

# The Throne of Revelation

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer

February 15, 1959

Open to Revelation and turn to the fourth chapter. We'll read responsively fourth chapter revelation. After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 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 round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

And out of the throne 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 before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 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 the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; 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. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Now, we have here between what was and what was to come. After this, I looked and behold, a door was opened after this. I looked, after this, these things which had just closed, which were the seven letters to the churches. I preached on one of them, and I'm skipping the other six, because they get so much attention from the teachers. After this I looked and then a voice said, I will show thee things which must be here after.

And here stood the man John, between what had been and what was to come. And John saw a door opened in heaven and he heard a voice as it were the voice of a trumpet and he saw a throne and he saw one on the throne and he heard the sound of the chanting of these creatures, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.

Now, John had suffered through the seven churches, those seven churches. John had suffered through them. John is here between what was and what was to come. And what was and what was to come, that is, the two chapters, chapters two and three and chapters on from six on to twenty, are anything

but good, anything. John had suffered through his seven churches. Look, look what John had had to hear, what he had to hear, what he had to tell the people. He'd had to talk about works and labors and patience and service and poverty and tribulation and suffering and prison and the sword and death and stumbling blocks and idolatry and backsliding and false apostles and religious liars and external riches and internal poverty, blindness of heart and nakedness and danger to life and the loss of crowns and the failure of rewards and the need to overcome. All of this he had heard, and it wasn't a pleasant thing to hear.

And yet this was for the moment passed now, and before him in his prophetic mind, he saw four horsemen ride out. He saw the opening of the seals and heard the sounding of the trumpets. He saw the opening of the bottomless pit and he saw the great smoke arise and the scourge of the scorpions. He saw the Antichrist come up out of the earth. He saw the mark of the beast and the great red dragon. And he saw finally, Armageddon and the last judgement. Now, he saw all this and there he was caught between his poor backslidden churches that so desperately needed help, that were in danger of great loss to themselves. And these things, and I've only mentioned a few that lay out there, what we call the Great Tribulation.

Now, with all these present woes approaching, I want to ask you, how could John stay sane? There's one way for you to stay sane and restful and enjoy yourself and have your food digest and enjoy your TV programs and your your nice home and your family, and not have too much worry. It is not to care a hoot about the world and about God and about the things of the Spirit and hell and heaven and judgment and losses and gains and rewards and punishment. That's one way. But it's a mighty poor way. And John didn't belong to the crowd who could know these things and be restful about them.

So, how could John keep sane? How could he keep poised and optimistic in an hour like that? And I asked you how can you and how can I at a time like this, knowing what's out there, even apart from the Bible? Close that Bible. Shut it. Put a rubber band about it. Put it to the bottom of the drawer and shut the door and lock it. And push the desk into a corner of the attic and determine to forget there is any Bible. All you have to do is listen to the radio now, and if you're at all sensitive, or if you love the human race, you will find it hard to keep poised or balanced or at peace because of what's facing the human race, all together apart from what the Bible says. Now, how are we going to live in this day? How are you and I going to live, are we going to make it? Well, John said, behold a door standing open in heaven.

Now, there my friends, there's the direction you've got to look. And there is the solution. The only solution is from above. The only solution for earth is something from above. There's nothing that comes out of the earth that can cure the earth. Nothing that spawns or hatches or is born in the earth can do the earth any good. All that fails, rulers and diplomats and agreements and pacts as the newspaper calls them, a man laws and soldiers and weapons and talks and summit conferences and science and culture and all the influence of learning. These are all good and I'm not knocking them. Certainly, it's better for two diplomats to meet and talk than it is for them to fight. But they haven't got the solution.

That kindly and well intentioned and much respected gentleman that lies so ill today in the hospital in Washington, not all that he could do with all his good intentions, some love him, some hate him, some

wish that he was in orbit, and others think that he's one of the greatest man that ever lived. Whatever you think of him, remember, he just couldn't, he just didn't have either the wisdom nor the power nor the strength to be able to save us. There has got to be help from somewhere else.

