

Revelation Chapter 4 Continued

Verses 6-8: The “four beasts” or living creatures (literally, “living ones”), are probably winged angelic beings (compare Ezek. 10:15-22), who guard the throne of God. The “eyes” symbolize wisdom, and the “wings” depict movement. They worship God as did the seraphim in Isaiah’s vision (compare Isa. 6:1-3). The “lion” represents strength (compare Psalm 103:20), the “calf” service (compare Heb. 1:14), the “face” of a “man” intelligence (compare Luke 2:52), and the “eagle” swiftness (compare Dan. 9:21). The angelic vision has a strong allusion to (Ezekiel 1:4-14).

Revelation 4:6 "And before the throne [there was] a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, [were] four beasts full of eyes before and behind."

“A sea of glass”: There is no sea in heaven (21:1), but the crystal pavement that serves as the floor of God’s throne stretches out like a great, glistening sea (compare Exodus 24:10; Ezek. 1:22). This "sea of glass" reminds me very much of the laver in the tabernacle in the wilderness.

All around the throne were the four beasts. Probably a little better translation would have been living ones. The number "four" shows the universality of these beasts or living beings. In (Isaiah 6:2-13 and in Ezekiel 1:5-28), these living beings are also called "seraphim" and "cherubim". These beasts, or living beings, surrounding the throne are full of eyes which means their wisdom was overwhelming.

“Full of eyes”: Although not omniscient, an attribute reserved for God alone, these angels have a comprehensive knowledge and perception. Nothing escapes their scrutiny (compare verse 8).

The eyes denote wisdom or intelligence. These beings looking "before and behind" means they look back into times past, and also look forward into things to come. These living ones, or living beings, also denote the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Those books truly are full of wisdom. Matthew does look back at the history of Jesus, and chapter 24 looks ahead to the end times.

Revelation 4:7 "And the first beast [was] like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast [was] like a flying eagle."

The four living beings show the four gospels: In Matthew, Jesus is shown as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The genealogy of Jesus is in Matthew beginning with verse 1, showing that Jesus truly was the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

“First ... like a lion”: In what is obviously intended as symbolic language, John compares these 4 beings with 4 of God’s earthly creations. Ezekiel indicated that every cherub has these 4 attributes. The likeness to a lion symbolizes strength and power.

“Second ... like a calf”: The image of a calf demonstrates that these beings render humble service to God.

“Third ... face like that of a man: Their likeness to man shows they are rational beings.

Fourth ... like a flying eagle”: The cherubim fulfill their service to God with the swiftness of eagles’ wings.

In John 1:1, Jesus, the Word, is in fact God the Word, God the Son. God in the flesh of man.

Even though the four gospels tell the same story in essence, they also show four different personalities. You can easily see why these beasts, living beings, are symbolically the four gospels.

Revelation 4:8 "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about [him]; and [they were] full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

“Full of eyes” (see note on verse 6).

Holy, holy, holy. This is the cry of these heavenly creatures who know God as He really is. It has been suggested that each "holy" is directed to one of the members of the Trinity. Then these creatures remind us of the One who "is to come." The return of Christ is guaranteed in the words of these heavenly hosts. In (Acts 1:9-11), angelic beings describe how Christ will literally return "in like manner as ye have seen him go". Here these angels in heaven reaffirm that promise.

The six wings spoken of (in Isaiah 6), seem to show humility, obedience, and reverence to God. The number six makes me believe also, that these wings show work and activity (six day work). It seems here that one of their tasks was to proclaim the holiness of God.

I really believe the three "holy, holy, holy", Lord God Almighty", indicate Father, Word, Holy Ghost. “Which was, and is, and is to come”. God’s eternal presence is not limited by time, He has always been present and will come in the future.

The "which was, and is, and is to come" just furthers that thought and shows us the eternity of this three in one. We do know from (1 John), that there are three in heaven.

1 John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

Verses 9-11: All of heaven “worship” the Father. The angels extol His character, and the “elders” (church), extol His creative powers. God has the right to rule and the sovereign authority to judge the earth, because He is both holy and the Creator of all.

