

# REVELATION

## OUR FINAL VICTORY

## The Greatest Worship Service, Ever!

(Revelation 4:1-11)

### Revelation 4:1-11 (NKJV) – Bible passage [my explanatory notes]

<sup>1</sup> After these things [after the church age of chs 2-3] I [John] looked, and behold, a door standing open [open to the redeemed] in heaven [see 2 Corinthians 12:3, where Paul was caught up in the third heaven]. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, [John, here, represents the raptured saints of all the ages] and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

<sup>2</sup> Immediately [this parallels 1 Corinthians 15:52, which says, “in the twinkling of an eye”] I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One [God the Father, because Jesus is described as the Lion and the Lamb worthy to take the scroll from “Him who sat on the throne” and break its seals (5:7)] sat on the throne. [The “throne” represents God’s sovereign rule over the world.]

- “The key word in this chapter is *throne*; it is used fourteen times. In fact, this is a key word in the entire book, appearing forty-six times. No matter what may happen on earth, God is on His throne and is in complete control.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>3</sup> And He who sat there was like a jasper [“crystal-clear”, similar to a diamond (see Revelation 21:11) symbolizing God’s glory] and a sardius stone [a fiery, bloodred ruby – expressing God’s glory and God’s blazing wrath] in appearance; and there was a rainbow [symbolizing God’s covenant faithfulness, mercy, and grace] around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. [shades of green]

- “The sardius and the jasper were the first and last stones on the high priest’s breastplate (Ex. 28:17–20; “ruby,” “jasper”), representing the firstborn (Reuben) and lastborn (Benjamin) of the twelve sons of Jacob. It may be that those stones depict God’s covenant relationship with Israel.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.

- The 24 Elders represent those who have been redeemed by God, not angelic beings. “First, angels are never called elders. Second, believers are granted to sit on thrones as coheirs with Christ (Matt 19:28; Rev 3:21; 20:4). Third, white clothes, though applied to both angels and humans in Scripture, are particularly the apparel of the redeemed in Revelation (3:4–5, 18; 6:11; 7:9, 13–14; 19:8). Finally, the *stephanos*, the victors’ “crown” (2:10), is appropriate more for the redeemed than it is for angels.”<sup>3</sup>
- Some scholars also see these 24 Elders as representative of the 12 Tribes of Israel (Old Testament saints) and the 12 Apostles of the Church (New Testament saints).

<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 582.

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *Revelation 1–11*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 147.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 114.

- <sup>5</sup> And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God [the Holy Spirit, see Isaiah 11:2; "seven" reflects His perfect work].
- <sup>6</sup> Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.
- <sup>7</sup> The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.

The four creatures communicate this about our God:

- 1) The Lion – God's **Authority** (the lion emphasizes strength and honor – that which is noble and respected).
- 2) The Calf/Ox – God's **Activity** (The calf is a servant, exercising great power for the benefit of others).
- 3) The Man – God's **Majesty** (Man is the apex of God's creation – intelligent, rational and spiritual).
- 4) The Eagle – God's **Deity** (The eagle soars in the heavens as the mightiest and swiftest of the birds).

"These creatures are strong like a lion, serve like an ox, see like a man, and are swift like an eagle. Each in its particular appearance gives witness to the greatness and glory of our God. **No creature is as strong as He. No creature serves as does He. No creature sees as does He. No creature is as swift as is He!**"<sup>4</sup>

- <sup>8</sup> The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy [repetition of words reflects emphasis, like exclamation points, in Greek. 3x is the ultimate – God is perfect in His holiness], Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"
- <sup>9</sup> Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,
- <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:
- <sup>11</sup> "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

**EXTRA STUDY ON THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH:** The word "rapture" is not found between chapters 2-3 and chapter 4, but it does occur between chapter 3 and 4. The previous letters to the churches (2-3) can be referred to as "the church age". In chapters 4-5, the church is in heaven. The concept of the rapture is taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, which reads, in part, "and we will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air..." The word "caught up" is "harpazo" in Greek, but "rapiemur" in Latin. The Latin words "rapturo" and "rapiemur" both derive from the verb "rapio", which means "to snatch away." However, they differ in grammatical form and usage.

### **3 Reasons To Expect a Pretribulation Rapture<sup>5</sup>:**

- 1) **The Promise of God.** As Noah was saved from the flood and Lot was saved from the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, so believers in Christ will be saved from the wrath that is to come (2 Peter 2:5-9). Jesus promised the church of Philadelphia: "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, **I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world**, to test those who dwell on the earth." (see also 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9)
- 2) **The Absence of the Church in Revelation 6-18.** The chapters 6-18 notably do not include the word "church" until Revelation 19:7, when the church is referred to as "His bride". People will still be able to give their lives to Christ during the Great Tribulation, but there is an evacuation of His church before these events.
- 3) **The Purpose of the Tribulation.** The first purpose is the salvation of Israel. Daniel 9 reveals that God will give Israel one last chance to respond. The second purpose is the condemnation of unbelievers. God will pour out His wrath on unbelievers, and the tribulation is the time that happens on earth before an eternity in hell. Neither purpose is meant for the church.

<sup>4</sup> Akin, 116.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Robert Jeffress, *Final Conquest* (Dallas, TX; Pathway to Victory, 2020), 74-76.