

**Revelation 4b - A response to “SDA QUARTERLY LESSON MONDAY January 21, 2019”**

[https://web.facebook.com/sami.wilberforce/posts/2298624206823026?comment\\_id=2298786093473504&reply\\_comment\\_id=2298808146804632&notif\\_id=1548234839043175&notif\\_t=feed\\_comment](https://web.facebook.com/sami.wilberforce/posts/2298624206823026?comment_id=2298786093473504&reply_comment_id=2298808146804632&notif_id=1548234839043175&notif_t=feed_comment)

*“It’s a time quarterly lesson writer stopped joking around with SDA Church members. They either come out publicly and declare the bible a sham and EGW a false prophetess or make an apology [I had originally written resign]. How can the 24 elders “perhaps be the ones who were raised from the dead at the time of Jesus’ death (Matt. 27:51–53).” when Jesus himself has not arrived in heaven with those people while the 24 elders are already there waiting for him?! And even they haven’t been offered/waved as firstfruits/wavesheaves and accepted by the Father? Again the EGW says they are angels why cant the quarterly quote that?*

*Revelation 5:2: And I saw a STRONG ANGEL proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?*

*We ask John what he saw and heard in the vision at Patmos, and he answers: “And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a STRONG ANGEL proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.” {20MR 197.1}*

*Revelation 5:5: And one of the ELDERS saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*

*His soul was wrought up to such a point of agony and suspense that one of the STRONG ANGELS had compassion on him, and laying his hand on him assuringly, said, “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” [verse 5]. {12MR 296.4}*

*Revelation 5:8: And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and TWENTY ELDERS fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and GOLDEN VIALS FULL OF ODOURS, WHICH ARE THE PRAYERS OF SAINTS.*

*Revelation 8:3: And another ANGEL came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the PRAYERS OF ALL SAINTS upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

*“Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very HIGHEST ANGELS in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage. {Lt201-1899}*

*Revelation 7:13: And one of the ELDERS answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14: And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

*John saw a company standing around the throne of God, and the ANGEL asked him, Who are these in white robes? He answered, thou knowest. And the angel said, "These are they who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (See Revelation 7:13, 14). There is a fountain in which we may wash from every stain of impurity. And says the angel, "He shall lead them to fountains of living waters, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (See v. 17.) This will be the happy privilege of those that have kept the commandments of God in the earth. {1SAT 20.2}*

*"SDA QUARTERLY LESSON MONDAY January 21, 2019*

*The Heavenly Assembly in the Throne Room*

*The fact that the 24 elders were never mentioned before in the Bible implies that they are a new group in the heavenly throne room. They perhaps are the ones who were raised from the dead at the time of Jesus' death (Matt. 27:51–53).*

*If so, these 24 elders who ascended to heaven with Jesus become representatives of humanity, to witness the fairness in God's actions in the realization of the plan of salvation. In Revelation 5:9, the 24 elders, along with the four living creatures (vs. 8), fall down in worship before the Lamb who was slain and yet lives. Together, they sing a new song, extolling the Lamb as the One who is worthy, because: “ ‘You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth’ ” (Rev. 5:8–10, NKJV).”*

### JS Wrote

“Sami, your question here appears to be a non-sequitur. There is nothing in the Bible that states that these 24 elders were already in heaven awaiting Jesus’ arrival. Where are you getting that idea from? I will await your answer.

### Response

Revelation 4:8: And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9: And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10: The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne,

This is so clear that none need to err, they sing holy holy holy TO HIM not TO THEM. They fall down BEFORE HIM not BEFORE THEM. Conclusively single pronouns never refer to plurality in this case and so we have to admit its directed to the Father or Son which I concede it’s the former and so you have to ask where is Jesus here?

The easiest way, at least to ascertain this is to know the timing of this scene (Revelation 4 and 5), to get that we go back to verse 3 of Revelation 5 “And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon.” Now the Bible isn’t lying – no one was found worthy, but why then do we later read that Jesus was able, where was He when this question was posed? Was He not in heaven, or on earth or under the earth? Necessarily He was not.

Now Scripture speaks of 3 heavens (2Cor. 12:2), the firmament where birds fly (Genesis 1:8, 20), the cosmos (Genesis 1:14-17) and the dwelling of God (Deuteronomy 26:15), which one was being referred to here? We can safely assume that of God’s habitation since this question was being addressed to those gathered there. So in heaven there was no one worthy, on earth none, and under the earth, but is that a complete set of potential places where one is to be found? Simply meaning was every stone turned, was every place considered? And we find the answer is no, the space between (the cosmos) is not considered. When the question was asked Jesus had left earth and was en route to heaven but had not yet arrived? In Scripture many times Jesus is portrayed as being at the right hand of God, when He ascended He went and sat there (Hebrews 1:3) three and a half years later Stephen sees Him standing at God’s right hand (Acts 7:55-56) Paul at the time he wrote Romans said “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Romans 8:34 and other Scriptures attest to the same, question then is if we say Jesus was in heaven at this time why was He not at God’s right hand? And why would He not have been found worthy but then shortly after that He is worthy? Reason must have that He can’t have been there. If one says maybe He was on earth and had not died at that time thus was not at that time worthy

since He hadn't died, but then He did die and ascend to heaven thus later is seen as worthy. In Desire of Ages later I will demonstrate Jesus was travelling to heaven and the 24 elders were already there waiting for him and as he was traveling there he was with those resurrected to offer them as the loaves of bread in the ceremony of wavesheaf.

Another point that persuades me to believe that He was travelling to heaven at the time that question was asked but then shortly arrived after that is because with His arrival is also scene the arrival of thousands of angels that were not seen before this (Revelation 5:11), and we know that angels accompanied Jesus at His ascension, He was taken up by a cloud (of angels) (Acts 1:9) why do I say of angels, verse 11 says "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11, He shall as He left, and yes He does come with clouds (Revelation 1:7) but also with His angels (Matthew 25:31).

So I believe this is a scene in A.D. 31. I discuss all that to say this – the elders can't be humans that were resurrected since those would only arrive when Jesus does, but the elders are there before His arrival.

### **The Day of First Fruits (The Omer)**

- *Fulfilled anti-typically in Christ on Nisan 16--Resurrection*
- *The 16th day of the 1st month (Abib / Nisan)*
- *Exo 34:25-26, Lev 23:10-14, - Late Passover Num 9:10-11*
- *Not a convocation day. No restriction on servile work.*
- *Barley harvest - Firstfruits presented to the Lord (Lev 23:10-11)*

This was the day of first sheaf waving (type), the first fruit of the barley harvest. The antitype was Resurrection Sunday which also occurred on 16 Abib / Nisan. Jesus was the first fruits of the resurrection, (1 Cor 15:20, 23, 2 Tim 2:6-8), the antitype. At His resurrection, Jesus also resurrected the saints whose tombs were opened (marked) at the moment of His death (Mat 27:52-53) as a type of the resurrection at the second coming. These saints were presented to the Father for His approval by Jesus in heaven (John 20:17) at the moment the barley sheaf was symbolically waved at the temple at the time of the morning sacrifice, the third hour (9 am).

It is important to note that it was not a day of convocation (**NOT A SABBATH**) to the Jews, so there is no reason for it to be a sabbath in antitype (post-resurrection) to Christians. This is because the yearly festivals were not just commemorative in nature, but also prophetic, pointing to future holy events as fulfillments. To suggest a new Sunday holy day was instituted on resurrection day, is to say the yearly festival calendar appointed by God was in error, since it omits a weekly 1st day observance. In Jewish Tradition, the period called the Omer begins on 16 Nisan and extends for the count of 50 days to Pentecost or Shavuot, Manna ceased to fall on this day (Josh 5:12)

The wave offering was an offering made by the Jewish priests in token of a solemn special presentation to God (Exodus 29:24, 26, 27; Leviticus 7:20-34; 8:27; 9:21; 10:14, 15, etc.). The sheaf or omer or wave-offering then became the property of the priests.

