

Chapter Four

This chapter moves us from the earthly into the heavenly realm. Unlike the earth, where imperfection exists, heaven is a state of harmony and balance. This is shown in the magnificent throne scene and the heavenly entities surrounding it. (Fig. 1)

Throne Scene #1

4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

After these things refers to the events pursuant to the letters to the seven churches. The scene changes from the *earthly events* surrounding the church, to *heavenly events* involving God’s redemption plan centralized in Jesus Christ (the Lamb in chapter 5).

A door standing open in heaven: This door is open, allowing men to see the mysteries behind the veil of God’s plan. Jesus called Himself “the gate for the sheep.” (John 10:7) Any other messengers (ways/doors into heaven) are considered “thieves and robbers.” Paul speaks of praying for God to “open up to us a door (an opportunity) for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ.” (Col 4:3) This door in heaven will soon reveal the same mystery in the following chapter. The fact that it is *standing open* signifies God’s open invitation to men that the way into heaven is available to those who believe in Jesus. What is behind the door? The Father, described simply as the “One sitting on the throne.” Jesus said, “No man can come to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6) In other words, no one can get into heaven except through this door. It is not through many doors that men gain access to God, but through One Door—Christ. (Acts 4:12)

*First voice which I heard...*The voice of Christ. (Rev 1:10)

Must take place: Events destined by God’s will. The phrase appears only three other times in scripture, all referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. (Matt 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9) They are not things that *will take place*, as in a provisional sense, but things that *must take place*, as by legal prescription.

4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne

In the Spirit refers to what John saw in his mind. It was a vision, seen with with the mind’s eye. Paul had proposed *in the spirit* (in his mind) to go to Jerusalem. (Acts 19:21) Christians are to be renewed in the spirit of their minds. (Eph 4:23) If John is speaking of the Holy Spirit, it may be in respect to the Spirit opening up his mind, allowing him to see this vision. (See notes on 1:10) Concerning those today who claim that God speaks to them, or who claim to have the “gift” of interpretation:

Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord. (Jer 23:16)

A throne standing in heaven: Not only is there a door open in heaven, there is also a throne standing there. It is the seat of the Great King. (See notes on 1:4; 2:13; 3:21) Heaven is God's throne. (Matt 5:34) He sits upon, or *over* heaven. (Matt 23:22) It is an eternal throne. (Heb 1:8) The throne is *standing*, or *established* in heaven, not on earth. This is the Holy Authority from which all earthly government finds its origin. Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities. For there is no authority but of God; the authorities that exist are ordained by God. (Rom 13:1) Law and order are based on God's righteousness and are integral to His holy character. Scientific laws keep the universe in order; breaking them leads to catastrophe. If the Universe is so arranged, it is reasonable to assume that God requires the human family and society to live in a morally lawful and orderly fashion. The sheer balance and harmony depicted in the arrangement of the throne, living creatures, 24 elders, etc., strongly support this concept. This is what the scene is designed to get us to see.

One sitting on the throne: The Lamb is introduced in the next chapter; this seems to be Jehovah Himself. John saw *representations* of heavenly things. Since God is omnipresent (Psa 139:7-12), He is not confined to a point in space. He dwells in unapproachable light and can not be seen. (1 Tim 6:16) In this scene, the Father is loosely described with human attributes, but also with characteristics seen in precious gems.

4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

Jasper stone and sardius in appearance: Attempts at translating the exact names of gems into present-day words are impractical. The Ancients did not define the various mineral species with any sort of precision. Due to the highly technical nature, I must refer the reader to any good bible encyclopedia that will explain the problems and inconsistencies regarding this subject. In simple terms, the precious stones and gems in the Book of Revelation were what the people of John's day would have considered most precious. They are used here to describe God.

Jasper is a type of quartz. It is usually red because of the presence of iron, but it can be brown, yellow, or green. It was the third stone in the fourth row of Aaron's breastplate. (Exo 28:20; 39:13) The brilliance of the New Jerusalem was "as a jasper, clear as crystal." (Rev 21:11) Clarity is an attribute of truth and sincerity. Sardius (also translated 'ruby') was the first stone of the New Jerusalem. (Rev 21:20) It was used for royal seals.

