

## **Lesson 12: Revelation Chapter 4:1-4 The Majesty and Splendor of the Heavenly Court**

1. **Revelation 4-5 and Daniel 7:** “An overview of the two chapters together reveals that they exhibit a unified structure which corresponds more to the structure of Daniel 7 than with any other vision in the OT. If we begin with Dan. 7:9ff. and observe the elements and order of their presentation that are in common with Revelation 4–5, a striking resemblance is discernible:
  - a. Introductory vision phraseology (Dan. 7:9 [cf. 7:2, 6–7]; Rev. 4:1)
  - b. A throne(s) set in heaven (Dan. 7:9a; Rev. 4:2a [cf. 4:4a])
  - c. God sitting on a throne (Dan. 7:9b; Rev. 4:2b)
  - d. God’s appearance on the throne (Dan. 7:9c; Rev. 4:3a)
  - e. Fire before the throne (Dan. 7:9d–10a; Rev. 4:5)
  - f. Heavenly servants surrounding the throne. (Dan. 7:10b; Rev. 4:4b, 6b–10; 5:8, 11, 14)
  - g. Book(s) before the throne (Dan. 7:10c; Rev. 5:1–5)
  - h. The book(s) opened (Dan. 7:10c; Rev. 5:2–5, 9)
  - i. divine (messianic) figure approaching God’s throne to receive authority to reign forever over a kingdom (Dan. 7:13–14a; Rev. 5:5b–7, 9a, 12–13)
  - j. The kingdom’s scope: “all peoples, nations, and tongues” (Dan. 7:14a [MT]; Rev. 5:9b)
  - k. The seer’s emotional distress on account of the vision (Dan. 7:15; Rev. 5:4)
  - l. The seer’s reception of heavenly counsel concerning the vision from one of the heavenly throne servants (Dan. 7:16; Rev. 5:5a)
  - m. The saints given divine authority to reign over a kingdom (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27a; Rev. 5:10)
  - n. Concluding mention of God’s eternal reign (Dan. 7:27b; Rev. 5:13–14).
  - o. Both visions also contain the image of a sea (Dan. 7:2–3; Rev. 4:6). (Beale, 2013)
2. **Revelation Chapter 4: John sees the majesty and splendor of the Heavenly Court (Rev. 4:1-6:17)** (Tyson, 2018)

**3. Introduction:**

- a. In lesson 8 we halted our studies in Revelation to study:
  - i. Lesson 8 & 9 studies about the timing of the rapture.
  - ii. Lesson 10 & 11 studies about Daniel's 70 weeks and his prophecy concerning the coming world empires.
  - iii. In lesson 8 we ended with: Revelation 4:1 "And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."
  - iv. Many ministers and theologians who are pre-millennialist, those who believe in the return of Christ prior to the establishment of the 1000-year millennial kingdom, believe that this is the rapture of the Church.
- b. In lesson's 8 and 9 we studied the various theories concerning the timing of the rapture as it relates to the final 7 years of this age.
- c. Perry Stone introduces this chapter: THE SHIFTING SCENE FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN
  - i. The scene changes from Christ in linen to God on the Throne (what was)
  - ii. The setting changes from the earthly church to the Heavenly Temple (what is)
  - iii. The substance changes from addressing Christians to judging the nations (what is to come)
  - iv. Revelation chapters 4 and 5 are the initiation of the tribulation or Daniel's 70th week. (Stone, 2012) (outline modified)
- d. Perry Stone continues: The pre-tribulation concept from Rev. 4:1-2...
  - i. There is transition from what is (the church age) to what is to come (after the church age)
  - ii. The catching away occurs after the gospel is preached to all nations (Matt. 24: 14)
  - iii. The imagery and the words used in chapter 4:1-2
  - iv. The door in heaven opens (a literal portal) -the parable of the 10 virgins (Matt. 25: 10)
  - v. The voice of a trumpet (the voice of archangel and trump of God) -"come up" (Rev. 11 :12)