### **Leviticus 23:9-11**

*“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted; **on the day after the sabbath** the priest shall wave it”*

You notice that it had to be accepted and it was after the Sabbath. When Christ had finished his work on earth "the land that Father had given him", (which Adam had lost by yielding to Satan and handing the sovereign to Satan), He rested on Sabbath and after the Sabbath, he ascended to heaven to offer a wave-sheaf according to the scripture, a perfect fulfillment. This was His body after resurrection and Revelation 5 depicts that acceptance. Before that, He refused Mary to cling on him, John 20:17 because He had to appear before the Father. Moses, as priest, received on this occasion the breast and the shoulder, which became afterwards the portion of the priests; see Ex 29:28, and Le 7:34 thus God acted in type of Moses for receiving the wave-offerings because Christ had not officially been inaugurated to start his priest. Being the lamb that had freshly been sacrificed, there was one to receive the wave offering and accept it and this was done by the Father Himself When the Father accepted, Jesus came back on earth and declared Matt 28:18. In ancient Israel, the beginning of the spring grain harvest was marked with an unusual ceremony—the waving of the first sheaf of grain to be accepted by God which I have cited to be the atoning sacrifice of Christ. This simple act holds great spiritual significance. Jesus Christ had to be accepted by God the Father to fulfill the wave-sheaf offering.

The first-fruits, a sheaf of barley, which is offered in connection with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, directly following the Passover; and the first-fruits of the second harvest, the loaves of bread, which are offered at Pentecost, are both a wave-offering. No one was to eat any of the grain of the harvest until the first sheaf of the harvest was brought to the priest, who in turn waved it before God.

### **What was the significance of this ceremony?**

*Jesus Christ "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"*

This first sheaf of grain was called the "firstfruits" (Leviticus:23:10). It was the firstfruits of the barley harvest, the first part of the grain harvest. Thousands of years later, we find the same term used again in the Bible-describing Jesus Christ! "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20,). We also find that Jesus Christ is called "the firstborn over all creation" and "the firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:15-18). The apostle Paul said that Christ was prophesied to be "the first to rise from the dead" (Acts:26:23).

What is the connection between the first grain offering, called the firstfruits, and Jesus Christ, the firstfruits and firstborn from the dead? This understanding is tied in with the symbolism of the two harvests mentioned earlier and the Feast of Pentecost, observed at the conclusion of 50 days that began with the day of the wave-sheaf offering.

### **Feast of Pentecost (Shavuot)**

- *Fulfilled anti-typically 50 days after Christ's resurrection, and 10 days after His ascension on Sivan 6 when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the believers in Acts 2.*
- *Exo 34:22, Lev 23:15-21, Acts 2:1, Acts 20:16, 1 Cor 16:8*
- *Occurs 50 days after the day of first fruits / barley sheaf waving (16 Nisan), on or about the 6th day of the third month (Sivan).*
- *A convocation / sabbath day. No servile work done.*
- *Travel to the Sanctuary in Jerusalem required of all men (Exo 23:14, 17, Exo 34:22, Deut 16:16).*
- *Wheat harvest - Firstfruits presented to the Lord (Lev 23:17, 20)*

Also called Feast of Weeks (Ex 34:22), the day of First Fruits (Exo 23:16, Num 28:26) Feast of the Harvest (Ex 23:16) and in the New Testament - Pentecost (Acts 2:1) A festival that celebrated the first fruits of the wheat harvest with the offering of two wave loaves of leavened bread (Lev 23:17, 20). This feast was also a shadow or type because fifty days after the resurrection, at the third hour morning offering at the temple (9 am - Acts 2:15), the firstfruits of the resurrection of saints on 16 Nisan were again presented by Jesus before the Father in heaven, and there was the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that resulted in three thousand souls being added to the church in one day (Acts 2:41), this rapid growth being symbolized by the loaves of leavened bread.

This was the day that Jesus was anointed in heaven with the Holy Spirit as our High Priest, which was also prefigured by the anointing of Aaron (Exo. 40:13) as mentioned in Psalms 133:1-3. Having finished His ministration in the outer court of the sanctuary (the work of justification by His sacrifice, Rom 5:9), Christ then began the priestly work of sanctification in the heavenly temple that was typified by the holy place, the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit is also known as the early rain (Antitype) and reached from heaven down to the Apostles gathered in the upper room on mount Zion. There will also be a latter rain, the greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit near the end of time (Joel 2:23, Zech 10:1, James 5:7) for the proclamation of the three angels messages (Rev 14).

The Jews do not recognize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the second chapter of Acts as a fulfillment of Pentecost/Shavuot, so they are consequently unsure about the true prophetic meaning of the festival, commemorating instead the revelation of the Torah to Moses on Sinai. On Pentecost, two loaves were offered from the

firstfruits of the wheat harvest, which followed several weeks after the barley harvest.

These breads are the trophies of those who resurrected and went with Jesus after 50 days to be given to the Father. On that day of Pentecost, to show that the wave sheaf and the bread had been accepted, the Holy Spirit descended on disciples. Anciently, it was fire which would fall and consume the offerings but it's interesting also to notice that the Spirit came as fire and rested on them. Psalms 133 was fulfilled. the anointing from Aaron's head which was now Christ flowed from His head symbolical of heaven to the outskirts of his garments symbolical to earth upon his disciples viz Isaiah 66:1.

After 50 days when the wavesheaf of the firstfruits had to be offered,

*The time had come for Christ to ascend to His Father's throne. As a divine conqueror He was about to return with the trophies of victory to the heavenly courts. Before His death He had declared to His Father, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17:4. After His resurrection He tarried on earth for a season, that His disciples might become familiar with Him in His risen and glorified body. Now He was ready for the leave-taking. He had authenticated the fact that He was a living Saviour. His disciples need no longer associate Him with the tomb. They could think of Him as glorified before the heavenly universe. {DA 829.1}*

*Christ had sojourned in the world for thirty-three years; He had endured its scorn, insult, and mockery; He had been rejected and crucified. Now, when about to ascend to His throne of glory,--as He reviews the ingratitude of the people He came to save,--will He not withdraw from them His sympathy and love? Will not His affections be centered upon that realm where He is appreciated, and where sinless angels wait to do His bidding? No; His promise to those loved ones whom He leaves on earth is, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. {DA 830.2} Upon reaching the Mount of Olives, Jesus led the way across the summit, to the vicinity of Bethany. Here He paused, and the disciples gathered about Him. Beams of light seemed to radiate from His countenance as He looked lovingly upon them. He upbraided them not for their faults and failures; words of the deepest tenderness were the last that fell upon their ears from the lips of their Lord. With hands outstretched in blessing, and as if in assurance of His protecting care, He slowly ascended from among them, drawn heavenward by a power stronger than any earthly attraction. As He passed upward, the awe-stricken disciples looked with straining eyes for the last glimpse of their ascending Lord. A cloud of glory hid Him from their sight; and the words came back to them as the cloudy chariot of angels received Him, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." At the same time there floated down to them the sweetest and most joyous music from the angel choir. {DA 830.3}*

*Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the angelic throng sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music. {DA 833.7} There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,-- all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. {DA 834.1}*

*But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father, with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 19:30; 17:24. {DA 834.2}*

*The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are "accepted in the Beloved." Ephesians 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Hebrews 1:6. {DA 834.3}*

*With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Revelation 5:12. {DA 834.4}*

*Songs of triumph mingle with the music from angel harps, till heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise. Love has conquered. The lost is found. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Revelation 5:13. {DA 835.1}*

JS wrote

Another important point here is the pronoun in Revelation 5:10. Let's read it in context and I will quote the KJV.

"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (Rev 5:8-10)

Did you catch it? The plural pronoun "us" is inclusive and it speaks about the redeemed. If the KJV has the correct pronoun here then these 24 elders are human. They are a part of the redeemed by Jesus' blood. Other translations use the pronoun "them" and if that is correct then they do not have to be human.

Response

My brother you do ignore many things here. Why do I say this? Because you are a Bible Scholar and Student who have done numerous research on Bible texts but I will not judge the motive behind it I will go straight to the answer.

