



World Christian Fellowship

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Revelation 20 Worship in Heaven! Revelation 4:5-8

Revelation 4:1-11, *After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice 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." ²Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. ³And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. ⁴Around 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. ⁵And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶Before 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. ⁷The 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. ⁸ 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, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

This is the second vision.

The first one was a vision of Christ in chapter 1.
Letters to the churches in chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4, the scene changes.

We go from earth to heaven and the throne of God.
The theme in **chapter 4 and 5** is worship in heaven.

For us to understand the essence of worship.

This is about heavenly worship which is perfected worship around the throne of God.

Now when we talk about worship it is very familiar to Christians.

We don't always understand the essence of worship.

Worship in heaven goes from verse 8 until end of chapter 5.

Revelation 22:9, *Then he said to me, "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. Worship God."*

"Worship God."

Heaven sums up in one final word to humanity is "Worship God."

A call to worship.

John 4:20, *Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."*

Samaritan women said we worship at Mount Gerizim where Samaritan worship took place.

This introduces you to a reality that was true in ancient times, and is still very true today,

Many people in many religions think worship is something that takes place at a certain location. You go to that location.

Historically it is the way worship was identified. Even in the Old Testament, worship occurred in the Temple, and it was

structured around the role of the priests and the sacrificial system.

So, they viewed worship as something that they participated in at a certain location. Exactly how these Samaritans viewed their worship on Mount Gerizim.

John 4:21, *Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

God is going to change everything. Worship is not going to be tied to a place.

John 4:22-24, *You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

God doesn't dwell in a temple made with hands.

He is not in a building.

He is not connected only to a certain service or ceremony or ritual or sacrament.

God is spirit. He is always everywhere, omnipresent.

Worship is to be done from the heart and in the mind by bringing together the human spirit to the truth of divine revelation.

John 4 gives us this very strong statement.

The Father seeks true worshipers who worship Him in spirit and truth.

It is not about the location but the heart.

It is about what you know to be true about God and the heart passion you must celebrate that truth; that's worship. Worship happens in a location that is dispelled by our Lord.

When we talk about worship, we often think of a location, even now. We do come together to worship the Lord today.

Apparently, this is what we do. Certainly, outwardly we sing songs, we give praises as the Psalms command us to do. Ephesians and Colossians commanded us to do, speaking to ourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

But that may or may not be worship. If it's simply an exercise on the outside, something, basically, that is instigated from some external stimulus, then it's not worship, it's just whatever it is.

It is only worship if it comes from the heart then it is completely attracted with the truth about God. This is essential.

This is a time for us to worship, but this is certainly not the only time.

This is a place for us to worship, but this is not the only place, by any means.

We are to worship in spirit and in truth knowing that God is a spirit, and He is always everywhere.

We therefore are called to be true worshipers all the time.
Worship is a way of life!

Praising God, honouring God, glorifying God is not reserved for a Sunday morning. It is basically the heart cry of every true believer.

Matthew 22:37-38, *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.*

All your human capacities come together to love the God who has been revealed to you through His Word.

There is no room for any other god because there is no other God. Everything you are and hope to be, all your faculties, are devoted in the direction of one the one true and living God.

Worship is not what we do on Sunday or occasionally, that is our life.

Philippians 3:3, *For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,*

We are not bound up in some external religion but worship from the heart.

John 4, worship is the spirit and the truth. It's the inner person adhering to and loving the truth concerning God.

Romans 12:1, *“Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”*

You give your inner person, you give your heart, you give your mind, you give your body to the worship of the Lord.

We don't have a priesthood or any Levitical priesthood. There are no officials' priests in the true church of Jesus Christ because every believer is a priest.

We are a priesthood of believers.

We all present sacrifices to God.

Everything you do is a sacrifice to God.

We are true worshipers. This should define us more than anything else.

If you want to know what a Christian is, he is a worshiper of God.

Nowhere in the New Testament do we have a worship service defined for us. We don't even have something called a worship service in the New Testament.

The church gathered, but it never says the church gathered to worship. It says they gathered to break bread, they gathered for prayer, they gathered for fellowship, ministry of spiritual gifts they gathered for the apostles' doctrine.

