***The Four Living Creatures

RV80-02***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 4:6-11, as we continue studying in our new section which deals with worship in the throne room. This is segment number two.

**God's Throne Room**

Let's have just a brief review of where we have come from in chapter 4 thus far. The apostle John finds himself in God the Father's heavenly throne room. He is confronted with an awesome site which is filled with a variety of biblical symbols. I want to stress the fact that they are biblical symbols. If they are symbols which are new, then God the Holy Spirit stops, and He explains what that symbol means. If it is a symbol which is used elsewhere in the Scriptures, and has a clarity of meaning, then that symbol isn't explained in detail at that point. So, when you study the book of the Revelation, its understanding is, in large measure, dependent upon your acquaintance with the rest of the Bible, particularly in the use of various symbols.

**God the Father**

When John steps into God's throne room, he is confronted with symbols which leap out at him with full meaning, because he is acquainted with the use of these in the Old Testament Scriptures. So, John has described some of the things he has been seeing in the throne room. He has described One who is sitting upon the throne, God the Father, and he has described Him in symbolic language to convey the holiness of God, and the fact of God's propitiation, the satisfaction of His justice through the payment of the death of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world. God's sovereignty (the Father's sovereignty) is stressed in presenting God as the One who is the first and the last. The rainbow halo around the throne proclaims the Father's faithfulness to His Word. What God says He will do, He will do, both in blessing and in judgment. This throne, for the church-age believer, is, of course a throne of grace, and it is to this throne that we approach in prayer.

**24 Elders**

John also sees 24 elders crowned with rewards. These are the rewards which they have earned for their divine good production in service. These elders represent, during the church age, the pastor-teacher elders which are in authority in each local church. The body of 24 pastor-teacher elders symbolizes the total body of Christ, the church.

**Judgment**

John also sees signs of impending judgment from the Father's throne. The tribulation period, at this time, is in progress on earth while the church is already in heaven. The throne of God is for the people upon the tribulation earth – not a throne of grace, but rather a throne of wrath and of terrible judgment following their allegiance to the antichrist beast. So, the throne of grace has become, for the tribulation people, a throne of great judgment. Divine holiness is certain to be preserved by the Father, and John recognizes that that is the case. God's holiness and God's integrity will not be compromised.

**Seven Flaming Torches**

John also sees God the Holy Spirit symbolized as seven flaming torches. These torches were identified for us in Isaiah 11:2 as ministries of God the Spirit to the humanity of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, and as ministries to our humanity. There was the torch of the presence of Jehovah, the indwelling of God Himself; the torch of wisdom; the torch of understanding; the torch of counsel; the torch of might; the torch of knowledge; and, the torch of the fear of the Lord. We've gone over each one of those in considerable detail.

**The Worship of God**

John now observes, in symbolic form again, the worship of God in the throne room. First of all, he observes a sea of glass, which lies before the Father's throne. It's a sea which looks like glass. This crystalline sea recalls the sea of brass, or the lever of water, which was used in Solomon's temple. This laver was used by the priests to wash their hands and their feet before they entered the holy place to minister before God. This act symbolized the need for daily forgiveness of sin to maintain temporal fellowship. It deals with experiential sanctification. Every Christian, who possesses positional sanctification as the result of his trust in Christ as Savior, is contaminated by the world; the sin nature; and, the devil, and needs, therefore, daily forgiveness – not for the purpose of salvation, but for the purpose of maintaining one's walk with God. So, this laver of water, which was sometimes referred to as a sea, was before the entrance to the holy place in the tabernacle, and later in the temple, so that the priest could symbolically demonstrate their need for cleansing in time.

The Lord Jesus illustrated the same principle in the washing of the disciples' feet, but in not giving Peter a full bath as Peter requested, since positional sanctification is irreversible. So, the Lord explained to Peter, "I don't need to give you a bath." That's what the Greek word there means, which would symbolize the washing of salvation. Positional sanctification, setting apart for eternal life, is irreversible. Therefore, you only need that once. But the Lord said to Peter, "If you're going to be in fellowship with me, you do need partial cleansing – the cleansing of forgiveness of sin in time."

**The Bible**

The water of the labor symbolizes the Word of God, the Bible, which has a purifying effect upon the soul. Ephesians 5:26 tells us that. The Word acts like water upon our souls. So, the Christian today uses the Word of God as per the principle laid down in 1 John 1:9, the confession of personal known sins, to maintain temporal fellowship, or to maintain experiential sanctification. The same purpose of the laver, the sea of brass in Solomon's Temple, is executed by 1 John 1:9 today.

