

REVELATION: HELP FOR LIVING, HOPE FOR LEAVING

Sermon no. 9

THE WORSHIP SERVICE OF HEAVEN

Revelation 4:1-11

Why is there a worship service in heaven just before God declares the end of all things? Because John, the 7 Churches, and you and I today need to realize that God has every right to do what He is about to do. Through Chapters 4 and 5, God is preparing our hearts for the inevitable judgment of earth that proceeds like a storm ripping across the lives of every person left on earth.

A.W. Tozer said "Worship is man's full reason for existence. Worship is why we are born, and why we are born again." As we witness this worship service in heaven, we will see how central the reality of God and heaven is to affecting even our lives today:

1. GOD'S CALL TO WORSHIP

a. He evokes worship by His SUMMONS:

¹ After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

b. He evokes worship by His SPLENDOR:

² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. ³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

2. GOD'S PRAISE AND WORSHIP

a. He was given honor by the PLACE of worship:

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.

⁶ Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

b. He was honored by the PEOPLE who worshiped:

• He was honored by the 24 elders

⁴ Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever.

• He was honored by the Holy Spirit

⁵ Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

- He was honored by the 4 living creatures

7 In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings.

3. GOD'S RIGHT TO OUR WORSHIP:

The first two doxologies out of 14 in Revelation now summon us to worship God:

- a. v. 8 *Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."*

God is extolled for His holiness in this 3-fold form, because it is the summation of all that He is.

- b. v. 10-11 They [CAST] their crowns before the throne and say:

*"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."*

Aware that God alone is responsible for the rewards they have received, they divest themselves of all honor and cast it at the feet of their Creator God, who set out to redeem His creation.

Final Thoughts:

May a glimpse of the reality of heaven give even the most hopeless among us, hope. Let us graduate from the juvenile idea that heaven is just a future home, and that's it. Heaven is far more than that – it is a present hope. When it is just a future home, we make it too mentally distant and practically irrelevant.

Philippians 3:20 reveals that even now "our citizenship is in heaven." I know few truths in the Bible that are more liberating to the soul than this. God has given us a down payment on heaven. He has transferred our citizenship there. We "are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" (Ephesians 2:19). We therefore cannot ignore heaven's glory as if it had no significance. There is nothing else that is worth setting our hearts on.