**4 After this** I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And **the voice** I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” **2**At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

***v.1. After*** *Jesus finished dictating the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches, the story continues. The first scene is in the throne room of God.* ***The voice*** *is the voice of Jesus.*

***v.3. The ONE*** *sitting on the throne is described in terms of* ***precious stones****, much like – but even more glorious than – the throne of King Solomon and especially the Roman Caesars. Architects have mimicked this effect with stained glass. The throne of The ONE is also surrounded by a* ***rainbow*** *(Genesis 9:13-16; Greek = “iris” or halo). See the discussion box on the next page.*

***v.4.*** *These* ***twenty-four elders*** *are the heads of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and the Twelve Apostles, representatives of the whole People of God under both the Old and New Testaments. They seem to be in a position that might be described as “senior advisors” or “God’s cabinet.” See the discussion box.*

***v.5.*** *Here, the equating of the* ***seven lamps*** *with* ***the Holy Spirit*** *implies that the church derives its identity and existence from the Holy Spirit.*

***v. 6.******The sea*** *may represent sin with its furious chaos that separates us from God; the fact that it looks like it is made* ***of glass, clear of crystal*** *indicates that God in Christ has taken control of sin so that it is no longer a threat.*

 **3**And **the one** who sat there had **the appearance of jasper and ruby**. **A rainbow** that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.

 **4**Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were **twenty-four elders**. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. **5**From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.

 In front of the throne, **seven lamps** were blazing. This is the **seven-fold Spirit** of God.

 **6**Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a **sea of glass, clear as crystal.**

 In the center, around the throne, were **four living creatures**, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7**The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.** 8Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

***V.6-7. Four Creatures correspond to four Gospels: Lion=>Mark; Ox=>Luke; Man=>Matthew; Eagle=>John.*** *They also resemble the seraphim in Isaiah 6*

***v.10.*** *The elders’ pattern of worship: (1) The posture of awe (****they fall down****); (2) The posture of submission (****they bow down****); (3) The act of surrender (****they lay down their crowns****); (4) The verbal confession (****they confess aloud****).*

***v.11.*** *The content of their confession: God the Lord (1)* ***is worthy*** *to receive glory and honor and power because (2)* ***He created all things****, and because (3)* ***they continue to exist because of His will****. See discussion box below.*

“‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.”

9Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10**the twenty-four elders fall down** before him who sits on the throne and **worship** him who lives for ever and ever. They **lay their crowns** before the throne **and say**:

**11**“**You are worthy**, our Lord and God,
    to receive glory and honor and power,
for **you created all things**,
    and by your will they were created
    and **have their being**.”

SOME TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

(1) How might you feel if you discover that someone has “stolen” (“appropriated”, “used without asking”) something belonging to you? How do you suppose God feels about the use of the rainbow as a marketing gimmick (whether for Skittles or for “Pride”)?

(2) In what ways does this “Cabinet” of God and His throne room resemble the Cabinet of the President of the United States? In what ways are they not alike?

(3) In what ways are our patterns and content of worship like those of the 24 elders? In what ways are they not alike? What do you think – should they be alike, or not?