

Worship in the Court of Heaven

Revelation 4:1-11

WELLSPRING CHURCH

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

Revelation 4:1–3 (ESV)

After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

Revelation 4:4–6 (ESV)

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. ⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, ⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

Revelation 4:6–8 (ESV)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. 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, 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!”

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

Revelation 4:9-11 (ESV)

⁹ 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, ¹¹ “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.”

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¹ **After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!** And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

Recall of Ezekiel's
opening chapter.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

¹ **After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!** And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

Ezekiel 1:1 (ESV)

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, **the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

¹ **After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!** And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

We find a door/gate to
heaven in the OT

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

¹ After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

Genesis 28:10–17 (ESV)

¹⁴ Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” ¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and **this is the gate of heaven.**”

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

¹ **After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!** And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

3 Maccabees 6:18 (NRSV)

¹⁸ Then the most glorious, almighty, and true God revealed his holy face and opened **the heavenly gates**, from which two glorious angels of fearful aspect descended, visible to all but the Jews.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

¹ **After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!** And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

Why a door to heaven? What is the meaning of the symbolism?

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

¹ **After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!** And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

Limited access.

Heaven is “closed off” to all for whom the door has not been opened.

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Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

¹ After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! **And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet**, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

The voice belongs to Jesus
who spoke in 1:10-11.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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Jesus is the revealer (Rev 1:1).

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Jewish and early Christian sources tell of people being called to **embark on a visionary journey**, and John fits this tradition.

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1 Enoch 14:8-9

And the vision was shown to me thus: Behold, in the vision **clouds invited me and a mist summoned me**, and the course of the stars and the lightnings sped and hastened me, and the winds in the vision caused me to fly and lifted me upward, and bore me into heaven. ⁹ And I went in till I drew nigh to a wall which is built of crystals and surrounded by tongues of fire: and it began to affright me.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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Heavenly perspective of history. Indicates there are other perspectives, but heaven's is authoritative.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.

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John's journey is a spiritual
visionary one.

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Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

² **At once I was in the Spirit**, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.

The continuation of an
ecstatic state.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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Repetition of the phrase “I was in the Spirit” signals a change to the heavenly setting.

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The OT spoke of God sitting on a throne in heaven.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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Isaiah 6:1 (ESV)

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a **throne**, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, **a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.**

Psalm 11:4 (ESV)

The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's **throne** is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, **a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.**

Daniel 7:9 (ESV)

⁹ “As I looked, **thrones** were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, **a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.**

Throne symbolizes absolute sovereignty of God.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

John is careful not to try to depict the one seated upon the throne of heaven in any sort of human form. Rather, God is portrayed as the brilliance of light reflected from precious stones.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Psalm 104:1-2 (ESV)

O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, ² **covering yourself with light as with a garment**, stretching out the heavens like a tent.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of **jasper and carnelian**, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

