

(Revelation - Part 7): The Rainbow Round the Throne

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon explores the themes of God's throne, the rainbow as a sign of covenant and protection, and the relationship between God's moral judgments and the light men and nations have received.

Duration: 48:46

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Proverbs 25:11, Isaiah 6:1, Matthew 16:16, John 7:17, Revelation 4:2, Revelation 4:6

Topics: "Book Of Revelation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of God being wholly other and transcendent, beyond human comprehension. He mentions a review of his book, 'The Knowledge of the Holy,' where the reviewer disagrees with the idea that when talking about God, one lacks ideas and mental understanding. The speaker also talks about the importance of obedience to fulfill the purpose for which humans were created. He emphasizes that by being willing to do God's will, one can come to know who God is and who they are. The sermon concludes with a reference to the creatures around God's throne in the book of Revelation, highlighting the glory of Jesus Christ and the importance of loving Him deeply.

Transcript

After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was, as it were, the Tumper talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone. And there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald.

And out of the thrones proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

And when those beasts gave glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power. Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Now tonight we are still looking through that open door which John saw.

And he saw a throne set, and one sitting on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon. I mentioned two weeks ago that John did not identify the one who sat on the throne.

We know who that is. Here is the great fixed throne. I think one of the greatest texts.

If you ever get discouraged, any of you preachers, I suggest that you preach on Revelation 4. And behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. There you have it. It even breaks itself up so that any preacher at all can preach on that text, because it divides itself.

A throne was set in heaven with one on the throne, God. Now that's what we're looking at, and he that sat was to look upon light. I ask you to notice here the problem this man was up against here, this man John.

As I've pointed out before variously and written about it a little, that when Bible writers are given a picture of the world to come, they're puzzled. They're not puzzled because things aren't clear, they're puzzled because they're too clear. They're puzzled because they're seeing things the like of which they never saw before.

That is, they're seeing things that they never saw before, so they have to tell us what they're like. And they're not like anything exactly, but they're somewhat like it. The problem there is that God wants to disclose himself to John.

Do you notice a veil over this? Do you notice that while John was looking at it, God himself nowhere came out, shining in his sevenfold brilliance? If he had, there would have been no John. John would have perished as a leaf in the fall might perish when tossed into a furnace. No man can look on God and live.

And it took the protection of the rock for Moses to be safe from the sight of God. But here was God coming out, and yet not coming out. Here was God being seen, and yet not quite being seen.

So John's eyes could not focus on God. If he had focused on God, he'd have gone blind. For no man can look at God and live.

But God is disclosing himself nevertheless. But how can the infinite receive the finite, or the opposite around? How can the infinite be received by the finite? For that was the situation. The infinite one, the one who had no bounds, was to be received by the one who had bounds.

It was like pouring an ocean into a teacup, and John staggered under it. And John had to describe what he saw. And he, of course, lacked ideas and he lacked language.

Now, I said this in the book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, which has just been out for three weeks. At least one man has written a review of it in which he carefully and skillfully peeled my hideoff, because he doesn't believe, apparently, that when you talk about God, you lack ideas and mental stuff, that God is wholly other and beyond and elevated and transcendent. But I do, and I don't mind, really.

I think there is a time. I am talking an awful lot now about union, but I'm not so sure about what division might be a good thing. I'm not so sure, but what if you divide at the right place? You might get more out of it than if you try to unite the wrong people.

Well, there is a definite difference between the evangelical mystic and the evangelical rationalist. The evangelical mystic, like John, stands in the presence of the awesome God and cries, holy, holy, holy, and falls down at his feet as dead. But the evangelical rationalist figures it all out and says, we can understand

it, we know how it is, and so he writes a long book about it and tells exactly what it's like.

Well, I belong to the first category. I think I belong to that category, and I'm not alone. I believe that Paul belonged to it and David and Isaiah and Moses and Augustine and Luther and Wesley and Terstigan.

You could name them by the hundreds and by the thousands of those down the years, not that I classify myself with those men with regard to size. I only classify myself with them in that they were evangelical mystics, the man who founded the Christian and missionary alliance, the man who wrote the first book of his life, Thompson. A missionary named Thompson wrote the life of Simpson, and I wrote the second life called Wingspread.

