

Revealing The Soon-Coming All-Powerful Sovereign World Ruler

[Part 5]

The book of Revelation is about our worship of our Creator God.

This physical life is a time of preparation for an eternal life of praise and worship of our Creator God.

John 17:3 [NIV] *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

Eternal life is to continually grow in our knowledge of the character of our Creator God, but the Greek word translated “know”, “ginōskō” also means an intimate relationship, such as a marriage between a man and woman.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Eternal life is a gift from our Creator God, through what He has done for all humanity in Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:11 [NIV] *“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”*

By faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ we can experience our beginning of eternal life now.

[For fuller study of this read our article on this website under main heading ‘Eternal Life’ entitled ‘Everyone Can Have Eternal Life Starting Today’.]

Revelation 1:12-18 [NIV] *“I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man”, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. **When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.** Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”*

The apostle John’s reaction to seeing, what must have been a limited veiled image of the glorified Jesus Christ, was to fall down, face to the ground, in a humble act of worship.

John 1:18 [NIV] *“No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”*

John’s vision must have been veiled.

John 5:37 [NIV] *“And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. **You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,**”*

No human, including John, has ever seen the full glory of God or heard His voice.

1 John 4:12 [NIV] *“No-one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”*

We experience God as human beings by reflecting His love in us, for the benefit of other human beings, especially those who do **not** know Him at all.

Exodus 33:18-23 [NIV] *“Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. **But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no-one may see me and live.” Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”**”*

Even Moses was **not** allowed to see God’s glorified face, to avoid dying instantly.

The nearest we can describe this light and power of God’s glorious state is that of an atomic explosion. Where those near instantly became but a shadow on the wall of a building because of the brightness of the explosion.

The more we come to know the Creator God the more we stand in awe of Him and feel compelled to worship Him.

John 4:23-24 [NIV] *“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

God desires we come to the place where we can worship Him in spirit, that is the union of our human spirit and the Holy Spirit.

Also in truth, that is coming to know Him through the life of Jesus Christ who is the Truth. [**John 14:6**]

With these scriptures in mind let us read what was revealed to the apostle John. The worship that continually takes place at the heavenly throne of God.

Revelation 4:1-11 [NIV] *“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.” At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. 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. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the centre, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and behind. 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. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. **Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”** Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, **the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”**”*

What an inspiring thought it is to learn that in the heavenly realm, God receives unceasing worship from the living creatures surrounding His throne.

John was overwhelmed by what he saw in vision and tried to describe the indescribable, when he lacked both language and reference points to do so.

Remember that John was “*in the spirit*”, he was taken out of the physical realm into the realm of the spirit world in order to have this vision.

How about comparing this constant worship of our Creator God and our rather inadequate Sunday morning worship hour of the Holy God who created us and sustains our lives?

My personal opinion is that I do **not** think that death is going to transform our attitudes and disposition.

We **only** take through death what we have become in this physical life.

If we lack worship and adoration of God now, then after death we will be totally out of place in the Kingdom of God which now worships Him day and night without end.

What I am trying to do is to stir you up, to encourage you to delight in a life of continual praise, worship and thankfulness for who God is and what He has done for all humanity.

In heaven these living creatures rest not day and night.

My fear is that too many of God’s professing Christians down here on earth are resting far too often and too long between their efforts of praise, worship and thanks to our Creator God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 [NIV] “*pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*”

There is **no** time in our waking day that we cannot offer up unverballed praise, worship and thanks to God.

Prayer is **not** something we do at a certain time or at a certain place, prayer and praise is a way of life.

Do we know for sure the symbolism of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures?

The scriptures do **not** give us a clear picture, but do hint of a possible symbolism.

Matthew 19:27-28 [NIV] “*Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, **when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**”*”

The thrones Jesus mentioned may **not** be the ones that John saw when the future was revealed to him.

But Jesus’ words were certainly definite about the apostles sitting on twelve thrones in that coming day of His return.

What about the symbolism of the four living creatures?

Again we must sympathise with John as he tries to describe heavenly spirit creatures in human terms.

I believe we see in these symbolic spirit beings four pictures of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The imagery is plainly about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God is constantly portrayed by Jesus Christ, for He is what Christianity is all about.

The Lion –

The characteristics of the lion are power and dominion. We call the lion the king of beasts.

Revelation 5:5 [NIV] *“Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, **the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.** He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”*

One of the messianic titles given to Jesus the Christ.

The book of Matthew is the good news of our coming king Jesus Christ.

The Ox –

Is depicted in the Old Testament as a willing burden-bearing, obedient animal, obedient even to sacrifice.

In the Old Testament sacrificing system there was little for an ox to look forward to except sacrifice, blood and death.

The ox is a symbol of God’s great plan of atonement and redemption through Jesus Christ.

Mark’s gospel centres on Jesus Christ as the suffering servant of God.

Mark 10:42-45 [NIV] *“Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**”*

Jesus the Suffering Servant of God.

Like a Man –

This is symbolic of the Son of God becoming the Son of Man.

Philippians 2:5-8 [NIV] *“Your attitude should be the same as that of **Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!**”*

The Word [Jesus Christ] became a man and lived among us that He might die for us and by shedding His human blood and became a substitute sacrifice for all humanity.

The gospel message given by Luke emphasises Jesus as the Son of Man and uses this as His title constantly.

The Eagle –

The eagle is a soaring being, earth may be the eagle’s resting place, but the heavens are its habitat.

Jesus was the Son of Man, partaking in our humanity, but He was also the Son of God, the Word Who is God.

John 1:1-2, 14 [NIV] *“**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.**” ... “**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**”*

Jesus Christ as the Word of God became the fleshly Son of Man.

John's gospel emphasises Jesus as the Son of God from the first few verses right through to the letters he wrote.

Revelation that was given to the same John, also depicts Jesus as the Only Son of God on the same throne as the Father God, and receiving from Him all power and authority.

What are we expected to do with what is being revealed to us in this book of Revelation?

This will be addressed in the next article.