The church gathered to hear the Word of God.

The church gathered to sing psalms and hymns.

The church gathered to confront sin, to proclaim truth.

But nowhere in the New Testament we have something called a worship service!

Acts 2:42, And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

There is no time that we see a church meeting in the New Testament, the book of Acts, in a worship service by definition.

Why is that seemingly such a serious omission, when we are so committed to a worship service?

Because the New Testament never isolates worship to an event any more than it isolates worship to a location.

- It is not on Mount Gerizim.
- It is not in Jerusalem.
- It is not at a temple.
- It is not in any specific place.
- It is not generated by any external behaviors.

It is a way of life.

We worship when we come together because we are worshipers.

The expression of the heart that reaches out and gives honour and glory and praise and thanks to God.

This is life.

The reason the New Testament doesn't identify something as a worship service is because all services worship.

All spiritual duty is worship.

All proclamation of the gospel is worship.

All obedience is worship.

All praise is worship.

Romans 15:16, *that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

Paul was a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He is like a priest offering acceptable sacrifice to God when he preaches the gospel to the Gentiles.

Apostle Paul says that when I preach the gospel, I am worshiping. When they believe in response to the gospel, I can offer those believers now to God as an acceptable sacrifice.

Everything is worship.

Evangelism is worship in the offering of those who believed, to God as a sacrifice, that pleases Him.

Hebrews 13:15, *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

We are supposed to be thanking the Lord all the time.

We constantly have plenty to be thankful for so thanks to His name is a sacrifice of praise. That is an offering of worship.

- You worship God when you offer Him your heart, your mind, your spirit, when you embrace His truth.
- You literally worship God when you offer your body as a living sacrifice.
- You worship God when you offer your praise in His name.
- You worship God when you proclaim the gospel.

- You worship God when you do anything that is consistent with His will.

It is so wrong for people to think of worship as some experience. It is our entire Christian life.

Since it is our whole life, **Revelation 4 and 5** are extremely helpful in encouraging us as to how to, throughout our lives, express our worship.

Let us go to heaven and see what perfect worship is like. We will find a pattern for our own worship.

John is transported to a vision that unfolds what will happen at the end of the church age. We are still in the church age.

John is going to give us a picture of what happens after the church is taken out of the world and judgment comes. Judgement comes with a fury from chapters 6 through 19.

Revelation 4 and 5 is the throne.

John was ushered by the supernatural effect of a vision that God gave him the ability to see into things that are not available to us.

John has this vision, and he sees a throne.

He is now in heaven. The door was wide open. He goes in and sees the throne.

The throne is mentioned eleven times.

Last week we saw,

- The throne.
- One sitting on the Throne.
- Around the throne the rainbow and 24 elders.

What happens next.

1. From the Throne.

We go from at the throne, on the throne, around the throne, to “from the throne.”

V 5, 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.

This is the rumbling of divine judgment.

Once the church is taken to glory, then judgment will come. This is prophetic of the storm of righteous fury that is about to come from the holy throne on the sinful world. A display of wrath, the likes of which no one has ever imagined.

Chapters 6 to 9 describe the coming judgment.

This is a powerful section, and it sets up what we will see in human history in the future.

The church is not going to be here. Our Lord keeps us from the hour of trial that comes upon the earth, as He said in chapter 3.

But judgment is rumbling, like **Ezekiel 1**, where we have a very similar vision to Ezekiel, and the machinery seems to be the same kind of machinery of judgment ramping up because of the wrath of God on his generation.

So we went to the throne, we saw the One on the throne, we saw around the throne, we saw from the throne, and now we come to “before the throne.”

V 5, *Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*

These are torches. They are blazing torches, seven of them.

They are not lampstands, like in chapter 1, that signify the church, not something giving off a soft, welcoming, gentle light.

But this is a blazing, fierce fire.

Fire in Revelation is judgment, and these torches fit that idea.

Torches were used in war (**Judges 7 and Nahum chapter 2.**)

So, we are seeing a judgment scene before the throne.

The Holy Spirit is identified at this point. We usually think of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, the Encourager.

