



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 4:1-11

"The Throne of the Lord God Almighty"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Well, we are going to read from Revelation chapter 4, and continue our studies in the apocalypse, so if you have your New Testaments turn with me to Revelation 4, and I'll read the eleven verses of this chapter. The apostle writes,

"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 show 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 jasper and a sardine stone" (That seems so strange in English to speak about a sardine stone, but more recent translations translate it a little more, a little better. It's the sardious 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 (or thrones.) 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 living

creatures" (The authorized version has beasts, but that might be confusing since in the 13th chapter the antichrist is called a beast. The two Greek words are different. This is a word that means simply a living creature, whereas, in chapter 13 the word for beast is a word that means a wild beast, so we'll translate it as a living creature.) "four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures 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 were" (The original text puts this in the past tense, the imperfect, and so we'll translate it) "and for thy pleasure they were and were created."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the word of God, and we thank Thee for these magnificent chapters in which the glory of our Lord as the coming judge is set forth, so greatly and so pertinently for our generation. We know Lord, we need to be reminded over and over again that the ultimate judge of all the earth, into his hands judgment has been committed by Thee the father, as our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for all that he represents, our great covenantal head who has confirmed the new covenant with a sacrifice in his blood and has made it possible for men to have the assurance of the

forgiveness of sins.

We thank Thee for the satisfaction that he rendered to a holy and righteous father in his blood, and oh God, we do pray that by Thy grace thou will touch the hearts of men today, enable them to understand their sin, to recognize it, to see their need of a savior and to flee to Christ. We thank Thee Lord for the church of Jesus Christ.

We pray for every one of the individual bodies that meet in various places over the face of this earth and honor his name. Bless them each. Bless the ministry of the word. May there be fruit from the preaching and from the worship. We pray for our country, for our President, for others associated with him and still others in government, and our local government here in the city of Dallas. We pray for them.

We ask wisdom and guidance upon our leaders, and we especially remember those who have requested our prayers. O God, minister to them, give answers to their petitions, and give healing if it should please Thee in accordance with Thy will, and bless those who minister to them, the physicians, their family and friends.

May we have, Lord, tokens of Thy presence in our midst, and we especially, Lord, ask that for each of us personally, we may truly come to know what it is to have communion with the living God, the triune God, father, son and Holy Spirit, enable us to know that, not for our sakes simply, but that others also may come to know him, whom to know as life eternal. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today, as we continue our exposition of John's apocalypse is "The Throne of the Lord God Almighty," and as you can tell from the reading of the Scripture, we're turning to the fourth chapter, in order to expound that chapter. One of the most salient and signal themes of the apocalypse, as everyone who has read it knows, is the activity of Jesus Christ as judge and as king. No human empire can endure permanently. We have the ancient kingdom of Egypt, the greatest on the face of the earth in its day. It no longer is such. The great kingdom of Assyria, a magnificent

kingdom so far as power and authority was concerned, it no longer exists today. Babylon, all readers of Scripture know the greatness of Babylon the Great. It does not exist today. Greece, the kingdom of the Greeks, it's no longer a kingdom. Greece can hardly get along with itself, much less conquer any one else today. Rome followed, and Rome is no longer with us, so will all the philosophies of men such as fascism, communism, we are seeing the disintegration of communism today in the Soviet Union, and democracy will also follow.

It was Mr. Churchill who said that democracy was the greatest of all the kingdoms of the earth. He said something like, "Democracy was the greatest of those failures," or something like that. They're all failures, all of the kingdoms of men. They will never be able to meet the tests of human life. Scripture tells us, of course, that there is coming a time that there will be kingdom that will prevail and last, and that is the kingdom in which our Lord shall rule and reign.

Isaiah wrote about it many years ago when he said in chapter 9 of his prophecy in the 6th verse, "For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder." Scripture looks forward to the time when the kingdom of this world, all of the kingdoms shall be the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah.

