

THE LAMB UPON THE THRONE

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Scripture Reading : Rev. 5 : 8, 9.

The message in the book of Revelation is primarily meant for those who want to become overcomers. If this book is studied carefully and prayerfully, we will see how all our questions which might have been troubling us concerning any problem can be answered one by one. It will be helpful if we divide this book into sections like chapters 1 to 3; 4 and 5; 6 to 11; 12 to 20; and 21 and 22.

In the beginning of the book we read that John, the Apostle was in exile. In his old age he was wondering about many things which were happening around him. For about fifty years, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ went on spreading rapidly in many parts as we read in Acts 12 : 24 and 16:5, "But the word of God grew and multiplied." "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily". In spite of much opposition and many handicaps the Lord's Word went on penetrating and the power of God was mightily manifested. But the time

came when there was spiritual decline in many churches. Many had lost their first love. Many like Demas had loved this present world and forsaken the Lord and His servants. By seeing all this, the Apostle John and other servants of God were in great confusion. There were many questions in the mind of the apostle like, "What is going to happen to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in the future? If there is so much of opposition, tribulation and spiritual decline in such a short time, then what about the future?"

The Lord Jesus answered all the questions which were in the mind of the apostle at that time, by giving him a revelation of Himself. To answer these questions, the Lord showed him beforehand what was going to happen to His people. The Lord is upon the throne watching everything. Nothing can happen without His knowledge. Even though the disciples were going down and down spiritually, the Lord told John, "If you wait for a while you will see them on the throne and not on the ground."

In the first chapter of Revelation, John the Apostle was given a fresh vision of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we want to have any question answered, the first divine principle is to have a new vision of the glory of the Lord Jesus. When we are discouraged, downcast or disappointed and when we come across any spiritual failure, we have to pray, "Lord, give me a fresh vision of Thyself and Thy beauty". Then you will find the vision of the Lord lifting you up from your depression and delivering

you from the oppression of the enemy. John had the privilege of being very close to the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet he had to see and know much more of Him. What he was made to see in chapter one, he had never seen before. That is why, when he saw the Lord in His glory, he felt as if he was dead. The glory of the Lord almost took his breath out of him. He saw His hair as white as wool, His face like the midday sun, His eyes like a flaming fire and a two edged sword coming from His mouth. Then he saw His feet like burning brass and His garment flowing upto the feet and girded with a golden girdle. These seven features of the Lord Jesus Christ are full of meaning. For your own edification pray and ask the Lord, to give you His message from the features, the hair, the face, the eyes, the mouth, the feet, the garment and the girdle. Having given John such a vision of Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ told him exactly what was going to take place among His people throughout the Church history.

In chapters 2 and 3 we have seven messages of the Lord Jesus Christ to the seven churches. Each message can be subdivided into seven messages. That means there are 49 messages in the two chapters. In chapters 3 and 4 we have the summary of the whole Church history in different stages and also the secret of seven spiritual experiences through which believers can come to God's throne. The first experience is the first love, the second experience is suffering for the Word of the Lord Jesus

Christ, the third experience is true separation unto the Lord Jesus Christ, the fourth is the inward experience of holiness, the fifth experience is to be watchful and be saved from the enemy's attacks, the sixth experience is to enter into open doors which are opened by the Lord Jesus Christ and the seventh experience is to have a very clear vision of the Lord and His heavenly plan. These seven experiences are described by these seven epistles to the seven churches.

Then you have seven great titles of the Lord Jesus Christ which are given in each letter and by these titles we know, who our Lord is. Many people know Him only in part. That is why in the beginning of every message, He says "I am so and so". In Rev. 2:1 we have the first title - "he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks". John the Apostle feared that if the earthly kings began to kill God's servants, then in a very short time, everyone will be killed and no one will be left. But the Lord says, "Do not look at the king and what he is doing. Look at My hand. I am carrying the seven stars in my hand. These stars are angels. I have angels in My hand. You do not know that I have commissioned My angels to watch over My flock everywhere. My people are not going to be protected by worldly forces or police forces. I have angels in My hand through whom I will protect My people. I walk in between the golden candlesticks". The shining golden candlesticks which represent the seven churches, also have

a special message. People see the failures of the believers and they say "Look at so and so". But our Lord says, "You see them in their weaknesses and failures. But in My eyes they are shining golden candlesticks. In the eyes of men they are nothing but weak human beings. But in My eyes they are bright and shining". This is possible by the inward working of the Holy Spirit which goes on in a believer's life.

