

THE FOUR FACES AROUND THE THRONE

1. The Scriptures speak of four Living Creatures. The number FOUR speaks of that which is “universal”, having a world-wide influence as in 4 directions, 4 seasons, 4 corners of the earth, 4 points on a compass. The Living Creatures are called Cherubim, and are associated with God’s Throne.
2. Their images were woven upon the veil within the Most Holy Place of the Old Testament Tabernacle. These images (faces) of a MAN, an OX, a LION and an EAGLE were symbolic and significant to the ancients.
3. These images and faces were seen by prophets and priests in both the Old and New Testaments: Exodus 26:1, 31-33; Ezekiel 1:4-28; Hebrews 9:5; Revelation 4:3-7.
4. The correct biblical interpretation is “Living (life-giving) Creatures”:
 - a. The Cherubim are IN UNION WITH THE MERCY SEAT:
 - b. These animal images are symbolic, but animals are not redeemed, neither are they “joined” to Jesus through salvation; Ephesians 2:6; 1 Peter 1:12.
 - c. Angels are not the redeemed, neither are they “joint-heirs” with Christ; Romans 8:17
5. The Cherubim are connected to the Ark of the Covenant (the high priest of the O.T. ministered there; Jesus, the High Priest of the N.T. is revealed there).
6. The Cherubim are ONE WITH THE MERCY SEAT, even as the Redeemed are in union with the Lord Jesus. They are always mentioned in regard to the THRONE of God, as is the “overcomer”; Luke 22:30; Revelation 3:21.
7. They serve Him with all four faces; they describe the GLORIFIED REDEEMED, the overcomers, the manifested sons of God in glory.
8. The Blood upon the Mercy Seat was BETWEEN the Cherubim, as they looked at, and faced each other. Similarly, the Blood of Calvary’s Cross was BETWEEN the Old Testament saints as they LOOKED AHEAD to the New Testament saints, who LOOK BACK to the Cross. One “looks ahead” and the other “looks back”.
9. The Cherubim are seen in TWO ARMIES in the Song of Solomon 6:13, which could reveal the overcomers of the Old Testament and the overcomers of the New Testament.
10. The Cherubim reveal characteristics of the SONS OF GOD, His fully surrendered servants. They are governed by the Spirit of life; Rom. 8:1-2, and are described as being:
 - a. Perceptive – see in every direction: “full of eyes”; Ezek. 10:12; Hebrews 4:15
 - b. Active – they “ran and returned” as a flash of lightning; Ez. 1:14; Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19
 - c. Luminous – like burning coals of fire, lamps; Ez. 1:13; Acts 2:3; Heb. 1:7; Rev. 1:14
 - d. Mobile – They live and move in the heavenlies; Eph. 2:6; Phil. 3:19-21; Col. 3:1-3
 - e. Audible – have a voice, a noise of “great waters”; Ez. 1:24; 10:5; 43:2; Rev. 1:15
 - f. Pure – sparkled, feet like polished brass (judgment); Ezek. 1:7; John 1:36; Rev. 1:5
 - g. In Unity – four wings JOIN (“kiss”); Ezek. 1:9, 11; John 10:30; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Pet. 3:8
11. Ezekiel saw the Glory of God and His Throne in motion. GOD’S THRONE is His Seat, from which He administers Righteousness and Justice: this is the foundation of His Throne; Psalm 89:14. It is often revealed in connection with HORSES (overcomers); Rev. 19:14, and CHARIOTS; Genesis 41:43; Esther 6:8-9; 2 Kings 2:11
 - a. The Living Creatures are the VEHICLE by which God makes Himself known.
 - b. THEY MOVE in whatever direction the Spirit goes; Ezekiel 1:20
 - c. God “rides” and “flies” upon a cherub; 2 Samuel 22:11.
 - d. “Wheels” speak of GOD’S THRONE IN MOTION; “wings” speak of mobility.

12. Attributes of the Lord Jesus Christ are seen in every one of these faces: the face of a MAN; the face of an OX; the face of the LION and the face of the EAGLE. These images together describe the characteristics and the ministry of His overcomers.