But in this vision the fire burning before the throne represents “the seven Spirits of God.”

Rather than seven spirits, the seven-fold Spirit of God this refers to the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 11:2-3, *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. ³ His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;*

Seven-fold Spirit is wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, fear, and deity.

So here is the Holy Spirit, a very critical agent in the judgment that is about to come, the fiery judgment.

In Zechariah, the Spirit is associated with power.

Zechariah 4:6, *So he answered and said to me: “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the Lord of hosts.*

The Spirit here is described as getting ready to unleash judgment on the world.

If you know Christ, the Spirit is your Comforter.

If you don’t know Christ, the Spirit will be your Judge.

Holy Spirit is not going to argue like some defense lawyer because He is soft but going to be your Judge.

V 6, *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.*

Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.

What is this?

This is a huge crystal base stretched out in front of the throne.

Not unlike ancient kings, who had thrones up on pedestals with a base that separated them from the populous. The crystal base and then the people separated from the ruler, indicating his unique dignity, was typical.

This demonstrates the separation of the nature of God.
“Sea” is the separation idea in Scripture.

Now this isn't the first time that we see this with God.

Moses and the others saw God on His throne.

Exodus 24:10, *and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.*

Ezekiel 1:22, *The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures was like the colour of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads.*

Ezekiel saw the floor on which the throne of God rested as the color of awesome, dazzling crystal, stretched across the sky.

Again, this speaks of the nature of heaven.

There are no shadows, no mists, no fog, no clouds.

Heaven is not a world of shadows and mists. It is of splendid light.

The blazing glory of God goes through everything.

There are no shadows.

All refracted through crystal-clear jewels and a crystal-clear platform that may act like a mirror to refract the glory of God out through the entire heavens.

God is all-glorious. His glory is on display. He is separate from those who are unlike Him. Sea of glass pictures, then, His separation from sinners.

What do we see there?

God's glory, splendour, beauty, majesty, sovereignty, power, wrath, holiness, all shown in the imagery.

V 6-7, *And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.⁷ 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.*

It is in the center and, yet around.

It is at the core of the throne, and yet it's around the throne.

We could say it's throughout the throne.

Like the wheels in Ezekiel chapter 1, the same picture of the spinning wheels moving in and out of the throne of God.

Who are these?

What are these spinning wheels?

They are four living creatures, from **zāō**, to be alive, living ones, living beings.

We know who they are from Ezekiel.

We are clearly told they are cherubim.

Ezekiel chapter 1, almost the whole chapter deals with these amazing, whirling cherubim around the throne of God.

The setting very much like this.

Ezekiel 10:20, *This is the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they were cherubim.*

What are cherubim?

They are angels.

Cherubim are a group of angels frequently referred to in the Old Testament in connection with divine holiness, divine glory, and divine power.

They had the task of guarding the holiness and the sacredness of God.

They are the most beautiful, the most glorious creatures described.

In **Ezekiel 28**, they are literally woven into Jewish history.

In Genesis chapter 3, when the man and the woman were chased out of the garden of Eden for their sin, cherubim were placed on the east side of the garden to guard the garden and to keep them from the tree of life.

Genesis 3:24, *So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.*

Cherubim have a guarding responsibility.

In the building of the Tabernacle when they were traveling in the wilderness, God gave them design for the Tabernacle. They

were to weave into the curtains and the veil itself, the sacred veil in front of the Holy of Holies, cherubim.

There were cherubim woven into the ten curtains that covered the Tabernacle.

Even the Ark of the Covenant had cherubim with their wings over the top of the ark.

Throughout the Old Testament, God is called “Jehovah who dwells between the cherubim.”

In the temple of Solomon, the cherubim were woven into the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Solomon made **two 18 feet** high wooden cherubim overlaid with gold, symbols of the guardianship of all that was sacred.

Cherubim are special angels, and they are involved in judgment. They are involved in judgment.

Matthew 24:31, *And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

All won't be sorted out in terms of life in this world and who belongs in God's kingdom and who doesn't, until the angels begin to separate.

So here is this amazing picture of God on the throne.

God is in the presence of four living beings.