Rainbow around the throne: The rainbow is indicative of God's glory, and is a token of a covenant promise. After the flood, He told Noah that the rainbow would be the sign of His covenant between Him and every living creature to never destroy the earth by water. (Gen 9:8ff) Note Ezekiel's vision:

...there was radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the *likeness of the glory of the Lord.* (Ezek 1:27-28)

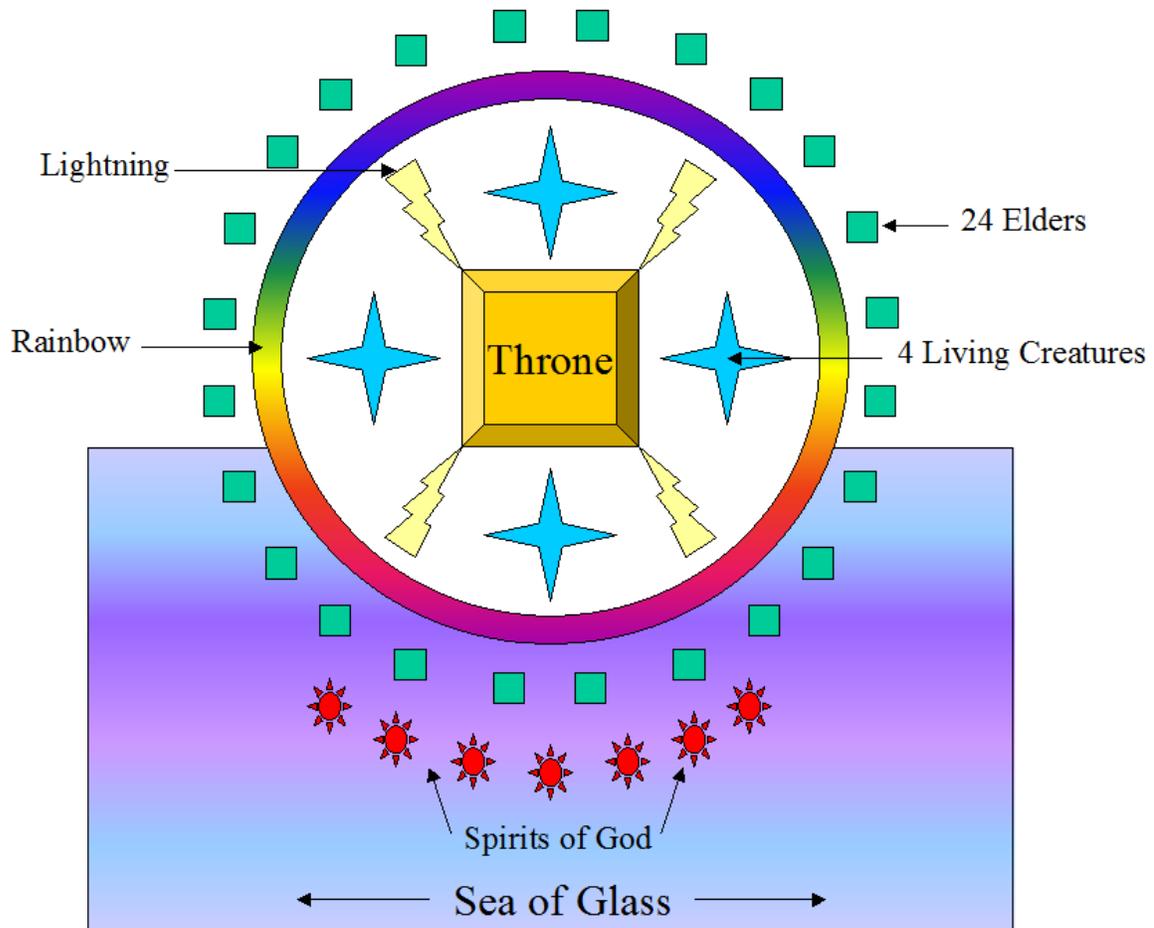


Fig. 1

You can see the sense of balance, order and harmony in this graphical description of what John saw.

4:4 And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

Who these elders are has been a source of debate among commentators and scholars. Some see them as a representation of the OT patriarchs and the NT apostles. Although they are another symbol, John was able to speak to them. (5:5; 7:13) When the Levite priests became numerous, David divided them into 24 groups. (1 Chr 24:1-19) Each group of priests officiated for a week at a time on a rotating basis. The only exception was during the great festivals, when all the groups served at the tabernacle at the same time. A very loose interpretation would be that these 24 elders surrounding the throne reflect David's organization of a *perpetual service*.

