

Reflections on Revelation 4 and God's Holiness

In Revelation 4, we read about four living creatures, who are always standing in God's presence. Day and night, they have but one thing on their minds. Constantly they cry out:

**"Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come."**

(Revelation 4:8b)

Their words contain the expression of God's central, all-defining character. It is not *love* (as many would have us believe), but *holiness*.

God is holy, and his holiness *defines* all his other characteristics. The more we understand this, the more we will recognize God for who he is. We will also come face-to-face with our own *unholiness*, and will see it for what it really is.

The four living creatures also acknowledge the self-existing nature of this holy God. He always was, is, and always will be the Lord God Almighty.

How should we respond to these things? Our only proper response is threefold:

- First, we must acknowledge who he is.
- Second, we must acknowledge our dependency on him, as created beings - creatures who are *not* self-existing. He made us, and he did so because he wanted to, not because of any obligation on his part. He also sustains us; our very existence depends on him.
- Finally, because of these things, we must acknowledge that he deserves (and we owe him) all glory, honor and power. When we recognize his greatness, we will joyfully acknowledge this. We will also willingly (and joyfully) surrender to him any glory, honor or power that *we* ourselves may receive, for he is worthy of it.

The twenty four elders recognized these things. So how did they respond?

The twenty-four elders ... lay their crowns before the throne and say:

**"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."**

(Revelation 4:10-11)