

Connected To The Most Powerful Place In The Universe

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Welcome to the ninth, of our 20 classes going through the book of Revelation. I think as we go through this section today, just entering into the 4th and 5th chapters of Revelation you're going to see why this book was the most popular of all the books of the Bible to the early church. The sequence is significant. We've been looking at the church on Earth, then we're going to soon be going into the wrath of God poured out on Earth. Between those two is the church in Heaven. What I've entitled this section is: Connected To The Most Powerful Place In The Universe.



Now, if you see the slide in front of you, that's what many of us think of when we think of grandeur and power? It's a huge spiral galaxy. Literally, as we look at the book of Revelation discussing the end of the world, the most peaceful assuring place of confidence for anyone to be, when they think they're going through the tribulation. Which is what the early church felt. They were being hunted down and martyred, which is how it's described in the tribulation. All believers are going to be hunted down and martyred. So, they saw this middle section, of the connection to the throne of God, to be the most peaceful, hope filled concept they could have.

So, let's read, just the opening of the 4th chapter of Revelation. If you can get there in your Bibles, and then let's pray that the Lord will help us to realize why the most commanded part of our Christian life; do you remember what that is? What's the only thing we're supposed to do without ceasing? What is it? Yeah, pray without ceasing. Prayer is how we get connected to the most powerful place in the universe. The throne of God. Where we see ourselves already surrounding that throne.

Look at this in chapter 4, *"after these things"*, do you see the juncture here? Chapter 3 ended with the church on Earth, Laodicea. Then chapter 4, verse 1 says *"after these things"*. The whole book of Revelation is, remember class one, it's like a movie script. It's like a shooting sequence of a movie, where it follows. It's not that this is out of order. This is a beautiful chronological view from now to forever. So, *"after these things"* marks this juncture.

"I looked" remember John is being taken on tour. So, he's the eye, the apostle John. *"I looked, and behold, a door was standing open in Heaven. And the first voice which I heard"*, going back to chapter 1; remember he was on Patmos in the prison colony, in the Roman Empire on the Lord's day. He heard a voice behind him. See, it's the same voice, so it's the voice of the Lord.

"...which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.'"

After the church on Earth, the church is in Heaven. It's a sequence and we're going to see that all the way through. That starts with, verse 2.

"Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in Heaven, and One sat on the throne."

God is on the throne. God is our Heavenly Father. When we are connected to him, we're connected to the throne of God, which is the center of everything going on in the universe.

Let's pray and ask the Lord to guide us.

Lord, I thank you that right now, just by bowing our hearts before you, just by approaching your throne in the name of Jesus, we're instantly connected to the center. The power center. The ruling center. Your throne. Oh Lord. Thank you for being our Father in Heaven.

You call your throne, the throne of grace and mercy, where we can find grace to help us in our time of need. How the early church lived that out, how we want to as we are in ever darkening days. How we want to live connected to your throne. To you as our Heavenly Father. In the name of Jesus, we ask for that. Amen.

As we go through the book of Revelation,

- remember it has 404 verses and
- 22 chapters and
- every one of the verses tie back to all the rest of the Bible.

As we get into this section, chapters 4 and 5, we see so much of the tie back to our Lord Jesus Christ's ministry.

Heaven is a Real Place Existing at This Moment

Revelation 4:1

Let's begin, number one, with that door. See in verse 2, "*standing open*". In verse 2, I was in the Spirit and I saw this throne, looking through the door that it talks about in verse 1. What John is learning is Heaven is a real place existing at this moment. It's not like someday, after everything's over, finally Heaven will start. No Heaven exists. In chapter 1, Jesus comes from Heaven and appears to John. So, Heaven is a place right at this moment.

These next two chapters, chapter 4 and chapter 5, that we study, gives us a sight of what's going on in Heaven. Now, the message to John was that: Heaven was real.

- even though he was on that Island,
- a prisoner,
- ill treated,
- not even knowing if he was going to ever get off that Island.

The Lord showed him, while his whole world was this horrible time of persecution, continuously going on at the same time as his persecution was all the worship, that we see in these two chapters.

It's when you fly above a storm, my wife and I flew 130,000 or 140,000 miles in the last 12 months. As I think about many of the hours in those planes, we would look down and see the dark clouds and lightning like flash bulbs going off in thunderstorms. Down seven miles or six miles below us, there were storms going on.

- People wondering where those lightning bolts were going to hit.
- Wondering if they're going to get flooded.
- Wondering about all the storm going on.
- But we were up there and sometimes while we were seeing storms below us, we could see stars out the window of the airplane.

It's almost while the storm is going on, there's this place of calm above it. That's exactly what John was shown. It's the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Above all else, that's what this book is about; no matter what your take on the book.

