

FACES OF LIFE

A deeper look at Ezekiel 1



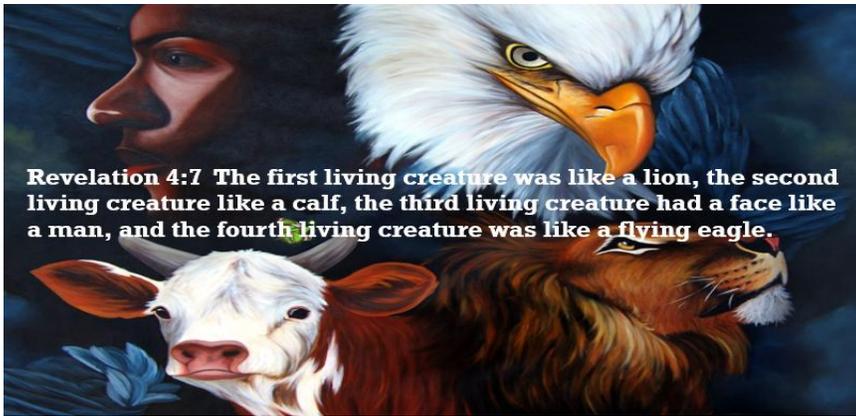
- The Old Testament is often hard to understand.
- One reason for this is that a good portion of the information in the O.T. was UNDERSTOOD only by the Hebrew people.
- The understanding was passed on from generation to generation through oral instruction.
- Without the benefit of the original cultural context and oral teachings, we may miss a lot of important information.
- We'll study the Bible and some of that oral tradition regarding the 4 faces of the angels in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 1:4-6 Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵ Also from within it came the **likeness of four living creatures**. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. ⁶ **Each one had four faces**, and each one had four wings.

Ezekiel 1:10-11 As for the likeness of their faces, each had **the face of a man**; each of the four had the **face of a lion** on the right side, each of the four had **the face of an ox** on the left side, and each of the four had **the face of an eagle**. ¹¹ Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies.

This chapter gives a more detailed description of how these beings appeared in the verses we skipped, but I want to specifically focus on those faces. There's something important about those 4 faces. You know what would really help, is if there were something in the N.T. that we could reference, because if something like these beings showed up in the N.T. then it would be more important to us N.T. believers right?...Lucky for us there is something similar in the N.T.

Revelation 4:7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.



Revelation 4:7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.

Reading the descriptions of these beings in Rev doesn't precisely match the description of the beings in Ezekiel, but we've learned from our previous studies that often prophetic visions will give the same message, but with different methods. So while there are differences, we still see the lion, the calf or ox, the man, and the eagle. So what could be the importance of how

these beings are described in both the Old and New Testaments?

Numbers 2:2 Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch ***by his own standard***, with the ***ensign of their father's house***: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

- A standard is another name for a flag or banner, and an ensign means an emblem or symbol, and it's where we get the word insignia from.

Numbers 2:3 On the east side, toward the rising of the sun, those of the standard of **the forces with Judah** shall camp according to their armies; and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be the leader of the children of Judah."

Numbers 2:10 "On the south side shall be the standard of **the forces with Reuben** according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur."

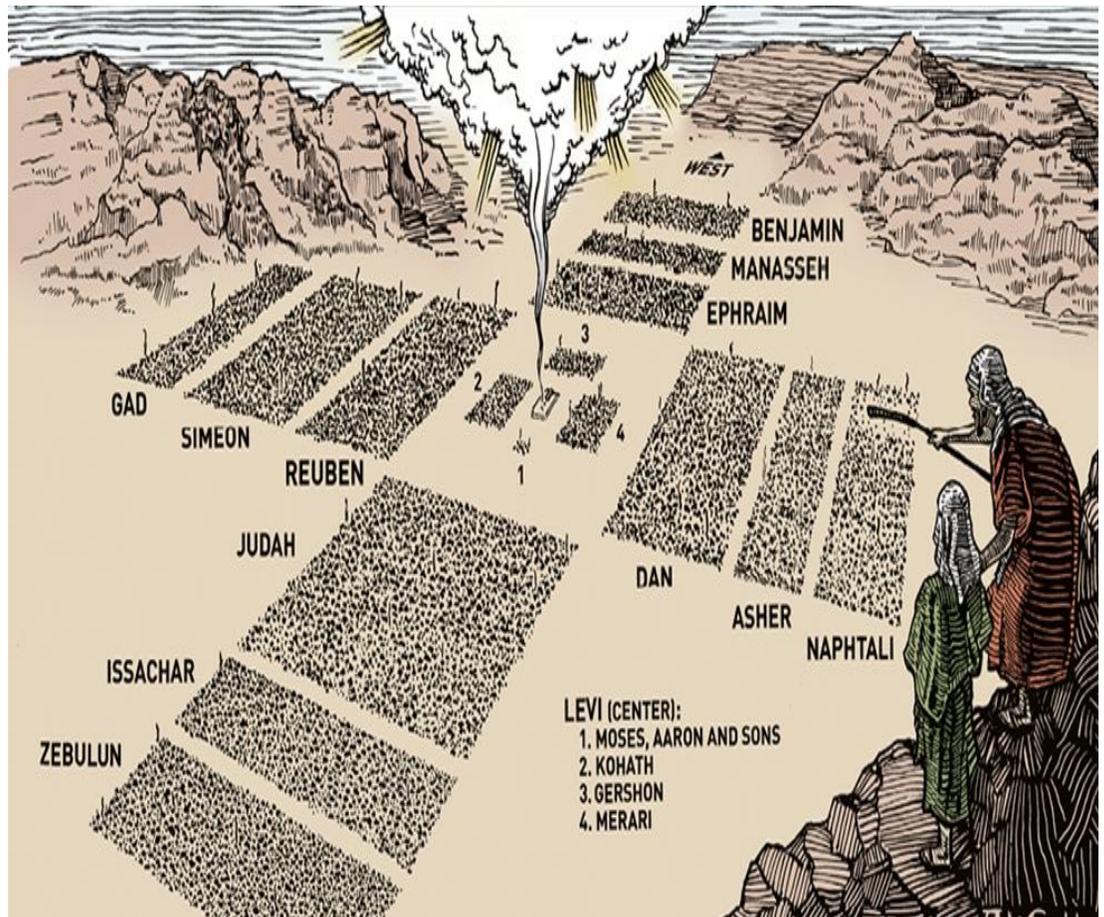
Numbers 2:18 "On the west side shall be the standard of **the forces with Ephraim** according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud."