And the first man, I guess we wrote about 25 or 30 years apart. I wrote, of course, after Mr. Thompson and benefited by his research. But he said, and said cautiously, that this man, A. B. Simpson, was an evangelical mystic, because back in those days the word had gotten into disrepute, and a man had, if he said anything, he had to say it most cautiously.

But I don't hesitate whatever to say that John was an evangelical mystic. And then there's the evangelical rationalists, I say, those who are trying to educate themselves out of the miry pit and by degrees get themselves out of the miry clay. But they'll never get out, God will never allow man to think his way out of the horrible pit, never while the world stands.

You're going to have to have an open vision, an open door and an illuminated heart, and then you're going to have to stand looking through that open door at that awesome throne, and you're going to have to say, Oh, Lord, God, is it I? Now, there are two substances in the universe, that which is God and that which is not God. That which is God, spiritual and unique and uncreated and unapproachable and incomprehensible and wholly other than, is super-rational and super-sensible that escapes all of our efforts to get at him. And yet, if we're humble, we'll come to us.

That you can never find, but can find you. That you can never search into, but that he'll search you out. That you can never rise to greet, but will come down and greet your soul through the gospel, that which is God.

And then there's that which is not God, all that God has created. It's not eternal, it's finite, it's made, and it is not God, but it is the handiwork of God. If you were to say, go into a studio of my friend Francis Chase, back in the city of Chicago, Illinois.

He's a very widely known artist, as you know, and you've seen his stuff in all the magazines. But he's a saintly man, a man of God. And you were to go into his home, and he wasn't there at the time, but you were to talk to his wife, Isabel, and you were to say, Is, talk to me about your husband.

And well, she'd say, there lives in this house my husband, and then there's that which is not my husband. There is France, as she calls him, and then there's that which is not France. There is pictures, look at them here, and all around there would be pictures of everything under the sun which his imagination had created and put down in watercolor and paint.

That would be that which is not Chase. And then he'd come in smiling, and there would be Chase. There's that which is Mr. Chase, and then all around him is his handiwork, that which is not Chase.

And you can take all that out and burn it, and Chase still lives. So we have all around about us in this studio of God, for this is God's studio, this world in which we live. It's a tragic place now.

Sin is everywhere. I suppose this afternoon you heard the news, as I did, that another plane crash in Chicago, a takeoff, and two minutes or three after the takeoff, a crash, another crash with 37 people dead instantly. Well, now that's tragic, my friends, that's tragic.

There's no question about it, that's tragedy for the people who remain, and tragedy for the people, some of them in their youth, who go without having fulfilled their life work. There's tragedy all about. That's because sin is here and the devil, but this is God's studio anyway, and all around about are the evidences of the handiwork of God.

God's work done in blue sky, and God's work done in green ocean, and God's work done in the brown fields, and God's work done in beasts and birds everywhere. That's that which is not God. And then God walks in and immediately you know who did it all, and you say, there's God.

That which is God and that which is not God, they're separated. And because I can understand that which is not God, it doesn't mean I can understand God. God has revealed himself sometimes in what the theologians call the theophany, that is, the setting forth, the shining forth of God.

Now, God has by figure and by similitude and by many like images, by angels and by fire and otherwise, God has made himself known to men. He's come and revealed himself in theophanies. But those were only theophanies, of course.

When God revealed himself as fire and was in Israel as fire, that wasn't God. It was God and it wasn't God, for God is not fire. The Bible says God's a consuming fire, and yet it doesn't mean that that which comes to a match when you strike it is God, unfortunately.

There are those who believe that, our friends way over the ocean who are called the Pharisees or Zoroastrians or the fire worshipers. They have a fire burning on their altar day and night, and they worship before that fire, and they worship the sun, and they say that God is fire. Well, when God said he's a flaming fire, he doesn't mean that.

For the fire that I strike when I strike a match and hold it up and it flickers there and then goes out, that is not God. That is that which is not God, but it's like God in that it's as mysterious and fiery a substance as God is. Then there were angels.

Do you remember that they came down to the city of Sodom, and God said, I'll go down and see? God talking down to our ignorance, I'll go down and see whether things are as bad as they say they are. Immediately there were two angels down there talking to Abraham. Those two angels were a revelation undoubtedly of the Father and the Son, because God said, I'll go down, and when he appeared, there they were, two men.

Sometimes it is as men, and sometimes it is as angels, and sometimes it is as fire God appears. Here was the rainbow. Here was God on his throne and a rainbow.