- vi. Things hereafter means after the previous events (church age)
  - vii. John was immediately in the Spirit (a picture of being "changed" and "caught up")
  - viii. The imagery in Rev. 4:1-2 is the gathering together (1 Thess. 4:16-17; Eph. 1:9-10) (Stone, 2012) (outline modified)
- e. Perry Stone goes on to give us information about Priest and their Temple service to aid our understanding:
- i. The Revelation correlation of the priestly ordination.
    - a. The worship beings at the altar at God's throne when we arrive.
    - b. A special place is being prepared (John 14:1-2)
    - c. The special meal will climax at the Marriage Supper (Rev. 19:9)
    - d. The priest could not go out the door for seven days; we will be in heaven seven years.
    - e. We are called "kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6); in Greek this can read "a kingdom of priests."
  - ii. The concealment of the priests before Yorn Kippur.
    - a. The 10 Days of Awe (Feast of Trumpets is the next feast to have a prophetic fulfillment for the future.)
    - b. From Trumpets to Atonement is 10 Days of Awe.
    - c. For seven days the High Priest was concealed before the Day of Atonement.
    - d. He is in a special chamber and cannot come out until the rime before atonement.
    - e. He is rehearsing for the day God either judges or releases Israel from her sins.
    - f. Days of Awe has the same concept as Isaiah's concealment: "Come, my people, enter your chambers and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain." -Isa. 26:20-21 (NKJV)

- iii. The concealment of the saints in heaven.
  - a. The Feast of Trumpets has the imagery of the catching away.
  - b. The saints are concealed for seven years with Christ, the High Priest in heaven.
  - c. After seven years Christ returns to judge the earth and rescue Israel.
  - d. The cycle is a Jubilee imagery and is painted in Christ redeeming men out of every nation.
  
- f. Following is from Prof (Dr) WA Liebenberg in his book “The Revelation of Yeshua HaMashiach: Full Book Hebraic Perspective Verse by Verse.
  - i. Theories Concerning the Tribulation and the Protection of the Bride...
  - ii. Theory 1 The Bride stays for the entire period on the earth up to chapter 19, only then they will be Raptured and return with Y'shua for Armageddon. With her stay on earth during the entire Tribulation, she will be fully protected. The Tribulation period for some is seven years; and others in this group is three and a half years Jacobs Trouble, Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1).
  - iii. Theory 2 The Bride stays for the entire period on the earth until 's time of wrath. They will then be Raptured and return with Y'shua for Armageddon. With her stay on earth during part of the Tribulation, she will be fully protected. The Tribulation period for them is seven years; and others in this group say only three and a half years.
  - iv. Theory 3 The Bride stays for the entire period on the earth until the midpoint of the Tribulation period. They will then be Raptured and return with Y'shua for Armageddon. With her stay on earth during part of the Tribulation, she will be fully protected. The Tribulation period for some is seven years; and others in this group is three and a half years.
  - v. Theory 4 Bride will be removed from the earth before the Tribulation start for the entire Tribulation period up to chapter 19, then they will return with Y'shua for Armageddon.
    - a. With her stay in Heaven during the entire Tribulation, she will fulfill the Shabua (period of 7) mentioned in Rev 3: 10 for:

- b. The model of the Jewish Wedding Tradition in the Chuppah (Wedding Chamber) for 7,
  - c. The Feast of Tabernacles-stay in the Sukkot (booth) for 7,
  - d. The sanctification for Priesthood in the Heavenly Tabernacle as required by the Torah for 7; and
  - e. Dan 9:2 7's Peace-Pact of 7.
- vi. The Tribulation period for them is a full seven years and the open door in Heaven here in Rev 4: 1 is the start of it and the fulfillment of 1 Thes 4:17-18 (for a strong motivation on this, please get my book *Is there a Pre-Tribulation Rapture or Not?*). (Liebenberg, 2017) (outline added)
- a. **1 Thes 4:17-18 (NKJV)** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.
- g. Prof (Dr) WA Liebenberg gives us the following considerations:
- i. Against Pre-Trib Rapture Theorists: A key to understanding Revelation is to know that each shift from one unit of revelation to the next does not necessarily indicate a change from one time period to the next, but indicates a change in point of view or subject matter. "After these things" combined with "I looked", "I saw", or "I heard" indicates a change in visions or perspectives; whereas "after these things" or "after this" (as at the end of this verse or in 9: 12) without the change of perspective addendum indicates a change in time periods.
  - ii. Pre-Trib Theorists: "After this" is meta tauta in Greek, and it refers to "after the 'Grace Period' is past". Grace Period is defined as: 1) for Christians it is known as the 'Church Dispensation'. 2) for Torah-observant Messianism it is the same period but identified as the 'Period not Under the Letter of the Law' but the 'Period Under the Grace of the Law' as the death penalty when you break the Law (Torah) has been paid by Y'shua. For simplicity sake and accepted by both groups that grace prevails during this time, we will call it the 'Grace Period'. Thus, the Bride from now on after the Grace Period is in