That's the connection again with the biblical symbols. As John looks upon this crystalline sea before the Father's throne in heaven, he does observe that it is not made of water. It looks like crystal. It's smooth as glass. It looks like a body of water on a calm day. But it is not made of water in heaven, because there we have experienced ultimate sanctification, which means that we will never again need cleansing from evil by the Word of God. You will never again have to confess, and you will never again need cleansing when you stand in heaven before God the Father. So, this crystalline sea is there to commemorate the daily cleansing, which once God's grace provided for us on earth, in order for us to deal with our sin nature.

It is a great tragedy that, while many Christians are faithful in witnessing and expressing the principle of John 3:16 as the way of eternal life, and the concept of salvation by grace through faith, apart from any human doing, that those same people are very careless about teaching their converts the need of executing 1 John 1:9 in their lives on a day-by-day basis. One of the places that Satan creeps up on us is in the fact that we do not confess evil. We do not confess the evil of human good. We do not confess the evil of our sins. The Bible makes it very clear to us that if we claim that we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves. There are probably few of us that would have the gall to stand up and say, "I don't sin," but if you do not confess sin, you have done the same thing. So, we do have the same kind of deception worked upon us by Satan, as those people, here and there, who actually think that they've come to some kind of sinless perfection.

**Confession of Sin**

Confession of sin is critical to your walk with God. I remind you that if a priest in the Old Testament, in his confusion, having ministered at the altar of sacrifice, should have walked past the laver and right into the holy place, he would have died. It was a sentence of death not to stop and symbolically perform the partial cleansing necessary for temporal fellowship.

John observes this symbol, and it declares our completed transformation into the image of Jesus Christ because the symbol does not have water. It's no longer the Word of God. It's just a memory. It's just a commemorative symbol. It looks like water, but it is a crystalline sea.

So, we pick it up in Revelation 4:6, at that point, as John observes something else now standing before him. Verse 6: "And before the throne, there was a crystalline sea, clear as crystal in the midst of the throne." The word "midst" looks like this in a Greek Bible: "mesos." "Mesos" means "in the middle of." Then he uses another word: "round about." "Round about" is the Greek word "kuklos." "Kuklos" is a noun, and it means "around." Now you have two words which are very distinctive in the Greek language. Immediately, we have a problem of trying to see how to relate those two to understand what it is that John was seeing, and that he was trying to express to us.

**Four Living Creatures**

John sees four living creatures round about the throne. The word "mesos" is telling us that. They are in the midst of the throne. The word "kuklos" is telling us also that they are around the throne. This is John's way of trying to describe the position of these particular creatures that he's observing. He says he observes four of them. The Greek word is "tessares," which means "four," and he calls them "zoon." "Zoon" is a noun. And of course, you can immediately recognize that that is the word from which we get our English words like "zoo" and "zoology," because the word "zoon" has to do with "life." It means "living creature." "Zoon" means "a living creature." Some of you, if you have a King James translation, have a very bad translation there because it uses the word "beast." It is not the word "beast." That's a false connotation. It is a living creature.

It is used, for example, in Hebrew 13:11, just to give you an idea of the use of this word: "For the bodies of those beasts." There you have it, and you could translate this as "animals." This is simply conveying the concept of life. This word "zoon" stresses life, and that's the thing that you want to grasp. The things it stresses is life. So, here in Hebrews, it is speaking about sacrificial animals: "For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt outside the camp. It's a good translation there, in that case, to call it "animals." The point that he's making is that you don't bring in for sacrifice something that is dead. You can't bring a piece of wood. You can't bring some metal for sacrifice. You can't bring vegetables. Cain tried that deal. He found out that that just doesn't work. This point of using this word "zoon" is to stress that it must have life in it if it is to be qualified as a sacrifice.

In 2 Peter 2:12, this word is also used: "But these, as natural brute beasts." Here it is translated with the idea of brute beasts, which is not a good translation. This really should be better translated as "creatures:" "But these creatures, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they don't understand, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." Here the word is used of "apostates," and it is referring to apostates as "creatures," stressing the fact that they are living beings.

Another example is in Jude 10, where it again connects it to apostates: "But these speak evil of those things which they don't know, but what they know naturally as brute beasts (as "zoon" – living creatures), in those things, they corrupt themselves." Again, the stress is that the quality of life is in these apostates who are doing these things.