Revelation 4:9 "And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,"

This "when the beasts give glory and honor and thanks" is a never ending thing. The four gospels have proclaimed this in the past, are proclaiming it now, and will proclaim it for all of eternity.

"The giving of "honor" goes on and on and on. The giving of "thanks" is to the Spirit of God, the Trinity.

The song of the living beings is giving praises not just then, not just now, but continuously. We see by this honor given it should be all glory and all honor, etc. The eternity of God is so difficult for us to understand because our minds are programmed to a life of just under one hundred years here on the earth.

Revelation 4:10 "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,"

At the presence of God it is a normal thing to fall down prostrate at His feet. The "four and twenty elders fall down before Him" shows their great humility at the presence of God. A deep respect and honor should be given God.

"To Him that sat on the throne" is very interesting. God the Father is on the central throne, but immediately on His right hand sits God the Son, Jesus. The "throne" encompasses both the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The word "worship" has been misunderstood by so many. We sing about it in our songs and use it in our prayers. But do we truly know how to worship? Our churches call Sunday services, worship, but again, very little true worship goes on. The word that was translated "worship" here means "absolute reverence to God, to adore Him". One of the meanings of the word means to "kiss", like a dog licking his master's hand. Absolute humility and adoration of God is what it really means. Do we go to church to humbly worship and adore our God? A deep respect and honor should be given God.

"Cast their crowns": Aware that God alone is responsible for the rewards they have received, they divest themselves of all honor and cast it at the feet of their King (see note on 2:10).

Why do they "cast their crowns before the throne"? These crowns are the victorious crowns that Jesus has placed on their head. They, or we, have done nothing to earn the crowns. These crowns belong to Jesus, not us. He won the victory. He placed them on our head. Everyone benefits from the victory, but Jesus won it. This is another act of humility on their part. When they throw the crowns at Jesus' feet, they are telling Him that they are His because He won them.

Revelation 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

“For thou hast created all things”: It is the Creator God who set out to redeem His creation.

We see here the worthiness of God and why He should be praised. It is, in our society, the popular thing to worship the created rather than the Creator. We are warned about this over and over throughout the Bible. Not only in terms of getting our priorities mixed up and thinking too much of money, jewels, family, homes, automobiles, and recreation (which can certainly become a God to us), but many are actually worshipping the sun, moon, stars, and rivers. In far too many Christian homes today we see totem poles, Buddha’s and all sorts of horoscope paraphernalia.

God is a jealous God. He will not allow the believer to mess around with false gods. How could we compare the Creator of it all to His creations? We must recognize God to be supreme to all others in every way. Before the world existed, He spoke, and it became. The power of his Word created all that we know.

I believe it is good to understand why He did not just leave well enough alone, and live as He was, and not bother with all of this. We have been such a problem and heartache to Him. The earth and all that's on it, was created for God's pleasure. He created us so that He could fellowship with us. We are to Jesus like our children are to us. They are great joy, but at the very same time, they can bring us hurt. The joy far outweighs the hurt. Perhaps that is the way it is with God dealing with us. The joy outweighs the sorrow. We see here that the whole universe was created for God.

Revelation Chapter 4 Continued Questions

1. What was before the throne?
2. What was it like unto?
3. What were round about the throne?
4. What in the tabernacle does the sea remind us of?
5. What does the number four show about these beasts?
6. What do these eyes show? Two things.
7. These four living ones denote what in the Bible?
8. What was the first beast like?
9. What does it symbolize?
10. What was the second beast like?
11. What does it symbolize?

12. What was the third beast like?
13. What does it symbolize?
14. What was the fourth beast like?
15. What does it symbolize?
16. What did the beast have six of?
17. What did the eyes within mean?
18. What was the task of these around the throne?
19. What do the three "holy" indicate?
20. In 1 John 5:7, what do we find out about God in heaven?
21. Who do the beasts glorify?
22. Who fall down before Him?
23. What do they cast before Him?
24. What does it show when they fall down before Him?
25. Why do they cast their crowns before Him?
26. What does worship really mean?
27. In our society, it is popular to worship what?
28. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive _____ and _____ and _____:"
29. God is a _____ God.
30. Why was the earth and everything in it created?
31. How do you think church services should be conducted? Tell how you would handle this if you were in charge.