

Revelation 4

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Date: 27 April 2025

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[0:00] So Revelation chapter 4, page 1236 in the Church Bibles. After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven.

! And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this.

At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. The one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.

Surrounding the throne were 24 other thrones, and seated on them were 24 elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.

[1:12] From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing.

These are the seven spirits of God. Also in front of the throne, there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the centre round the throne were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes in front and behind. The first living creature was like a lion.

The second was like an ox. The third had a face like a man. The fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings, and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings.

Day and night they never stopped saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.

[2:37] Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour, and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever.

They lay their crowns before the throne and say, You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

And may God bless that to us. I want to open your Bibles, Bible apps, to the passage that Kenneth read for us earlier, Revelation chapter 4.

Now, as I said before, if you're just here for the first time, then it's our practice to work our way through books of the Bible. We pretty much start at the beginning and kind of work our way through a book of the Bible so that we miss nothing out and sort of extract all that God has to say to us from the whole counsel of God.

I have to say that it has taken me 20 years to pluck up the courage, however, to preach on the book of Revelation. I think for preachers, Genesis, Romans, Revelations, are the ones that you feel, you know, just a little bit more preaching time under your belt experience to preach on.

[4:12] I'm not sure I've made it yet, but we're tackling it nonetheless. And maybe as we sort of have launched into Genesis again, in community group, you felt something similar, whether you're leading the group or participating in the group, going, hmm, how are we going to get on here?

And of course, the first three chapters of Genesis are relatively easygoing. You know, the letters to the churches, the other things that many people preach on, and usually the place where most preachers stop and dare to go no further.

But as we go on, things obviously get a little bit more tricky to understand. And so it's key that we spend some time just thinking about context and genre as we kind of launch into this.

And so there's sort of, there's a bit of an extended introduction this morning, just thinking about these things to kind of help us navigate not just this passage, but the other passages that are going

to be coming up and we're looking at in our studies together.

And I think once we do that, hopefully we see that actually it's not as scary a book as we might first have thought. And actually it's a really precious part of scripture that is going to become very dear to us.

[5 : 26] And of course, the extreme ends of interpretation of Revelation do not take enough cognizance of things like context.

What was the situation that John was writing in? What's the kind of genre? What is the style of writing that is contained within the book of Revelation? And so you get some wild and wacky ideas out there on the internet.

Maybe you've come across them. The cults go absolutely mad over them. And unfortunately, these kind of somewhat wacky and creative interpretations of Revelation make believers really jumpy. You know, when something major happens in the world, whether it's back in the day, it was the rise of the Soviet Union, folks were talking about the rise of the Antichrist or the rise of the European Union, or folks were saying the same kind of things back at the time of the rise of Napoleon. Folks, you know, start kind of looking at Genesis and trying to figure stuff out from it because they're looking at it with the wrong lenses. And then, of course, there's this stuff about timings.

[6 : 29] And folks get jittery whenever some major things are happening at the turning of the millennium. Folks are getting, oh, you know, Jesus is coming and so on. I met folks recently who were very assured that Jesus is coming back in 2030.

You know, I wish he would. I wish that I'd be happy with today. Please, Lord, Maranatha, you know, let's get on with eternity. But again, I, you know, I'm going to stick my neck out and say, I think they're going to be disappointed.

And also, when the slightest thing happens in the Middle East or to Israel, you know, this is the big one, this is it, this is, you know, Armageddon, and so on. Christians with a sort of unhelpful view of Revelation just get a bit jumpy in unnecessary ways.

And there's so much on the internet that feeds these kind of things. And some denominations major on it, as are the cults of a field with it. But it's also one of the potential things that divides us as a fellowship.

Because we come from different backgrounds and different Christian experience and there's some different teachings. And we mustn't let it do that. As we say that, you know, the things pertaining to salvation are non-negotiable salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, in scripture alone, all for God's glory alone.

[7 : 47] But these secondary things are just that. They're second and should not divide us. And hopefully, as we spend time in Revelation, we'll begin to see what actually it is saying as we read it for ourselves.

I think a big controlling principle for me in all of our thinking about end times are the words of Jesus himself. When he addresses the topic in Matthew 24, the essence, it's a lengthy kind of piece on thinking about end times, but the essence of it is in verse 36, isn't it?