Now remember, good believers have all different views of Revelation.

- There's the covenant theology view. Which is, it's just a historic record of the fall of Jerusalem and a narrative that God's going to win in the end, but none of those details are literal.
- Then there's the dispensational view, which I'm teaching you. That all of this is really going to happen.

Don't let your perspective of this book, keep you from the message that,

- it's the Revelation of Jesus Christ, helping us in the church right now on Earth.
- Watching over and receiving the worship in Heaven.
- Overseeing the righting of all wrongs. That's what the tribulation is.
- Coming back. Now, every Christian agrees on that. The 19th chapter. They all agree on it's the return of Christ.
- His rule on the Earth. Again, we get into all different views on that.
- The final judgment, all believers agree on that.
- Heaven, all believers agree on that.

So, we all believe the church is on Earth. We believe the church is in Heaven. We believe He's going to right all wrongs. He's coming back. He's going to give everyone what they deserve, and we are going to get to dwell with him forever. It's the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Worship 101: Who are True Worshippers?

Phil. 3:3

Now real quickly. As we talk about worship remember, when you read starting in verse 3 it starts describing this throne of Revelation 4:3. Verse 4, around the throne are 24 elders. They have these crowns. Verse 5, *"from the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings and voices"* and all of this description.

Now, look at verse 8. See the atmosphere of Heaven is worship. You see how it says that, *"they don't rest day or night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is and is to come!"* Do you see that atmosphere of worship?

That immediately brings us to this slide. Who are these worshipers that are on the throne? How do you get around the throne? How do you get to Heaven? That's really what this book is all about. That's why it was so popular and explains everything.

Let me take you back to answer that. To Philippians 3:3, Philippians chapter 3, look at verse 3. *"For, we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,"*

Who are true worshipers? The apostle Paul says people that have a circumcised heart. Do you remember what, a couple of days ago, I was telling you about? The fact that Ezekiel 36 talks about salvation.

Starting in verse 26 and through 27 it says:

- *"a new heart also will I give you",* so a new heart,
- *"a new spirit I'll put within you"*
- *"I will take away "out of you "the Stony heart"*
- *"and I put my spirit within you."*

That's what is called the new covenant. The new covenant is what we celebrate at communion. The New Testament or covenant that's in Christ's blood. This new heart and new spirit is what this circumcision is, Paul said *"for we are the circumcision"*, this is surgical

transformation of the inner part of us. He wasn't talking about the physical sign of the covenant of the Jews. He said, they think that physical, external circumcision gets them into the kingdom of God. He says, actually, what God says is: I want to circumcise your heart, not your body. This new heart we get, which is the new covenant, is what Paul says.

Philippians 3:3. How do you know you're the ones that have the right circumcision because you *"worship God in the Spirit"*. Philippians 3:3, *"rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in your flesh."*

That's what it takes away, the old hard, do it my own way, going our own way.

- Isaiah 53 says all we like sheep have gone the astray.
- We go to our own way.
- That's our flesh.
- That's our old heart.

So, the true worshipers are those who worship God in the Spirit. Revelation 4 and 5 shows us a future picture of all true believers gathered in Heaven, as the true worshipers of God, worshipping at the highest level.

Now we worship here on Earth. We just enjoyed, Bonnie and I in our sheltering at home, enjoyed watching Grace Community Church, where we were on staff way back in the eighties with John MacArthur. We watched that service and sang along with them and worshipped with them. Then we went to central park by way of the television and watched Franklin Graham speak. Then we also were participating in other services and singing along with other believers. Now that's wonderful worship, but that's Earthly worship. We have distractions. Even while I was sitting and watching, my phone is buzzing, and the heater is going on and off, and there are all different distractions. What we see in Heaven is; unhindered, focused, glorified worship.

What's Heavenly worship like, those in Heaven are unhindered by time.

- They're not bothered by their flesh.
- They're not distracted.
- They're completely focused directly on the lamb.

And what are they doing? Look what it says in revelation 4. I love this. I'll never forget. The first time I taught through this decades ago. I was speaking in a church that had a main floor and a balcony, and I started saying, and that's how they worship in Heaven. And all of a sudden, I saw this elderly man get out of his chair and he disappeared. I found out later that, when he saw in Revelation verse 10 of chapter 4, *"the 24 elders fall down for Him who sits on the throne", "who lives forever, and cast their crowns"*. One of the elders told me later, he was in the balcony, that this gentleman first got out of his chair. Then he got on his knees. Then he actually laid his head down on his hands on the floor. He said, if that's how God is worshiped in Heaven, I want to start doing it today. Think what it means to be unhindered by any distraction, focused on the lamb bowing in front of His throne.