This, the 4th chapter is really a part of the two chapters 4 and 5, and part of the unfolding of the great plan of God is set forth in this marvelous book. Four great movements are found in the book of Revelation, each introduced by a vision. We've already had one of them in chapter 1, in which John on the isle of Patmos had a vision that was given to him by the Lord. We read in Revelation chapter 1, in verse 10, "And I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day on the isle of Patmos and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet."

And the vision that John was given was a vision of the Lord himself and how he viewed the church upon the earth. We've looked at those seven letters to the churches in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation. Well, now in chapter 4 in verse 2, John

writes, "Immediately I was in the spirit and behold a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne." So the second of the visions it begins here, and what John sees is the Lords execution of judgment upon the cosmos, upon the world.

In chapter 17 in verse 3, he will tell us again that he was in the spirit, "and there is the wilderness he sees the overthrow of the city of man, the city of Babylon, that preminent city of man," and then finally in chapter 21 in verse 10, the last of these visions he is seeing, from a high mountain, the establishment of the bride, the new Jerusalem, as over against the harlot of the city Babylon, the pure holy city of God that comes down from heaven, the new Jerusalem. When you look at the philosophies of men you find that many of them are philosophies in which the world is looked at as being the continuous unfolding of the same thing, for example, in Hindu thought, and in some forms of Greek thought, the world is endless repetition. The wheel of history keeps going round and round in just the same way as the wheel of the seasons of the year, and then as it goes round and round the same things really appear. Civilization is one simple, single cycle, and civilization thrives, and they die. They are born. They live for a while. They die.

The biblical picture, on the other hand, tells us that this world has a meaning and a goal and a destiny. That it's created by God for his glorification. Biblical history is therefore unique it moves from the first creation in the book of Genesis, to the new creation in Christ in Revelation chapter 21 and 22, "And the new heavens and the new earth," and the center of the whole thing is the drama of the incarnation of the God man and his redemptive death on Calvary's cross. This is why the first pages of the Bible can be understood only in the light of the last pages of the Bible. Genesis and Revelation are the beacons that cast light on all that comes in between them. Together they make up the prologue and the epilogue of the drama of Calvary, which is the history of our redemption.

If we understand Genesis, and if we understand Revelation, we see that the whole plan and purpose of God is designed to highlight our Lord's ministry to us, and particularly in his death, burial, and resurrection. The Second Advent as Tennyson put it in his poem, "In Memoriam," is the one far off divine event toward which the whole creation moves. This, the 4th chapter and the 5th chapter of the book of Revelation, the two chapters go together. This is the scene in which the throne invests the lion of the tribe of Judah with authority to establish his dominion on the earth. It's the doom of all human political messianism. It would be a marvelous thing really if every political ruler were forced to read and ponder Revelation chapters 4 and 5. It would let them know that their view of things is not the ultimate view of things. If the pharaohs, for example, had understood Revelation 4 and 5 they would have ruled much better. If Nebakenezzer, if Alexander, if the Caesars, if Charlemagne, if Ghengis Khan, if Napoleon, if the Kizers, Hitler, and Gorbachev and Dong and Lei Ping in China also, if they were forced to read and ponder these two chapters, the rules and the kingdoms of men would perhaps be a good bit better, as beneficiary of benefactors of human beings.

Now, the apostle begins in the first chapter by giving us a summons. "After this I looked and behold a door was opened in heaven and the first voice which I heard were of a trumpet talking with me which said, Come up hither and I will show thee things which must come to pass hereafter." It's obviously a change of scene. We've had the letters to the seven churches, and now the apostle is envisioned taken to heaven, and he's going to look from heaven's standpoint at the things that are to transpire upon the earth, and how God will through judgment bring to pass ultimately the kingdom of God.

John, you know, was the one who wrote of himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved, and looking at this one, one would think that if he were to write about his personal experiences, he would say, "I'm the disciple that the Lord still loves," because he's the one to whom he reveals this magnificent revelation. There is of course room on his bosom for others to lean as well. You're not excluded simply because John speaks of

himself as the one who leaned physically upon the bosom of our Lord. Any one who wants to study the word of God and to spend time and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ may have the experience of communion with him.

