

Revelation 04 - The Throne Room of Heaven; 24 Elders; The Worship of God

IV. After These Things (Rev 4:1—22:21)

(1) Before the Tribulation (Rev 4:1—5:14)

(A) Summons to Heaven (4:1)

(a) Vision (4:1a)

(b) Voice (4:1b)

(B) Sights in Heaven (4:2-8)

(a) Heavenly Throne (4:2-3,5a,6a)

(i) On the Throne (4:2-3a)

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(ii) 24 Elders (4:10)

(b) Song (4:11)

Introduction

Rev 4-5 prepared John, as they also prepare the reader, for the outpouring of judgments on the earth that follow. They present the *place* from which these judgments originate (heaven), and the *Person* from whom they come (God).

Before revealing the judgments that God will send on the earth, the Lord showed John what will take place in heaven (Rev 4-5) following the Rapture and the judgment seat of Christ (1 Peter 4:17-18). Jesus did this in order to enable the readers to view coming earthly events from a heavenly perspective.

Revelation 4

IV. After These Things (Rev 4:1—22:21)

(1) Before the Tribulation (Rev 4:1—5:14)

(A) Summons to Heaven (4:1)

(a) Vision (4:1a)

(b) Voice (4:1b)

1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "**Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.**"

1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "**Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.**"

1 After these things, I saw a door standing open in heaven. The first voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "**Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this.**"

1 After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, **Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.**

- "After these things" [2x] - *meta tauta*, this phrase envelopes this verse, written by John and spoken by Jesus

— It is a clear textual indication that this verse begins the third section of Revelation (1:19):

Rev 1:19: **Therefore write the things which you have seen [Rev 1], and the things which are [Rev 2-3], and the things which will take place after these things [Rev 4-22].**

— After what things? After the "completion" of the church (7 = number of completion/perfection); after Jesus issued the letters to the seven churches (Rev 2-3)

- "...Come up here" - *anabainō*, Greek imperative, a command

— Is this the Rapture? Yes and no.

Yes, in the sense that what John experienced here is a prefigurement of the Rapture of the Church yet future. Is this a valid prefigurement? Yes...

1. Because "church" (*ekklesia*) is used 19x in Rev 1-3, but not even once in Rev 4-19
2. It is clear throughout Rev 6-19 that God is dealing with a nation (Israel); the Church is not a nation

3. John will see two symbols of the Church in heaven in the following passages: the seven lamps and the 24 Elders.

No: this verse describes John's personal rapture from the earth into heaven. This was an actual rapture of John...he was divinely transported from the island of Patmos into heaven, where He saw Jesus Himself and the heavenly scene.

— It's interesting that John's personal rapture described here has similarities to the Rapture of the Church (Cf. John 14:1-4; 1 Cor 15:51-55; 1 Thess 4:13-18):

- John hears a command ("Come up here"); the Church will hear a command as well (1 Thess 4:16)
- John hears a "voice"
- John hears a "trumpet"
- John is snatched from the earth and moved to heaven; the Church will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air, and be taken to heaven

- The purpose of John being summoned by Jesus to heaven was to observe the heavenly scene, the Person who will issue the coming judgment, and the place from which the coming judgment would originate (heaven)

— John will also witness the qualifications and credentials of the Triune Godhead to bring forth this very harsh judgment on those who dwell on the earth

- "...must" - *dei*, indicates that the events God was about to reveal will be true to future reality; the word indicates divine necessity (Luke 2:49; 4:43; 13:33; 17:25; 19:5,22; 22:37; 24:25-27,44-46; Cf. Acts 2:23-24)

— Why "must" these events take place? Because God has ordained it as time to begin the judgment of the earth and the earth dwellers, and to begin the process by which He conquers Satan and evil and sets up His kingdom over creation.

