

Revelation 4:1-11(2)

1. Church of Christ

We continue to look at the blessed reality of our worship through the words of Revelation 4. The earthly reality of Jesus' church and saints was shown through the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, and now in Revelation 4-5, God shows the heavenly reality of Jesus' church and saints. He is telling us to look by faith that the earthly reality that is visible is not everything, but that there is a heavenly reality that is invisible but that Jesus has accomplished for us. By seeing it by faith, we believers gain strength, persevere with hope, and move forward toward heaven. However, when God shows the true reality of heaven in Revelation 4-5, He shows it in various symbolic figures. But we should remember that this is not a symbol at the level of type and shadow like the Old Testament. Now, God tells us that the true reality of heaven has come, showing it through various images, numbers, and symbols used throughout the whole Bible. So, we should not interpret these words with our ideas but should interpret these words according to the principles by which the Scripture interprets the Scripture.

Revelation 4:1, "After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Jesus Christ, the resurrected King of glory, calls Apostle John to heaven. Come up here, he says. Please remember that every Lord's Day, Jesus calls us to heaven, telling us to come up here. And the first part of verse 2 follows, "Immediately I was in the Holy Spirit." There is a heavenly meaning here too. Now is the time to worship in the true reality of heaven, no longer in a temple on earth, but in a temple in heaven where the Holy Spirit dwells. And now the Holy Spirit dwells in us, so we are also the heavenly Temple.

John hears the voice of Jesus, is led to heaven in the Holy Spirit, and sees the hidden glory of heaven. If you look at verse 1 again, he sees that there is an open door in heaven. In other words, the gates of heaven are open. God opened the way to the Tree of Life, which was blocked by the flaming sword and the cherub angels. And He tells us that this is our reality now. It's amazing grace that the gates of heaven are open to us sinners who deserve to go to hell. When God tore the body of Jesus on the cross and shed His blood, He tore the veil that covered the Holy of Holies from top to bottom, and opened the gates of heaven wide for us saved by Jesus' blood, so that we may approach the throne of God. Only through Jesus is the way open for us to approach God.

Hebrews 10:19-20, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh"

Ephesians 2:18, "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."

John 14:6, "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

In the Holy Spirit, we can boldly approach the throne of God, following the living path that Jesus opened with his blood. This is God's pleasing will and the ultimate reality of our salvation that has been accomplished by Christ who suffered to the point of shedding blood so that we may enter heaven and live with Christ in heaven for eternity. So, although He calls Apostle John, He also calls us. He allows us to see by faith that there is an open door in heaven, and to hear a voice calling us to come up here. That is why we need to hear this holy calling, hold on only to the blood and righteousness of Jesus, and boldly

pass through the open gates of heaven for us and enter heaven. We are enjoying this blessed reality now, it is the true reality of our worship, and when we die, our spirit will immediately enjoy this blessed reality.

In this way, Apostle John sees the gates of heaven open, follows the voice of Jesus who told him to come up here, and enters heaven in the Holy Spirit. As soon as he enters heaven, what does he immediately see? It's the throne of God. And he sees the glory of God sitting on the throne. How was the glory of God sitting on the throne in heaven described? Please look at the end of verse 2 through verse 3.

2. The Glory of the Throne

Revelation 4:2b-3, "... behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. 3 And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald."

When Apostle John saw the glory of God sitting on the throne, he testified that it looked like jasper, carnelian(sardius), and emerald. This is a symbolic expression of God's glory. What does it mean? Why is God's glory expressed through these jewels? Here, jasper and carnelian(sardius) are the gems seen in the robes of the high priest in the Old Testament. The high priest placed a breastplate on the robe and had twelve precious stones engraved on it, the first and last of which were carnelian(sardius) and jasper.

Exodus 28:15-21, "You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work. In the style of the ephod you shall make it—of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen shall you make it. 16 It shall be square and doubled, a span its length and a span its breadth. 17 You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; 18 and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; 19 and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 20 and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree. 21 There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes."

The priestly robes were made in the same pattern as the tabernacle and consisted of three layers: an undergarment, an outer garment, and an ephod to wear over them. On the outermost ephod, God was made to wear a breastplate with twelve precious stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes. However, the outermost cloth of the ephod was the innermost cloth in the tabernacle and was the cloth that covered the glory of God. On the other hand, the ephod of the priestly robes was the outermost cloth that revealed the glory of God. So, the revealed glory of God is expressed in the form of jewels hanging on the ephod.

