

## THE THRONE IN HEAVEN Revelation 4:1-11

Chapter Four begins a new section of the Book of Revelation that reveals the future. Revelation 4:1-19:11 reveals the future events of prophecy which will come after the Rapture of the Bride of Christ ending the Church Age. In Chapter 4:1, God tells John, *"I will show you things which must be hereafter."* Remember that Revelation 1:19 is key to the book and that the book addresses the past, present, and future. From Revelation 4:1 to the end the book is referring to the future, *"the things which must be hereafter."* A literal translation reads, *"Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after these things."* What God says, is that He now is going to reveal what is to take place after the events of Revelation 2 and 3, which refer to the churches in Asia Minor that existed in John's day.

From this point on to the end of the Revelation there is no further mention of the institution of the local church on the earth. All believers, both living and dead since the time of the beginning of the dispensation of the Church Age have been resurrected and are now with the Lord in heaven. (Acts 2 records the beginning of the Church Age) At this point in time, Jesus Christ has returned to earth as 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 records, which is called the Rapture.<sup>1</sup> The Body of Christ has been caught up and the New Testament records that following the Rapture, Christians will be judged at the BEMA judgment and then at the end of the Seven Year Tribulation they will return with Christ and reign on earth with Him beginning with the Millennium and then for eternity (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10, 20:6).

In the sequence of the end time events the Rapture takes place after the events of Chapter 3, and beginning in Chapter 4, Church Age saints are now in heaven and not mentioned again until the end of Chapter 18 when Christ returns to earth with His bride. Chapter 18 ends with the destruction of Babylon. More will be said about this later, but let it suffice to say that the destruction of Babylon ends the rebellion against God of those in the Seven Year Tribulation. Chapter 19:1-10, refers to the events at the end of the seven years and just before the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth. Therefore, Chapters 4 to 18 covers the period of the Tribulation.

It is vital in interpreting the Book of to understand that during this period the Church Age saints are not on earth. There is no further mention of the churches until Chapter 19:9, which states, *"the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."* This pictures the all Christians collectively, both dead and alive, as being the "bride" of Christ. Views such as the Mid-Tribulation and Pre-Wrath Rapture view fail to take this into account in formulating their interpretations. There cannot be a Mid-Tribulational or Pre-Wrath Rapture, because God plainly says all Christians from Pentecost to the Rapture, both who died and who are alive at His coming are now in Heaven. After Christians are raptured they are taken to heaven where the BEMA judgment takes place.<sup>2</sup>

Revelation 4:1 begins and ends with the phrase, "*meta tauta*" in Greek which translates "*after these things.*" The present Church Age as represented by the seven churches mentioned in chapters 2 and 3 has ended and the events that are about to be revealed come in time after the events of Chapters 2 and 3.

The churches are referred to nineteen times in chapters one through three, and not mentioned again until Chapter nineteen. God's prophetic clock is once again moving forward and He is dealing with Israel and completing the Old Testament Dispensation. Daniel prophecies that there would be four hundred and ninety years from the going forth of the decree of the Persian King, Cyrus to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah. (Daniel 9:24-27; 2 Chron. 36:22; Ezra 1:1-18)

History records Cyrus made his decree in 536 B.C. Counting forward in time from that decree Jesus Christ was crucified (cut off) 483 years later as Daniel 9:26 states. However, the coming of the Messiah would be a full four hundred and ninety years. Four hundred and ninety years equals seventy weeks of seven days each. Jesus the Messiah was cut off in at the end of the sixty ninth weeks, therefore the prophecy has not been completed. There is one week to go to fulfill the prophecy which ends with the coming of the Jesus the Messiah.

It is apparent that Christ has not returned and also that prophecies concerning the Tribulation and the nation of Israel are not be fulfilled. Clearly, for the past two thousand years God has been working in a new dispensation which began with the Church Age which was begun as Acts two records. Therefore today, God is working with the Gentiles and gathering Himself a body of believers, who are Christians. But God has plainly stated that He will fulfill all prophecy which means He will end the Church Age and once again start His prophetic clock and complete the Old Testament dispensation. Therefore the Church Age began in Acts 2 and will end with the rapture as 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 records.

Because Christians are absent from the earth during the events of Chapters 4 - 19, clearly these chapters are dealing with the nation of Israel and the other nations of earth during this seven year period. It is vital in interpreting this section of the book to understand this important fact. Many have mistakenly referred to these prophecies as applying to the churches and this has caused great confusion in interpreting the Scriptures.

