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Jesus Christ Second Coming – Lesson 14

Tribulation 08

Will the Church go through Tribulation? (03)

Church will be raptured before the Tribulation.

Who are the 24 elders?

Let us look at the chronological order of book of Revelation.

Chapter 1, we see Christ is in heaven and John sees the vision about Christ and other general things in Heaven. Christ tells John that He will reveal him what is going to take place.

Chapter 2 and chapter 3, is the personal letter to the churches who are present at that time. Which represent the type of churches in the future as well.

Chapter 4, John had been caught up in heaven where we see certain individuals described.

Revelation 4:4, *Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones, I saw **twenty-four elders sitting**, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.*

Until revelation chapter 6 the Tribulation does not take place.

Who are these 24 elders.

There are so many theories saying they are Jews, or they are apostles, or they are angels.

Angels cannot be elders because nowhere in the bible the angels are wearing a white robe.

Secondly, they are called elders, which in Greek language for the old or matured people. Never ever that word has been used to denote Angels. Also, the angels age is always the same they don't grow old!!

Thirdly, **Revelation 4:10-11**, ¹⁰ *the twenty-four elders fall down before Him **who sits on the throne** and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and **cast their crowns** before the throne, saying: ¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord,*

To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

Angels never have been given the authority or permission to sit on the throne of God to reign.

Fourthly, they have cast their crown, the angels don't wear any crown. Also, these crowns are not ordinary crown they are known as victor's crown.

Finally, in **Revelation 5:9**, ⁹ And **they sang** a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, **And have redeemed us to God by Your blood** Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

Angels were never redeemed by the blood of Jesus. So, we can boldly say they are not Angels.

Another argument is they are old testament saints, each one from one tribe of Israel. Let us counter this argument.

Again, see Revelation 5:9, their song was, “**And have redeemed us to God by Your blood**” All the Old Testament saints were dead and gone before the resurrection of lord Jesus Christ. At the time of this vision, Israel as a whole nation had not yet been redeemed. The elders cannot

represent tribulation saints for the same reason, not all had yet been converted at the time of John's vision.

Secondly the crown they are wearing is Victor's crown which never promised to Israel, this was promised only to the church.

Twenty-four elders as representatives of both Old and New Testament saints? No, because there are certain texts which clearly place the resurrection of Old Testament saints at the end of the tribulation period rather than at its beginning. **Daniel 12:1-2 & 11-13; Isaiah 26:19; 25:8**, clearly place the resurrection of Israel at the close of the tribulation period.

These 24 elders are the representative from New Testament saints.

1. Sitting on the throne.

The New Testament saints have been given the authority to rule and reign with Christ.

Revelation 2: 26-27,²⁶ *And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations*—²⁷ *'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'*

Matthew 19:28, ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 22:30, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

1 Corinthians 6:1-2, Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ² Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Ephesians 2:6-7, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 1:22-23 ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

From the above verses we can see clearly, it's the church that has been given the right to rule along with Christ.

2. Victor's crown

Victor's crown, worn by those who have successfully competed and won the victory for Christ, as Christ promised.

There are five crowns mentioned in scripture. Each of them deal with different aspects of the Christian life. These crowns reflect your service to the Lord while here on earth.

a) Incorruptible crown

1 Corinthians 9:25, *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

This would be the level one believer would attain it. This crown is for those who master over their sin. This crown is for their self-control. That's why Apostle Paul goes on to say that I beat my body and make it my slave so that I will get the price. But I don't want to lose it by preaching it others where if I don't have the self-control.

b) Crown of Righteousness

2 Timothy 4:8, *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will*

give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

This second level of crown is going for the ones who live righteously in the world. These people who look for Christ return.

c) Crown of Life

Revelation 2:10, *Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

James 1:12, *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

This is the third level of crown for Christians. This crown is for those who go ahead in their call upon their life in spite of facing trials and persecutions, even to martyrdom.

Testing and trials are part of the Christian life. When faced with test and trials many Christians turn back and do not continue the path God has called them to run on.

d) Crown of Joy

Philippians 4:1, *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, **my joy and crown**, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*

1 Thessalonians 2:19, *For what is our hope, or joy, or **crown of rejoicing**? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*

This crown is for those who lead others into the righteousness of God or demonstrating fruitfulness by influencing others towards righteousness of God.

Rewards are not just for how we live and what we do, they are also for the influence we have on, how others live and what they do.

e) Crown of Glory

1 Peter 5:4, *and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the **crown of glory** that does not fade away.*

The greatest achievement is to fulfil your calling and finish the work God gave you to do. Success in this world may have different meaning and they may judge it very differently. But success is fulfilling the will of God in your life.

This crown is Not only for pastors and ministers but for anyone who finds the purpose in His life and fulfils their assignment.

The scripture reference is speaking to ministers who finish their work faithfully, but this crown is not only for pastors. It is for anyone who finds and fulfils their assignment God has given them.

Why I am taking such an elaborate deliberation on this subject? Because we need to establish the fact that these elders are saints who are saved by Jesus Christ then we can be sure that the church is with Jesus Christ when the great Tribulation takes place.

Let us see the whole list for a moment,

1. **Incorruptible Crown** for mastery over the sin nature.
2. **Crown of Righteousness** for living righteously in this world.
3. **Crown of Life** for enduring trials while proceeding in God's plan.
4. **Crown of Joy** for leading others to Christ and in righteousness.
5. **Crown of Glory** for fulfilling your calling and finishing the work assigned.

From this we know none of the Old Testament saints have been promised such a crown. This is only for those who are washed by the blood of Jesus Christ. So, we can confidently say the church is with Jesus Christ when the Great Tribulations takes place on the earth.

3. Wearing white robe

White garments symbolizing Christ's righteousness imputed to us at salvation.

Revelation 3:5, *He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.*

Revelation 19:7-8, *⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

So, it's the elders from the redeemed community having white garments.

4. Numbers 24, why?

Is it a literal number or is it the list mentioned in 1 Chronicles 24th Chapter? Are they Israelites mentioned in that chapter?

1 Chronicles 24:5, *Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of the house of God, from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar.*

They were serving God in the temple.

Hebrews 8:4-5, ⁴ *For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;* ⁵ *who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things,* as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

It's remarkable that the book of Hebrews gives a beautiful explanation of the true meaning of the temple arrangement, yet makes not a reference to the 24 priestly divisions.

Hebrews 9:11-12, ¹¹ *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this*

creation. ¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Jesus has entered the Most holy place not only as a High Priest but also a sacrifice for us to God.

Single numerical reference to a priestly order is by no means conclusive evidence of a correlation between the accounts in Chronicles and Revelation.

Bible does explain in Isaiah 6; the seraphim was serving God. If the 24 elders do refer to 1 Chronicles 24, we might ask ourselves, if God wanted to inform us about an angelic order that serves him in his heavenly court, how could he make it comprehensible to us?

Conclusion:

The 24 elders have these four descriptions:

1. They are elders
2. They are on thrones surrounding the Father's thrones
3. They are dressed in white robes
4. They are wearing crowns

There is only one group that is prophesied in the Bible fit to have all these four descriptions.

They are Church age believers, those who have accepted Christ after Jesus came and died on the cross. Redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

It is yet another concrete evidence that church will be raptured back to Jesus Christ before the Great Tribulation.