Heaven. The trumpet here in verse 1 is the same as the trumpet of 1 Thes 4:16; 1 Cor 15:52. All three verses refer to the 'same' trumpet of Elohim that will be the 'last' trumpet for the Bride and the last trumpet on Yom Teruah (Day of Blowing/ Feast of Trumpets) and not the last trumpet of the seven trumpet judgments of Revelation. This is why, from now on, you never read of the Bride on earth again until Rev 19:11. This simply means that the Bride is Raptured away immediately after the 'first voice' spoke. (Liebenberg, 2017) (outline added)

#### 4. The Creatures in Heaven worship the One on the Throne Revelation 4:1-11.

- a. **Revelation 4:1-3 (NKJV)** After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."  
<sup>2</sup> Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. <sup>3</sup> And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.
- b. W. A. Liebenberg tells us: Chapter 4 is the start of the last part of the entire prophecy which consists of the past, present and future time. It is the start of the prophetic future, which takes us to the end of chapter 22. From this period onwards, shocking events are going to happen, prophecies that will grip your shear awareness. In fact, it will happen in the last phase of the Laodikeia Assembly time (now our time) and will climax during the Tribulation. What you are about to read will shock you to the core ... (Liebenberg, 2017)
- c. **The Heavenly Court in Context:** "...John's portrayal of the throne room scene owes something to both the [Ancient Near East] throne room scenes but more pertinently to Roman scenes of the enthroned Emperor surrounded by his council and holding an open scroll in his hand. The hymns that emanate from the throne room in heaven can be seen in the light of hymnic acclamations and acts of bowing down before the Emperor not only in the Roman court but also the imperial cult in Asia, where a statue of the Emperor might have obeisance (o•bei•sance) done before it. The scenes in Revelation 4-5 then become John's rhetorical means of offering an alternative vision of who is really in charge of the world..." (Witherington, 2003)
  - a. **(v1)** After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven.

- i. The Revelation was given to Yochanan in more than 40 individual visions and/ or sounds that he saw and heard, in a series of six units.
  - a. Those six units are separated by the phrase, "After these things", which also occurs at 7:1, 7:9, 15:5, and 18:1.
    - I. The first unit of Revelation to Yochanan is contained in 1:1-3:22;
    - II. the second unit is 4:1-7:8;
    - III. the third unit is 7:1-7:8;
    - IV. the fourth unit is 7:9-15:4;
    - V. the fifth unit is 15:5-17:18; and
    - VI. the sixth unit is 18:1-22:21. (Liebenberg, 2017) (outline added)
- ii. " John is now swept up in the Spirit to the very door of Heaven. There he beholds a vision of a sovereign God in full command of the course of human affairs as they move swiftly to their denouement. On the plane of history the church appears unable to resist the might of hostile worldly powers, but the course of history is not determined by political power but by God enthroned and active. At his appointed time the scroll of destiny is to be handed to the Lamb, who himself will open the seals, bring history to a close, and usher in the eternal state. The great throne room vision of chapters 4 and 5 serves to remind believers living in the shadow of impending persecution that an omnipotent and omniscient God is still in control." (Mounce, 1997)
- iii. " It is interesting that of the 274 NT occurrences of "heaven," 91 are in the plural (reflecting the Jewish conception of multiple heavens found in 2 Cor. 12:2), while of the 52 uses in Revelation, only one is plural (12:2), and that may have been influenced by Isa. 44:23 (so R. Charles, Mounce, Thomas). Since heaven is the dwelling place of God and the final home of the victorious saints (the "new heaven" of 21:1a), John is uninterested in the concept of multiple heavens. The old "heaven" with its conflict and evil (12:7-9, 12) will be vanquished (21:1b) and replaced with the new, final "heaven" filled with the presence of God among his people." (Osborne, 2002)

