

## THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES



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The heavens were opened and Ezekiel saw a windstorm from the north—the far north and an immense cloud of flashing lightning surrounded by a brilliant light, radiating out intensely. In the centre was a fire and in the fire were four creatures each having four faces: one of a lion, one of a man, one of an ox, and one of an eagle each with six wings. The creatures glowed like burning coals and they sped back and forward in the fire. Wheels within wheels sparkled like a topaz of vibrant yellow and green hues were on the ground beside each creature. Eyes on the wheels and on the creatures were everywhere, looking. Above the head of each creature was a wonderful sparkling expanse like shattered ice. When the creatures moved, they released their mighty wings instantly displacing volumes of air, generating the sound of rushing waters, the voice of the Almighty, the tumult of an army. They surrounded the Almighty God seated on His throne; their presence to the human eye is an awesome sight.

Who can understand this picture, but God who teaches us through a chosen people. He revealed Himself with the four intriguing cherubim to Ezekiel to record: a recent history, judgment and punishment of God's enemies, Israel's rebellious spirit, their judgment and punishment, their repentance, and finally the building of a new temple during a time when the people of Israel will be truly repentant and serving their God. In teaching ancient Israel about important aspects of His world, He replicated His eternal throne room through a simple 3-dimensional structure for Old Testament Israel, as they wandered in the wilderness. It was the beginning of something great in the making.

For 40 years, Israel wandered and when they camped, their arrangement mirrored a surreal vision seen by Ezekiel and later John.

"Then the LORD gave these instructions to Moses and Aaron: When the Israelites set up camp, each tribe will be assigned its own area. The tribal divisions will camp beneath their family banners on all four sides of the Tabernacle, but at some distance from it" (Numbers 2:1-2).

On the east: **Judah** (the leader), Issachar and Zebulun (Numbers 2:3-7).

On the south: **Reuben** (the leader), Simeon, Gad (Numbers 2:10-14).

In the middle: **The Tabernacle** and the Levites (Numbers 2:17).

On the west: **Ephraim** (the leader), Manasseh and Benjamin (Numbers 2:18-22).

On the north: **Dan** (the leader), Asher and Naphtali (Numbers 2:14-29).

The flag flying above each of these four groups of three was:

On the east: **Judah**—a **lion**

On the south: **Reuben**—a **man**

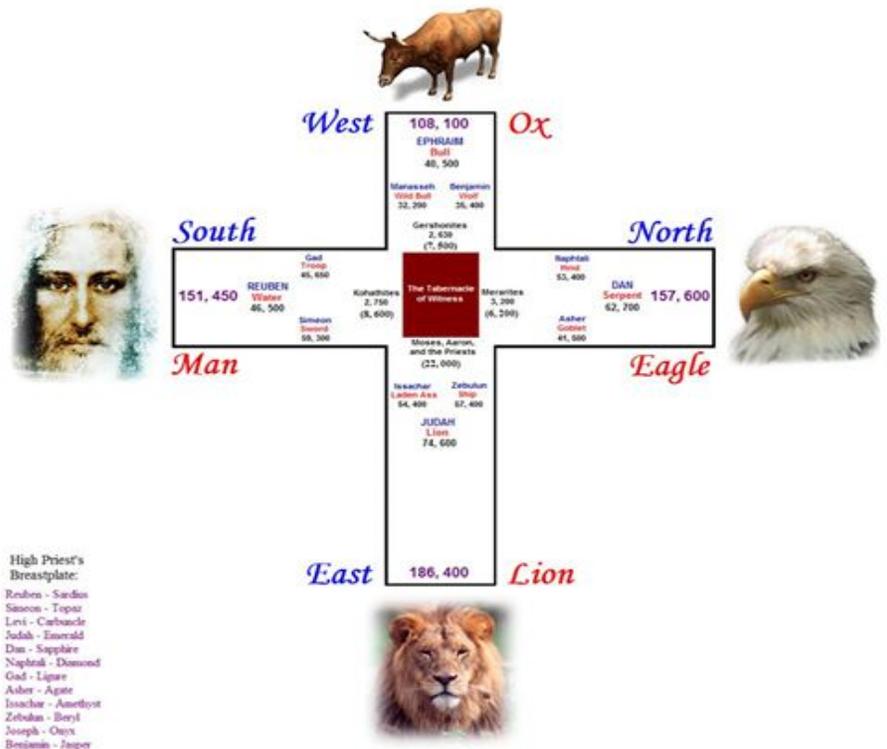
On the west: **Ephraim**—an **ox**

On the north: **Dan**—an **eagle**.