When Jesus says, but about the day or the hour, no one knows. Not even the angels in heaven, nor the sun, but only the Father. Only the Father knows the time that God, Christ has appointed to return again to bring the final judgment.

So he's basically saying, if I don't know, then don't speculate about it. Only the Father knows. And when the Father thinks it is time, he will send me and so on.

And I think that's really helpful in just kind of calming our spirits a little bit in terms of our thinking about Revelation. So as I said, I want to spend just a little bit of time thinking about what kind of literature is this in the Bible?

[9 : 02] What are some of the key things that we need to know in approaching it? In a moment, we're going to sort of, the door will be open, but it's almost as if, I'm kind of wiping our feet quite a bit before we're able to enter into the door.

So we'll spend a little bit of time on that. First of all, I want to talk about the genre. What kind of literature is this? And actually, Revelation, I think, helps us itself to kind of understand it as a book. You look back at chapter one. There are several words that are used there at the very beginning that kind of help us get a sense of some of what we're about to encounter. First of all, it's a revelation of Jesus Christ.

So we're going to see Christ revealed in it. It is a revelation of the Greek word, which is the translated apocalypse. It means just an unveiling, a revealing of Jesus.

And then in chapters one to three, we see that there are letters in it. So we're going to expect a revelation of Christ. We're seeing some letters in it also. But in verse three there, there is the word prophecy.

[10:03] It is a prophecy. So what kind of prophecy is it? And in terms of trying to understand it, folks have taken lots of positions over the years. Let me just outline four of them.

The first is what's called the preterist view. And that view is that revelation was written just for the time that it was written and has no bearing on the future.

So it's a kind of foretelling, not a foretelling, just saying about what is happening there and then.

And that, of course, would be a great help and strength to those who are there hearing it for the first time and present in all of that, but little help to us.

Then there's the hystericist view that revelation is a forecast, a foretelling of the history of Western Europe right up until the second coming of Christ. And the strength of that, of course, that it would be help us now, but of very little help to them.

And the weakness also is that this is a view that produces much speculation and disagreement.

Then there is the futurist view that apart from a few passages, this book is entirely about the end of the age and little to do with the situation that we're facing first century Christians.

[11:14] And then the idealist view that it sets out nothing but principles and theological concepts that are suitable for any age and there is no historical anchoring to it at all.

But actually, when you look at it, when you read it, and when you compare it actually with other prophecies, for example, Isaiah, you see that none of these adequately describe what it is, although there are elements of them actually in it.

So if you compare it with Isaiah, you see that in Isaiah there are prophecies that are for that particular time and God is speaking to the people of God in Isaiah's time.

But there are also kind of foretelling, you know, Isaiah 53, where he foresees the cross, for example. So there is prophecy about the future, but also there is kind of, there are principles that apply for all time in the whole of the prophecy.

So all of these streams are kind of present, but you have to be a little bit careful about how you sort of navigate your way through them and understand what is, you know, what you're reading at that time.

[12:25] But what was the time then that this letter was being written? John is writing probably from the island of Patmos where he's been exiled by Domitian, the then emperor of the Roman Empire, who like his forebears had a great distaste of Christianity and persecuted Christians.

Although you get a kind of sense that towards the end of the writing of the New Testament, most of the books are kind of preoccupied with how to encourage Christians in that hardship as they're facing persecution.

So Hebrews is written to encourage persecuted believers. You see second and third, John written pretty much in coded language so that it could be distributed and if anyone was caught with it, they wouldn't be able to necessarily discern that it was specifically about Christian teaching so that folks wouldn't be arrested and so on.

And so that is very much the context of the time of the writing of Revelation and those latter books of the New Testament. So this then will be a much needed word to folks who are truly up against it. You'll get that sense as we go through the book of Revelation that there are folks being martyred, they're being persecuted, they're being beaten, they're being arrested, they're being killed for the gospel. So we're getting a sense that there are various kind of threads to the letter and we need to step through it carefully.

[13:46] We're getting a sense of the context that this is written to encourage believers who are being persecuted to help them to remain faithful. But is there anything else about the book that's going to help us?

I think there is. One of the other things that I think helps us is the structure itself. I think it helps us to grasp the kind of material that we're dealing with. So in chapter 1, which we looked at a while back, we have this introduction and the letters to the churches in chapters 2 to 3.