[OT reference: Ezek 1:1]

Raptures in the Bible

- Enoch (Gen 5)
- Elijah (2 Kings 2)
- Christ (Acts 1:11; Rev 12:5*)
- Philip (Acts 8:39)*
- Paul (2 Cor 12:2,4)*
- John (Rev 4:1-2)
- Two Witnesses (Rev 11)

* Verses where the Greek word *harpazo* is used

(B) Sights in Heaven (4:2-8)

(a) Heavenly Throne (4:2-3,5a,6a)

- (i) On the Throne (4:2-3a)
- (ii) Above the Throne (4:3b)
- (iii) Out of the Throne (4:5a)
- (iv) Before the Throne (4:6a)
- (b) Items Around the Throne (4:4,5b,6b-8)
 - (i) 24 Elders (4:4)
 - (ii) 7 Lamps (4:5b)
 - (iii) 4 Living Creatures (4:6b-8)

2 Immediately I was in *the Spirit*; and behold, a **throne was standing in heaven, and **someone was sitting on the throne**.**

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

2 Instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven with a person seated on the throne.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

- "Immediately" - in the "twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor 15:52)

- "...I was in *the Spirit*" - John was being inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the prophecies that follow (Cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21)

— John was also "in the Spirit" when he had the vision of Jesus Christ (Cf. 1:10)

— John was being powered ("moved," *phero*, 2 Peter 1:20-21; Cf. Acts 27:15,17) by the Holy Spirit; while John actually wrote the entire book of Revelation, the content didn't come from within himself, but rather was disclosed and orchestrated by the Holy Spirit

- "...a throne" - the first thing John sees upon his arrival in heaven; "throne" is singular, there is only one throne; both Jesus and the Father are sitting on the Father's throne (two seats, Cf. 3:21)

- "...*someone was sitting on the throne*" - God the Father (Cf. 5:1); in Revelation, the Being on the throne is always God the Father (Cf. Dan 7:9; Rev 4:5; 5:5,7; 6:16; 7:10; 9:4)

— John apparently saw a very large room, with a throne in the center of it, and Someone ("One") "sitting on the throne" (Cf. 1 Kings 22:19; 2 Chr 18:18; Ps 11:4; 47:8; Is 6:1; Ezek 1:26; Dan 7:9). In other words, John saw God in all His majesty.

— Daniel saw the same glorious sight (Dan 7): the Ancient of Days enthroned, and "One like unto a Son of Man brought near before him" and given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, and languages should serve him."

— This was probably a room in the heavenly temple, since later John also saw the golden altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant there (8:3; 11:19)

[OT reference: Is 6:1; Ezek 1:26-28; Dan 7:9]

Dan 7:13-14:

13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven **One like a son of man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.**

14 **"And to Him was given dominion, Honor, and a kingdom, So that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages Might serve Him.** His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

3 And He who was sitting was like a **jasper** stone and a **sardius** in appearance; and *there was a rainbow* around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was a rainbow* around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

3 The person sitting there looked like jasper and carnelian, and there was a rainbow around the throne that looked like an emerald.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was a rainbow* round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

- "...jasper" - *iaspidi*, evidently a diamond (Cf. 21:11), not what we would call a jasper today

— It was the last stone of the last row on the breastplate of the high priest, which would symbolize Benjamin

— Jasper will also later appear as first in both the wall and foundation of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:11,18-19)

- "...sardius" - *sardiö*, a fiery red colored gemstone; speaks to holiness, purity, judgment and wrath

— It was the first stone in the first row on the breastplate of the high priest, representing Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob (Jesus was the firstborn of the dead)

— It is the sixth stone in the foundation of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:20)

— These two stones, in the description of God, symbolize the holiness and purity, and the justice and wrath of God, respectively. They may also represent the relationship of God to His chosen people, Israel.

- "...rainbow" - *iris*, the token of the Noahic Covenant, that God would never again flood the earth in wrath (Cf. Gen 9:8-17)

— As wicked as mankind has come, God has kept His covenant promise

— The rainbow represents His mercy that surrounds His rule (Cf. Gen 9:8-17; Ezek 1:28)

[OT reference: Ezek 1:26,28; 10:1]

4 Around the **throne** were twenty-four **thrones**; and upon the thrones / **saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments**, and golden **crowns** on their heads.

4 Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones / *saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

4 Around the throne were 24 other thrones, and on these thrones sat 24 elders wearing white robes and gold victor's crowns on their heads.

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

- "...throne" - *thronos*, throne (singular), the same word used for both the central throne of God, as well as the 24 thrones of the Elders ("seats" [KJV])

— This suggests there is a co-thronement here with God on the central throne, and the 24 Elders seated on the lower thrones

— To the Church, and the Church alone, this co-thronement has been promised (3:21)

- "...thrones" - *thronoi*, seems to be a particular type of seat. These are regal thrones, seats of majesty, dominion and judgment. They speak of royal dignity and prerogative.

