

Revelation 4:9-11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rev/rev-4/revelation-49-11/>

In the throne room of God, the twenty-four elders who sit on thrones also participate in worshiping God and submitting their authority under Him.

In the previous section, John has just described four *creatures* who resemble cherubim (a type of angel) but here they are not referred to as such (Revelation 4:7-8).

We saw that these four *creatures* are *forever* giving *glory and honor and thanks* to God, never ceasing day or night. John continues, saying:

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 (vv 9-10).

The word *Him* is singular in the phrase describing the *living creatures* giving *glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne*. As we saw in Revelation 4:2, God is One. There is One God, with three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This seems to include all in One.

The *twenty-four elders* here are those introduced in verse four, having “white garments, and golden crowns on their heads (Revelation 4:4). These *elders* have thrones that they sit on themselves, but they also *worship Him who sits on the throne* and *cast their crowns before the throne*.

The Greek word translated *elders* is “presbyteros” and indicates those having authority. These *elders* have been given authority. They have power and authority themselves, but they submit their power under the One who has ultimate authority. The image of them giving *glory and honor* to God shows that although God has granted them the glory and honor of having authority, they recognize that God is the source of all glory and honor.

Thus, these *elders* who have been elevated to reign are themselves servants. The image of them casting *their crowns before the throne* indicates full submission of their authority to the One who is over all.

Presuming that these *elders* either represent or are the chief among those who overcome, it is consistent with the primary admonition of Revelation that those who are faithful witnesses gain great rewards. In Revelation 3:21 Jesus promised that for those who overcome as He overcame, He would share His authority with them. Now we see this image of those given to share authority, and they are in full submission. Their submission is voluntary—it stems from their worship of God.

This picture of submission shows that those who will be given power to reign will be those who are faithful and willing servants. This is a consistent theme throughout scripture. A few verses that assert the theme of faithful servants receiving authority follow:

- Matthew 25:21, the Parable of the Talents, where Jesus rewards the faithful servants by making them rulers over many things.
- Hebrews 2:5-10, where Jesus led the way to restore humanity to the “glory and honor” of reigning over the earth through the “suffering of death.” He desires to bring many sons with Him to the restored glory of having authority over the earth.
- Romans 8:17b, which says those who suffer as Jesus suffered will share His inheritance, which is to reign over the earth.

This is completely the opposite of Satan, the current ruler of this world (John 14:30). Satan’s objective is to be a tyrant, having submission to no one (Isaiah 14:13).

This chapter further elevates the theme that continues throughout Revelation: God’s authority over all things, that He is on the throne. He will give to reign over the new earth those who are faithful witnesses and willing servants (Revelation 3:21). The new earth will be a place where righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). “Righteousness” means all things operating according to God’s design. It is God’s design for leaders to be servants, and servants to be leaders. The *elders* illustrate this design; they have authority but also submit to authority.

When the *twenty-four elders* prostrate themselves in worship they are *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” (v 11).

Again here, *You* is singular in the phrase *You, our Lord and our God*. In the next chapter we will see a search for someone worthy to open the scroll that will initiate events leading to the culmination of the age. We will see that the Lamb will come from the throne and be found to be the only one who is worthy (Revelation 5:5-6). The One Lord and God will begin to express as persons, when the Lamb emerges.

That Jesus is the Lamb emphasizes His humanity. This picture of a Lamb emphasizes that He was slain as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (Hebrews 9:11-12). But here the elders assert *Worthy are You, our Lord and our God* because He created the world. We are told that Jesus created the world (Colossians 1:16-17). We are also told God created the world. We know God is One, but the word translated “God” in Genesis 1:1 is plural, and in Genesis 1:26, God says “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” indicating that God is both One as well as Three. It appears that Jesus, the Son, was both the agent as well as the redeemer of all creation.

The twenty-four elders once again proclaim that the Lord God is *worthy to receive glory and honor and power* because He is the creator of all things. All was created to work in harmony with God’s design, which was good.

The phrase *glory and honor* is the same phrase in Hebrews 2:7 to describe the privilege humans were given in the original creation to reign over the earth. However, humanity proved to not be worthy of that calling, as humanity fell into sin.

But Jesus recovered the *glory and honor* intended in God’s original creation through the “suffering of death” (Hebrews 2:9). As we will see in the next chapter, He is now worthy of the

calling. He is worthy to have all the power to reign over the earth. This is because He served (Matthew 20:28). He was obedient, even to death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). Because He served, laying down His life as the Lamb, He is worthy to reign.

God is One. He *created all things, and because of His will they existed, and were created*. He is *worthy* for that reason alone. Jesus existed as God, but He did not grasp that privilege (Philippians 2:5-7). Rather He emptied Himself, and became the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world. He is on multiple accounts *worthy* to reign over all.

Jesus's worthiness to reign is in direct contrast to the claim of Satan, who apparently attempted to grab power to ascend on high as a usurper (Isaiah 14:13). The Lord God is *worthy* to receive all power because He *created all things*. In the next chapter, we will see that the Lamb is worthy to receive all glory and honor and power because He was obedient to His Father's will, and was slain for the sins of the world. So the Lord God is worthy because He created the world, and the Lamb is worthy because He redeemed the world.

Biblical Text

⁹ 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, ¹⁰ 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, ¹¹ "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."