Well, having said that in verses 2 through 8, we have this magnificent picture of the scene in heaven of the sovereign creator who is worthy of worship. This I say is part of the total vision. Chapter 5 belongs to it, and we'll spend a little bit more time on chapter 5 because chapter 5 has to do with the redemption by which our Lord gains the authority that is to be ultimately his. John says, "And immediately I was in the spirit and behold a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne." It's very interesting to me that we read that a throne was set in heaven. You would think that if this were a revelation of the eternal throne of God that there would be no setting of it. In the original text it says something like this, "And a throne was being set," or "A throne was standing," even in heaven. One gets the impression then that this is a temporal throne. It's a movable throne. It can really be set, so clearly there is some difference between this throne and the eternal throne of God. I suggest to you that this is a tribunal for governmental purposes.

We are not Englishmen and Scotsmen, but most of us, or many of us, have our roots there, and so we know about the king and we know about the queen and we know something about them, but perhaps it's escaped us that actually there are two thrones for the king and the queen.

Now, Queen Elizabeth has a throne in Buckingham Palace, and Queen Elizabeth also has a throne in the House of Lords. These two thrones are thrones of the royalty. Now, in the one case the throne in Buckingham Palace is a throne that suggests the right and authority to sit upon the throne of England. It's more of a personal thing. It's a throne that is related to the fact that they are Windsors. That's their right, but the throne in the House of Lords is a throne upon which she or a king, if the king were a king, in which they would sit in matters of law were at issue.

This appears is that governmental kind of throne. This is a throne that is set up for the government of the universe, and so we read, "the throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne." John goes on to describe the picture that came to him. We don't have any specific words of description about the person here except that he says, "And he that sat was to look up like jasper or like a diamond, and a sardious stone," the blood red sardious stone, "and that a rainbow was round about the throne," in sight like well, the emerald, the green of the emerald. A much nicer color to look upon, as our computer let's us know. So in other words, the apostle shuns anthropomorphic detail, and he describes the Lord who sits upon the throne in the flashing of gem like colors.

The Bible sees him terms of light. He's the one to whom no man can approach because he is light, the jasper, the diamond suggesting purity perhaps, and the sardious suggesting his wrath, the blood red sardious, and then the emerald suggesting perhaps mercy. We cannot be absolutely sure of that. He goes on to speak in the 4th verse of the, twenty-four elders who are seated upon thrones also. Verse 4, "And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones, and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold." These were individuals who were angelic beings. We don't have time to justify that, but in the 5th chapter in the 9th and 10th verses it's evident from the text there, it is probably the genuine text, that they are not speaking as redeemed individuals, so I suggest to you that what we have are angelic members of the court of the Lord.

They are, we would say coadjutors, who are given certain responsibilities by the one who sits upon the throne. They are perhaps the ones of whom Paul speaks in Colossians when he says, "that there are thrones and powers and principalities." They are the thrones; that is God has a governmental rule over the affairs of this earth. We know in the book of Daniel we have reference to them with certain angels, the angel of Persia or whatever, so that God rules an organized invisible universe about us. The details of which, well, we have a few clues in the Bible but we really do not know a whole lot

about. The four and twenty elders then are angelic members of his court. The four living creatures are the angelic guardians of the throne. We read in the 6th and 7th verses,

"And before the throne there was sea of glass like unto crystal, and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind," (Evidently special powers given to these living creatures) "the first living creature was like a lion the second like a calf, the third the face of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle."

Now, why the four are likened as they are to these four being or things, the lion, the calf, the face as a man, and like a flying eagle, why there are four of them no one knows. Commentators have often sought to take a guess. They have suggested, some of them, that this is a reference to the four gospels. That seems rather far-fetched to me. They have also suggested that perhaps they are the four women in our Lord's genealogy. How any one could come up with that I don't know. It's very imaginative, creative we might say in our language of today, but these two, in my opinion, are simply angelic guardians of the throne, as Paul says, "They are principalities, there are powers, there are thrones, there are dominions" associated with God's rule of this universe of which we are a part, but the interesting thing is what they are doing, so in the 8th verse we read, "And the four living creatures that had six wings about him full of eyes within: they do not rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and which is to come."