— The same word is used to describe God's Throne, however these "seats" are in what is obviously a subordinate position

- "...twenty-four elders" - numerous conjectures on the identity of this group, however based on other Scriptures, they cannot be:

1. Tribulation Believers/Martyrs - the Elders are distinguished from Tribulation Martyrs (7:13-14); also, here they appear in a resurrected state, but Tribulation Martyrs will not be resurrected until after the Second Coming (20:4)
2. Angels - the most popular view, but impossible because:
 - a. The Elders are identified separately from Angels (5:11; 7:11); nowhere in Scripture are angelic beings ever called "elders," but there are many instances where men are so designated (Gen 50:7; Ex 3:16; Lev 4:15; Num 11:16; Deut 5:23; Ps 107:32; Is 37:2; Ezek 8:1; Matt 15:2; Luke 7:3; Acts 4:5; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 11:2; 1 Peter 5:1).
 - b. They also are "sitting" but angels don't sit in God's presence, they only stand (Cf. Luke 1:19)
 - c. The song sung by the 24 Elders (5:8-9) is a song of redemption, which cannot be sung by angels because angels were never redeemed (Jesus didn't die for the salvation of angels). They do not understand salvation/redemption (1 Peter 1:12).
 - d. Angels have no reason to be given or wear crowns since they have no opportunity to earn rewards. Although angels are sometimes presented in white robes/garments (Mark 16:5; John 20:12; Acts 1:10), we never see angels crowned or sitting on thrones (Luke 1:19). Angels who fell have no possibility of redemption, and unfallen angels don't need any.

- e. Rev 5:10 states that God has made them (the 24 Elders) kings and priests, and they have been redeemed out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation. There is no sense in Scripture that angels are kings and priests, and no sense that angels are redeemed, let alone from every kindred/tongue/people/nation.
 - 3. Israel - the 24 Elders are already in their resurrected bodies, but believing national Israel (except those who are part of the Church Age) will not be resurrected the Second Coming (Dan 12:1-2; Rev 20:4). To identify the 24 Elders as Israel would be chronologically out of order.
 - 4. Redeemed of all ages - those who hold this view base it mainly on the number 24, and how that nice fits the 12 tribes of Israel plus the 12 apostles. However, OT Believers are not resurrected until the Second Coming (Dan 12:1-2,11-13; Is 26:19; 25:8; Cf. Rev 20:4-6).
 - a. Those included in the Rapture are only those "in Christ" (Cf. 1 Thess 4:16), meaning believers in the Church Age.
 - b. The Church and its relationship to resurrection and translation is spoken of as a "mystery," unknown until revealed by Paul, and not taught in the OT (1 Cor 15:51-54). Thus, the promise of translation before death was not given to OT believers, so they are not part of the Rapture and cannot be part of the 24 Elders.
 - 5. Jewish - they come from every kindred, tongue, people and nation (5:9-10); this eliminates speculations about the 12 Apostles (who would be raptured anyway)
 - 6. The Partial Rapture View - according to this view, not all believers will be taken at the translation of the Church, but only those who are watching for the event who have reached some degree of spiritual attainment that makes them worthy to be included.
 - a. The main argument for this view is the term "elder," which means older or senior, in the sense of advanced spiritual position and condition. While this is an accurate interpretation of the term, it's most often used in the NT as a representative of the people, one who rules or judges on behalf of God over the people.
 - b. If this were true, the number 24 would increase as new groups of people were added to heaven. However, it isn't, as noted in 19:4, where the number of elders is still 24.
 - c. There is also the doctrine of the Rapture and the doctrine of salvation, both of which prohibit a salvation based on works or human attainment, but rather on God's grace (Cf. "all" in 1 Cor 15:51)
- After eliminating the options above, the only remaining option is Church Age believers. If we look at how the 24 Elders are described, it matches up very well with how the Church is described by Jesus in Rev 2-3 (see chart: **24 Elders = The Church** below)
- It's interesting that Revelation is not the only book to document the scene in heaven...both Isaiah (Is 6) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1) do so, but neither identify the 24 Elders,

whose thrones surround the throne of God. You find the four living creatures and the myriad of angels in those passages, but no mention of the 24 Elders. This indicates that such a prominent seating of these elders happened sometime after those two prophets saw their visions of heaven.

