

The Vision of Heaven and Praise in Heaven (Revelation Chapter 4)

We continue from where we ended in last week's message of the Lord in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ Chapter 4:1-2

A. Vision of the throne

1. Voice of the Lord Jesus. John after hearing the voice as it were a trumpet, he saw the door of heaven open and the voice said come up hither and I will show you things which shall be hereafter. As we have studied last time, John's coming up into heaven is alluding to the rapture, when a trumpet is sounded (rapture happens at trump of God, 1 Corinthians 4:16-18 or at the last trump, 1 Corinthians 15:51-53). The voice of the Lord Jesus in Revelation 1:10 is likened to the sound of a trumpet. The apostle John heard the voice as it were of a trumpet talking to him which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. Remember that this is the voice of Jesus Christ as a trumpet which John heard in Revelation 1:10 during his first vision of the then risen and exalted Jesus Christ telling him to write letters to the 7 churches of Asia.
2. Vision of the throne in heaven. And immediately when John was called, he was in the spirit: and he beheld a throne that was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. Rev 4:3 says, "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."
3. The throne in heaven is not a piece of furniture but it symbolizes the authority and sovereignty of the one sitting on the throne. Hebrews 1:3 speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the **right hand of the Majesty on high**. Heb 12:2 says, " Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the **right hand of the throne of God**."
4. We see here the risen, glorified and exalted Jesus Christ sitting on the throne of God with the Father. However, only the Son is visible because the

Bible John 1:18 teaches that God the Father as being invisible for no one has seen nor will ever see the Father at any time. But though the Father is invisible, Colossians 1:15 teaches that God the Son is the exact image of the invisible God and therefore, John 1:18 says that the Son reveals the Father to the whole creation.

5. That explains the Father and the Son. Where is the Holy Spirit? The rainbow surrounds the one sitting on the throne with glory. One of the ministry of the Holy Spirit according to the Lord Jesus is to glorify the Lord Jesus as He spoke about in John 16:15, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."
6. The colors of jasper and sardine emanating from the One sitting on the throne are the colors of the first and last stone of the 12 stones on the breastplate of the High Priest which represent the 12 tribes of Israel.
7. The twenty-four elders have been thought as representing the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of the New Testament. However, it is more believed by scholars that the 24 elders represent the Church for the following reasons:
 - a. They are wearing a crown.
 - 1) Crown of righteousness for those who have finished the Christian race with patience by looking unto Jesus, those who have kept the faith by fighting the good fight of faith. (2 Timothy 4:7-8);
 - 2) Crown of life for those who remain steadfast suffering under trial (James 1:12) and those who suffer persecution as the church of Smyrna (Revelation 2:10);
 - 3) Crown of glory is for the elders and spiritual leaders who supervise and feed the Lord's flock not under compulsion but willingly and not for shameful gain, but eagerly. When the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive that crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1Peter 5:1-4);
 - 4) Crown incorruptible for those who strove for excellence and mastery in Christian life by self-discipline and self-control. (1Corinthians 9:25);
 - 5) Crown of rejoicing is for those soul winners. This crown is available for every believer in Christ Jesus. (1Thessalonians 2:19)and sitting on other thrones around the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should remember that the Church after being raptured went

through the Bema seat of judgments to test what they have done in the body and those works that survive the test of fire will be given victor's crowns.

- b. At this point Israel is still on earth going through the Tribulation period of 7 years. On the other hand, Israel will be given thrones and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ only after the Lord has judged Israel in the Tribulation period. After the tribulation period when the Lord has dealt with Israel and with their being a stiff-necked people and they finally say to the Lord Jesus, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" then the Lord will give them possession of the kingdom and will reign with the Lord for a thousand years in the Lord's millennial reign and unto eternity. (Daniel's vision of Israel: Dan 7:22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Dan 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.)

B. *(show here the slides under the title – The Heavenly Throne)*

C. Praise before the Throne

1. Who the four living creatures are is not important but what these creatures are doing. They are giving honor and adoration, worship and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ and they rest not day nor night but continually praise His name, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is and is to come. In other words, He is the "I Am", the ever living, never changing faithful One.
2. Though the apostle John does not identify as to who is sitting on the throne, He is referring to the Lord Jesus Christ because the praise is given to the one sitting on the throne saying, , "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come" is the same praise Isaiah heard in

Isaiah 6:1-3 saying, Isa 6:1 "...I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Isa 6:2 Above it stood the seraphims: Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. The apostle John says that this is the glory of Jesus which Isaiah saw and spoke about Him. (cf. John 12:41)