This word "zoon" is used 20 times in the book of the Revelation, and it's used to refer to some type of creature possessing life. That's why we translate it as "living creature." It can be a variety of creatures, all of whom are characterized by the quality of life. I want to stress that what it does not refer to is brutality, as in a wild beast. We have another Greek word for that. That's why we were we know that to be the case. That's the Greek word "therion." "Therion" is a noun, and it refers to brute beasts. It connotes wild animals. This word does stress the concept of viciousness and of being a brute of some kind.

For example, in Acts 28:4, you have this word used: "And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast (here you have the word therion') hang on his hand;" that is, Paul had been bitten by a viper here: "They said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer, and so on." Here the viper is described as a "therion" because it is a brute, vicious beast. That quality is there, where Paul is on the island of Malta, when he was bitten on the hand. It is used in a place that you would expect it to be used, here in the book of Revelation. We'll come to it a little later. Revelation 13:1 speaks about the beast who comes out of the sea. Revelation 13:11 speaks about another beast coming up out of the earth. These two beasts are the antichrist and his right hand man, the false prophet. These two are vicious, brutal characters. Therefore, it would be unfitting to call them "zoon." That would not be a fitting word to describe these people, though they are living. The thing that is most significant about them is that they are of the "therion" kind. They are vicious, brutal beast. The antichrist is not going to be a nice person once he's in a position of power, and neither will the false prophet.

So, this word, "therion," is not the word that is used here in describing what John sees around the Father's throne. "Zoon" is used in Revelation to describe someone who praises the Father, and who acts with positive relation to the Father's guidance. A little later on in Revelation 5, we're going to find that description about these living creatures. Revelation 5:13-14: "And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying, 'Blessed, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.' And the four living creatures said, 'Amen.' And the 24 elders fell down and worshipped Him that lives forever and ever." So, here you have the four living creatures acting in terms of praising God. Every time this word "zoon" is used in Revelation, that is the concept – someone who praises God.

**Cherubim**

As those who first read this verse, they again would be thinking in terms of the Old Testament. When these early Christians, who at this time, were basically of the Jewish background, they would read this expression "Around the throne were four living creatures." Immediately, their minds would leap to Ezekiel 1:1-18, which speak about living creatures, and in fact, specifically of four living creatures. We won't take time to read that whole passage now, but they give a description of Ezekiel seeing a chariot a fire, which he discovers is made up of angels, which is swooping down upon him out of the north. He sees this whirlwind coming. He sees it as a chariot of fire. As it comes closer, he realizes that this chariot is made up of angelic beings. The chariot of fire that he sees is borne by four angelic creatures (by four living creatures) which are identified as cherubim.

Ezekiel 1:5: "And out of the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures;" that is, out of the midst of this swirling mass of fire, which he recognizes as a chariot of fire, as it gets closer, he sees the likeness of four living creatures. In comparing that to Psalm 18:9-11, we have this concept of the chariot of fire amplified: "He bowed the heavens also, and came down, and darkness was under his feet, and he rode upon a cherub, and did fly. Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place. His pavilion round about him was dark waters and thick clouds in the sky." Here you have a chariot of fire in Psalm, and it's described as God riding upon a cherub. The living creatures in Ezekiel each had had four faces: the face of a man; the face of a lion; the face of an ox; and, the face of an eagle. You will see that that was again connected with what John saw relative to these four living creatures in heaven.

They were full of eyes in Revelation, and on the heels of this chariot, there were many eyes. Ezekiel 1:6 says, "Every one had four faces." Verse 10 says, "As for the likeness of their faces, the four had the face of a man; the face of a lion on the right side; the face of an ox on the left side; and, the face of an eagle;" that is, each living creature in Ezekiel had four faces around it. That's what Ezekiel saw. What John saw was a little different. Ezekiel 1:18: "For their rims (their wheels) were so high that they were dreadful, and their rims were full of eyes round about the four." In Revelation, John will observe that the living creatures have many eyes before and behind.

These had four wings each here in Ezekiel. Verse 6 tells us that every one of them had four wings. John sees the living creatures with six wings. But Ezekiel 10:20 is significant to us because it tells us what it is that Ezekiel is seeing, and thus identifies what John is seeing. Ezekiel 10:20 tells us: "This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar, and I knew that they were cherubim." And what John does is identifies for us these living creatures as angels of the cherub class.