Governments throughout history have installed older, more experienced individuals as best fitted to govern. Thus, an elder signifies experience coupled with authority. They served as local magistrates (Deut 19:12; 21:1ff; Josh 20:4), punished disobedient sons (Deut 21:19), inflicted penalty for slander (Deut 22:15) and noncompliance with Levirate marriage law. (Deut 25:7ff) In a general sense, they enforced the Mosaic Law. (Deut 27:1)

In the NT, an elder carries seniority. (Luke 15:25; 1 Tim 5:2) Elders were appointed to hold offices

to oversee the church, exercising spiritual oversight for the flock.

Clothed in white garments: They are clothed in righteousness. (cf. 19:8) (See notes on 3:4-5)

Golden crowns: Gold is considered to be precious and pure. Christians will receive an imperishable crown as a reward for their faithfulness (1 Cor 9:25), one that will not wither or fade away, and a crown of eternal life. (James 1:12)

There are two types of gold in Revelation: *pure gold* and *gold*. The term, ‘pure gold’ describes the street and walls of the New Jerusalem, a poetic description of the church. (21:18, 21) The Ark of the Covenant and most of the tabernacle pieces were overlaid with pure gold. (Exo 25) It is a standard in which to have confidence. (Job 31:24) Jesus advised the lukewarm church of Laodicea to buy pure gold—gold refined by fire. (3:18) Gold tested by fire (refined, purified) refers to God’s people. (Zech 13:9) It’s indicative of men being tested (i.e., the furnace) and how they respond. (Prov 27:21) Refined gold is compared to righteous offerings presented to the Lord. (Mal 3:3) The 24 elders throw their crowns to God to show that they are not worthy, only He alone is worthy.

The characteristics of the 24 elders:

- They are *elders*, implying age, wisdom, judgment, and leadership¹
- They are *righteous* (white robes)
- They have been *tested* and found *faithful* (gold crowns)

Who these elders *are* is not as important as what they *represent*. Like the four living creatures, they are depictions of characteristics God desires in His kingdom. While John makes no attempt at identifying them, this hasn’t stopped theologians from wasting a lot of paper and ink on the issue. Be that as it is, they *generally* agree the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles are symbolized in these 24 elders. The number 12 may be seen as a symbol of national unity. (See notes on 21:12) Thus, 12+12 may imply two *national* covenants in harmony. The Mosaic covenant was a shadow of the new covenant under Christ. (Heb 10:1) One introduced the other.

The description of the elders gives us a perspective of wisdom, righteousness, and proven faithfulness. If there is any meaning to be found in the number 24, it may be this: both Jews and Gentiles were brought into harmony with God’s will. They are the faithful from all nations, who owe their salvation (gold crowns) to God for what He has done.

The scene before us drips Jewish symbolism, which leads me to wonder to whom Revelation was primarily written. We see before us a heavenly version of the earthly tabernacle. There is the mercy seat (God’s throne), the cherubim (4 Living Creatures), the lampstands (Holy Spirit), the bronze sea (sea of glass), the Golden Censer, and the altar of incense. The trumpets and bowls we find in chapters 8 and 16, are also reflections of the earthly Jewish temple. The thrones are indicative of the throne of David, Christ’s throne, and the thrones of the kings and priests (the church past and present). To the Jew familiar with Moses and the temple arrangement, these would have been immediately recognizable. Other parts of Revelation, such as chapter 11, are also laden with Jewish language and pictures.

Christian Gentiles in the 1st Century were, for the most part, unfamiliar with Jewish history, tradition, or its laws. Even if the Jews at that time had built colleges to instruct Gentiles in the Law and Prophets, the latter would never have arrived at the same level of understanding of the former. This

¹ Taken literally, this would mean there are “old men” in heaven. Again, we are dealing with symbols.

lack of understanding the Old Testament caused Gentile Christians to see Revelation as dark and mysterious. Today it has become a science fiction manual used to predict the future. This unfortunate result is because of not seeing the Jewish symbolism in its pageantry. It wasn't until much later that non-Jews began to see the Old Testament inside of Revelation, thus following the Dive Order, to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. (Rom 1:16; 2:10 cf. Matt 10:6)