- "...sitting" - *kathēmai*, the 24 Elders were "enthroned" in heaven (3:21)

— God promised every believer in the Church Age that they would sit with Him on His throne, just as Jesus sat down on the Father's throne. The fact that these Elders are sitting eliminates the prospect that they can be identified as angels.

— "twenty-four" - many premillennial scholars link the number "24" here to David's organization of the Levitical priesthood (1 Chr 24:1-19) into 24 "courses"

— When these 24 priests were together, they represented the whole priesthood (a completed group). Because the Church is similar to Israel in that it is also a priesthood (1:6), the number 24 may symbolize the Church's priestly function.

- "...clothed in white garments" - *en himatiois leukois*, same words used to describe the clothing promised to believers (3:4-5,18; 7:13)

— White raiment is also used of Jewish believers (Is 61:10) and Tribulation Saints (7:9,13-14), however it clearly refutes all viewpoints which see these Elders as anything but redeemed people

- "...crowns" - *stephanos*, a victor's crown [ISV]; these are crowns of reward for achievement or faithful endurance

— John also used *stephanos* to describe a crown that represents authority (6:2; 9:7; 12:1; 14:14)

— The same word is used as a promised reward for believers (2:10; 3:11; 4:10; 2 Tim 4:8; James 1:12)

- Distinguishing characteristics of the 24 Elders that may link them to the Church:

1. The term Elder (*presbyterous*) better fits the Church than any other option considered. Elders are the highest elected officials in the NT Church, and are representative of Christian believers.
2. The 24 Elders are completely absent prior to 4:4. Isaiah's vision of the heavenly throne room did not mention the 24 Elders (Is 6:1-7); neither do Ezekiel's descriptions (Ezek 1; 10), however Ezekiel does mention other details that correspond with John's vision here, such as the four living creatures. Neither of the other descriptions of the throne room (Ex 24:9-11; Dan 7:13-14) mention the 24 Elders.
3. Enthroned - "sitting" - God promised every believer in the Church Age that they would sit with Him on His throne, just as Jesus sat down on the Father's throne (3:21; Cf. 1 Cor 6:2)

Rev 3:21: **The one who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.**

4. They are clothed in white raiment (symbolized as the righteousness of Christ (3:4-5,18; 7:13)

Rev 3:5: **The one who overcomes will be clothed the same way, in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.**

5. Believers are promised crowns of gold as rewards (2:10; 3:11) (angels never wear or are promised crowns)

Rev 2:10: **Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

Rev 3:11: **I am coming quickly; hold firmly to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.**

2 Tim 4:8: in the future there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

6. They fall down before God in worship (4:10-11; 5:14)
7. They cast their crowns [rewards] at His feet
8. They are pictured falling down before the Lamb with harps and bowls of incense representing the prayers of the saints (5:8)
9. They are redeemed; they sing a new song of the redeemed (5:8-10)
10. Called "Kings & Priests" (5:10; Cf. 1:6)

- The fact that these 24 Elders have been resurrected, translated and rewarded shows that the Rapture has already taken place. It is completely incongruous to conceive of a disembodied spirit crowned and rewarded apart from the resurrection and Rapture.
- See [24 Elders](#) for a complete review and various options of who this group represents.

5 Out from the throne *came **flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder**. And *there were seven lamps of fire* burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God;

5 Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

5 Flashes of lightning, noises, and peals of thunder came from the throne. Burning in front of the throne were seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

- "...flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder" - symbolize God in the act of judging (8:5; 11:19; 16:18; Cf. Ex 19:16; Job 37:4; Ps 77:18; Ezek 1:13)

- A storm in heaven is brewing in heaven, and it's about to come to bear on planet earth...this is a prefigurement of the judgment that is about to come to bear upon the earth (Cf. 8:5)
- In Job 37:4 God's judgment is analogized to thunder and lightning, but here the cosmic disturbances are in heaven, not on the earth; they are foreboding the judgment about to come upon the earth.
- In Revelation, the symbols of thunder and lightning are always connected with a scene in the heavenly temple and mark a noteworthy event
- "...seven lamps of fire" - represent the fullness/completeness of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 1:4; 3:1)
- In heaven, the Holy Spirit has complete power...no one resists Him, no one disagrees with Him; He has total and complete autonomy
- Believers on earth have the ability to "quench" the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19) and "grieve" the Spirit (Eph 4:30), because we're fallen beings. The Holy Spirit does not have complete autonomy and power in our lives because we don't allow it due to sin.
- But once we're in heaven, resurrected in our glorified bodies, ruling and reigning with Christ as priests, we will experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit because the temptation to sin and grieve or quench the Holy Spirit will not exist.
- If the seven lamps are in heaven, doesn't it follow that the lampstands will be there too? Rev 1:20 identifies the lampstands as the seven churches.
- [OT reference: Ex 19:16; 25:37; Is 11:2; Ezek 1:13]