For example: The events of Matthew 24-25 are prophecies which occur during the Seven Year Tribulation also referred to as Daniel's Seventh Week. Many have tried to make current events fit into Bible prophecy such as Israel's Six Day War in June 1967's, the Camp David Accords, etc. In the local paper the "Spectrum," in June 12th, 1988 there was an ad which stated that a Dr. Skousen, "will show how current events in Israel, Europe and America are fulfilling Prophecy."<sup>3</sup> This cannot be true because according to the Bible there is no biblical prophecy to be fulfilled until after the Rapture of the Church Age believers. God stopped His

prophetic clock when Israel rejected Christ their Messiah, but God starts it again with the start of the Tribulation. **(See Appendix 2, "Is the Church in the Olivet Discourse")**

Many who deny the literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation, such as the Amillennialists state that God disavowed Israel when the nation rejected Jesus the Messiah. Thus, all promises God had made to Israel were made null and void. This is the reason they deny there will be a thousand year Millennium. If God has rejected Israel there is no need for Christ to reign on the earth on the throne of David and Israel being restored and ruling the world. The many Old Testament prophecies that clearly teach that God promised that they would be regathered and restored to the land He gave them.<sup>4</sup>

God has made specific and absolute statements concerning Israel. *"Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD."* (Jeremiah 31:35-37) Clearly God will never abandon Israel.

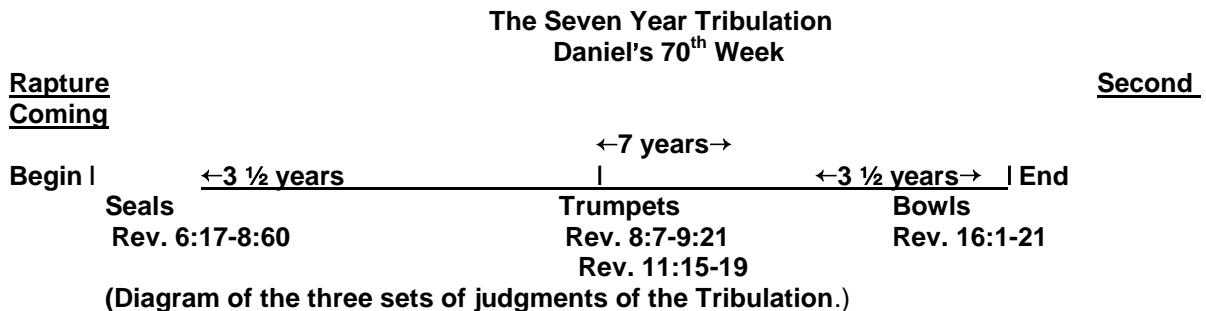
God also promised the Christians of this dispensation that they would not go through the Great Tribulation. In Revelation 3:10, Christ said to the Philadelphian church that, **"I also will keep thee**

**FROM the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."** Note this is not a local event as this "hour of temptation" will come upon the entire world. The "hour of temptation" is clearly a reference to the coming Seven Year Tribulation. God is telling the members of this church to take comfort in knowing that they will not be on earth during the events of the Tribulation. What is in view in the Tribulation is that God is going to purge Israel and all the nations of the earth in preparation for the Millennial reign of Christ the Messiah. Where then is the Church? The following section will explain this.

Robert Van Kampen in the 1970's and Marvin Rosenthal in the early 1990's popularized a new view called the Pre-Wrath Rapture which teaches that "the Church" will go through the first part of the seven year Tribulation. They place the rapture as occurring before God's pours His wrath on earth, thus the reason for the name Pre-Wrath Rapture. They purport that the first three and a half years of the Tribulation will be a time of relative peace and the Seal judgments of Revelation 6-7 are the not the pouring out of the wrath of God, but of man through the Antichrist.