When a high building is under construction, you find a wooden scaffold all around. Those who pass by can see only an ugly wooden structure, but inside there is a strong building. When the work is completed, the wooden structure is taken away and we can see the strong building. In the same way the work is going on in many hearts, but we have to wait till the day of glory. On that day, when we see Him, we shall be like Him. The work begins at new birth and will be completed on the day when we see our Lord Jesus Christ face to face. Only on that day we will see what the shining golden candlestick is. So the Lord says, "I am walking in between those candlesticks. I am not concerned about the number of people. But I am walking in between those who want to become like shining golden candlesticks".

In Revelation 2:8 we find the second title of the Lord Jesus Christ. "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive". He is the first, He is the beginning and He is the ending. The Church of the Lord

Jesus Christ was not established by any man. The Lord Himself is the Author of the Church. That is why He will also complete the work. The work of man remains incomplete. But the work of God will not remain incomplete. Even though we may not see the power of God manifested as before, yet He is working. He has conquered death and is alive for evermore and unknown to us is working everywhere.

In Revelation 2:12 we read, "These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges". This is the third title of the Lord Jesus Christ. At that time some people began to doubt the sayings of the Lord Jesus Christ. They said, "Where is the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ? He said He would come back again, and now we see spiritual decline everywhere". There were many mockers in those days, ridiculing the Word of God. God's Word is like a sharp two edged sword. What He has spoken must come to pass. It will go on working even if people do not believe it.

The fourth title is found in Rev. 2:18, "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass". Because of some sin in the Church some began to say, "How can we believe so and so?" The Lord says, "I can see everything, My eyes are like a flame of fire. There may be some defilement for a short time, but the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ will bum

away the dross in His own time. If there is a dead body in any part of the sea, the sea waves move towards it and then throw it out somewhere. Even though for sometime defilement or sin may enter somewhere and remain even for a few years, a time will come when every filth will be removed and cast away by the eyes of the Lord, which are like a flame of fire.

Then we read that His feet are like brass. The devil bruised the heel of the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross. The devil thought he would conquer and have victory by bruising the heel of the Lord Jesus Christ. So when men were reviling the Lord at the cross, the devil was very happy. But the very same cross crushed the devil. The devil may succeed in bringing his devices to prosper for a short time, but you will see that the Lord will destroy Satan by the very same weapon. It does not matter what weapon the devil uses, he will be defeated in his own device.

Fifthly, the Lord's title is "he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars" (Rev. 3:1). We may be stupid or foolish but the Lord Jesus Christ says, "I have with me the seven Spirits of God". The number seven speaks of perfection. So the seven Spirits of God speak of the perfect work of the Holy Spirit. We will not be made perfect by our human cleverness. It is the complete and deep work of the Holy Spirit that can complete the work of God in us day by day. It does not matter how weak we are. If we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, we will become perfect one day.

The sixth title is, "he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David" (Rev. 3:7). Men may try to bring defilement in the House of God, but the Lord Jesus Christ will cleanse it in His own time. He is true and He will uphold His living Word, no matter what happens. He has the key of David to open the door. Men may refuse to hear the Gospel and pass, many rules that the Gospel should not be preached in the country, but the Lord says, "I know how to open the door by the key of David".

The Lord Jesus has the key of David. We cannot open the doors by earthly powers but He can open every door. It is wonderful to see how the Gospel has reached even the ends of the earth. Kings and powers have tried to stop it, but could not. The Gospel goes on penetrating, even into remote places.

Seventhly, the Lord Jesus is called "the Amen" (Rev. 3:14). Amen means "So let it be". What God has purposed will come to pass. Every prophecy made and every word spoken by our Lord will be fulfilled literally. These seven titles speak of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the same way, we have seven rewards which the Lord offers to those who overcome. Then there are the seven attacks of the devil on God's people. There are seven great dangers which will come to every believer. Similarly, there are seven great gifts which the Lord wants to give to those who overcome the devil. In this way, we have 49 messages in the second and third chapters of Revelation.

Having given all these messages to John the Apostle upon the earth, in chapter four, verse one, our Lord says, "Come up hither, now I want to show you something from heaven itself". The things which were happening upon the earth were revealed to John the Apostle in chapters 2 and 3. Now He says, "John, you come up hither and I will show you things which must be hereafter. There are certain things which you cannot see upon the earth, they can be seen only from a high place". When we are upon the earth we cannot see many things, but when we go above the clouds we can see them more clearly.