**Cherub Angels**

There are different classes of angels. We don't want to get too deeply into the subject of angelology now, but just this much: There is a type of angel called the cherub angel. A certain class of angel is the cherub angel. He has a certain relationship to God, and a certain responsibility. The plural of this word is cherubim. You should not add an "s." It is not "cherubims." That's a double plural. "Cherubim" is the plural. "Cherub" is the singular.

Those of you who are acquainted with the Bible immediately will leap to the remembrance that the outstanding cherub of all times was Satan himself. In Ezekiel 28:14 (this very book), Satan is identified to us as an angel in that category. In speaking of Satan (speaking to him), the prophet says, "You are the anointed cherub that covers." God is speaking of Satan, when he was Lucifer: "You are the anointed cherub that covers, and I have set you so. You were upon the holy mountain of God. You have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire," and so on. As a cherub angel, Satan was, furthermore, the model of perfection in wisdom and beauty. Ezekiel 28:12 says, "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre, and say unto him, "Thus says the Lord God, 'You seal up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." The king of Tyre, which is the immediate point of contact of the prophet's vision, was acting in the way that Satan acted previously, before his fall. As you read the verses that follow, you suddenly realize that he's no longer talking about an earthly ruler. He's saying things that have leaped over the centuries, and he is now making a double application to Satan himself, who is the original pattern for what the king of Tyre is doing.

The thing that's important is to realize that Satan was a cherub angel, and furthermore, that Ezekiel says that he was the finest cherub that God ever made. He was perfect in wisdom and beauty. The word "cherub," therefore, is a very significant word. It has a very important meaning. I know you like to speak of your little newborn babies as cherubs, but many of them lack a whole lot of wisdom, and they're very unattractive as it is. So, they can't qualify on the two factors that make cherubs cherubs. They're smart, and they're good looking. Most of the little cherubs that you have, as Shakespeare said, "Do their muling and puking," and become very unattractive, and anything but smart and everything else that goes with being a cherub. So, you have to accommodate the language considerably to call your newborn a cherub. But, sometimes they do act like the devil, and he was a cherub, so it's not perhaps entirely wrong to call them that either.

In any case, Satan, as a cherub angel, exercised authority as the supreme agent of God's government. That's what cherubs are associated with. Cherubs are associated with God's government. You need to anchor that in your mind. They are associated with God's judicial government. God, as the sovereign authority who makes decisions, has agents to execute His authority. Those agents are the cherub class angels.

This is demonstrated by the first appearance of the cherub that we have in the Bible. It's in Genesis 3:24. Right off the bat, we see what cherubs are doing. Adam and Eve have sinned. God is removing them from the Garden of Eden, and He is making certain that they cannot sneak back in and eat of the fruit of the tree of life. So, Genesis 3:24 says, "So He (God) drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way of the tree of life." The first contact we have with the cherub angels is that they are there to guard the way to the tree of life. What are they guarding? Well, they're guarding God's absolute righteousness. They are guarding the fact that man has violated the integrity of God, and therefore, he has been brought under divine judgment.

In the tabernacle curtains, and in the veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies, cherub angels were woven into the curtains. In Exodus 26:1, we have this describe for us, and it is significant that those particular items were the items in which the cherub angels were included in the design. This is where God was giving directions to Moses for the building of the tabernacle: "Moreover, you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet. With the cherubim of skillful work, you shall make them."

Then in Exodus 26:31, we read again, "You shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen of skillful work. It shall be made with cherubim." This veil is the one which was torn when Jesus Christ died on the cross, signifying that the separation between God and man was at an end. This veil was there separating man from the holy presence of God. Nobody went past that veil into the holy of holies, except the high priest, and he did it only once a year. He did it on the basis of the sacrificial blood that he brought with him. And as he saw the cherubim woven into that curtain, that reminded him of the fact that God's agents are there protecting God's holiness. If that priest was to walk in there on any day other than the day of atonement, or if he was to walk in there without the blood, it would be a cherub type angel which would have struck him dead. The picture of those angels on that curtain reminded him that they are the agents that protect the holiness of God.

This was further demonstrated by the fact that we come into contact with the cherub type angels in Exodus 25:20, when we have the description of the making of the Ark of the Covenant – this box that contains certain important reminders of God's dealing with the human race: "And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another. Toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be." The Ark of the Covenant was a box, and it had this lid on it, which was made of gold. Then there were these two cherub angels. They were facing each other, and they were looking down upon the lid of the mercy seat. Here is where the blood was sprinkled, and here is where God communed with Moses and with the priests when they would walk into the holy of holies.

