

The Voice of Truth # 486

The Living Ones

Now let's get our Bibles turned to the 4th chapter of Revelation, beginning with that 6th verse. Hold it there, will you, and listen.

We closed our last message looking at the redeemed of heaven seated on thrones, clothed in white raiment, and crowns of gold on their heads. These were seated round about the throne of God. Then we beheld the wrath of the Holy Spirit, ready to go forth in fiery judgment upon a Christless world.

Before we begin our study today in Revelation 4:6, I want to call your attention to the redeemed of heaven, which were represented by the four and twenty elders. The scripture says they were **clothed in white raiment**. The scripture tells us, get it now, you listen to this, will you, that flesh and blood cannot and will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. There will be no blood in the new resurrected bodies, only the indwelling presence of God. Adam and Eve were clothed with light and fire, which were the symbols of the indwelling presence of God. After they sinned, they immediately recognized they were naked because the glory of God had left them and they were alienated from the life that was in God. Then God clothed them with coats of skin, made after his own fashion. These coats of skin represented his righteousness in Christ. I've been thinking about them for this past week, and I know they were beautiful and lovely. They had to be to symbolize his righteousness. I don't think the artist has given us a true picture of those robes as they are pictured; Adam and Eve in skins. I think the Lord gave them, as near as possible, the most beautiful robe that he could make out of the skins of animals. Then the everlasting clothing of the glorified saint will be a garment of light and power, which is the radiant presence of the indwelling Spirit of God.

I want to call your attention to this fact, all inhabitants of heaven are clothed. We see the redeemed saints are clothed with white raiment. God is clothed. All descriptions that we have of him in the Bible presents him as clothed with immortal glory. Christ is clothed, read the first chapter of Revelation. The angels

are clothed, all the saints are clothed. But on the other hand, all the inhabitants of hell are naked. Demon spirits are disembodied spirits, and have no clothing. Satan has no clothing. The demon spirits are always seeking a body to be clothed. Sinners in hell will have no clothing. That'll be one of the horrors of hell.

One of the manifestations of demon possession of the present generation is their lack of clothing. It is demon possession that is back of all the fashion experts in New York, Paris, and London. And the latest manifestation of demon possession expressed in clothing comes from the yé-yé girls of France, who are setting the fashion patterns for the whole world, especially among the teenage girls. I want to tell you, friend, you listen to me, will you? The question of dress and clothing is much more important than the average person realizes. Why do you find the heathen wearing no clothes? It is because they are demon-possessed to the nth degree. No gospel, no Christ, no knowledge of their depraved nature. I must insist that God's people that I administer to follow the Bible in matter of conduct and dress, because it is an expression of the experience of the heart of holiness. Let's set our own pattern from God's word. We must not, we cannot, we cannot dress as we please, or as the world. It must be after God's fashion. Let me ask you some questions. Will you listen to me? Why did God clothe our first parents with clothes of skin? The answer, to hide the shame of their nakedness. Why did not God allow steps to lead up to the altar? The saints were instructed to build the altar on ground level. The answer, it was so that their nakedness would not be exposed to the altar. God hates the nakedness of man. It manifests all of his old, depraved nature. It is only by grace man is saved. The believer must be clothed to come in the presence of God. Preachers going out on the beach and preaching to these naked devils have got no sense. They are just as depraved and lost, as they are. According to Isaiah 3:16, God condemns very severely his people when they do not dress according to the spirit of holiness. The Apostle Paul and Peter very definitely laid down rules of dress. Why does God in his word warn us against the painted, proud Jezebels? Let me tell you something, friend, **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.** Take heed how you dress, that it may be fashioned after the spirit of holiness. So, the redeemed of heaven were clothed in white raiment. Let the believer dress according to God's fashion, will you?

Now we come to the study of Revelation 4:6. With your Bible in hand, let's read;

And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

When John was caught up into heaven, the first thing that he saw was the throne; and the likeness of him that sat on the throne was like a jasper and sardine stone. We saw that in our last study. He saw a rainbow round about the throne like unto an emerald and round about the throne were the resurrected redeemed, represented by the four and twenty elders seated on thrones. Then he said, I saw before the throne, that was there a sea of glass like unto crystals. The scripture tells us in Exodus 24:10, that when Moses and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel went upon the mountains, and saw the God of Israel, listen now, they also beheld, **under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness.** Then, Ezekiel 1:22 tells us that in his vision he saw the plain, on which the throne of God rested, was as **the color of the terrible crystal.** So, John's vision of the throne here, and all that surrounded it, was seated upon a plain which to him looked like a sea of glass, like unto crystal. Yes, the floor on which this throne rested resembled a wide, solid sea, and yet transparent, which was the expression of beauty and splendor and majesty. It was not like something hung in thin air, but had a solid foundation. it reminds us of Revelation 21:21, where the scripture says, **And the streets of the city, the new Jerusalem, was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.** This great plain, like a glassy sea, was not occupied. Yet if you turn to Revelation 15:2, the plain there was occupied with those who had gotten victory over the Antichrist and his mark. Let me tell you something, friend, this sea of glass was not shadows or a mist, but a reality. Heaven will not be a place of shadows, but a place of substance and realities. There will be a literal heaven, as there is a literal hell. Let's stop trying to spiritualize everything in the Bible, and let it speak for itself. The throne sitting here on this plain, like unto a glassy sea, is a throne of

judgment set for the purpose of judging a Christless world, and I'll tell you, friend, you are not going to escape that judgment if you are here when Jesus comes. I know all these things in the Bible have great spiritual meanings, but they are still realities.