However, if you go to Revelation chapter 21, just like today's text, Apostle John hears the voice of Jesus telling him to come up here, enter the new heaven and new earth in the Holy Spirit, and see the heavenly Jerusalem. Even then, just like today's text, he sees the glory of God, and the glory of God is also expressed through various jewels. In today's text, jasper, sardine, and green gemstones appear, but in Revelation chapter 21, all 12 precious stones are shown further.

Revelation 21:9-11, "Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.' 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal."

Revelation 21:18-21, "The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass."

Today's text and Revelation 21 are very similar. In today's text, Apostle John enters heaven through the open door and sees the glory of God sitting on the throne, and the glory of God is expressed through jewels. In Revelation chapter 21, Apostle John enters the new heaven and new earth and sees the glory of God sitting on the throne as expressed through various jewels. Here we can discover a surprising reality. In Revelation Chapter 21, the meaning of the jewels is explained in more detail.

Revelation 21:1-2, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

New Jerusalem, the holy city beautifully decorated as the bride of Jesus, comes down from heaven from God, and its blessed and glorious appearance is shown as shining jewels starting in verse 9. What does the holy city of Jerusalem, prepared like a bride, refer to here? This shows that the church and our saints, who were called to be the bride of Jesus, have reached glorification. In verse 9 of Revelation 21, the angel says, "Come here, and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." In verse 10, the Holy Spirit shows us the holy city of Jerusalem, coming down from heaven from God. Then, we know that he speaks of the bride of the Lamb and the holy city of Jerusalem as the same thing. But where does the holy city of Jerusalem also refer? It's heaven. In Hebrews 12, the kingdom of heaven we will reach is called the heavenly Jerusalem. However, it is also called the bride, the wife of the Lamb. It is the church and our believers. If so, then God is now speaking of Jesus' church and saints as heaven. What does this mean?

Heaven refers to the place where our saints will live with God but it also refers to the new temple that God has made as his eternal dwelling place, that is, the church and the saints. We were built as God's holy Temple on Christ and we will live together with God, forming a heavenly Temple, which is also the eternal kingdom of God. So, the reality of heaven shown in today's text becomes our reality, and the image of heaven becomes our image. Furthermore, the glory of God revealed there becomes our glory. And this is the glorious reality of our worship now.

So if you look closely, the glory of heaven, the glory of God, the glory of New Jerusalem, and the glory of the bride of Jesus are all shown as various jewels. In Revelation 21:11, which you just read, what was the first word of Apostle John when he saw the holy city Jerusalem coming down from God, shining like a precious jewel? At the beginning of verse 11, "It shone with the glory of God!" John cried out with overwhelming joy. The glory of God! Therefore, if we connect chapters 4 and 21, the glory of God seen in chapter 4 is revealed as the glory of our saints in chapter 21 of Revelation. The Lord's church and saints are filled with the glory of God and shine with the glory of God. In other words, they are completely united with God and shining with One glory. We now participate in the unity of the Triune God and reveal His glory forever. Then, in the latter part of verse 11, this shining glory of God is expressed through extremely precious gems, jasper, and crystal. Our saints who have reached the glorification reveal the full glory of God, shining brightly like precious jewels hanging on God. This is what heaven looks like. And this is the reality of this worship service now. We who are saved by Christ's redeeming work are shining God's glory

3. God's Glory and the Bride's Glory

God testified this glorious reality as types and shadows in the Old Testament. Think of the tabernacle and temple that God built for His glory to dwell among His people. What happened after the Tabernacle and temple were built? The glory of God, who was present as a holy cloud, filled it, and neither Moses nor the priests dared to approach it because of its extremely holy glory. They just had to look at the tabernacle and temple filled with the glory of God from afar and confess, "It is the glory of God." But what happens when we come to the Book of Revelation?

