

Revelation week 12

A Trip to Heaven. Rev 4:1

I. Introduction

- a. There is an unprecedented fascination these days among both Christians and non-Christians with the afterlife.
- b. Books on supposed after- or near-death experiences and angels top the bestseller lists. TV programs explore the mysterious realm of the supernatural, often focusing on angels and their alleged interaction with humans.
- c. Many people, both those who profess to be Christians and those who do not, claim to have visited heaven and returned to tell of their experiences.
- d. In contrast to the fanciful, bizarre, often silly fabrications of those who falsely claim to have visited heaven the Bible records the accounts of two people who actually were taken there in visions.
- e. In 2 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul wrote of being transported to the third heaven (the abode of God).
 - i. But he was forbidden to speak of what he saw there (2 Cor. 12:4).
 - ii. The apostle John also had the great privilege of visiting heaven.
 - iii. Unlike Paul, John was permitted to give a detailed description of his vision, which he did in chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation.
 - iv. In those two chapters, John recorded the second vision he saw, the first being his vision of the glorified Lord Jesus Christ in 1:12–17.

- f. The Bible refers to heaven more than five hundred times, and others, such as Paul (2 Cor. 12) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 1), wrote descriptions of it.
- g. Yet John's description in chapters 4 and 5 is the most complete and informative in all of Scripture.
- h. Escorted by the beloved apostle, readers are carried far beyond the mundane features of this temporal realm to behold the realities of eternal heaven.
 - i. Through John's vision, believers have the privilege of previewing the place where they will live forever.
- i. The first occurrence of the phrase **after these things** (v. 1) relates to John's personal chronology.
 - i. It notes that this second vision followed immediately after John's vision of the risen, glorified Christ (1:9–20) and the letters to the seven churches (2:1–3:22).
 - ii. The phrase **after these things** is used throughout Revelation to mark the beginning of a new vision (cf. 7:9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1).
- j. The second occurrence of **after these things** relates to God's chronology.
 - i. Its use marks an important transition in the book of Revelation from the church age (the "things which are"; 1:19), described in chapters 2–3, to the third great division of the book (the "things which will take place"; 1:19), found in chapters 4–22.
 - ii. The scene shifts from matters concerning the church (which is nowhere mentioned in chaps. 4–19) on earth to a dramatic scene in heaven.

- iii. That scene centers on the throne of God and forms the prologue to the future historical events (the Tribulation, millennial kingdom, and eternal state) that unfold in chapters 6–22.
- iv. In keeping with the Lord’s promise to spare His church from the hour of testing (the outpouring of wrath before the Lord returns) given in 3:10, the church will be raptured before that time of tribulation (described in detail in chapters 6–19) begins.
- k. As John **looked**, to his astonishment (indicated by the exclamation **behold**) he saw **a door standing open in heaven** (cf. Ezek. 1:1; Acts 7:56).
 - i. That already open door admitted John into the third **heaven** (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2; the first being the earth’s atmosphere and the second interplanetary and interstellar space)—to the very throne room of God.
 - ii. It was **heaven** to which Christ ascended after His resurrection and where He has since been seated at the right hand of God (John 14:2–3; Acts 1:9–11; 3:20–21; 7:55–56; Rom. 10:6; Col. 3:1; 1 Thess. 4:16).
 - iii. Heaven became John’s vantage point for most of the remainder of the book of Revelation.
- l. After noticing the open door, the **first voice** John **heard** was the familiar voice **like the sound of a trumpet** that had spoken to him in his first vision (1:10).
 - i. This was the voice of the risen, exalted Lord Jesus Christ.

- ii. His voice is likened to **the sound of a trumpet** because of its commanding, authoritative quality.
 - m. The Lord specifically ordered John to **come up here**, that is, to heaven.
 - i. John was not swept away into some mystical fantasyland, but transported spiritually into the reality of heaven.
 - n. The central theme of John's vision is the throne of God, mentioned eleven times in this chapter.
 - o. All the features of the chapter can be outlined based on how they relate to that throne of divine glory.
 - i. After describing the throne, John tells us who is on the throne, what is going on around the throne, what comes from the throne, what stands before the throne, who is in the center and around the throne, and what is directed toward the throne.
- II. **The Throne.**
- a. At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, **(4:2a)**
 - b. Most modern-day people who claim to have had visions of heaven tend to emphasize the trivial and the bizarre.
 - c. But John's vision focused on the glorious throne of God and the ineffable majesty of the One who sits on it.
 - d. As he was taken out of the familiar dimension of space and time and into the heaven of God's presence **in the Spirit's** power (cf. 1:10), John was amazed and astounded by what he saw, causing him to exclaim **behold.**