Rabbis say this of the living creatures (Midrash): “MAN is exalted among creatures; the EAGLE is exalted among birds; the OX is exalted among domestic animals; the LION is exalted among wild beasts, and all of them have received dominion, and greatness has been given them, yet they are stationed below the chariot of the Holy One”

1. The MAN – In Luke’s gospel Jesus is seen as the Son of Man, One who rules over God’s creation. He is the Promised “Seed” Who bruised the serpent’s head; Gen. 3:15.

a. Jesus, the Son of Man, bears the image of the invisible God; 2 Corinthians 4:4. He brings “many sons” to glory; Hebrews 2:10

b. Man is created in God’s image; Genesis 9:6. The “Living Creatures” have the “LIKENESS OF A MAN”; Ezekiel 1:5

c. God said that He looked for a MAN who would stand in the gap; Ezekiel 22:30. This CORPORATE MAN (Head and Body) intercedes for others.

d. The first man Adam was made a living soul; the “Last Adam” was made a quickening spirit...the SECOND MAN is the Lord from heaven; 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47

e. The open, UNVEILED FACE of a man beholds the glory of the Lord and is changed into His image; 2 Corinthians 3:13-18

f. The FACE of a MAN suggests human understanding, compassion and identification with humanity. He makes His FACE TO SHINE UPON US; Numbers 6:25

g. We are told to put on the “NEW MAN”; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 3:10

h. The feet are of “polished brass”, which reveal a pure walk and righteous judgment. They went “straight forward” (are upright and stable); Ezekiel 1:7, 12; Rev. 1:15

i. The face of a MAN REVEALS THE HEAD, and a mind that is renewed, which has the ability to think and move by the spirit; Ezekiel 1:12; Romans 8:14

j. THE NEW CREATION MAN is “full of eyes” (perception), and has ears that can distinguish different voices and sounds. The nose speaks of inner discernment.

k. The voice from his mouth is like the sound of “many waters”; Ezek. 1:24; Rev. 14:1-5

l. The “HANDS” OF A MAN (serving in ministry) are under their “wings”, giving them mobility by the spirit; Ezekiel 10:8. Wherever the cherubim went (no matter how high), the hand went with them (they are upheld by His power).

m. Pilate said that he could find “no fault” in this Man, Who is called the King of the Jews. He said “BEHOLD THE MAN”; John 19:3-5

2. The Ox (Calf) – In Mark’s gospel, Jesus is portrayed as the patient Servant, the “burden-bearer”, Who gave His life as a SACRIFICE for many; Proverbs 7:22.

a. In biblical times, an ox was a valuable animal, used for work in the HARVEST FIELD. It was also used as an OFFERING unto the Lord; Ex. 20:24; Proverbs 7:22.

b. Oxen work hard and persevere in their service, but they also observe God’s Sabbath ; Exodus 23:12. They enter His “rest”, by ceasing from their own labors; Heb. 4:10-11.

c. The OX IS TRAINED to faithfully carry the master’s work loads. He does this without fanfare or pretense, performing simple, common, uncelebrated tasks; Philippians 2:7.

- d.** The ox CARRIES precious cargo: BURDENS of prayer and divine assignments. He cannot be yoked with (does not plow with) an “ass”; Deut. 22:10; 2 Corinthians 6:14.
- e.** The ox is STRONG BUT LOWLY. He spends most of his time with his head bowed, in the posture of meekness and humility, as he eats and works; 1 Peter 5:5.
- f.** The ox KNOWS HIS OWNER; Isaiah 1:3, and accepts the “restraint” (divine confinement of the Lord). He plows in his own field, in a straight and narrow way; Matthew 11:29-30.
- g.** The ox IS FAITHFUL in seed time and harvest time. HE LABORS in weariness, even while enduring pain or persecution; 1 Corinthians 9:9; 2 Timothy 2:3.
- h.** He comes into contact with a lot of “dirt and dung” as he works in his master’s field. He BREAKS UP FALLOW GROUND so that the “seed” (gospel message) can be sown and planted in the soil; Matthew 13:3-8.
- i.** Because he PLOWS IN HOPE, he is also a partaker of the harvest; 1 Corinthians 9:10
- j.** The ox TREADS OUT THE CORN in his master’s field, providing meal (food) for many. In contrast there is no “sound of a millstone” (grinding of grain) in the “field of Babylon”; Revelation 18:22.
- k.** As a work animal, there are times that HE CAN BE MISTREATED or mishandled (persecuted) or “driven” by others who are disobedient; 2 Samuel 6:3-6
- l.** God says “BLESSED ARE YOU THAT SOW” (in grace, mercy and forgiveness), beside “all waters” (every stream); Isaiah 32:20
- m.** God restores dignity to His DOWN-TRODDEN laborers. He understands their purpose and their value; Exodus 5:13.

3. The LION – In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus is seen as the King of the Jews. The lion is the KING of beasts, one who has power and takes dominion on the Earth.

