My translation is given in bold first, followed by the Greek text then followed by parsing and grammar notes. Other textual and lexical notes will be included and footnoted, as well as comments and observations. The final smoothed translation will be included at the end.

1 After these things I looked, and behold a door having been opened in Heaven, 
Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα ἤνεωγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ,

The perfect participle ἤνεωγμένη is stative which opens up the state of affairs in which the rest of the action that subsequently unfolds will be situated—that being, an open door in Heaven. This situates John’s vision as seen through the open door into the heavenly realm. It could also be considered an anarthrous attribution to θύρα—thus the participle functions adjectivally to the noun of which it matches in gender, case and number.

The prepositional phrase ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, situates the door in the heavenly realm.

1 Μετὰ ταῦτα simply indicates that a new vision is coming after chapters 1—3, it is not necessarily in historical order but rather the order in which John saw the visions (Beale, Revelation, 316-317). Beale notes, “the concluding phrase of 4:1 affirms only that the subsequent visions of the book are further visions concerned with an explanation of the ‘latter days,’ which are both ‘realized’ and ‘unrealized,’ set in motion but not consummated (as ch. 1 affirms), including the eschatological past and present as well as the future” (Beale, Revelation, 318).
And the voice earlier which I heard like that of a trumpet speaking with me saying, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη ἂν ἦκουσα ὡς σάλπιγγος λαλούσης μετ’ ἑμοῦ λέγων,

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The plural neuter pronoun ἂ is accusative and the direct object of the future indicative δείξω. The use of δεὶ (it is necessary) with the infinitive of γίνομαι (to become, to come to pass). Hence I have translated it “the things which must come to pass.”

Here a choice about segmentation must be made. If verse 1 ends after μετὰ ταῦτα then it should be translated as I have above. However, if μετὰ ταῦτα belongs to the beginning of verse 2, then it starts the next sentence, “After these I was immediately in the spirit...”

I have chosen to go with the majority reading of this segmentation as it seems to make more sense to be part of the dialogue from the voice rather than resuming John’s narrative.

2 immediately I was in the spirit, εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι,
Interesting to note the use of γίνομαι, “to come to acquire or experience a state—‘to become.’” This implies that John’s state of being has shifted now to being ‘in the spirit.’ What follows in his vision should be understood then as spiritual realities. Since John has been ushered into this spiritual, timeless dimension of God’s heavenly council, the chronology of the events he sees may be difficult to precisely determine.

**and behold a throne was set in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting,**

καὶ ἴδον θρόνος ἐκεῖτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον καθήμενος,

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While the imperfect aspect may be conceived by the writer as being in progress, or even as a past tense. However, the imperfective aspect may be used in a variety of temporal contexts.

Something else is going on here. There seems to be an escalation of the verbal aspects being used in this verse here, progressing from aorist (ἐγενόμην), to imperfect (ἐκεῖτο) to present (καθήμενος). This escalation may be to draw the attention of the reader to the one seated on the throne (τὸν θρόνον καθήμενος), which makes sense given the awe of the imagery used.

This is meant to hit the reader as a climactic and awesome vision of Yahweh enthroned on high.

**3 and the one sitting [was] similar in appearance as a stone of jasper and carnelian,**

καὶ ὁ καθήμενος δμοιος ὀράσει λίθῳ ἱσπιδὶ καὶ σαρδίῳ,

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6 John is summoned into the secret heavenly council and is thus to go back and communicate God’s hidden purpose to his people, having been to the timeless dimension where truth and reality can be clearly discerned. John thus identifies himself with OT prophets as commissioned by God. There is little basis to see this as symbolic of the physical rapture of the church before the tribulation as some Dispensational Premillenialists argue (Beale, *Revelation*, 319).
9 Porter suggests that the imperfective aspect is more heavily weighted when used in opposition to the perfective (aorist) and implies greater semantic significance (Porter, *Idioms*, 22-31).
10 He is enthroned and in sovereign control over earth’s affairs regardless of how rampant evil seems to run. This is demonstrated in chapters 6-16 where all judgments are issued from the throne of God. Furthermore, it is placed in the center of this heavenly cosmology with circular constructions emphasizing God’s cosmic, universal kingship (Beale, *Revelation*, 320).
Here the adjective ὁμοιός matches the nominative subject (καθήμενος) in gender, case and number. We have an instrumental dative clause of likeness and identity, ὃρασει λίθῳ ἵππῃ καὶ σαρδίῳ, expanding on the nominative subject. This is one of three non-verbal clauses which describe the heavenly throne. Perhaps the omission of a verb in these clauses is to not take attention away from the previous clause which had been the culmination of an escalation of verbal aspects to highlight the throne and the one sitting upon it.

