

Remnant Life Church  
July 22, 2018  
**Heaven: What Do We Know?**  
(Pt 3)  
Revelation 4:6-11

- Lightning and thunder; peals (tones, voices, echoes...)
- But John also sees seven lamps blazing. These are the seven spirits of God – the Holy Spirit

**READ – Revelation 4:6-11**

- When reading Revelations – John often used images to convey or communicate truth about God that cannot be expressed in words
  - Facts – certain; statistics – context; images – various interpretations
  - The reason there are so many interpretations of Revelation

Two remaining descriptive images given by John in the 4th chapter – the sea of glass (v 6a) and the four living creatures (v 6b – 8)

The first part of the 6<sup>th</sup> verse - “...before the throne looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.”

- Three meanings in this part of the vision
  - First, clear as crystal
    - This represents an image of God’s holiness - unmarred, untouched, unscarred – perfection
    - Sea of glass is the calm and peace of God’s reign
    - There is a stark contrast in this sea of glass and the seas of this world
      - Problems often termed ‘Storms of life’
      - *Isa 57:20-21* - *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. “There is no peace,” Says my God, “for the wicked.”*
      - While there is a physical resemblance of this world to heaven, one of the greatest differences is there will be none of the temptation, struggle, and consequences of sin and death present because of the presence of God’s Holiness
  - Second, it represents the completed work of the cleansing of our sins
    - Read in Exodus the details of the tabernacle
    - One of the items present is called the laver - or basin (*Ex 38:8*)
      - God gave instructions that a large basin, filled with water, was to be present for the priests to wash before entering the Holy Place to perform their priestly acts on behalf of the people
      - The priests would first offer a sacrifice to God for themselves at the brazen altar

- The laver, or basin, would be next for them to wash their hands and feet before beginning their service to the Lord
  - Water is used to represent cleansing all throughout the Bible
  - In the OT, ceremonial washing was an intricate part of the priest's responsibilities of not only himself, but all of the items used for the sacrifice and service to God
  - John the Baptist baptized with water for the repentance of sins and water baptism is still important to us today
  - Jesus revealed Himself to the woman at the well and said to her...
    - *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:13)*
- The altar (representing salvation) is before the laver used in preparation for service
  - Works or service do not bring salvation to a person – only believing in and calling on the name of the ultimate sacrifice - Jesus Christ – can do that
  - **Eph 2:8-9** - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*
- In heaven, at the Throne of God, John saw a sea of glass, not water
  - The need for cleansing is no longer necessary in heaven
  - The work of our Savior and the Holy Spirit will be completed in our lives as we bow before the throne
- Third, is the deep and perfect judgement of God
  - The two words John uses, “sea” and “crystal” are the descriptive elements of God’s judgment
    - The sea represents depth, and the crystal, purity
    - **Rom 11:33** - *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*
    - His judgments may be unsearchable but the desire for wisdom and knowledge of God is a sure and powerful sign of a Christian’s maturity and growth
      - Throughout the book of Proverbs, the writer calls anyone who has no desire for wisdom a fool
      - What is Godly wisdom?
        - It is a desiring, knowing, and living in the instruction of the Word of God
        - Notice that desiring and knowing are not enough – you must live it as well

- The judgments of God are deeper than the sea and unknown to us until we are at His throne but the pursuit of His wisdom makes our hearts available to His revelation and knowledge for us according to His perfect (crystal) will.

The second part of v 6b - "*In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures...*"

- Recognize first that numbers are important in the Bible
  - Not numerology – the use of numbers for the purpose of cultic knowledge and guidance – a perversion of God’s precision and perfection
  - 7 the number of fullness or completion – 3 the number of the deity of God – 12 the number of the church and divine government (12 sons of Jacob; 12 disciples of Jesus)
  - 4 is the number of the world
    - four seasons; four points of the compass; four elements (earth, air, water, fire); the four corners of the earth, etc...
- John says that there are 4 living creatures (beasts)
  - Three primary words for “beast”
    - Hchai (back of the throat with “I” at the end) – a living thing; often used to describe the animals of Eden’s creation (**Gen 1:24**)
    - Thair-REE-ahn – a wild and dangerous animal; a savage; a ferocious man
    - ZOE – ahn – (zoon) a living being (the root of the word zoology and zoo)
    - John uses this last word to describe the 4 living beings around the throne
  - John’s description of them...
    - **Rev 4:6b** - *...and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back*
      - This is not the same vision that Ezekiel saw although it sounds similar (wheel within a wheel that moved the beings)
        - **Ezek 1:18** – the rims of the wheels covered with eyes
        - **Ezek 10:12** – entire bodies and the wheels
    - The eyes could mean many things but surely they represent the omnipresence, omnipotent, and omniscience of Almighty God
      - These beings are a part of the angelic hosts (more in the future)
    - The four living beings each have a different appearance (in Ezekiel each had all 4 faces – **Ez 1:10**)
      - The first like the face of a lion
      - The second the face of an ox
      - The third the face of a man
      - The fourth the face of an eagle
  - To understand what they represent turn to **Gen 8**  
(Look at the precision and completeness of God – The FOCS 1, a continuous cold caesium fountain atomic clock in Switzerland, started operating in 2004 at an uncertainty – possibility of error - of one second in 30 million years. God is more perfect than even that!)



- **Gen 8:8-11** - *Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”*
  - The birds – the face of the eagle
  - The livestock – the face of the ox
  - The wild animals – the face of the lion
  - Those in the ark – the face of the man
- These four creatures around the throne represent all of God’s creation
  - God was never through with His creation
  - Do not be deceived that satan was victorious and took it away
  - In heaven, not only is man redeemed, but so is all of His creation
  - Not only will we be restored but so will all of what God did at the beginning
  - It is this picture of tranquility that is written by the prophet Isaiah
    - The loving presence of Christ and the peace of His rule will once again bring about the idyllic image of Eden
    - **Isa 11:6-9** – the wolf with the lamb; the calf with the lion; the child playing at the hole of the cobra’s lair
      - Enemies in the fallen natural world restored
- These four creatures, representing all of creation, never stop saying, *“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.” (Rev 4:8)*

\*\* We were created to worship God! \*\*
- What is the response of the 24 elders when the four living creatures cry out this praise to God?
  - They fall down on their faces before God
  - Worship Him
  - Present their crowns (their rewards, accomplishments, accolades, etc) to God as an offering of their worship
- The four living beings never stop praising God so the 24 elders never stop worshipping our Almighty God
- What the elders cry out to God is our closing thought this morning...
  - **Rev. 4:11** - *“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”*