

Heaven's Throne Room, pt. 2

Revelation 4:1-11

Context

The bible refers to heaven over 500 times. There are several specific descriptions in Scripture (Ezekiel 1; Isaiah 6), but none more comprehensive than what we see in John's account from Revelation 4-5. The Apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven, but was not permitted to speak about it (2 Corinthians 12). The account in Revelation gives believers today a glimpse of our eternal dwelling.

Details surrounding the Throne

I. The things related to the Throne

Revelation 4:4-11—*Around the throne* were twenty-four thrones; and *upon the thrones* I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. 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; ⁶and *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. ⁷The 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. ⁸And 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." ⁹And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who *sits on the throne*, to Him who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the 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, 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."

- **Around the throne**
- **Upon the throne**
- **Out from the throne**
- **Before the throne**
- **Around the throne**
- **Sits on the throne**
- **Fall down/worship Him who sits on the throne**
- **Cast their crowns before the throne**

II. Around the throne

Revelation 4:3b-4—... and there was a rainbow *around the throne*, like an emerald in appearance. *Around the throne* were twenty-four thrones; and *upon the thrones* I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

- **Rainbow**—symbolizes God's faithfulness and covenant promise (Gen 9:13-17). His wrath never operates at the expense of His faithfulness.

- **Twenty-four thrones with Twenty-four Elders**—(presbuteroi) refers to older men, not angels, in the church era as well as Israel.

Revelation 2:26-27—*He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE [a]NATIONS; 27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father*

Revelation 3:21—*He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

Revelation 5:10—*“You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”*

- **Sitting**
- **Clothed in white garments**—reflecting the imputed righteousness of Christ

Revelation 3:5a—*He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments*

Revelations 3:18a—*I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself*

Revelation 19:8—*It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

- **Golden crowns on their heads**—a victor's crown; received by athletes after a win.

I Corinthians 9:25—*Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

Revelation 2:10c—*Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

1 Peter 5:4—*And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

II. Out from the Throne

Revelation 4:5a—*Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder...*

- **Flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder**—reflective of God's presence

Exodus 19:16—*So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.*

Ezekiel 1:13—*In the midst of the living beings there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches darting back and forth among the living beings. The fire was bright, and lightning was flashing from the fire.*

Revelation 8:5—*Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.*

Revelation 16:18—*And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty.*

III. Before the Throne

Revelation 4:5b-6a—*And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; ⁶ and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal*

- **Seven lamps of fire burning**—fiery torch giving off a blazing light
- **Seven Spirits of God**—description of the fullness of the Holy Spirit

Isaiah 11:2—The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, [deity]
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. [reverence]

Cf. Zechariah 4:1-10

- **Sea of Glass, like crystal**—figurative language to describe the floor of the throne

Exodus 24:10—*and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.*

IV. In the center and around the Throne

Revelation 4:6b-8a—*and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. ⁷The 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. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within;

- **Four living creatures**—angels in general who are intensely involved executing God's judgment in future events

Matthew 13:40-43—*So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*

- **Full of eyes in front and behind**—representative of awareness, alertness, and comprehensive knowledge.¹

Ezekiel 1:18—*As for their rims they were lofty and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about.*

Ezekiel 10:12—*Their whole body, their backs, their hands, their wings and the wheels were full of eyes all around, the wheels belonging to all four of them.*

Ezekiel 1:6—*Each of them had four faces and four wings.*

Seraphim (possibly the same as cherubim) have descriptions that reference the created world:

- **Lion**—wild animal
- **Calf**—domestic animal
- **Face like that of a man**—the apex of God's creation
- **Flying eagle**—flying creature

Six wings—denotes that their supreme responsibility and privilege is to constantly worship God²

Isaiah 6:2—*Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.*

Revelation 4:8b-11—*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 [2]IS TO COME." 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, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders will fall down*

¹ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Revelation 1-11, p. 154

² Ibid.

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, "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."