Now, that rainbow is an interesting thing. A rainbow is, of course, what you see in the day of the storm, and God made that rainbow to be a sign of a covenant and of a protection eternally. God said, One time I destroyed the world by flood, but the next time it will be by fire, and that will be way at the end of things.

In the meantime, don't you worry about floods. They are telling me now that Hurricane Esther, bless her, all the Esthers I've ever known were meek little ladies, and here she is going wild. They say that by tomorrow she'll hit the Florida coast, and look out for her, she'll be the worst of them all.

Well, the gods, when they strike, and it looks as if the world is going to go to pieces in water, God says, Don't let it get you down. There will be losses and maybe a few will die, but I'll not destroy the world by water again. And when you look up and see the rainbow, it will be my smile telling you that it will not be destroyed again by fire.

So you don't have to worry about that. And this is a sign of covenant, a sign of protection, and a sign of eternal protection. I wonder if you've noticed one little thing here, that all the rainbows are arches.

The rainbow arch, said the poet, is the sign of his love, the rainbow arch. It just comes over this half-way, you know. But this rainbow went all the way around the throne.

So as much as to say, Here is a covenant protection all the way around, and it included and embraced these elders that were sitting there, clothed in white raiment, and these beasts that were there, these strange creatures, 24 elders and all these beasts. They were there, and around about them there went circles. There wasn't a spot where the devil could get in.

If I were the devil and I'd sneak under the end of the rainbow and try to do some dirt, if I were the devil, I think I'd try that, because it only comes half-way around. It starts here and goes over and comes down there. You've always noticed that.

The devil might sneak under, but here he can't get in, because it's all around the throne. It embraces and protects and takes in God Almighty himself and the throne and all of these redeemed and unredeemed creatures that are here. There were the 24 elders.

Now, for whom do they stand? Well, here would be the place to divide over things that don't matter. I have said that divisions over things that do matter aren't to be deplored. If a man doesn't believe the scriptures and insists he doesn't believe the scriptures, I can shake hands with him and live in the same town with him without having trouble, but I'm not going to kneel and pray with him or go to church with him if he doesn't believe the word of God.

There can be a division that does us good, and then there can be a division that does us harm. Now, who are these 24 elders? Well, I think they stand for the overcomers, Israel and the Church. I think they go back and stand for all the overcomers, the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

Notice in Matthew 19, then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee. What shall we have therefore? Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which follow have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory. He also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

These are not those thrones, but at least it's a suggestion that these twelve apostles shall sit upon the twelve thrones. So that, I think, is what the elders mean. But if you think something else, we're going to be friends about it.

Somebody was worried for fear in something I'd said. I don't remember what I said. It's on tape in there if anybody wants to make anything out of it.

We can play it back there. But I said the last time I preached here something about the Scofield Bible, and I left the impression that one good Irishman sounded as if he'd come from County Sligo. He called me on the phone, and he said he thought that I'd inadvertently classified Scofield as one of those irresponsible teachers.

And I said, No, I hadn't, that I'd only classified the people who took his teachings and ran to extremes with them. So I'll make that explanation for my Irish friend who was worried about me. It's nice to have people worried about you and call you up and try to straighten you out.

So I've been straightened. Now, I'll explain that I'm not criticizing Scofield. I don't believe everything he said.

He was a man among men, but I certainly don't consider him irresponsible. He certainly was a responsible Christian scholar along with those who worked with him. But that can't be said about all those who are teaching prophecy.

So that these 24 elders are, I believe, the redeemers, the overcomers in the church and in Israel. Then the lightnings and the thunders and the voices and the seven fires. Well, God and the throne are unchanged, but the cup of iniquity on earth is filling up.

This is what worries me a little bit about the earth. No, I'm not at all worried about my relation to God, nor about the fact that the sovereign God will have his way in the world, and in the storm, and the day will be when there will be peace. And that which men now talk about and don't believe in, at least they can't believe much in it, there will be that time when there will be peace from the river to the ends of the earth.

Yet I'm worried because when the cup of iniquity fills up, then the judgment of God comes. I only hope that we'll not be here when the judgment of God comes down upon this terrible earth. There's a difference of opinion among the saints of God about whether the church will or will not go through the time of trial and judgment and tribulation.

