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– an uncluttered approach –

SIMPLIFYING

# REVELATION

A man in a dark jacket is kneeling in a field of tall grass, reading a book. The background shows rolling hills under a clear sky. The image is dimmed to serve as a background for the text.

○ J A S P E R

○ S A R D I U S

○ R A I N B O W

○ E M E R A L D

## The Throne Room OF GOD

- In ch. 4-5, the veil is pulled back and we are allowed to see into the throne room of God!
- John saw several images in and around the throne which we will consider, plus a scroll with seven seals upon it, which becomes the catalyst for chapters 6-7.
- 4:1-2 – John was *“in the Spirit.”*
  - cf. 1:10; 17:3; 21:10
  - This was a vision, a dream, a trance.
  - He was not physically in the throne room (such is impossible, since it is a spiritual place).
- 4:3 – the throne is described.
  - The purpose is not to give a physical description. It is an image to convey character of the One who sat upon the throne.
  - **JASPER** – jasper is an opaque stone or silica, usually

appearing red, yellow, brown, or green (rarely blue).

- It is used later in the book (21:11) to speak of the glory of the new Jerusalem.
- Presumably here the same image is used to convey the glory of the One who is upon the throne.
- **SARDIUS** isn't used elsewhere.
  - A precious stone of the comelian variety, typically red.
  - Sardius is mentioned, in Revelation twice (21:20), in Exodus twice (28:17; 39:10), and in Ezekiel 28:13.
  - However, at no point is this stone defined or associated with any particular image.
  - Some have suggested if the jasper here represents God's glory, perhaps the fiery red of the sardius may represent His justice.
- **RAINBOW** – there is a rainbow *“around the throne.”*
  - Ezek 1:28 describes God's throne, *“...like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day...”*
  - Recall the first rainbow (Gen 9:12-16).

God keeps His promises.

- The rainbow seems to be representative of His faithfulness.
- **EMERALD** – emerald is soft green.
  - Barnes says it is the predominant colour in the rainbow.
  - In Rev 21, emerald is part of the foundation of the new Jerusalem.
  - It has been suggested by some commentators the emerald is representative of God's mercy (though there is no text that would corroborate such).
- If this is so, then in the image of the Lord's throne, John saw the glory, justice, faithfulness & mercy of God.

# TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

*“clothed in white robes”*

**REVELATION 3:5, 18**

*“crowns of gold on their heads”*

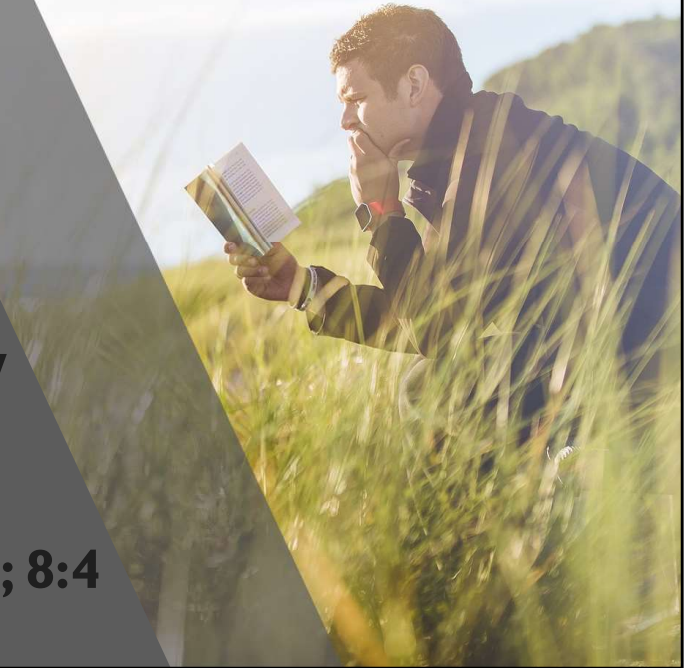
**REVELATION 2:10; 3:11**

*“fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him”*

**REVELATION 11:1; 14:7**

*“each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense”*

**REVELATION 5:8; 8:4**



- 4:4 – the 24 elders are mentioned several times in the book. No text specifically says who they are, but there are certainly clues about their identity.
- 4:4 – **CLOTHED IN WHITE** robes.
- 4:4 – wearing **CROWNS OF GOLD**.
- 4:10, etc – they **WORSHIP GOD**.
- 5:8 – each have a **HARP & GOLDEN BOWL**.
- These same attributes are found about a distinct group of people – God’s people.
  - **REVELATION 3:5, 18** – Christians are clothed in white, purity.
  - **REVELATION 2:10; 3:11** – Christians are promised crowns of gold.
  - **REVELATION 11:1; 14:7** – Christians are pictured worshiping God.
  - **REVELATION 5:8; 8:4** – Christians are pictured with harps &

golden bowls full of incense (prayers)

- If these 24 elders are representative of God's people, why 24?
  - Why not 7, or 10? Or 23, or some other number?
  - Numbers convey ideas.
  - There are not literally 24 people in God's presence.
  - $24 = 12 + 12$ . Recall, 12 is important in Revelation. It is the number of God's people.
  - National Israel is characterized by the 12 tribes;
  - The church had its beginning with the 12 apostles.
  - Combine the two and you have the image of the 24 elders.

# activity

IN AND AROUND THE THRONE



EXODUS 37:23  
**SEVEN**  
lamps | spirits



...from the throne proceeded  
lightning, thunderings and voices...

COMPARE WITH EXODUS 19:16, 19; 20:18-19

- 4:5 reveals the activity in and around the throne.
  - The activity described is similar to what caused Israel to tremble at **MOUNT SINAI**.
  - The **SEVEN LAMPS** of fire are identified as the Holy Spirit (recall, the image of 7 spirits earlier to convey the perfection & holiness of God's Spirit).
  - Like the sights & sounds described, this may also draw from an OT image – the **GOLDEN LAMPSTAND** in the temple.
- 4:6 – John describes a sea of glass, like crystal.
  - Not a sea in the sense of the Mediterranean or the Sea of Galilee.
  - The priests of the Old Covenant washed in a great molten sea prepared by Solomon (1 Kings 7:23-26; 2 Chronicles 4:2-5).



- This “sea” is a large wash basin, made of glass or crystal.
- The sea was a place of cleansing – this likely represents the need for and provision of cleanings for those who come to the Lord.
- In the New Covenant, baptism is essential for one to come to the Lord (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21).
- When we get to the new heaven and earth (21:1), there is “no more sea.” Only those who are already washed and belong to God are there.



# FOUR LIVING CREATURES

...Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come! (REVELATION 4:8; cf. ISAIAH 6:3)

<b>LION</b>	<b>CALF</b>	<b>MAN</b>	<b>EAGLE</b>
Majesty, authority, power	Tenderness, perfection	Intelligence, reason, conscience	Swift, graceful



SIX WINGS | **full of eyes around and within**

- 4:6 – John also saw 4 living creatures. They are found throughout the book (4:6-9; 5:6-8; 6:1; 7:11; 8:9; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4; etc.)
- These creatures are perpetually declaring the praise of God.
  - The **DESCRIPTION** is similar to seraphim (Isa 6:1-3) & cherubim (Eze 1:4-11; 10:1-22), but not the same.
  - They could be another class of angel, but part of the description should lead us in different direction.
- Verse 6 – the 4 living creatures are “...in the midst of the throne, and around the throne...”
  - Who is permitted on a king’s throne but the king himself?
  - Rather than these 4 living creatures being angels, it is quite possible they are representations of God’s character.

- We've seen His glory, justice, faithfulness & mercy in verses 2-3.
- In these 4 living creatures we find more attributes of our Great God.
  - **THE LION**, displaying His majesty and authority.
  - **THE CALF**, representing perfection & tenderness;
  - **THE MAN**, indicating intelligence, reason & conscience;
  - **THE EAGLE**, revealing speed and grace.
- V 8 – they constantly **GIVE GLORY AND HONOR** to God.
  - As much as the angels, and His creation perpetually give him glory & honor,
  - His character more so.

