

**And The Award For Special Effects Goes To...
The Throne Room Of The Universe
Revelation 4:5 – 11**

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As soon as we left chapter 3 of Revelation, we left earth behind along with John as he, personally invited by Jesus to pass through a dimensional time portal, went into the future. A future where the church has already been removed from planet earth and is with Jesus.

We see John, immediately ushered into a scene he would be familiar with; a scene which shows up in Daniel 7 and, knowing his Bible, he also begins to pick up on things which he has seen other places in his Bible as well.

He is getting to see something very rare, the entire picture. In the past, pieces of it have been relayed by the prophets, but John sees it all.

Just as Daniel 7:9 talks about thrones, plural, being set up around the Ancient of Days, John now sees THE THRONE and thrones around it in real time; relaying to us additional detail that there are 24 thrones. Just as Daniel 7:9 and 10 discuss the glory of THE THRONE, John sees that and gives us additional eye witness detail.

John, knowing his Bible, is looking for other signs he should be experiencing. His report provides much more than just an eye witness account of the glory of God; he matches up the special effects revealed in the Old Testament with those that he sees being rolled out in the throne room of the universe.

As he watches and listens, he will see scene after scene from his Bible, played out in real times, and he reports it.

Revelation 4:5

“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;” (NASB95)

John sees

Flashes of lightning

Seven lamps of fire

John hears, or does he see?

Sounds (φωναί phonai) the faculty of utterance, voice. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 1071)

Voices

Thunder

In plerophorous (complete assurance) expressions the signs of the theophany at Sinai are transferred to the world-shaking catastrophe of the last judgment. (Betz 1964-, 296)

Voices are heard. Voices implies revelation.

The voice may refer to the voice of God which was said to be heard in several different languages; cf. Shabbath 88b. However, these phenomena are traditional accompaniments to theophany. (Ford 2008, 73)

Rabbis believed that whenever voices are heard from the throne, that the voices are in the languages seen in Genesis 11, 70 languages to go along with all the nations.

I.34 A. Said R. Yohanan, “What is the meaning of this verse of Scripture: ‘The Lord gives the word, they who publish the good news are a great host’ (Ps. 68:12)? Every act of speech that came forth from the mouth of the Almighty was divided into seventy languages.”

I.35 A. A Tannaite statement of the household of R. Ishmael: “ ‘And like a hammer that breaks the rock into pieces’ (Jer. 23:29)—just as a hammer yields ever so many sparks, so every work that came forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, was divided into seventy languages.” (Neusner 2011, 385)

Speculation is aroused esp. by the plur., “voices” in Ex. 19:16 and by the fact that they could be seen, 20:18. There is a twofold development. Stress is laid on the numinous power and also on the universal range and adaptability of the voice of God. The power of the divine voice caused the souls of the hearers to melt, Ex. r., 5, 9 on 4:27 (Wünsche, 56); 29, 4 on 20:2. Its visibility was explained by R. Akiba to mean that the flaming Word struck the tablets and wrote on them the commandments, M. Ex., 7, 9 on 20:15 (p. 235, 8–10). It is also maintained that God’s voice went around the whole world, that the Israelites received it successively from the four quarters of heaven, from heaven and earth, that they welcomed it and received it gladly, Ex. r., 5, 9 on 4:27. R. Jochanan b. Nappacha (c. 250 A.D.) explains on the basis of the plur. קולות that God’s voice split up into 70 voices acc. to the 70 languages of the earth, so that each people could hear it in its own tongue, loc. cit., cf. b. Shab., 88b (school of R. Yishmael c. 130 A.D.). (Betz 1964-, 287-288)

Exodus 20:18

“All the people **perceived** the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance.” (NASB95)

רוּם רֹאִים roim - to see, observe, perceive, get acquainted with, gain understanding, examine, look after (see to), choose, discover. (Vine, Unger and White Jr. 1996, 219)

They saw voices

Exodus 19:14–17

“So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. He said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.” So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were **thunder (sounds, voices) and lightning flashes** and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a **very loud trumpet sound**, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.” (NASB95)