4:5 And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God

Thunder, lightning flashes and smoke accompanied the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. (Exo 19:16; 20:18) Jesus compared His Second Coming to the lightning that came from the east and flashed in the west (Matt 24:27), declaring the startling revelation of God's kingdom that would be made plain from horizon to horizon. Thunder and lightning are often associated with God's power and majesty, and also His presence and judgment:

The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire. And He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them. (Ps 18:13-14)

Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thundering of His pavilion? Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him, and He covers the depths of the sea. *For by these He judges peoples*; He gives food in abundance. He covers His hands with the lightning, and commands it to strike the mark. *Its noise declares His presence*; the cattle also, *concerning what is coming up*. (Job 36:29-33)

From these verses, thunder and lightning symbolize God's voice and presence. They come from the throne, from the center of all Authority and Judgment.

Seven lamps—seven Spirits: The lamps are defined as God's *complete and perfect* Spirit ('7' = perfection or completeness). It is the All-Seeing and All-Knowing Spirit. (See notes on 1:4) Jesus is the One who holds these seven spirits. (3:1)

4:6 and before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

The term 'sea' refers to a vast expanse, and in scripture, is a symbol for mankind. The waves of the sea are symbolic of unstable and godless men. (Jude 1:13) The kingdom of heaven is like a net *cast into the sea* (nations), and gathering fish (men) of every kind. (Matt 13:47) In the book of Daniel, the four beasts rise from the *sea*, but when the angel explains the vision, they become four kingdoms that rise from the *earth*. (Dan 7:3; 17) David said, "He sent from above, He took me, *He drew me out of many waters*. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me; for they were too strong for me." (2 Sam 22:17-18) Thus, the sea refers to the pagan, Gentile nations. The Great Harlot sat on *many waters*, meaning she ruled over many nations. (Rev 17:15)

Sea of glass: The Hebrew word *yam* (pronounced *yawm*) is used of the Great Basin that was positioned immediately in front of the Holy Place. (2 Kings 25:13) Just as the sea stood in front of the Holy Place in the Temple, here, it is before the throne, under the all-seeing, all-knowing God of the

universe. Depending on the translation, it is also called the *sea of cast metal* (1 Kings 7:23—KJV); *molten sea* or simply *the sea*. (Jer 27:19) Those who entered the Holy Place washed themselves in this basin. The sea of glass (or crystal) also implies transparency or clarity. Light can pass through it. Jesus spoke of a clear eye, where light could shine through, making a man full of light. (Matt 6:22) Paul spoke of clear speech, to facilitate understanding by others. (1 Cor 14:9) A clear conscience denotes freedom from guilt or doubt. (1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3) God’s eyes can see through the hearts of men. Nothing is hidden except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it should come to light. (Mark 4:22) The idea is there is no shadow or doubt, or anything deceptive that can thwart or block the light (truth).

Four living creatures: The terms, ‘creature’ and ‘creation’ are used interchangeably throughout scripture. *Creatures* make up the living part of *creation*, and are necessary to one another. In the four living creatures, we see both creation and creature, but their focus is on the *Creator*. In their orientation, they are in the *center* of, while at the same time, *around* the throne. This suggests they have their origin from God, since He also dwells in their midst. God’s throne seems to be more than just a large chair. The sea of glass is *before* God, as is His Spirit, watching the earth. Yet the creatures *come from* God. He is central to their existence. Paul said, “in Him we live and move and have our being.” (Acts 17:28)

In Genesis, living creatures populated both the *sea* and the *land*. (Gen 1:20, 24) We’ve already discussed how *earth* is a metaphor for the land of Judah, while the *sea* symbolizes surrounding nations. Mankind finds its origin in the dust of the earth. We all have a common ancestor, Adam, who was made from the dust. Therefore, the earth is typically used in scripture to mean people in general, and Judah in particular. Just as Adam was brought from the earth, so also, the Jews were “created” by God to serve His purpose in bringing forth Jesus into the world.

Nations on the other hand, are those corporate entities built by human design and energy. They are made up of people, and defined by religion, language, culture, and borders. God raised up nations through His promise to Abraham. (Gen 17:4) Satan raises up a beast (nation) in chapter 13 from the sea (nations).

