

SAINTS MINISTERING IN HEAVEN

Revelation 4:4 *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

Right now, there are saints ministering in heaven. We should not imagine that heaven is a retirement home for tired Christians. It is not a place for recuperation because the Christian is instantly rejuvenated by the Lord Jesus' Spirit. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). The moment we enter heaven we will be ready for eternal service to the glory of the Lord Jesus. The 24 elders are real elders but they also represent the ministry of each Christian. Just like the 12 elders of Israel and the 12 Apostles, these 24 elders are also symbolic of the Church's service to the Lord. ***Notice firstly that the 24 elders were sitting around the throne.*** What a glorious blessing to know that we will all be very near and equidistant from the Lord. Everyone in a circle is both equally distant and equally close to the Lord. This is why the Lord could not grant the specific request of the mother of James and John. "And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom" (Matthew 20:21).

Next, we note that the 24 elders were facing the Lord at all times. Thank God there will be no distractions in heaven when we sit beholding the face of the Lord around his throne. What an indescribable blessing to fix our eyes upon the Lord Jesus. Those who love him dearly will not want to miss the sight of his kind eyes, gentle words and every gesture and move he makes. If the unbelievers were mesmerized and captivated by the words of the Lord, how much more we? "Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man" (John 7:45,46). To stand up before he stands up, to sit only when he bids us to and to be quick to fall down and worship him. Then will be fulfilled the great desire of David. "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

Next, it is clear that the elders ministered to the Apostle John who was “visiting” so to speak from the earth. “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Revelation 5:5). This elder comforted the Apostle John who “wept much”. No Christian should be weeping in heaven thinking the Lord Jesus has no solution. We know that the Lord himself is the great comforter, but he graciously permitted the elder to console and comfort John. An imaginary critic may argue that someone who died cannot comfort the living. Yes, that is generally true but remember that saints who die in the Lord are not dead but alive. “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:32). Not only did the elders comfort John, but they also taught and instructed him. “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:13,14). The elders in heaven teach us to ask the right questions. Sadly, we often ask irrelevant questions and focus on the non-essential. Let us pray to ask questions that please the Lord.

What else do the elders do in heaven so we can emulate their example on earth? *They worship the Lord before his throne constantly and offer up our prayers contained in vials before the Lord.* “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (Revelation 5:8). Not only do they represent the Church in their worship but they offer up our prayers to the Lord. Saints of the Lord Jesus, if we have been granted seats around the throne of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, should we not worship him with infinite gratitude? This was the great error of Lucifer. Rather than be grateful like the 24 elders and worship the Lord constantly, he began to desire the throne of the Lord. “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14: 13,14). Either we throw ourselves down at the feet of Jesus, or our pride will throw us into hell. Heaven is a place for only those who are grateful and worship the Lamb.

***Revelation 7:11** And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,*

Let us also register that the 24 elders have crowns. “And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold (Revelation 4:4). See how gracious the Lord is to his Church. He allowed them to sit around him with crowns of gold on their heads. ***Yet, these elders were so humble that they often threw themselves and their crowns of gold at the feet of Jesus.*** “The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying” (Revelation 4:10). Remember that the crowns of gold were bestowed upon them for their great sacrifice and service to the Lord while on the earth. Yet they considered themselves unworthy to wear these crowns before the Lord. What a tremendous lesson in humility! Whatever we may achieve or do for the Lord, the honor and glory belongs to Jesus alone. “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

In conclusion, the vision of saints ministering in heaven calls us to live with a mindset of continual service, unwavering worship, and humble gratitude. The 24 elders exemplify the true Christian attitude – close to the Lord, facing him with devotion, offering prayers, and casting crowns of humility at his feet. Heaven is not a place of retirement, but a realm where believers are renewed, prepared and actively engaged in eternal service and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our ultimate goal should be to emulate their devotion, ensure our hearts remain humble, and always prioritize God’s glory above all else. As Hebrews 12:2 (KJV) encourages us, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, live in worship and service now, and look forward with hope to our eternal communion around His throne, where we will serve Him forever in humility, love, and gratitude.

***2Tim 4:6** For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
2Tim 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
2Tim 4:8 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.*