

3-13-05

## REVELATION 4

INTRO: Just one verse. This morning—***the rapture!!!*** The Bible clearly teaches that we should live with an urgent expectation that Jesus is coming soon. **Rom 11:25; I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.** Knowing that the final gentile might get saved today will change the way we live, the decisions we make. We will evangelize our families, friends, and neighbors...

Believing that Jesus could come today will force us to prioritize. In other words, ***keeping the main things the main things.*** We will be less concerned with things of this world and more concerned with being about our Father's business...

**Rev 4:1-11;**

**1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet**

**said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."**

John gets to go to heaven; in what form, we cannot know. This isn't all that unusual; **Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel** all had visions of the throne of God. But John, ***the disciple whom Jesus loved*** (important distinction!), got to do something that none of the others did—he was actually taken by the Spirit to heaven! This is significant because of the 4, only John was a member of Jesus' Body, the church! What John is seeing is what the church will see from heaven during the Great Tribulation...

- Our key is the first 2 words—**after this**. After what? The church age. You see, if we return to our ***Divine Outline***, the one given to us in **ch.1:19**, we find two Greek words repeated here: "**Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.**" The Greek words ***meta tauta*** are translated ***after this***. Our 4<sup>th</sup> chapter begins with the same two words. Literally, ***after the things of the church age***...

- The absence of the church is conspicuous in most of the **Book of Revelation**. The focus is only the church in **chapters 2-3** but, from **ch.4** forward, the church is nowhere to be found on earth. What happened? ***The rapture happened!*** The church goes to heaven and doesn't reappear on earth until we get to **ch.19** where we are seen ***returning to earth with Jesus in victory!***
- I want to start out this morning by stating clearly that there is nothing at all wrong with wanting to be taken out of the great tribulation. In WWII, the worst war in history, more than **60 million** people lost their lives world-wide. By comparison, based on the present population of the world, there will be some **5 BILLION** people die during the great tribulation. That's how bad it will be. Of this time, Jesus said (**Matt 24:21-22**), "**For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now-- and never to be equaled again.**" No wonder Paul calls the rapture of the church '***the blessed hope...***'

- The good news for us, of course, is that the church—Christians—will not see this time of great distress. Why do I say that? Simple: Paul says this: **1Thes 5:9; For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.** A day is coming—soon—when Jesus will call His bride to be with Him where He is. Jesus spoke of this moment in **John 14:2-3;**

**2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.**

**3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**

- For any here who might be new to Christ, let me explain that the rapture is the event where every believer in Jesus Christ is taken to heaven in an instant without ever having to experience death. The rapture is the first part of a 2-part return of Jesus to this earth...
- I know that the idea of a **sudden snatching-away** of people from the earth can sound a little like **science-fiction**. But there is no doubt that the rapture will

take place; the only disagreement among Christians is when it will happen...

**1 Cor 15:51-52;**

**51 Listen, I tell you a mystery:** the first thing I want to point out is the significance of this word '*mystery*.' The Greek word is *musterion*; it means something that cannot be known apart from revelation, something that has not before been revealed in detail...

- What that means is that the rapture was a hidden secret revealed for the first time in detail by Paul in this letter to Corinth! How exciting it must have been for Paul to be the recipient of so many mysteries. Paul received the ***mystery of the church—Jew & Gentile becoming one in Christ.*** Paul revealed the ***mystery of Christ in us, the hope of glory!*** And here, he reveals the mystery of this magnificent change in location...

**We will not all sleep (die), but we will all be changed (made different physically)--  
52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.**

- This morning, our purpose is to be clear about the **timing of the rapture**. We will see both OT & NT evidence that should provide great hope and comfort for all of us. This, guys, is exciting stuff and something that could happen at any minute! I hope/pray that the prospect of seeing Jesus at this glorious event thrills you as much as it does me!
- There are 4 major theories about the timing of the rapture. I will tell you what they are but I will not waste time explaining those theories that are, frankly, **just wrong**. I want to save our time this morning teaching the Biblical doctrine of the rapture. The 4 theories are:
  - 1) **post-tribulation**. This theory says that the rapture of the church will occur at the end of the great tribulation. According to this theory, we would be caught up into heaven only to immediately return with Jesus to rule and reign;
  - 2) **mid-tribulation**. This is the idea that we will be raptured at the half-way point (3 ½ years) of the great tribulation—before things get really bad;

3) ***pre-wrath***. This is a fairly new theory that says the first 3 ½ years of the 7 year great tribulation are a time of world-wide peace under the direction of the anti-christ and the church will be here for those years. But then, just before God pours out His wrath in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 3 ½ years, we will be raptured. This is not only unbiblical, it's silly...