Most of all, each of those we see in chapters 4 and 5 are glorified. Now glorified means, finally we're transformed into sinlessness. Never on Earth are we sinless. We're always struggling with the world that's trying to distract us, our flesh. That's trying to entice us. The devil is trying to devour us and we're always struggling with that. Not in Heaven. No more are there human messes that weaken us or sin or the devil to interfere any way with our worship. It's worship at the highest level, that's what we see.

What Kind of Worship Does God Accept?

John 4:24

So that leads us to this question. What kind of worship does God accept now? Jesus already commented on that. Remember every part of the book of Revelation harkens back to somewhere else. Look at John chapter 4, because Jesus has already weighed in on what worship is, that is acceptable to God. In John chapter 4 in your Bible, verse 24 says *this "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him"*, look at this, *"in spirit and truth"*.

What that means is that, the only way to truly worship God is to have this new heart. That's when we get the Holy Spirit within us. Paul says that we are dead in our trespasses and sin. We walk according to our father, the devil, the course of the god of this world. When we get saved, this new covenant event right here, this spiritual heart surgery gives us a new heart. The Holy Spirit moves within and that makes it possible for us to even worship.

Now I have my cell phone here and this wonderful electronic device wears out in about a day of heavy use or about a day and a half of light use. It has right here, the charging port. Now of course it also can have that, I don't even know how the cordless one works, but I can charge it. I have to put it either connected with a cord or put it in as cradle, to recharge it. Without the power, it doesn't work. It's just a heavy, expensive object, but it doesn't function.

Without a new heart, we can't worship God. So, Jesus said, this biblical worship always has three elements. Think about everything in the Bible about worship. Every time worship is portrayed in the Bible it has these three elements of chapter 4, verse 24.

The person that's offering the worship. That's number one.

- Worship is not music. It's something a person offers. Now worship is a part of it.
- Communion is a part of it, but communion is not worship.
- Preaching is not worship.
- Singing is not worship.
- Listening to music has not worship.

Worship is number one, the person offering the worship and then the offering that they're bringing. So, you have to be the right kind of person. You have to have the right kind of offering. Thirdly, the one they're giving that offering to.

See there's three parts,

1. the person that's offering
2. what they're offering and
3. who they're sending it to.

And look what it says in chapter 4. "*God is spirit*". That's the one we're offering to.

"...and those who worship" that's the offeror.

The person "*...must worship*", listen, "*in spirit and truth*", that's the type. It has to be spiritual worship prompted by a regenerated heart. It has to be based on in spirit and in what? Truth. That's what makes these two chapters, some of the most valuable in the Bible. This describes the worship that's acceptable to God. The content, the lyrics, the focus of what's acceptable to God. These three perspectives are always present in the Bible. **All three elements, the person, the offering, and the one that is being offered to have to be right, or the worship is wrong.** That's what is so clearly presented in these two chapters.

By the way, Romans 12:1-2 says the only way that we can offer worship is to be surrendered. That we may - remember Romans 12:1-2; "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice...*" That's an offering of worship, *latreuō*, a spiritual service to God.

God Gives the ETERNAL Gospel

Rev. 14:6

God gives the eternal gospel, and it connects to worship. In fact, worship in the Bible is submission to God. Very, very interesting. Let me show you what I mean, turn to Revelation 14:6, because when we get to the 14th chapter, which I can't wait to get to with you, it's the high point of the tribulation.

- It's just before Armageddon,
- there are huge hailstones and
- the sun is scorching and
- water is all poisonous.
- the antichrist is martyring everybody that's a believer and
- the two witnesses have come and
- the 144,000 are out there ministering.
- But look what the Lord does. He sends a gospel angel preaching. See what it says on your slide, the eternal gospel.

Let me read to you. *"Then I saw another angel", this is Revelation 14:6, "flying in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the Earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people."*

- So, this is the proclamation of the everlasting gospel, the unchanging gospel, the gospel of God.
- God sends a personal representative, this angel, to proclaim to every person on Earth.
- What I see is this angel flying like a drone over the surface of the Earth.
- He's flying around the Earth nonstop, beaming down, speaking to every human, in every language of every person on Earth.

Look what he says in verse 7, *"saying with a loud voice, 'fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him'".*

- Worship Him.
- Submit to Him.
- Worship Him.
- Ask Him for a new heart.
- Let His Spirit come within you.
- Worship Him.
- Become one who has a circumcised heart and has the Spirit, as Paul said in Philippians 3:3.
- Look at the One we worship "*who made*" this, verse 7 of chapter 14, "*Heaven and Earth, the sea and the springs of water*".