Heaven alone can cure. Heaven alone can heal. Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal. But heaven can heal all earth sorrows. Heaven alone, I say, can heal. When He came the first time, you remember, and there were in a certain country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And suddenly an angel appeared on to them, and they were so afraid. The angel said, fear not, behold, we bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And immediately there was with the heavenly host, with the angels, a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest, peace on earth to men of goodwill.

Now that was when He first came. When he went away, he said, my peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. And just as He went away, when He had spoken these things, He was taken up from them and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they stood gazing toward heaven, lo, two men in white said to them, appeared and said, why gaze ye up into heaven? This same Jesus which ye saw go, shall come again in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.

Now the world has forgotten this, and the church has forgotten this. All you have to do to find out how unspiritual we are is to get into a tight spot. And then you find how we haven't been trusting God too much at all. We have been looking to other things rather than to God. But I warn you against looking to anything that doesn't show through the open door. I warn you against trusting to anything that begins lower down than the throne which John saw. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have Him incarnated here, but not His origin here. He came out out of heaven's open door and through the womb of the Virgin In order that He might redeem mankind.

Now, the church, I say, has forgotten it. And we must take one more gaze into heaven. We must look once more. We must see an open door once again. We must realize that earth's salvation comes through the open door and that it does not, it is not, it cannot ever possibly originate down here. It cannot be. But you say, did not Jesus originate here? Was He not born here. He got his body here, but He originated nowhere. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

And the Scripture says, behold, a set throne. Now, where it says here a throne was set, I have examined this very carefully. And I know I found out that it does not mean I saw the setting of a throne. You know how you set a table? There's nothing there and then a woman gets busy and pretty soon she's got a fine table set, all dolled up and food on it. Well, now that isn't what it means here. It does not mean I saw a throne being set. That throne was never set. That throne had never been set. He had been with that throne. He the One who had no origin, sat on a throne. And that throne was not a throne being set, that was the set throne. Behold, a set throne. What does a throne proclaim.

When you see a throne, what does it proclaim? Well, it proclaims certainty. And all I pray that you will hear me tonight as I say to you, that in the ups and the downs of the world, that you will look to the throne. There's no certainty anywhere else, remember it. You know, when we get to the brink of war and then pull back from it, we breathe once more and say, perhaps we will have another breathing spell. But with that breathing spell, we soon catch our breath again as we get to the brink of war once more. No, there is no certainty anywhere but at that throne. John saw it and you and I can see it for it's set there, and there is certainty.

Now, there isn't any certainty anyplace else and don't let anybody tell you that there is. Don't let them tell you there's anybody that you can elect that can give you certainty or anybody you can defeat that will bring you certainty or any system or ideology that you can take up that will bring you certainty. There is no certainty in a rotting world, a world of decay.

Then the throne proclaims authority. Authority has got to be somewhere. There isn't too much authority now. It is broken down everywhere, and broken down in the home, broken down in the schools, broken down in nations. So, there's hardly a place of authority. But John said I saw a throne set. And that throne symbolizes and proclaims authority.

More than authority, it proclaims sovereignty. There never has been a throne, thank God, there never has been a throne set up in this world that was a sovereign throne. You know, the English refer to their queen as a sovereign, and many other nations have had queens or kings that they called sovereign, but I quarrel with their use of the word sovereign. For the word sovereign is an absolute, universal word. And it cannot possibly be used to designate any queen or anything that ever sat or does now sit or ever will sit on any throne of this world, until the Son of God the Messiah returns. And then there will be a sovereign throne, for sovereignty, of course means absolute freedom, absolute rule over all things without anybody anywhere or any power, any law, anything anywhere daring to challenge it. And there never has been a king like that since the beginning of the world. There isn't now and there never will be until He comes back.

But this throne that John saw is a sovereign throne. That's the kingdom of God, the center of the kingdom of God. And it means universal dominion, of course, and it means this other thing that I shall name and that is perpetuity. Oh, my brother, to be able to find something that will last. Did you ever, did you ever get to thinking, now this only applies to people over 35. People under 35, they have no idea in all the wide world but that they live forever. That is, they know better but they don't feel it. But after you get to 35, which is halfway to 70. And incidentally, any of you thirty-fivers that imagine you're spring chickens, you're halfway to 70, just keep on.