(iii) 4 Living Creatures (4:6b-8)

(a) Description (4:6b-8)

(1) Identification (4:6b)

(2) Eyes (4:6b)

6 and before the throne *there was something* like a **sea of glass**, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four **living creatures full of eyes** in front and behind.

6 and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

6 In front of the throne was something like a sea of glass as clear as crystal. In the center of the throne and on each side of the throne were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

6 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.

- "...sea of glass" - John sees a "glassy sea" in front of God's throne; in the Tabernacle, the sea was the "laver"—now it is crystal: no washing needed (mingled with fire, 15:2)

- It's interesting that many times in the Bible, before a person can approach God, there is always water involved
- In the tabernacle, when you entered from the east, one of the first things you see is a bronze laver (it's also called a "sea" in 1 Kings 7:23). So when the Israelites would approach God in the tabernacle, the first thing they encountered was water.
- It's a reminder to sinful man that we cannot approach God on our own, but need to first undergo proper cleansing. Jesus Christ is our bronze laver, allowing us to approach God the Father.
- The fact that the sea is solid indicates that those who can approach God's throne have attained a fixed state of holiness by God's grace
- "...living creatures" - *zoa*, these are angelic beings that reflect the attributes of God. They form an inner circle, and surround both the throne and God Himself (Cf. Ezek 1:12).
- They are similar to be seraphim (Is 6:2) and even more like cherubim (Ezek 1:4-14; 9:3; 10)
- "...full of eyes" - indicates intelligence, awareness; heaven is fully aware of what is about to happen on the earth. Even the angels recognize it. (Cf. Ezek 1:18; 10:12)
- [OT reference: Ezek 1:5,18,22,26; 10:1,12]

(3) Faces (4:7)

- 7 The first living creature *was* like a **lion**, the second creature like a **calf**, the third creature had a face like that of a **man**, and the fourth creature *was* like a **flying eagle**.
- 7 The first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle.
- 7 The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second living creature *was* like an ox, the third living creature had a face like a human, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle.
- 7 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.
- Numerous interpretations here...some see the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- "...lion...calf...man...flying eagle" - all represent the "height" or top tier of the animal kingdom (lion), domesticated animals (calf), the pinnacle of creation itself (man), and the height of the animals that fly (flying eagle).
- The living creatures likely represent very high ranking angels, the pinnacle beings of the angelic realm
- The four faces before the throne of God (Cf. Is 6; Ezek 1; 10; Num 2; the four Gospels)
- [OT reference: Ezek 1:10; 10:14]

The Design of the Gospels

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Presents as:	Messiah	Servant	Son of Man	Son of God
Genealogy:	Abraham (Legal)	--	Adam (Blood line)	Eternal (Preexistence)
What Jesus	Said	Did	Felt	Was
To the:	Jew	Roman	Greek	Church
1st Miracle:	Leper cleansed (Jew = sin)	Demon expelled	Demon expelled	Water to Wine
Ends with	Resurrection	Ascension	Promise of Spirit: Acts	Promise of Return: Revelation
Camp Side:	East	West	South	North
Ensign:	Judah	Ephraim	Reuben	Dan
Face:	Lion	Ox	Man	Eagle

(4) Wings (4:8a)

(b) Duty (4:8b)

8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**/S THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, who was and who is and who is to come."

8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy *is* the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and were full of eyes inside and out. Without stopping day or night they were saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is coming."

8 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."