However, the fatal flaw to this view is that in Revelation 5:1-14 is the prelude to the Tribulation in which Jesus Christ is presented as the Lamb, who is the only worthy One, who has the authority and position to open the seven sealed book. Revelation 5:3 states, *“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.”* The book that no man could open is the seven sealed book of the wrath of God which begins the seven year Tribulation with the out pouring of God’s wrath. What is about to unfold is plainly not the work of any man, but of the Messiah, the work of *“. . . the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David.”* (Rev. 5:5) It is the Lamb, Himself, who opens the first seal (Rev. 6:1) and thus initiates the beginning of the seven years of the Tribulation. Revelation 6:3, states that “he” referring to the Lamb of verse 6:1, and verses 5, 7, 9, and 12, continues in opening each of the subsequent seven Seal Judgments. Clearly, these are not judgments initiated by man or Antichrist, but by the Worthy Lamb of Chapter 5. It is Jesus Christ who opens each of the seals in the first half of the Tribulation and brings God’s wrath on the earth.

Yes, it is the Antichrist who persecutes God’s people and all peoples on earth, but he does so by the will of Jesus Christ. God will be using the Antichrist as the instrument of His wrath. Many times in biblical history God used the enemies of Israel to chasten and judge them.<sup>ii</sup> The Antichrist could do nothing unless he was allowed by God to do so. The Pre-Wrath view is fatally flawed in its assumption that it is not God who is pouring His wrath on the earth at the beginning of the Tribulation and though out the seven years and until the three sets of God’s judgments are completed. It should be recognized that if the Seal Judgments are the wrath of God, the Pre-Wrath position is refuted.



## **THE RAPTURE, THE BEMA JUDGMENT, AND THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.**

### **The Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Church.**

Earlier in our notes (Chapter One) we defined the Rapture. The Rapture takes place at the end of the Church Age and before the beginning of the Great Tribulation. At the Rapture, the Christians (those who have been saved since Pentecost until today) both alive on earth and those who have died, will be "caught up" in the air to meet the Lord. (1 Thess. 5:15-17, 1 Cor. 15:52)

## **The BEMA Judgment or Judgment Seat of Christ.**

After the Rapture believers are to be examined before Christ and judged according to their works. Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 refer to this as the Judgment Seat of God. 1 Corinthians 3:9-15, refers in detail to the substance of this judgment. It is not a judgment of condemnation, but of reward. It is only for Christians, saved during the Church Age who are of the Body of Christ. Old Testament saints will be judged later at the end of the Tribulation. Only born again believers, who are the Bride of Christ, are judged and present at the BEMA judgment.

In Romans 14:10, the phrase "*judgment seat of Christ*" is the Greek word, "BEMA." The word "Bema" refers to "a raised place mounted by steps; a platform, tribune; used of the official seat of a judge. Acts 18:12, 16... uses the word of the "judgment seat of Christ" and Romans 14:10 of the structure of the judgment which resembles a throne, which Herod built in the theater at Caesarea. From this amphitheater Herod viewed the games and made speeches to the people."<sup>5</sup> The word BEMA was also is used to identify the place where the athletes were rewarded at the Grecian games in Athens and referred to as the "Seat of Reward." After the Rapture Christians will be judged according to their works. What believers sow in Christ, meaning what works they do trusting in and through the power of Christ, be rewarded. This reward given will be in several forms. The New Testament speaks of the faithful believer receiving one or more of five crowns as a reward.

### **The Five Crowns**

The Incorruptible Crown. *"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."* (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)

The Crown of Rejoicing. *"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"* (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

The Crown of Righteousness. *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

The Crown of Life. *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."* (James 1:12)

The Crown of Glory. *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."* (1 Peter 5:2-4)

The believer's works are tried in the fire. What was done in Christ will reap us reward, "gold, silver, precious stones." (Eph. 5:18) However, that which was done in the flesh will be consumed in the fire as "wood, hay, stubble" and receive not reward. The passage says those whose works are burned will suffer lost, but themselves will be saved "as by fire." (1 Cor. 3:15)

### **The Marriage of the Lamb.**

In many places in the New Testament the Body of Christ is called the bride of Christ and Christ is referred to as the Groom indicating a future marriage. (John 3:29, Rom. 7:4, 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-33, Rev. 19:7-8, 21:1-22, 27) The time of the marriage occurs after the Rapture and before the Second Coming. At the beginning of the Millennium, now saved Israel attends the marriage supper. According to Revelation 19:7, before the Second Coming it states, *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."* Israel is never presented as being the Lord's bride which is an interpretive mistake made by some commentators. The words "is come" is the aorist tense, which indicates a completed act. The marriage has already taken place.