Isn't it interesting that when God preaches the gospel, the eternal gospel is: submitting to our creator. And worshipping Him, offering the true worship He wants, to the true person that He is. Creator. Basically, we can say this, that worship or submission to God is the central theme of the Bible.

Worship or Submission to God, is the Central Theme of the Bible

Rev. 22:9

Now go to the very last chapter of the Bible, in your Bible if you have it. Revelation 22 and in the very last chapter, it's fascinating, there's one more glimpse at this event of worshipping God. Basically, John is just overwhelmed at everything he's seen, and he starts talking in verse 8 of chapter 22.

"Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things."

He had an angel that had been leading him around and taking him to see this and that. He was asking questions of what that meant and this meant. So, John has been spending time with this angel and when he finally sees everything going on in Heaven, and the throne of God, verse 8 says:

I fell *"before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me"*, verse 9, *"See that you do not do that."*

How do you know if an angel is a pre-incarnate Christophany, or Theophany a pre-incarnate picture of Christ? It's Christ appearing as an angel. How do you know it's Christ or just an angel, angel? What's the difference? Those who are just angels say, don't worship me. They won't let you. Whenever you see an angel that receives worship, it's Christ. Like the commander of the hosts, the Lord with Joshua for example. Or the one who appeared to Manoa for the birth of Samson, that was the Lord Jesus Christ coming before His incarnation in the form of an angel.

So, this angel is just a normal angel. He said, *"see that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book."*

What are the last two words of verse nine?

"Worship God."

See that slide, worship or submission to God is the central theme of the Bible. The whole Bible is about worship and that's what the book of Revelation shows us.

- The church on Earth is to be worshiping God.
- They get to Heaven. They spend all their time around the throne, worshiping him.
- God is sending the angel, telling those on the Earth that if they will submit to God and worship, they can go to Heaven.
- If they won't, they're going to face his wrath.
- He comes to be worshiped in the second coming.
- He sits. Jesus sits on a throne in Jerusalem during the millennium and allows the whole world to come and meet Him.
- Then they reject Him, and they're cast in the Lake of Fire because they won't submit to Him,
- All who do submit to Him, we get to spend forever in Heaven worshiping Him.

Worship is the central theme of the Bible.

The Foundations of True Biblical Worship

Revelation 4-5

The foundations of true biblical worship are what we see in chapter 4 and 5. What chapters 4 and 5 do is give us the template, the framework, the paradigm, what we need to know, how to worship God properly.

We see the content that's worship. If you look in, starting in chapter 4, the wording of these songs. The lyrics we could say because there are several of these songs list. There are 14 of them. 14 different worship choruses in Heaven.

- The first one is in verse 8. Holy Holy Holy.
- The next one is in verse 11 of chapter 4. You are worthy.
- The next one is in chapter 5, verse 9.
- Then another one comes in verse 12 and
- Another one comes in verse 13.

What we see are the actual words, the chorus, the lyrics, which is truly what we could call the foundations of true biblical worship.

The Father We all Need is the One Seated on the Throne of Heaven

Revelation 4:2-3/Matthew 5:16

What does it center on? Back to verse 2 of chapter 4. Remember, John is a prisoner of war in prison. When Jesus shows up to him, reveals His resurrection glory and then shows him the worship going on in Heaven. What's the first thing he sees. Verse 2 of chapter 4.

"... I was in the spirit; and behold, a throne set in Heaven, and One sat on the throne."

Now this draws us back to the sermon on the Mount. What does it say in Matthew 5, verse 16? You can see that on the slide, Matthew 5, and verse 16. Then we'll go to verse 34. Matthew 5. Let me turn back there with you. Jesus was always pointing people to look at this.

"Let your light", Matthew 5:16, "so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify..." what? "...your Father in Heaven."

The Father we all need, is the one seated on the throne of Heaven in Revelation 2 & 3. As we enter Revelation 4 & 5, we must always remember: the best explanation of scripture is the scripture. The reformers called that *analogia scriptura*. The analogy of the scripture. So, let's take some time looking at what does the scripture say about the scripture? This is what the scripture says about the scripture. This is what Jesus said about the throne of God in Heaven. So, the book of Revelation is a collecting into one place, what all the rest of the scripture say about our Father in Heaven.

Chapter 5 of Matthew, verse 34. Jesus said this, *"but I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne."* Look back at the slide on the screen, the Father we all need is the one seated on the throne of Heaven.

To see the throne of God, most clearly, we have to see it through the lens of all the other times God shows us the throne. Now remember, we see the throne of God several times in the scriptures.