- e. The cause of John's amazement was the **throne** of God that he saw **standing in heaven**.
 - i. This was not a piece of furniture, but a symbol of God's sovereign rule and authority (cf. Pss. 11:4; 103:19; Isa. 66:1) located in the temple in heaven (cf. 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:6–8; 16:17).
 - ii. According to Revelation 21:22 the heavenly temple is not an actual building: "the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" are the temple.
 - iii. The use of the term *temple* symbolizes God's presence.
 - iv. The throne was said to be **standing** because God's sovereign rule is fixed, permanent, and unshakable.
 - f. A vision of God's immovable throne reveals He is in permanent, unchanging, and complete control of the universe.
 - g. That is a comforting realization in light of the horror and trauma of the end-time events about to be revealed (chaps. 6–19).
 - h. In much the same way, Isaiah was comforted during a traumatic time in Israel's history by his vision of God's glory (Isa. 6).
- III. **On the Throne.**
- a. with one seated on the throne.³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, (**4:2b–3a**)
 - b. The whimsical, mindless, purposeless forces of random chance do not, as many foolishly believe, govern the universe.
 - c. Instead, the sovereign, omnipotent Creator of the universe is **sitting on His throne** as its ruler.

- d. Unlike its use in Hebrews (cf. Heb. 1:3; 10:12; 12:2), where it depicts Christ's posture of rest, the term **sitting** here indicates the posture of reigning.
- e. The thought is not resting because the work of redemption has been accomplished, but reigning because judgment is about to take place.
- f. Though John does not name the One sitting on the throne, it is obvious who He is. He is the One Isaiah saw in his vision: "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple" (Isa. 6:1). The prophet Micaiah also saw Him on His glorious throne: "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left" (1 Kings 22:19). "God reigns over the nations," declared the psalmist, "God sits on His holy throne" (Ps. 47:8).
- g. But perhaps the most detailed look at God on His heavenly throne outside of Revelation is that given by Ezekiel: Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. (Ezek. 1:26–28)

- h. In sharp contrast to the casual, flippant, proud, almost blasphemous accounts of those today who claim visions of God, Isaiah (Isa. 6:5), Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:28), and Daniel (Dan. 7:15) were terrified and humbled by their visions.
- i. John described He who was sitting on the throne as being like a jasper stone and a carnelian in appearance.
 - i. That description is reminiscent of the flashing light, blazing fire, and vivid colors in Ezekiel's vision.
 - ii. Revelation 21:11 describes **jasper** as "crystal-clear"; therefore, it is best to identify this stone as a diamond. All the shining, flashing facets of the glory of God are compared to a diamond, brilliantly refracting all the colors of the spectrum.
 - iii. A carnelian, is a fiery, blood red ruby.



- iv.
- v. It too expresses the shining beauty of God's glory, and may also symbolize God's blazing wrath, about to be poured out on the sinful, rebellious world (chaps. 6–19).

- j. There is a possible further symbolism in the choice of these two stones. The carnelian, and the **jasper** were the first and last stones on the high priest's breastplate (Ex. 28:17–20; “ruby,” “jasper”), representing the firstborn (Reuben) and lastborn (Benjamin) of the twelve sons of Jacob.
- k. It may be that those stones depict God's covenant relationship with Israel; His wrath and judgment will not revoke that relationship.
 - i. In fact, it is during the Tribulation that, largely through the zealous evangelistic efforts of the 144,000 (Rev. 7:3ff.), “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26).
 - ii. It is also possible that the names of Reuben (“behold, a son”) and Benjamin (“son of my right hand”) picture God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, sitting at His Father's right hand in glory.
- l. John's vision of God's throne is not one of peace and comfort.
 - i. Its flashing, glorious, splendidous magnificence reveals the terrors of God's judgment. Truly, “our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29; cf. Deut. 4:24).

