

SYMBOLS IN JOHN'S VISION OF THE THRONE ROOM

JASPER AND CARNELIAN	The glory of God that forms the foundation and wall of protection for his people, cf. Rev. 21:11, 18-19.
RAINBOW	God's mercy in his justice, cf. Gen. 9
24 ELDERS	<p>Represent the unified people of God from the OT and NT headed by twelve Tribes and twelve Apostles, cf. Rev. 21:12-14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thrones: Authority - White Robes: Righteousness - Crown: Eternal life/rewards <p>In sum, the thrones, robes, and crowns represent the fulfillment of Christ's promises to those who will overcome through faith. (Hamilton) "[Their ministry in Heaven] brings assurance to the church / [people of God] ... still suffering on earth. (Beale)."</p>
SEVEN TORCHES OF FIRE	The Holy Spirit, particularly in connection to His presence in God's Temple.
SEA OF GLASS	<p>Peace that results from God's holy rule that contrasts the chaos and wickedness on earth resulting from the authority of Satan (the Dragon) and the Antichrist (the beast), cf. Dan. 7, Isa. 27:1.</p> <p><i>¹⁷ Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea. ¹ And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (Rev 13:1 ESV)</i></p>
FOUR LIVING CREATURES	<p>Combination of the creatures from Ezekiel 1 and Isa. 6. These four creatures play an important role in kicking off both the seal judgments, which include the trumpets, and the bowl judgments. MacArthur describes them as "an exalted order of angels".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lion: Noblest of Creation (Osborne) - Ox: Strongest of Creation (Osborne) - Man: Wisest of Creation (Osborne) - Eagle: Swiftest of Creation (Osborne) - Taken together they represent the sum of God's creative order. <p>"While these four transcend nature in one sense as heavenly beings, they also represent the whole of the created order..." (Osborne, see also Beale).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Six Wings: Designed to worship. (Two covered face & two covered feet) - Eyes: They represent the knowledge they possess. "Their knowing eyes search the earth, and they execute punishments only upon those who truly deserve them" (Beale).
THE SCROLL WITH 7 SEALS	Contract deed/title of the earth that contains the fullness of God's redemptive plan for this earth (MacArthur, Osborne, Hamilton). "In short, if that scroll is not opened the Bible's promises don't come true. Hope is lost" (Hamilton).
THE LAMB	<p>Jesus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seven horns: omnipotent (all-powerful) authority. - Seven eyes: The Holy Spirit, particularly his omniscient (all-knowing) sovereignty executed on the earth, in part through the church as God's Temple, i.e. the lampstands, the dwelling place of the Spirit, cf. 1 Cor. 3:16.
HARP	The praise and worship of God's people.
GOLDEN BOWLS OF INCENSE	<p>The prayers of the saints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Golden: Pure in God's sight - Bowls: Pleas for justice and vindication, prayers of the sufferer. - Incense: Worship, prayers of the cheerful.

The Message of Chapters 4-5

God is holy, holy, holy, and his purpose in creating you—as well as the rest of creation, both earthly and heavenly—is for the increase of his worship.

In John's vision, we see representatives of both God's creation and his new creation surrounding the throne and worshipping God. We were designed for worship. People are consistently asking the "why" questions. "Why am I here?" "What's the purpose of all of this?" This passage makes a profound connection: God's role as creator reveals his worthiness to receive our worship.

In this worship, we recover our significance as image-bearers and the peace of God.

Everything comes back to worship. And when we set our chief purpose to be the worship of God, not only do we recover our significance, but we experience the peace of God's crystal sea rather than the chaos of Satan's sea. If you lack peace or significance—and we all struggle in these areas—the problem is a worship problem, not a situation problem. The good news, as we will see in this passage, is that the gospel—not our self-will—restores us to be worshippers.

We need this good news because unfortunately, though creation was intended to offer continual praise to God, we broke that when we sinned, choosing to worship idols instead and becoming slaves to sin, children of the devil, unworthy of God's standard, and incapable to do anything about it. This is why no living creature was able to open the scroll that contains the fullness of God's redemption. Angels did not have the authority. We could not because of sin. And this is why John is weeping. Caught up in that moment, he comes to the same realization he has already come to in his life: we are desperately lost apart from Christ. If that scroll is unable to be opened, all the promises he has believed in will not come to pass. There will be no kingdom, no resurrection, no salvation. But thanks be to God for the message of one of the elders: Weep no more!

The good news is: Jesus is worthy and recreates us that we might be restored as worshippers.

- Jesus is the promised king who conquered his enemies through his sacrificial death and reigns with perfect authority.
- He sovereignly reigns today over the world by his indwelling Spirit.
- He hears and answers our prayers.
- He ransomed a people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation.
- He made them a kingdom and priests who shall reign upon the earth.
- He is exalted by God, before whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess him as Lord.

How should we respond?

- ***Humble yourself before Christ.*** (4:10, 5:8)
- ***Delight yourself in his presence.*** (4:10)
- ***Pray kingdom prayers.*** (5:8)
- ***Sing gospel songs.*** (5:8-9)
- ***Be a kingdom.***

Seek God's peace-producing justice as you love your neighbor and loosely hold the things of this earth. (5:10, see Sermon on the Mount)

- ***Be a priest.***

Evangelize the lost as you bear one another's burdens and practice the presence of God. (5:10)

Some Worship Bands I Listen To:

CityAlight
Shane & Shane
Sovereign Grace
Austin Stone Worship
Keith & Kristyn Getty
The Grey Havens
Rend Collective
Ellie Holcomb (with kids)

See also mbchurch.com/music/