- We see the throne of God when Moses in Exodus goes up on the mountain with the elders and they see this crystal seat.
- Then we see the throne again in 1 Kings when Micaiah the prophet is standing before Ahab and he says, I see the Lord and all the hosts of Heaven around Him.
- Then we see the throne of God again, in the book of Job when Satan is coming and accusing Job.
- Then a little bit later, we see in Isaiah chapter 6, especially the throne of God high and lifted up.
- Then by the time we get to Ezekiel, we see the actual, what we would call cherubim and seraphim around the throne of God.
- Then we get to Daniel and wow, we really start seeing the throne of God and more details than anywhere else in the scripture.
- Then the next time we see the throne of God, it's right here in Matthew. There's a lot in the book of Matthew about the throne of God.

Our Father is The One On The Throne (Mt. 5:16,34,45,48;6:1-9,14,26-32)

He Knows Each Hop of Every Bird (Mt. 10:29-32)

He Tells us How To Approach (Mt. 6:9-13)

Basically, we could summarize it this way: our Father is the one on the throne.

Do you see on the slide verse 16? We already read verse 34. Keep going to chapter 5, verse 45 of Matthew, and *"you may be sons of your Father in Heaven."* So, Father. Heaven. The one on the throne. Always think of your Father as the one seated on the throne, the most powerful place in the universe. The command center, the control center of the universe. Just for a moment, think of the power of the one seated on the throne. He spoke and He made all the stars by just saying for them to come into existence. That one statement is beyond anything we can comprehend.

Keep going to chapter 6 of the book of Matthew, *"take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in Heaven."* Wow. All the way through verse 9, it keeps talking about that we're supposed to be talking about our Father, thinking about our Father.

Verse 4, *"your Father who sees in secret"*

Verse 6, of chapter 6. your Father who sees in secret and is in the secret place will reward you openly. Wow.

The one, in verse nine, that we pray to as our Father in Heaven.

Now, what is He like? Look at chapter 10, verse 29. He knows each hop of every bird. Matthew 10:29. Jesus was in the business of introducing people to His Father,

- the one on the throne,
- the one who is the most powerful being,
- the Creator,
- the Redeemer, and
- the Judge: Jesus, God the son, revealed Him as.

Look at 10:29, it says *"are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will."*

Now that talks about the power of God, but you know what's really interesting? Looking up the Greek word for fall. This isn't talking about the sad thing that happened two days ago here. We had a bird; we were sitting in our chairs looking out the window and all of a sudden, the bird was coming dead into us. We've never seen one come so hard. He hit the window and it killed him. He fell to the ground and we didn't even know, we thought he flew away. Until the next day and there he was sitting outside our house, on the ground, by the window dead. That's not what this word fall means, die. God knows, yes, when every bird dies but it's literally the word hops. God is aware of every time a bird hops on the ground. Have you looked out? It's springtime. They're hopping everywhere. God says He knows each hop of every bird.

He's the one in chapter 6 that tells us how to approach Him. That's the whole essence of the Lord's prayer that we come to. The God who's on the throne, He is our Heavenly Father. In Matthew 6, He's our connection to the center of the universe, to the control center.

It is The Map of the Future That God Our Father Left Us in His Word

Revelation 1-22

What is the book of Revelation? See the next slide.

- It's the map of the future, God our Father has left us in His word.
- God says, I want you to be completely focused on doing what I left you on Earth to do.
- You're headed to Heaven. To be absent from the body is better by far.
- I'm showing you where you're going.
- I'm going to right all wrongs.
- I'm going to return and rule on this world.
- I'm going to finally meet out all the judgment, for all those who have ever gotten away with it and never fully been held accountable for them.
- I'm going to spend forever with you in Heaven.

That's the map of the future and those are the events the Lord tells us about.

What Happens When We Worship?

Revelation 4:6-11

Starting in verse 6 of chapter 4, let's keep working our way through every verse. Remember there are 404 verses and we have to keep plowing through each one. Chapter 6 tells us what happens each time we worship. Remember I said two classes ago, that Easter Sunday that we recently celebrated, there were more people worshipping God than ever in history of the universe. Do you know why? It's because all those who die are absent from the body and they're present with the Lord. The group around the throne is growing every day. Fast. On Earth, it's growing too, as we share the gospel. Look what happens when all of us are worshipping.

Starting in verse 6, *"before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of thrown, and around the throne, were four living creatures."*

Then it describes in verse 7 these are the four faced cherubim.

Verse 8, *"the four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes[...]* they do not rest [...]" but say, *"Holy, Holy, Holy"*

Verse 9, whenever they *"give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down..."*

Now for just a second, what is this? 24 elders? What is that talking about? Here's the throne of God in Heaven.

