

*"Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads." (Revelation 4:4)*

### I. The Majesty and Activity

- a. As a reminder, as we read deeper into *Revelation*, we are dealing with symbolism and we should guard against the tendency to read into the text more than is there.
- b. The overall purpose of chapters 4 and 5 is to emphasize that God is in control even through defiant warfare and chaos.
- c. The activity around God's throne: lightning flashes, thunder roars, worship from creatures and twenty-four elders is lavished on the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.
- d. Amos reports that God does nothing "without revealing His plans to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). (v.1) You can't be blessed by what you can't understand.
- e. The first thing John sees in heaven is the sovereign throne of God. The throne is mentioned over 40 times in *Revelation*.
- f. Notice there is no depiction of the *One seated on the throne* in any human form. God is spirit.
- g. God is portrayed as the brilliance of light reflection from precious stones. (Psalm 104:2; Eze 1)
  1. Jasper, a variety of quartz found in various colors, symbolizes the purity and brightness of God.
  2. Carnelian, a fiery red stone. The divine presence and wrath of God.
  3. Emerald, instead of a normal prism of colors, the rainbow is green.

### II. The Elders and the Creatures (vv.4-8)

- a. There is much speculation regarding the identity of the twenty-four elders. We do not know for sure who they are, but their names are inscribed on the gates and foundation of the holy city.
- b. Three characteristics of twenty-four elders are mentioned:
  1. They are seated on the thrones, meaning they rule and serve. (Rev 3:21; 5:10)
  2. They are dressed in white robes, designating their glorified state.
  3. They have *golden crowns*. The victor's crown (*stephanos*) rather than the royal crown (*diadem*).
- c. The casting of their crowns indicates victory over persecution. Their prostration illustrates their submission to God as they rule and reign.
- d. The *seven spirits* represent the spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. He is with God in heaven.
- e. *A sea of glass*. In ancient Hebrew culture, the sea was primarily a dangerous place where the forces of chaos were at work. The sea before the throne is smooth like crystal.
- f. The four living creatures in Revelation have one face. In Ezk. 1:5-21, there are four faces.
- g. The lion represents wild animals; the ox represents domesticated animals; the human face represents humanity; and the flying eagle represents birds of the air. They represent all creation.
- h. The praise of the twenty-four elders represents the people of God.
- i. *On each side of the throne* means that the living creatures are in contact with God, and *around the throne* means that they represent God in the world.
- j. *Are full of eyes all around and within* indicates their complete comprehension.
- k. *Their continuous praise day and night calls* for the carrying out the will of God.

### III. Personal Application for Today

- a. Our world is in turmoil. There is civic unrest. We are facing a pandemic.
- b. The focus is on worship.
- c. Revelation answers the question: Who has authority in this world? God is in control.