What this passage is telling us is that the angels who were there, that had been made out of gold, were the cherub type angels. Exodus 25:22: "And there I will meet with you, and will commune with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I give you in commandment unto the children of Israel." So, this was the point at which God communed with the people of Israel. This was in the holy of holies in the tabernacle that the ark stood.

In this ark, one of the things that was here was, of course, the stones upon which God had written the Mosaic Law. The Law represented the divine standard of absolute righteousness which had been violated by man. On the cover of the ark stood the two cherubim, facing each other, looking down at the mercy seat where the sacrificial blood was sprinkled, and which, therefore, preserved man from the wrath of God's holiness. The cherubim angels were there as protectors (symbolic protectors) of God's holiness of divine integrity.

Exodus 37:6-9 describe that for us: "And he made the mercy seat of pure gold. Two-and-a-half cubits was the length thereof. One cubit-and-a-half was the breadth thereof. And he made two cherubim of gold. He made them beaten out of one piece on the two ends of the mercy seat. One cherub was on the end on one side, and the other cherub on the other end on that side. Out of the mercy seat, he made the cherubim on the two ends thereof. The cherubim spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, even their faces one to another, even toward the mercy seat were the faces of the cherubim."

**The Mercy Seat**

So, every time they looked down, they saw the blood representing the future blood of Christ, which would preserve man from the consequences of violating the holiness of God. The mercy seat symbolized the divine provision through the death of Jesus Christ for preserving the integrity of God. That's what cherubs do. They protect that integrity.

**God's Government**

The cherubs also act as executors of God's government over creation. We have that in Psalm 99:1, which indicates to us that the cherubs are going to play a very prominent role during the millennium period: "The Lord reigns. Let the people tremble. He sits between the cherubim. Let the earth be moved." This is declaring God's governing power over the earth. So, the living creatures of revelation represent the qualities of God's government over man and creation.

So, what John sees in heaven, in Revelation 4:6, are four angelic beings. These angels are of a certain specific category. There are the category of cherubs, and they are there because they're fulfilling the role of being governing authorities defending the holiness of God. Specifically, these cherub angels are representatives of the qualities of God's divine government. We're going to get into that in more detail next time. But it's very revealing what God thinks about divine government – about governing mankind. As John saw seven flaming torches, symbolizing the ministry of the Holy Spirit, so in these four living creatures (cherub angels), John sees the qualities that govern God's authority in His rule over the earth.

**Covered with Eyes**

However, there's one thing to observe at the end of verse 6. That is that John says, "They're full of eyes in front and behind." The word "full of" is the Greek word "gemo." This is a verb which means "to be heavily laden" with eyes. It is a word which was used in the Greek world to describe a heavily laden ship. It's in the present tense, which means it was constantly the state of these living creatures – that they had all these eyes on them. It is active. The creatures themselves possessed this fullness. It's a participle, which is a spiritual principle being stated. What they had was "eyes," which is the Greek word "ophthalmos." "Ophthalmos" is a noun for the physical organ of the eyes – the physical organ that we call the eye. These living creatures were covered in two places. One was "in front" which is the Greek word "emprosthen." "Emprosthen" means "in front." On the front of these creatures were all these eyes. Then it was "behind" them as well. This is the Greek word "opisthen," indicating the back of these creatures.

**Perception**

So, John, as he looks at these cherub angel creatures, sees that they're covered with eyes on the front, and covered with eyes on the back. This symbolizes what eyes symbolize in the Bible: perception; or, discernment. This is God's perception and discernment in governing mankind. This is what the Bible means when it says, "Whatsoever man sows, that shall he also reap." God is never conned. The multiplicity of eyes indicates that God sees all, and thus He knows all. The eyes, furthermore, are before and behind, indicating God's perfect grasp of the future as well as the past.

**A Lion; an Ox; a Man; and an Eagle**

These creatures each have one face, unlike Ezekiel's creatures, which all had four faces. They have only one face apiece. These, very briefly, are given us in verse 7. One has the face of a lion; one has the face of a calf (and that would be better translated as an ox); one has the face of a man; and, one has the face of an eagle. Those are exactly the same faces that we saw in Ezekiel. As you look at these creatures, you realize that each one of these is the supreme creature in his particular category. When you think about the animal kingdom, the lion is the king. When you think about the domestic creatures, in terms of its importance and value to man, particularly in ancient times, the ox is the creature that is the king. When you think about the realm of those who are above (outside) the animal realm, man, of course, is the supreme creature. When you think about the realm of fowl (birds), the eagle is the supreme creature. Each of these has a significance in Scripture that we will go into in more detail.