Once when I began my journey from London, there was a very thick fog and we had to wait for half an hour because the fog was too thick for the plane to go up in the air. But as we went three miles above the earth, there was a beautiful sunshine. What a contrast! Upon the earth we could see but a short distance because there was fog everywhere and now three miles above the earth, we could see the sun shining and also miles and miles clearly. Unless we rise high above our human limitations we cannot see what God has in His heart. We have in and around us many limitations. We have a very small heart, we are very narrow minded i.e., we do things with a mean spirit and wound people for small things. Like children, we fight with one another for small things. That shows how small we are. But when we have a large heart and rise above our bondage and limitations, then we see that God is very great and that we cannot limit Him by our own limitations. So

we have to rise very high and then we shall see God working.

In chapters four and five, the Apostle John was made to see seven things. First, He saw the throne of glory, the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ and the One Who sat on the throne was like a jasper and a sardine stone. Because of their blue colour and clarity, the stones speak of God's glory. Also he saw 24 seats around the central throne and twenty four elders with golden crowns sitting on them. Then there was a rainbow of seven colours behind the central throne and seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. There were four living creatures or cherubims around the throne and also an innumerable company of angels. There was a Lamb in the midst of the throne as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. John was made to see these seven things and what he could not understand upon the earth, he was made to see when he went above. There are certain things which our Lord will teach us abundantly. When we come together for Bible Study, special meetings and fellowship, we are taught something in that way. But we also learn something from our own private study and something from reading books. All these are means by which we learn upon the earth. But there are certain things which we cannot learn in the meetings or from preachers or books. The Lord Himself must lift us up and then teach us these things. That is why He allows painful and sorrowful experiences in our lives to try us. When our eyes

are drawn away from man, preachers, teachers, and friends, they are fixed on the Lord Himself. We have to learn that lesson after going through very bitter experiences, when the Lord is given full charge of our lives.

Thus we can get many messages from these two chapters. But my burden is to draw your attention to the four cherubims. We can learn from other details also, if we go on studying point by point. As the Lord has burdened us about the cherubims let us meditate upon them. Now do not think that they are some kinds of peculiar heavenly creatures. When we first read we get an impression that they are heavenly creatures which John saw at that time.

In Rev. 5:9 we read, "And they sung a new song". It is the twenty four elders and the four living creatures who are singing together. They are singing a heavenly song and that song is found in verses 9 and 10. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth". Both the elders and the living creatures speak of one thing, that is, the Church. If they are heavenly beings, there is no need for them to be redeemed by the blood because there is no sin in heaven. But note that they are singing the song of redemption through the blood.

John the Apostle was made to see the real meaning of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, because there were all kinds of thoughts in the minds of the early believers, preachers and others. It is very easy to be carried away by grand buildings, property, education, numbers and outward things. They think that, that is the Church. But our Lord was saying, "John, I am not building any earthly society. I did not shed My blood or die to start a new group or society or a religion". The Church of the Lord Jesus is heavenly. Our Lord shed His blood for us, to make us entirely a heavenly people who have to sit with Him upon His throne. The twenty four elders on the twenty four seats refer to the twelve patriarchs in the Old Testament and twelve apostles in the New Testament. Thus the twenty four seats speak of the whole Church of the Lord Jesus Christ from Genesis to Revelation. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is composed of the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints. It is not a group of few people or few countries. Our Lord was from the beginning of the creation. Only when we go to heaven, we will see how the Church has been built and how it has been prepared for centuries. Upon the earth we will never know the real character of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can only have glimpses of the Church as we hear the Word of God. The twenty four elders and the four creatures speak of the real Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read in the Old Testament that the twelve tribes had to march in a particular order. Judah had to march

first, then came Issachar, next to them came the tribes of Zebulun, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, then Ephraim, then Manasseh, then Benjamin, then Dan, and Asher, and lastly Naphtali. This was the divine order to be observed always. Judah should always go first and Naphtali should march last. They were never to change the order, no matter what happened. Through this order the Lord was showing how He prepared the Old Testament saints. Each of these names has a meaning which contains a divine law. Through these twelve divine laws, the Old Testament saints were prepared. Just as we have the Holy Ghost to teach us now, in the Old Testament period they had the divine Law to teach them.

Let us see briefly the meaning of each name and the message it conveys. Judah means praise and that is the first divine law, that the true Church should praise God. God used many, many means to teach His people to praise Him in the Old Testament period; so much so they had to sing praises even in the battle field (Read 2 Chron. 20). When they saw the enemy coming against them, they were not to think of weapons or other things, but they were to call the Levites and the tribe of Judah to praise God. That is how they always went to battle. They never looked at the enemy, but began to praise God for His greatness.

Issachar means "wages or reward". God is my reward. Whatever we do we should do as unto God. We do not look to man for our reward. Having done good deeds we must forget them and trust God for the reward.