Where is the complete glory of God now filled? Heaven and the bride of Jesus, the church, and our saints! We are one heavenly temple, and we are filled with the glory of God and shine with One glory. It is not a cloud of glory like in the Old Testament, but the full glory of God that can only be expressed as the brightest and most precious jewel in this world. God and His people are becoming one, revealing One God. Just as Jesus and God are one in all character, heart, and will, and fellowship of love and joy, we too become completely one with our Triune God. So, the glory of God seen in Revelation chapter 4 and the glory of God's people shown in Revelation chapter 21 are all revealed as one glory, and that is the reality of heaven. Each one of us is filled with the glory of God and shining, revealing His glory perfectly. This is the reality that will be revealed in heaven when Jesus returns, but it also tells us that it is our spiritual reality even now. In this blessed reality, we need to remember God's words we know well.

1 Corinthians 3:16, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"

Even now, we are the temple of God where the Holy Spirit dwells. The glory of God is filled in us. Dear saints, you are blessed heavenly people who are shining and filled with the glory of God. So when we see ourselves by faith, we must shout with overwhelming joy that it is the glory of God. Please look at verses 2-3 in today's text again.

Revelation 4:2-3, "At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. 3 And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald."

There is one who sits on the throne of heaven, and his glory shines with jasper, sardine, and green precious stones. Who is He? It is our God who sits on the throne and Jesus Christ who is the Lamb. But when we come to chapter 21, whose glory is shining now? It is you and me. In other words, the glory of God and the glory of Jesus are shining as our glory, and we are shining with the glory of God and Jesus. This can also be said this way. When we fully shine with the glory of God, we become completely like God in His image. It is to reach the image of God's perfect glory. The sons of God completely resemble God the Father, and the bride of Jesus completely resembles her groom, Jesus. That is why God the Father and His sons, Jesus the Bridegroom, and His Bride become completely one and shine with one glory. This is what heaven looks like.

Can't we now see what the Bible is trying to tell us through the images of these jewels? The glory of God can be said to be the image of God and also the divine nature of God. Ultimately, we reach the perfect glorious image of God and Jesus, have one mind and will to live in the divine nature of God and Jesus, and live in a completely united loving fellowship.

2 Peter 1:4, "by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."

It is said that we have become partakers of the divine nature which is the communicable attributes of God, and in heaven we will be perfected in this nature of God. The fruit of the Holy Spirit that shows the character of Jesus in Galatians 5 is being perfected in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Matthew 5:48, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The salvation that Jesus achieved is to make us perfect like our Father in heaven, and this is completely fulfilled in heaven.

Matthew 13:43, "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

So, it is said that our saints will shine like the sun with the glory of God the Father in heaven.

1 John 3:2, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."

When Jesus comes again, we will live in heaven completely resembling Jesus. Dear saints, isn't the grace of salvation we have received so amazing? Isn't the glory that we can enjoy truly immeasurable? Although we are not becoming God, we can enjoy God's perfect glory, God's perfect image, and God's perfect nature, have one heart and one will with God, share one loving fellowship, and fully reveal His glory. To achieve this glory and to enjoy this glory forever, God sacrificed even his only begotten Son without sparing him, and our Jesus saved us even to the point of shedding blood on the cross. Please do not forget this amazing love of God and the grace of Jesus. Our reality is not just what it appears in the world right now. He tells us to look at our true reality by faith and to live a life that reveals the glory of God and Jesus. Please look again at the words of 2 Peter.

2 Peter 1:4-7, "by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love."

Since we were already called to participate in God's nature, we have already become sons who resemble God the Father and Jesus, the true son who fully resembles the Father, we should make every effort to supplement our faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. He tells us to grow in the knowledge of the gospel, become more like Jesus, and bear the fruit of love.

1 John 3:2-3, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."

Since we will soon live as people who fully resemble Jesus, He tells us to live by purifying ourselves like Jesus even now. Dear saints, please see ourselves in this blessed reality of heaven and live shining the glory of God and Jesus. Even now, especially through this worship service, you and I are shining with His glory like jewels hanging on God and Jesus. It is only because of the salvation achieved by Jesus. So when we worship according to this blessed reality, let us repent that we have not lived a life that is one with God, seek God's grace, and turn to God's will. Let us worship God by embracing God's heart in our

hearts, loving God and our brothers and sisters as God loves us, and living a life that further reveals the glory of God. And soon, Jesus will come again to find every one of you and me who are like his precious jewels. On that day, we will become completely one with Jesus and the Triune God and live forever revealing the glory of one God.