

judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28). Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:12, “If we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us.”

## Revelation 4:1-11

### “Worship of God Before the Heavenly Throne”

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.’ Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; 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. 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; and 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. 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. And 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’ [Isaiah 6:3]. 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, the 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, ‘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.’”

Within the Apostle John’s being revealed the future (Revelation 4:1), he is asked to step into Heaven and be shown a significant supernatural scene: “At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne” (Revelation 4:2-3, NIV). Some association is properly made with what was seen previously in Ezekiel 1:26-27:

“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.”

John encounters twenty-four elders in Heaven (Revelation 4:4), which is notably the sum of the Twelve Patriarchs of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the Twelve Apostles of Yeshua. The presence of these elders may cause one to recall the sentiment of Isaiah 24:23, “Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and *His* glory will be before His elders,” although the likelihood that John has actually been asked to step into the Eternal State and be revealed things which have already occurred—as far as the twenty-four elders is concerned—is rather strong.

Revelation 4:5-10 depicts a scene of great veneration taking place before the throne in Heaven, including “the seven Spirits of God” (Revelation 4:5) or “the sevenfold Spirit of God

## The Nature of Yeshua in the Revelation Given to John

(CJB/CJSB). The four living creatures of Revelation 4:8 speak forth the word of Isaiah 6:3.<sup>48</sup> It is unavoidable that the elders direct worship toward the One on the throne: “and will worship the one living into the ages of the ages” (Revelation 4:10, Brown and Comfort),<sup>49</sup> *kai proskunēsousin tō zōnti eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* (καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων).<sup>50</sup>

Contextually, it is clear that the figure or entity being worshipped by the elders in Heaven is the One God of Israel: “You are worthy, *ADONAI Eloheinu*, to have glory, honor and power, because you created all things—yes, because of your will they were created and came into being!” (Revelation 4:11, CJB/CJSB). The presence of *ho Kurios kai ho Theos hēmōn* (ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν) or “our Lord and God” is thought by many Revelation commentators to have some deliberate subversion of the Emperor cult.<sup>51</sup> The Roman historian Suetonius recorded, regarding the Emperor Domitian, how “‘Our Lord and God instructs you to do this!’ and ‘Lord and God’ became his regular title both in writing and conversation” (*Domitian* 13).<sup>52</sup> For the original late First Century and early Second Century recipients of the Book of Revelation—many of whom were former pagans—they surely needed to be reminded how the One God of Israel was the Only True Lord, and not any of the Caesars.<sup>53</sup> Those who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua the Messiah being uncreated and integrated into the Divine Identity, do so because of the relationship between Yeshua and this One God of Israel—particularly as He is worshipped right along with Him (Revelation 5:14).

### Revelation 5:1-14

#### “Worship of God and the Lamb Before the Heavenly Throne”

“I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, ‘Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.’ And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.’ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.’ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the

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<sup>48</sup> “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3).

<sup>49</sup> Brown and Comfort, 862.

<sup>50</sup> The Sacred Name ISR Scriptures (2009) strangely renders Revelation 4:10 with “and bow before Him who lives forever and ever.” Normally, the ISR Scriptures renders the verb *proskuneō* or “worship” in association with YHWH as “worship,” but in association with the Messiah as “bow down.”

<sup>51</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 140; Aune, 52a:310-311; Keener, *Revelation*, 176; Witherington, *Revelation*, 118.

<sup>52</sup> Suetonius: *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. Robert Graves (London: Penguin Books, 1957), 309.

<sup>53</sup> The thought of Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 119 is,

“God alone is exalted on his throne. The universe came into being through him and everything should subserve his holy purpose—a sentiment basic to the monotheistic Jewish-Christian tradition taught to pagans (1 C. 8:6).”