- iv. The Fire Bible Commentary: AFTER THIS. This phrase seems to indicate a passage of time. It appears that instead of one continuous vision, John was given insight into various times and events of the future (see 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1). For this reason, we have this change of scene and time. Many Bible scholars and interpreters believe that at this point in Revelation (i.e., before the fulfillment of the events described from here forward), Christ has already taken the “overcomers” out of the world. Thus, the catching up of the true church to meet Christ in the air (see Jn 14:3, note; see article on THE RAPTURE) takes place before the tribulation period (chs. 6–18; see article on THE GREAT TRIBULATION). This belief is based on the following statements: (1) Beginning with 4:1, the terms “church” or “churches” no longer appear until 22:16. (2) The bride of Christ (i.e., the church) appears in ch. 19 already with Christ in heaven before he returns to earth to judge the wicked and to reign on earth for a thousand years, closing out time as we know it (see 20:4, note). (3) The promise given to the Philadelphia church to spare it from the time of worldwide trial pertains to all believers who stand true to Christ before the tribulation... (Fire Bible: A Study Bible for Spirit-led Living, 2001)
- v. "A door open in heaven" means a real opening or entrance into heaven that Yochanan had gone up into heaven. (Liebenberg, 2017)
- b. **(v1)** And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”
  - i. There are many who study and present the Book of Revelation with a focus on determining “when” the events described will take place. The central concern of the book, however, is not in giving us a “divine timetable” of events but in showing us the certainty of what will happen. From John’s perspective, the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ are the pivotal and most significant events of human history. Revelation simply narrates for us the “summing up of all things in Christ” (See Ephesians 1:10) as the foreordained conclusions that flow from Jesus’ self-sacrificial and atoning work already finished in history. (Tyson, 2018)



- a. **Ephesians 7-12 (NKJV)** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, <sup>9</sup> having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, <sup>10</sup> that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. <sup>11</sup> In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.
- b. The "first voice" is Y'shua's voice (Rev 1:10-11).
- c. **(v2)** "Immediately I was in the Spirit..."
  - i. Yochanan was taken up "in the spirit" into Heaven to see what is going to happen after the Grace Period. (Liebenberg, 2017)
  - ii. "In the spirit" is a Hebrew idiom that means "in a vision or trance". (Liebenberg, 2017)
- d. **(v2)** "... and behold, a throne set in heaven..."
  - i. The Throne is the unifying image in chapters 4 & 5.
    - a. (Refer to: Rev. 4:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10; 5:1, 6, 7, 11, 13).
    - b. This is the only place in the New Testament where God's Throne is described.
  - ii. For parallel accounts in the Hebrew Scriptures see:
    - a. **Isaiah 6:1-4 (NKJV)** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" <sup>4</sup> And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.
    - b. **Ezekiel 1:26-28** – we will see this below when we look at verse 3.

- iii. “ A throne centers authority. Worship is centering. The word appears in nearly every chapter of the Revelation (the exceptions throne are Rev. 9, 10, 15, 17, 18). Twice it is used to refer to false centers of authority, Satan’s throne (Rev. 2:13) and the beasts throne (Rev. 16:10.) (Peterson, 1988)
- iv. This throne is also the "bema" seat which Sha'ul referred to in 2 Cor 5: 10. Around the Greek Olympic stadiums were huge pavilions. There was a certain pavilion specially reserved only for the elite guests. In this pavilion, there was a special raised platform or stage, the official seat "bema" of the judge of the games. All the winners were brought to this special platform and congratulated by the elite guests and rewarded with a laurel wreath. The same will happen to the reborn Believer one day; it is only the reward that will be different. Sha'ul refers to this place and uses the Greek word "bema". We do not have a word for it in English and 'judgment seat' was used that sends out a totally wrong message. The result is that we think the Believer will be standing in front of a court bench and see a picture of a stem judge clothed in red, ready to sentence him. The truth is that the Believer will after then find himself in front of the "Berna seat" where his deeds will be judged and receive his reward/ rewards (crown/ crowns). This will take place in front of Y'shua HaMashiach in Heaven. (Liebenberg, 2017)
- e. **(v2)** “... and One sat on the throne...”
  - i. This is Father God, we know this as chapter 5:1-3 tells us that Him who sat on the throne held a seven sealed scroll and the angel was proclaiming “Who is worthy to open the scroll...”
  - ii. There is only one other record in Scripture of YHWH (Liebenberg, 2017) the Father seated on the throne, and that is Dan 7:9-10, and the glory that Yochanan beheld was indescribable. YHWH dwells in unapproachable light and is One whom no one has seen or can see (1 Tim 6: 16). The closest that one could get to a description of YHWH's excellence and brightness, was to compare it with radiant precious stones. Jasper is a crystal clear stone like a diamond and symbolises purity and Sardius is deep red and symbolizes the

blood of the Lamb (as the Son is also a manifestation of the Father, but in the flesh),,, (Liebenberg, 2017)

f. **(v3)** “And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.”

i. ...Jasper is a crystal clear stone like a diamond and symbolises purity and Sardius is deep red and symbolizes the blood of the Lamb (as the Son is also a manifestation of the Father, but in the flesh).