Ezekiel 1:4–14

“As I watched, I noticed a windstorm coming from the north—an enormous cloud, with lightning flashing, such that bright light rimmed it and came from it like glowing amber from the middle of a fire. In the fire

were what looked like four living beings. In their appearance they had human form, but each had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight, but the soles of their feet were like calves' feet. They gleamed like polished bronze. They had human hands under their wings on their four sides. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, their wings touched each other; they did not turn as they moved, but went straight ahead. Their faces had this appearance: Each of the four had the face of a man, with the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left and also the face of an eagle. Their wings were spread out above them; each had two wings touching the wings of one of the other beings on either side and two wings covering their bodies. Each moved straight ahead—wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. In the middle of the living beings was something like burning coals of fire or like torches. It moved back and forth among the living beings. It was bright, and lightning was flashing out of the fire. The living beings moved backward and forward as quickly as flashes of lightning.” (NET)

Like Adam and Eve, they were to be God's co-workers to maintain creation. Instead of doing that, they gathered at a place called Babel and built a tower to their own glory (Gen 11:1–4). (Heiser 2018, 18-19)

At Pentecost, God began the process of undoing what occurred as a result of the sin of mankind at Babel.

Genesis 9:7

“As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.” (NASB95)

The original post flood command for man, populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.

Man's response, everyone stay in one place.

God's response.

Genesis 11:5–9

And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.” So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth. (ESV)

Deuteronomy 32:8–9

“When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.” (ESV)

Because of rebellion, and the attempt to recreate the conditions of Genesis 6, God divides the nations and their languages.

The Rabbis see the voices of God as being in all the languages of the world. The undoing of this began with Acts 2, John is reflecting that in heaven. It is undone as the voices are in all languages, but they are also voices of judgement.

Acts 2:2–12

“Suddenly a sound like a violent wind blowing came from heaven and filled the entire house where they were sitting. And tongues spreading out like a fire appeared to them and came to rest on each one of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven residing in Jerusalem. When this sound occurred, a crowd gathered and was in confusion, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Completely baffled, they said, “Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that each one of us hears them in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and the province of Asia, Phrygia and

Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own languages about the great deeds God has done!” All were astounded and greatly confused, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” (NET)

It means God is beginning the process of undoing the curse, He is beginning the undoing of Genesis 11; to be completed in Revelation, and we see this in John’s use of the word for voices. The power of His voice...Psalm 29.

Psalm 29

“A psalm of David. Acknowledge the LORD, you heavenly beings, acknowledge the LORD’s majesty and power! Acknowledge the majesty of the LORD’s reputation! Worship the LORD in holy attire! The LORD’s shout is heard over the water; the majestic God thunders, the LORD appears over the surging water. The LORD’s shout is powerful, the LORD’s shout is majestic. The LORD’s shout breaks the cedars, the LORD shatters the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young ox. The LORD’s shout strikes with flaming fire. The LORD’s shout shakes the wilderness, the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The LORD’s shout bends the large trees and strips the leaves from the forests. Everyone in his temple says, “Majestic!” The LORD sits enthroned over the engulfing waters, the LORD sits enthroned as the eternal king. The LORD gives his people strength; the LORD grants his people security.” (NET)

The “thunder” is not just a natural force but the rumbling majestic voice of God, the Creator of the world, the Judge and the Holy Warrior, to which the chorus of heavenly beings responds in wonder and praise, v. 9b and which strikes with terror the enemies of Israel and the power of chaos. At creation the waters of the primal flood are chased from the earth by the rebuke of God’s voice of thunder, Ps. 104:7. In the days of the monarchy Israel’s deliverance at the Red Sea is viewed as a victory of this voice of Yahweh over the flood of chaos, Ps. 77:16–20. Israel’s foes, the agents of chaos, are frightened by the voice of Yahweh in the holy war, 1 S. 7:10; Jl. 2:11; Ps. 46:6. This voice declares judgment on the nations and executes it, Jl. 3:16; Is. 30:30 f.; Jer. 25:30 f. (Betz 1964-, 283)

By the way, did you pick up on the description of the throne guardians Ezekiel saw? Hang onto that description as it shows up in Revelation as well as several other places.

John reports that coming from the throne are “flashes of lightning and sounds (voices) and peals of thunder.”

Lightning and thunder show up in Revelation. Lightning shows up four times and thunder shows up eight times in the book. (4:5, 6:1,8:5,10:3-4, 11:19,14:2,16:18, 19:6)

In West Texas, at night you can see the storm, far away, before you hear it. As it comes closer, you get the light show and the noise along with it.

