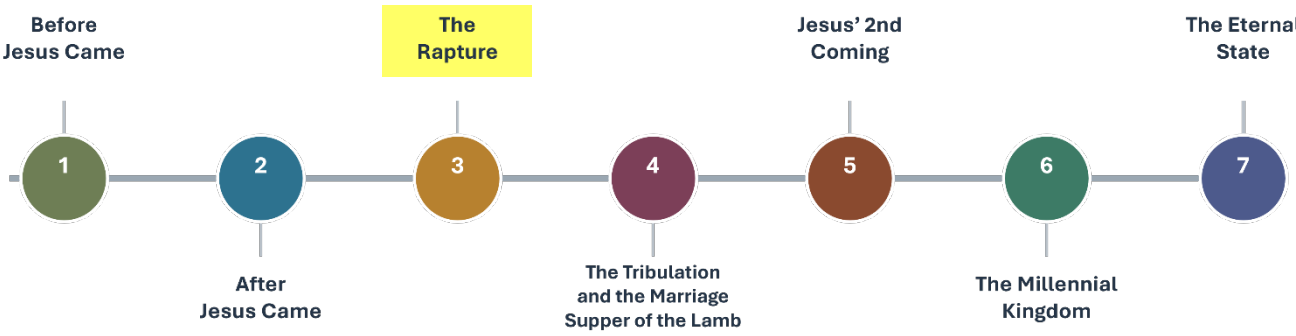
Topical Study: Heaven (message #6)



Although we started out this study by looking into the location of heaven, along with the state of the soul and body in each transition, last time I disclosed we are not really doing too much of that while we are reviewing where the church will be, and what we will be doing, immediately after the rapture. Which only makes sense because this is a study about heaven. And the events of that day are so spectacular I felt we just needed to unpack them (that's why this is our 4th week covering it 😊).

- Last time we found John weeping bitterly because there was no one anywhere who could open the scroll that would once and for all bring about the judgment of God. And you might say, isn't that a good thing? No, because without the judgment first taking place, the second coming of Jesus would not occur. And all of creation needs Him to come again to clean up the mess we've made and to then establish His millennial kingdom (a section we are coming to once we complete this one on the rapture).
- But as we closed, we also heard an announcement of good news in verse 5, which told us, *"5 But one of the elders said to me* (John), *'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.'"* And with these words, the third person of the trinity (Jesus) was now mentioned in this heavenly scene along with God the Father and the Holy Spirit (last week we unpacked how this pointed to Jesus prophetically).
- And it gets even better as we come to verse 6, because it goes beyond hearing about Him now.

6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth (which ties directly to the appearance of the Holy Spirit as seven lamps of fire [3:1, 4:5]).

Here Jesus is revealed, because as we were told in 1:1, this book is "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*"; here seen as *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* (John 1:29). But I never imagined (until initially reading these verses) the first view I would have of my Savior would be like this. But we are told here when we see Jesus, He will have in Him the marks of what He went through to purchase us from our own sin.

- And the language is specific in describing Him as though these wounds had just occurred. We know that is not the case, so you might ask, why would we see Him like this?
- You and I will be in heaven. And as we found out last week, we will be being filled up more and more as we and the four living creatures worship **the Father**.
- If **Jesus** appeared here as the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, that would have certainly been enough to cause praise no one could ever measure or describe. But when we see Him as the *Lamb* who was *slain* for us, we will experience a reminder and reality check of what Jesus endured because of our sin, in order to save and spend eternity with us. Can you imagine how seeing Him this way, and realizing He endured this for you, will impact you then?

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Seven horns and seven eyes are very important pieces of His description for again, the *horn* speaks of power while the *eyes* speak of His presence being everywhere. And when you add the number 7 to these identifiers you get **complete power and complete presence** (Omnipotent and Omnipresent). These are attributes that only One can have, and that's God.

- **Jesus is God**, and the fact that He is no longer seated by the Father, but rather standing, means something is about to happen,
- Matt. 22:44 (which is a quote from Psa. 110:1, entitled in the NKJV, "*Announcement of Messiah's Reign*") tells us what that is. Stating, *"The Lord* (God the Father)*, said to my Lord* (God the Son)*, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."*
- We are used to hearing of Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Rom. 8:34, Col. 3:1, Heb. 1:3, Heb. 8:1), but this scene in heaven has Jesus on His feet!!! Which means they are in big trouble. And the "they" is anyone who has not 1) received Jesus' free gift (free to them, not to Him), 2) repented of their sins, and 3) made Him their Lord!

