

Week of December 23-29

## **ON THE THRONE**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Revelation Chapter 4

Recently, our country held its presidential election and the current president was reelected. For his supporters, there was a sense of elation and celebration. They believe the country should continue on its present course of action and were thrilled their candidate was returned to office. For those who supported the other candidate, there was a sense of sadness and mourning. They believe the country is heading in the wrong direction and the days ahead will be dark ones for our country. Each side is convinced of the rightness of their position and many are convinced the other side is wrong. Four years from now, we'll have the opportunity to evaluate how things turned out and vote accordingly. It's the American way.

1900 years ago, a democratic republic was not even a possibility. Emperors in Rome ruled as "gods" and their orders were expected to be carried out without hesitation. The whim of the emperor could lead to life or death for those subjects in the empire. As we noted in the devotional on Revelation chapter 1, John wrote this book when Domitian was emperor. He had coins minted that declared himself to be Lord and God. He demanded that incense be offered up in worship in his name. One could not buy or sell without papers testifying that the worshipper had honored the emperor at a temple. Under such conditions, it was not easy being a Christian. The temptation to cave and compromise was great. The power of Rome seemed unstoppable. What was a crucified Christ, even a risen one, in comparison to the Roman legions? Such was the question that entered the minds of not a few believers.

Revelation 4 is God's answer to their question. It is not Domitian who is Lord and God nor is it Domitian who is on the throne of heaven. It is God Almighty who reigns supreme. He is the sovereign ruler of the universe. He is the all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present God. He is King and all must bow before his rule. It is from his throne that flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder come. It is his throne that is encircled with a rainbow resembling an emerald. He is the one who is "holy, holy, holy." He is the one before whom the twenty-four elders bow and lay down their crowns declaring, *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."*

John's vision in Revelation chapter 4 still speaks with force today nineteen centuries later. It's a reminder to those who voted to reelect the president that their candidate was returned to office for four more years but God's rule is eternal. It's also a reminder to those who wished another candidate were elected that God is sovereignly in control regardless of the outcome. Finally, it's a reminder to all believers that no matter who is in charge down here, a Roman emperor or an elected president, that the Lord God is the holy one on the throne of heaven whose reign will never be overruled or overthrown.

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Listen to the "Revelation Song" by Phillips, Craig and Dean. Be reminded of who really reigns and rules and pause to give him praise.

**Take-a-way:** *God's throne will never be overthrown!*