

*A Vision of*  
***Heaven***



***Inside the Throne Room of God***

***# 4 in a series***

# Introduction

Many people do not see attending church as an inspiring event. But in this lesson we will experience worship in the throne room of God that is wonderfully awe-inspiring. In the vision of Revelation chapters 4 & 5 we witness the exaltation of Jesus Christ after His resurrection and ascension to Heaven, and then sat on the throne as King of the universe.

## Overview for Session #4 (Revelation chapters 4 & 5)

1. A summary of “Sanctuary Scenes” in Revelation
2. Worship in Heaven around the throne of God (Revelation chapter 4)
3. The worthiness of Christ who gives hope for our planet (Revelation chapter 5)

### 1. A Summary of “Sanctuary Scenes” in Revelation

#### A Comparison with the “Daily Service” & Revelation chapters 1 - 11

| Daily Service                                                                                                                             | Revelation’s Imagery   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| At the beginning of the service the High Priest enters the “Holy Place” and lights the seven-armed “menorah”.                             | Revelation 1:12-20     |
| The doors of the Sanctuary are opened by the High Priest                                                                                  | Revelation 4:1         |
| A lamb is sacrificed to remind Israel of the results of sin                                                                               | Revelation 5:5-7       |
| The blood of the sacrificed lamb is collected and poured at the base of the “Altar of Burnt Offering”                                     | Revelation 6:9:10      |
| The congregation are to be silent                                                                                                         | Revelation 8:1         |
| During the silence, incense and coals are taken in a bowl into “The Holy Place” and placed on the “Altar of Incense”                      | Revelation 8:2-6       |
| Seven priests blow their trumpets to mark the end of the “Daily Service”                                                                  | Revelation 8:7 – 11:15 |
| You can see from this comparison that the imagery in the Old Testament “Daily Service” plays a central part in the visions of Revelation. |                        |

To understand this section properly, it is an advantage to have some knowledge of the Old Testament Sanctuary and its function. The Sanctuary was the centre of religious life for the Israelites in Bible days. Here is a brief overview –

***The Sanctuary consisted of three sections –***

- **Section 1 - The Outer Court** which contained the *Altar of Burnt Offering* and the *Laver* (or wash bowl)
- **Section 2 - The Holy Place** had three items of furniture – on the left side was the *seven-armed lampstand* called the Menorah. On the right side was the *Table of Shewbread* which was a table on which were placed twelve loaves of bread. Directly ahead, in the centre at the end of the Holy Place, was the *Altar of Incense*.
- **Section 3 - The Most Holy Place** and the Holy Place were separated by a curtain. Behind the curtain, in the Most holy Place, was the *Ark of the Covenant* which housed the Ten Commandments. *Images of two angels* called cherubim spread their wings over the *Mercy Seat* which was on top of the Ark of the Covenant. Here God's holy presence resided. The High Priest entered this section only once a year on the Day of Atonement, (Yom Kippur in Hebrew).

*The daily service* began with the priest lighting the Seven Branched Candlestick. **A lamb was sacrificed to symbolically forgive the sins of the people.** The blood of the lamb was poured at the base of the Altar of Burnt offering. The congregation remained silent as the priest took incense and coals into the Holy Place and placed them on the Altar of Incense. To conclude the service, seven priests blew their trumpets. All these images are referred to in the first eight chapters of Revelation

**Question 1: Why was a lamb sacrificed in the Sanctuary service?**

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*The High Priest  
in the Earthly Sanctuary*



*Question 2: What items of furniture were found in the Holy Place of the Sanctuary?*

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*Question 3: What were the contents of the Most Holy Place of the Sanctuary?*

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## **2. Worship in Heaven Around the Throne of God (Rev. chapter 4)**

Once again we see the Sanctuary parallels in these verses. *Revelation 4: 4* speaks of *24 elders*. In the Old Testament Sanctuary, there were 24 rotations of priests doing their duty in the temple. In *Revelation 4:5*, we observe the *seven lamp stands* which as we have noted were part of the Sanctuary furniture. In *Revelation 5:8*, each elder had a *bowl of incense* reflecting on the Priest in the Sanctuary's Daily Service.

The summary of chapter 4 is as follows. First of all we see the Apostle John in heaven. There is a divine being sitting on the throne. *Around the throne are 24 elders*. Also surrounding the throne are *seven spirits* – the same Spirit we saw in Chapter 1. Furthermore, there are *4 Living Creatures* present.

Then we see songs being sung to describe God as “worthy”. Worship is derived from the word worthy. God is described as being deserving of worship because of who He is and what He has done. His motive here is in no way forceful. He desires that we worship Him with a willing heart. What He is seeking is to develop a close relationship with each one of us with the desire that we will accept His invitation of love.

Jesus extends an invitation to all in chapter 3 when He seeks for our invitation to let Him enter our hearts. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to Him, and dine with him, and he with Me. Revelation 3:20* In this heavenly scene in chapters 4 and 5, we do not observe worship demanded of God, but worship that is given freely and joyfully by His creation.