The word "us to God" is in manuscript B, Coptic, Vulgate, and CYPRIAN. But A omits "us": and Aleph reads instead, "to our God."

Lets look at other version because I believe you are not dogmatic of KJVism propaganda though this is the champion of Bible Translations. EGW used other versions too so I hope you accept the challenge

KJV

- "And when he had taken the book, the **four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down** before the Lamb, having every one of them harps [angels have harps and the 144,000 have harps so why not the 24 elders?], and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed **us to God** by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made **us unto** our God kings and priests: and **we** shall reign on the earth."

NIV

- "And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased **men for God from every** tribe and language and people and nation. You have made **them to be a kingdom and** priests to serve our God, and **they will reign on the earth.**"

NAS

- “And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood **men from every tribe** and tongue and people and nation. “You have made **them to be a kingdom and priests to** our God; and **they will reign upon the earth.**”

BBE

- And their voices are sounding in a new song, saying, It is right for you to take the book and to make it open: for you were put to death and have made an offering to God of your blood for men of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation,

You seem to be missing something so vital in the text. The elders are singing how God through Christ has redeemed to them people from the earth. The work of redeeming the angels could not do as ministering spirits unless Christ intervened. Remember how Gabriel was defeated with the powers of Persia until Michael came. When man fell angels gave themselves but their sacrifice could not atone and so seeing that their heavenly commander has triumphed, what a joy to them that nothing has been lost!

1. First, the elders were **already present in the Father’s heavenly throne room** before Jesus arrived so they cannot be those who resurrected with Him.
2. Second, this song was sung by both the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders (Revelation 4:8). It is absolutely clear that the four living creatures are Seraphims and they **were not redeemed from among men and will not reign upon the earth.**

JS wrote

Finally there is also the fact that no one else in the Bible is ever called an “elder” except for human beings. That tends to lean toward a human identity. These 24 elders also appear to function as priests/musicians with the heavenly sanctuary. Thus they appear to be modeled after the 24 orders of priests and musicians that David assigned for the earthly sanctuary. According to Hebrews an high priest has to be compassed with infirmity in order to be able to empathize with the people. It stands to reason that the same would be true for all priests and this lends itself to the conclusion that these 24 elders are glorified humans who know by experience what is common to all men...The next objection that you appear to have here is that Mrs. White uses “angel” where Revelation uses “elder” and thus you appear to be concluding therefore that the elders cannot be humans. It would appear that you are taking her reference to “angel” in the sense of ontology (i.e. like Gabriel). This seems very convincing until we realize that Mrs. White did not always use the word “angel” that way. For instance she refers to “the mighty angel” of Revelation 10 as Jesus yet we know that He is not an angel in nature. He is actually God and man in His nature.

"The mighty angel who instructed John was no less a personage than Jesus Christ...(MR Vol 1 pg 59)

Or again, as another reference, she refers to Zechariah 3's angel as being Christ.

"Then the Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"... {5T 469.1}

Thus we see that she sometimes used the word angel in an exceptional sense - not always indicative of ontology. Therefore it may be possible that the same thing is true of the angelic references for the 24 elders. It could be that Mrs. White used this language because we are dealing with those who are "children of the resurrection" who "are equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36) and "are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt 22:30) and who thus have a place among those [the angels] who stand by (see Zech 3:7).

#### Response

This is where Brother JS also you must be playing with words and entering into semantics with the comment you make above. The context determines the answers we give not what we suppose. The surrounding verses unlock the middle verses as you know Hebrew chiasm works. You are not new to these things. Mrs. White used the word elder in an ontological way because she goes and in the remarks to that verse and Revelation 8:3 says

"Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very HIGHEST ANGELS in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage. {Lt201-1899}

What we should be asking is why did the Bible use the words ELDERS not why did the prophet contrast with ANGELS, STRONG ANGELS and then HIGHEST ANGELS. And moreso it is even not a contrast; in verse 2 of Rev 5, we find the word strong angel so EGW will not be at fault to say the elder is the strong angel and be meaning in its ontological sense. She is just repeating what John has said earlier.

What we should be asking is why did the Bible use the words ELDERS not why did the prophet contrast with ANGELS, STRONG ANGELS and then HIGHEST ANGELS.

JS Wrote

Now this is, by no means, a conclusive case but it is a Biblical one that does make sense. We shouldn't fault anyone for thinking, for these reasons, that they are resurrected humans. Moving on. Anyhow this might be seen as special pleading but I'm trying to be fair and look at the matter from all angles. I certainly would not make this a matter of willful deception or call for anyone's resignation over it. That is majoring in the minors my friend.

Response

I must admit I went further to the opposite extreme and apologize to the whole world. Am sorry.

JS Wrote

The identity of the 24 elders is in no way salvific and we can find out for sure when we meet them one day soon

Response

Am not claiming that the lesson writer is a Jesuit but the work of Jesuits is to present a premise and repeat it until it is finally accepted as truth. Since 2013, our church has been making deliberate errors in our lessons. I say deliberate errors because these guys are not children from a village grazing sheep and called to give and write views of what they think. They are people with highest degree from prominent institutions. They are acquainted with the Bible so well and EGW comments on the things they try to introduce which cant be harmonized with the inspiration. When you employ someone using peoples' tithes and offerings to do a job, you expect them to come up with evidence not PERHAPS. More so, what are you paid for! This is not the issue even. When we put in public official documents without giving all the information we have, then we are either afraid of what we have or we simply want to deceive however sincere we are. Any suppression of evidence is deception. All erroneous doctrines we have outside there did not just happen once, it was gradual suppression of evidence and a PERHAPS expression of things then ultimately fundamental beliefs. And who said non-salvific statements can just be glossed over? I don't believe there is a waste of any Bible text though I know what you meant. But "2Tm 3:16: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

Once we start sieving what is salvific and what is not, we are headed the road downward and this is fatal you may end up discarding all Bible.

JS Wrote

You seem to be arguing that because in Revelation 4 there is a "Him" (singular) on the throne that means that the Son of God was not there physically. In other words because the Son is not mentioned you take that as an indication of absence. You make a similar argument with respect to the angels.

### Response

The DA quote solves the issue Christ was not in heaven but enroute to heaven 50 days after the resurrection. Am not assuming the angels were not there already we have the seraphims and four living creatures and the 24 elders, representatives of unfallen world and what are they doing? They are waiting to welcome Christ. If waiting to welcome then it means he is not there unless my understanding of waiting to welcome is not good enough to common language? I think you maybe thought I was saying there were no angels. I already quoted the following to show my belief

There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are THERE TO WELCOME THE REDEEMER. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. {DA 834.1}

### JS Wrote

There is THE THRONE and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,—all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. {DA 834.1}

Notice that Mrs. White spoke of the "throne" at the time of Jesus' ascension but she does not mention the 24 elders or 24 thrones. They may not have been set up yet. This may have occurred post ascension. That is a genuine possibility

### Response

This still shows you are negating to see the 24 elders to be strong and highest angels as inspirations shows and verse 2 of Revelation 5 reads and perhaps consider them to be humans so this is the reason you can't accept they are part of the DA 834 quote among those waiting to welcome Christ. If the 24 elders are highest and strong angels as inspiration indicates why not be the "commanders of the angel hosts" as DA 834 indicates?

Brother JS I want you to see how Revelation is written and how EGW blends so well with it:

Revelation 4:6: And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 10: The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on

the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne,

Revelation 5:6: And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain

We know the four living creatures are cherubims and seraphims and the elders strong and highest angels

EGW follows the same sequence and instead of using four living creatures and 24 elders she says the following

There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts

If this sequence EGW uses is the same sequence in the Rev 4 and 5 the you still can't escape the fact that "four living creatures [cherubims and seraphims], 24 elders [highest, strong angels the commanders of the angels hosts] were already in heaven waiting to welcome Jesus they were not the wavesheafs to be waved before the Father as the Firstfruits of Christ labour on earth.