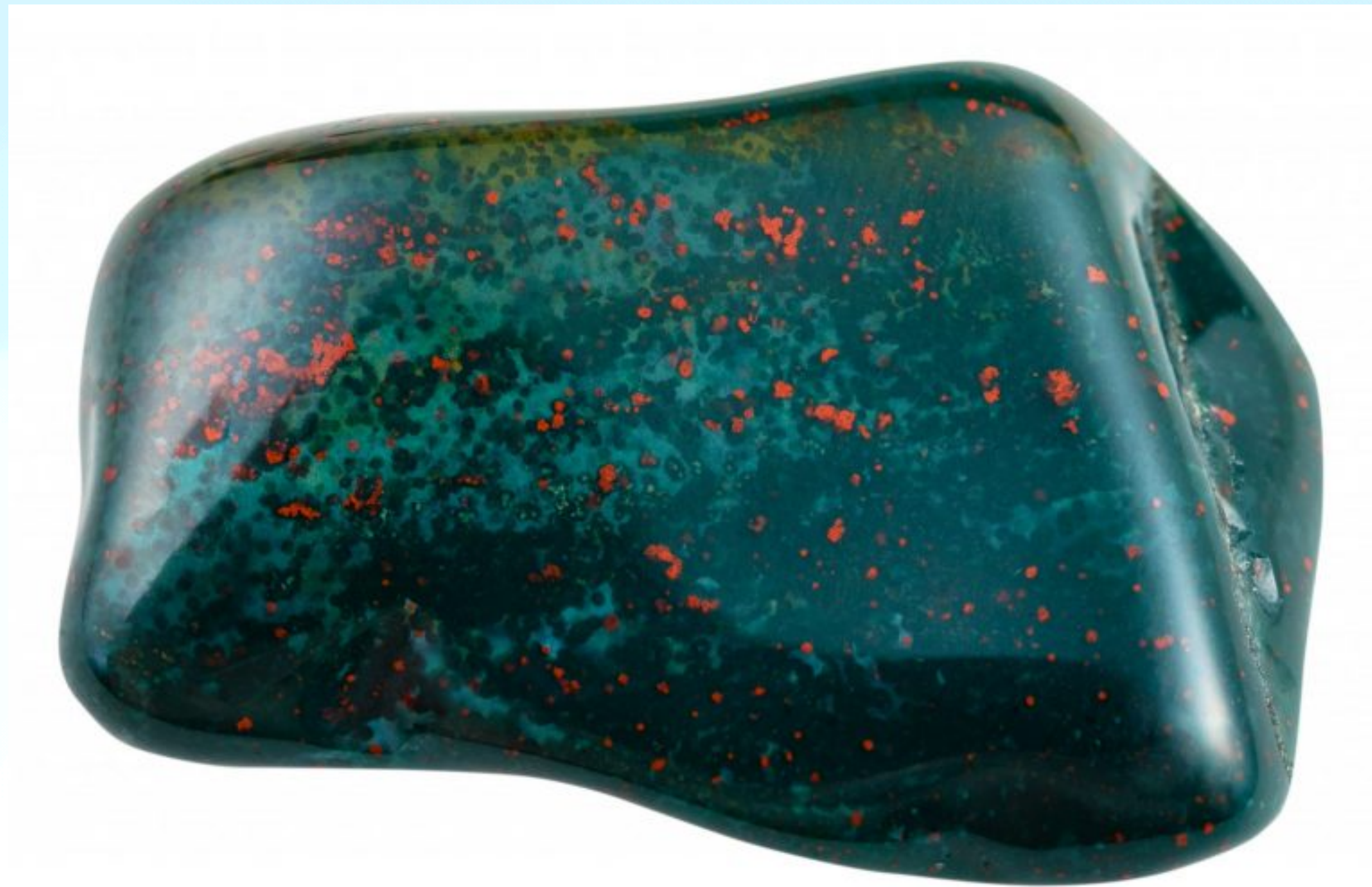
Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of **jasper and carnelian**, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Jasper refers to precious stones ranging from green to blue.

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Carnelian is reddish stone suggesting God's presence has a fiery radiance.

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Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of **jasper and carnelian**, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Ezekiel 1:27 (ESV)

²⁷ And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the **appearance of fire** enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were **the appearance of fire**, and there was brightness around him.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of **jasper and carnelian**, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

The New Jerusalem, in reflecting God's glory, also has traits of jasper and carnelian.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of **jasper and carnelian**, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Revelation 21:11–12 (ESV)

¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a **jasper**, clear as crystal.

¹² It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed...

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of **jasper and carnelian**, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Revelation 21:18–20 (ESV)

¹⁸ The wall was built of **jasper**, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was **jasper**, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth **carnelian**, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, **and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, **and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.**

Like Ezekiel 1:28

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, **and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.**

Ezekiel 1:28 (ESV)

²⁸ Like the appearance of **the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain**, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, **and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.**

Emphasis on emerald rather than the array of colors.

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³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, **and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.**

Rather than assigning specific qualities to each of the gems it is better to take them as part of the overall portrayal. They describe in symbolic form the majesty of God, resplendent and clothed in unapproachable light.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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.

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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.

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Revelation uses multiples of 12 in visions that depict the **whole people of God.**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

The 24 elders around the throne are heavenly representatives of **all** God's people.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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.

Is the number more specific than that? If so, what are the possibilities?

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

1. Groups of people.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

a. Twelve tribes and 12
apostles.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

b. Priestly groups. 24 groups of priests and levitical musicians served in the temple (1 Chr. 24:7-29).

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

c. The Witness of Scripture. 24 books in the Hebrew Bible.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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.

2. Cosmic Order

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

The Babylonians spoke of 24 celestial bodies, half of which were judges of the universe. Those are referred to as “elders”

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

3. Time. 24 hours a day and twelve months in a year.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

What seems sure is that the 24 elders represent the whole people of God in the throne room of worship.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

The elders demonstrate to readers the future glory of the faithful (white garments, thrones and crowns).

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

The elders also interpret
visions.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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.

Revelation 5:5 (ESV)

⁵ **And one of the elders** said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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.