When you see the light, you have your warning to prepare for what is coming. Is the storm heading your way or is it moving away? When you hear the thunder, it may already be too late to plan and all you have left is a short time to seek shelter.

Just as lightning and thunder signal an approaching storm, here, the signal is approaching judgment.

The throne of mercy is about to change into a throne of wrath toward those who have spurned God’s offer of mercy. (Gingrich 2001, 36)

The “thunder” is not just a natural force but the rumbling majestic voice of God, the Creator of the world, the Judge and the Holy Warrior, to which the chorus of heavenly beings responds in wonder and praise, v. 9b and which strikes with terror the enemies of Israel and the power of chaos. (Betz 1964-, 283)

If we care to look, the Bible has examples of those times where God judged sin.

Genesis 6:5–8

“The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” But Noah found favor with the LORD.” (NLT)

Jeremiah 19:2–6

“Go out through the Gate of Broken Pots to the garbage dump in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, and give them this message. Say to them, ‘Listen to this message from the LORD, you kings of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem! This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: I will bring a terrible disaster on this place, and the ears of those who hear about it will ring! “ ‘For Israel has forsaken me and turned this valley into a place of wickedness. The people burn incense to foreign gods—idols never before acknowledged by this generation, by their ancestors, or by the kings of Judah. And they have filled this place with the blood of innocent children. They have built pagan shrines to Baal, and there they burn their sons as sacrifices to Baal. I have never commanded such a horrible deed; it never even crossed my mind to command such a thing! So beware, for the time is coming, says the LORD, when this garbage dump will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.” (NLT)

These are examples, here in Revelation 4:5, God is revealing Himself as judge, those who He loves are around the throne, there are also some on earth He will protect, and there will be those who come to Him as a result of the judgement about to be poured out on planet earth. We are seeing the scene of preparation, we will be there and see this and I can’t hardly wait.

“seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God”

We covered this rather thoroughly back in chapter 1, this is the Holy Spirit. These attributes are seen in Isaiah 11:2.

Notice this, the Spirit is not on earth as in chapter 1, He is in the throne room, He is no longer restraining. Preparation is taking place for the purging of evil from planet earth and the establishment of the Kingdom.

The lampades (“torches”) should be distinguished from the *λυχνίαι* (*lychniai*, “lampstands”) of 1:12, 20. They were used outdoors rather than indoors. They were better suited for open air because of less likelihood that they would be extinguished by gusts of wind (cf. John 18:3) (Lanski). This feature, coupled with the use of *kaiomenai* (“burning”) elsewhere in the Apocalypse (cf. 8:8, 10; 19:20; 21:8), indicates that the torches emitted “a blazing and fierce” light rather than a calm and soft one. (Thomas 1992, 350-351)

2 Thessalonians 2:3–13

“Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not arrive until the rebellion comes and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, and as a result he takes his seat in God’s temple, displaying himself as God. Surely you recall that I used to tell you these things while I was still with you. And so you know what holds him back, so that he will be revealed in his own time. For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way, and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy by the breath of his mouth and wipe out by the manifestation of his arrival. The arrival of the lawless one will be by Satan’s working with all kinds of miracles and signs and false wonders, and with every kind of evil deception directed against those who are perishing, because they found no place in their hearts for the truth so as to be saved. Consequently God sends on them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false. And so all of them who have not believed the truth but have delighted in evil will be condemned. But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.” (NET)

Revelation 4:6–11

...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." 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." (NASB95)

The sea of glass

Remember, the Temple as well as the Tabernacle designs were intended to be a representation of the reality that exists in heaven. The Holy of Holies is a representation of God's throne. The sea of glass though is a representation of the laver, the sea of brass, which the priest constantly has to wash in. It is a picture of the word. Tabernacle from above.

Ephesians 5:24–27

"As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault." (NLT)

There is additional background on the tabernacle and the meaning connected with the design of it in our study of Exodus.

This is also a reference to the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. We have seen this before.

Exodus 24:4–10

"And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness." (ESV)

Only after the blood was applied could access be granted. In Revelation, we see the results of what Jesus did on the cross and as a result, we have access. From the very moment He announced access for us, the exact moment that occurred is frozen in time for us by the scriptures.