- a.** Jesus Christ is the true Lion of the tribe of Judah; Revelation 5:5; HE ROARS out of Zion; Joel 3:16. The devil is a counterfeit lion; 1 Peter 5:8.
- b.** The face of a lion reveals one who is BOLD AND FEARLESS, even when confronted with hostile opposition. The locks of his mane reveal his status among the others; Revelation 1:14.
- c.** A lion is a REGAL animal, who SYMBOLIZES COURAGE, strength, loyalty and combat skills.
- d.** God has some mighty men who have the FACES OF LIONS, a fierce countenance; they are alert, vigilant and cautious; 1 Chronicles 12:8
- e.** The lion has highly developed hearing and smelling which speaks of DISCERNMENT; 1 Thessalonians 5:12
- f.** Lions live in a support group or family, called a pride. There are established bonds of trust and unity. Each member knows its function and its role; Hebrews 10:25
- g.** Lions go to strongholds in the wilderness; THEY DWELL IN HIDDEN CAVES and dens; Hebrews 11:38
- h.** Lions teach the others how to SUBDUE EVERY BEAST, and overwhelm any enemy.
- i.** They feed, guard and protect their young, hiding them in a secret place; 1 Timothy 3:6
- j.** Strange lions try to creep in and usurp the dominant male’s authority. They attempt to reproduce within the group, defiling it with “strange seed”; Ezra 9:2. The dominant male chases strange lions away and destroys their offspring.

k. Lions TAKE DOMINION in their specific territory, where there is food and a water source. It adapts to living in different climates (it is flexible), enduring heat and cold.

l. A lion's roaring is TERRITORIAL COMMUNICATION; it is like a long-distance telegram; Amos 1:2. It can be heard a great distance, usually from sunset until dawn. The lion can see in the dark; Psalm 139:12

m. The roaring triggers a response and others call back. It warns invaders, reunites any scattered members "nomad lions" or those who have wandered away; Isaiah 42:13. Psalm 68:6.

4. The EAGLE – In John's gospel Jesus is seen as the Son of God, Who came from heaven. He descended and then ascended on high, far above all heavens; Eph. 4:8-10.

a. He causes His people to "rise" on eagles' wings into the heavens with Him. The Lord of the sky calls us to ASCEND, to "COME UP HITHER"; Revelation 4:1; 11:12

b. It is a picture of one who sets his MIND ON THINGS ABOVE (the heavenly realm) and not the things beneath (the earthly realm); Colossians 3:1-2

c. The FACE OF AN EAGLE speaks of one who lives above the natural, earthly mentality. It makes its nest on high. It "builds upward", living on a high spiritual plane; Ephesians 2:6.

d. Its rest is achieved without effort or struggle. It waits for the right current of wind, and then it locks its wings to soar. An eagle is BORN TO SOAR, and is willing to risk its life to embrace the flight into the heavens. It "soars above" storms and tribulation.

e. It knows how to "CATCH THE WIND", which launches it; it knows how to ride and navigate the currents of air by the power of the Spirit.

f. The eagle's wings provide mobility, and are symbolic of a COVERING IN WORSHIP, honor, glory and humility. He has the ability to MOUNT UP; Isaiah 40:31. Their wings take them to their retreat in the wilderness; Rev. 12:13-14.

g. Eagles migrate in groups called a stream, symbolic of a prophetic flow of vision. They have EXCELLENT VISION, and they symbolize a man of the spirit, one who can see in every direction. It "flies high" and has a "wide view".

h. It has learned the habit of perching, WATCHING, waiting for extensive periods of time, studying the landscape beneath it. It is a type of the watchman; it can see both the lower and upper realms; Isaiah 21:6, 8

i. Ancient people believed that eagles were MESSENGERS of the gods, and were involved with carrying souls and prayers to heaven.

j. Eagles symbolize liberty, power, war. They were PORTRAYED AS DELIVERERS in times of famine because they were always seen carrying food to their nests.

k. The eagle STIRS UP THE NEST. He causes others to become aroused, provoked and awakened to move into the realm of the spirit; Deuteronomy 32:11.

l. Eagles are the enemies of serpents (humanistic wisdom).

m. Eagles experience a RENEWAL PROCESS when old feathers are plucked out, revealing wounds and scars. When new feathers grow back, the oil glands under their wings are reactivated; Psalm 103:5.

"The HEAD in union with a BODY reveals a holy perfect MAN from above, who took dominion as the LION, whose sacrificial offering as an OX, was seen in the glory of His resurrection as He ascended on high like the EAGLE".