I won't speak on this matter no more

JS Wrote

And another key point here is that there is nothing in Revelation 4 that indicates to us the exact timing. We do not know whether John saw a scene in heaven meant to represent a period before the ascension or a period just after it. The introduction simply informs us that John was about to see things which must be hereafter

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter (Revelation 4:1)

Thus the scene in chapter 4 and 5 are introductory scenes designed to help us properly understand the prophecies that will reveal the "hereafter" (i.e. the 7 seals, etc,...). They are designed to show Christ's right to the scroll and inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary. They are not designed to reveal the precise timing of chapter 4 and 5 in terms of His ascension. As such they really cannot conclusively settle the matter of whether the 24 elders were there before His ascension or after.

Response

The reason I view things the way I have done is because scene 4 and 5 is the inauguration of Christ for the start of his ministry in the holy place, his anointing, before he could do that, he had to come and pick the wavesheaf who had resurrected after his resurrection and witnessed to the people in Jerusalem to wave before the Father, on that day he had to come and pick them that's what the priests in the earthly sanctuary did. Christ here is meeting the type.

**JS Wrote**

Anyhow my point in saying all of this is not to dispute the idea that they may have been there prior to Christ's ascension. I am quite open to that but I am also open to the idea that these 24 elders may have been set up in thrones after His ascension too, prior to the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary. Truthfully the Bible doesn't tell us either way. It just has John seeing them and offers no explanation of how long they were there.

**Response**

I really appreciate your time in this and the spirit involved and I must confess my original post went to extremes the next time I will do better.

**Summary**

**Revelation 5:8-10** *“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”*

**When he had taken the book** - This is the point at which the heavenly host responds. When Jesus took the book from the Father, the four beasts and 24 elders fell down before Christ, which is an act of worship. (Revelation 4:10) Also it can show the importance of the book and heaven's concern for the children of men.

**Elders** - This shows to us that the 24 elders minister in the heavenly sanctuary to aid Jesus Christ our High Priest. In the building of the Sanctuary, we are told, Exodus 25:18: And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. Also Exodus 26:1: Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.

So it's not difficult to notice that these 24 elders are strong angels a representation of what was on the curtains and also overshadowing the mercy seat working not only in the heavenly sanctuary but send forth to minister to the heirs of salvation Hebrews 1:7, 14. Peter also speaking of these strong angels who we find have odours and incense Revelation 5:8, 8:3 says 1Peter 1:12: Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

This is a very curious passage from Peter that has made people come up with different ideologies of the angels desiring to look into the things preached by the

prophets. Some even thing the prophets had more light than the angels. This cannot be so. We just read in Revelation 5:1 that there was *a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.*” The angels then seeing no one amongst them could open it, they would be curious to know what is its contents for it pertained to salvation of the universe. That is why Peter says they desire to look into these things. They stoop down to; the posture of those who are earnestly intent on finding out a thing, especially a writing difficult to be read; they bring it to the light, place it so that the rays may fall on it as collectively as possible, and then stoop down in order to examine all the parts, that they may be able to make out the whole. There is evidently an allusion here to the attitude of the cherubim who stood at the ends of the ark of the covenant, in the inner tabernacle, with their eyes turned towards the mercy-seat or propitiatory in a bending posture, as if looking attentively, or, as we term it, poring upon it. Even the holy angels are struck with astonishment at the plan of human redemption, and justly wonder at the incarnation of that infinite object of their adoration. If then these things be objects of deep consideration to the angels of God, how much more so should they be to us; in them angels can have no such interest as human beings have.

We learn from the above that it was the Spirit of Christ in the Jewish prophets that prophesied of Christ; it was that Spirit which revealed him; and it is the same Spirit which takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us. This, the angels are involved at the highest level in making the things which are sealed to be known to men Revelation 1:1, Revelation 19:10, 22:9. Christ was never known by prophecy, but through his own Spirit; and he never was known, nor can be known, to the salvation of any soul, but by a revelation of the same Spirit. It is he alone that bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. This prerogative of the Revelation of prophecies he has committed on a higher sense to angels and a limited sense to human beings 1Corinthians 13:9.

The ministry of angels is something worthy looking into. These strong angels alluded to 24 elders work closely with Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

### **The 24 Elders Revelation 4 and 5 point to something**

You will find in 1 Chronicles 24:7-19, an organization of a 24 course of priests. These were to minister in the sanctuary under Aaron the high priest. This was still the case when Christ was upon the earth. (Luke 1:5, 8-9) Thus these elders are ministering in the sanctuary in heaven under Jesus Christ our high priest. But even more, when the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place, the priests gathered around the porch in the courtyard. We believe the earth is the courtyard because the altar of sacrifice represents Calvary. So While Christ is the High Priest and is in the Most Holy place, we must see the antitypical priest in the earth at a special place doing a special work. This is brought clear in 1Peter 2:9 and 2Corinthians 5:18-20 and Joel 2:12-17. As present truth church, we are not in the category of “The duty of the congregation during the Day of Atonement” but “The Duty of the Priests During the Day of Atonement”. I can just say Seventh Day Adventism has

suffered an Identity Crisis when it comes to the Sanctuary message. So while the 24 elders are strong angels a representation of the angels on the curtain of the sanctuary and the cherubims overshadowing the mercy, we have another group in Revelation 14 called the 144,000, the firstfruits that follows the lamb wherever he goes representing the priests that gathered at the porch on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place.

### **The First-fruits Revelation 14**

In the sanctuary, the first-fruits were not the whole harvest but the choicest of those ready. There are arguments that the 144,000 are the saved of all ages, the whole saved from Adam to the last person but this is just a destruction of the sanctuary symbolism and typology. Also Malachi 4 talks about Elijah being send in the last days. The work of Elijah was to contend with Idolatry in Israel per se. He had no guile in his mouth neither was he defiled by any woman either physically or spiritually So I believe that the Elijah people are One True God believers and this is all about 144,000. He stood on a mountain to contend with this false worship. The 144,000 are standing on Mount Zion in their introduction to sounding the three angel's messages which are aimed at Babylon that woman Jezebel as the papacy is called in Revelation 2:20. I have proved from other writings that the papacy is Jezebel. If you missed that refer to "Revelation 2b - The Imminent Return of Jezebel and Elijah". Lastly, the same question posed in Revelation 6:17 is an update of Joel 2:11. Those who can abide are those in Joel 2:15, 16 blowing the trumpet in Zion, gathering the people, sanctifying the congregation, assembling the elders, gathering the children, and those that suck the breasts. According to Joel 2:17 these are the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weeping between the porch and the altar, and saying, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. There are no other people standing on Mt. Zion but when the question of Joel 2:11 and Revelation 6:17 is asked but the 144,000. Hence it won't be erroneous to conclude that the 144,000 are the Elijah people, the priests at the porch on earth, those against false gods; the 144,000.

Blessings, Sami Wilberforce

NB

***Later after submitting this rebuttal, I was send an email by White Throne Ministries and I will put it down here for more information***

George Opiyo

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "George Opiyo" <[ejustice475@gmail.com](mailto:ejustice475@gmail.com)>

Date: Jan 25, 2019 3:20 PM

Subject: WHO ARE THE 24 ELDERS.

To: <[Joshuaclinton5@gmail.com](mailto:Joshuaclinton5@gmail.com)>

Cc:

## **LESSON 7**

### **WHO ARE THE 24 ELDERS BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD?**

You are welcome to another edition of Insights from God's Word, a Bible study programme that is committed to sharing God's Word by allowing the Bible to speak for itself.

In this edition, we continue with our series on Heaven. The topic for this study is: Who are the 24 elders before the throne of God? In as much as some in Christendom may want to discard this topic as a non - salvific issue, the truth is that there are many among God's children who are so interested in getting higher and brighter beams of light on such celestial topics. For I have discovered that a healthy discussion of topics like these will actually draw our hearts from this earth unto our home above. In fact, besides our main goal of trying to uncover the identity of the 24 elders in this study, it is my sincere prayer that the Lord will use this study to draw our hearts closer and closer unto Himself.