But did you ever stop to grieve over the lack of permanence and perpetuity? Things just can't last. Why, they bring them down and have him dedicated on Thursday and what seems only the next month, they're married. And in a short while, they begin to get gray and then laugh at their gray hairs, and before very long they slow down and they're gone. Generation follows generation. Moses prayed that famous prayer, O God, establish the work of my hands. He wanted something that would last.

Well, John here, saw a throne and he saw a throne that was sovereign, authoritative, certain, universal and perpetual. There is one thing that will last; Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. And when God folds up the heavens as a garment and rolls back the stars as a mantle to change, His throne will still stand. I want to testify while I preach and say to you that the older, I get the more I live for that throne. The more I live for that throne, that permanent throne, that which cannot perish nor pass away. There is the throne, that blissful center about which was sing. There's that blissful center.

And here, my friend, is our sanity. And here's our certainty and here's our assurance and here is our cheer. Here's what gives us cheer. God's children should be a cheerful people. St. Francis of Assisi believed that a man ought to be a cheerful, and he was a cheerful, happy man.

My wife and I are reading at our morning prayers, we are reading through Thomas Traherne's great book called "The Centuries of Meditation." It means meditations done in hundreds Well, he was the happiest man in all the wide world. He thought that when you get up in the morning that you ought to get up like a bird and sing and never be anything but happy. He was an Episcopalian preacher and wrote a couple of great books which went into obscurity and only have been lately resurrected, and I happen to have one of them. But don't try to borrow it yet for a while. But it's a great book and hard to get published by Dobell in London.

But this man was delighted man, he was a happy man. And you know that when the old Catholic Church used to canonize people, well, you know that they have to prove that they had a sense of humor; they were happy people. They won't canonize a gloomy saint. I'm sorry I'd ever be on their side on anything, but I'm on their side on that, because a gloomy saint is more of a problem for the kingdom of God than a modernist. Here is the blissful center. Here's sanity and here's assurance and here's cheer.

Well, One sat on the throne, One sat on the throne. Do you notice, One sat on the throne. And that word "one" there is a kind of "you" general pronoun. It doesn't say who it is that sat on the throne. A throne was set. There was a set throne in heaven, and One sat on the throne, and it doesn't say who sat on the throne. But is identification necessary, my friends? Is it necessary that you and I identify why we're in the last book of the Bible?

Do we have to identify the One that sat on the throne? For here is the center of all worlds, and here is a throne that never was created. Here was the throne that God has sat on from the dim dawn of far beginning. Before there was anything, as the colored brother said the other day, way back on the other side of nothing. There's going back. And back on the other side of nothing, God had to work. Back on the other side of nothing and this One that sat on the throne. He is not identified here, but must we identify Him? Does He need a name? Don't we know who it is? Let's call up a few men and ask them.

There lived a man with a name hard to pronounce, and he was found in the fourth chapter of the book of Genesis and never so far as I remember, mentioned again until the book of Hebrews thousands of years later. He had the long, difficult name of Melchizedek, and he was king of Salem which is king of peace. And he lived before there was any Hebrew race and he lived before there was any Old

Testament and of course, before there was any New Testament. He lived before any church spire ever pointed to the sky or any choir ever chanted the praises of God. But somehow or other, he had become high priest of the Most High God.

And if we call up old Melchizedek and say to him, sorry to bother you, you've been sleeping so comfortably so long, but we'd like to know. John saw heaven opened and saw a throne and saw one on a throne, but he didn't name him. Who is this that sits on the throne at the center of the universe. And Melchizedek would say, why, it's the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. Don't you love that old expression? They say, you know, there's a progressive development of doctrine in the Bible. But I like to go back to some of those old grassroots beginnings of things. And in the light of what we know now in the New Testament, those old grassroots expressions have tremendous meaning. Melchizedek knelt before the One he called the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. And he was the high priest of that God. And so, Melchizedek might answer and say, why don't you know who He was? This one that sat on the throne was the Most High God.