And then we have in chapters 4 to 5, that we're looking at this week and next week, the vision of the throne and the lamb. Then we have seven seals in chapters 6 and 7, seven trumpets in chapters 8

to 11, seven plagues in chapters 15 to 16.

And John Stott, I think, is very helpful in kind of saying when you look at it, what you realize is that the book is not showing a film showing a continuous unfolding of one story.

He says, but it's a series of lantern slides depicting the same landscape from different angles. The seals, the trumpets, the signs, the plagues cover the same historical period but with a different message.

[15:00] I think that's just really helpful to kind of think, okay, that's kind of where this is going. This is, we're getting a sort of feel for what's going on here, that it's covering one particular period in time, looking at it from different angles, but it's going to contain truth for every age of every believer.

So it speaks to them and it speaks to us. And I think those kind of details help just cool the boots, don't they, of any kind of fanciful interpretations on Revelation are going to help us to kind of navigate our way through it.

These are not consecutive periods in history, like some say, for example, the letters to the seven churches represent seven ages to come. No, no, they're just letters to seven churches at the time containing truth for every age that is applicable to every Christian in every time.

But at the same way, also towards the end of the scripture we're going to see John speaking about that which is to come and the return of Christ.

And we see that in chapter 17 onwards. When we see the fall of Satan, the triumph of the land and the descent of the new Jerusalem. And kind of that hopefully encapsulates Revelation in a nutshell and gives us a sense of where we're going and how we're going to approach this book.

[16:29] So firstly, it's important to know what kind of literature this is and get a hold of that. Also secondly, it's good to grasp something of its purpose.

And we're given that in chapter 1 verse 3. Its purpose is to be a blessing. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the word of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it.

And so what is God's intent for this passage, this book? It's to bless us, to help us, to draw us closer to himself, to be sustained in the age that we live.

So we can expect that as we gather on Sunday mornings as we look at it together and our community groups as the children are going to be looking at it as well. It's going to take a bit of hard work, yes, but we are promised a blessing through it.

So apologies for taking just a little bit of time to kind of wipe our feet before we go through the door this morning, but I think hopefully that is helpful and pay off dividends in the future weeks as we look at it and also in our community groups.

[17:36] But let's look at the chapter itself. Verse 1. After this I looked and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And of course the contrast here is with the first three chapters that in the main where God speaking to compromised and lukewarm kind of churches that had just somewhat lost their way.

Apostles were being martyred. the church was under the cosh. It all might have appeared somewhat bleak and so you have that kind of bleakness represented in those chapters but here in chapter 4 light is beginning to dawn as the door of heaven is opened and we're about to see something wonderful and something beautiful.

But what is it that God wants to say to these beleaguered Christians? He wants them to look up, isn't it? Look up and see as it's nicked from the Getty hymn there is a higher throne.

Look up. That is a word, it's a principle if you like for believers who are struggling in one way or another in every age. The Lord says to him in verse 1 come John come people come Cornerstone this morning let me show you something that is going to bless your heart that is going to help you in your walk and he takes John and he takes us to the door and it opens to glorious light light that John must have felt just so pure the light of heaven because this is verse 1 the door of heaven and the same voice that had been heard before in chapter 1 verse 10 that sounded like a trumpet is speaking again and here we begin to see sort of John and Ezekiel and Isaiah and Daniel using similar kind of phraseologies to describe what is almost indescribable to try and fathom the unfathomable he says it's like a trumpet and you see that kind of language when he's trying to describe it it was like that it had the appearance of this or that and you know that's quite common in the kind of apocalyptic writings and genre that we see in Daniel and Ezekiel and here in Revelation but why did it sound like a trumpet well of course a trumpet would have been used at the time to give a clear authoritative call to behold you know and be aware that an important announcement