In the TaNaCh, we find other significance for precious stones. Each of the 12 Tribes of Israel was represented by a gemstone. Reuben (means "behold, a son"), Jacob's first-born son, was represented by the jasper (crystal clear). Benjamin (means "son of my right hand"), Jacob's twelfth son, was represented by the sardius, a beautiful red stone. So, the stones represent YHWH the Son in purity (crystal clear jasper) and redemption (the blood-red sardius), who is the First and the Last.

The rainbow around the throne forms a circle, which symbolises never-ending. It is also a reminder of YHWH's covenant with us (Gen 9:12-17). (Liebenberg, 2017)

ii. Emerald is green and symbolises eternal life. (Liebenberg, 2017)

iii. From the Fire Bible Commentary: A THRONE IN HEAVEN. The one seated on the throne is God the Father, and John is deeply and acutely aware of God's presence. Yet, John does not attempt to describe God directly, for God's glory is too great for words and beyond description. Since God "lives in unapproachable light" (1Ti 6:16), John can only speak of a diamond-like brilliance (i.e., the jasper in Rev 21:11 is crystal clear) and a fiery presence. Carnelian stone was a brilliant red precious stone, symbolizing God's redemption (i.e., spiritual salvation and restoration of people through the personal sacrifice of Christ). (Fire Bible: A Study Bible for Spirit-led Living, 2001)

iv. **(v3)** The Glorious God

- a. “ The One seated upon the throne of heaven does not appear in human form but is portrayed as the brilliance of light reflected from precious stones.” (Mounce, 1997)
- b. **Psalms 104:1-2 (NKJV)** Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, <sup>2</sup> Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.
- c. **Ezekiel 1:26-28 (NKJV)** And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. <sup>27</sup> Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking
- d. **1 Timothy 6:16 (NKJV)** who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.
- g. **Revelation 4:4 (NKJV)** 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.
  - i. **(V4)** Who are the 24 Elders:
    - a. Prof (Dr) WA Liebenberg presents the following information: The identification of the 24 elders has been the subject of endless debate, largely because of some confusion among Bible translations. The 24 elders thus can mean one of the following theories:
      - I. Theory 1: They can represent the Priesthood of the Old Covenant (1 Chron 24:1-19).

- II. Theory 2: They can be a representation of 12 Patriarchs out of the TaNaCh and 12 Apostles out of the New Covenant.
- III. Theory 3: They can represent the 12 Tribes of Israel who sit as Queen (Rev 20:4) and the 12 Apostles of Y'shua, as will be written in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:10-14).
- IV. Theory 4: This means the Believers who were resurrected immediately after the resurrection of Y'shua (Matt 27:52) and ascended into Heaven with Y'shua are the 24 elders. This makes them the "Firstfruits" (1 Cor 15:20-23) of those resurrected who are dead in union with the Messiah, just as the 144,000 will be the "Firstfruits" of those sealed as the Redeemed of YHWH (Rev 14:1, 4).
  - b. Liebenberg continues: White robes indicate they are righteous (Rev 19:8).
  - c. Liebenberg continues: Post-Trib Theorists say: "Because the 24 elders are wearing white robes (purity) and golden crowns (royalty) and are sitting on thrones (only YHWH the Father, YHWH the Son, and the Redeemed are seen in other parts of Scripture as sitting on thrones in the Kingdom of Heaven), this refers to the Olam Haba, the Messianic Age -a picture of the future. There are 12 Patriarchs in ancient Israel and 12 Apostles of the Assembly whom Y'shua promised would sit on 12 thrones with Him judging the 12 Tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28)."
  - d. Liebenberg continues: Pre-Trib Theorists say: "This provides powerful evidence that these beings are Raptured Believers in Heaven, since we do not receive our glorified bodies before we die. This event with these 24 elders sitting here must then be after the Rapture (1 Thes 4:13-17). Crowns also tell us that they already received their rewards, which will take place in Heaven immediately

after the Rapture. This cannot refer to the Olam Haba as the Messianic Age will be on earth ruling from Jerusalem and the song that they sing here in Heaven (5:9-10): "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals ... and we shall reign on the earth." All this plays off before Y'shua opens the scroll with the seal judgments during the Tribulation and the song says we will reign on the earth, not in Heaven." (Liebenberg, 2017) (outline added)