Revelation 7:13–14 (ESV)

¹³ **Then one of the elders** addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” ¹⁴ I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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.**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.**

White garments = purity,
holiness, and honor.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.**

crowns = victory

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came **flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder**, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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Storms convey the fearsome quality of divine power in Revelation (8:5; 11:19; 16:18), Jewish tradition (Pss 18:14; 77:18), and Greco-Roman sources (Homer, Il. 7.443).

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came **flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder**, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...

Revelation 8:5 (ESV)

⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and **there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁵ From the throne came **flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder**, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...

Psalm 77:18 (ESV)

The crash of your **thunder** was in the whirlwind; your **lightnings** lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came **flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder**, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...

Lightening and thunder also signaled God's presence at Sinai.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came **flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder**, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...

Exodus 19:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were **thunders** and **lightnings** and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

Resonant with Ezekiel's
vision.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...

Ezekiel 1:12-13 (ESV)

¹² And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. ¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

There are different interpretations of the seven spirits of God

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

1. Angelic beings

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

2. The Holy Spirit

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

Psalm 104:3–4 (ESV)

³ He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; ⁴ **he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

Note that in Revelation the torches and the seven spirits of God are synonymous.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

In Rev 5:6 the seven spirits become the seven eyes of the lamb.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, **and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...**

Revelation 5:6 (ESV)

⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns **and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...

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⁶ **and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.** And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...

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⁶ **and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.** And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...

God's throne is above the
“waters above” from
Genesis 1:6–8

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁶ **and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.** And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...

Genesis 1:6–8 (ESV)

⁶ And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”

⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁶ **and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.** And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...

Psalm 104:3 (ESV)

He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind...

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁶ **and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.** And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...

Psalm 148:4 (ESV)

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens, **and you waters above the heavens!**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ **and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.** And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...

The dome, or firmament, looks like a crystal beneath the throne of God according to Ezekiel

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁶ **and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.** And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...

Ezekiel 1:22 (ESV)

²² Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring **crystal**, spread out above their heads.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

Heavenly intermediaries
with two roles.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

1. Exemplify true worship.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

Revelation 4:8 (ESV)

⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, 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!”**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

2. Summon divine threats
against the earth

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

Revelation 6:1-2 (ESV)

Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, **and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!”** ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

One of the creatures gives a bowl of wrath to the angels.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

Revelation 15:7 (ESV)

⁷ **And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever...**

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

The eyes all around indicate that they see all, or keep watch diligently. They are throne guardians. Keeping watch is their duty.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. **And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind...**

And round about were Seraphin,
Cherubin, and Ophannin: And these are
they who sleep not And guard the throne
of His glory.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

Throne guardians in
Scripture are always hybrid
creatures.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

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.

Ezekiel 1:4–7 (ESV)

⁴ As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. ⁵ And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, ⁶ but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

In Ezekiel, each creature has four faces (person, lion, ox and eagle). In Revelation, each only has one face.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

In Ezekiel, each creature has four wings, and many eyes cover the wheels of God's throne chariot.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

In Revelation, each creature has six wings and are themselves covered in eyes.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

In Ezekiel the creatures are under the throne. In Revelation they are beside it.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

In Christian tradition the four creatures have been identified with the four gospels.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

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.

Why the multiplicity of creatureliness? To represent all of the creation.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, 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!”

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁸ And the four living creatures, **each of them with six wings**, are full of eyes all around and within, 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!”

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁸ And the four living creatures, **each of them with six wings**, are full of eyes all around and within, 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!”

Recalls the seraphim in
Isaiah 6:2-3

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, 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!”**

God is supremely holy.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁹ 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...

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁹ 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...

The creatures, in declaring the supreme holiness of God, lead the church in worship.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁹ 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...**

Prostration a common form of
worship in Scripture

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁹ 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...**

Hiding one's face from the holiness of God. An outward recognition of God's superiority.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁹ 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...**

Faithful Christians are given the “crown of life” (Rev. 2:10)

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁹ 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...**

Jesus instructs the church to hold fast so that “no one may seize your crown.” (3:11)

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

⁹ 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...**

The church willingly casts their crowns before the King. Satan, however, is forced down because of his unwillingness to bow (Rev. 12)

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1–11)

¹¹ “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.”

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

¹¹ “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.”

In contrast to those in power
who are not worthy.

Worship in the Court in Heaven (4:1-11)

¹¹ “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.”

God’s worthiness is wrapped up in his identity as the uncreated Creator.

Worship in the Court of Heaven

Revelation 4:1-11

WELLSPRING CHURCH