IV. **Around the Throne.**

- a. ...and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. ⁴ 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. (4:3b–4)

- b. Moving away from his description of the throne to describe what was around it, John noted first that **there was a rainbow around** it.
- c. That John described it as being **like an emerald in appearance** reveals that green was the dominant color.
- d. This again is introduced to show the many-splendored glory of God (cf. Ezek. 1:28).
- e. The **rainbow** provides a comforting balance to the fiery flashings of judgment earlier seen emanating from God's throne.
 - i. According to Genesis 9:13–17, a rainbow symbolizes God's covenant faithfulness, mercy, and grace.
 - ii. God's attributes always operate in perfect harmony. His wrath never operates at the expense of His faithfulness; His judgments never abrogate His promises. God's power and holiness would cause us to live in abject terror were it not for His faithfulness and mercy.
 - iii. God said of the faithful remnant of Israel who feared being swept away in His judgment of the nation, "They will be Mine ... on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him" (Mal. 3:17).
- f. John also saw around the throne **twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones he saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.**

- g. The identity of the **twenty-four elders** has been much debated.
 - i. While some see them as an order of angelic beings, it seems best to view them as human representatives of the church.
 - ii. Several lines of evidence point to that conclusion.
- h. First, the reference to the **twenty-four thrones** on which the **twenty-four elders** sat indicates that they reign with Christ.
 - i. Nowhere in Scripture do angels sit on thrones, nor are they pictured ruling or reigning.
 - ii. Their role is to serve as “ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14; cf. Matt. 18:10).
 - iii. The church, on the other hand, is repeatedly promised a co-regency with Christ (2:26–27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; 1 Cor. 6:2–3; 2 Tim. 2:12).
- i. *Presbuteroi* (**elders**) is never used in Scripture to refer to angels, but always to men.
 - i. It is used to speak of older men in general, and the rulers of both Israel and the church.
 - ii. There is no indisputable use of *presbuteroi* outside of Revelation to refer to angels. (Some believe that “elders” in Isaiah 24:23 refers to angels, but it could as well refer to humans.)
 - iii. Further, “elder” would be an inappropriate term to describe angels, who do not age.

- j. While angels do appear in white (e.g., John 20:12; Acts 1:10), **white garments** more commonly are the dress of believers.
 - i. That is particularly true in the immediate context of Revelation.
 - ii. Christ promised the believers at Sardis that they would “be clothed in white garments” (3:5).
 - iii. He advised the apostate Laodiceans to “buy from Me ... white garments so that you may clothe yourself” (3:18).
 - iv. At the marriage supper of the Lamb, His bride will “clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean” (19:8).
 - v. **White garments** symbolize Christ’s righteousness imputed to believers at salvation.
- k. That the elders wore **golden crowns on their heads** provides further evidence that they were humans.
 - i. Crowns are never promised in Scripture to angels, nor are angels ever seen wearing them.
 - ii. *Stephanos* (**crown**) is the victor’s crown, worn by those who successfully endured the trial, those who competed and won the victory.
 - iii. Christ promised such a crown to the loyal believers at Smyrna: “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (2:10).
 - iv. Holy angels do not personally struggle with and triumph over sin; thus, the overcomer’s crown, the crown of those who successfully ran the race and finished victorious, would not be appropriate for them.

- l. Assuming, then, that the twenty-four elders are humans, the question remains as to which humans they represent.
- m. First, it should be noted that the number twenty-four is used in Scripture to speak of completion and representation.
 - i. There were twenty-four officers of the sanctuary representing the twenty-four courses of the Levitical priests (1 Chron. 24:4–5, 7–18), as well as twenty-four divisions of singers in the temple (1 Chron. 25).
 - ii. Whoever the twenty-four elders are, then, they likely represent a larger group.
- n. Some believe the elders represent Israel.
 - i. But while individual Jews have been and will continue to be redeemed throughout history, at the time of this vision the nation as a whole had not yet been redeemed.
 - ii. Their national judgment and salvation (Rom. 11:26) comes during the Tribulation (chaps. 6–19), largely as a result of the evangelistic efforts of the 144,000 (introduced in chap. 7).
 - iii. When the twenty-four elders are first introduced, those events are yet to take place.
- o. Similarly, the elders cannot be Tribulation saints, since they too had not yet been converted.
 - i. The elders are already in heaven when the Tribulation saints arrive.
 - ii. Revelation 7:11–14 describes the scene: And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures;

and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

- p. The elders are also seen in heaven when other momentous events of the Tribulation take place, such as when the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of Christ (11:15–18), when the 144,000 gather on Mount Zion (14:1–3), and when God destroys the Babylonian economic and religious system (19:1–4).
 - q. It is unlikely, then, that the twenty-four elders are angels, or that they represent Israel, the Tribulation saints, or a combination of Israel and the church. That leaves one most acceptable possibility, that they represent the raptured, glorified, coroneted church, which sings the song of redemption (5:8–10). They have their crowns and live in the place prepared for them, where they have gone to be with Jesus (cf. John 14:1–4).
- V. **From the Throne.**
- a. **From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder (4:5a)**