The visual of the stones represent God’s sovereign majesty and glory. They in theophany scenes of the OT (Ezekiel 1, 28; Exodus 28) in which divine glory is manifested. Their use here in Revelation is a summary and anticipation of the fuller list in chapter 21, where God’s glory is revealed. The placement of jasper first in the list is significant of its link to glory as it is linked explicitly to the city which has the glory of God and whose luminance is like jasper shining like crystal in 21:11.

and [there was] a rainbow around the throne similar in appearance to emerald.
καὶ ἤρις κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου ὁμοιός ὃρασει σμαραγδίνῳ.

Here, ἤρις (rainbow) and ὁμοιός (similar) do not match in gender. It seems some scribes corrected it to ὁμοίως according to the apparatus on the textual variants. It is unclear to me why this would be an intentional mismatch unless it were a sort of Septuaginitism.

The imagery of the rainbow (also used in Ezekiel 1:28), perhaps alluding to the Noahic covenant, implies that God’s actions of judgment are also tempered with considerations of mercy. Beale comments, “The precious stones together with the rainbow are an incipient hint, not only that this vision eventually will issue into a new creation, but that it already actually portrays the beginning of the new creation in heaven: the precious

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11 Robertson, A Grammar, 530.
12 The stones intensify the light around the throne by reflecting the unapproachable brightness, and hence glory, surrounding God himself (cf. 1 Tim. 6:16; Ps. 104:2). See Beale, Revelation, 320-321. Bratcher comments, “The Greek ‘had the appearance of jasper and carnelian’ means ‘(he who sat there) shone with a light the color of jasper and carnelian.’” (Bratcher, A Handbook, 88).
13 Porter cites this as an improper preposition (see Porter, Idioms, 180).
stones in 21:10–11, 18–23 are part of a depiction of the new creation, and the “rainbow” is the first revelatory sign of the new creation that emerged after the Noahic flood.”

4 and around the throne [there were] twenty-four thrones,
kαὶ κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου θρόνους εἴκοσι τέσσαρες,

There is nothing particularly interesting about the grammar to note here. However, the SBL edition has θρόνοι instead of θρόνους due to variants found in several manuscripts. This was probably a scribal change to match the accusative case of εἴκοσι τέσσαρες (twenty-four). The significance is negligible to translation and both the UBS and NA28 texts reflect the majority reading of θρόνους among the variants. It is unclear to me though why John would mismatch the cases of θρόνους and εἴκοσι τέσσαρες unless it was perhaps a Septuagintism.

and upon the thrones [there were] twenty-four thrones elders sitting having been clothed in white garments,
kαὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους εἴκοσι τέσσαρας πρεσβυτέρους καθημένους περιβεβλημένους ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς

The adjective πρεσβύτερος simply means elder or older (here used substantively functions as a noun). It refers to a person who holds authority and responsibily—specifically in matters of socio-religious concern.

“In some languages πρεσβύτερος is best rendered as ‘older leaders,’ but in other languages the more appropriate term would be the equivalent of ‘counselor,’ since it would be assumed that counselors would be older than the average person in a group as well as having authority to lead and direct activities.”

The twenty-four elders may probably be angels who are identified with the twelve tribes and twelve apostles and thus represent the entire redeemed community of OT and NT saints. The number twenty-four may be based on the organization of the temple servants in 1 Chronicles by David into twenty-four orders of priests (1 Chron. 24:3-19), twenty-four Levitical gatekeepers (26:17-19), and twenty-four orders of Levites (25:6-31). This seems to provide good explanation as to why the elders perform mediatorial functions and participate

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14 Beale, Revelation, 321.
15 Louw, Greek-English Lexicon, 542.
16 Also supporting this conclusion is the fact that the angel in 22:8-9 who reveals the visions to John says he is a fellow servant of your brethren the prophets (See Beale, Revelation, 322).
in liturgical function in the heavenly cultic temple throughout the book. Another suggestion is that the number twenty-four is based on a Jewish tradition that there were twenty-four authors of the books of the OT. If this is the case, then the book in chapter 5 could be identified as the OT itself and these elders would be the authors and witnesses to the prophecies in it that have been fulfilled by Christ.