The four living creatures seem to correspond to the four corners of the earth, which is another way of describing the entire earth. The living creatures and their function:

- 4:8—They worship God
- 4:9—They give glory, honor and thanks to God
- 4:9-10; 5:14—By their veneration they cause the elders to also worship
- 5:6—They are central to the slain Lamb
- 5:11; 7:11—They are central to the heavenly assembly
- 6:1ff—They introduce the first four seals
- 15:7—They give the seven bowls of wrath to the seven angels
- 19:4—They worship God

The first and final time they are mentioned in the book, they are worshipping God.

4:7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.

Lion: The lion is from among the untamed beasts of creation. (Gen 7:21) It is a symbol of kingly

authority and strength. The tribes of Judah, Dan, and Gad—and also Babylon—adopted the lion as their symbol. Jesus is called “the lion of Judah.” (Rev 5:5) *Ari*, the most common term for lion, means *the strong one*. Jerusalem is called Ariel, implying the capital of the Jewish nation was “the strong (lion-like) city of God.” (Isa 29:1)

Calf: Opposite the untamed lion, the calf (or young bull) was from among the domesticated beasts of creation. They were separate from the “beasts of the field.” (Gen 2:20) They were a common sacrificial animal, and used in the consecration of priests to God. (Exo 29:1) At times, they were used as sin offerings. (Ezek 43:19)

Face of a man: While the other creatures are depicted as entire animals, only the implication of humanity is made here. The *face* of man would indicate intelligence and discernment. ‘Face’ in scripture means ‘presence.’

A partial ranking order can be seen in these creatures: First, the lion, representing the wild, untamed part of creation. Second, the calf, symbolizing the domestic, tamer side of creation. Third, man, which is over them both. The eagle is over them all.

Flying eagle: Literally, a *spread* eagle. A swooping eagle was a symbol of swift justice. (Deut 28:49; Jer 48:40; 49:22; Hos 8:1; Hab 1:8) As a spreading eagle, however, it was a protector of its young. (Deut 32:11) In striking its prey, the eagle assumes this wingspread, depicted as a swift harbinger of judgment.

Behold, one will fly swiftly like an eagle, and spread out his wings against Moab. (Jer 48:40)

A great eagle with great wings, long pinions and a full plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took away the top of the cedar. (Ezek 17:3)

Both of these OT scriptures describe the eagle as judge and executioner. However, the eagle is also a sign of God’s protection and salvation:

He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions. The Lord alone led him; no foreign god was with him. (Deut 32:10-12) (NIV)

Animals were commonly used as signs or *standards* (flags) in military formations, their symbolism can be found in the book of Numbers:

The sons of Israel shall camp, *each by his own standard*, with the banners of their fathers’ households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. (Num 2:2)

As the living creatures were arranged around the throne, the earthly shadow of the nation of Israel was arranged around the tabernacle. (See figure 2) The Israelites were divided into three principle divisions. At the center of their encampment was the tabernacle (throne). The second division was made up of the priests and Levites (24 elders). The last division was the remaining tribes. These tribes

were then divided into four major quarters, which faced the four compass points.² Judah (the lion) was placed on the east, which was considered the front, and from which all other directions took their reference. The tribe of Reuben was on the south, Ephraim was on the west, and Dan was on the north. Under each of these were other tribes. For example, Issachar and Zebulun were ranked under the tribe of Judah.³

Each tribe had a standard, or flag. Judah's flag depicted the lion. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up? (Gen 49:9)

