

The Revelation to John 4: The Throne Room

4:1-11: God on His Throne

Ezekiel 1.4-28; Isaiah 6.1-4; Daniel 7.9-10; 2.28-29ff

618-536 B.C. – Ezekiel and Daniel in Babylon

Summoned to the throne room; in antiquity the throne is a symbol of the sovereign majesty of a king

YHWH on the throne – 4.2-3, 9-10; 5.1, 7,13; 6.16; 7.10, 15; 19.4; 20.11; 21.5

‘in the Spirit’ – a Holy Spirit-sent visionary experience in which God reveals Himself

3 Stones (also Revelation 21):

- a. jasper – an opaque jewel, red, green, brown, blue, yellow, or white; It makes up the wall in the city of God (21.18) and heads the list of the foundation stones (21.19-20); Associated with the glory of God (21.11)
- b. *sardio* – carnelian; fiery red stone very popular in the ancient world
- c. *ipis* - rainbow/halo – like the radiant light surrounding the throne in Ezekiel 1.28; ‘like’ emerald
- d. Perhaps they signify majesty/holiness, wrath/judgment, grace/mercy
- e. These stones are also named in Ezekiel 28.13 (King of Tyre) and in Exodus 28.17-21 (high priest’s breastplate) representing tribes of Benjamin, Reuben, and Judah, respectively

4 Heavenly Council: Twenty-four elders (*presbyteroi*): concentric circles with elders, living creatures, and songs, then elders surrounding the Throne of God. ‘Clothed in white garments’ with ‘crowns of gold’. Could be: 12 patriarchs and 12 apostles; or 24 great saints; or the Church built on twenty-four orders of priesthood described in 1 Chronicles 24.4-5; or the victorious, redeemed, faithful Church. Or the 24 elders could be angelic figures; or might represent the prophetic revelation of the 24 OT books).

Throughout Revelation, the *presbyteroi* worship (5.14; 11.16; 19.4) and praise (4.11; 5.9-10; 11.17-18; 14.3; 19.4) and serve as intermediaries and interpreters (5.5; 7.13-17)

5 ‘lightning, storm, and thunder’, ‘blazing torches’ (8.10), and a sea of glass – 4.5; 8.5; 11.19; 16.18; Ezekiel 1.4-28. The coming storm - symbols of both the divine majesty and the judgment of the Apocalypse.

‘seven spirits of God’ – (1.4), the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3.11), Zechariah 4.1-10 speaks of ‘seven lamps’ as the ‘seven eyes’ of God.

The Sea of Glass – ‘like’, likely an allusion to the firmament that separated the waters in Genesis 1.7. From Ezekiel 1.22 which described ‘an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome’. This vision ‘emphasizes God’s awesome vastness, His transcendence and holiness that separate Him from His creation’ (Osborne 231).

4.6-8: Four Living Beings

(Ezekiel 1.18: ‘eyes all around’); Ezekiel 1.5-6, 10-11 (Gospels, Zodiak, other?)

They combine the cherubim of Ezekiel 1 and 10 with the seraphim of Isaiah 6. They represent the highest order of celestial beings and lead in worship and judgment. They ‘transcend nature and represent the whole of the created order as they stand before God’ (Osborne 235).

What are the Four Living Beings saying/doing?

‘The Lord God Almighty’ – Amos 3.13, 4.13, 5.14-16, 9.5-6; Hosea 12.6, Nahum 3.5; Zechariah 10.3; Malachi 2.16

This description emphasizes what about God?

9 ‘to Him seated on the throne’ and ‘unto the ages of ages’- Isaiah 6.1-3; Daniel 4.34

10 What do the 24 *presbyteroi* do in the presence of God?