

# Focus on Prophecy GUIDE 10



# Someone is in Charge

- **“Houston, we have a problem.” When Commander Jim Lovell spoke those words he was more than 200,000 miles out in space.**
- **An oxygen tank aboard Apollo 13 had just exploded, causing serious damage to the service module.**
- **But the message reached Mission Control immediately, and hundreds of engineers, physicists, and computer experts got right to work.**
- **With their accumulated wisdom, they came up with a rescue plan.**
- **They talked the astronauts through the procedures step-by-step.**
- **Out in the vast darkness of space, the friendly voice of Mission Control guided Jim Lovell and his companions safely back to Earth.**

Someone is in Charge

- **The infinitely wise Creator of the universe has His own communication system which reaches across the vast heavens to individual human beings in need of rescue.**
- **His Mission Control site, from which He rules the galaxies, is of course, far more complex than the control center of NASA.**
- **But in Revelation 4, God invites John to take a look inside His “control room” in heaven. The result: a mind-boggling vision.**

# Someone is in Charge

- **READ REVELATION 4 IN ITS ENTIRETY.**
- **When you have done this, return to verses 1 and 2. *Come on in!***
- **If you visit someone and they throw the door wide open with a big smile and exclaim, “Come on in! Wonderful to see you!” how does it make you feel?**
- **How would you feel if the person welcoming you was a head of state, the leader of your country? Pretty special. You’d be able to relax in presidential quarters.**
- **Well, God did something like this for John.**
- **The door He threw open so graciously led to the very throne room of heaven, where He showed John some impressive sights.**

# Someone is in Charge

- **In chapter 3 God's voice is described as thunder coming from the throne. Here God's invitation sounds like a trumpet blowing.**
- **John says, "I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice 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.' Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne" (Revelation 4:1, 2).**
- **Exciting news for John. God is going to show him the future; the apostle will be looking at events on planet Earth that haven't happened yet! Guess what? You get to look over John's shoulder and listen in!**

# The One on the Throne

- **In verse 3, John describes the One sitting on the throne in a very striking way.**
- **To picture divine glory, he refers to brilliant jewels—the fiery sardius stone and the flashing jasper. A whole rainbow of colors seems to encircle the throne.**
- **John saw “four living creatures” around the throne. These beings have wings, and they praise God unceasingly, saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (vs. 8).**
- **“Twenty-four elders” also surround God’s throne.**
- **They “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: ‘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’ ” (vss. 10, 11).**

# The One on the Throne

- **Everyone John sees in heaven is mesmerized by the Almighty. The four living creatures can't stop proclaiming His glory.**
- **The twenty-four elders fall down before Him and worship. They know they're in the presence of the Maker of the universe, the Lord of lords, the center of all things.**
- **He is the One who leads the galaxies in their synchronized celestial dance and who also touches lives on planet Earth.**
- **God, through John, invites you into His throne room.**
- **He wants to show you the future of our world because He cares about your individual future.**
- **There's great peace in really knowing God cares about you.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: God is the Maker of the universe. (False or True)**

# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **Besides John, others in the Bible were also given remarkable glimpses of God on His throne.**
- **The prophet Daniel saw the “Ancient of Days” clothed in snowy white on a throne that seemed ablaze with glory. A fiery stream flowed from it (Daniel 7:9, 10).**
- **Isaiah was shown God “high and lifted up [exalted]” on a throne.**
- **The train of His robe filled the temple, and six-winged “seraphims,” or angels, hovered above Him (Isaiah 6:1-3).**
- **Ezekiel pictured the Almighty and His throne as having the “color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it” (Ezekiel 1:27).**



# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **His throne rested on an “awesome crystal” (vs. 22), or expanse, sparkling like ice.**
- **Living creatures whirled around Him within a brilliant light like “a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day” (vs. 28).**
- **Just before his martyrdom Stephen received a vision of God’s glory on His throne and saw “the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56).**
- **All those privileged to look into heaven put the experience in similar words.**
- **If you find some of their descriptions hard to understand, remember they are human beings trying to picture in human language the most spectacular sights in the universe.**

# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **TO THINK ABOUT:** *If you had to describe God to someone, what would you tell him or her?*
- **A well-respected Roman aristocrat named Cornelia once received at her house a wealthy lady who proudly showed off her jewelry.**
- **Her visitor then challenged her hostess to display her finest stones. Cornelia gestured toward her two young boys, who had just entered the room, and replied, “These are my jewels.”**
- **Those two boys, Tiberius and Gaius, grew up to become the famous reformers of Rome’s agrarian laws.**
- **When Bible writers describe God’s glory in terms of brilliant jewels, they also reflect something of the way He feels about His children because to the heavenly Father, His redeemed people sparkle in His hand “like jewels in a crown” (Zechariah 9:16).**

# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **That glorious rainbow John and others saw above God's throne echoes the same truth.**
- **The rainbow first appears in Genesis 9, after the worldwide Flood which destroyed the earth.**
- **God lifted it up as a sign that He would never again destroy the world by water.**
- **Whenever the sky darkened and the rains poured down, the rainbow would always remind people of God's promise.**
- **It's like a greeting card assuring us that God's word is trustworthy, and that we're important to Him. We are His children, His jewels.**
- **And each of us can "grow up" to do great things for Him.**

# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **The rainbow would always remind people of God's promise. It's like a greeting card assuring us that God's word is trustworthy, and that we're important to Him. We are His children, His jewels. And each of us can "grow up" to do great things for Him.**
- **The next few verses in Revelation 4 describe activity from the throne, before the throne, and around the throne of God. Let's examine these three descriptions.**
- **"From the throne proceeded lightnings, thundering, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal" (vss. 5, 6).**

# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **John hears thunder as God speaks. He sees lightning as the angels flash from the throne of God to carry out His commands. Where are the angels going? They're traveling from "Mission Control" to Earth.**
- **While the tragedy of sin and suffering grips this planet, all the attention of heaven is focused on our individual needs.**
- **Every frail voice whispering, "God, we have a problem," is instantly recognized.**
- **God immediately responds in the way His infinite wisdom knows is best.**
- **All the living creatures whom the prophets saw swirling about God's throne are not some distraction.**
- **They are an extension of God's concern for you and me. The voice that thunders is friendly; it's God talking us through His rescue plan, step-by-step.**

# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **Imagine the scene. A throne sitting on a crystal sea. Like a prism, the “sea of glass” spreads the dazzling colors of the beautiful rainbow above it. It also reflects the light of seven blazing torches.**
- **The Holy Spirit in all His perfection is represented by the number seven in various ways.**
- **And the Holy Spirit is yet another way in which God reaches out to His “jewels.”**
- **The Father wants us to experience His wonderful qualities. He wants to live in us.**
- **That’s what the Holy Spirit is all about.**
- **God’s great love makes the Spirit available to each one of us.**

# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **John sees a great deal of activity going on around God's throne—four living creatures are praising and glorifying God.**
- **Twenty-four elders are casting their crowns at His feet and worshiping Him (vss. 8-10). In ancient Israel, priests who served at the temple were organized into twenty-four groups.**
- **They made sure the Hebrew system of festivals and holy days flowed uninterrupted throughout the year.**
- **Similarly here, the twenty-four elders on twenty-four thrones have a special task of worshiping God and singing praises to Him, because He is the Creator of all things.**
- **During their anthem of devotion, the elders take off their crowns and lay them before the throne of God.**

# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **TO THINK ABOUT:** *If you had a crown of gold what would cause you to lay it before another person?*
- **Next we come to “four living creatures.”** From descriptions in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1 we can identify them as angels.
- **They are each pictured in highly symbolic language.** The lion represents strength.
- **The ox symbolizes a willingness to serve.** The face of a man represents intelligence.
- **The eagle depicts swiftness and keen perception.**
- **The many wings suggest the speed with which the divine will is to be carried out.** These creatures are “all-seeing” in a very graphic way.