Matthew 27:50–51

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. (NASB)

1 John 1:6–7

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (NASB95)

In the tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament there was a brazen laver filled with water in which the priests were required to wash themselves when they came to minister before the Lord (Exod. 30:18; 38:8; 1 Kings 7:23). Symbolically, this ‘sea of glass’ represents the blood of Christ, which is a fountain opened in which we must be washed before we can approach the throne of God. (Fortner 2002, 169)

Jesus provides access through His blood and the Word of God is what washes us. In heaven, everything sits on His Word and His blood.

John’s tells us more of what he is seeing that is around the throne.

In your notes I have included some additional resources regarding the throne room from the Book of Enoch, Enoch is not considered by most to be canonical, but it is a source of background regarding the view of the Rabbis and most Jews just prior to the incarnation of Christ.

Enoch 14:9–23

“And they lifted me up and carried me into heaven. I went until I was brought near a wall built with hailstones and tongues of fire surrounding them, and they began to alarm me. And I went into the tongues of fire and was brought into a great house built with hailstones. The wall of the house was like flat stones, and all were from snow and a ground of snow. The roofs were like the running across of stars and lightning, and between them cherubs of fire and the heaven above like water. Burning fire surrounded the walls, and its doors were like burning fire. I went into the house which is hot as fire and cold as snow, and it had no sustenance of life. Fear covered me and trembling took me. I was shaking and trembling, and I fell. I looked again at my vision, and behold, another door opened in front of me. This was a great house and all was built with tongues of fire. It was all worth more in glory and honor and greatness such that I am not able to point out to you its glory and its greatness. Its ground was of fire and its upper part was lightning and the spreading out of stars, and its roof was burning fire. I looked, and I saw a high throne, and its appearance was like crystal, a wheel like the sun shining brightly and a mountain of cherubs. And below the throne, burning rivers of fire were going out, and I was not able to see. And the great glory was seated upon it, its covering like the appearance of the sun, brighter and whiter than all snow. And all the angels were not able to go into this house and see his face because of the honored and esteemed one. And all flesh was not able to see him. The fire was burning in a circle, and the great fire stood beside it. No one comes near to him in the circle; numberless ten thousands stood before him, and all of his reason is a work. The holy ones of the angels who come near to him do not withdraw with the night, neither do they leave him.” (Lexham Press 2020, Enoch 14:9-23)

Enoch 39:4–41:9

“And there I saw another vision, the dwelling-places of the holy, And the resting-places of the righteous. Here mine eyes saw their dwellings with His righteous angels, And their resting-places with the holy. And they petitioned and interceded and prayed for the children of men, And righteousness flowed before them as water, And mercy like dew upon the earth: Thus it is amongst them for ever and ever. And in that place mine eyes saw the Elect One of righteousness and of faith, And I saw his dwelling-place under the wings of the Lord of Spirits. And righteousness shall prevail in his days, And the righteous and elect shall be without number before Him for ever and ever. And all the righteous and elect before Him shall be strong as fiery lights, And their mouth shall be full of blessing, And their lips shall extol the name of the Lord of Spirits, And righteousness before Him shall never fail, And uprightness shall never fail before Him. There I wished to dwell, And my spirit longed for that dwelling-place: And there heretofore hath been my portion, For so hath it been established concerning me before the Lord of Spirits. In those days I praised and extolled the name of the Lord of Spirits with blessings and praises, because He hath destined me for blessing and glory according to the good pleasure of the Lord of Spirits. For a long time my eyes regarded that place, and I blessed Him and praised Him, saying: ‘Blessed is He, and may He be blessed