I can only say that I'm afraid she will, but hope she won't. And I'm not going to fight about it, but I'm only going to say that I don't want to be on earth in that time when God rises up to shake the earth and to shake the nations, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. For there are lightnings and thunderings and voices and fires, and the cup of iniquity has been filled up.

I wonder how much longer God can take it. I wonder how much longer he can take it. I say if the holy justice of God will be able to stand it much longer, it will be a wonder.

We've sinned our way and forfeited a way all right we might ever have had to the protection of God, no question about that. We've sinned it away. We like to think that what we grandly call the underprivileged nations of the earth are the ones that are the judgments going to fall upon.

But if I were bringing moral judgment upon the world, I would not bring it upon Katanga. You've been hearing about Katanga and Kshumbi. I've learned to pronounce those wonderful names.

Katanga, the high priest of Katanga. If I were bringing moral judgment upon the world, it would not be upon Katanga and Kshumbi and those who until recently were cannibalistic. Somebody told me in one of the little states in Africa a man had been elected president who had just gotten out of jail for cannibalism, his cannibalism had consisted of eating his mother-in-law.

I said I thought it was one way to solve the mother-in-law problem. But anyhow, those people over there, they don't have the light that you and I have. Look at our King James Bible, 350 years it has stood solid and has given light to all the world.

It's given light and borrowed none, as the poet said. We've had our preachers and we've had our great cathedrals and our great churches and our great evangelists and our missionaries and our reformers and our revivalists. We've had them all, I say.

And if I were bringing moral judgment upon a nation, I'd bring it upon Canada and the United States and England and not upon Kshumbi in his darkness there, or upon the poor fellows who only got out of nakedness 24 hours ago and were cannibals as long as they could get away with it. They need judgment and they will receive judgment, but I wonder if their judgment will be equal to the judgment of those nations who knew the will of God and did it not. Does not the scripture say that he that knows his master's will and does it not shall be punished with a few stripes, but he that knows it and does it not shall be punished with more? Remember that the moral judgments of God will fall upon men and nations according to the light they have received.

I once heard a preacher of the evangelical church stand, a great tall thin man who preached as though it would be his last sermon on earth. I heard him say once, lean way back and look up and cry, if I went to hell, I'd rather go to hell from the heart of the jungle than to go to hell from Akron, Ohio. That's where the sermon was being preached.

I agree with him fully. If I were going to hell, I would want to go to hell, a dark man without knowing any truth, somewhere in some heathen land, as we call it, heathen land in our white pride, because they haven't had the privilege we've had of hearing the truth that we've heard. Well, these lightnings and thunderings and voices are going to come and begin to sound out in that day when the cup of the earth has been filled up.

I wonder when it's going to be filled up. I don't know when, but I wonder when it's going to be filled up. God can't take it any more, and the anger of God and the justice of God have been violated so long and so consistently and so arrogantly that he cannot take it any more.

Then the lightnings and thunderings shall go out from the throne, and the throne of grace will become a throne of judgment. My brother, that may not be as far away as you and I think. It may not be.

And if I were not a Christian man, I'd get on my knees and see to it that I was a Christian man. I wouldn't wait around. I wouldn't deceive my own soul by talking about, I don't have the light and I don't understand this and don't understand that.

You'll go to hell hiding behind excuses, paper-thin excuses about not understanding something. All that you don't understand is what's keeping you away, and it's never what you think it is. They that love the light, they come to the light that their deeds may be seen.

They that love darkness, they hide from the light lest their deeds be reproved. And it never is a case of a man not understanding the gospel, it is a case of a man not being willing to obey. For the Lord said that he that is willing to do the will of God, he shall know.

And all the Lord will need from me is a willingness to do his will, and I'll know instantly. Not everything. It doesn't mean that I'll have a four-year course in theology if I give my heart to the Lord, but it means that I

will, if I yield to him in faith, instantly come to know who he is and who I am.

And I will know that he is the Lord God, and I can rise and say with Peter, Thou art the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Then from there on, of course, it's growth, as I said this morning. These creatures about the throne, it calls them beasts here.

I still love the dear old King James Version. I just wrote an article for a magazine called, Confessions of a New Version Addict. I buy a new version every time one comes out.

All I have to do is to know that a new version has appeared, and I'm hopped off down to the bookseller to buy it. Always buy it, always bring it home, always labor over it for three or four weeks and then give it up and go back to my good old King James Version. Of course, the King James Version has a few little mistakes in it here and there.