- There are four of these cherubim that are flying around this throne. I call it theocentric orbit. The throne is in the center and they're flying around the throne like this.
- The next element is directly in front of the throne, there are these seven flames of fire, which the Bible describes as the archangels. We know two of them, Gabriel and Michael. So, we know Gabriel and Michael and there are five others that we don't know their names. So, four cherubim. Seven archangels. Throne of God.

- Then the next thing around the throne are these 24 little thrones that are seated in a circle around this throne. These are called the 24 elders. What group is that? Who are they?

The Bible doesn't name them, just like we don't even know all the archangels and certainly we don't know the names of any cherubim except one. One cherubim, one cherub, Satan. When he was Lucifer, he was a cherub. So, we know the name of one cherub. We know the name of two archangels. We know the name of none of the elders.

I will give you a little idea of who they might be.

- Heaven has this merging of two groups of 12.
- There are the 12 gates of Heaven and the 12 foundations.
- The 12 foundations are the apostles, and the 12 gates are the tribes of Israel.

So, it appears the 24 represent all the gathered people of God. The Old Testament, the 12 tribes of Israel, the chosen people of promise; and the New Testament church, 12 apostles. It appears these 24 represent us. Why would we say that?

The only time 24 occurs in the Bible is, 24 courses of priests. Of which Zachariah, John the Baptist's father, was one of them. There are 24 courses of priests in the Old Testament.

Then we learn from Peter that we are a chosen nation, a holy priesthood. It's almost like the 24 elders represent the holy priesthood of all believers old and new, merged together around the throne.

What's amazing when these come around the throne, Paul explained, that we're to set our affection on things above. What's he talking about? We're supposed to be longing to be a part of this representative worship of God seated on His throne, connected to what's going on in Heaven.

God's Throne is Surrounded by:
Clouds of Raging Fires (Ezk. 1:4-6)

Sparkling Ones reflecting the Light of
His Glory (Ezk. 1:7-8)

Flashing like Lightning (Ezk. 1:13-17)

Let me just give you a little bit of the wonder of the scriptures. Go to Ezekiel chapter 1. See the slide in front of you? It says God's throne.

- This throne right here is surrounded by clouds of raging fires. That's Ezekiel 1, verses 4-6.
- Then it says there are sparkling ones. These angels here that surround the throne, reflecting the light.
- It says in Ezekiel 1:13, that out of the throne proceed lightnings. There are lightning flashes coming out of the throne and peals of thunder. That's what Ezekiel 1:13-17 says and that's exactly what we see in Revelation 4 and 5. It's one of those 800 illusions.

God's Throne is Surrounded by: Highly Intelligent Beings, covered with eyes (Ezk. 1:18-19)

Glistening of Crystal, Refracting the Light of His Glory (Ezk. 1:22)

- Also, it says God's throne is surrounded, in Ezekiel 1:18-19, by highly intelligent beings covered with eyes. Oh wait, look at chapter 4. It says in verse 6 of Revelation and around *"the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal."* *"In the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four creatures full of eyes."* Remember these right here, these cherubim. Those are the same ones that are in Ezekiel verses 18 and 19 of chapter 1.
- Then it says that the surface that all these thrones are sitting on and these angels are standing on, is crystal. It's reflecting all this light. Glistening crystal that reflects and refracts the light of His glory.

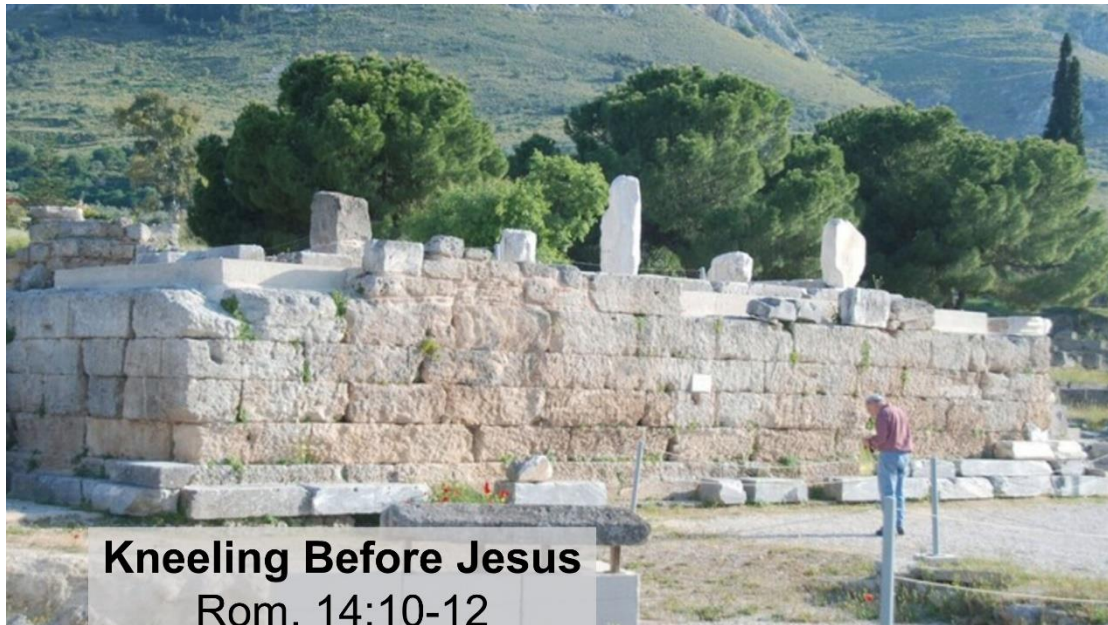
God's Throne is Surrounded by the Sounds of Mighty Waters & Sparkles Like a Burning Fire