The BEMA judgment (1 Cor. 3:10-15, 2 Cor. 5:10), which is the judgment of Christians, has taken place in the time interval between the Rapture and the Second Coming. The bride of Christ appears in the "righteousness of the saints" (Revelation 19:8) concluding that the BEMA has taken place in heaven.

Following the Second Coming, there will be the "marriage supper of the Lamb"(Rev. 19:9), which is customary in oriental weddings. The marriage supper will be on the Millennial earth and will be attended by the saved Gentiles and Israel who make up the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ.(see Matt. 22:2-14) In the Tribulation God will purge the earth of those who reject Him. At the Second Coming, the Lord will gather all the saved Jews to Jerusalem and they will be waiting for the Bridegroom and His bride. Gentiles who believed during the Tribulation will go into the Millennial Kingdom and also be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

### **JOHN SEES HEAVEN. Revelation 4:1**

Paul saw heaven as recorded in 2 Corinthians 12:2. Here John sees a door which was opened and hears a voice like a trumpet. (John 10:9, Jesus said He was the door, "I am the door") The first voice John hears, is a shout like a trumpet, and he is told to "come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." This clearly starts a new section in the Book. What John saw next were things that

would follow the events of Revelation 2-3 and the Church Age.

## **THE THRONE. REVELATION 4:2**

The "throne" of God is mentioned 45 times in the Book of Revelation and only 15 in the rest of the New Testament. Note the throne "was set" which denotes an action completed at the time of the seeing. In Daniel 7:9, the Bible says *"till thrones were cast down,"* which is the same phraseology as *"I beheld till the thrones were set."* Why the mention of the thrones being set? The Book of Revelation emphasizes the majesty and authority of God. His longsuffering is now at an end. He has waited long enough and now His will be done on earth. The world will see His might and strength first hand and He will bring about His kingdom that believers have been promised since the Fall of Man. It also denotes His authority to bring wrath and judgment on rebellious man. Only those who are outside the favor of the King are threatened by the One on the Throne in Authority. To those who are related to the King, it is a place of glory and worship of His Majesty.

## **JOHN SAW "ONE WHO SAT ON THE THRONE." Revelation 4:3**

Although some believe it is God the Father on the throne, it probably is Christ Jesus who is the stated Judge of all the earth. (John 5:22, Rev. 20:11) This is a prepared throne from which Christ the Righteous Judge will bring judgment on a rebellious world. Daniel 7:9 says, *"...I beheld till the thrones were cast down."* This throne is not the eternal throne of God, because this throne is cast down or prepared as John watched. It can be concluded this will be the throne of judgment used to judge the earth during the Tribulation. The one on the throne is not named, but referred to as being like jasper and sardine, which are bright stones and symbolize the glory of the One on the throne.

What is the meaning of these stones in Revelation 4:3? Jasper is a multi-colored opaque quartz gemstone of red, yellow, and brown facets or a combination of these colors. The Sardine (or Sardis) gem is thought to be another quartz gemstone, chalcedony. Chalcedony is a waxy, smooth form of quartz that sometimes is transparent and usually translucent. The colors are from white to gray, blue, brown or black. They seem to be depicting the glory of God. These two stones are the first and last stones which the Old Testament high priest wore on the breastplate covered with twenty four stones. They were arranged according to the birth of Jacob's sons. Reuben, jasper, "Behold a son"; Benjamin, sardine, referring to "Son of my right hand." Because the meaning of jasper is "Behold a son" it seems to signify the Incarnation of Christ and His humanity. The sardine, "Son of my right hand" may denote the deity of Jesus Christ. The Bible does not tell us that these stones have a particular meaning. Surely, God chose them for some definite reason, but He has not revealed it to us. We may speculate, but not be dogmatic as the significance of these stones.

**John saw a rainbow in a circle over and "round about" (meaning, "encircling") the throne.** Its color was emerald or green. A rainbow is a symbol of

God's promise. In Gen.9:11-17, God made the rainbow as a symbol that He would not again destroy the world by water. This throne is the place of the beginning of a new judgment that begins in the Seven Year Tribulation.

## **TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS WITH GOLDEN CROWNS. Revelation 4:4**

**In Daniel 7:9, the thrones were empty, but now they are filled.**

*"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire" (Daniel 7:9).* These twenty four elders are shown sitting clothed in white garments and they have golden crowns on their heads. Note too, they are sitting on thrones that are around the main throne.

