

Questions About Are the 24 Elders from Unfallen Worlds?

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Could the 24 Elders be other unfallen worlds?

Answer:

That's an excellent and thoughtful question — and one that theologians and Bible students have wrestled with for centuries. Let's explore both perspectives carefully:

1. The View That the 24 Elders Are Redeemed Humans

This is the most common interpretation among Adventist and Protestant scholars.

Evidence for redeemed humans:

- **Revelation 5:9–10** — They sing, “*You have redeemed us to God by Your blood ... and made us kings and priests.*”
 - ◆ Angels are never said to be “redeemed.”
 - ◆ Only humans can sing this song of redemption.
- **White robes and crowns** — symbols consistently applied to *overcomers* and *faithful saints* (Rev. 2:10, Rev. 3:5).
- **Ellen G. White's insight (Adventist view)** — She links the “elders” with *those who were raised with Christ at His resurrection* (see *Early Writings*, p. 184; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 833). These are seen as **representatives of the redeemed** who ascended with Jesus as firstfruits of His victory.

So in this view, they are **redeemed humans**, possibly those who were resurrected when Christ rose (Matt. 27:52–53) and taken to heaven with Him (Eph. 4:8).

2. The View That the 24 Elders Could Represent Unfallen Worlds

Some theologians suggest that the 24 elders might represent **leaders or ambassadors from other unfallen worlds** — created beings who never fell into sin.

Why some hold this view:

- In **Job 1:6–7**, we see a “council” of heavenly representatives — “the sons of God” — presenting themselves before the Lord.

This has led some to think that these beings are *representatives of the unfallen worlds* who report before God, as Job’s earth once had a representative before sin entered.

- Revelation’s **heavenly council imagery** — The elders could symbolize **cosmic governance**, representing intelligent beings from across God’s universe who rejoice at the Lamb’s victory.

However, there are problems with this interpretation:

- The elders speak of being *redeemed by the blood of the Lamb* — which unfallen beings would not be able to say.
- They wear crowns and sit on thrones, a privilege described elsewhere as belonging to *the saints* who overcome (Rev. 3:21).

Thus, while it’s **possible symbolically** that they stand for all loyal beings of creation, the **plain textual evidence** points more strongly to them being *redeemed humans*.

3. A Reconciled Perspective

It’s possible the **24 elders serve dual symbolism**:

- Literally: redeemed human beings (firstfruits of Christ’s resurrection).
- Representatively: witnesses from *all creation*, including unfallen worlds, who affirm God’s justice and mercy.

In this sense, the elders show the **unity of heaven and earth** — a redeemed humanity joined with loyal intelligences of the universe, all worshiping the Lamb together.

Summary Table

View	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
Redeemed Humans	Resurrected saints who rose with Christ	Supported by the language of redemption, white robes, crowns	Does not explicitly say “from earth,” though implied

Unfallen Worlds	Representatives of sinless creations	Fits cosmic council imagery	They could not sing “redeemed by Your blood”
Symbolic of Both	Represents both redeemed humanity and cosmic witness	Integrates both dimensions of God’s kingdom	Symbolic rather than literal

Final Thought

Whether the 24 elders are *redeemed humans* or *representatives of unfallen worlds*, their role is clear:

They stand in awe of the **Lamb who was slain**, bearing witness that **Christ’s sacrifice is sufficient for all creation**.

They represent **a universe in harmony** — heaven, earth, and the unfallen worlds united in worship of the Redeemer.