The two participles καθημένους and περιβεβλημένους match πρεσβυτέρους in gender, case and number. They function adverbially, describing the elders. The use of present and perfect aspects in these participles perhaps foregrounds them in the narrative. However, the use of the perfect in περιβεβλημένους probably describes the state of affairs with continuing effects in regards to the clothing of these elders. The passive voice indicating that they were not the ones clothing themselves with these garments, but rather they were clothed with them—assumedly by God.

**and upon their heads [were] crowns of gold.**
καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν στεφάνους χρυσοῦς.

Louw-Nida define a στέφανος as “a wreath consisting either of foliage or of precious metals formed to resemble foliage and worn as a symbol of honor, victory, or as a badge of high office—‘wreath, crown.’” However, the UBS Handbook notes that these were not victory wreathes but they type of crowns that kings wear. Patterson calls them “victor’s crowns.”

**5 And from the throne proceed lightnings and sounds and thunders,**
καὶ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου ἐκπορεύονται ἄστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ,

The nominative clause of plural nouns, ἄστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ, are the subject of the verb ἐκπορεύονται (hence the third person plural) set in the present tense—seen as an ongoing action. The idea here being that there is continuous eruptions of lightning, rumblings and thunder. It is of note that most of the verbs in verses 5—8 are in the

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17 Beale, *Revelation*, 323-324. The term ‘elder’ is also used in Hebrews 11:2 of great OT saints.
18 Beale, *Revelation*, 326. Paige Patterson seems to favour the elders representing redeemed humans due to the nature of their song (Patterson, *Revelation*, 152).
19 Louw, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 75.
21 Patterson, *Revelation*, 151.
present, which may foreground and highlight the action more than denote temporal significance.

Some see φωναί and βρονταί to be one unit with the καὶ linking them together and thus translate them “peals of thunder” instead of as separate units. The phrase “lightnings and sounds and thunders,” is repeated in 8:5, 11:19 and 16:18 at the conclusion of each series of seven judgments which here, implicitly identifies God’s throne as the source from where these judgments proceed.

and seven torches of fire burning before the throne,
καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ λαμπάδες πυρὸς καίόμεναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου,

Louw-Nida define λαμπάς as “a light made by burning a wick saturated with oil contained in a relatively small vessel—‘lamp.’” The image of the torches is patterned after Zechariah 4:2-6. They may perhaps refer back to the seven spirits before the throne in 1:4. Patterson comments, “indeed according to the text are the seven spirits or the Holy Spirit presented in his fullness to the churches. Conceivably the seven lamps of v. 5 are to be considered the seven churches now in their heavenly abode and still possessing the fullness of the Spirit. Whatever the case, the Spirit is clearly in view.”

which are the seven spirits of God,
ἀ εἰσιν τὰ ἐπὶ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ,

The relative pronoun ἃ (relPRO-NNP) refers back to λαμπάδες (NON-FNP), however some scribes seemed to have changed it to αἱ (relPRO-FNP) in some manuscripts to better match its antecedent. A possible explanation is what Porter refers to as attraction, “when the ‘required’ case, number or gender agreement is not found between a referent and its relative pronoun.” The phrase however is likely a special explanatory Greek idiom and is “used without much regard to the gender (not to say number) of antecedent or predicate.”

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23 Beale, Revelation, 326.
24 Louw, Greek-English Lexicon, 65.
25 Beale, Revelation, 326-327.
26 Patterson, Revelation, 153.
27 Porter, Idioms, 251.
28 Robertson, A Grammar, 411.
6 and before the throne [was something] as a sea of glass similar to crystal.
καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ὡς θάλασσα ἀνέλθη ὡς κρυστάλλῳ.

This is a non-verbal clause. The conjunction ὡς is a marker of relationship between events or states.²⁹ A subject must be supplied in English, such as “something,” as well as a verb—“was.”