4) the truth—***pre-tribulation*** rapture. This is the only theory consistent with God's nature, His character, and His Word. This theory says that Christians will be taken out of this world prior to God pouring out His judgment in the great tribulation...

Let's establish Biblically when the rapture of the church is going to come. Please turn to **1Thes 4:14-18;**

**14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.**

**15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.**

**16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.**

**17 After that, we who are still alive and are left** (Paul clearly expected to be alive at the rapture) **will be caught up**(Gr; *harpazo*; Latin Vulgate—*raptuse*) **together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.**

**18 Therefore encourage** (comfort; Gr.; *parakaleo*) **each other with these words.** No comfort or encouragement if our message was we were going through God's wrath!

Let's go back to a verse we've already read: **1Thes 5:9; For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Make no mistake—the OT teaches clearly that the **Day of the Lord**, the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's distress/trouble, **is God's wrath!** His anger, judgment. The NT says the same thing: after the great tribulation begins, our Bible is very clear: judgment has begun and the enemies of God recognize one thing very clearly—Jesus is responsible for this wrath: **Rev 6:14-17;**



**14 The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.**

**15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.**

**16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!**

**17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"**

- Having clearly established that the great tribulation is, indeed, God's judgment, His wrath, we ask (and answer) the definitive question: is it even remotely possible that God could ever judge His people? Is it possible for God to punish His bride? Let's see what the Bible says... **Gen 18:20-25;**

**20 Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous**

**21 that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."**

**22 The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD.**

**23 Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"**

**24 What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it?**

**25 Far be it from you to do such a thing-- to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"**

**Do you need more? Gen 19:15-22;**

**15 With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished."**

**16 When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them.**

**17 As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives!"**

**Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!"**

**18 But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please!**

**19 Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die.**

**20 Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it-- it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared."**

**21 He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of.**

**22 But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it."**

Why couldn't the angel of destruction do anything? **Because** (I thank God for NT light) **Lot was a righteous man!** God cannot judge the righteous! It is **impossible**, guys, for God to judge His own! Having been washed by the blood of Christ, having been given His righteousness, **we are appointed unto salvation and not to wrath...**

- Let's talk about another aspect of the great tribulation. We know that the man we call anti-christ will be in control here on earth.

Please turn to **II Th 2:1-8;**

**1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers,** There are two issues being discussed here. 1<sup>st</sup>, the coming of the Lord and, 2<sup>nd</sup>, our being gathered to Him. The coming of the Lord refers to His return to earth. Our (believers) being gathered to Him refers to the rapture...

**2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.** The purpose of this section is to comfort those in Thessalonica who had heard a false report that the Day of the Lord has already come. Then, as now, there were false teachers spreading lies...

That's why Paul clears things up...

**3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.**

**4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.**

**5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?**

This is important. Paul is telling them that the Day of the Lord could not have come because the anti-christ had not yet been revealed!

What's keeping him from appearing—then or now? This...

**6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.**

**7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.** There is no power on earth powerful enough to hold back the devil. Only God can do that. Who is it holding back this secret power of lawlessness? It's the Holy Spirit...

- We also know, don't we, that the Holy Spirit is ***omnipresent***? It's impossible to take Him out of the way. So what's this reference? Clearly, this is the work of the

Holy Spirit in/through the church! When the church is removed, the work of the Holy Spirit changes altogether! No longer fetching a bride for the Son (**Gen.22**), His job will then be to focus again on Israel...

**8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.**

You see, no judgment (great tribulation) until after the lawless one has been revealed! Who is the anti-christ? No one knows and will not know—until Jesus calls us home!

- Let's start wrapping up this morning by discussing some of the criticisms of a pre-trib rapture of the church. What do opposing viewpoints say about what I am teaching today?