Let us skip on a little and ask Abraham, to whom he paid tithes. And let's say, Abraham, who's meant here? You're a man of faith. You've marched down from Ur of the Chaldees. You've come a long way down, and what about it, Abraham? We're not such good theologians and we see a door open in heaven and a throne there surrounded by creatures of all kinds and seven spirits with eyes and all this wonderful strange, yet there's a throne and there's is a, the only one that's on it is called One and he's left without a name. Who is it?

And Abraham would say, I'll give you two names. I'll give you. I'll tell you who He is El Shaddai, El Shaddai. What does that mean Abraham? And he would say, why, that's an old Hebraic word meaning God Almighty, God Almighty, the Almighty God, El Shaddai. It's He that sits on that throne, the Most High God, El Shaddai.

But Abraham that isn't enough. Name Him again. Identify Him. Who sits on that throne? And he would say I'll give you another name, Jehovah Jireh. But what does Jehovah Jireh mean Abraham? And Abraham would answer Jehovah Jireh means the LORD will provide. Don't worry. The Lord will provide. Do you believe it, my friends? The LORD will provide. El Shaddai, the the Mighty God, the Almighty God, the one that has all the might there is. He says, I'll provide for you.

And later when He came down in the form of a man and stood among us or sat among us and preached his great sermon on the mount. He said, why are you people so scared and worried? Why are you bothered, and you get premature wrinkles from worrying? Why, he said, your Father knows what things you have need of before ye ask Him. About whom was He speaking? He was speaking of the one who was El Shaddai, the Almighty God who owned everything, and Jehovah Jireh, who would provide everything.

But if we want still more, we come down the years and say, Moses, we've got an odd theological question back here in the book of Revelation. We've been preaching on it here and we're sorry to bother you. We know that you've been sleeping well, too. But who is this that sits on the throne? We've had a little testimony, but we'd like yours. Moses would bow his head. And in a reverent voice he'd say

one time, I, one time I now, by a bush and there was fire in that bush, and I turned aside to see. And when I turned aside, I heard golden voice say, Abraham, Abraham, draw not nigh. I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Go down and deliver Israel. Go down Moses.

And I said, O God, excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me and pardon me, but O God, I'll go if you want me to go, but they'll say, who sent you? What do I tell them, God? What is the name? They'll demand a name. And God said in that same, wondrous, healing voice that filled heaven and earth, this is what you'll say; say, I am that I am. That is my name forever and that's my memorial above all generations. I am that I am. I am the Almighty. I am Jehovah Jireh, I am Jehovah Tsidkenu. I am.

All right. We ask another man who happens to be one of my favorites, and that is Isaiah. Isaiah wrote his 66 chapters, and they were filled, filled with great music, filled with music. A great musician could take the book of Isaiah and he could write an oratorio on the Book of Isaiah, at least the score, I mean not the score, but the libretto would be there, the words would be there. And he could write an oratorio that it would take a week to sing and would require the voices of angels to do it justice. For Isaiah was a man with an organ in his soul.

Isaiah, you're a cousin to the King, and you're a gifted poet. But where did you get your power? Where did you get jirtle lasting quality? What was it? What is this that Jew and Gentile and church of God have loved all down the centuries? And Isaiah would say, the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. Oh, Isaiah, excuse us. That's what we wanted to know. Who was that sitting on the throne? And Isaiah would say, why, it was Jehovah sitting on the throne, Jehovah, the God of our fathers, Jehovah, the Most High God of Melchizedek, possessor of heaven and earth, the El Shaddai of Abraham and the I am of Moses, sitting upon the throne.

Ask our fathers, any of our fathers, back to Paul. Ask them with their long Latin musical, Latin names. Tertullian, Polycarp and Chrysostom and the rest of them whose very names are music. Ask and say, who, who is it? We're just dumb Gentiles and we don't know much and we're busy. Who was that sitting on the throne Tertullian? Who was that, Origin? Who, who was that Anselm? Who sat on that throne? And they would say, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. That was He that sat on that throne, God, our Father. So, when we pray, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. We harmonize with all saints down the years who have said I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

Now, my Brother, you know what our trouble is, that we look around us and we have figured too much. Old Dr. Brown used to when missionary time would come, in his inimitable fashion, he'd get out a pen and sarcastically say, now, you're going to give to the Lord's work. You're going to give. How much can I give? Then, he would stand up here and figure it out, oh yeah, 225.