- b. Flowing out from God's presence, symbolized by the **throne**, John saw a precursor to the firestorm of divine fury about to burst on the sinful world.
 - c. **Flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder** are associated with God's presence in Exodus 19:16 and Ezekiel 1:13.
 - d. They are also associated with God's judgment during the Tribulation.
 - e. In Revelation 8:5 "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."
 - f. In Revelation 11:19 "the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder."
 - g. When the seventh angel pours out his bowl there will be "flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder" (16:18).
 - h. John saw a preview of the divine wrath that will be poured out on the earth, described in chapters 6–19.
- VI. **Before the Throne.**
- a. and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, ⁶and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. (4:5b–6a)
 - b. As he looked at the scene in heaven John saw two things **before the throne**.
 - c. First **were seven lamps of fire**.

- d. Unlike the lampstands mentioned in 1:12–13, these were outdoor torches, giving off not the soft, gentle light of an indoor lamp, but the fierce, blazing light of a fiery torch.
 - i. John identifies them as **the seven Spirits of God**.
 - ii. that phrase describes the Holy Spirit in all His fullness (cf. Isa. 11:2; Zech. 4:1–10).
- e. The sevenfold representation of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah speaks of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, reverence, and deity; in Zechariah of power; in Revelation 1:4 of grace and peace; and here of fiery judgment.
 - i. Torches are associated with war in Judges 7:16, 20 and Nahum 2:3–4.
 - ii. John’s vision depicts God as ready to make war on sinful, rebellious mankind and the Holy Spirit as His war torch.
 - iii. The Comforter of those who love Christ will be the Consumer of those who reject Him.
- f. Also in front of God’s throne **was something like a sea of glass like crystal**.
 - i. That **sea** is metaphorical, since there is no sea in heaven (21:1).
 - ii. What John saw at the base of the throne was a vast pavement of **glass**, shining brilliantly like sparkling **crystal**.
 - iii. Exodus 24:10 records a similar scene when Moses, Aaron, and the elders of Israel “saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself” (cf. Ezek. 1:22, 26).

- iv. Heaven is not a shadowy world of mists and indistinct apparitions.
- v. It is a world of dazzlingly brilliant light, refracting and shining as through jewels and crystal in a manner beyond our ability to describe or imagine (cf. Rev. 21:10–11, 18).

VII. In and Around the Throne.

- a. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, (4:6b–8a)
- b. This passage introduces **the four living creatures** who will play a significant role in the events that unfold in Revelation.
 - i. That they are said to be both **in the center and around the throne** means that their station is in the inner circle nearest the throne.
 - ii. The similar passage in Ezekiel 1:12, 17 suggests they are in constant motion about it.
 - iii. The translation **living creatures** is somewhat misleading, since these are not animals.
 - iv. The phrase derives from a single word in the Greek text, the noun form of the verb *zaō*, which means “to live.”
- c. Ezekiel gives a detailed description of these incredible beings and of the glorious magnificence of heaven and God’s throne:

- i. Read Ezek. 1:4–25
- d. Ezekiel’s description appears incomprehensible, almost incoherent, as he struggled to make sense out of the spectacular, supernatural scene that he witnessed.
 - i. Both Ezekiel’s description and that in Revelation 4 describe what could be called the divine war machine ready to unleash judgment.
- e. Ezekiel 10:15 specifically identifies these four living beings: “Then the cherubim rose up. They are the living beings that I saw by the river Chebar.”
 - i. The **four living creatures** are thus cherubim, an exalted order of angels frequently associated in Scripture with God’s holy power (e.g., 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 22:11; Pss. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16).
 - ii. After Adam and Eve sinned, God drove them out of Eden and stationed cherubim at the entrance to keep them from returning (Gen. 3:24).
 - iii. Two carved cherubim were placed in the Holy of Holies (also called the Most Holy Place), symbolically guarding God’s holiness (1 Kings 6:23–28).
 - iv. Satan, before his fall, was the “the anointed cherub who covers”; his duty was to attend God’s throne (Ezek. 28:14; cf. v. 16).
- f. John, like Ezekiel, struggled to capture the reality in comprehensible terms to describe the indescribable scene before him.
- g. First, he said the living creatures were **full of eyes in front and behind** (cf. v. 8; Ezek. 1:18; 10:12),

symbolizing their awareness, alertness, and comprehensive knowledge.