from the beginning and for evermore. And before Him there is no ceasing. He knows before the world was created what is for ever and what will be from generation unto generation. Those who sleep not bless Thee: they stand before Thy glory and bless, praise, and extol, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Spirits: He filleth the earth with spirits." ' And here my eyes saw all those who sleep not: they stand before Him and bless and say: 'Blessed be Thou, and blessed be the name of the Lord for ever and ever.' And my face was changed; for I could no longer behold. And after that I saw thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand, I saw a multitude beyond number and reckoning, who stood before the Lord of Spirits. And on the four sides of the Lord of Spirits I saw four presences, different from those that sleep not, and I learnt their names: for the angel who went with me made known to me their names, and showed me all the hidden things. And I heard the voices of those four presences as they uttered praises before the Lord of glory. The first voice blesses the Lord of Spirits for ever and ever. And the second voice I heard blessing the Elect One and the elect ones who hang upon the Lord of Spirits. And the third voice I heard pray and intercede for those who dwell on the earth and supplicate in the name of the Lord of Spirits. And I heard the fourth voice fending off the Satans and forbidding them to come before the Lord of Spirits to accuse them who dwell on the earth. After that I asked the angel of peace who went with me, who showed me everything that is hidden: 'Who are these four presences which I have seen and whose words I have heard and written down?' And he said to me: 'This first is Michael, the merciful and long-suffering; and the second, who is set over all the diseases and all the wounds of the children of men, is Raphael: and the third, who is set over all the powers, is Gabriel: and the fourth, who is set over the repentance unto hope of those who inherit eternal life, is named Phanuel.' And these are the four angels of the Lord of Spirits and the four voices I heard in those days. And after that I saw all the secrets of the heavens, and how the kingdom is divided, and how the actions of men are weighed in the balance. And there I saw the mansions of the elect and the mansions of the holy, and mine eyes saw there all the sinners being driven from thence which deny the name of the Lord of Spirits, and being dragged off: and they could not abide because of the punishment which proceeds from the Lord of Spirits. And there mine eyes saw the secrets of the lightning and of the thunder, and the secrets of the winds, how they are divided to blow over the earth, and the secrets of the clouds and dew, and there I saw from whence they proceed in that place and from whence they saturate the dusty earth. And there I saw closed chambers out of which the winds are divided, the chamber of the hail and winds, the chamber of the mist, and of the clouds, and the cloud thereof hovers over the earth from the beginning of the world. And I saw the chambers of the sun and moon, whence they proceed and whither they come again, and their glorious return, and how one is superior to the other, and their stately orbit, and how they do not leave their orbit, and they add nothing to their orbit and they take nothing from it, and they keep faith with each other, in accordance with the oath by which they are bound together. And first the sun goes forth and traverses his path according to the commandment of the Lord of Spirits, and mighty is His name for ever and ever. And after that I saw the hidden and the visible path of the moon, and she accomplishes the course of her path in that place by day and by night—the one holding a position opposite to the other before the Lord of Spirits. And they give thanks and praise and rest not; For unto them is their thanksgiving rest. For the sun changes off for a blessing or a curse, And the course of the path of the moon is light to the righteous, And darkness to the sinners in the name of the Lord, Who made a separation between the light and the darkness, And divided the spirits of men, And strengthened the spirits of the righteous, In the name of His righteousness. For no angel hinders and no power is able to hinder; for He appoints a judge for them all and he judges them all before Him." (Charles and Oesterley 1917, Enoch 39:4-41:9)

John sees the throne guardians. Those divine beings who are specifically tasked with being around the throne of YAHWEH, the center of the universe. John is familiar with the other appearances of these divine beings. In the scriptures they are referred to as cherubim, also as seraphim and here in Revelation, as living creatures. Again, from Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 1:5–12

"In the fire were what looked like four living beings. In their appearance they had human form, but each had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight, but the soles of their feet were like calves' feet. They gleamed like polished bronze. They had human hands under their wings on their four sides. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, their wings touched each other; they did not turn as they moved, but went straight ahead. Their faces had this appearance: Each of the four had the face of a man, with

the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left and also the face of an eagle. Their wings were spread out above them; each had two wings touching the wings of one of the other beings on either side and two wings covering their bodies. Each moved straight ahead—wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went.” (NET)

Ezekiel is describing a multi-dimensional being from a 3-dimensional perspective.

Ezekiel 10:12–15

“along with their entire bodies, their backs, their hands, and their wings. The wheels of the four of them were full of eyes all around. As for their wheels, they were called “the wheelwork” as I listened. Each of the cherubim had four faces: The first was the face of a cherub, the second that of a man, the third that of a lion, and the fourth that of an eagle. The cherubim rose up; these were the living beings I saw at the Kebar River.” (NET)

Isaiah 6:1–4

“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. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.” (ESV)

Numbers 2:2

“The people of Israel shall camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers’ houses. They shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side.” (ESV)

What are the banners or standard of each tribe?