# YOU HAVE CREATED ALL THINGS



- verses 9-11
  - The 4 living creatures (God's attributes) give Him glory, honour perpetually;
  - Which causes the 24 elders (Christians) to worship God perpetually.
- The beginning point for their praise to God is His power as displayed in creation.
  - He is the reason why we are here.
  - He is the reason why we continue to be here.
- As we transition from ch. 4 to ch. 5, the focus moves from the glory of the Father to the glory of the Son.

- ❖ the Lamb
- ❖ the Root of Jesse
- ❖ the Lion of the tribe of Judah

SEALS



- The Father had a scroll in His right hand.
  - *“Written inside and on the back.”*
  - It is full, nothing more to be recorded; it is complete.
  - But who is worthy to open it? (v 2)
    - No one in heaven or on earth or under the earth.
    - In fact, none were worthy to look at it (v 3).
    - This caused John to weep (v 4).
- V 5-6 – one of the elders spoke to John – there was someone who was worthy.
  - **THE LION** of the tribe of Judah – an image stretching back to Gen 49 concerning the Messiah coming from the tribe of Judah.
  - **THE ROOT** of Jesse – more specifically, the Messiah would come through the offspring of Jesse – David. The image is a reference to Isaiah 11.
  - This Lion of the tribe of Judah, and Root of Jesse had prevailed

(Gr. Nike).

- V 6 – He is described as a **LAMB** “...in the midst of...”
  - The throne (He is God, He sits with His Father on His throne);
  - The four living creatures (they characterize both the Father & Son);
  - The 24 elders (they praise the Son, just as they praise the Father).
- V 6 – the Lamb image hearkens to Isaiah 53; John 1...
  - The Lamb was slain – a sacrifice for sin.
  - But the description goes further...
  - This lamb has seven horns, obviously an image (lambs don't literally have 7 horns).
    - He is perfect (7) in power and authority (horn).
    - Horns are used to throughout Scripture to speak of authority or kingdoms (Dan 7:24; 8:3, 20; Hab 3:4; Rev 13:1; 17:12).
  - The lamb had seven eyes (the 7 Spirits of God).
    - The 7 eyes are associate the Holy Spirit with the Son of God.
    - We've noted previous Jesus' association with the Spirit (ch 1).

The 24 elders (who have the harps & golden bowls of incense)

Many angels, the four living creatures & the 24 elders

Every creature in heaven, on the earth & in the sea



## praises to **GOD**

- V 7 – Jesus took the scroll from the Father’s hand.
- There are 3 occasions of praise that result from the Lamb’s ability to open the scroll.
- **THE 24 ELDERS** (v 8), who have the harps & golden bowls full of incense (prayers) and sing a new song (v 9-10).
  - They extol Him as worthy to take the scroll & to open it;
  - Why? Because He was slain & redeemed them to God;
  - He had made them a kingdom of priests to reign with Him (1:6).
- **THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN** and the 4 living creatures join in the praise (v 11-12).
  - A huge number are described as participating.
  - They praise the Lamb, identifying 7 things:
  - Worthy to receive (1) power, (2) riches, (3) wisdom, (4) strength, (5) honor, (6) glory and (7) blessing.

- **THEN EVERY CREATURE** in heaven and on earth joined in (v 13-14).
  - They declare (1) Blessing and (2) honor and (3) glory and (4) power unto the Father and the Lamb.
  - Four things – to the corners of the earth. The extent of His reign.



# SUMMARY OF THE **THRONE ROOM**

- The 24 elders are **God's people**
- The 4 living creatures are **God's character**
- The sealed scroll is **complete**
- The Lion, Root & Lamb are **Jesus Christ**



Next week...

❖ From the throne room  
in heaven to the harsh  
reality of life on earth

REVELATION 6-7

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