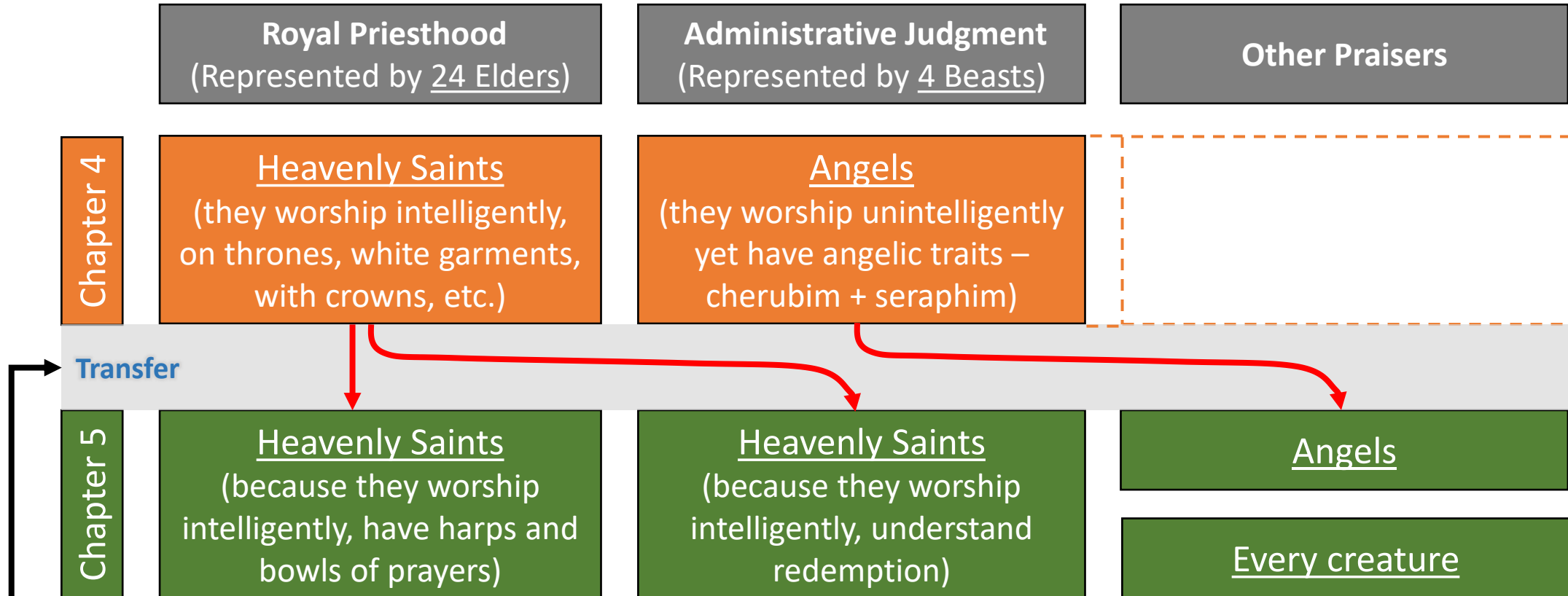


## Chart Illustrating the Administrative Shift Between Revelation 4 and 5



4 Beasts couldn't be angels in ch.5 because angels are mentioned as a separate class.

**Something happens to cause the administrative shift... The Lamb takes the book.** At that moment, the saints begin to “judge angels” although that will be seen fully in the millennium when the angels are “retired”. This doesn't mean angels are no longer used in the Tribulation. On the contrary, we see them blowing the seven trumpets (Rev. 8), pouring out the seven bowls of wrath (Rev. 16), and fighting a great war in heaven (Rev. 12:7). The point is that our position is in association with the Lamb. When He takes the book, our role expands.

## Kelly's Exposition

- It is to be remarked that there is dead silence as to angels in our chapter, whereas they distinctly appear in Rev. 5:2,11,12. This suggests what solves the difficulty often and largely felt. For the living creatures in themselves present the attributes of providential power in the execution of judgment; but the comparison of the chapters points to change in its administration from the angels who are now the agents to the redeemed who are to be. Hence in Rev. 4 the angels are merged as it were in the living creatures; in Rev. 5 they are distinguished in view of Christ's co-heirs, to whom and not to angels God will subject the inhabited earth to come (Heb. 2).
- How comes it that no angels appear in Rev. 4? And why have we them in Rev. 5? There is always the wisest reason in the ways of God of which scripture speaks, and we are encouraged by the Spirit to inquire humbly but trustfully. The inference it warrants seems to be this: that the assumption of the book into the hands of the Lamb, and His preparing to open the seals, marks a change of administration. Up to that point of time angels have held an executory ministry of power from God. Where judgments were in question, or other extraordinary intervention on His part, angels were the instruments; whereas from this time we gather the title to a marked change for the world to come in those that are Christ's above.

## Kelly's Exposition, cont.

- In other words, when the Lamb is brought definitely into the scene, then and not before, we see the elders and the living creatures united in the new song. As one company they join in praising the Lamb. They sing, "Worthy art thou, because thou wast slain and didst purchase." Thus we have them combined in a new fashion; and, as a consequence, the angels are now definitely distinguished. Supposing that previously the administration of judgment was in the hand of angels, it is easily understood that they would not be distinguished from the living creatures in Rev. 4, because the living creatures set forth the agencies of God's executory judgment. Whereas in Rev. 5, if there be a change in administration, and the angels that used to be the executors are no longer so recognized in view of the kingdom, but the power is to be in the hands of the glorified saints, it is simple enough that the angels fall back from the cherubim, being eclipsed by the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. If previously angels were seen in the living creatures, they henceforward retire from this dignity to their own place, and therefore no longer fall under that symbol.
- From this it follows that the four living creatures might be at one time angels, at another saints. The symbol sets forth, not so much the persons that are entrusted with these judgments, as the character of the attributes in action.

## Darby's Synopsis

- Here (Rev. 5) the angels come in to praise, not in the fourth chapter. I can hardly doubt that a change in administrative order takes place here. Until the Lamb took the book, they were the administrative power; they were the instruments through which what the four living creatures symbolized was exercised in the earth. "But unto the angels hath he not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." Hence, as soon as the Lamb appears and takes the book, as soon as the idea of redemption is brought in, the living creatures and elders are brought together, and the angels take their own place apart. Like the living creatures before, they give no reason for their praise. As the heads of creation as to their nature, they celebrate with all creatures the title to glory of the Lamb and His own worthiness, ascribing praise to Him that sits on the throne and to the Lamb for ever and ever. The four living creatures, that is, all the exercise of God's power in creation and providence, join their Amen, and the elders worship God in the excellency of His being. But the living creatures and elders are joined (verse 8) in falling down before the Lamb. I do not think they are meant to be distinguished in the latter part of the verse, but merge in the elders, symbolizing different service but not now two classes.