# The Throne Room and the Throne

- **The four living creatures actually portray four dimensions of Jesus' character. He is a king (the lion), but also a servant (the ox). He is a human (the man's face), but also soared above as fully divine (the eagle). What characteristics do you appreciate the most about Jesus?**
- **Isn't it wonderful that, early on in the book of Revelation, God gives us these striking word pictures of who He is and how much He cares for us? He's taking us on a tour of His heavenly Mission Control.**
- **He's showing us that in everything—in His omnipresent Holy Spirit, in the flight of angels, in the work of supernatural beings—He acts ceaselessly on our behalf. Are you important to God? No question! The throne room of heaven demonstrates that fact.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: Although God is enthroned in heaven, He is intimately acquainted with each of us and wants to help us individually. (False or True)**
- **The rainbow is a sign to us that God promises to never again send a flood on the entire world. (False or True)**

# The Lamb

- **Now let's look at Revelation 5. This chapter continues our tour of the divine throne room.**
- **But the focus shifts from God Almighty on His throne to the Lamb of God before the throne.**
- **The Lamb is now the center of attention.**
- **As the scene opens, the attention of the universe is riveted on a great drama unfolding before the throne.**
- **John sees God the Father seated on His throne, holding in His right hand "a book written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals" (Revelation 5:1).**
- **In ancient protocol the right-hand side, especially of a sovereign, always signified favor or highest standing.**
- **In other words, this book has special significance. But its message is sealed.**

# The Lamb

- **John writes, “Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?’**
- **And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.**
- **So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll” (Revelation 5:2, 3)**
- **It appears that no created being in the entire universe can unseal the scroll’s secrets (vs. 3).**
- **It’s going to take someone extraordinary. And that means there must be something extraordinary in this book.**
- **Think about it! Not one of the twenty-four elders, not one of the four living creatures, not one of the innumerable angels, can open the book. All stand silent. John is so distressed by this predicament that he begins to weep.**

# The Lamb

- **Have you ever felt so hopeless and overcome by a tragedy in your life that all you could do was cry?**
- **If you did not know how to find comfort and hope in your time of crisis, the next few verses will point you to a solution that lasts forever!**
- **One of the twenty-four elders comes up with a solution. Let's follow the drama as it unfolds.**
- **John says, "One of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.'**
- **And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God . . . . Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne" (vss. 5-7).**

# The Lamb

- **The number seven represents perfection. Horns symbolize power.**
- **The seven eyes and seven spirits represent the all-seeing Spirit of God working efficiently on our behalf.**
- **When the Lamb takes the scroll, the beings around God's throne sing "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' "** (vss. 9, 10).

# The Lamb

- *Who is the Lamb?*
- **When Jesus went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist, John spoke these words:**
- **“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).**
- **The apostle Peter referred to Jesus in the same way: “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18, 19).**

# The Lamb

- **The Lamb is none other than Jesus the Son of God who died on the cross of Calvary to save us from our sins!**
- **As soon as Jesus, the Lamb of God, takes the sealed scroll in His hand, heaven's silence is broken by thunderous ovations of adoration and praise.**
- **Harps ring out. Voices grow ecstatic. Heavenly beings are moved to bow before the Lamb.**
- **The throne room of God is filled with intense celebration.**
- **All are overcome by the same realization: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!"**

# The Lamb

- **“I looked,” John says, “and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,**
- **‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!’**
- **And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:**
- **‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever’ ” (vss. 11-13).**



# The Lamb

- **Revelation 7:14** shows us exactly why the Lamb is so highly honoured.
- It states that those who are saved and receive eternal life will have
- “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
- As we noted previously in Revelation 1:5, Jesus Christ “loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”
- **THOUGHT QUESTION:** The Lamb who is able to open the sealed book is Jesus who died for us. (False or True)

# Conclusion

- **A very successful pop star had begun to feel that his life of nonstop limos, adoring fans, and champagne had left him pretty empty.**
- **After one concert, a young man began to talk to him about Christ, and the singer found himself listening, then praying, then pouring his heart out to God.**
- **He confessed his sinfulness to the God who had shed His blood to save him.**
- **And the pop idol made a remarkable discovery: “I was washed, cleansed—I couldn’t believe it.**
- **Suddenly, when I admitted that I was sorry for the life I had led without God, everything collapsed, and I was perfectly balanced.**
- **I had been given day one again.”**

# Conclusion

- **God can indeed wash away the pain and guilt of your past and give you day one again.**
- **That's what it means to wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb.**
- **Christ's death on the cross turns forgiveness into a free gift. If you haven't done so already, you can accept that gift right now.**
- **Simply acknowledge that you are a sinner, that you can't earn salvation; believe that Jesus died for your sins, and accept Him as your Lord and Savior.**
- **You can do it by repeating the following prayer. Say it out loud to God.**