Zebulun means "dwelling place". God was showing from the beginning that He wants us to build a house for Him, not a house of brick, timber or wood. God does not live in buildings made by man. Our hearts become His dwelling place and so they have to be thoroughly cleansed. Otherwise God cannot come and live in us. That is why laws of holiness were claimed throughout the period. God is holy, and He must take away every filth from our hearts to come and live there.

Reuben means, "Jehovah seeth" or the Lord has looked upon my affliction. Whatever your trouble may be, believe from your heart that the Lord has seen all your troubles and trials. He knows how to comfort you in your sorrow and help you. Do not seek human sympathy.

Simeon means "God hath heard". The faith that God hears and answers our prayers is the secret of effectual prayer. We can trust God for everything. If you really believe that the Lord has heard your prayer, then thank Him for answering your prayers.

The meaning of Gad is "a troop or army cometh". We should learn to look far beyond the small beginning and see the great things that will take place later. The Lord Jesus saved the woman of Samaria and through her He won the whole country.

Ephraim means "fruitful". Joseph became fruitful in the land of affliction and so he named his son Ephraim.

Every believer must go through afflictions to become fruitful.

Manasseh means "to forget". We enjoy talking about the past sufferings or past blessings. But we should look forward with eager expectancy for greater blessings.

Next came Benjamin, which means "son of my right hand". Benjamin speaks of those sorrows which bring us to God's right hand. By going through painful circumstances we learn to bear the burdens of other people, and this qualifies us to come to the right hand of God.

Dan means, "God is my judge". We as believers should not retaliate or take revenge when people hate us or falsely accuse us. We must leave everything with God for He is our judge.

Asher means, "Happy am I." The Lord Himself is our happiness. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psa. 16:11). The moments we spend upon our knees in worship and in reading His Word and prayer are the happiest moments in our life. This joy cannot be compared with any other joy in the world.

Naphtali means, "wrestling with God". As Jacob wrestled with God and Abraham interceded with God for Sodom and Gomorrah, we too have the privilege of wrestling in prayer for God's people **and His** servants.

Next we find the cherubims or the four living creatures before the throne of God. We see, from the book of Genesis that God had a purpose for the cherubims i.e., to guard the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). God never told Adam not to eat from the tree of life. It was intended for man. But when Adam became impure he lost that privilege. If he had not eaten of the other tree, and eaten only from this tree, he would have escaped temptation. The tree of life is the picture of what God had prepared for man. The whole tree of life speaks of the heavenly life which God intended to give man and this is the true Church. God is seeking and saving sinners, that His life might be brought into those who are saved. Primarily God wants His heavenly and divine life to come in fulness into those who are redeemed. Adam did not have that life when he was made. But if he had eaten from the tree of life, he would have received that life. What Adam could not have, we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. If we want to become part of the cherubim, the life of that tree of life must flow into us and through us in fulness.

In Psalm 80:1 God is addressed as, "...thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth". Unless we are filled with the life of heaven, God cannot shine forth His glory through us. Now we are being brought together, refined and put together that God may live in us, among us and shine through us. He becomes our Shepherd, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel...." (Psa. 80:1). Then He can live with us and feed us. Shepherds have to feed, lead

and protect the flock. If we allow the Lord to do this, we will become part of the cherubim.

"The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved" (Psalm 99:1). Even the reign of God and the judgement of God are going to be exercised from His seat between the cherubims. As part of this, God will use His people to execute His judgements and then only God's reign will be fully understood. We are not concerned with earthly power, but with the very reign of God. We need to understand the hidden purposes of God's salvation.

We read in Exod. 25:18, 19 that the upper part of the ark was called the mercy seat. The same golden plate which formed the mercy seat, turned upward and inward to form the cherubims, one on the one end, and the other on the other end. They were so made that they were constantly looking down upon the mercy seat while their wings covered the mercy seat. "And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be" (Exod. 25:20). On the day of atonement the high priest went inside the most holy place with the blood and sprinkled it on the mercy seat. That blood sprinkled on the mercy seat was consumed by divine fire. When God spoke to Moses, He always spoke from between the two cherubims (Num. 7:89).

Now the mystery is revealed by the gold of the mercy seat as a type of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and that very life comes into the cherubim. The Jews and the Gentiles, both receive the same life. Unless the life of the Lord Jesus Christ enters into us, we cannot become a part of the Church. The gold also refers to the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ which comes into us and whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, the same nature is given to all. As the cherubims had their faces towards the mercy seat we have to keep our faces and our eyes always on the mercy seat. If you take away your eyes from the mercy seat, and look in a different direction the devil will come to you and say that you are guilty.