“The words glass and crystal, like “jasper and carnelian” in verse 3, may not necessarily indicate that the water was solid as glass or crystal, but that it was as clear, or as bright, as glass or crystal.”³⁰ Patterson sees the word θάλασσα as referencing not wave action, but a vast expanse of crystalline sparkling glass spread before the throne.³¹ The wording confirms Ezekiel 1:22, which also refers to an expanse like crystal, as the background for the phrase. Beale suggests that it may reflect the (1) laver of Solomon’s temple, given the temple imagery of chapters 4-5, (2) God’s holy separateness in heaven and (3) an analogue to the Red Sea. Psalm 28:2-3 also refers to God dwelling “on many waters” in his holy court and dwelling on the flood sitting as King forever in verses 9-10. If John has the Psalm in mind, it may support both the imagery of the heavenly temple laver and the sea as a place of evil over which God sovereignly reigns.³²

And in the midst of the throne and around the throne [there were] four living beings full of eyes in front and behind,
Καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου τέσσαρα ζώα γέμοντα ὡφθαλμῶν ἐμπροσθεν καὶ ὄπισθεν,

PrAPart-NNP
γέμοντα

Spatially this scene is a bit difficult to understand. It is said that the sea is before (ἐνώπιον) the throne, and literally the living beings are in the middle of (μέσῳ) and around (κύκλῳ) the throne. Some suggested translations include, “one at the middle of each of the four sides of the throne,” and “in the center, round the throne itself.” What seems to be indicated here is the immediate proximity of the living beings to the throne. R. G. Hall even

²⁹ Louw, Greek-English Lexicon, 617.
³¹ Patterson, Revelation, 153.
³² The “sea” is also associated with the idea of evil in scripture. It is the abode of the evil sea monster in the OT and it is the origin of the beasts in Daniel 7. So John may see the chaotic powers of the sea as calmed by God’s sovereignty and it could be an intentional contrast between the crystal clear river of life coming from the throne in 22:1. “The sea as the source of satanic evil opposing God’s throne has been eliminated and replaced by the river of redemption, which has its source in the throne.” (Beale, Revelation, 327-328).
suggests that the living beings were part of the throne, like carved legs on a chair. However, this is unlikely to envision them as part of the throne’s construction since later on (5:8 and 19:4) they fall down and worship before the throne. In any case, the language of the translation should reflect this closeness to the throne.

John may have the living beings in Ezekiel 10:12-15, and 20-22, in mind here. Isaiah 6 also describe seraphim as having six wings. The word ζῷα is normally translated beasts, animals or creatures, however these may evoke unwanted imagery of ominous biological life forms which may be repulsive and hideous to the modern reader—a tendency which is exacerbated by their descriptions if it is imagined to describe them visually. Louw-Nida define it as, “a supernatural being surrounding the throne of God in visions of the book of Revelation—a living being.” This seems to be a better choice of translation to avoid unwanted imaginations of hideous creatures.

Some early church fathers thought the four living beings represented the four Gospel writers, and others that they symbolize the fullness of life since each animal is the head of its species. However, most likely they represent the whole created order of animate life. “The four creatures represent general creation and the elders the elect of God’s special creation.” So here we have a heavenly representation of a truth shown elsewhere in scripture, namely that, all creation sings the praise of God. Furthermore, Beale notes there is a double symbolism—that they represent the Creator as well—the multitude of eyes signifying divine omniscience as they are God’s agents. Their knowing eyes search the earth and they inaugurate the judgements on those who truly deserve them (6:1-8; 15:7) on behalf of God. Their knowing eyes search the earth, and they execute punishments only on those who truly deserve them.

7 and the first living being [was] like a lion and the second living being [was] like an ox and the third living being having a face like a man and the fourth living being [was] like an eagle flying,

καὶ τὸ ζῴον τὸ πρῶτον ὄμοιον λέοντι καὶ τὸ δεύτερον ζῶον ὄμοιον μόσχῳ καὶ τὸ τρίτον ζῷον ἔχων τὸ πρόσωπον ὡς ἀνθρώπου καὶ τὸ τέταρτον ζῷον ὄμοιον ἀετῷ πετομένῳ,

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ζῷον | ἔχων | πετομένῳ

34 Beale, Revelation, 329.
35 Patterson, Revelation, 154.
36 Louw, Greek-English Lexicon, 144.
37 Beale, Revelation, 329-330.
38 Beale, Revelation, 322.
39 "For the discerning reader these “living beings” are an encouragement to keep persevering under persecution, knowing that God is acutely aware of their plight and is already in the process of taking action in their favor and against their persecutors (Beale, Revelation, 330)."
Grammatically there’s nothing particularly of interest here, they are mostly nominative clauses linked together. Some manuscripts change ἔχον to ἔχον to match the neuter gender of ζῷον. Translationally this has no effect. The participle πετομένῳ functions adverbially modifying ἀετῶ, matching it in gender, case and number. It might be also translated “an eagle in flight.”