(Ezk. 1:24-27)

We could summarize and say, God's throne is surrounded by these huge sounds, all these flashes of lightning, and it sparkles like a burning fire. What I just described to you is what's here in Ezekiel chapter 1.

- Do you know what Daniel adds to it in chapter 7, and chapter 9, and chapter 10? He talks about the fact that there is a river of fire. So, coming right out of the front of the throne is this river of fire, that flows out from beneath the throne. So, a pavement of glass, a throne that is flashing lightning, peeling with thunder, surrounded by these flying angels, these seven standing angels, these 24 elders.
- By the way, the next layer right here, it has all the redeemed of all time, they're the next row; it keeps growing.
- Then there's an outer room.

Now the geography I know, that explains how big this is, is right here. Does anybody recognize this state? That's the state of Michigan. Anytime you see Michigan it looks like a hand, a mitt. If you took how much space it would take for, hundreds of millions of people to stand far enough apart so they can get down on their faces, and then get back up, and keep doing that all the time, on a map it would take an area about the size of the lower peninsula. The state of Michigan, that's the geographic area. The size of the areas surrounding the throne. So, what we're saying is, this is an incomprehensively large area.



Why does that matter? Let's go to Romans 14:10. Remember all the Bible is reflected in the book of Revelation. What does Romans 14:10 say? It says that every one of us have an appointment to go to that throne. This is what it says in Romans 14, verse 10.

"Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all", paristēmi, that's the Greek word "stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

The slide you see in front of you is the Earthly representation of that throne. The word Paul chooses to use for that throne is the word in Greek, bēma. He said, we're all going to appear before the raised bēma of Christ. So, this throne, right there the throne of God in the Bible is called, the bēma. Paul says we're all going to appear before that place.



Now the next slide, 2 Corinthians 5:10 tells us that we are going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of our life. That's 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 10.

Then Paul already said in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, that this river of fire I told you about, we're going to stand on one side and Christ is going to stand on the other side. We get to push our shopping cart, everything we've done in our life with the sin removed. Everything we've invested our time in. All the time we spent doing anything that wasn't sin because the sin he erased. So, all that we did that wasn't sin is in our shopping cart. That's the works of our life. We push it into this fire. It says that it will go through the fire and whatever doesn't burn up, is what we give to Jesus. It's like the sum of our life. Wow.

Do you see why this throne is so important? You see why the early church; they couldn't get enough of this. They had so many messages about the church on Earth, what they're supposed to do. The church in Heaven, we're going to get ready for that. Don't worry about all the evil in the world God's going to handle that. Jesus is coming back. He's going to rule. He's going to give everybody their reward and we're headed to our home prepared for us.

WHAT WILL WE ALL SEE IN HEAVEN?

1. The Throne Daniel 7:9-10

So, what do we see in Heaven?

1. We see that throne with the river of fire, Daniel 7 verses 9-10.

2. **Sea of Glass** (Rev. 4:6a)

3. **Living-Burning Ones** (Rev. 4:6-13; Is. 6)

4. **24 Elders** (Rev. 4:9-11)

5. **Countless Angels** (Rev. 5:11; Dan. 7:9-10)

Awesome....

2. We see the sea of glass, that flat surface; Revelation 4 in verse 6.
3. We see these living and burning ones, these angels.
4. We see the 24 elders.
5. We see the countless angels in the concentric circles around there.