The translators tell us, and our Bible teachers never get over telling us. So the word beast is one of those mistakes. It shouldn't have been beasts, because they weren't beastly creatures.

They were creatures, creatures, that's the word, creatures, living creatures. Well, the first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like a calf, and the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. There you have four beasts, or four living creatures.

They adumbrate, to use a big word that I learned one time, that is, they show forth and set forth and echo and shine forth the glory that is Jesus Christ the Lord. And one of them is as a lion. You see, you'll find some day, my brother.

I sat here this morning listening to this young lady singing, O sweet wonder, Jesus the Son of God. I heard it 30 years ago, and I've heard it sound occasionally down the years since. Well, I thought as I sat here, this is Christianity, this is it.

To love Jesus Christ until you are aglow with it. To love the Son of God until you are overcome with it. Until you cry, comfort me with apples, for I am undone, my heart is ablaze with the love of Christ.

Everything in the universe is there to shed forth the glory of God's eternal Son. And here we have these creatures. These are not redeemed creatures, they never fell and they didn't have to be redeemed.

They were there as original inhabitants of that holy place, preceding man, I suppose. And the elders were there as redeemed persons who were washed in blood and who went there afterward. But these creatures are there to set forth Jesus Christ.

Did you ever go visit somebody who'd had a baby within the last year? And they not only have a baby, they have a camera. And did you ever try to get away before 11 o'clock? You know, all the pictures. This was Jimmy when he was two months old.

This was Jimmy when he was two and a half. This was Jimmy when we were in Alberta on a vacation. This is Jimmy doing this, and this is Jimmy doing that.

And this is an enlarged picture of Jimmy. I like it myself. I don't mind it at all.

I've never been bored yet by anybody showing me baby pictures. I like it. I'm glad they feel that way about it.

My mother, no doubt, did feel that way about me, though it's hard to think so now, but I imagine she did. But I like it. But the point that I'm trying to make is that when you love somebody enough, you never can get too many pictures.

My wife, as a rule, puts a picture on everything that doesn't have something else on it. There's pictures standing up there. So if you want to know the whole history of the Tozer Menage, from Laurel to Becky and all the grandchildren, come over some night and look us over.

You'll see them standing up there. Don't mind it because you want to see and remember what you love. And what you love, you like to see it shine out.

God made his world and he said, I'm going to make my world so everywhere you look, you see my Son. Everywhere you look, you see my Son. Every place, through all the world.

Look at the rainbow and remember the covenant in his blood. And look at the sea and remember the time when the sea will be no more. And look at the mountain and remember that he stands strong as the mountain.

And look at the forest and remember that he's like the cedar of Lebanon and everywhere you look, you see Jesus Christ the Lord. I believe a good Christian ought to live like that. I believe that everywhere we look and every thought we think and everywhere we go, we ought to find the face of Jesus Christ looking out at us.

So here are these creatures. One of them has the face of a lion, and there is the kingship of Jesus Christ the Lord. The kingly idea is a noble idea, as I've said before here under other circumstances, that the kingly idea is a noble idea, because the glory of the king doesn't lie in the person of the king, it lies in the person of the people.

And when you look at a king or a queen, you don't mind calling them all sorts of your majesty and your nobleness and that, you don't mind that, because you know they don't mean that person. They are talking about everybody over whom they reign. And so the king idea is a noble idea, for the glory of the king lies in the freedom and happiness of his people, and the glory of Jesus Christ the lion lies in that he is the ruler over a people who will be supremely and perfectly happy throughout all the universe.

And there is the calf. What is the calf doing there? Obedient unto sacrifice, the little calf that didn't have much in his head and not much to look forward to, but death and blood and sacrifice. But he was there, God had him there, the calf and the lamb.

Then there was the man, the manhood of Jesus, and there was the flying eagle, the deity of Jesus. These four show the four gospels. It's quite a wonderful thought to me that when you go back into the symbolism and imagery of medieval times, you will find that over Matthew, the gospel of Matthew, there was the lion.

And over Mark there was the calf, and over Luke there was the man, and over John there was the flying eagle. You will find those symbols dating way, way back hundreds and hundreds of years, because the Bible students of those days had seen that the four gospels show forth the four faces of Jesus Christ, the Lord. In other words, God has put Jesus Christ's picture up everywhere and said, I behold my Son in

whom my soul delighteth, and see him and hear him, for he is my beloved Son.