Interpreters have generally viewed these beings as representative of four segments of biological life: the lion representing untamed or predator species, the ox representing domesticated animals, the eagle representing flying animals and man representing human life. However, it seems that sea life is left out.40 Beale suggests an alternative theory: the tribes of Israel were divided into four groups in the wilderness and had an insignia on their priest’s breastplate of a lion, a stag (originally an ox), a man, and a serpent (which was changed later to an eagle). Jewish tradition said this was intended to reflect the four guardian angels around the throne. If this is true, it may link these living beings to represent humanity and the worship of the ideal community of God.41

8 and the four living beings, each one of them having six wings, around and within being full of eyes,
καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῷα, ἐν καθ’ ἐν αὐτῶν ἔχον ἀνὰ πτέρυγας ἔχει, κυκλόθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν γέμουσιν ὀφθαλμῶν,

PrAPart-MNS ἔχον PrAlnd-3P γέμουσιν

The phrase ἐν καθ’ ἐν αὐτῶν ἔχον ἀνὰ πτέρυγας ἔχει, κυκλόθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν is literally, “one by one they each,” however, that doesn’t make for very good English. There does perhaps seem to be some emphasis on distinguishing that each one of them had six wings though, which is why I have translated it “each one of them” and left out the “one by one.” Some manuscripts add “outside/without” between “around and within.” However, the shorter reading is preferable although the scribal addition perhaps does seem to explain what is meant by “around.”42 Depending on how one breaks up the clauses, κυκλόθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν could pertain to the six wings—“having six wings around and within”—or the eyes. However, it makes more sense to link them with the eyes and the traditional interpretation and rendition of this phrase supports this understanding.

The number of wings seems to be taken from Isaiah 6:2, as in Ezekiel 1 the living beings have four wings. Patterson comments, “one conceivable explanation for the difference in four-winged versus six-winged angels is the possibility that the four-winged angels of Ezekiel are cherubim, while the six-winged angels that are found in Isaiah 6 are specifically

40 Patterson, Revelation, 156.
41 Beale, Revelation, 331.
42 Beale, Revelation, 331.
said to belong to the seraphic order.” In Isaiah they stand above the throne, however, in Ezekiel they form part of the base of the throne with the “wheels.” Ezekiel’s vision of the beings also differs in that each of them have four faces of a lion, ox, man and eagle. So it would seem that John is using imagery combined from Isaiah and Ezekiel here and likely to be best interpreted as a symbolic depiction.

and without having rest day and night saying,
kai anapauasin ous exousin hemeras kai vuktos legontes,

The present aspect of εχουσιν and λέγοντες sees the actions as continuous and ongoing. This is an image of perpetual unceasing worship by the living beings as their purpose.

“Holy holy holy Lord God Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming.”

The living beings’ trishagion of “holy holy holy” is from Isaiah 6. It also finds expression in Jewish apocryphal writings such as 1 Enoch 39:11-14. This was certainly understood by John as Trinitarian. However, Calvin commented on using this as a Trinitarian proof text:

“if I had to contend with heretics, I would rather choose to employ stronger proofs; for they become more obstinate, and assume an air of triumph, when inconclusive arguments are brought against them; and they might easily and readily maintain that, in this passage, as in other parts of Scripture, the number “three” denotes perfection. Although, therefore, I have no doubt that the angels here describe One God in Three Persons, (and, indeed, it is impossible to praise God without also uttering the praises of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit,) yet I think that it would be better to employ more conclusive passages, lest, in proving an article of our faith, we should expose ourselves to the scorn of heretics.”

41 Patterson, Revelation, 156.
42 Beale, Revelation, 330.
43 Patterson, Revelation, 156.
44 Calvin, Commentary on Isaiah, 205.
The use of the different tense forms in the second title for God, “who was and who is and who is coming” express the idea of divine infinity and sovereignty over all points of history—beginning, middle and end.47 This phrase is used in 1:4 and is a reflection of God’s revealed name, “I AM,” in Exodus 3:14. This name was later expanded upon in Jewish tradition with threefold formulas based on Isaiah 41:4; 44:6 and Deuteronomy 32:39.48 The substantive present participle ὁ ἐρχόμενος, “the coming one” expresses the imminence of Yahweh’s arrival which is later shown as Jesus’ return—linking Christ with the eternal God. If one traces through the book, the Lord who is titled as “the coming one,” comes back as the returning and victorious Christ, then it ends with the expression of the longing for His coming, “even so come!” in 22:20.