According to rabbinical tradition, the standard of Judah bore the figure of a lion, that of Reuben the likeness of a man or of a man’s head, that of Ephraim the figure of an ox, and that of Dan the figure of an eagle; so that the four living creatures united in the cherubic forms described by Ezekiel were represented upon these four standards. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 660)

The Jewish writers tell us, that the standard of each tribe of Israel took the color of the stone which represented it in the high priest’s breastplate, and that there was wrought upon each a particular figure—a lion for Judah, a young ox for Ephraim, a man for Reuben, and an eagle for Dan. These were the representative tribes, and all the rest were marshalled under these four standards (Num. 2);—Judah, on the east, with Issachar and Zebulun; Reuben on the south, with Simeon and Gad; Ephraim on the west, with Manasseh and Benjamin; and Dan on the north, with Asher and Naphtali. In the centre of this quadrangular encampment was the tabernacle of God, with four divisions of Levites forming an inner encampment around it. It was thus that Israel was marched through the wilderness, under the four banners of the lion, the young ox, the man, and the flying eagle. These were their ensigns, their guards, their coverings, the symbols of powers by which they were protected and guided. (Seiss 1901, 256)

Each tribe relates to an emblem they followed. Judah – Lion, Dan – Serpent, then switched to Eagle, Ruben – Man, Ephraim – Ox.

Lion – Messiah
Ox – Servant
Man – The Son of Man
Eagle – The Son of God

“I agree with those who identify each of these living creatures with the gospel which it represents, and I believe this is accurate, although such an application is questioned a great deal.

Matthew
Theme
Jesus is the Messiah
All that He said
Lion

Mark
Theme
Jesus is a servant
All that He did
Ox

Luke
Theme
Jesus is the Son of man
All that He felt
Man

John
Theme
Jesus is the Son of God
Who He is
Eagle (McGee 1997, 931)

These four living beings are “of an exalted angelic order engaged in worship, who bear a special relationship to those angelic beings described in Ezekiel and Isaiah and whose special function in the context of the Apocalypse is the administering of divine justice in the realm of animate creation.” (Thomas 1992, 358)

These are throne guardians specially created by God for the job they have. There is consistency throughout the scriptures and that too is reflected by the faces as well as the references to other sections of the OT.

The four living beings, these throne guardians are also worship leaders. We see in their actions possibly what the job responsibilities were of another cherub who was the song leader but made some very serious errors in judgement resulting in his being cast out and down.

Just as our enemy never rests, this is reflected with John’s observation that these former colleagues of Lucifer also never rest. They worship and move about continuously, and John shows us that the 24 elders join with them in worship around the throne.

They adore three Holies in this one God: the holy Father, the holy Son, and the Holy Spirit. And these are one infinitely holy and eternal Being who sits on the throne and who lives forever (verse 9). In this glory the prophet saw Christ and spoke about him. (Henry 1999, 59)

Though it is stated earlier that the living creatures do not rest in their ascription of holiness to God, according to verse 9, periodically they give special glory and honor and praise to God sitting on His throne. On such occasions, according to verse 10, the twenty-four elders join with them in worship and fall down before God on His throne. In their worship, they cast their victors’ crowns before the throne declaring that God is worthy of glory and honor and power because all things have been created by Him and for His pleasure. (Walvoord 2008, 111)

The worship of the twenty-four elders has a more particular note. They not only worship and recognize these attributes of God but support their worship by recognition of the fact that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe and, as such, is sovereign over it. In other words they recognize not only the

attributes but the works of God which reveal the attributes. Further, in casting their crowns before the throne they testify that if it had not been for God's grace, salvation, and goodness, they could not have had victory over sin and death. Here the creature honors His Maker and accepts the dictum that man necessarily must be subject to his Creator. (Walvoord 2008, 111)

"They fall down before him." They are kings, but yet they fall down—they wear royal crowns, but yet they prostrate themselves. They are second to none in God's universe; they stand as first in the peerage of creation; yet before the king they have no honour and no esteem, but as if they were slaves and menials, they cast themselves upon their faces before his throne, having nothing of their own whereof to glory, but boasting alone in Him. The more holy, the more humble. Where holiness is in perfection, there humility is in perfection too. The cherubim veil their faces with their wings, while they cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth." So do these elders, taking the same posture of humility, they bow before the throne. (Spurgeon 1862, 176-177)

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