It's interesting that the reason for their activity is the praise of the Lord God, and notice how they praise him. "Holy, holy, holy" the *treis Hagion* of the holiness of God, so they praise him as the holy one. The holy one suggests the difference between God and men. If there is one of the attributes of God that marks him out as being different from men, it is his holiness. That adjective holy means really, separated from, so if he is holy,

he is separated from us. He is set apart from us. He's different from us. That's why theologians often, to try to stress this fact, say that God is the holy other one. He's different from men. He's the creator of men, and his being is different from our being.

Oh true, we are created in the image of God and in his likeness, but there is a basic difference between the creator and the created. He's the holy one, and so the living creatures praise God for his holiness, but they also praise him as the Lord God Almighty, his majesty. He is the Lord. He is God, and he's the one who has his hands upon everything. That's what "*pantokrator* almighty" suggests, the one who grasps it all, so they praise him for his holiness. They praise him for his majesty, and they praise him also for his eternity. He is the one which was, and which is, and which is to come.

I think that one of the nicest things that Campbell Morgan ever wrote was the two paragraphs that he wrote in one of his books about the poem "The Seraphim" by Mrs. Browning. He speaks of how he wasn't going to recite the poem because he couldn't recite, but he knew it's meaning, and then he goes on to say that, "Mrs. Browning in this poem "The Seraphim" describes the seraphim watching the work of the son of God upon earth, and at last when the seraphim as they ponder what our Lord is doing in his incarnation, at last, seeing that everything is moving toward the mystery of the incarnation and ultimately the cross and resurrection, one of the seraphs turns to the other seraph and says, "Here after shall the blood bought captives raise their passion song of blood," and the other seraph to, whom he is speaking, understanding what he is talking about says, "And we extend our holy vacant hands toward the throne crying, we have not music."

In other words, Mrs. Browning was trying to suggest the fact that the angels, created mighty beings, are not redeemed beings they do not know redemption. They do not know the experience of being lost. They do not know the experience of being condemned by a holy God, and they do not know the glorious experience of hearing the cross preached to them and realize the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross is the

answer to their need. They do not know that. They do not know that one must be redeemed. They haven't had that experience, and so they don't know the grace of God.

I had an experience this past few weeks with one of theological students. We discussed the work of our Lord, and we were discussing the work, and we had an interesting discussion. It was kind of a very warm discussion among friends, and I was trying to explain to him the nature of the grace of God. He is a man who has been to theological seminary before in other places, and a very fine young man, but he did not really understand the graciousness of God's grace. Oh, I don't mean he didn't have any understanding at all. I mean, it just was not the understanding that would have given him the greatest of the joy of the redeemed.

And finally I said to him, "But John you don't understand grace," and we went on discussing more, and I said, "John you do not understand grace." We had a nice discussion and then the next day or two days after, as I was getting ready to leave he said, "You know it is very interesting that we had to have somebody come from Dallas, Texas in order to teach us the sovereignty of grace." Very interesting. He'd been to theological seminary elsewhere. A Christian man, very fine young Christian man, but he did not understand the sovereignty of grace, that it's God who saves. My Christian friend, it's God who saves, and my non-Christian friend, it's God who saves. The angels don't know that marvelous experience of salvation by grace.

There's a song that I used to hear sung in our meetings. I don't ever hear it sung much now. In fact, most of the time I used to hear it as a solo. Its "Holy, holy is what the angels sing." Always loved that song because when I first heard it, I understood what Peter was talking about when he said, "The angels desire to look into our salvation," and the writer of the epistle of the Hebrews says, "He did not come to hold of angels, he came to take hold of the sons of men." It has the stanza, "Holy, holy, is what the angels sang, and I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring, but when I sing redemption's story they will fold their wings, for angels never felt the joys that our

salvation brings." Well, these angels praise him for his power. They praise him for his holiness. They praise him for his eternity, but they don't know, what we know.