We worship God willingly because we can see how He loves His created beings deeply and passionately. As part of His creation, we come to realize that we exist only because God has given us life and we therefore are committed to Him and grateful for His wonderful gifts to us. In our present condition, we are given the assurance that God loves us very much, even to the point of giving His Son by allowing Him to shed His blood for us on the cross of Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. He is absolutely committed to saving us for eternity. The only thing stopping Him is our personal choice, if we choose to reject His pleading invitation.

*Question 4: Are you thankful that God loves you so much? \_\_\_\_\_*

*The Heavenly  
Throne Room*



*Revelation 4:2-4 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And 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. 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. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices...*

The One on the throne is obviously God the Father. The rainbow around the throne is a reminder of the promise of hope made by God after the flood that the world would not be destroyed by a flood again.

The twenty-four elders around the throne dressed in white with crowns on their heads are clearly human because angels were never called elders. They have been redeemed from the earth indicated by wearing white which demonstrates their faithfulness. The crowns on their heads are a symbol of victory attained by the forgiveness of their sins through Jesus sacrifice. Jesus gave victory only to humanity – not angels. All evidence suggests that the twenty-four elders are **glorified saints (believers in Jesus)** who represent the redeemed of all ages. The four living creatures around the throne in verse 5 are identified as cherubim (angels) paralleling Ezekiel's vision in *Ezekiel 10:20-22*.

*Question 5: Who is the One on the throne?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Question 6: Who are the twenty-four elders?* \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Hope for the Earth (Revelation chapter 5)

Chapter 4 has set the stage for what we will now examine in chapter 5. The three sections in this chapter are as follows.

- *There is a crisis in heaven because of an unopened scroll (Verses 1-4)*
- *The crisis is averted however because of the arrival of the Lamb (Verses 5-8)*
- *There is a chorus of celebration with the singing of three more songs (Verses 9-14)*

#### **Crisis in heaven**

Here we behold God sitting on His heavenly throne with a scroll in His right hand, sealed in seven places. The question is then asked –

- *Who is worthy to open the scroll? (5:2)*
- *The Apostle John is deeply concerned that no person seems to qualify.*
- *John weeps because no one appears to be worthy (5:3-4).*
- *What is written on this scroll? Why are the contents so important?*

The crisis is averted by the arrival of the Lamb so John doesn't need to be upset for too long and is told that the problem is solved. John is informed that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is worthy to open the scroll because of His tremendous victory and well able to break the seals and open the scroll. Here Old Testament imagery of the Messiah is shown to be the worthy One. New Testament imagery also identifies the Messiah as the One who is worthy. Now we see the slain Lamb, representing Jesus, taking the scroll and sitting on the heavenly throne. This is followed by the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders bowing down to worship Jesus because He is indeed worthy having paid the price for the sins of humanity by His shed blood.

When we study chapter 12, we will see the contents of the scroll and a continuation of the battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil right down to the very end of time.

*Question 7: Can you see how we can have a hope for the future because of the sacrifice of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_ How does this make you feel about Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_*

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*Revelation 5:2-7 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice; "Who is worthy to open the scroll and loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth... was able to open the scroll... So I wept much because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me "Do not weep, Behold, **the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals...** in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain... Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.*

*Question 8: Who is represented by the Lamb and who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah?*

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Jesus Christ is the One who is worthy to open the scroll because of His victory on the cross of Calvary. From a human perspective, His death appeared to be a loss but the divine perspective is different. If he had not died for our sins, none could ever be saved from eternal death. He died in the place of all who would accept Him. This indeed was a victory for humanity. His death resulted in all believers being given the gift of everlasting life.

## **Songs of Joy**

In honour of Christ's arrival, three more songs will be sung. Looking at the 5 songs in chapters 4 and 5, we see an exciting build-up of praise and adoration.

- *The first song is sung by the 4 living creatures.*
- *The next song is sung by the 24 elders.*
- *Now the 4 creatures and the 24 elders join together in song.*
- *Next we see the 4 creatures and the 24 elders join in song with millions of angels.*
- *Finally, all creation in the whole universe sing praise to the worthy Son of God.*

*Question 9: Why do think God accepts worship from His created beings?*

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In overview, we see a relatively low key beginning but with the arrival of Jesus the singing builds up to an incredible, extremely moving crescendo. Worship in heaven is a very heart inspiring experience full of deep emotion and gratitude motivated by meaningful love for our Creator and Redeemer.

*Revelation 5:9-10 And they sung a new song saying: You are worthy to take the scroll. And to open its seals; For you were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.*

*Question 10: Why is Jesus said to be “worthy” in this song?*

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This ever-increasing worship experience we have just studied is likened to an individual’s spiritual experience after the time of conversion. When we first come to Jesus and accept Him as our personal Saviour, it seems an important but simple step to take. But over time the relationship with our beloved Redeemer develops into an ever deepening experience of love and gratitude. Jesus also becomes our best Friend who we constantly look to for guidance in this life. We become like the patriarch Enoch of whom it was written – *he walked with God* throughout his life and so will continue to walk with Jesus throughout eternity. Each one of us can have this same experience.

*Question 11: Is it your heart’s desire to walk with God?* \_\_\_\_\_