### **Who are the twenty four elders?**

In 1 Chronicles 24, twenty four elders were appointed by David to represent the entire Levitical Priesthood. Each elder served two weeks. In Luke 1:5, Zacharias "was of course of Asia," or division of Abijah. Thus, the work in the Temple was divided into "courses" and each course was named for its leader. There were thousands of priests, yet when the twenty four met all priesthood was represented. So it is possible that as all believers are priests these elders represent all Christians who are believer priests.

Some conclude that these could be the twelve patriarchs of Israel and twelve apostles, or all the priesthood both apostle and patriarchs. John Walvoord, the commentator, says no, this represents only "the church" meaning Christians in this dispensation.<sup>6</sup> This seems to be a better explanation because these elders have crowns! At the beginning of the Tribulation Israel has not been judged, therefore they have not been rewarded at this time. To have crowns they must have been judged. This is judgment and reward is yet in the future for Israel and will occur at the Second Coming. In time immediately after the Rapture the BEMA judgment takes place, which is for Christians (1 Cor. 3:13 - 2 Cor. 5:10) and Paul was looking forward to this day. (See 2 Tim. 4:7-8) Scripturally only the Church Age believers have crowns having been judged at the BEMA and rewarded.

The question is what is their individual identity and why twenty four elders? We cannot be dogmatic about this, but these are clearly literal men who have been redeemed, gloried, judged, crowned and given thrones. Some make the argument that there were only twelve apostles and could not the other twelve be men of Israel? Israel is clearly in view in the rest of the Book because that is the theme of the Tribulation. God in this seven year period is saving and purging Israel in preparation for the Millennial reign of Christ. This could be a possibility if it were not that these elders are all crowned and setting on thrones. Although we cannot explain the number, it seems they are Christians and representative of believers of the Church Age and not men of Israel.



## **THE PROCEEDINGS OUT OF THE THRONE. Revelation 4:5**

**Three things are seen proceeding out of the throne, lightning thundering and voices.** This denotes the gruesomeness of coming events, and signifies the gathering of a terrible storm. This is the throne of terrible judgment that is about to be poured upon the earth. Christians stand at throne and there is no fear in them. At Mt. Sinai God thundered when he gave the Law. (Exodus.19:16) Here the Bible records that God is about to come in wrath and the rumbling speaks of the coming fury of the storm of God's wrath on the earth. These thunderings, lightning and voices appear again in Revelation 8:5, 10:3, 11:19, 16:18.

**The Seven Lamps of Fire which are the Seven Spirits of God.** In Revelation 1:13-16, Christ appears in judgment and His eyes are described as flames of fire. Again judgment is in view and these Seven Lamps are said to be the Seven Spirits of God. This is not seven different spirits, but rather they represent the seven fold fullness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (Isa. 11:2, Rev. 1:4)

The seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit:

Restraining	Baptizing
Convicting	Indwelling
Regenerating	Filling
Sealing	

In Revelation 1:4, 3:1, 5:6, the seven spirits are seen before the throne. This is indicating Holy Spirit's participation in judgment. (II Thess.1:7-8) Some believe this refers to Revelation 8:1-6, and the seven angels of judgment mentioned there. However, these seven spirits here are said to be the seven spirits of God. These come "out of throne" meaning out of Christ Himself, associating them as part of the vision of God which John saw. This is clearly showing God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are to be involved in this coming events.

## **THE SEA OF GLASS. Revelation 4:6.**

The word "sea" means "laver." The laver in the tabernacle was a bowl used for washing and purifying before the priests entered into the Holy Place. (Exodus.30:18-21) It is called a "sea" in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:23-27). This sea is crystallized indicating the saints have entered are perfect, sanctified and glorified no longer in need of cleansing! Praise God! One of the greatest joys of heaven is that believers no longer need cleansing. Because of Christ, will one day all believers will be glorified and no longer have the sin nature and never again have to go to the Lord confessing that we sinned and shamed His name. We then will only bring glory to Him. Also at the throne are four beasts with eyes to the front and to the back.

Being full of eyes, means these beings were covered with eyes. This use of the word "beast" should not be understood as being wild beasts in the normal use of the English word. The Greek word for a wild beast is the word "*therion*," however

this is the word “*zoon*” which means simply means a living created being. It is used twenty four times in the Book of Revelation. These are not Cherubim, (Ezek.1:5-10, 10:20) or Seraphim (Isa.6:2-3) as their eyes are different.