was coming or an important person was coming

I wonder if it sounded like a trumpet almost like the sound waves that carried the voice almost you know were so taken up by it that they almost heralded the words in such a way it sounded that they carried the words like a trumpet you know I don't know I'm speculating but it was like it was glorious in his hearing and so here in chapter 4 we're getting that first snapshot that lantern slide that John Stott talks about that's first picture that's going to help sustain the soul of the weird disciple struggling to trust and see in verse 2 that he's in the spirit it's not a physical place that he's in but in his spirit God is giving him this revelation but what is it that is being revealed to him what is the thing that is going to refresh the soul of believers is it a sun drenched beach with perfect temperatures is it a beautifully formed mountain and valley blue skies the most refreshing breeze imaginable was it a trouble free future mapped out for them so they never need worry about life again what was it that they needed to hear what was it that they needed to see what is it that God wanted to show them and what is it that God wants to show us what is it that we actually need what is the view that we require the view that we require here that God reveals is of a throne in heaven that there is a throne in heaven on which he is sitting and from which he reigns the throne that he has shown it's not an empty throne maybe some at that time and sometimes we might think and wonder is he on the throne is he truly reigning has he sort of just nipped off for a millennia just to kind of and left us to it no he's saying no God is on the throne he's never not on it it is occupied verse 2 what is the words that this picture that he's saying embodies reigns what's the word that we need to take to heart isn't it it is the words he reigns he reigns the throne is used 62 times in the bible and 47 of them are used in the book of revelation he reigns is the word we need to be reminded of again and again that will sustain the soul ultimate power does not reside with man with any man or any woman with humanity it resides with God alone it resides with him alone so keep looking up the message to those first believers was though Caesar holds some power even over your life and death he does not reign supreme and even then though he reigns he's only doing so at the bidding of the king of kings of the great throne of heaven

[23:10] Domitian though he claimed actually to be divine did not reign supremely did not reign eternally did not reign with all power with all understanding and with all wisdom and neither did Napoleon in his age or the Soviet empire in theirs or Pol Pot in theirs or any of the world leaders today Isaiah reminds us that the whole earth it's but a footstool the nations are but a drop in the ocean a drop in the bucket in comparison with him and the one who sits there John wants to show us and just open our eyes to the one who sits there he is unlike any other he sits sovereignly he sits in utter majesty his splendor outshines ten thousand times ten thousand suns that it is what he resides in that indescribable unfathom uniqueness he's trying to convey here in verse three when he says that his appearance was like precious stones an attempt to describe the almost indescribable almost beyond the scope of human vocabulary it's reminiscent of Exodus 24:10 which says that under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli as bright blue as the sky or in Ezekiel 1:26 to 28 when Ezekiel saw similar things he said above the vault over their head was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli and high above the throne was a figure like that of a man

I saw that from what appeared to be his wrist up looked like glowing metal full of fire and that from there down he looked like fire and brilliant light surrounded him like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day so was the radiance around him and who else sees a rainbow John of course sees that rainbow above whether he's thinking with reference to that passage whether he physically saw it but he's trying to describe it and saying it was so beautiful it was like sapphire again he's sort of trying to describe it so we glimpse something of it the beauty the wonder the glory with which surrounds that throne and of course this splendor this beauty it's not just for show one who is as glorious as he cannot do anything but just shine as king of kings and lord of lords and surrounding him are 24 thrones verse 4 on whom sit the 24 elders these are probably angelic figures who represent the whole of God's people the 12 tribes of the old and the 12 apostles of the new and they're dressed in white which is not just purity but also victory and so surrounding this throne is majesty is glory is victory and also verse 5 is power the flashing lightning the rumbling peals of the thunder also seen at Mount Sinai in Exodus when God revealed himself and they're not like the puny kind of thunder and lightning that we get here that you basically barely even notice it's like the thunder and lightning you get around the other parts of the world that shake the very ground on which you're standing that reverberate through your chest cavity that when the lightning strikes it

strikes with such power that people just end up running for cover it represents the active the physical potent power of God that power that created all there is just by speaking it into being that power that sustains everything just by the word of his mouth the power that can effortlessly raise the dead the power that scriptures tell us is work in our lives right now the same power that raised Christ from the dead is at work in you

Paul tells us and round this throne there are these seven lamps they're not the lampstands of the previous chapters they may be more reminiscent of the torches that would customarily burn in a throne room in that time and because there are seven the perfect number they represent John tells us the seven full spirit the full and perfect presence of the spirit of God and so in this passage we have the sun beckoning we have the father on the throne and we have the holy spirit presence and as John is saying to us behold our gods in all his splendor and in all his wonder in all his power and in all his glory and verse 6 is interesting the sea that looks like glass the sea represented chaos in the scriptures it was the consumer of ships the interrupter of commerce the preventer of plans and so on but here just like on the day that Christ was on when the storm threatened to overwhelm the boat with the word of his mouth he spoke and it was calm the sea was subdued so here the sea is subdued before its creator surrendered to its master the one who has all power and all authority so what's going on why this here now in this ongoing kind of revelation how does it fit with the previous the flow of the previous chapters well as said of course it's in comparison with some of the darkness and the bleakness of the previous it's light but more than that if you remember in the letters how often at the end of it