When we turn our face away from the mercy seat, the devil will rob us of our joy and peace. But when we turn our eyes towards the mercy seat he leaves us; he has no power over us. Keep your eyes always on the mercy seat. Then God's light and grace will come back to you. The devil will try his best to draw away our eyes from the Lord Jesus Christ and fix them on the preachers, feelings and knowledge. These cherubims are part of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and you have got to look on the mercy seat to enjoy His divine life.

The cherubims were given strong wings. Wings are given for different purposes. Birds are given wings to fly. That means birds can overcome many barriers which we cannot overcome. With the wings they can fly away very

easily. Wings speak of liberty and freedom to overcome all limitations. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to give us liberty from every bondage. We are made free from every condemnation and given liberty to be the saints of God.

Also wings are given for protection. It is very comforting to see how the birds cover and protect their young ones with their wings. If you could question the young birds as to how much warmth they receive from those wings, they will say, "Your house may leak but the wings will not leak when the storms are on. Your fire can go out and leave you cold but the wings always keep us warm". The wings are so made that the birds are kept safe even though there is a storm outside. I stayed in many houses in Europe. There they have to have fires to keep them warm. They have different means to keep their houses warm. They cannot keep themselves warm uniformly and they become cold again and again. But the wings of birds are very strong. They do not need any fire. So wings speak of warmth and protection. As part of the cherubim we have that protection from the storms and from the changing climates of life. We are continually protected by the wings of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Psalm 91:4 we read "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Thus the wings of the cherubim remind us of protection, shelter and safety which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Psalm 18:10 we read about the other ministry of the cherubim. "And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly : yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind." All the activities of God are carried on with the wings of the cherubim. Wherever God wants to go, He goes on the wings of the cherubim. What a mystery, what a salvation, what a grace! All the activities of God are carried on only through His true Church. When we understand what the Church is and when we take interest in the work of God, then we realise that all the movements of God are always through His Church. Ezekiel also was made to see how all God's movements and activities were through the cherubim (Eze. 1). Before God judges every nation, He sends His cherubim here and there. We as members of His Church are like cherubim who fulfil His vocation.

Now please see the faces of the four beasts:- lion, calf, man and eagle. Lion is an animal which always goes straight. It will never be carried away by the current of the river. When human beings swim they are carried away by the current because it is so swift. No other animal except a lion can go against the current and this seems to be the greatest characteristic of a lion. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is the greatest joy we have. Once we know the mind of God, we are determined to go on the straight course. You will see that the very moment you take a straight course in God's path, there will be many forces trying to change your course. But you have to see that you are kept on the right path.

When you travel by air, sometimes you have to face a storm. The stormy winds try to change the course of the plane. It becomes so dark that it is difficult to know where you are going. But by using the compass and watching the lights, the plane is kept on the right path. Every plane has a definite route to go. With the help of the compass they know the route. They fix the needle on with the point. Also they have three lights, on either side red and the middle one green. Whenever the plane changes its course it shows red light and when it is on the right course it shows green light. They cannot see anything outside but inside the lights are burning. In the same way the Lord has given us the Holy Spirit which works like green light. When we fail miserably and miss God's path, we feel wretched and lose our sleep and appetite. We know we have missed the right path and till we are brought back we cannot rest.

There is a fish called salmon. That fish is found in North Europe and Canada. At times it swims and goes very far into the ocean. But the mystery is, the fish finds its way back home. It goes on swimming till it comes to the mouth of the river. It has to swim against the current of the river. It goes on jumping and swimming till it finds its home. How does that fish find its way back home, when it had gone so many miles away into the ocean? It is because of the peculiar life that the fish has. Similarly there are some birds who fly from Russia to India. After some time they go back again. How do they **find their** way back?

under them, spreads her wings and catches them. Again she drops them and catches them. This is repeated many times. That is the way the mother eagle teaches the young birds to fly high. Similarly, our Lord breaks our plans that we may learn to fly very high. This is the fourth great characteristic. Through this we are prepared for any situation in life.

We are told that these living creatures cry out day and night, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty". (Rev. 4:8). That means, the same holiness is being brought now into us. Holiness is not an outward cleanliness, but is an inward experience. Our very spirit and soul have to be thoroughly cleansed and then only we receive holiness. Then we too can say "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty". Before Isaiah could be given any message from the Lord, he was made to see God's glory filling the temple with the seraphims. Through the very same seraphim his lips were touched and made clean. The different features of the cherubim should work in us, so that we may be made holy and that is how we can be prepared to reign with the Lord Jesus. May the Lord make us part of the living creatures, God's living hands working in us and lifting us up.