Now, having said that, John tells us in the last three verses of the worship of this heavenly court. He says in verse 9,

"That when those living creatures 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 were and were created." (It's almost as if at recurring intervals and the unfolding of the plan of God, perhaps at the crisis in the plan of God.) "When the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne then the four and twenty elders respond by falling down before him the sits upon the throne and they worship him for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power."

I guess you've noticed in reading the book of revelation that in the beginning, these doxologies are very limited in the beginning in the very first one there are two of these magnificent expressions rendered to God, "Glory and honor," but then they enlarge as time goes on, and finally in the 7th chapter in the 12th verse. Seven of the things that we say are to be given to the Lord God are given. It's almost as if the praising go the Lord God is like an avalanche, in which one little snowflake falls on the ground, sticks to another, and the two become four and so on until finally there's a giant avalanche that buries a village.

The praises in the Book of Revelation are somewhat similar to that. "They cast their crowns before the one who sits upon the throne." That's simply their way of saying,

"We don't really have the right to judge. If we carry on any judgment it's because that judgment has been given to us as representatives of the Lord God himself.

The court ceases to function. It's given to the lion for his obedience as the lamb in the next chapter. It's the Lord Jesus who has the ultimate authority to rule and reign in the earth.

It's very interesting that this particular picture of the twenty four elders casting their crowns before the throne is the token of giving their recognition of the fact that the one who sits on the throne has the authority for all judgment. And in history near the time, during the life of the Apostle John, there is an instance, 64 AD in which Nero is sitting on the throne of Rome. His armies were still expanding and Parthea was one the kingdoms that was threatened, and Tiridates of Armenia was, it appeared, going to lose his kingdom, and so he arranged politically for a merger, and they had a little ceremony. He surrendered really to the Romans, but without a fight because he arranged that he would give the kingdom to Rome, but at the same time, Rome would give him back authority over it, but what they did was to arrange a ceremony.

The Roman legions came from Syria. The Parthians and their great cavalry stood opposite each other. Then they set up the deities to which each ascribed in a circle, and then in the center of the circle they raised a little mound, and then they sat on the mound an image of Nero the emperor, and then Tiridates when the ceremony was ready to begin, Tiridates takes his throne, and he walks over and sets the throne down before the image of Nero, the emperor, and then there's a great noise of applause, and they celebrate in a banquet afterwards, and later Tiridates travels to Rome, and there Nero gives them the authority, a kind of feudatory authority over the realm of which he had once been king, so it was his acknowledgment of the supreme authority of Nero in Rome.

Well, when the elders cast their crowns before the throne it is as if to say, "The authority we have is a delegated authority, the one sits upon the throne has all of the authority," and the 11th verse ends, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and

honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they were and were created." Creation gives him sole rights to the world. The world is his world. It's brought into being by the breath of his mouth. "He spoke. It came to be. He commanded, and it's stood forth" the psalmists says, so this chapter is the picture of the total authority of the creator.

I'd like to stress in closing just two or three points. John's words had local reference and application to the emperor worship to his day. We shouldn't really forget that because if we do we loose some of the force of the book of Revelation. Emperor worship was the political bond of the empire. We've talked about this before and how it was required of every citizen that once a year should take a pinch of incense, burn the innocence in the temple, the local temple, and confess that Caesar was Lord. This is what got the Christians into so much trouble because they couldn't do that.

The Romans didn't care if you worshipped other gods as well, just so you made that acknowledgement that Caesar was your king and god, and you could worship your own god, but Christians they have only one God. They cannot do that, and so that got them into a lot of trouble. John, of all people, was probably the one that Rome feared the most at this time. Domitian was on the throne in John's day. He was the first to have himself officially titled lord and god. Domitian loved to have the Romans and others shout, "Hail, the lord" to him at the festival of the seven hills that was common, all of the authority that he had, he seeked to make it divine authority. He's the one was called lord and god, in fact, there were a number of titles that were given to him such as lord forever, lord from eternity to eternity, lord in all eons.