Now before we move on, this is a perfect opportunity to gather more information directly related to Jesus' omnipresence. Meaning that being He's God, He is everywhere at all times. But what about when He took on flesh? How did that affect His omnipresence and what we are seeing in heaven in this future event?

1) In the OT we have an account in Isa. 6:1–4 of Jesus being in heaven and seated next to the Father (see also John 12:41). And the account given is clearly before Jesus took on flesh in coming into the world. So both He and the Father are in heaven yet present everywhere also.
2) Then we have Jesus descending from heaven to take on flesh and walk among us. And afterward ascending back into heaven, now with a glorified body forever. And again, He is seated at the right hand of the Father. Yet the Bible makes it clear that while Jesus is in heaven, He is also present here on earth, but in a non-physical way. 1) In Gal. 2:20 Paul tells us Christ lives in him. 2) And in Col. 1:27 he makes that universal of believers, saying "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (see also Eph. 3:17, Rom. 8:9–10).
3) But here in this scene we find Jesus appearing rather than already being there. Why? Because He physically (in His resurrected body) came back (although still future in reality) in the clouds to call the believers up into heaven (Phil. 3:20). Yet He is still everywhere at all times in a non-physical way **because He is God**. That is omnipresence. And He is in you now (Matt. 28:20) and here among the church right now (Matt. 18:20). You have not been abandoned now, no matter what you are going through (John 14:15–18). And He is coming for each one of us to take us home one day (John 14:1–4).
4) He will again sit at the right hand of the Father in heaven after His coming to get us, till the Father makes Jesus' enemies *His footstool* at His second coming (Rev. 19:11–21). There He will stand up again to literally and physically return to the earth to judge it, while still being everywhere at the same time.

[7] *Then He* (Jesus) *came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne* (God the Father). **For those in heaven**, this event will be so powerful. I have watched some videos of people I have never met, who have performed acts of valor that are so uncommon, as they receive recognition in the form of medals, standing salutes, and being presented before an audience of those whose lives were impacted by what they had done.

- And frequently they carry in their bodies signs of at least part of the cost of their heroism.

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- But here, we will see *the Lamb* that was *slain* for us, and who *prevailed* over death and the grave, step forward to receive *the scroll* that only He, in all existence, was *worthy* to open. We will be there witnessing this very transaction, and no other ceremony you have ever seen will compare.
- But **for those who rejected Jesus,** and are still upon the earth when this occurs, it will be horrifying.

Now we will hear what it will be like on that day when the praise that began in chapter 4 now continues to build and erupt.

[8] *Now when He* (Jesus—the Lamb) *had taken the scroll,* ***the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders*** *fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.* [9] *And they sang a new song, saying* (emphasis added)*:*

Now, this first group who responds to Jesus' entrance and His taking the scroll from the Father are *the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders*. Who are now worshiping together (I believe each having our own parts).

- Both groups (both us and the four living creatures) fall *down* before **Jesus**—which by the way, no one in heaven protests to. I say this because God's angels do not allow anyone to worship them. But Jesus is no angel or man. **He is God**, and the four living creatures and the redeemed know it!!!
- But when it comes to the *harps*, either or both groups could be playing these. I kind of hope it's both because it's not actually a harp, but a *zither*, which is more like a guitar (so when I told you that you wouldn't be playing harps on a cloud in heaven, I did not mislead you 😊).
- And I suppose both groups could have these *golden bowls full… of the prayers of the saints.* But these prayers are every prayer ever prayed while we were physically apart from Him. And I would like to believe, like the crowns, that He hands them back to us when we are called up, to remind us once again (like in Psa. 56) that He has heard and received every one of them as precious to Him. This is just my thought, but we had to get these somewhere. And with this reminder of how much He has loved us in our hands then, it will certainly add to the worship when we see Him here.

Now we come to the next doxology, or declaration of praise.

[9b] *"You* (Jesus) *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,* (that's more than 24 as these represent the church from all the nations) [10] *And have made* ***us*** *kings and priests to our God; And* ***we*** *shall reign on the earth* (emphasis added)*."*

This is the first specifically stated song, and it's our song to present to the Lord, so we want to learn these verses. Because only mankind has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. The angels were sealed to God the Father after ⅓ fell and the other ⅔ chose to stay faithful to Him alone.

- But here we see all those *of every tribe and tongue and people and nation*, praising the Lord Jesus for *redeeming* us from death by His blood.
- And there will be faces and voices of every ethnicity, and color, and time around that throne. **But of only one faith!!!**
- And He has foreordained that His children would reign under His authority during the millennial kingdom (2 Tim. 2:12, 1 Cor. 6:2–3). He did not say this of the angels. **This is our song!**

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I feel I need to address some of the translations here, for some use the word "*them*" instead of "*us*" in this song, which is inaccurate and misleading. And is another reason some question the pretribulation rapture.