The term 24 elders only appear in the book of Revelation. Many Bible scholars and theologians have suggested who they believe this group might be. In this study, I want us to consider the major viewpoints in relation to the identity of the 24 elders. I believe this approach will place us in a better position to make an informed decision on the subject.

### **FIVE MAJOR VIEWPOINTS**

Several viewpoints abound when it comes to the identity of the 24 elders in the book of Revelation. Some of the interpretations view the 24 elders in a symbolic way while others see them literary as representing particular beings. In this study, we are going to consider five major viewpoints. The first two viewpoints do consider the 24 elders in a symbolic manner while the latter three view them in a literal sense. The five main views that are popular today in regard to the identity of the 24 elders in the book of Revelation are as follows:

## **1. THE 24 ELDERS AS A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD OF ANCIENT ISRAEL**

One of the prevailing viewpoints expresses the point that the apostle John in his usage of the 24 elders had in mind the 24 courses of the Levitical priesthood (1 Chronicles 24:1-19; 2 Chronicles 8:14). The proponents of this view postulate that just as 24 priests and Levites ministered before the Lord in the earthly sanctuary over a period of time, so does John see 24 elders ministering before the Lord in the heavenly sanctuary. Thus, in this interpretation, the 24 elders are viewed as a symbolic depiction of the Levitical priesthood of ancient Israel. The problem with this interpretation is the fact that after the death of Christ, the 24 courses of the Levitical priesthood ceased (Matthew 27:50-51). From the book of Hebrews, Christ is portrayed as the High Priest who ministers on behalf of the people of God. From Hebrews 4:13-15, we read the following:

*"14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:13-16).*

*From 1 Timothy 2:5, Christ is described as the only Mediator between God and man. Thus, with Christ being the only high priest in the heavenly courts, there is no room for another order of priesthood. What this means is that the 24 elders cannot be viewed as representing the 24 courses of the Levitical priesthood of ancient Israel.*

## **2. THE 24 ELDERS AS A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF THE HEADSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

Some interpreters have also viewed the 24 elders as a symbolic depiction of the headship of the church. These interpreters view the 24 elders as representing the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles; the leadership of the Old and New Testament Church respectively. From this background, the 24 elders as thus viewed as symbolic figures instead of saints who are now in heaven.

The problem with this symbolic interpretation is that it is unable to explain the various roles that we find the 24 elders performing in the book of Revelation (such as in Revelation 5:8). This point brings out the fact that the 24 elders cannot be just viewed as symbolizing the headship of the church without seeking for a deeper meaning which addresses their roles as portrayed in the book of Revelation.

### **3. THE 24 ELDERS AS THE RESURRECTED SAINTS WHO ASCENDED WITH CHRIST TO HEAVEN**

One of the old and prominent views regarding the 24 elders is that they are the saints who ascended with Christ to heaven after His resurrection. From Matthew 27:50-53, we read the following:

“50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

Christ spent 40 days on the earth after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). During these 40 days, He united the disciples, strengthened their faith, and gave them instructions in relation to the gospel commission to the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). He then ascended to heaven to be with the Father (Acts 1:9-11). But Christ did not ascend to heaven alone. He went with the resurrected saints as first fruits of His work of redemption for the human race. From Ephesians 4:8, we read the following: "That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.” (NLT) In this text, we gather the fact that Christ ascended to heaven with the resurrected saints as trophies or first fruits of His work of redemption for mankind.

The million dollar question at this point in our study is this: Are these resurrected saints who ascended with Christ to heaven the 24 elders spoken of in the book of Revelation? Proponents of this view provide the following biblical viewpoints to support their belief that the 24 elders are the resurrected saints who ascended with Christ to heaven:

#### **A) THEY WEAR CROWNS OF VICTORY (STEPHANOS)**

Some interpreters who view the 24 elders as the resurrected saints point to the fact that in Revelation 4:4, the 24 elders are portrayed as wearing crowns (Stephanos) of gold which is actually an emblem of victory for the saints (see Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 Corinthians 9:25; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4). The concept of being victorious which is derived from these texts has made this group of interpreters to suggest that the 24 elders do represent redeemed men. This is because other heavenly intelligences such as angels do not struggle to triumph over sin and thus, the word stephanos will be inappropriate for them.

#### **B) THEY SIT ON THRONES**

Some interpreters have become convinced that the 24 elders are redeemed men because they are portrayed as sitting on thrones before the Lord in heaven (Revelation 4:4). According to these interpreters, this is actually a symbol of the part

these redeemed men are playing in the investigative judgement; where they serve as human jurors in relation to their peers (fellow human beings) on the earth. Thus, according to these interpreters, the 24 elders are likely to represent human beings who have been redeemed from the earth.

### **C) THE WORD ELDERS (PRESBUTEROI) AS USED IN SCRIPTURE**

Some interpreters have also pointed out that the word elders (Presbuteroi) as used for the 24 elders in the book of Revelation has always been used in reference to human beings in all of Scripture. Even though some argue that the word “elders” or “ancients” as used in Isaiah 24:23 do refer to angels, some scholars hold the view that they might as well refer to humans. Thus, according to these interpreters, the 24 elders are likely to be redeemed men, particularly the resurrected saints who ascended with Christ to heaven.

### **D) THE ELDERS AS REDEEMED MEN (The Context of Revelation 5:8-10)**

Moreover, interpreters who view the 24 elders as human beings also make use of the word 'US' as used in Revelation 5:8-11 from the KJV to support their position that the 24 elders are human beings who have been redeemed from the earth. To bring out this point well, let us read the passage of Revelation 5:8-11 from the King James Version:

"8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, AND HAS REDEEMED US to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 AND HAS MADE US unto our God kings and priests: AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH" (Revelation 5:8-10 from KJV; Capital Emphasis Added).

Some interpreters who view the 24 elders as the resurrected saints lean heavily on this text which seems to suggest that the 24 elders are humans who have been redeemed by the shed blood of Christ.

Beloved, it is clear that those who assert that the 24 elders represent redeemed men, particularly the resurrected saints who ascended with Christ to heaven do have several strong points. However, there are some serious questions and loopholes that have been identified in relation to this way of interpreting the 24 elders. These are some of the issues that some have raised to question the interpretation which suggests that the 24 elders are redeemed men:

A) Some scholars such as Pr. Stephen Bohr have pointed out that the passage in Revelation 5:8-10 was translated wrongly as far as the word 'US' is concerned. These scholars have pointed to other reputable Bible translations such as the

NASB, NIV, RSV etc. which actually utilize the word THEY instead of US in the passage under discussion. For instance, the New American Standard Bible which is another literal translation just like the KJV utilizes the word THEM instead of US. From the NASB, we read the contents of Revelation 5:8-10 as follows:

"8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood MEN from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. "You have made THEM to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and THEY will reign upon the earth" (Revelation 5:8-10, NASB; Capital Emphasis Added).

Friends, this passage brings out a different meaning in relation to the identity of the 24 elders. The Word MEN and THEY as used in the passage indicate that the 24 elders do not consider themselves as redeemed by the shed blood of Christ. The conclusion from this statement is that the 24 elders cannot then be referred to as humans if we want to go by the NASB and many other modern translations which seem to correct the apparent mistake in the KJV.

B) Some interpreters such as Pastor Stephen Bohr have also pointed out from the passage in Revelation 5:8-10 that the song that we read about in the passage was not sung only by the 24 elders. From the context, it is clear that this particular song was done by both the four living creatures and the 24 elders. This fact, according to these interpreters show clearly that the right word in the passage should have been THEY instead of US as the four living creatures who partook of that song are clearly seraphim (compare Isaiah 6:1-3 and Revelation 4:6-8) who were not redeemed by the shed blood of Christ, and will not also reign on the earth as the text in the KJV suggests.