Well, that's not it, Brethren. That's not the place to look. That's not the place to look for us. That's not the place to look for you. And you that are young and rearing families, that's not the place to look for your hope. And you that are worried about your jobs. You're not supposed to look to the auditor. You're supposed to look through the open door at the fixed throne and see the one that's on that throne. And this is our home, my Brethren. God is our home said Moses, a dwelling place for all generations.

And Simpson wrote a hymn by that name, God is my Home. So, this is our home. Your life is hid with Christ in God. And from there my Brethren, we look down. Now you say, how can I do it? You do it by faith. You do it by faith. A young fellow wrote me from, I forget what university. I can't recall. It was one I was not familiar with the name, but he said, I want to ask you a question. He said, I learned that Jesus Christ is everything to me. But now, he said, how do I get hold of that? He said, do I believe and have faith and believe that it's true for me or what do I do? And I wrote back and said, my dear young friend, you have asked a question and given your own answer. And I cannot, though I am much older give you any answer, but the one you've given. I read, he said, in the New Testament that Jesus Christ is everything to me now. How do I get ahold of it? I said, you've answered. Then I quoted him. I said, believe that He means you and dare to rise into it and take it for yours and say it's not a theory, but it's a fact. It's not a doctrine, but it's a reality, as well as a doctrine.

So, our life is hid with Christ in God. We are God's. We belong to Him. And from there, my Brethren, we look down. From there we look down, and we look down on everything. We look down on the risen Christ. We look down from the throne where sits the risen Christ. We look down.

Oh, I get accused for being pessimistic because I won't run around with a daisy in my boutonniere singing all the little songs about toothpaste, because I don't like that stuff. Because I don't like it. I don't like the foolish way people are going. I don't like what they are making me put up with. I don't like their opinion of my mentality. They think it's 12 years old and it isn't. It's a little older. I don't like it. And Brethren, I'm a roaring optimist when I go to the book. When I look out on the world, the Democrats and Republicans and socialists and stragglers, I'm a pessimist out and out where they don't have the answer. But when I look through the open door at the throne that is set, nobody can be more of an optimist than I am.

So, from up there, we look down. Now, we're looking down on a problem. A lost sheep has wandered in. Brother bird, he got lost up there in cloud nine. But, let me tell you this. Let me tell you this, anything, anything He is going to say to you has got to be seen from the throne down. We don't dare see it from our bank account out and from our little place out. We've got to see it from the throne down.

And the problem of racism, the problem of modernism and the new ecumenical council called by the Holy Father to woo us back into the fold and squirt stuff on us and make us good Catholics, we've got to settle that all from the throne down. If you try to get a lot of angry fundamentalists together down here sending telegrams to the President and to the State Department, all you've got is a bunch of people mad. But if you face all these problems from the throne down, you're on top of it brother, just as sure as you live. No matter what happens to it, you're still on top of it. Amen.

If I had just been having a good time up there but there's somebody listening. I don't know. I lost contact with you 10 minutes ago. So, I don't know whether you still heard me. But as for me, don't pity me and say poor man, he must carry a burden. I'm one of the happiest men in the world; by nature, one of the most miserable and by grace, one of the most delighted, because long ago I saw a throne and One sitting on a throne. And though imperfectly, I've tried to see everything else from the throne down. Well, everybody said, amen. Amen.



And so, we've got to see that throne, that set throne, that fixed throne and that One that we've now identified, sitting on that throne, receiving the adulation of all the heavenly host. And from that throne we view the Cold War and from that throne we view any possible hot war and from there we view the missiles and crime and corruption and race trouble and accidents and woes and diseases and death. From there, we look down. So instead of being under the circumstances, we're on top of the circumstances. Amen.