- Jerome, who was the leading Bible scholar of the 4th century and created the Latin Vulgate translation, had access to all available texts, and translated it "*us*" and "*we*".
- Our translation of Revelation was created from 95 Greek manuscripts. And the authors of some alternative texts point out that only 23 of the 95 texts use "*us*" and "*we,*" but fail to tell us that only 24 of these copies had chapters 5–10 available in them, meaning 23 of 24 properly translate this "*us*" and "*we*".
- We are not on earth during the tribulation. We (every tribe, tongue and nation of believers in Jesus) are in heaven as pictured here, lifting our praise to the Lord!!!

Now, when the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures respond to Jesus taking the scroll, the worship in heaven elevates even more!

*11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of **many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders**; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*

This is not a math problem. John was describing the number of angels as innumerable (see also Dan. 7:10 & Heb. 12:22)! Can you imagine this? These **angels** (often being sent to minister to us, bring messages, and fight on our behalf) have seen every one of our faults and failures. They've seen our rebellion to the Lord before we knew Him. And many of our other unamazing acts afterwards.

- And they also saw the glory of Jesus before He stepped out of heaven and into humanity, to be beaten, spat upon, and crucified.
- And then **they were there when the Father raised Him from the grave**, and Jesus returned to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father again.
- Now with a passion that only they could bring, they join in with us, saying *"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*

And I believe at this point, not only will the heavens be rocking, but the sound of this praise will be heard and felt throughout all of creation. Which now sparks the next round of the ever-expanding worship of the Lamb. *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 honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" 14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!* (meaning 'so be it!') *" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.*

What could I possibly say here to expound upon this! I honestly have no words, except to say that this is making me really long for this coming day (1 Pet. 2:11, Heb. 11:13). And if this doesn't make you homesick, then you're heartsick.

- This is what Paul was conveying when he said: *21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you* (Phil. 1:21–24).
- And Paul wasn't even speaking about going to this scene but rather entering into God's presence. And then waiting for this coming day along with the rest of us.

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- I believe very soon the Lord is going to call us up to be with Him. But until that day, **be** the blessing of the knowledge and the fragrance of Jesus in the world. But always with your mind on heaven!!!

As we close this section of the book of Revelation, I want to remind us all that this scene is incredible and very intense. In a great way. But again, because so many have said they do not want to spend all eternity singing (with the idea of standing in one place to do so forever), **this is only the starting point** after our great unification with God and with all who have come to Him through Jesus.

- Since we are talking about eternity, there's plenty of time to also experience the lighthearted and playful moments. After all, He did create our personalities, and those will not be lost or somehow wiped out for you to take on some mindless and emotionless state (as we discussed in previous teachings in this series).
- As we will discover going forward in this study, the same God who created nature, atmosphere, animals, water, mountains, stars, flowers, relationships, humor, creativity… is preparing something for us which is more amazing than anything we have experienced so far. And when you see Him and it, worship will not have to be somehow worked up in you (no hype men needed in heaven). It's going to just erupt from every part of your being. And He is worthy of it all.

CROSS REFERENCES

Rev 3:1 NKJV – "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

Rev 4:5 NKJV – 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.

Rev 1:1 NKJV – The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

Jhn 1:29 NKJV – The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Rom 8:34 NKJV – Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Col 3:1 NKJV – If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Heb 1:3 NKJV – who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Heb 8:1 NKJV – Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

Isa 6:1–4 NKJV – (1) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. (2) Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (3) And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" (4) And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

Jhn 12:41 NKJV – These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Gal 2:20 NKJV – "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Col 1:27 NKJV – To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Eph 3:17 NKJV – that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Rom 8:9–10 NKJV – (9) But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (10) And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Phl 3:20 NKJV – For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Mat 28:20 NKJV – "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Mat 18:20 NKJV – "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Jhn 14:15–18 NKJV – (15) "If you love Me, keep My commandments. (16) "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- (17) "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. (18) "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Jhn 14:1–4 NKJV – (1) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. (2) "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (4) "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

2Ti 2:12 NKJV – If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

1Co 6:2–3 NKJV – (2) Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (3) Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

Dan 7:10 NKJV – A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

Heb 12:22 NKJV – But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,

1Pe 2:11 NKJV – Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

Heb 11:13 NKJV – These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.