C) Some scholars such as Pastor Stephen Bohr see the passages of Revelation 4 and 5 to be the time of the glorification of Christ in heaven after His death for the human race on earth. From the explanations of these scholars, Revelation 4 presents the throne of God in heaven where God the Father (Revelation 4:2-3), the Holy Spirit (Revelation 4:5), the four living creatures (Revelation 4:6-8) and the 24 elders (Revelation 4:4) are portrayed as waiting for the return of Jesus, the war hero from the earth. According to this interpretation, Christ appears with the angelic host in Revelation 5 to join those already assembled before the throne of God in heaven (Revelation 5:6-7; Revelation 5:11-12). When Christ finally appears before the Father, He is glorified as the Son of God and Redeemer of the human race. The argument from these scholars as far as the background above is concerned is that, the 24 elders cannot be the resurrected saints who ascended with Christ to heaven because they (that is, the 24 elders) were already present in heaven before the arrival of Jesus and the angelic host from the earth.

D) Other interpreters also view the 24 elders sitting on thrones or seats (KJV) before the Father (Revelation 4:4) as of a symbolic expression. Thus, according to this mode of interpretation, the 24 elders cannot thus be viewed as redeemed men who serve as human jurors in relation to their peers (fellow human beings) in the investigative judgement.

E) Moreover, from Revelation 5:8, the four living creatures and the 24 elders are portrayed as ministering the prayers of the saints. Some interpreters see this work performed by the 24 elders as of a nature that will not be committed to humans in heaven.

Friends, I think these are serious issues which I believe those who see the 24 elders as redeemed men, particularly the resurrected saints should endeavour to address.

#### **4. THE 24 ELDERS AS THE REPRESENTATIVES OF UNFALLEN WORLDS**

Many today see the 24 elders as the representatives of the unfallen worlds. I understand that the term unfallen worlds may sound quite strange to some of you. The term unfallen worlds basically mean other worlds which were created by God that never sinned. In as much as the Bible does not specifically use the term (unfallen worlds), there are hints in Scripture which give us such an understanding. In fact, the Bible provides hints that God have created other worlds beside our world. From the book of Hebrews for instance, we read the following:

"1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, **BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS**" (Hebrews 1:1-2; Capital Emphasis Added).

"Through faith we understand that the **WORLDS** were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3; Capital Emphasis Added).

In these texts, we obtain the biblical insight that God did not just create our planet or world but other worlds as well.

From the book of Job, we obtain very special insights about the possibility of other worlds in the universe of God. From Job 1:6-7, we read the following:

"6 Now there was a day when the **SONS OF GOD** came to present themselves before the **LORD**, and Satan came also among them. 7 And the **LORD** said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the **LORD**, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Capital Emphasis Added).

Moreover, from Job 2:1-2, we read a similar statement of fact like the one above:

"1 Again there was a day when the SONS OF GOD came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Capital Emphasis Added).

Beloved, from these two accounts in Job, it is clear that these sons of God do not stay permanently in heaven. The word AGAIN as used in Job 2:1 suggests that the sons of God departed from His presence and came back another time. From these texts in Job, it is clear that these sons of God are representatives of other worlds who assemble for a council meeting in heaven from time to time. Some reasons why I believe these sons of God are representatives of other worlds are as follows:

A) On the two occasions in the book of Job where the sons of God meet the Father in heaven, Satan joins them, however, as an unwelcome guest. Based on the answer Satan gave to God as to why he came with the other sons of God, we gain the insight that Satan was there in heaven to represent planet earth at those council meetings. Satan was bold to identify himself with the sons of God, the representatives of other worlds because he viewed himself as the legitimate representative of our planet. He has stolen the planet's dominion from Adam by tempting him to sin against the commandments of God.

In fact, Adam should have been the right representative to represent planet earth. He was the true son of God by creation (Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 24:7; Luke 3:38) and was given the dominion of the planet (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:3-8). However, his decision to obey the devil rather than God made him a subject to Satan (Romans 6:16). Thus, Satan could claim that the world has been delivered to him (Luke 4:5-6). In fact, Christ even referred to him as the "prince of this world" (John 12:31). And so Satan saw himself qualified to represent our planet in heaven identifying himself with the sons of God.

Now, if it is clear that Satan was at those council meetings to represent our planet (Job 1:6-7; Job2:1-2), then it follows that the other sons of God at the meeting, also came to represent their respective worlds in the universe of God. Thus, these sons of God are therefore the representatives of the worlds in the universe of God that have never sinned.

B) Another reason why I see the sons of God to be the representatives of the other worlds created by God is because of some insights we can glean on this subject from the passage of Job 38:1-7. From this passage we read the following about the morning stars and the sons of God:

"4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding ... 7 When THE MORNING STARS sang together, and all THE SONS OF GOD shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4, 7; Capital Emphasis Added).

Friends, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is clear that the MORNING STARS are angels. For instance, Satan is described as the SON OF THE MORNING in Isaiah 14:12. In Revelation 12:4, the angels who were cast out of heaven with Satan are described as STARS OF HEAVEN (Revelation 12:4, 9). Thus, the term morning stars basically refer to the angels in heaven. But what about the SONS OF GOD who also sang at the creation of the human family? Who are they? Are they also angels or they have another nature? The Bible doesn't say. But from what we have learnt earlier, the fact that Adam should have been the right representative of planet earth at those council meetings in heaven if not because of his disobedience (Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 3:1-24; Job 1:6-7; Job 2:1-2), suggests that the sons of God may have other natures different from the angels? This is because Adam was created differently from the angels (compare Genesis 2:7; Hebrews 1:7; Hebrews 2:7). Thus, even though the Bible does not describe the nature of these sons of God, we gain glimpses from Scripture that they may have natures different from the angels. Moreover, the fact that they present themselves to the Father in heaven and go back to their respective worlds shows clearly that they are differentiated from the morning stars or angels who are stationed permanently in heaven. Thus friends, it can be clearly seen through the lens of Scripture that the sons of God are representatives of the unfallen worlds in the universe of God.

Some Bible scholars, such as Pr. Stephen Bohr, have suggested that these sons of God are the 24 elders we read about in the book of Revelation. This interpretation has become one of the popular viewpoints in recent times as far as the identity of the 24 elders is concerned. The basic tenets of this interpretation in relation to Revelation 4 and 5 are as follows:

### ***"The Context of Revelation 4 and 5***

Revelation 4 describes four orders of beings: One who is seated on the throne, God the Father (4:2); the seven Spirits before the throne (4:5); the four living creatures or seraphim (Revelation 4:6-8, Isaiah 6:1-3); and the 24 elders (4:4). Missing in chapter 4 are the angelic host and Christ. It is important to realize that the twenty-four elders were around the throne before the arrival of Jesus in chapter 5. This means that the 24 elders cannot be those who resurrected with Jesus because when Jesus arrived in heaven they were already there!

Revelation 5 depicts two other additional orders of beings: The angels who arrived with the Lamb who had just been slain and resurrected." - Pr. Stephen Bohr

After doing a process of elimination in relation to who the 24 elders are not, Pr. Stephen Bohr concludes that the 24 elders are neither angelic nor human. And thus, they must be some other order of being.

Besides these scriptural explanations (and many others), Pr. Stephen Bohr also makes use of various Spirit of Prophecy quotes (such as the Great Controversy, page 518 and the Desire of Ages, pages 833-835) that leads him to suggest that the 24 elders are the representatives of the unfallen worlds. According to him, the 24 elders (the representatives of the unfallen worlds) were around in Revelation 4 to await the triumphant return of Christ and the angelic host from the earth as is evident in Revelation 5.

In as much as Pr. Stephen Bohr's study presents very insightful revelations on the subject of the 24 elders, I believe there are still some issues that his study does not address. Let's briefly consider some of these issues:

A) If the 24 elders were present to welcome the Redeemer from earth as Pr. Stephen Bohr's study suggests, why do we find them ministering the prayers of the saints in Revelation 5:8? Can we deduce from this text that these representatives of other worlds are actually given salvific roles on behalf of mankind?

B) How do we explain the other appearances of the 24 elders (who are supposed to be the representatives of other worlds) in other portions of the book of Revelation (see Revelation 7:13-17; Revelation 11:15-18; Revelation 19:1-4)? Are they there in heaven in these instances for a council meeting or for some other work? Friends, it is clear that in the other instances where we encounter the 24 elders in the book of Revelation, there is nothing that suggests that they have come for a council meeting in heaven as we read from the book of Job (Job 1:6; Job 2:1). However, we find them most of the time worshiping, or ministering on behalf of the human race.

