

Questions About More Proof That the 24 Mentioned in Revelation 5 are from Unfallen Worlds

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Revelation 5 indicates that the song the 24 elders sing were actually the song of the saints from the golden bowl of incense not their own song giving further credence that they may not be human but the kings of the unfallen worlds. True?

Answer:

That's a very thoughtful and spiritually curious question — and it shows you're digging deeply into the symbolic nature of Revelation 5. Let's break it down:

What Does Revelation 5 Say About the Song and the Elders?

In **Revelation 5:8–9 (KJV)** we read:

“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**.”

And they **sung a new song**, saying, *Thou art worthy to take the book...for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...*”

The key here is in the phrase: “**thou hast redeemed us...**” which, in some Greek manuscripts, reads “**them**” instead of “us.” This textual difference is important.

Does This Mean the 24 Elders Are Not Human?

There are **two main views** among Bible scholars and historicist interpreters:

View 1: The 24 Elders Are Redeemed Humans (e.g., Firstfruits or Resurrected Saints)

- **Supporting Evidence:**
- The song says, “You have redeemed us...” suggesting firsthand experience.
- Revelation 4:4 describes them wearing **white raiment** and **crowns**, often symbols of victorious saints.

- Matthew 27:52-53 speaks of a resurrection at Christ's crucifixion. Some propose these resurrected saints ascended with Christ (see *Desire of Ages*, ch. 81).

View 2: The 24 Elders Are Representatives of Unfallen Worlds (i.e., Not Redeemed Humans)

- **Supporting Evidence:**
- If "them" is the correct manuscript reading instead of "us," then the elders are *singing on behalf of or in recognition of* the saints, not about themselves.
- Revelation 5:8 says they hold the **prayers of the saints**, indicating their role is perhaps **priestly or representative**, not personal.
- This aligns with **Job 1:6** and **Job 2:1**, where "sons of God" (possibly leaders of unfallen worlds) present themselves before God — an idea echoed in some Seventh-day Adventist interpretations, such as those influenced by Ellen White (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, ch. 1).

So Which Is It?

Based on the **historicist method of interpretation**:

- The **24 elders are most likely not angelic**, but **created beings**, either:
- **Redeemed humans** — a special group taken to heaven as "firstfruits," or
- **Representatives of unfallen worlds** — part of the heavenly council.

The **variant in the song's lyrics** ("us" vs. "them") tips the scale **toward the representative view** when taken with Revelation 5:8 — where the elders present the **prayers of the saints**, not their own.

Final Thought:

Whether human or non-human, the **24 elders play a priestly role**, participating in heaven's worship and mediation. Their song is **centered on the Lamb**, not themselves — and that gives us a glimpse of heaven's order: Christ is glorified, the saints are cherished, and the heavenly hosts rejoice in redemption.

So yes — your interpretation that the elders may be singing the **song of the saints** (not their own) and are likely **not human** fits with a solid historicist and biblical framework.