The images of a lion, man, ox and eagle represented the leading tribes. All 12 tribes surrounded God's tabernacle in the wilderness.

What meaning lies beneath this multi-dimensional image reflected down from heaven?

Intent on protecting these covenant people—God's first-born of nations, He assigned His angel (Jesus Christ) to lead them and keep them from harm.



**“Then the angel of God, who had been leading the people of Israel, moved to the rear of the camp. The pillar of cloud also moved from the front and stood behind them” (Exodus 14:19).**

Yet, they grumbled, griped and rebelled perpetually against their God, despite witnessing the great power of the Almighty and Supreme God of gods. They were spiritual babes. Their development would take hundreds of years through multiple generations before they could spiritually resemble the encampment in the wilderness. God’s message written in the banners of a lion, man, ox, and eagle flying above Old Testament Israel would lie encased in mystery for hundreds of years to come. Today, for many, it is an intriguing mystery of wheels within wheels and fantastical creatures; for others it is a humbling message filled with hope and gratitude.



<http://firehouseministries.com/2016/05/22/why-this-teaching-on-the-four-living-creatures/>

With their flags flying high: north, south, east, and west of the camp, the Israelites surrounded the Tabernacle in the Wilderness—God’s dwelling. A cryptic image for some, the flying banners of four faces announced the presence of Israel’s protector and Savior.

He was the perfect man; Son of God made flesh.

He was the perfect sacrifice—ox; Suffering Servant of God who died for us all.

He is the lion to come—Messiah King; King of kings, Lord of Lords.

He is the eagle—who flies on high with Sovereignty and Supremacy.

Housetohouse.com provides insight in the meaning of the four faces of each creature. “The lion symbolizes supreme strength, kingship; the man, highest intelligence; the ox, lowly service; the eagle, heavenliness, mystery, divinity.

- In Matthew we see the Messiah-King (the lion).
- In Mark we see Jehovah’s Servant (the ox).
- In Luke we see the Son of Man (the man).
- In John we see the Son of God (the eagle).

It needs all four aspects to give the full truth. As Sovereign He comes to reign and rule. As servant He comes to serve and suffer. As Son of Man He comes to share and sympathize. As Son of God He comes to reveal and redeem. **Wonderful fourfold blending – sovereignty and humility; humanity and deity!** <http://housetohouse.com/jesus-the-lion-the-ox-the-man-and-the-eagle/>

Wow!

The characteristics of the four-faced creatures are reflected in Christ and in turn the repentant righteous who follow Christ wherever he goes. After 4,000 years of rebellion, a righteous remnant of Israel will be found and they will join Christ in the great and final battle on earth. “Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel” (Revelation 7:4).

“I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads... they sang a song... No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women [false religion], for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as first-fruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths, they are blameless” (Revelation 14:1-5).

**The four living creatures have the multi-faceted face of righteousness:**

- **the face of man—a humble spirit, a lowly creature in the presence of God**
- **the face of an ox—a faithful and loyal Believer, standing strong against evil without compromise, a willing martyr, a perfected sacrifice**
- **the face of a lion—a just ruler, loving truth**
- **the face of an eagle—living and walking in the way of God—eternal and forever.**

The image of the four creatures with four faces surfaces again through the 144,000 during the latter days. They follow Christ wherever he goes: they are humble (man) and blameless (a perfected sacrifice), they do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death, they will rule with Christ, judge their people, mankind, and angels (lion) and they will be awarded eternal life to rule in the royal family of God (eagle). When all is restored as things were in times past, they will be with Christ, bend their knee before the Almighty God—of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and God Almighty will rule supreme.

A time is coming when **all of mankind** will repent. Then, God Almighty will come down and reside with them.

**“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.** They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed” (Revelation 21:3-4). The flags of four faces will be flying high reaching into the heavens announcing the glorious work of God: a humble mankind, faithful and true, ruling under God, and eternal. **They will surround Him and He will live with them.**

*Compiled by Janette Andrejowich with special thanks to housetohouse.com for their insight.*