- These living creatures resemble the description of the seraphim that we see in other passages (Is 6:2)

- The main job of the seraphim seems to be directing worship toward God
 - "...HOLY, HOLY, HOLY" - the song that the seraphim sing around the clock here is the same song as they sing in Is 6:3
 - In Hebrew, the double repetition of a word adds emphasis (i.e. Verily, verily); the rare three-fold repetition designates the superlative, calling attention to the infinite holiness of God
 - This is the first of 20 "hymns" or songs sung by various heavenly groups in the Book of Revelation
- [OT reference: Is 6:2-3; Ezek 1:18; 10:12]

(C) Song of Heaven (4:9-11)

(a) Singers (4:9-10)

(i) 4 Living Creatures (4:9)

- 9 And when the living creatures give **glory**, honor, and **thanks** to **Him who sits on the throne**, to Him who lives forever and ever,
- 9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,
- 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,
- 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,
- Once we understand what the living creatures are praising God for, we begin to understand why God is qualified to bring judgment to the earth (beginning in Rev 6)
 - "...glory" - *doxa*, where we get the doxological purpose of God
 - Human being exist to give glory to God
 - The Westminster Confession summarizes this as: The chief end of man, humanity, is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
 - "...thanks" - the living creatures show gratitude to God in their praise
 - Our society is becoming less and less thankful (Cf. 2 Tim 3:2) as time goes on, focused more and more on ourselves rather than what we have to be thankful for
 - "...Him who sits on the throne" - God the Father is always the One on the throne in Revelation
- [OT reference: Deut 32:40; Dan 4:34; 6:26; 12:7]

(ii) 24 Elders (4:10)

- 10 the twenty-four elders will **falldown** before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will **casttheircrowns** before the throne, saying,

10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

10 the 24 elders bow down and worship in front of the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever. They throw their victor's crowns in front of the throne and say,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

- "...fall down" - previously (v4) these Elders were sitting; here, they are off their chairs, prostrate on the ground, bowing before the Lord

- "...cast their crowns" - the crowns we receive at the Bema Seat for our eternal works done with the right motives and through the power and influence of the Holy Spirit

- The casting of crowns is an act of worship...it's not payback (we could never pay Him back); it's not to gain favor (we already have His favor)...it's an act of worship, adoration and gratefulness for what He did for us

- The casting of crowns is not a one-time event...whenever the four living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to God, then the 24 Elders fall down before Him and cast their crowns before His throne

- Our crowns (Cf. 3:11) are our capacity to glorify God

Is it selfish to want to gain a reward? Is it an unworthy motive for living the Christian life?

Here the 24 Elders "cast their crowns" at the feet of the Father *in worship*. If a crown is something we will give back to the Lord in worship, the desire for a crown need not be a selfish motivation. Indeed, the desire to present one's life work of faithful service—as a *gift* to the Savior—is a very unselfish and God-honoring motive.



Grant R. Jeffrey

Apocalypse: The Coming Judgment of the Nations, p. 85, 87.

“Someday every Christian will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive rewards for faithful service. Some believers will receive no rewards at all because they lived their lives of service to self rather than service to the Lord...Christians are promised a number of golden crowns for us faithful service to the Lord. Jesus warned that we are to ‘hold fast’ lest we lose our crowns. This indicates that it is possible to lose eternal rewards and blessings that God prepared for those who love Him. While our salvation is assured today by our accepting Christ as our savior...our future reward will be determined at the Judgment Seat of Christ after the Rapture. We are encouraged to hold on to these rewards through continued faithful service.”

(b) Song (4:11)

11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for **You created all things**, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory, honor, and power, because you created all things; they came into existence and were created because of your will.”

11 “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

- God is receiving this glory, honor and power because His kingdom is coming from heaven to the earth

— But before His kingdom can come to the earth, the current ruler and occupier of the earth must be evicted, and the earth must undergo a renovation

— That is what is about to happen in Rev 5 with the opening of the seven sealed scroll, which represent the title deed of the earth

- “...You created all things” - God's role of Creator qualifies Him to judge the earth; He created it so He has the right to control it and judge it

— If you want to make God mad, strip Him of the glory He deserves as the Author of creation. We do this today through the theory of evolution, where the natural man is taught to explain the incredible complexity of the universe without God's involvement.

— Evolution is not a scientific issue, it's a theological issue. It's a question of who is going to rule your life...man or God. That's a microcosm of the entire book of Revelation. Man, powered by Satan, thinks throughout Revelation that they are in charge, but God proves them wrong.

— This is the opposite of what heaven is doing in this verse...all of heaven recognizes that God is the Author of creation, and that nothing exists outside of His perfect will

— When people begin to believe in a philosophy that tries to explain creation without God, their mind becomes darkened, they become confused about many things, including their sexual orientation or even their gender

[OT reference: Gen 1:1]