Christ says to the people so that you might be to the one who is victorious in other words the one who perseveres to the end and here is a further help for believers Christians to be able to persevere to find the victory to persevere to the end he's saying of course look to the cross but also you need to look to the throne see Christ not just in his humiliation but also in his exaltation hold to the saving power of the cross but also look to the ultimate victory that is ahead that is represented on this throne know that he reigns and let that help and sustain you know that he knows your circumstances know that he is all powerful know that he has a plan and a purpose and even though we might not be able to work it out at this time he's working it out his purposes for his glory and for your good he's saying look to the throne and as you do that regain perspective this is not all there is there is a higher throne look up we need to hear that again and again don't we we need to hear that message there is a higher this is not all there is there is one who reigns on the throne

I remember when we first started looking at the start cornerstone and I was working with Lynn at that time as well and I would go up to her office and say look I'm just a bit apprehensive about how this is going to go what about this what about that and there was one day I don't know if she just fed up me but the Lord just gave her the words to say Callum he reigns you're right I'll go back downstairs and get on with my work but then I go back up and just look at me and I know what you're going to say he reigns that's fine okay it's a word that sustains isn't it it's a word that we need to just hear time and time again it's easy to panic a little about the news wars economic fluctuations interesting world leaders but here's the thing we need to know he reigns he reigns are you overwhelmed about what's happening in your life wrestling with besetting sin with addictions health issues a difficult diagnosis or situation

[31 : 37] John says Jesus says look up the future is certain even if you can't figure it all out now know that he reigns the future is certain and his reign over you is love keep looking up look up see the beauty the glory the splendor the majesty the power the wonder of our gods and know that he reigns so first of all look up I think what also John is saying through John here is also by dying you know C.S. Lewis used to wonder what is the deal with worship why do we have to sing praise to God is he some kind of narcissist that he demands the praises of his people and then he realized that there is a natural human response to that which is truly spectacular and it is all you know the most amazing sunset words barely describe what you're saying it's wonderful the most stunning vista from a high mountain the most jaw-dropping of architectural feats old and new that is amazing and what is that in essence it's praise isn't it it's wonder it's a natural and spontaneous reaction to something that is truly incredible and so it is no wonder that around the throne there is praise because what they're beholding is truly wonderful and here in verse 6 the four creatures representing the whole of the created order they appear also in

Ezekiel 1 all four the beings the lion the ox the eagle the man were thought to be the mightiest of creatures and all of them are coming and being worshipping before the throne so interesting that

the nations and empires have used these symbols as emblems over the years the flying lion was on the walls of Babylon the lion rampant the Scottish royal banner the bull is in the national symbol of Spain eagle for Rome and the US human heads on the coinage of currency of all the nations all of these great achievements great things bow before their creator and all these creatures and they're again using language that they're covered in eyes saying that they're all seeing are beholding the beauty that is before the throne they're joining with the chorus of creation that sings in Psalm 19 that declares the glory of God day after day pouring for speech they're joining in that great chorus of creation declaring his praise the praise of the one who is utterly praiseworthy and it's interesting that in

Ezekiel chapter 1 Daniel chapter 7 where they too are granted a glimpse of heaven their situation is where they're facing great difficulty either about to face or are in exile in the case of Daniel in Babylon that great and terrible empire and here John is in exile in the Babylon of his time the Roman empire ruled at the centre of it by the self proclaimed eternal city ruled by men who considered themselves divine the mission in John's time demanded that he be greeted with the title our Lord and our God compare that with verse 11 the mission was unworthy but contrasted with verse 11 for the one who is worthy of that title it's really interesting that Modi the prime minister of India has begun to declare himself not of biological origin in other words he's divine and Christians there will not buy to that and they're being persecuted they're being beaten they're being arrested their homes are being burned their churches are being bulldozed as we heard a couple of weeks ago and what do