Then there is the unceasing worship, the unceasing worship. There are the elders and the creatures. They unite in verses 9 and 10.

And when those creatures had given glory and honor, first the four beasts had each of them six wings, the four creatures. Each of them had six wings, and they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come. These beings are there in heaven, never resting while they worship and cry, Holy, holy, holy.

And yet here we go, we are so tenderhearted and so generous and tolerant that we believe that a man who dies, who has never said holy, holy and meant it, who would consider himself bored to tears if he had to dwell day and night in heaven, crying holy, holy, holy, as soon as he dies, we preach him right off into heaven and say, there he goes. See him disappear? He's gone into heaven. There lies the old body.

I remember a dear friend of mine who preached the sermon one time over the body of a man who died in his church, the man, I don't know what kind of man he was, but the pastor got eloquent and he said, This is not our brother, this is only his body, this is merely the shell, and that's gone to heaven. And it took the district superintendent to get that straightened out, they didn't like that so well. But it was only oratory, the fellow was merely trying to use figure speech, and he used an unfortunate figure, Bob, that's all.

Now what I'm trying to say here is that when we preach a man off to heaven, he'd be bored. If you don't want to go to heaven, God's not going to force you into it at all. The Lord is not going to take you and say, Now, here, you weren't much interested while you were on earth, but now you will be.

You won't change a bit. If heaven bores you now, it would bore you in the hour of death. There are many a sinner that lies in the last hour of death without a qualm.

Preachers like to tell stories of sinners pulling their hair and crying, I'm going to hell, but not one in 10,000 ever had such an experience. The Bible tells us in Psalm 23 that they'd die quietly in their bed, and John Bunyan pointed that out in one of his books. He said that sinners die peacefully in their bed, and is that a proof that they're all right? No, it's a proof how terribly all wrong they are.

They're not even able to understand how bad off they are, so they lie like a man in a coma on a railroad track with a train coming. They don't know what's happening. Here they're crying, Holy, holy, and they rest not day and night.

Some of you rest an awful lot in between holy, holy, holies, and some of us do, but they don't. They rest not day and night, crying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. And when those beasts give glory and thanks to him that sat on the throne who lives forever and ever, that stirs up the elders.

That's one nice thing about great singing, great hymn singing, particularly great worship. It may stir up somebody else to want to worship. When the four beasts worshiped, then the four elders woke up and said, Let us worship.

And down they went on their knees before him that sat on the throne. And they worshiped him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before him, crying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, for this is not Jesus they are talking about now, this is God the Father. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Now, these creatures, these descriptions of praise given by the heavenly creatures there and given by the redeemed creatures there, and they cast their crowns before him. They felt they didn't deserve a crown. They had earned their crown, but they didn't deserve it, so they cast it at the feet of God.

Do you feel that everything that's yours, everything that's good about you, everything you have and everything that you may easily have earned, nevertheless, is to be cast at the feet of God and not your own? Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things. Now, those are the descriptions of praise to the Father and the casting of the crowns at his holy feet. Now, all this is revealed.

This is preliminary to the opening of the seals, the book which we'll deal with next Sunday night. But this is revealed for about three reasons. It's revealed that the wise and believing may live in the light of it.

The wise man with faith and penitence who walks with his God as Noah walked, he lives in the light of this. I never want to get where the light can't reach me. I never want to get where the light can't reach me.

Nature has its flatworms and its silver fish. Nature has its creepers and its crawlers that lie under rocks and in wet spots and in caves. The glorious sun that shines down these fall days can never reach these creatures.

The sun shines, but it never reaches the flatworm, because the flatworm hides from the light and would die if it reached it very long. But I don't want to be a flatworm. I want to be one of those that the light can reach.

The wise and the believing, I say, will live in the light of all this. The curious and the inquisitive will worry over details and write bitter books against other men over details. But the holy and the humble and the lowly and the blood-washed and the godlike, they'll live in the light of this, understanding a great deal and knowing there's a great deal more that don't.

But understanding enough to live in the light of it. You walk out of a beautiful cool day like this and God's dear sun shines down on your head and you don't know too much about that sun. But you know enough to walk in the light of it in a cool fall day.