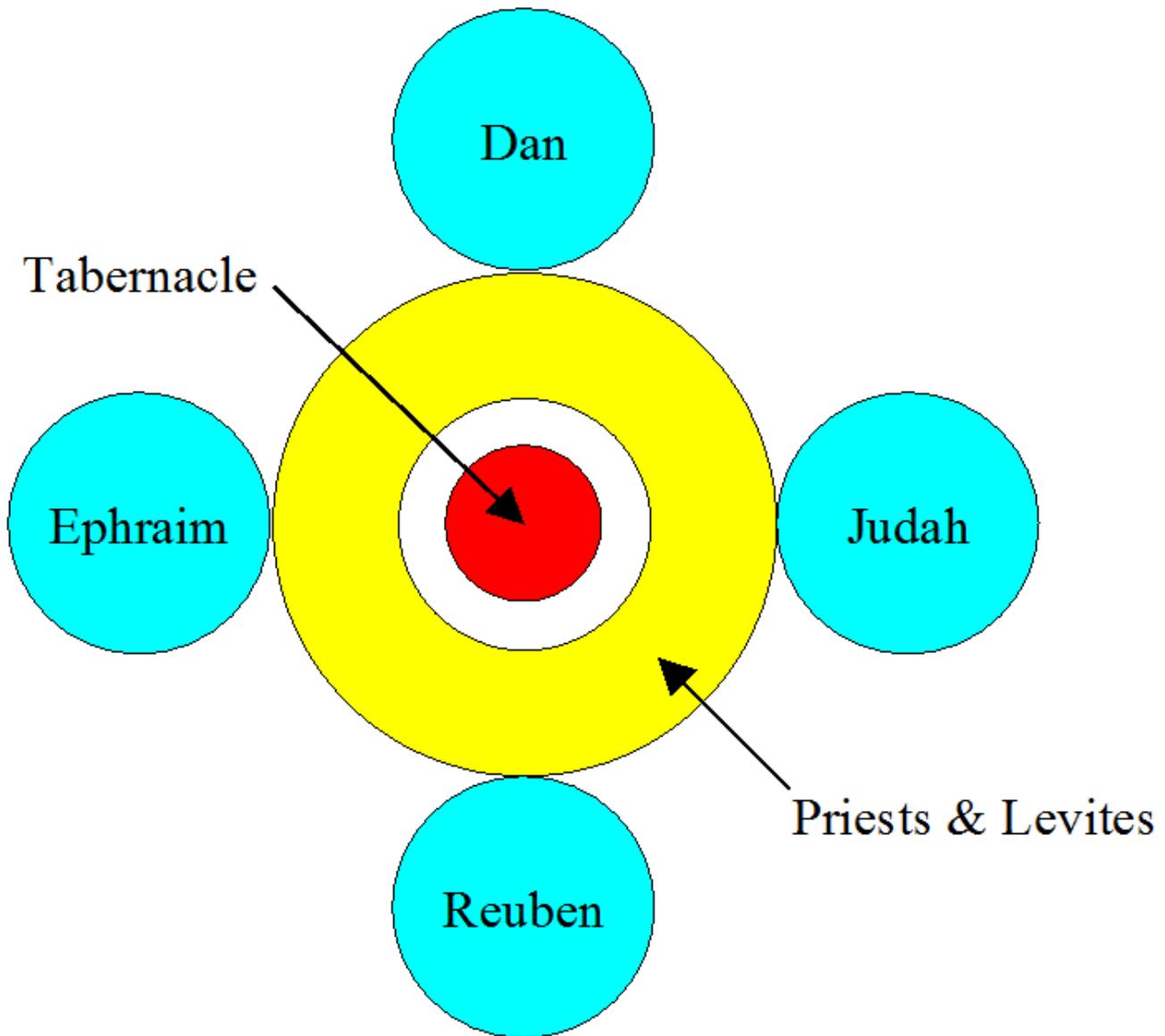


Fig. 2—Organization of Israel's camp in the wilderness.

² Josephus, *Antiquities* III

³ See Clarke's commentary on Numbers 2, p. 617 detailing how the standards were ascribed to each tribe.

Ephraim's standard was that of an ox (calf; *unicorn* in the KJV) Ephraim was Joseph's younger son, whom Jacob blessed ahead of the older son Manasseh. (Gen 48:14) When Joseph tried to get his father to bless the older son, Jacob said, "(Manasseh) shall become a great people, but truly his younger brother (Ephraim) shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." (Gen 48:19) The standard of the calf shows up in Deuteronomy:

His glory is like the first-born of his bull, and his horns are like the horns of the wild ox. With them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth. And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deut 33:17)

Although Reuben was given the sign of a river, Jewish literature depicts the figure of a man pouring water from a bowl. 'Hebrew' means "person from beyond," and is ascribed to Abraham the Hebrew (Gen 14:13), who crossed the Euphrates river to enter Canaan. This may explain why their standard was at one time a river, and another time, a man—*man from beyond the river*. A man pouring water, probably taken from the river.