1<sup>st</sup>, they say that pre-trib rapture is merely escapist theology. "*We have to be prepared for the great tribulation,*" they say. Is it escapist theology? **Absolutely!** But it's what Jesus told us we should pray for: **Luke 21; 34 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and**

**that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.**

**35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.**

**36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." Not only did He tell us we should pray to escape, but we should do so that we may stand before Him! The only way we can do that is if He comes for us to take us to be where He is (**Jn.14**)!**

2) critics say that this is a ***new teaching***, that throughout church history a post-trib position was taught. They say it was introduced by Margaret McDonald and John Darby in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Guys, church history is not something we should be especially proud of! Way back when **Jude** wrote his epistle, he was urging us ***to contend for the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints!*** People have always been wrong...

- Is this really new? Or did God give us some very clear pictures of the rapture way back in the OT? I would suggest He did...

- 1) **Enoch—Gen.5**; a type of the church...
- 2) **Noah—Gen.6**; a type of Israel...
- 3) **Daniel—Daniel 3**. A type of the church while his 3 friends are a picture of Israel going through the fire being preserved by who? Jesus! In addition to the story about Lot being snatched away from Sodom and Gomorrah. You see, nothing new...

- Do you need any more evidence? How about one more—from the mouth of Jesus Himself? **Rev 3:10; Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.** This was a promise to the true church—real believers...

**the hour** (specific time in view) **of trial...**  
**from**—key Greek word; **ek**—it always means out of...

**those who live on the earth**—literally, **earth-dwellers**. **But our citizenship is in heaven**, Paul wrote! When Jesus calls us home, so, too, will our bodies be in heaven!



- Still need more proof? We're out of time today. You'll have to wait until we see just who it is singing in heaven in the next 2 chapters! Guys, this is great stuff and even better promises. You may have a different point of view regarding the rapture. If that's true, don't worry—you'll be raptured with the rest of us! 😊

CONCL: How excited should we be? Since people have been saying Jesus is coming back for 2000 years? Watch the clock—Israel is our clock. **1948** and **1967**—the clock is ticking...

**1 After this I looked,** This is the signal to us that the 3rd division of **Revelation** has begun. From here on out we deal with the things **which must take place later**. The church is now in heaven and God turns His attention to Israel and the events happening on earth...

- The remaining chapters in **Revelation** happily mark the return of *righteousness*

and *justice* to earth! When Jesus stood before Pilate in His first visit to earth, righteousness was on His side but ***justice was not!*** Pilate, a sinner, a rejecter of Christ, was the judge that day. Now all justice is returning to the just one!

**Ps.29:10** says, "**The Lord sits enthroned over the flood (judgment); the Lord is enthroned as King forever!**"

**and there before me was a door standing open in heaven.** Jesus said (Luke 13:24), "**Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.**" He also said that ***He was the door;*** it is tragic to me that the door seems so narrow; it's not that people can't find it and go through, it's that they won't! Since Jesus is the door-opener, I am also encouraged that He said (in the letter to Philadelphia) that when He opens a door, it cannot be shut! Our way to heaven has been secured by grace through faith in Jesus Christ!

- This is the ***third heaven*** spoken of by Paul in **2 Cor.12** that John is privileged to visit! It is important to recognize that the rest of **Revelation** *is future!* **Ch.4 & 5** are the

introduction and background for the awesome prophetic events contained in the rest of the book. We must grasp this point or it will be easy to get confused...

**And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."**

**2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. Its impossible for us to grasp the majesty of this scene! John's focus is *a throne*...**

- Thrones are a central theme throughout **Revelation**. The word '**throne**' appears 14 times in this chapter alone and in all but 5 of the chapters in the book. That's because we are now seeing Jesus as the Judge of earth and heaven! The throne in heaven is the seat of authority which controls every event in history—past, present, and future. John is seeing **HEADQUARTERS!**

- Here's the most important application for this morning's study. Throne—who is sitting on yours? You see, that's the big question in life, isn't it? The humanist agrees with the Christian—there is surely a throne with someone sitting on it. ***The difference lies in who!*** The Christian, unlike the unbeliever, has to get off his/her throne every day in order to allow the rightful occupant to the throne His place to sit! Who's in charge in your life? If your answer is you, I will provide an opportunity to get saved at the end of this study...

Now, John simply runs out of words to adequately describe what he is seeing...

**3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.**

This is one of those times when words escape you! He couldn't possibly describe this adequately. I've heard an old story about someone going to heaven, running into John, and telling him, "*Why didn't you tell me it was this beautiful?*" John's reply

was, "*When I was on earth, I didn't have the words to describe it!*"

- What John saw was color—  
***magnificent, indescribable color!***  
This reminds of us what John said earlier, **(I Jn 1:5) God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.** It is significant that there are 3 colors as they represent the Triune God in all His glory...