The Moment

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:10

Then Paul said, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. That each one may receive the things done in his body, your shopping cart to put into the river of fire, according to what we have done, whether it's good - that means it lasts, or it was just worthless - that means it wasn't sin. There's nothing wrong with collecting stamps. You can't take them to Heaven. They'll burn up. There's nothing wrong with being a great sportsman and having all kinds of trophies. Being a great businessman, having all kinds of awards. Those things aren't the currency of Heaven. They were just things we could do with our life on Earth. The reward is what Jesus said that we did, as a good and faithful servant.

HOW DO WE GET READY TO STAND BEFORE GOD'S THRONE? GOD WANTS US TO PRAY TO HIM AS HE SITS ON THAT THRONE

Mt. 6:9-13; Rev. 5:8

1. Focus Me:

“Our Father, Who art in Heaven,
Hallowed by Thy Name”

Now I want to close with this: How do we get ready to stand before God's throne? The whole 4th and 5th chapter. This class and the next class, it's all about how we are going to appear before that throne, but how do we get ready for that?

Back to Matthew, let's conclude in Matthew because Jesus explains it. I think most of us have not connected Matthew chapter 6 with this scene. So how do we get ready? God wants us, listen to this, chapter 6 of Matthew, verse 9 *"in this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father who art in Heaven."* Now wait a minute. What does it say we're supposed to do in our prayer?

- Number one, the first thing we do every time we pray is, we focus on the throne where our Heavenly Father is seated. That's verse 9 of Matthew 6. How do we get connected to that throne? We say, Lord focused me on the fact that right now you're sitting on the throne. You're surrounded by all these angels and lightening and fire and countless inexpressible, as Ezekiel describes, sights. Focus me on that. Focus me on the fact that you're running the universe. That you created it all and that all you want me to do is to submit to you. That's my spiritual worship. That's the first. Our Father, see on the screen, focus me. "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name."

2. Control Me:

“Thy Kingdom come”

3. Lead Me:

“Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven”

- Number two, control me. *“Thy kingdom come”*. Martin Luther said this is a terrible petition. Do you know what he meant? He said, every time you say that, *“thy kingdom come”*, you're inviting God to control your life. Did you know we're supposed to every day pray in this manner? The Lord says after this manner, verse 9, pray. We're supposed to pray without ceasing. God focused me on your throne. As I'm watching that, I submit to your control. That's what my worship is. I say control me and then Thy will be done.
- You all know this. This is the Lord's prayer. It's the most well-known portion of scripture in the Bible. *“Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done”*, which is another way of saying lead me.

4. Supply Me:

“Give us this day...”

5. Cleanse Me:

“Forgive us...”

- Number four. Next slide. Supply me, *“give us this day our daily bread.”* Notice it says daily. That means I need the Lord. I keep close in touch with him. Supply me. It's like

when my cell phone wears out. If I use it heavily, it can wear out in less than a day. As a believer I need to be connected to the Lord, to the most powerful place in the universe for Him to focus and control and lead and supply me.

- Notice what it says next, *"forgive us our trespasses. As we forgive those who trespass against us."* You know what that is? Cleanse me. I don't want any sin in my life that separates me. Do you remember the other day I wrote down here, that we can grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. Cleanse me, I don't want to grieve or quench you

6. Protect Me:

"and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one..."

7. Empty Me:

"for Thine is..."

- Then *"lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"*. Do you know what we're supposed to constantly ask the Lord to protect us? If we realize how powerful the devil is, we know the only protection comes through Christ. Protect me from the evil one.
- Here's the crescendo of the Lord's prayer, which says *"for thine is the kingdom, the power, the glory forever."* You know what that means? It's all about you. I want you to empty me of thinking life is all about me, empty me from filling my shopping cart with all about me stuff that's all going to burn up. I want Jesus to be the sum of my life.



That's how we stay connected to the most powerful place in the universe. That's how we do what the Lord says. That's how we focus on our Father, who's sitting on the throne. The writer of Hebrews put it this way: *"we do not have a High Priest that can't sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, [...] and mercy [that we can] find [...] help in our time of need."* Wow. That's the message of Revelation 4 and 5.

Let's ask the Lord to bless His word to our hearts.

Father in Heaven, we bow before you. Focus me on your throne as you sit there; and the serenity; and the beauty of the worship; on the throne of the universe. Then I pray you would control me; and lead me through life; supply me with grace and help for today because I want to need you every day. Cleanse me as I am the worst sinner that I know personally in the whole world. Cleanse me so I don't grieve or quench you. Protect me from the evil one; and I pray that you would empty me so that you can fill every part of my life.

That's the message that stirred the hearts of the early church and that keeps each one of us on target every day of our life. That's what we ask for. In the name of Jesus and for His glory.

All God's people said, Amen.



Connected to the Most Powerful Place In the Universe

EXPLORING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lesson 9 of 20