Isaac and Gloria do in that context they look up and they bow down they pray to the one who reigns trusting in him and looking to him just like they're encouraged to do here and here John like Daniel is shown the throne and those who cannot but worship before it as they behold him in all his beauty and they declare that verse eight he is holy the sum of all his goodness and purity anything unable to be spoken anything other than in multiples holy holy holy who was and is and is to come this is the ancient of days described in Daniel in verse nine the living creatures give him the glory the twelve elders fall down and worship and our word worship you may be familiar with this but our word worship is from the old word worth ship declaring his worth when they do that in verse 11 as they declare you

Lord and no other are worthy our Lord and our God to receive glory and honour and power and majesty for you created all things see that their worship it's truth filled worship that ornares and fills the content of their worship they sing the things that are true about God and by you they say we were created and have our being but notice what else they did verse 11 they lay their crowns before the throne it's said that the nine sultans of Malaysia lay their crowns before the new king who was coronated every five years though they are kings they declared you are our king and we lay our crowns before you and surrender to you and to your sovereign reign that's what the elders are doing here so interesting isn't it that in the rise of new atheism over the past couple of decades they kind of shut the door that's opened here they shut the door to heaven they said actually listen to us we have a better vision for life though ultimately life is meaningless the universe cares not whether you live or die actually in this time we can be the gods we can decide who we are what we will do how we will live what we consider to be right and wrong we can create for ourselves a heaven here while we live and people for a time thought this is great this is our you know we can decide how what heaven will look like but over time what has happened is that people have been fleeing back to open the door and saying please please please tell me there is a god in heaven because what we created or started to create what we thought would be heaven is turning out to be pretty hellish even Richard Dawkins has admitted atheism was insufficient to create a lasting civilization and is looking to borrow from the Judeo-Christian worldview to help them if you're been a Christian for a long time we're so accustomed to these ideas but if you're new to looking into these things this changes everything that the door is open that there is a god in heaven it changes everything and true worship and by that I mean more than just sung worship true worship true beholding of who he is changes us changes you beholding his utter glory beholding just his beauty and his perfection just makes us want to surrender our crimes and say Lord have my glory have my substance your will is much better and greater than mine well your vision of life much greater than mine and so I surrender my all to you to you you alone be all the glory for you have made all this you've made me so now rule

[39:57] Lord rule in my life reign over me Lord I cast my crown at your feet and as we do that self-interest is set apart the arrogance of youth or success is laid aside perspective is change it

brings peace to the soul Lord you reign and before that fear somewhat subside as we yield to him frayed emotions are made whole as we surrender back to him giving up the reign that we've tried to establish over our lives holding on to the crown and saying Lord I surrender it to you I'm not a great sleeper as many of you know and I wake in the night and recently just one of the things that I just to calm my kind of mind or whatever is to say Lord you reign and to remind myself of this truth you reign and often I'll cite Psalm 23 you are my shepherd you are the one whom I trust and I get the peace why does this change everything because and why does it bring such blessing we're led aren't we into the presence of the king of kings the lover of our souls the power that gives us power the strength that gives us strength a reign that delivers us from the fears that we so dread and helps us to overcome like he wants us to do and wanted those as we see in those early letters in the chapter in the book now I know that

I'm somewhat speaking in superlatives here but I hope you get the sense of what John wants to communicate to us this morning what the Lord wants to say to our souls because when we are wrestling to lay down our crowns to hold on to power or to whatever to our own will our own way our own self determination our self made security our self rule or trust in others and the opinions of others or the wisdom of others it's then that we get into trouble because we hold on to our crown saying I'm not quite sure I trust you it's when the insecurities of self doubts begin to reign but when we can truly cast our crown and say Lord you reign and I surrender to you then the peace comes so what are the things that you're holding on to that is holding you back from you casting your crown wholly before him maybe it's because you you're kind of looking into the Christian faith you know I'm not a Christian but you know I think I want to be I want to cast my crown before him this morning maybe that's you then come and speak to me put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your saviour and Lord today I'd love to give you some gifts to help you and pray with you about that but maybe there are other things that you're holding on to and thinking and the Holy Spirit is just convicting you of that right now something to do with work or with family or relationship or money or the future well maybe come this morning and say like the man of old he said to Jesus Lord I believe help thou my unbelief and cast your crown before him there is a higher throne so look up bow down and press on for he is as we're about to sing sovereign over us let's sing you