Numbers 2:25 "The standard of **the forces with Dan** shall be on the north side according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai."

- There were four groups of three tribes each, with the leader tribe guarding the corners of the inner camp.
- The other tribes had their own banners, but would camp under the flag of the leader tribe

For the sake of time, I didn't read the verses in between that show where the other tribes were located, but if you want, feel free to check it out. The gist is that there were four groups of three tribes each, with the leader tribe guarding the corners of the inner camp.

The other tribes had their own banners but would camp under the flag of the leader tribe of their particular group, so there were 4 main standards, each with a different emblem. They all camped around the tabernacle to protect it. It looked something like this...



The Bible doesn't say what shape the different camps formed specifically, but I kinda think this is probably pretty accurate, considering what happens much later in the Bible. Another thing we don't know from the Bible, is what was on those banners that they camped under. This is where we have to look into the oral teachings that were passed down from generation to generation.

I'll share what I've learned from studying this, but I encourage you to search also for yourselves. Each tribe had their own banners, with the symbol of their ancestors on them. I want to focus on the 4 leader tribes and their banners.



Genesis 49:9
Judah *is* a lion's
whelp;
From the prey, my
son, you have gone
up. He bows down, he
lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who
shall rouse him?

First was Judah.
Their symbol was a
lion, which can be
shown with the Bible.

Next is Reuben, who
was the first born and
head of the family, so
the symbol on their
banner was that of a
man's head.

Genesis 49:3
"Reuben, you are my
firstborn,
My might and the
beginning of my
strength,
The excellency of
dignity and the
excellency of power.



Jeremiah 31:18 "I
have surely heard
Ephraim bemoaning
himself: 'You have
chastised me, and I
was chastised, Like
an untrained bull;
Restore me, and I will
return, For
You *are* the LORD my
God.



Deuteronomy 33:16-17 With
the precious things of the
earth and its fullness, And
the favor of Him who dwelt in
the bush. Let *the*
blessing come 'on the head
of Joseph, And on the crown
of the head of him *who*
was separate from his
brothers.' His glory *is like* a
firstborn bull, And his
horns *like* the horns of the
wild ox; Together with them
He shall push the peoples To
the ends of the earth;
They *are* the ten thousands
of Ephraim, And they *are* the
thousands of Manasseh."

Next is Ephraim. Their
symbol was an ox or bull,
which can also be shown
using the Bible. Ephraim
was the second born son
of Joseph, but He
received the firstborn
blessing from Jacob. That
can be found in Gen
48:17-20. So whatever
his father was blessed
with, he also received.

Finally, there's Dan. Their symbol was originally the serpent. We can see this here in Gen. Not a very good symbol for a follower of YHVH.

Genesis 49:17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that its rider shall fall backward.



DONT TREAD ON ME



Genesis 49:16 "Dan shall judge his people As one of the tribes of Israel.

Deuteronomy 28:49 The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand,

Jewish oral tradition states that the leader of the Danites, a man named Ahiezer, didn't like the idea of a serpent banner, so he chose an eagle instead, the slayer of serpents and symbol of judgement.

Interestingly, that verse in Deut, comparing judgment to a swift eagle, is right in the middle of the blessings and curses chapter, and of course it's part of the curses for disobedience.

A few verses past this one, God tells the Israelites that if they disobeyed Him, their huge walls and great gates would be destroyed by a people from far away. This is while they were still wandering in the desert. They didn't even have a permanent place to call home, much less a city with walls and gates. But they would, and just as sure as they would eventually have walls and gates, those same walls and gates would be destroyed by a people from far away.

So, we can see, using the Bible and ancient oral teachings, that these were the 4 symbols on the standards of the 4 leader tribes, and that they match the 4 faces of the living beings. That's awesome, but I'm not sure why they are connected that way, unless it's to bring attention to something deeper, in the future, for the sake of those that live after the cross. That seems like something God would do. Let's take a look.



Each of these symbols represent a different aspect of Christ, (see chart below)

- He is the King of Kings represented by the lion.
- He is the humble servant and sacrifice, represented by the bull.
- He is the Son of Man, represented by the man's face.
- He is Judge of creation and Lord above all, represented by the eagle.

The Gospels Compared						
Gospel	Portrait	Key Verses	Lineage	Face	<i>Camp of Israel</i>	The Branch
Matthew	King Messiah	Mat. 1:1	From Abraham and David	Lion (Rev. 5:5)	Judah (East)	King (Jer. 23:5-6)
Mark	Servant	Mark 10:45	None	Ox	Ephraim (West)	Servant (Zec. 3:8)
Luke	Son of Man	Luke 19:10	From Adam (Luke 3:23)	Man (Dan. 7:13)	Reuben (South)	Man (Zec. 6:12)
John	Son of God	John 20:31	From Eternity (John 1:1)	Eagle	Dan (North)	Judge and Lord (Isa. 4:2)