1) ***jasper***; this is really a diamond—clear, perfect, and pure! It is the most beautiful of all stones and has the ability to capture light and reflect brilliant colors! This diamond speaks of the Father.

2) ***carnelian*** (*sardine*; KJV)—or blood-red ruby. This obviously speaks of redemption through the precious blood of Jesus who was eager to die for your sins—the greatest expression of love in the history of history!

3) ***a rainbow resembling an emerald*** is a symbol for God's eternal grace—God's promise to Noah not to judge the world in a flood again. Please note that the rainbow is a ***full-circle***; in heaven, all

things are **complete**. Normally, we see a rainbow after a storm. Here, however, the rainbow is seen before the storm to come.

- There is also deep significance in the stones for Jews (John would have understood this immediately). The high priest's breastplate (from **Ex.28**) had 12 stones on it, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. He carried them on his breastplate (heart) as a reminder that he represented all Israel to God. The ***jasper stone*** was the first and ***carnelian*** the last...
- The 1st stone represented ***Reuben***, the oldest son of Jacob while the last represented ***Benjamin***, the youngest. Their names are very significant— Reuben means '*Behold, a son!*' and Benjamin means '*the son of my right-hand.*' These are obvious references to Jesus who is the first (priority) begotten Son of God and the Son to whom judgment is given (right-hand is the power position, the seat of authority)...

**4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders.** This is better translated *lesser-thrones*. There is wide difference of opinion on who these 24 characters are, but I think that if we look at the evidence we will be able to determine their identity...

- In **1 Chronicles 24** we see that the entire Levitical priesthood was represented by 24 elders who were appointed by King David. Because there were thousands of Levites, it would have been impossible for them all to gather at one time. So the work at the temple was divided, 24 Levites serving at a time. One representative was taken from each family to be a representative for the entire family. It's like our US Congress; we elect one man/woman who represents many. *It is clear that these 24 elders represent the whole of something.* We are given some clues...

1<sup>st</sup> clue...

**They were dressed in white...**

Throughout Scripture, white clothing

represents ***righteousness***. We know that only Jesus was righteous along with those to whom He has given His righteousness. How does one become righteous? ***By faith*** (both OT & NT); ***Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness...***

**2 Cor.5:21; God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God.**

**Eph 2:8; For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.** Clearly, these 24 elders represent the whole of people who have believed in Jesus Christ. But there's still more evidence...

**and had crowns of gold on their heads.** There are 2 Greek words for different types of crowns; this is the word ***stephanos***; It refers to ***victors*** crowns, or ***overcomers*** crowns. Paul referred to these crowns in **2 Tim 4:8; Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his**



**appearing.** These crowns can only be worn by believers and will be given when Jesus returns for the church! **I Jn 5:5; Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.** That *has to mean* these 24 elders represent believers by faith throughout the entire history of earth!

- Those born before Jesus looked forward to the cross by faith, those born after Jesus look back at the cross by faith (easier for us)! **These 24 represent all of Abraham's sons by faith!** *That they are already in heaven when John is taken up is **conclusive proof** that the church is already in heaven **before** the Great Tribulation begins!* We will be even more certain about their identity when we study the **new song** they sing in **ch.5!**
- Some say these are angels but angels are never spoken of as redeemed, they are never numbered, nor are they ever connected to crowns. Who are they then? OPINION: I personally believe (strongly) that 12 thrones are occupied by the **12 apostles** (not including Paul) and the other 12 thrones are

occupied by representatives from the **12 tribes** of Israel. Why do I believe this? Because Jesus gives us a hint of this when speaking to His disciples. Referring to His reign during the millennium, in **Matt 19:28**; He says, "**I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**" BTW, I believe Paul will have a very special, very prominent place in heaven, similar to King David's position relative to OT believers...

**5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.** Remember now, these are symbols. They speak of **a coming storm of judgment**. The same things were seen and heard on **Mt. Sinai**, when Moses was given the Law. It was an awesome sight, so terrifying that the Jews shook with fear! These are a symbol of **God's righteous judgment**; **Revelation** is the book which turns **from grace to judgment**. When

the church is gone, a holy God must judge evil...

**Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.** We don't have to guess what this symbol is because John gives it to us. From **Is.11** and **ch.1** of this book, we know this is the **7-fold Spirit of God**. Jesus spoke of the **blasphemy of the Holy Spirit**; these **blazing lamps** are lamps of judgment because the Holy Spirit's call to grace has been rejected. If you've ever wondered what blasphemy of Holy Spirit is, this is it—the continual, willful rejection of Jesus Christ as Lord!

**6 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.** The sea of glass is a symbol of the nations—people! Crystal is a symbol of purity and holiness (this is why we call Him the *Holy Spirit!*). **Heb.12:14** says, "**Without holiness, no one will see the Lord.**" It is significant that the throne is located on this sea of glass as holiness is the single most important attribute of God. Everything else God is springs from the truth that He is holy!

**In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.** The KJV translation is very poor—**beasts**. These may be strange very strange and very interesting creatures, but they are not beasts! **Ezekiel** saw similar creatures which he called **cherubim**. **Isaiah** also saw them and called them **seraphim**; he saw some with 6 wings, others with 4...

- That they were covered with eyes reflects the **all-seeing, all-powerful** nature of God. He is **omniscient** and **omnipresent**. You cannot hide from God! He sees everything—every direction all the time! If you are walking with Jesus, this is comforting! If you are not, this can be terrifying!

**7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.** The faces are important because they each represent a facet of Jesus' earthly ministry

and each correspond to a different gospel account:

- The ***lion*** represents Jesus as depicted in **Matthew's** gospel; *Jesus was the Lion from the Tribe of Judah, the Jewish Messiah!*
- The **ox** was a beast of burden, a servant; **Mark's** gospel portrays *Jesus as the servant of the people--He came to serve, not to be served!*
- The ***face of a man*** is a *symbol of Jesus as the Son of Man* as portrayed in **Luke's** gospel. In order for a sacrifice for mankind to be acceptable, it would have to be a man!
- The ***eagle is a symbol of deity in Scripture***. In **John's** gospel, *Jesus is set before us as God*, emphasizing His non-beginning, His creation, and His miracles. He is 100% God, 100% man, forever the God-man. 4 gospels written by 4 different men but all consistent pictures of God in the Person of Jesus Christ!

**8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." Isaiah 6** tells us why they had 6 wings; 2 under their feet because the ground where God is, is holy ground! Even these magnificent, holy angels could not stand in the presence of God! They had 2 wings to cover their eyes because they could not look on the presence of God. The 3rd set of wings in **Is.6** is to fly with! There is constant activity around the throne of God. He never rests—neither do His attending angels...

- Notice what they never stop saying—***Holy, holy, holy!*** Not *power, power, power*. Or even *love, love, love*. It's holiness; God's outstanding attribute is holiness! Each Person of the Trinity is declared holy ***continuously!*** Guys, a scene like this should keep us on guard from becoming too casual with our God. Jesus is our friend, He is our

Brother, and He is our Lord! ***But He is also HOLY GOD!***

**9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,**

**10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:**

Remembering that these 24 elders represent us—believers throughout history—gives us important instruction: they fall down before the Lord in worship...

- It's where we ought to be, too! You know what? Since worship is going to be the thing we love doing the most in heaven, why not get started now? You know, there are people who think that the idea of continuously worshipping God in heaven is going to be boring. Do you think that these 4 magnificent creatures ever get bored worshipping God? No way...

- You see, they are doing what they were born to do! As we'll see in a minute, it's what we are born to do, too. But don't worry—we'll have plenty of work (good work) and plenty of things to learn when we get to heaven. It won't be floating around on a cloud for eternity singing *'hallelujah...'*

Please notice that they threw down their crowns. Here's why...

**11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power,** You see, in heaven, all glory goes to God! Not to servants—His instruments. But to the One who created the instruments. He's the worthy one, not us...

- I really want all my crowns, my rewards. I hope you do, too. Not because I plan on carrying them around heaven for eternity. But because I want to be able to throw down every one at His feet!

**for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."** I prefer the KJ translation of this last sentence; **for thou hast created all things,**



**and for thy pleasure they are and were created.** People are always asking this question: “***what’s the meaning of (purpose for) life?***” Guys, this is it! We who are Christians are the only ones who seem to have figured it out! Isn’t that an amazing thing? We search and search, we come up empty and, then, we give our lives to Jesus and find the one thing we were always looking for!

- What this means is simple: if you are here today trying to find meaning, purpose, and happiness in any other place, from any other source, you are doomed to fail! Only God. Only Jesus...