There are several characteristics.

a) They are characterized by their knowledge.

V 6, *full of eyes in front and in back.*

V 8, *full of eyes around and within.*

They are an exalted order of angels.

They are participants in the guarding of the sacredness of God's throne, and they are judgment angels.

Part of that guardianship is to make sure that no one ever enters that place that doesn't belong there.

What sets them apart is their alertness and their awareness.

They see everything.

Nothing escapes them.

If you wanted a perfect guard to protect a sacred place, it would be very helpful if he was full of eyes in front and behind.

They watch for everything.

They see everything.

They are not omniscient like God, but they are aware, and nothing escapes their scrutiny.

b) They are marked by their responsibility.

V 7, 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.

Even in Ezekiel 1, Ezekiel's cherubim resembled human beings. Ezekiel's angels had four facial experiences.

Here we have the faces of the cherubim described as a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle.

What is this?

- The lion represented strength and power.
- The calf, or the ox, represented service.
- The man represented reason.
- The eagle represented speed.

They are literally the right angels equipped for judgment.

- They are powerful.
 - They fulfill their responsibility.
 - They are rationally brilliant.
 - They can move at angelic speed.
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- They guard God's presence.
 - They serve Him on behalf of His purposes.
 - They understand everything.
 - They swiftly fulfill their responsibility.

Ezekiel 28:14, *“You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.*

Lucifer was one of them before he fell.

The Jewish Talmud, written by the rabbis, says there are four primary forms of life in God’s creation.

Man, calf, lion, and eagle.

In the camp of Israel, there were twelve tribes, three tribes in four groups.

- One group was Reuben, identified by a man.
- Another group was Dan, identified by an eagle.
- Another group was Ephraim, identified by a calf.
- Another group was Judah, identified by a lion.

So again, these represent God’s relationship to Israel. These angels are now about to carry out God’s judgment.

Revelation 6:1, *Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.”*

Then all the judgment breaks out. Immediately after those the familiar four horsemen, and then the devastating judgment.

c) They are marked by their worship.

But they are not just creatures of judgment, they are worshipping creatures.

V 8, 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, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

The four living creatures had six wings as they did in **Isaiah 6**, two to cover their face, two to cover their feet, and with two they hovered, ready to be dispatched.

They are "full of eyes around and within."
Their activity.

And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

That is what worship is!
Nonstop praise of God.

Do you want to know how to worship?

Worship like the angels worship.

They worship unceasingly and unendingly.
They give praise to God.

They set the tone of heaven. This is their permanent occupation.

2. Toward the throne.

Starting in verse 8 there are going to be five hymns of praise circling the throne of God, running through the rest of chapter 4 and all of chapter 5.

The four living creatures, saying, "Holy, holy, holy."

It starts with a quartet of four.

In **verse 10**, the twenty-four elders join.

Now we have 28 voices.

Revelation 5:8, we have the four living creatures and the 24 elders plus we have a harp.

We have four, 28 voices, with harps.

Revelation 5:11, we have "the voice of many angels."

How many angels?

The number of them was myriads of myriads. Thousands of thousands. Countless.

It starts out as a quartet, then 28, then 28 with harps, then 28 with all the angelic voices.

Revelation 5:13, *And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all*

that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honour and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" ¹⁴Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Heavenly worship.

There are two aspects to this section on worship.

One is an oratorio of creation's redemption, chapter 4.

The other is an oratorio of man's redemption, chapter 5.

But here's what you need to know:

All worship is directed at God.

- ✓ God is being honoured.
- ✓ God is being worshiped.
- ✓ God is receiving all the glory.

1 Chronicles 17:20, *For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, Lord, have become their God.*

Everything is directed at God. That's why Scripture says you love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, because there is no other.

Psalm 86:8-10, *Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; Nor are there any works like Your works. ⁹All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall*

glorify Your name. ¹⁰ For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.

Psalm 89:6-8, *For who in the heavens can be compared to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the Lord? ⁷ God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, And to be held in reverence by all those around Him. ⁸ O Lord God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.*

All heaven's worship is directed at God. He alone is worthy of worship.

The four living creatures set that worship in motion.