

Sermon Sunday 20th February 2022

Revelations 4 and Luke 8: 22 -25

The Book of Revelation was written by John when Jesus showed John a vision of Heaven whilst exiled on the island of Patmos, situated now between Greece and Turkey. How many of you have read Revelations, a show of hands please? Revelations is written in an apocalyptic style. 'A type of Jewish literature that uses symbolic imagery to communicate hope in the ultimate triumph of God.' Many scholars and others have used the imagery to predict the end of the world by trying to tie the events taking place on earth to the imagery and events described in Revelations, the Gulf Wars is just one example of many down the centuries. However, what we have to remember is that the events in Revelations are not a strict chronological pattern, it is a literative or written pattern.

Revelations was written at a time of Roman persecution of the Christians throughout the Roman Empire. Christ appearing to John, one of the original disciples, showing him a vision of Heaven is the basis or reason for Revelations. Revelation 4 is a message of hope; a

message that God will defeat all evil; we must live in complete obedience to Jesus who will come again as the conqueror and Judge. This will happen in God's time and will take place after the forces of the Devil are defeated in the battles described in later Chapters of Revelation.

In Verses 1 to 6 Jesus shows John a vision of Heaven; a vision of heaven described in terms of jewels, colour and glass with a central throne surrounded by 24 thrones. Along with descriptions of four living creatures, part human, part animal covered in eyes and wings. Mystical creatures but God's creation. The occupant of the throne is described as having a jewel like presence not a physical or human presence. All these descriptions show us how Heaven is so different to earth and something which is a mysterious yet wonderful place, far beyond our human imagination. The 24 thrones are occupied by elders wearing crowns. Who are they or who do they represent? They represent or symbolise all those people who are part of God's family, past, present and in the future. The elders along with all the other creatures described in Chapter 4 fall down before Him on the throne and worship Him, who lives for ever and ever.

{READ VERSE 11}. The point of this Chapter is for me summed up in this verse. All creatures in heaven and earth will and should praise and honour God the creator of all, of everything. We worship and pray just like the hosts revealed to John by Jesus and our worship and prayers are joined to them as we wait for the return of Jesus Christ.

We are reminded of Gods' power through Jesus in the reading from Luke. He got up and rebuked the wind and raging waters, the storm subsided. Jesus challenged the disciples 'where is your faith?' In verse 25 they ask **WHO IS THIS, HE COMMANDS EVEN THE WINDS AND THE WATER AND THEY OBEY HIM.'** As in Revelations, Gods creative power and might are shown to the Disciples who do not understand what they have just seen. Whilst like the Disciples we do not understand Gods wonderful powers and I am not sure we are ever meant too we must give thanks for Gods wonderful powers and the gifts and blessings He gives us. Hold on to John's vision of Heaven revealed to him by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the bridge between us and God and Heaven where one day we will join Him and offer everlasting praise.

I finish with a quote by the writer Jane Williams.

'Revelation implies, heaven and earth are united and we are again in our proper relationship, knowing who made us and who wills our existence. Amen