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## The Twenty-four Elders and The Four Living Creatures

By Bryan Hodge

Twenty-four elders and four living creatures are mentioned in Revelation 4 and 5. They are engaged in worshipping. They say, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!... 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. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing! Blessing and honor and glor and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (Rev. 4:8; 4:11; Rev. 5:12, 13).

### The Twenty-four Elders

Consider their dress. (1) They are clothed in white robes (Rev. 4:4). This is language of victory. They had overcome (cf. white garments, Rev. 3:4, 5). (2) They are crowned (Rev. 4:4, 4:10). The term for crown (Stephanos) refers to a victor's crown (Vine's). This is language of victory (cf. crown Rev. 2:10; 3:11). This is language of faithfulness (cf. Rev. 2:10; 3:11). This is the redeemed (Rev. 5:9).

What is the significance of 24? There were 24 divisions of the priesthood (1 Chr. 24). We are His priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Let me suggest to you that much of the book of Revelation is of temple imagery [(a) There is a throne (Rev. 4:3). The mercy seat was considered the throne of God. The ark was called the ark of Jehovah (Josh. 4:11), and the ark of God (1 Sam. 3:3). It represented God's presence (Num. 10:33, 35-36; Josh. 6:6-8; 7:6-7; 1 Sam. 4:3, 7; 6:19-20; 1 Chr. 16:4, 37). (b) There is a sacrificial lamb (Rev. 5:6, 8, 12: 12:11, etc.). (c) There is incense (Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4). This was a part of the temple (Ex. 30:1 cf. Luke 1:9-10). (d) There is a lampstand of seven lamps (Rev. 1:12; 1:20; 4:5). This too was a part of the temple/tabernacle system (Ex. 25:37; 27:20 cf. Heb. 9:2). (e) There is a sea (Rev. 4:6). There are some who think this refers to the laver (1 Kings 7:23-ff; 1 Chr. 4:25)].

### The Four Creatures

Consider their facial description: lion, calf, man, eagle (Rev. 4:7). This sounds like cherubim (Ezek. 1:4-14 cf. 10:15, 20). Moreover, they have six wings (Rev. 4:8). This sounds like seraphim (Isa. 6:1-5 cf. Ezek. 1:6).

Cherubim were definitely a part of the tabernacle temple system. (1) They were above the mercy seat (Ex. 25:19-20). God is said to dwell between Cherubim (Num. 7:8-9; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; Isa. 37:16). (2) They were on the veil (Ex. 26:1). (3) They were on the temple walls (1 Kings 6:29).

Cherubim have indicated in the past separation from God. Cherubim were placed in the garden to keep man from the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:24). Cherubim on the veil (Ex. 26:1), no doubt reminded man that there was separation. Only the High Priest was allowed into the Most Holy Place, and even he could only enter one day per year (Heb. 9:7 cf. Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16:2, 11, 12, 15, 34).

Today, the veil has been removed (Heb. 10:20-22). The Tree of Life is accessible (Rev. 2:7; 22:1-2, 14). Righteous men and cherubim now join in the praise of God.