### **THE FOUR BEASTS. Revelation 4:7-9**

There is great speculation as to the identity of these four living beings. Some conclude these are not beings at all but four attributes of God. They spiritualize the meaning of these verses concluding that the beings are surrounded with eyes which they say speaks of the omniscience of God. Further they surmise that the lion represents God in His office of power as the King, the ox denotes the patience and labor of the Lord, whereas the man speaks of the humanity of Christ and the eagle is symbolic of the sovereignty and supremacy of God. However, the word which is used to name this creatures represent them as living existing beings and are compared to earthly animals. Further, these beings are said to have an active ministry never resting day or night, and praising God, saying, "*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*" They too are said to be literal creatures, “round about the throne” this would seem to preclude them referring to the attributes of God.

Some have suggested this is an order of being or angels yet not revealed before in Scripture because other beings in Scripture to compare to them. The description that they have six wings, does not lend itself to being seen as a spiritual attribute of God, but to a real being like unto angels which are also said to have wings. Here again we should not go any further than what the Bible reveals. We can safely conclude that they are created beings that have attributes like a lion, ox, man and eagle and have a wonderful ministry of constantly praising God and giving him honor and thanksgiving.

### **The Twenty Four Elders worship Christ. Rev. 4:10-11**

What a wonderful scene it will be to be able to witness as the twenty four elders join in the worship of God, and getting off their throne, falling down and casting their crowns before Christ. They blend into the chorus with the four living creatures and add to their praise, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11)

The New Testament promises reward and crowns for believers. Following are Scriptures which reveal the various crowns that the faithful will receive:

The Crowns:

**Incorruptible Crown** is given to those who practice self-discipline. (1 Cor. 9:25)

**Crown of Rejoicing** is to those who hope for Christ's return. (1 Thess. 2:19)

**Crown of Righteousness** is to all that love His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8)  
**Crown of Life** is promised to them that love Christ. (James 1:12) and to those who undergo trials that leads to death. (Rev. 2:10)

The placing of the crowns before the Lord is an act of worship. Those who receive the crowns do not keep them, but cast them at the feet of Christ who is the only One worthy to receive praise and honor as stated in verse 11. It is wrong to covet personal honor and glory in heaven. Our reward for faithfulness is to be given greater opportunities of service to the Lord. Those looking for a gold mansion in the sky with beds of ease have greatly misunderstood God promises to us. Any work we do on earth that will receive reward will be done, filled and directed by the Holy Spirit. Never will we have anything to boast of except the righteousness and grace of God.

It is important to understand the significance of this act of the twenty four elders as they cast their crowns before the throne. What Christian do as faithful servants of the Lord will be rewarded? Yet, we know that anything we do for God, we do in the power and direction the Lord gives us. It is actually Christ who is doing the act through us. Yet, He rewards us for even a cup of water given in His name. Here in Revelation 4:10, the crowns received as reward are rightfully given to the One who deserves of rewards, Christ Himself. To Him be the praise and honor...for ever AMEN!

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<sup>1</sup> Rapture. The words "caught up" is the Greek word *arpazw* (*harpazo*) which means taken in a strong, violent and forceful way. The event is referred to as the "Rapture" which is taken from the Latin the word for "caught up" is *rapturo*. The term "caught up" is translated "pluck" in John 10:28, "pulling (out of the fire)" in Jude 23, and "take by force" in Acts 23:10. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 further reveals this "catching up" will be instantaneous event "in a moment in the twinkling of an eye" and at the moment of being taken God changes the person and they receive their new eternal glorified bodies (see 1 John 3:2). Those believers who died will be resurrected first and then they and the Christians who are alive will both be caught up to meet the Lord in the clouds. The believers who are alive at the time of this event will not see death. This event ends the dispensation of the institution of the church and begins the Tribulation.

<sup>2</sup> See the Appendix 1, "A Biblical Look at Mid-Tribulationalism" and Charts 1 and 2)

<sup>3</sup>The "Spectrum" is a local newspaper printed in Cedar City, Utah. Dr. Skousen is a Mormon.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix III, "God's Millennial Promises to Israel"

<sup>ii</sup>The 70 year Babylonian Captivity is a prime example of God using Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king and enemy of the Jews, to bring His judgment on disobedient Israel. (See 2 Kings 25, 2 Chron. 36, Jer. 27)

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 362

<sup>6</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1966, pp106-107.