9 And whenever the living beings will give glory and honour and thanks to the one sitting upon the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, καὶ ὁταν δώσουσιν49 τὰ ζωὰ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ, τῷ ζώντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων,

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<tr>
<td>δώσουσιν</td>
<td>καθημένῳ</td>
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Normally ὅταν is used with the subjunctive, however here it appears with the future indicative.50 Some significant manuscripts have the aorist subjunctive δώσωσιν instead of the future indicative here. Grammarians differ over whether this has an iterative idea when used with ὅταν or a simple future force. The former would mean this is what the living beings have always done or are always doing and the latter that what they are now doing will continue into the future or refer to a single future event. However, the reading of the future indicative is the more difficult to interpret and thus has been deemed likely to be the original reading.51 The words δόξαν, τιμὴν and εὐχαριστίαν are all in the accusative case as the direct object of δώσουσιν. The dative present participles καθημένῳ and ζώντι are the indirect objects.

How can glory, something inherent to God’s essence, be said to be given to Him? It seems that there is a certain glory inherent to all created orders, as in 1 Corinthians 11:7, it is said that man is the the image of the glory of God. So the point expressed here could be that the living beings bring their created glory to God in the same way that the elders bring their crowns. They recognize that whatever glory they possess finds its source in God and is thus rightly attributed to Him.52

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47 Beale, Revelation, 332.
48 Beale, Revelation, 187-188.
49 δώσουσιν appears in א 046, 1854, 2351 and TextNode.
50 Porter, Idioms, 240.
51 Beale, Revelation, 333-334.
52 Patterson, Revelation, 158.
10 the twenty four elders will fall down before the one sitting upon the throne and will worship the one who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne saying,

πεσοῦνται οἱ ἐκκοσμηται ἐπὶ τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ ζωτίῳ εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων, καὶ βαλοῦσιν τοὺς στεφάνους αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου λέγοντες,

The preposition ἐνώπιον is always followed by the genitive, hence the genitive case of the clause τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου, here denoting the location (before or in front of).\(^\text{53}\) Louw-Nida define πίπτω as “to fall from a standing or upright position down to the ground or surface—‘to fall, to fall down.’”\(^\text{54}\) This coupled together with them “casting” their crowns before the throne seems to envision a sort of spontaneous and passionately enraptured worship in response to the truth of who the Eternal God is as sung by the living beings.

“Whatever the case, clearly the worship of heaven is focused not on the created order but on the uncreated and eternal God; and worship is spontaneous, moving, exciting, and literally rung from the hearts of the participating entities out of their gratitude to God for creation, providence, and redemption. When the saints assemble, the worship of every church ought always to be nothing less than a rehearsal for the day when we enter the heavenly worship described here.”\(^\text{55}\)

The phrase εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων, literally “unto the ages of ages” is a common idiom used to say “forever and ever.” This reminder of the only Sovereign who will reign forever points to God as the only one to whom belongs ultimate and eternal devotion. This should serve as an encouragement to the recipients of the letter who are persecuted and under temptation to compromise.

“God’s eternal reign supersedes the temporary reign of evil, pseudo-divine kings who ultimately will be judged. Such an eternal perspective should be a solid basis for persecuted Christians to continue persevering, for thus they know that they will finally be vindicated and rewarded (cf. Dan. 12:1–3, 12), even though they are presently no match for their oppressors.”\(^\text{56}\)


\(^{\text{54}}\) Louw, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 197.

\(^{\text{55}}\) Patterson, *Revelation*, 160.

The twenty-four elders who represent the unity of the people of God throughout time (OT and NT), after the living beings (who represent all created things) worship God, the people of God respond and fall down in worship together with creation. There is here a synergy of the worship of God in heaven and on earth—that this heavenly vision images what happens now here also, that the people of God gather to worship together with creation their Creator and Sovereign Lord. The twenty-four elders being representative of God’s people who endure to the end are seen with crowns on their head—that which was the promised reward to them before (Rev. 2:10). These they cast before the throne in worship and recognition that it is only because of the Lord that they received them in the first place.