C) If the 24 elders are the sons of God we read about in the book of Job (Job 1:6; Job 2:1; Job 38:7), why is the term "sons of God" as used repeatedly in the book of Job not even once employed to describe these elders in the book of Revelation? Why are these beings repeatedly referred to as elders instead of the sons of God in the book of Revelation?

D) If the 24 elders are representatives of the unfallen worlds, does it follow that there are only 24 other worlds in the universe of God? I know Pr. Stephen Bohr sees the number 24 as symbolic instead of literal. But that notwithstanding, it is also clear throughout Scripture that the number 24 which is actually 2 groups of 12 basically represents the headship of the church on earth; with the 12 patriarchs representing the leadership of the Old Testament church and the 12 apostles, the leadership of the New Testament church. Thus, it is clear that the number 24 is tied to the human family and cannot be used to symbolically refer to intelligences from other worlds.

These issues above make me to be very skeptical about the interpretation that the 24 elders are the representatives of the unfallen worlds in the universe of God.

## **5. THE 24 ELDERS AS A GROUP OF THE HIGHEST ANGELS IN HEAVEN THAT MINISTER IN A SPECIAL WAY FOR THE SALVATION OF MANKIND**

There are other interpreters who see the 24 elders as angels instead of human beings. These interpreters point out that the 24 elders are portrayed in Revelation 5:8 as ministering the prayers of the saints, a work that according to them would hardly be committed to human beings in heaven. In fact, from the account in Revelation 5:8, it is clear that both the four living creatures or seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-3; Revelation 4:6-8) and the 24 elders are all portrayed as ministering the prayers of the saints. This gives a clue that like the seraphim, the 24 elders must also be angels to be given such a salvific role on behalf of the saints.

Moreover, from Revelation 8:3-4, we find another Angel (obviously Jesus Christ Himself) who is presented to John as an angelic being ministering the prayers of the saints in the heavenly sanctuary. The passage from Revelation 8:3-4 reads:

"3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

Now friends, is it possible that we can infer from these two passages (Revelation 5:8; Revelation 8:3-4) that the 24 elders are among a group of the very highest angels in heaven to whom are committed an extraordinary task in relation to the salvation of mankind? Well, does not the Scripture say concerning the angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14).

Friends, as I have studied the subject of the 24 elders, I have become more and more convinced that the 24 elders are among a group of the highest angels in heaven to whom have been committed special responsibilities in relation to the salvation of the human race.

Let us consider some scriptural passages that lend credence to this point:

### **A) REVELATION 7:13-17**

"13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?"

7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

7:16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

(Revelation 7:13-17)

In this passage above, we find one of the elders giving John crucial information in relation to the great human multitude before the throne of God. This elder reveals to John how a great host of the human family will one day be also found at the throne of God in heaven because they washed their clothes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.

### **B) REVELATION 11:16-18**

"11:16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

11:17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

(Revelation 11:16-18)

Beloved, from this passage, we find out how the 24 elders are closely in touch with issues on planet earth. They are thrilled that the time of God's judgement has come and that the prophets, the saints and those who fear the name of the Lord will be rewarded while justice is meted out to the wicked who destroy the earth.

Friends, these passages provide hints that the 24 elders are angels who are permanently stationed in heaven working for the salvation of mankind and not some intelligent beings from other worlds who may even have been cautioned by God not to meddle in the affairs of a planet in rebellion.

**STATEMENTS REFLECTING BIBLICAL PASSAGES: ELLEN G. WHITE'S COMMENTS ON THE 24 ELDERS**

1) Ellen White stated clearly that the elders mentioned in Revelation are angels. Let us consider the S.O.P. evidence:

A) *"This roll was written within and without. John says: "I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." The vision as presented to John made its impression upon his mind. The destiny of every nation was contained in that book. John was distressed at the utter inability of any human being or angelic intelligence to read the words, or even to look thereon. His soul was wrought up to such a point of agony and suspense that ONE OF THE STRONG ANGELS had compassion on him, and laying his hand on him assuringly said, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." 20MR 197.3 (Capital Emphasis Added).*

*Beloved, it is important to note that in the passage of Revelation 5:1-8, it was one of the elders who told John not to weep. However, in Ellen White's commentary on this Scripture, she categorically uses the word 'ANGEL' instead of an 'ELDER'.*

B i) *"John beholds an innumerable company, precious, refined, purified, around the throne of the Majesty of Heaven. The angel inquires of John, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" and John answers, "Sir, thou knowest." THEN THE ANGEL DECLARES: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." Now we have the precious opportunity of washing our robes of character in the blood of the Lamb till they are spotless in his purity. To all who shall do this the promise is, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." ST December 22, 1887, par. 7 (Capital Emphasis Added).*

B ii) *"As John saw the multitude standing around the throne of God, the question was asked, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?"—"These are they which came out of great tribulation," THE ANGEL ANSWERED, "and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." At an infinite cost a fountain has been prepared for our cleansing. In the blood of the Son of God we may wash our garments of character, and make them white. If now we crucify self, and live for Christ, God will give us a place in the mansions He is preparing for those who love Him." ST April 17, 1901, par. 18.*

*Friends, these two quotes capture Ellen White's commentary on Revelation 7:13-17. In these commentaries, we once again see how she replaces the word ELDER with ANGEL. Considering, the three quotes we have considered above, it is clear that Ellen White is consistent in regard to her view that the elders in Revelation are angels? But what kind of angels are they? Are they representatives from unfallen worlds? Her other quotes do not suggest they are representatives of unfallen worlds but rather part of a group of the highest angels in heaven who have been given a special assignment to minister for the salvation of the human race. Let us now consider the S.O.P. evidence in relation to this point:*

*C) "Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. THE VERY HIGHEST ANGELS IN THE HEAVENLY COURTS ARE APPOINTED TO WORK OUT THE PRAYERS WHICH ASCEND TO GOD for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage...." LHU 370 (Capital Emphasis Added).*

Friends, in this quote from E. G. White, there is a clear parallel link in relation to the work done by the four living creatures and elders who are portrayed as ministering the prayers of the saints as recorded in Revelation 5:8. This quote from Ellen White also shows a parallel link to the work of the angel who ministers the prayers of the saints as recorded in Revelation 8:3-4. Thus beloved, the E. G. White's quotes above come to support the fifth biblical view in our study that the 24 elders are actually among a group of the very highest angels in the heavenly courts that minister in a special way for the salvation of mankind. It is very clear that our Bible study do synchronise with this quote from Ellen White:

"Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. THE VERY HIGHEST ANGELS IN THE HEAVENLY COURTS ARE APPOINTED TO WORK OUT THE PRAYERS WHICH ASCEND TO GOD for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage...." LHU 370 (Capital Emphasis Added).

At this point in our study, someone is likely to ask the question: Why is the number 24 related to these elders? What is the symbolism of the number 24 in relation to these angels? Friends, I believe that the number 24 as linked with these angels is basically a symbolic representation of the headship of the entire body of Christ. That is, the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles. You see, the 12 patriarchs represent the leadership of the Old Testament church; while the 12 apostles represent the leadership of the New Testament church. Thus, in a way, the number 24 is linked with a group of the highest angels (elders) in heaven who have been ministering in a very special way for the salvation of all of God's children throughout the ages.

Thus, it is clear from the above explanation that the number 24 might not be literal. In fact, it is interesting to note that even though Ellen White uses the word ANGELS in place of the ELDERS (such as in Revelation 5:5), she never uses the term 24 angels in any of her commentaries on these elders. Thus, the commentaries of Ellen White on these elders might also suggest the symbolic expression of the number 24 as used in reference to the elders.

### ***A PROBLEM WITH AN S.O.P INTERPRETATION***

Pr. Stephen Bohr in his study "THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS" states emphatically that E. G. White identifies the 24 elders through the quote below in the *Desire of Ages*:

"All heaven was waiting to welcome the Saviour to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection followed. The heavenly host, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, attended the joyous train.

