates with the seven lamps. Therefore, this expression is best understood as apocalyptic symbolism. It identifies the fullness of God’s Holy Spirit as being manifest in His

In the Old Testament (Judg.7:15-20), *“torches”* were known as instruments of war. Applying this understanding to the apocalyptic book of Revelation, we see the seven-fold Spirit of God representing God’s war-like wrath on, and judgment of, sinful and rebellious mankind. Although the Holy Spirit is a Comforter to those who believe in God, He is an instrument of God’s divine wrath and judgment to those who do not believe.

➤ In addition to the seven spirits of God that were *“before the throne”* (vs.5) we read that *“before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal”* (vs.6) We know that this is a metaphorical sea, since there is no sea in heaven (cf. Rev.21:1). What John is relaying to us is that the “floor” of heaven is as tranquil as a sea of glass and as brilliant as crystal. This reveals that even with the brewing storm of God’s wrath, heaven is not in chaos and God is not capricious or out of control. His judgment is calculated, and predetermined, and will be executed with divine precision. Again, heaven is not a dark and dingy place but rather a place that is radiant and awesome.

4. The HOLINESS of God (vs.6b-8)

➤ All *“around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind”* (vs.6). This is another difficult verse to interpret. Not only is it difficult for us to grasp what they completely looked like, it is almost impossible for us to understand what they fully represent. As we see similar creatures represented in Scripture (Is.6:1-3; Ezek.1:5ff; 10:14-15) it is safe to conclude that these *“living creatures”* are actually cherubim (sing., cherub) – similar to seraphim (sing., seraph) – which are an exalted (highest) order of angels frequently associated with God’s holy power, and who constantly worship God.

➤ While each of these four creatures had different faces (vs.7; or each having all four faces, Ezek.1:6), they each were *“full of eyes in front and behind”* (vs.6), *“full of eyes all around and within”* (vs.8), and each had *“six wings”* (vs.8). These heavenly (angelic) creatures are not omniscient like God, but they are always observing and ever perceiving all that is going on around them. They exist to serve and worship God.

Isa 6:2 ~ “Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.”

➤ More importantly, each of them *“day and night ... never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’”* (vs.8). Their worship of God is a constant (uninterrupted) and eternal (never ending) declaration of praise. He is exalted as *“the Lord God Almighty”* in that He is

all-powerful and invincible, and the one *“who was and is and is to come”* in reference to Him being the self-existing and eternal God (Ex.3:14). Further, God is extolled as being absolutely and eternally holy.

Isa 6:3 ~ “And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’”

- It is important to note that God’s holiness is the only one of God’s attributes that is repeated three consecutive times. We never read that God is “love, love, love” or “good, good, good.” But in God’s holy Word we find that God is “holy, holy, holy.” Theologians call this the trisagion, which simply means “three times holy.” God’s holiness is the perfect culmination of all His attributes. Everything God does and everything God is, is motivated, undergirded, and executed by His holiness.

5. The SUPREMACY of God (vs.9-11)

- The climax of this whole scene is the crescendo of praise and worship directed at God as He sits upon His throne. The picture that John paints for us is as beautiful as it is intense: *“And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the 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 honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created’”* (vs.9-11).

- When the living creatures’ worship and give thanks to God (as we read about in vs.8) it sets-off a domino effect of praise and adoration – which never ends because the worship from the living creatures never ends). In response to the creatures worshipping and honoring God, the twenty-four elders fall down before God in humble veneration – worshipping Him in both actions and in words.

First, they physically express their worship of God as they *“fall down before Him”* (vs.10) and as they *“cast their crowns before [His] throne”* (vs.10). This act is a beautiful scene of humiliation and reverence. They not only bow in humble adoration, but *“cast”* (*ballō*) their crowns – the symbol of their reward for serving God – before the throne as an offering to God.

- ✓ Illust: “Since no further mention is made of these crowns it would seem that they remain before the throne as a witness to its absolute sovereignty and to their adoring submission” (J. Allen, *What the Bible Teaches: Revelation*, p.172).

This is likely what all Christians will do with the crowns they have received from God. Such a *“reward”* (1Cor.3:14), or *“crown”* (2Tim.4:8; Jms.1:12; 1Pet.5:4; Rev.2:10), is the capacity to worship God in heaven. The opportunity to worship God by giving Him all your rewards.

Second, these elders verbally express their worship of God in saying, *“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created”* (vs.11). God alone is the Creator God, and He alone worthy of supreme worship.

- This – humble and fervent worship of God – is the occupation (preoccupation) of all those who are in the throne room of heaven, who appear before God’s throne. May we, as God’s children, reflect this worship of God here on earth. May we not get overly caught up in that which is physical, tangible, and temporal. May we *“Set [our] minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth”* (Col.3:2; Col.3:1; 2Cor.5:2).

Conclusion

- How awesome and amazing it is to see God enthroned in heaven! The only right response is one of utter humiliation, exaltation, and adoration! The truth is, as believers, we too will and do share in this anthem of praise and worship of our Creator God. To share in this worship does not point to our worthiness, but God’s supreme worthiness. We can approach His sovereign and holy throne not because of who we are, or what we’ve done, but because of who He is and what – through Jesus Christ – He has done (Heb.4:14-16; 10:22; 2Cor.5:21).

We are victorious over sin and death because Christ has redeemed us through His life, death, and resurrection from the dead. It is to God that all praise and honor and glory are due. For it is through Him, that we find redemption and life eternal in heaven. Through His holiness, goodness, grace, and love God has made a way for sinful man to be with Him forever – for all who would ever believe in His Son, Jesus Christ!

✓ Illust: In his classic devotional book titled *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, English Puritan pastor and author Richard Baxter (1615-1691) wrote: “Why are not our hearts continually set on heaven? Why dwell we not there in constant contemplation? ... Bend thy soul to study eternity, busy thyself about the life to come, habituate thyself to such contemplations, and let not those thoughts be seldom and cursory, but bathe thyself in heaven’s delights” (Richard Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*; Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847, p.235-36).

➤ It is when we view heaven, through the perspective of Scripture, that we begin to hold on to this life loosely and long not for this world, but for a better place – our real, eternal home. When we contemplate the true Treasure of heaven – not streets of gold, but the unbroken and undefiled worship of God in the fullness of His awesome presence – this world, and all its troubles, slowly begin to fade into shadow that comes from truly knowing God.