11 “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power,

\[\text{Ἀξίος εἶ, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεός ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν,}\]

The phrase ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεός ἡμῶν forms a vocative clause which is equated with the implied “you” of the first clause, Ἀξίος εἶ, as well as being the subject of λαβεῖν. It could be translated as “the Lord and our God” or “our Lord and God” if the καὶ is seen as joining the two into one unit referenced by ἡμῶν. It is interesting that the article (τὴν) is kept with all the abstract qualities (glory, honour and power) and is probably significant. Robertson comments, “The article is not necessary with abstract qualities, but is often so used to sharpen the prominence of the quality or to describe it as previously mentioned.”57 Also, “In enumerations the repetition of καὶ gives a kind of solemn dignity and is called polysyndeton.”58 So I’ve kept the article in the translation, but also the phrase perhaps is emphasizing that it is the glory and the honour and the power which God possesses.

The use of the phrase “our Lord and God” bears similarity with the title, dominus et deus noster, which was applied to the emperor Domitian—so this could well be intentionally polemic against the emperor cult. This emphasizes the contrast between God’s eternal kingship and that of the temporary earthly rulers.59

Something interesting to note, the living beings give glory, honour and thanks to God and the elders say God is worthy to receive glory, honour and power. If the living beings represent all of creation, and the elders represent God’s people—then we have here an image of creation giving glory to God and God’s people recognizing His worthiness to receive glory (cf. Psalm 96).

57 Robertson, A Short Grammar, 70–71.
58 Robertson, A Grammar, 427.
59 Beale, Revelation, 334-335.
because you created all things and through your will they exist and were created.”

ὅτι σὺ ἐκτίσας τὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημά σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.

AoAInd-2S ἐκτίσας
ImpAInd-3P ἦσαν
AoPassInd-3P ἐκτίσθησαν

ὅτι introduces a causal clause, establishing the relation as to why God is worthy to receive glory, honour and power. The διὰ plus θέλημά (accusative) is used as an instrumental preposition—that is, God’s will serves as the device or means by which all things exist and were created. The phrase, ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν (they existed and they were created), has been interpreted by some to mean that creation existed in God’s mind before he actually created, or that the two verbs stress the fact that God created all things. “It may be best to view the first verb as referring to the ongoing preservation of the created order and the second to the inception of creation: ‘they continually exist and have come into being.’”

There is also a strong presence of influence from Daniel 4:35-37 here, echoing Nebuchadnezzar’s hymn which emphasizes that God is not merely sovereign over creation but that He has created all things to serve His purposes and accomplish His will without possibility of being thwarted. Therefore, when His people suffer, they must trust this and rest assured that it all has a redemptive purpose according to His will.

Smoothed Translation:

After all of this, I had a vision of a door which had been opened in Heaven, and the voice which I had heard earlier that was like a trumpet speaking with me said,

“Come up here and I will show you the things which must happen after these.”

Immediately I was in the spirit, and there was a throne set in heaven. Upon the Throne was One seated whose appearance was similar to a stone of jasper and carnelian. Also, there was a rainbow around the Throne which had the appearance of emerald. Around the Throne there were twenty-four other thrones. And upon those thrones, twenty-four elders who had been clothed in white garments were sitting. They had golden victors’ crowns upon their heads. From the Throne erupted lightning, rumblings and thunder. Before the Throne, there were seven flame lamps burning, which are the seven spirits of God. Also before the throne was an expanse like a sea of glass resembling crystal.

Closely surrounding the Throne there were four living beings full of eyes in front and behind. The first living being was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face

60 Porter, *Idioms*, 149.
like a man and the fourth was like an eagle in flight. These four living beings each had six wings and were full of eyes around and within them. Without rest, day and night they were saying,

“Holy! Holy! Holy! Is the Lord God Almighty! The One who was, and who is and who is coming.”

And whenever the living beings would give glory, honour and thanks to the One sitting upon the Throne—the One who lives forever and ever—the twenty-four elders would fall down before the One sitting on the Throne and would worship the One who lives forever and ever. And they would cast their crowns before the Throne saying,

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive the glory, the honour, and the power, because you created all things and by your will they exist and were created.”

Bibliography


