

Remnant Life Church
July 15, 2018
Heaven: What Do We Know?
(Pt 2)
Revelation 4:5

(Review from July 8)

- The Apostle John is on the Greek island of Patmos
 - About 40 miles off the coast of Turkey in the Aegean Sea
 - Sent there for preaching the Gospel of Jesus
- John has just written down the letters to the 7 churches of Asia Minor given by the Angel of the Lord (Jesus) – (Rev 2, 3)
 - Ephesus; Smyrna; Pergamum; Thyatira; Sardis; Philadelphia; Laodicea
 - Only Smyrna and Philadelphia are not called to repentance for their sin
 - Only Philadelphia is called the one loved by God for their willingness to stand firm for God even when weak
- John is then called up into the third heaven (Rev 4:1)
 - We know it is the third heaven because of the presence of the throne of God (4:2b)
 - John is “in the Spirit” (as opposed to a physical presence) which is another way of saying a vision (4:2a)
- 1. We will be able to observe our surroundings (we will be aware)
The first and most important, the centerpiece, is God upon His throne
 - His Position
 - i. God is sitting, in heaven, on His throne, in power, over all creation
 - His Appearance
 - (Rev 4:3a) John uses the precious stones Jasper and Carnelian
 - John then speaks of a rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircling the throne (4:3b)
- 2. We will be able to see the saints
 - a. Their position - seated
 - b. Their purity – dressed in white
 - c. Their prize – crowns of gold

Continue to do good and the work of the Father for His kingdom

- Exercise the love of **I Corinthians 13**
- Put into practice the fruits of the spirit in **Galatians 5**
- Live your life as demonstrated by Jesus

- These two chapters of Revelation (4 and 5) are what are known as bridge or pivot chapters
 - Following the greeting and John’s introduction to “...someone ‘like a Son of Man’” (Chap 1)
 - The Lord’s exhortations, challenges, and warnings to the 7 churches (Chaps 2–3)
 - And just before the judgements and final victory of the Glorious and Triumphant Lamb (Chaps 6-22)
 - It is the 4th and 5th chapters that give us both the historical and theological basis of our risen Lord’s authority over both the church and the world as He sits in full majesty on His throne the object of eternal worship

READ - Rev 4:5 - *From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.*

- John once again tries to describe the very presence of God
 - Lightning and thunder – are always associated with the powerful presence of God – (turn to **Exodus 19**)
 - God has brought the Israelites through the Red Sea and they have seen the Egyptian army defeated
 - God has provided food (**Ex 16:1-36**), water (**Ex 15:22-25;16:1-36**), and a military victory over the Amalekites (**Ex 17:8-16**)
 - They now come to the foot of Mt. Sinai
 - God calls Moses up and tells him He is going to enter into a covenant with Israel to make them His own among all the peoples of the earth (**Ex 19:3-6**)
 - One condition –*if you obey me fully and keep my covenant (19:5)*
 - God calls the people into a 3-day period of consecration or preparation by washing their clothes and purifying themselves (**19:9-15**)
 - Almighty God then manifests Himself in an awe-inspiring display of His creation
- (**Ex 19:16-20a**) *On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently. As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. Then the LORD descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain.*
 - When Moses went back up the mountain with Aaron at God's command, he was given the 10 Commandments (**Ex 20**)
 - The incredible and immense significance of the giving of the Law of God has been made very clear by the awesome setting and display of God's power
- While this is used as a representation of God's presence in the OT, it is also what John is experiencing
 - The NIV uses the words *peals of thunder* which we read this morning; in the KJV it is "voices"; others use the word "rumbles"
 - In the original language the word for what John heard is *foe-NAY* and translate in a couple of different ways
 - "tone" like with a musical instrument;
 - Also means voices like the sound of uttered words
 - The echo of thunder when it booms, and you hear the sound all around is what John is witnessing – several elements...
 - It is the on-going, reverberating sound of the redeemed worshipping and praising God
 - It is the pulsating, unspeakable power of God
 - (**Ps 77:18**) *Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked.*
 - It is an uncountable number of voices all singing out to Almighty God
 - And the thunder even spoke to John but he was not allowed to record it

- **Rev 10:3-4** - ...and he (a mighty angel) gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.”
 - The power and presence of God is such that the most powerful forces of His creation are merely another vehicle to praise His name
 - We will witness His awesome presence and participate in the thunder of praise and worship when we are in heaven
- But John sees something else (**Rev 4:5b**) - *In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.*
 - What do these 7 blazing lamps represent even as John calls them the *seven spirits of God*?
 - These 7 lamps are not angels nor are they some physical manifestation of light and heat to keep the throne of God illuminated and a comfortable temperature
 - John says that they are the 7 spirits of God (another way to say that is the “sevenfold Spirits”)
 - The word “spirit” is *KNEE-ah-muh* – the Holy Spirit; third of the triune personhood of God
 - This phrase refers to the seven attributes of the Holy Spirit given in the New Testament.
 - He is called: (1) Spirit of Truth (**John 16:13**); (2) Spirit of Holiness (**Rom 1:4**); (3) Spirit of Faith (**II Cor 4:13**); (4) Spirit of Wisdom (**Eph 1:17**); (5) Spirit of Power (**II Tim 1:7**); (6) Spirit of Grace (**Heb 10:29**); and (7) Spirit of Glory (**I Peter 4:14**).
 - This then connects directly to what the prophet Isaiah wrote of the Spirit of the Lord that will rest on the Branch of Jesse (the One to come; Jesus)
 - **Isa 11:2** - *The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD...*
 - These lamps are the presence of the Holy Spirit both in the world and at the throne of God
 - John is instructed to remind the 7 churches (a representation of the churches of the world) in **Rev. 2 & 3** to listen and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit
 - Each of the admonishments to the churches ends with the same sentence
 - *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*
 - The activity of the Holy Spirit in the church will continue right up until the final moment that will signal His return
- So, what is it we are learning of Heaven so far?
 - We will have awareness of what is happening around us
 - We will see others
 - God’s awesome might and power will be seen and on display
 - The Holy Spirit is present even as His work continues on earth