As they drew near to the city of God, the challenge is given by the escorting angels,-  
-

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; And the King of glory shall come in." Joyfully the waiting sentinels respond,--

"Who is this King of glory?" This they say, not because they know not who He is, but because they would hear the answer of exalted praise,--

"The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates; Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; And the King of glory shall come in." Again is heard the challenge, "Who is this King of glory?" for the angels never weary of hearing His name exalted. The escorting angels make reply,--

"The Lord of hosts; He is the King of glory." Ps. 24:7-10. Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the angelic throng sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music.

There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King.

But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of

nails. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father, with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 19:30; 17:24.

The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are "accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. 85:10. The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Heb. 1:6.

With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:12.

Songs of triumph mingle with the music from angel harps, till heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise. Love has conquered. The lost is found. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13. -----" - Desire of Ages, pages 833-835.

Beloved, while it is clear that this quote is a right description of the events in Revelation chapters 4 and 5, I do not see any evidence that indicates that Ellen White identifies the 24 elders as the representatives of the unfallen worlds. In fact, the portion of the quote above which is the main reason for Pr. Bohr's interpretation that the 24 elders are representatives of the unfallen worlds have been repeated below:

"There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King."

Friends, from this quote from Ellen White above, we can infer the following:

i) The sons of God we studied about earlier in the book of Job (Job. 1:6 and Job 2:1) are actually the representatives of the unfallen worlds.

ii) The sons of God had come to heaven to purposely "welcome the Redeemer".

iii) As we studied from the book of Job, these representatives of the unfallen worlds who had assembled in heaven would go back to their particular worlds, sending the glad tidings about the triumph of the King of glory.

iv) The biblical fact from point 3 above is in contrast with what we read about the elders in other passages of the book of Revelation (see Revelation 7:13-17; Revelation 11:15-18; Revelation 19:1-4). From these passages in the book of Revelation, the elders seem to be permanently stationed in heaven and are actually occupied with works that relate to the salvation of the human race.

v) Ellen White does not state in her commentary above that these sons of God were there in heaven to minister the prayers of the saints as we read from Revelation 5:8. To this work, she points to the very highest angels in the heavenly courts. From LHU 370, we read the following: "Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. THE VERY HIGHEST ANGELS IN THE HEAVENLY COURTS ARE APPOINTED TO WORK OUT THE PRAYERS WHICH ASCEND TO GOD for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage...." LHU 370 (Capital Emphasis Added) Beloved, this E. G White quote becomes very clear when we come to understand that the four living creatures (or seraphim; see Isaiah 6:1-3) and the elders (or angels; according to Mrs. White) were portrayed as ministering the prayers of the saints in Revelation 5:8.

vi) Based on what we have discussed so far, it is quite clear that the biblical accounts in Revelation 4 and 5 do not mention the representatives of the unfallen worlds. Rather, the main focus is on the Redeemer who is the only One qualified to open the seven - sealed book because He has shed His blood for the human race. Other beings described in Revelation 4 and 5 are God the Father (Revelation 4:3 and 5:7), the Holy Spirit (Revelation 4:5 and 5:6), the four living creatures or seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-3, Revelation 4:6-8 and 5:6-10), the elders or strong angels according to Mrs. White (Revelation 4:4, 10 and 5:6-10), and the innumerable host of angels (Revelation 5:11-12). According to Mrs. White, the representatives of the unfallen worlds were there in heaven to WELCOME the Redeemer. And it is quite evident from the passages of Revelation 4 and 5 that these sons of God were not captured by the apostle John in his account of the glorification of the risen Christ in heaven.

Thus beloved, from the points above, it cannot be inferred from the passage in the Desire of Ages, pages 833-835; that the 24 elders are the representatives of the unfallen worlds.

### **SOMETHING FOR FURTHER STUDY**

From the book Great Controversy, page 518, we read the following:

"The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the ANGELS OF GOD came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous." GC page 518. (Capital Emphasis Added).

From the above quote, Ellen White identifies the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds as angels. Now, some questions that I want us to be reflecting on as part of our further study on this topic are as follows:

1) We have considered earlier from Scripture that if Adam had not sinned, he will have been the representative of our planet at those heavenly council meetings we read about in the book of Job.

In fact, Ellen White records the following about Adam: "In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, THE FATHER AND REPRESENTATIVE of the whole human family." Patriarchs and Prophets, page 48 (Capital Emphasis Added).

Now, supposing Adam had been obedient and represented planet Earth, will he have been referred to as an angel too?

2) Let us consider another quote from Ellen White:

"The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place. I asked one of them why they were so much more lovely than those on the earth. The reply was, "We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth." Then I saw two trees, one looked much like the tree of life in the city. The fruit of both looked beautiful, but of one they could not eat. They had power to eat of both, but were forbidden to eat of one. Then my attending angel said to me, "None in this place have tasted of the forbidden tree; but if they should eat, they would fall." Then I was taken to a world which had seven moons. There I saw good old Enoch, who had been translated. On his right arm he bore a glorious palm, and on each leaf was written "Victory." Around his head was a dazzling white

wreath, and leaves on the wreath, and in the middle of each leaf was written "Purity," and around the wreath were stones of various colors, that shone brighter than the stars, and cast a reflection upon the letters and magnified them. On the back part of his head was a bow that confined the wreath, and upon the bow was written "Holiness." Above the wreath was a lovely crown that shone brighter than the sun. I asked him if this was the place he was taken to from the earth. He said, "It is not; the city is my home, and I have come to visit this place." He moved about the place as if perfectly at home. I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, "You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God." EW 39, 40.

From this quote above, Ellen White clearly states that the inhabitants of the first place she was taken to "were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus,..." Here, Ellen White does not state that these beings were angels. She rather said these beings bore the express image of Jesus. Like humans, who have been created in the image of God (Jesus), these beings also bore the express image of Jesus. (I believe E. G. White had in mind the image of Jesus in his glorified human nature in heaven).

Well the big question which is similar to the one above is this: Was the representative of these beings also there at those heavenly council meetings we read about in the book of Job? If yes, was this representative also described as an angel by E. G. White?

Well, I believe these and many other questions will continue to perplex our finite minds till we enter into the knowledge of heavenly intelligences in the soon coming future. But from what we have gone through so far, one thing is clear; Ellen G. White refers to the elders as strong angels in heaven who minister in a special way for the salvation of mankind. Thus, for anyone to use the two E. G. White quotes (that is, the Desire of Ages, pages 833-835 and the Great Controversy, page 518) to push the viewpoint that the 24 elders are a different order of beings who hail from the unfallen worlds in the universe of God is to amplify or stretch the quotes to speak out more than they really do.

Exhortation: Friends, in as much as I'm convinced about the thoughts I have expressed in this study, I'm also aware that on this side of the universe of God, we may not fully perceive and understand all the issues in relation to these heavenly intelligences. And so I humbly agree with the apostle Paul when he says:

"9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but

then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).

Even though these issues may perplex our minds, I believe they are interesting subjects that we should continue to study; for they draw our souls unto a higher ground.

NOTE: Unless otherwise specified, all Scriptural References are from the King James Version of the Bible.

***SELECTED REFERENCES / FURTHER STUDY***

1. THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS by Pastor Stephen Bohr.
2. Who Are the 24 Elders in Revelation by Dr. Thomas Ice.
3. Seventh-day Adventist Commentary on Revelation 4:4 as utilized in a response to a question by William Fagal, Director Ellen G. White Estate Branch Office, Andrews University Berrien Springs, MI 49104-1400 USA.

In our next study, we will consider the topic: Who are the 4 living creatures before the throne of God? The Bible study references for this study are Ezekiel 1:3-14, Ezekiel 10:1-22, Isaiah 6:1-3, Revelation 4:6-8, and Revelation 5:6-10. Please do well to go through these passages before the next study is released.

Stay blessed and keep shining for King Jesus.

Maranatha!

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