- e. Stacy Tyson adds these possibilities:
- I. God's Heavenly (Angelic) Council
    - a. (See 1 Kings 22:19ff or 2 Chronicles 18:18ff, Psalm 89:7, also possibly Isaiah 24:23)
  - II. The Saints Enthroned in Heaven,
  - III. The Whole People of God – Jew and Gentile, united
  - IV. A figurative expression, representing 24 hours of the day as continual worship. (Tyson, 2018)
- f. John Hagee's Prophecy Bible, in commentary titled "Top 20 Questions – 4. Will Christians Go Through the Tribulation?": ... Revelation 4:4. John writes, "Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones, I saw twenty-four elders setting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads." Notice that these elders are seated, robed, and crowned. This clearly is symbolic of the church. In Ephesians 2:6 we read that God has "made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In Revelation 19:8 we read, "And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright." Also we read in 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... to all those who have loved His appearing."
- The critical question is this: When is the church seen in heaven in their glorified position? They are seen at the very beginning of the Tribulation that John describes in Revelation 4-19. They are seen in

heaven, seated, robed, and crowned. Thus, the Rapture must precede the Tribulation. (Hagee, 1997)

- g. Perry Stone gives us the following considerations: There are 24 elders around the throne (Rev. 4:4)
  - I. Elder is presbuteros, meaning one of older age; used of a deacon James 5:14)
  - II. The elders are a picture of the twenty-four courses of priests at the ancient Temple
  - III. The elders are the twelve sons of Jacob and twelve apostles of Christ (Luke 22:30)
  - IV. The twenty-four elders are a picture of the heavenly priesthood -at the Heavenly Temple (Stone, 2012)  
(outline modified)
- h. It seems to me that a key to the identification of these elders is found in the song that they sing in 4:11 which praises God first for his creative work. (Tyson, 2018)
  - I. **Revelation 4:11 (NKJV)** “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.”
  - II. The song of these Elders in 5:9 seems to distinguish them from those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb: (Tyson, 2018)
  - III. **Revelation 5:9–10 (NKJV)** 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,
  - IV. The elders were singing a new song: (Tyson, 2018)
  - V. Given the evidence, it seems best to me to take these as the angelic elders mentioned or alluded to elsewhere in Scripture. If these are angelic elders, part of God’s priestly ruling court, then they might be the pattern that the 24

courses of priestly and Levitical orders in the OT (See 1 Chronicles 2:4; 25:9-13). This would be appropriate since the earthly Temple was made according to the pattern of things in Heaven. (Tyson, 2018)

- i. **The key is the function** of the πρεσβύτεροι (presbyteroi, elders) in the book. Their primary role is that of **worship** (5:14; 11:16; 19:4) and **praise** (4:11; 5:9–10; 11:17–18; 14:3; 19:4). In addition, they **serve as intermediaries and interpreters** (5:5; 7:13–17). A close examination of these texts shows a **distinct differentiation between the elders and the saints**. In 5:8 they hold golden bowls that contain the prayers of the saints; in 7:13–14 one of them explains who the victorious saints are; in 11:18 they thank God for rewarding the saints; in 14:3 the 144,000 sing “a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders”; and in 19:4 they join the heavenly chorus. The elders are seated on thrones (4:4; 11:16), while the saints stand before the throne (7:9). From this evidence it is more likely that these are heavenly beings who reign with God and are part of the retinue surrounding his throne. Moreover, since “all the angels” also stand before the throne (7:11), these must be celestial beings with a ruling function...
- On the whole, I conclude that the elders were a ruling class of heavenly beings who encircled the throne and led heavenly praise, thus exhibiting a priestly role.” (Osborne, 2002)

- i. Perry Stone gives us this confirming details: The earthly Temple correlation.
- a. The Temple service was overseen by fourteen men called the "counsel of the Temple."
  - b. The Temple members were called the "elders of the priest!"
  - c. In the Heavenly Temple we are a "royal priesthood and a holy nation" (1 Pet. 2:9)
  - d. In the Heavenly Temple we are literally a "Kingdom of priests" (Rev. 5:10)



- e. Note: These twenty-four elders remain in the Heavenly Temple throughout the book of Revelation. (Stone, 2012) (outline modified)

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