So I don't know all I could know about this, but I know enough that this to me, this is great truth to me. Not because I've preached it, but because it's here. Great truth to me.

While I stand on this earth, there exists out of my sight, but exists in reality, a throne and one on a throne, a rainbow around the throne, encircling in everlasting covenant protection the representatives of the creatures who never fell and the representatives of the creatures who fell and were redeemed. There is a third classification of creatures that are not represented here. They are the creatures that fell and were not redeemed.

There are creatures that never need redemption because they did not fall. There are creatures that fell and must be redeemed and were redeemed. There are creatures that fell and were not redeemed and will never be redeemed.

And the first two classes are found here on the throne. Those who never fell and those who fell and were redeemed. But the third terrible class is not found here.

They're found elsewhere, but we know they're there somewhere. We know that they're in the sight of God at any rate because there are lightnings and thunders and voices and fires and God gets ready to send his judgment upon them. Then these things are revealed that the foolish and unbelieving may stand without excuse.

The foolish and the unbelieving, they stand without excuse. Let me never hear anybody say, I'm puzzled, I'm all mixed up, I don't understand. If I knew more, I'd get right.

If I'd get saved, if I only knew more. You know enough. You know enough to get right with God.

If you're a Christian living a life far off, you know enough to get straightened out. You don't have to know more. You only have to kneel on what you now know.

When Paul had his shipwreck out there in the Mediterranean that terrible day, the night, remember that the ship broke to pieces and they all got ashore, some on boards and some on oars and some on bits of floating cargo, some on this and some on that, but they all got ashore. So you don't have to know everything. You only have to know that you're a sinner and that Christ died for you, and if you'll believe on Christ, you'll be saved.

You're a Christian all mixed up, but you say you don't have to believe. You can come back, any verse that will bring you in. You can come soaring in on any verse.

You can come soaring in on the verses some people don't believe that are for you. You can come in, come back, be restored and be cleansed and delivered and filled. We missed this the first time I ever talked to my now good friends, Brother Finley and Kay.

He surprised me as we rode along. I learned he was a young philosopher, and he said this. He said, what makes me feel bad is that we were born with a design, with a purpose, and where men are not fulfilling the purpose for which they were created.

There's the great overweening philosophy of the world, that we were brought into the world with a design, with an ending. I want you to justify your existence if you fail that end. I want you to tell me what right you have to live if you fail that end.

I want you to excuse yourself before the bar of God and the judgment of mankind if we miss this. If I miss the salvation, if I miss the privilege of standing with these for whom these 24 elders stand, all those creatures, if we read about those redeemed souls we read about later in the book of Revelation, if I miss this, then it's far better for me that I had been carried from my mother's arms to the grave when I was yet an unnamed infant. It's far better for me that I should never have breathed God's fresh air and basked in God's sunshine.

It's far better that I should never have gone to Sunday school as a young fellow and heard the text, God is love, for Christ died for the ungodly. It's far better that I should never have heard it if we miss it. And if we miss it, who is to be blamed? Certainly not the God who sits on the throne.

Certainly not the Lamb who stands before the throne like as he had been slain. Certainly not the fiery Holy Ghost that leaps out all over the world bringing the gospel to men. Certainly not.

And if I miss it all, has life been worth the struggle? I personally think not. I wish that those who are not saved might be saved this night, and I wish that those Christians who are not living as you should live, you'd decide to do something about it tonight. Now it shouldn't be like this, but it is.

But we're kind of starting a new season. There never should be any seasons in the church. We should serve God in season and out of season.

But we are getting started with what we hope will be a long fall and winter and spring uninterrupted. Are you ready to do your share? Can you properly do your share? Can you do it with zeal and enthusiasm and fire? Can you do it with relish? You can't? I suggest we all go into the newly cleaned up chapel. You can get in there now without falling overboard.

Everything is all fixed up from the floor. I suggest we go into this chapel tonight and have a little prayer meeting together. Now we're going to close this meeting.

I want every unsaved person or person who isn't sure of his spiritual condition to meet the Pastor and me in this room. And I want every Christian who wants to say, I want to get straightened out tonight. I want to serve God with relish and with zeal and with fire.

I want to make a new start this night. And I want you to all go in there, and we're going to go in and have a prayer meeting in a little while. Not long, but a little while anyway.

Let us stand and sing, and then let's file through that door into the chapel.

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