- i. Though they are not omniscient, nothing pertaining to their duties escapes their scrutiny.
- h. Ezekiel's description of these angels notes that each one possessed all four facial features (Ezek. 1:6).
 - i. But from John's vantage point, **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.**
 - ii. Those descriptions view the four cherubim in relation to the created world
 - 1. the **lion** represents wild creatures
 - 2. the **calf** domestic animals
 - 3. the **eagle** flying creatures
 - 4. **man** the pinnacle of creation.
- i. Symbolically, the **lion** represents strength, the **calf** service, the **man** reason, and the **eagle** speed.
 - i. The Talmud
(the collection of Jewish law and tradition) saw in these four creatures the four primary forms of life in God's creation.
 - ii. It also noted that the twelve tribes of Israel camped under these four banners; some with Reuben (symbolized by a man), others with Dan (symbolized by an eagle), others with Ephraim (symbolized by the calf, or ox), and the rest with Judah (symbolized by a lion).
- j. The **four living creatures**, like angels in general (Matt. 13:40–43, 49; 25:31ff.; Rev. 15:1, 7), are

deeply involved with the coming judgments of the Tribulation, in which they will play an integral role.

- i. They will be there at the outset of divine judgments as one of their number calls forth the rider on the white horse (6:1–2).
 - ii. Another will decree economic disaster upon the earth (6:6),
 - iii. While another will give the seven angels involved in the bowl judgments their bowls (15:7).
- k. Their **six wings** denote that their supreme responsibility and privilege is to constantly worship God.
- i. From Isaiah’s vision, we learn that the seraphim (possibly the same beings as the cherubim) used their six wings in the following manner: “with two [they] covered [their faces], and with two [they] covered [their] feet, and with two [they] flew” (Isa. 6:2).
 - ii. Four of their six wings related to worship; with two they covered their faces, since even the most exalted created beings cannot look on the unveiled glory of God without being consumed.
 - iii. They also used two wings to cover their feet, since they stood on holy ground.
- l. Worship is thus their privilege, calling, and permanent occupation.

VIII. **Toward the Throne.**

IX. ...and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” And whenever the living creatures give

glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

- a. **(4:8b–11)**
- b. Fittingly, the scene in heaven culminates in worship directed toward God on His throne.
- c. In this passage and in chapter 5 are five great hymns of praise, during the singing of which the size of the choir gradually increases.
 - i. The hymns of praise begin in verse 8 with a quartet—the four living creatures.
 - ii. In verse 10, the twenty-four elders join in, and in 5:8, harps are added to the vocal praise.
 - iii. The rest of the angels add their voices in 5:11.
 - iv. Finally, in 5:13, all created beings in the universe join in the mighty chorus of praise to God.
- d. Worship is reserved for God alone, since there is no one in the universe like Him.
- e. This mighty praise and worship may be divided into two movements: the hymn of creation (chap. 4), and the hymn of redemption (chap. 5).
 - i. God’s power is seen in creation. Psalm 33:9 says, “He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” Having created the universe, God also controls it.

- ii. In 1 Chronicles 29:11–12 David declared, Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.
- f. The praise of the four living creatures, as they **give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne**, triggers a response from the **twenty-four elders**.
- g. They **will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever**.
 - i. This is the first of six times that the elders prostrate themselves before God (5:8, 14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4).
 - ii. Such a posture is one of reverential worship, a natural response to the majestic, holy, awe-inspiring glory of God (cf. Gen. 17:3; Josh. 5:14; Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; 43:3; 44:4; Matt. 17:6; Acts 9:4).
- h. Amazingly, after prostrating themselves the twenty-four elders **cast their crowns before the throne**.
 - i. They are not preoccupied with their own excellence.
 - ii. They are not concerned about their own holiness, honor, or reward. All those things pale into

insignificance and become meaningless in light of the glory of God.

- i. The elders add their own note to the chorus of praise initiated by the four living beings, crying out,
“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.”
 - i. The focus of the elders’ song is on God’s glory manifested in creation; He is presented as Creator throughout Scripture (cf. 10:6; Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Isa. 40:26, 28; Jer. 10:10–12; 32:17; Col. 1:16).
 - ii. The elders are acknowledging that God has the right both to redeem and to judge His creation. Their song anticipates paradise lost becoming paradise regained.