3. 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."
4. We, the raptured ones, will be given crown (2 Corinthians 5:10) but we will not be wearing them but cast them before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ for He is worthy to receive glory and honour and power: for he hast created all things, and for His pleasure they are and were created. The Bible says, For of (*ek*) him, and through (*dia*) him, and to (*eis*) him, are all things: **to whom be glory for ever. Amen.** (Romans 11:36) Colossians 1:16 For by (*en*, locative and instrumentality) him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by (*dia*) him, and for (*eis*) him.
5. I would like to make "An Important Point in the Office/Function of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially In His Work of Creation. The Lord Jesus Christ Jesus is being mis-identified and mis-represented by present day churches because many:
 - a. Deny Him what is rightfully and justly due Him (i.e., their all in all) by virtue of His covenanted position/function/role in the Trinity not only as a co-Purposer of the Eternal Purpose of God but as the CEO for without God the Son, God cannot be God, for Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God;
 - b. Deny Him what is appropriately and justly due Him (i.e., their all in all) because they unBiblically and wrongly know Jesus as functioning only as a TOOL (engineer's material to build a house) or as an

ATTORNEY-IN-FACT (acting for and in behalf of God the Father) or as an AGENT-REPRESENTATIVE OF God the Father.

The entire combined figures of a TOOL-INSTRUMENT and an ATTORNEY-IN-FACT and an AGENT-REPRESENTATIVE cannot exhaust or does not justly describe/express/define His Person as God the Son who is the True God and Eternal Life and His indispensable voluntary assumed but not transferable Position in the Eternal Covenant of the Trinity, as well as, His eternally covenanted but not interchangeable Mediatorial Function/Works as the Almighty Lord God the Son, who is justly appropriating all in all.

6. Some see Him as the Healer of their diseases. Some see Him as their Shepherd to guide them. Many see Jesus as doing only bits and pieces of God's work. Many see the function of the Lord mainly as the Savior of the world. So that when He finished His work of salvation, His work has stopped and now the whole of creation can now go direct to the Father and focus their faith and devotion to the Father. This is a utterly wrong and seriously undermining the vital and significant work of the Lord Jesus Christ as eternally covenanted with the Father (Hebrews 13:20; Ephesians 1:9-10, 22-23; 3:11; Revelation 13:8 and witnessed to by the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14; 2Peter 1:21) that the eternal purpose of God is decreed by God the Father to be worked out and realized by no one else but God the Son (Ephesians 3:11; Acts 4:12) through the eternal anointing of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 1:8-9; 9:14). The eternal purpose of the Father has no end and so the work of the Son in the realization of the purpose of the Father is eternal. That is why the Bible says that Jesus is a "High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 6:20) and "because He continues forever, He has an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:24-25). His work for the Father is from eternity to eternity and that is why the Father spoke of the Son, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."
7. One of our major occupations throughout eternity will be to glorify and adore the Lord Jesus Christ. Prolonged worship may not sound very exciting to many folks. Others would just like to reach heaven to walk the streets of gold, see the pearly gates, eat of the tree of life, drink of the pure river of

water of life. They do not enjoy worship as much as they enjoy the heavenly blessings. Yes, the Lord wants us to enjoy His glory that is why He prayed to the Father that all that the Father has given Him be with Him that we may behold His glory that was given Him by the Father before the world began because the Father loves the Son even before the foundation of the world. But if we would not enjoy praising the Lord Jesus as much as enjoying the heavenly blessing, it seems that the focus of our lives is still being self-centered instead of Christ-centered existence. To many worship is at 9:30 am, sit in church, sing some hymns and songs. Worship is more than this.

D. What is Worship

1. The more you know about Jesus, the more you will worship Him. It is impossible to worship Jesus if you do not know Him. The more we know about Jesus, the better we can worship Him. In Revelation 4, we see the elders and the angels who know the Lord far better than we do and the depth of their worship is directly tied to their knowledge of Jesus. This means that if we want to worship the Lord and He is worthy to receive all the worship the world can ascribe to Him, we ought to be preoccupied with knowing Jesus more and studying His word and doing our personal devotion to develop our relationship with Him. Consider the apostle Paul saying, "All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death, in the hope that I myself will be raised from death to life." (Philippians 3:10-11)
2. Notice how the four living creatures are praising:
 - a. They praise the holiness of the Lord saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God..." the worship is about the eternal truth of the holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ which keeps Him apart from His fallen creation.
 - b. Then they speak about the sovereignty of the Lord when they say, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God, Almighty." Recognition that the Lord is still sovereign and in control of everything must be a comforting word to those who were undergoing severe persecution during the time of Domitian.
 - c. Now they speak the truth that Jesus is eternal when they say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is

to come." The four living creatures are in effect saying Thou, O Lord are the ever-existing, ever-living, never changing, faithful One, the great I Am.

