

Do We Know Who the 24 Elders of Revelation Are?

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“Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads” ([Revelation 4:4](#)).

There is much speculation as to who the 24 elders in Revelation are. As you can see, they are seated on thrones, dressed in white robes, wearing crowns. Whoever these elders are, one of the things you notice is that they are constantly entering into worship.

“Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever” ([Revelation 4:9-10](#)).

The question now arises – who are these 24 elders in Revelation, and what if anything do they symbolize? We’ll start by looking at the number 24.

Is There Any Significance in the Number 24?

The number 24 has significance in the [Bible](#) when you look at where it was used and what it meant, both back then and possibly during this time. In [1 Chronicles 24](#), the descendants of Aaron, who were the priests in Israel, were divided into 24 sections to determine the order in which they would minister before the Lord. In [1 Chronicles 25](#) the musicians were divided into 24 sections and they were responsible for worship in the house of the Lord.

It’s possible the 24 elders were a symbol then of what was to come. When you read the opening chapter of Revelation, notice how John describes us as kingdom and priests.

“Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father — to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen” ([Revelation 1:4-6](#)).

You could possibly draw a correlation of these verses back to those verses in Chronicles.

Who Are the 24 Elders?

The truth is no one knows exactly because they are never actually given names. The Bible is not clear of their identity, but there are some things we can learn from Scripture that can lead us to some speculations or possibilities of who these elders are or what they symbolize. The first thing to consider is [Revelation 4:4](#). As you read the verse, focus your attention on what they are wearing and where are they sitting.

“Surrounding the throne were **twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads**” ([Revelation 4:4](#), emphasis added).

1. Where Are They Seated?

You will notice the 24 elders are seated on thrones. To sit on a throne is a seat of power and authority. In the Bible one of the things we are told is that we will reign with Christ.

Ephesians even mentions that we are seated with him in heavenly places. So this could simply mean that the 24 elders are a reference to the church. More specifically the overcoming, victorious, and raptured church, because these scenes are playing out during the Great Tribulation.

“To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne” ([Revelation 3:21](#)).

In addition to this there are two other things that would lend me to move in the direction that the 24 elders represent the church.



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2. What Are They Wearing?

Dressed in white - The 24 elders were all dressed in white and wore crowns on their heads. To be dressed in white, especially a white robe, is symbolic of being clothed in the righteousness of Christ. The only ones who will ever be clothed in his righteousness are those who have been redeemed. You see this mentioned in other parts of Revelation.

“Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels” ([Revelation 3:4-5](#)).

Wearing crowns of gold – One of the things believers are promised is the crown of life. “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him” ([James 1:12](#)).

Since the 24 elders are wearing crowns, that could be symbolic of the crown of life, which again would point to the elders being the church.

Another Thought on the 24 Elders

There is another possible idea or symbolism tied to the 24 elders. Some scholars would say the 24 elders represent the 12 tribes of Israel combined with the 12 apostles, representing how God has bridged the gap between the Old Covenant and the New. Again, since the Bible is not clear who the 24 elders are in Revelation, these are just ideas that can help you possibly understand who they might be or represent.

Are These Angels, or Heavenly Beings?

Some would argue these 24 elders are angels. I would shy away from that idea and move to precluding these are not angels for the same reasons I mentioned above. Angels may be dressed in white, but they are not clothed in Christ's righteousness. Angels also do not sit on thrones, nor are they awarded the crown of life. For these reasons I believe it is safe to say the 24 elders of Revelation are not angels.

Where Else Are the Elders Mentioned?

Aside from chapter four, the 24 elders are mentioned in various parts of the book of Revelation.

“And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people” ([Revelation 5:8](#)).

“All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God” ([Revelation 7:11](#)).

“And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God” ([Revelation 11:16](#)).

“The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: ‘Amen, [Hallelujah!](#)’” ([Revelation 19:4](#)).

It is hard to distinguish definitively what these elders will do in the book of Revelation. We know certainly that one of the things they will do is worship around God's throne.

As you can see, there are different opinions surrounding who the 24 elders are in Revelation. Honestly, we won't know for certain now. The best we can do is gather as much information as we can and come to the best conclusion possible. We should not let this lead us to argue and debate, but to listen and learn. We won't know who these elders are right now, but we will know then and at that time, it won't matter who was right.

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