Scripture identifies Dan as having the symbol of a young lion (Deut 33:22), while some Talmudists claim the tribe's standard was the eagle.⁴ Since the eagle symbolizes judgment, the tribe of Dan was ascribed a similar charge:

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that bites the horse's heels, so that its rider shall fall backward. (Gen 49:16-17)

Josephus points out that when Solomon built the temple, he had engraved on the bronze sea basins a lion, a calf and an eagle.⁵ These descriptions heavily employ Jewish symbolism, again underscoring the fact that Revelation was targeting primarily a Jewish audience. The scene in heaven and how it mirrors the Israelite encampment in the book of Numbers shows that God is a God of order. To the Jewish mind steeped in Mosaic terms, the imagery would be plain.

4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

Verse 7 described them as *full of eyes in front and behind*. Here, they are *full of eyes around and within*. Note the similarity in Ezekiel's vision:

Whenever (the living beings) moved, they moved in any of their four directions, without turning as they moved. As for their rims they were lofty and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about. (Ezek 1:17-18)

Their whole body, their backs, their hands, their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes all around, the wheels belonging to all four of them. (Ezek 10:12)

Front alludes to forward sight, while *behind* suggests past sight. *Around* encompasses what is seen on the outside (the world), while *within* points to that which is unseen (the spirit). They possess an understanding of past, present and future, and also a complete discernment of both worldly and

⁴ See Clarke's commentary on Numbers 2, p. 617

⁵ *Antiquities* VIII, chapter 3, para 8

spiritual matters. They are *full of eyes*, denoting *complete understanding and wisdom*.

They do not cease to say: Three times ‘holy’ is spoken, denoting God’s *complete* holiness. Since His holiness is too awesome and terrible to *describe*; it can only be *proclaimed*. This proclamation appears in only one other place in scripture:

I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.” (Isa 6:1-3)

The living creatures are forever saying, “Most holy is the Eternal One.” John says that they are giving glory, honor and thanks to God in the next verse.

4:9-11 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.”

The living creatures do not have crowns. When they give their praise to God however, this triggers the 24 elders to fall down, worship God, and throw their crowns in front of the throne. If we understand these creatures to represent creation itself, it follows that “since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” (Rom 1:20)

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. (Psa 19:1-3)

The creation then, testifies to God’s power, just as these living creatures testify to His holiness. The wise person sees design in the creation, acknowledges God, which precipitates worship. This is also how the 24 elders align themselves to the living creatures’ testimony. Just as the living creatures acknowledge God, so too does the creation speak of God. Just as the creation inspires men to worship God, so too do the living creatures inspire the elders to do the same.

If the golden crowns represent eternal life, or a Divine Reward, the elders are essentially giving back to God what He had already bestowed on them. He alone is worthy, and our attitudes should be the same. We should not be like Zebedee’s sons, who desired to sit on either side of God’s throne. (Mark 10:35-38)

In view of all this, we may loosely infer that the four living creatures symbolize creation itself, testifying to God’s glory, the source of its existence. Jesus prayed, “On earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt 6:10) The righteous (24 elders) concur with the living creatures, and give God the glory and praise.

For He created all things, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Col 1:16-17)

Paul's words reflect the actions and attitude of the 24 elders and the living creatures: "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor 10:31)

With that said, there is another aspect seen in these living creatures that goes beyond identification with the creation. The creation is temporary. Things in heaven—including these creatures—are eternal. (2 Cor 4:18; 5:1, etc) They are in the *center* of, while at the same time, *around* the throne. This suggests that they have their origin from God, while He also dwells in their midst. As such, *the creatures seem to part of the throne*. This is key. A look at their attributes also gives us a clue:

- The lion represents Christ's lineage from Judah, and His rightful place of power and authority.
- The calf symbolizes Jesus' meekness and gentleness, not to mention the sacrificial offering.
- The face of the man represents Christ's humanity.
- The flying eagle is a symbol of Christ's protection for those under the New Covenant.

This is why the creatures are in the center of the throne, while simultaneously circumscribing it. All of these attributes point to Jesus Christ. He is being *revealed* for us. There is the creation, and there is the re-creation. Genesis tells the story of creation; Revelation tells the story of the re-creation of all things in Christ.⁶

⁶ *The Consummation of the Ages*, p. 129

In scripture [Palestine] is called, by way of pre-eminence, *The Land*. It is often translated 'the earth' in English versions.

Introduction to *Palestine, World's Histories*
John Kitto