He was hailed as the lord of the earth. He was hailed as invincible. He was hailed as power, glory, honor, peace, security, holy, blessed, you can see that the book of Revelation with it's King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is John's way, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, of reminding us of who the real Lord is. What was very interesting about Domitian is that he was naturally a man with a solid peasant's head, and then a face like a

hangman, and the early pictures of Domitian on the Roman coins are of a relatively young man who looks off into the distance with the natural look of one looking off into the distance, but as the years went by Domitian, as you might expect, became paunchy. He had little legs, and he was unable to see very well, very nearsighted.

Now, when we were in the airport the other day waiting for three hours and forty five minutes there looked like there was a potentate with his little potery of individuals, and then an individual who probably was the travel agent traveling with them too. He didn't have to do anything. She was doing everything for him. He had a kind of turban on his head, and he had a body like Domitian's, that is, as he walked along with his flowing garments. His paunch came out about like this, [Dr. Johnson demonstrates how his paunch looks] and he walked very impressively, very slowly, and you couldn't help but notice it. In fact, Martha said that some of the people that were sitting by her said, "He looks like he is pregnant with twins." [Laughter] Well, I think that must have been the way that Domitian looked, so John is thinking about the Roman Empire and the Roman Empire when he accords, "The supreme glory and honor and power to the one who sits upon the throne."

He is totally sovereign, and he must have our worship, and my Christian friend, and my non-Christian friend, if the twenty four elders and the four living creatures, if they are the ones who worship the one who sits on the throne, how much more must we worship the one who sits upon the throne?

I like that story of the father who is taking his son out one night. The moon was shining rather bright. He said, "Son, were going out, and we're going to steal a watermelon," so he found a patch, and he stationed his son on the fence, and he went into the watermelon patch, and he was examining the watermelons to see which one he would like to steal, and so as he finally had set his eyes on one that he thought was just right he stood up, and he looked around like this. [Dr. Johnson demonstrates how the father looks around] He got his knife out, and he's ready to cut it and his little boy said,

"Daddy, you didn't look every way." And he said, "Which way?" he said, "You didn't look up." [Laughter] That's true. We have to look up. We have to remember the things that really count, the relationship with the Lord God, and if the living creatures and the elders are the worshippers of God, then you and I sinners surely must be. I hate to take you over time, but we were a little, and we do need forty minutes or so on our radio broadcasts, so I have to be sure to do that. You understand that really I would have liked to have stopped a lot earlier, but [Laughter]

Yesterday, I read a little story. It was of a deacon's wife in the congregation, and the preacher got started, she began to think, "Did I turn off the oven?" And so not really certain and worrying about it, she wrote a little note. She handed it to one of the ushers to give to her husband, a deacon, but he thought it was a note for the preacher, [Laughter] and so he took it up to the preacher, and gave it the preacher, and he opened it up in the pulpit, and he read, "Please go home and turn off the gas." [Laughter] So I think that's what I better do. [Laughter]

If you are here today, and you have never believed in our Lord, we remind you, as John will stress next week in that great vision of the lion who as the lamb offers and atoning sacrifice, that the forgiveness of sins comes from the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. If you've never believed in our Lord, remind you there is no salvation in the church. There is no salvation in good works. There is no salvation in baptism. There is no salvation in the Lord's supper. There is no salvation in education. There is no salvation in culture. There is surely no salvation in citizenship. Salvation finds its source in the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross, and the atoning work that our Lord accomplished, but this saving work is for all who believe.

If you are here and God has spoken to your heart and reminded you of the fact that you are a sinner, salvation's for you. Come to Christ. Trust in him. Believe in him. Bow your head before him and your heart before him. Confess your need and receive as a free gift our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. For as Paul says, "For by grace are you saved

through faith, and that not of yourselves. It's the gift of god, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the word of God and for the reminders that we have of the sovereignty of our creator God. We render to Thee Lord, salvation, power, glory, honor, all of the things that are thine by virtue of who thou art, and to our Lord Jesus we acknowledge his savior hood, his redeemer hood, by virtue of the blood he shed, and oh, father if there are some here who have never believed may at this very moment they turn to him and receive him as their own Savior.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.