- d. (*insert here the slide Making Jesus Known and the Slide - Jesus Revealed, Identified Himself*)
- e. Then finally, the last verse, "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." He alone is worthy of worship because He is the Creator of all things and the very reason all things exist is because He wills all things as created to exist.
- f. There is a famous debate on the argument from contingency between Father F. C. Copleston and the famous philosopher Bertrand Russell. Simplifying the arguments is this: Everything in the universe (world) is contingent, therefore the universe is contingent. Therefore the universe requires an explanation. An infinite series of simplified explanation is not a solution at all. Therefore, an entity that possess necessary existence is required to explain the contingent universe or world. The debate on the argument of contingency ended there.
- g. So, the Bible states, "All things were made by Him (Jesus) and without Him was not anything made that was made. In short, the world or all things or the universe need not exist or had no reason to exist. For it to exist, there must be God who created all things and the Bible says, this is God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- h. This is what I have been saying that the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son Incarnate has a function beyond the boundaries of time and space because His work started from eternity to eternity, inclusive of creation, to ordering, to provisioning, preservation, judgment, redemption-salvation and consumation which are among the exclusive and unique functions/works of God the Son, Christ Jesus. The 7 cosmic function of the Lord Jesus Christ (*insert here the slide – 7 Cosmic Functions*) shows that aside from the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to cause the world to exist, nothing that is created would have existed and have continued to exist were it not for continuing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The world, being a contingent being, can exist only because

- of a necessary being, that is the Lord Jesus Christ who created all things and without Him is not anything made that was made.
- i. You and I are not here by accident. We are not the result of billions of years of evolution and some biological accident in the primordial soup, you are here by the specific will and design of the Lord Almighty, Eternal Creator, the necessary cause for all creation. He has a purpose why the world is here, why you and I are in this world. He created you in His image and for a specific purpose.
 - j. One of the reasons why so many of us, Christians, have never really enjoyed the experience of true worship is because we have not learned to accept the truth of the 24 elders' praise in verse 11 that we are created for the Lord's pleasure and praise. They have the mistaken idea that the Lord created them so they could have their own pleasure.
 - k. Modern day Christianity is no longer Christ-centered but man-centered. Many churches design their worship services around what will attract the most people, what will give people a good feeling, or a good show, but this should never be the case. Worship is not about us feeling good it is about us doing, saying and being what we should do and say. It involves specific and intentional action on our part directed toward the Lord.
3. Worship involves surrender. Revelation 4:10 says, "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."
- a. These crowns represent rewards. They were given these crowns based on their faithfulness. But notice, instead of holding on to their crowns and remaining on their thrones. They abandoned their thrones and cast their crowns before His throne. Everything they have, everything they possess, their position and their possessions they have laid at the feet of Jesus.
 - b. You cannot come to worship the Lord with a stingy heart. You cannot truly worship the Lord unless you are willing to surrender everything you are and everything you have to Him. One of the reasons so many people never experience authentic worship is because they insist on holding back, on keeping things from the Lord Jesus which belong to Him. This is not just material possessions, it means surrendering your agenda, your

- future, your hopes and your reputation to Him. It means trusting Him with your children, with your business and with your time.
- c. Listen, without Him you would have nothing and you would be nothing. Everything you are and have is because of Him. You cannot worship Him if you do not trust Him and if you are unwilling to surrender everything to Him it is because you do not trust Him.
 - d. This is Communion Sunday. Before we go to the Lord's table, the Bible says examine yourselves. Have you totally surrendered your whole life to the Lord Jesus Christ? Ikaw pa ba ang nakaluklok sa trono ng buhay mo o naisuko mo na ang iyong trono upang si Jesus ang iyong paupuin na Panginoon at Hari sa buhay mo?
4. Prayer:
- a. Sinabi mo Panginoon sa Matthew 7:21-23 na hindi lahat ng nagsasabi sa iyo ng Panginoon, Panginoon ay papasok sa kaharian ng langit kundi yaong gumagawa ng kalooban ng Ama na nasa langit. At sinabi mo rin Panginoon na kung ano ang kalooban ng Ama sa langit ay gayon din ang mangyayari dito sa lupa. Nakita naming ang kalooban ng Ama sa langit na lahat ng pagsamba, pagpupuri at pagdakila sa Dios ay nakatuon sa iyo Panginoong Jesucristo. Nais naming na makapasok kami sa kaharian ng langit kaya ang lahat ng aming katauhan, pagsamba, pagpupuri, dalangin at pnanambahan ay nakatuon at nakatalaga na sa iyo Panginoong Jesucristo upang matupad namin ang kalooban ng Ama dito sa lupa katulad sa langit.
 - b. Ngayon, sa aming pakikipagsalo sa iyo sa iyong Holy Communion, saliksikin mo pa kami, alamin mo ang laman ng aming puso. Subukin mo po kami at alamin mo kung ano ang nasa kaisipan namin. Tignan mo at ipakita mo po sa amin ang aming kasamaan at ipakita mo sa amin ang anomang pumipigil sa amin sa pagtatalaga ng aming lahat sa iyo. Help us to deal with them at akayin mo po kami sa landas ng buhay na walang hanggan. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23-24). Kaya patawarin mo kami sa mga nagawa namin na kasalanan, hugasan mo kami ng iyong banal na dugo at dalisayin po ninyo ang aming buhay at akayin po ninyo kami sa iyong landas na matuwid tungo sa buhay na walang hanggan, at upang

maihandá po namin ang aming mga sarili at maging karapatdapat po kami na makasama mo sa banal na salu-salo na ito. Amen