We saw in our last lesson that around this throne sat the redeemed of every tongue, nation, and people, robed in white, with golden crowns on their heads. Now we see in the midst of the throne and around the throne, as set forth in that sixth verse, four beasts, more correctly translated, four living ones, full of eyes before and behind. As John beheld them, he saw that the first was like a lion, the second was like a young ox, the third having the face of a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle; **and the four living ones had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within, and they rested not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.**

Naturally, the first question that rises to our mind is, who are these living ones? If you will turn with me to Revelation 5:8-10, We find that they sing the same song that the 24 elders sang. We also find they give the same praise to the Lamb of God for dying for them and redeeming them by his blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, just as the 24 elders did. In other words, they say to the Lamb, Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Isn't that marvelous? So, this at once settles the point. They are not angels, but they are glorified human beings. Let's read the scripture to refresh our minds. If you have your Bible, turn to Revelation 5:8. **And when he had taken the book, the four living ones and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new song, saying, 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.**

As I said in our last lesson, revelation from the fourth chapter on is largely Jewish in its language. So, to understand this scene, and let me say again, the Bible, the scripture, interprets the scripture. You don't have to go outside the Bible to interpret the Bible. So, to understand this scene, it takes us back to the second chapter of Numbers, where the standard of each tribe of Israel was represented

by the color of the stone which was in the high priest's breastplate. And above each of these stones was a figure. For instance, there was the lion for Judah, the ox for Ephraim, man for the tribe of Reuben, an eagle for Dan. These four were the representative tribes of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and all of the eight were marshaled under these four standards. For instance, associated with Judah on the east was Issachar and Zebulun. Associated on the south with Reuben was Simeon and Gad. Associated with Ephraim on the west was Manasseh and Benjamin. Then associated with Dan on the north was Asher and Naphtali. These were all camped four-square with the tabernacle of God in the center. In this manner the children of Israel marched through the wilderness under these four banners, the lion, the ox, the man, and the flying eagle. We see here set forth that heavenly administration under the guiding hand of Jehovah God that led the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, took care of them in the wilderness and finally brought them through all the struggles, trials, and battles, and settled them in the promised land. As we look at this earthly administration, which is a pattern of the heavenly administration, we can more clearly understand, then, the meaning of the four living ones who are pictured here to John, being in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne.

Just as there are differences of administrations in the Lord's work here on earth, but the same Lord, so there are differences of administrations in heaven. If you'll study the office of the cherubim, which was placed at the east of the Garden of Eden to keep the way of the tree of life, and the office of the cherubim as set forth in Ezekiel's vision, in the first chapter, which were angelic beings, you'll find that what these cherubim were in the ancient order of God's administration, these living ones are in the order of God's heavenly administration of the redeemed human race. As we see, they are not angels, but they are redeemed men, glorified, and have their relationship to this judgment throne that John saw them set up in heaven, and will participate in the affairs of the judgment of God upon a Christless world, and also upon the future kingdom on earth, because Revelation 5:10, we find these words, **and has made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on earth.** What we see here is the order of God among his resurrected and translated, redeemed ones. These four living ones denote the worldly number, four is the worldly number, and that their office has reference to God's providence in the world. But remember, these four are representatives of

thousands, or multitudes of glorified ones. These four living ones are selected of the Lord God, to share the throne with our blessed Redeemer. They are his ministers and will be the executors of his will throughout all ages to come. Oh, what the Lord has prepared for them who love him, for those who have looked to him for redemption and have been redeemed by his blood out of every tongue and tribe and nation.

As we said, Ezekiel's vision in the first chapter was angelic, and these cherubim had ministered to one tribe, Israel. But just like the cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden ministered to the beginning of the human race, so these living ones have a wider sphere of movement and service because they are kings and priests of God out of every nation. The Scripture says here, they have six wings, which makes it possible for them to move in any direction in the service of their Redeemer. Scripture says they are full of eyes, before, behind, and within. This sets forth the great truth that they are intelligent beings, with a knowledge of the past, present, and future. As they are now walking and serving their divine Redeemer, their service is unlimited. Here is an interesting statement about these four living ones, and it is this, they do not rest day or night, but say, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come. That is, they never cease to express the holiness and the glory of God. That is, there is that constant praise world without end. And yet some of you claim to be saved and you can't sit 30 minutes in a church building. You want a 15-minute little sermonette so you can go. My friends, I'm going to express something here that's been on my heart and is my experience ever since the Lord saved me. And it's this, you get it, this has been my experience for over 22 years since God saved me. I believe there is never one moment in the heart of a born-again believer that there is not going up a praise to the Lord Jesus Christ for redeeming us with his own precious blood. I don't care whether we are sleeping or awake, whether we are sick or well, whether we are conscious of it or unconscious, that heart, day and night, is praising the Redeemer. Many times, I've been awakened out of sleep praising my blessed Lord for redeeming me with his own precious blood. If that's so in our earthly bodies, what will it be when we are gathered around the great throne with our Redeemer in our resurrected bodies, beholding him, the Lamb slain? There could be no rest. There, He is the center of our life. He is the center of our life here. He will be the center of our life in heaven.

As we study these two classes, the elders and these living ones, we see here an individual distinctness, a distinctiveness, even though they have the same song; **Thou hast redeemed us with thine own precious blood.** Paul brought that out in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians in these words, **There is one glory of the sun, there is another glory of the moon, there is another glory of the stars, for one star different from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead.** So don't get frightened, we're not going off on a tangent. Listen, and they are kings and priests, and will rule with him on the earth. We see that the elders have golden crowns and separate thrones from the eternal throne occupied by the Godhead. These living ones have for their crown and glory the eternal throne itself because it is said here, listen, they're not only around about the throne, but they're in the midst of the throne. What glory! What distinctiveness! You know, I don't know whether the Lord's going to let me be there or not. I'm not worthy to be there.

Then we notice in that ninth verse, when the living ones give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.** We notice that distinctiveness here between the living ones and the elders, but we also find that the Redeemer, the Lamb slain, is the center, the object of worship. He is exalted, magnified, glorified, and they fall before him in worship, that is, they come off their thrones, lying on their faces, casting their crowns before him who occupies the throne, crying, **Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, because thou hast redeemed us with thine own precious blood.**

I've often said, whatever crowns my Lord would see fit to give me, if he gave me any, I would come and rest them at his feet, crying, **My Lord and my God.**

In the 11th verse they say, **For thy pleasure they are, and were created.** We see here the Lord God of heaven is subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent, does as he pleases, only as he pleases, always as he pleases. There is none that can thwart him or hinder him in any way. Oh, I wish you would study

the sovereignty of God. If you want my book on the sovereignty of God, if you'll write me, I'll mail it to you.

My friends, these glories I've been setting forth to you are the dignities and glories to which you and I, and all who hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, are called and invited to embrace. Look my friend, and see, what glories the redeemed in heaven are elevated to in Christ Jesus. Listen to the song that they sang, **redeemed by his precious blood**. Look at the office or possession of these redeemed ones. Behold the white robes and the crowns they wear in that celestial land. Look intently and see the place they fill. All of this is what our Lord is inviting us to come to, in him. I wish that you could look away from yourself and behold the Lamb of God slain, and what glories he has for his redeemed ones, and with your eye you could see these heavenly splendors, the kingship, the priesthood, these eternal royalties with God, and with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And at once would release your hold upon things earthly and turn your eyes from the beggar elements of the world which decay with their using and pass away day by day, and place them upon Christ, the Son of God, the Eternal One, who died for sinners.

Let me ask you this question. Are you going to despise the spirit of grace and trample under your unhallowed feet the blood of the Son of God and cast away all the eternal glories in Christ Jesus? Are you going to do it? Are you so blinded? Are you so held captive by Satan? Are you so bound by your lust? Are you so nearsighted that you can't see beyond these earthly things and cannot behold that all the earth, and things that are therein, will pass away, that you cannot cry out from the depths of your heart, Oh, I want the Lord Jesus, I want him. Do you think you can turn a deaf ear? Do you think that you can willfully turn away from the Lord Jesus Christ and escape the damnation of hell? **How shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?** Thou art guilty, condemned to die. How shall you escape the wrath of the eternal God, if you will not hear the Lord Jesus Christ? God said, This is my son, hear him. Are you going to allow this world's fleeting empty dreams and damning and blasting sins and your hellish folly to occupy your present time until you'll give no consideration to the eternal welfare of your soul? Just let me lay the claims of Christ upon your heart, my friend. Read the third chapter of Peter, listen: **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night**

in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming day of God, wherein, get it now, listen, listen, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. When all this takes place, and it will, because the Bible is true, whether you believe it or whether any man believes it, where will you be? Oh, sinner, where will you be? Hasten to Christ, the one who died for sinners. He is the friend of sinners. What more can I say than what I've already said? My friend, hasten to Christ, will you? Will you? Christ, God's only remedy for sin. God's only salvation to the sinner is Christ. Christ! **And the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanseth us from all sin.**