**Christ in the Four Gospels**

But these creatures indicate that they are supreme in their category, and what they represent is supreme in their own category. Immediately, of course, we look back, from the vantage point of the New Testament, and we recognize that these qualities which characterize God's government of the human race are also the qualities which were supremely demonstrated about Jesus Christ in the four gospels. The gospel of Matthew is the gospel that describes Jesus Christ as the lion of the tribe of Judah. The gospel of Mark is the gospel that describes Jesus Christ as the suffering servant (the ox-like creature). The gospel of Luke is the gospel that stresses Jesus Christ as the Son of Man, the humanity of Christ. It is the gospel of John that stresses Christ as the Son of God, stressing the deity of Jesus Christ.

Here is something in itself which is absolutely amazing. Again, it's the declaration of the power of inspiration and of the governing of the Holy Spirit, as He took these four gospel writers who made a record of Jesus Christ. All of them uniformly declared that the earthly life of Jesus Christ was perfect in every relationship and every circumstance. All the people around Jesus were imperfect. But every one of these writers comes through clearly with the fact that this Man was perfect. He was supreme in His class. They stress the fact that He was a human being. He was completely human – 100%. They all uniformly stressed the fact that He was deity, and that He was completely 100% deity. They all uniformly stress the fact that there was no mixture of the two. He was the God-man, but He was not a combination of the two as a mixture. He was the unselfish and dignified person.

The Lord Jesus Christ constantly shows dignity when He was abused. That was not true of the people around Him. He shows unselfishness, even though He is being imposed upon. Every writer conveys this about the person of Jesus Christ. He is superior in His judgment of all other men. The Lord Jesus Christ never had to apologize. He never had to correct himself. He never was under the pressure of making Himself acceptable, or explaining Himself to people. When he was asleep in the boat crossing the Sea of Galilee during the storm, the disciples rebuked Him. Their rebuke meant that He was doing something wrong. He just passed it off. He never took it up and said, "No, I'm not doing anything wrong by taking a nap here." And let me tell you that this was the characteristic of Jesus Christ. He knew His ground because he knew the Word of God. Therefore, He is portrayed in all of these gospels in the same way.

Not one gospel writer ever indicates that Jesus Christ ever asked anybody to pray for Him. In the garden of Gethsemane, He asked them to watch while He went and prayed, but He never asked anybody to pray for Him, because He didn't need anybody to pray for Him. There was nothing to pray for. He had it all together. Every one of these writers presents that. Certainly, they all four uniformly present Him as being sinless in His capacity, whether in the role of the lion; the eagle; the man; or, the ox. He never has to ask anybody's pardon. He never has to declare an evil. He never has to confess to any sin. He challenges anybody to try to prove that He does. There is a balanced quality in the person of Jesus Christ. You get this in all the gospels

Here's an intelligent Man who does not permit His intelligence to outstrip His knowledge of the Word of God. Here's a Man who, in His soul, spirit, and body, has it all in a balanced uniformity. He is in harmony with Himself. Here's a Man who is firm, but He doesn't permit that to become obstinacy. Here's a Man who is noble in His goals. He's really after good objectives. But as so often happens to us, the Lord was not guilty of what is often true of us. We become forgetful of people while we pursue noble goals. The Lord was not forgetful of them. His whole life is one in which one hour never contradicted the previous hour. One week never contradicted the previous week. It is amazing that you read through these four gospels, and they all convey that same impression. Certainly they declare His omnipotence; His omniscience; and, the unique God-man quality that He had.

**Inspiration**

How can this be? It is the proof of inspiration. This record was written by four ordinary men. Matthew was a tax collector. Mark was a young Christian worker. Luke was a physician. John was a fisherman. All they do is record incidents about the life of Jesus: His discourses; His miracles; and, a few of His remarks. They don't try to portray any special kind of person. They just present Him.

Matthew selects the things out of His ministry that stress one facet of His ministry – the lion facet, presenting Him as the Messiah to the Jews. Mark comes along, and he is guiding his gospel to the Romans out there. So, he stresses what is impressive to the Romans. He stresses Jesus as the servant – the one who is subject to authority. Luke comes along, and he wants to talk to the Greek world. So, he stresses what is of interest to the Greeks – humanity. He stresses the humanness of Jesus Christ, His 100% humanity. John comes along, and he writes the gospel which is going to be uniquely provided for the church, the body of Christ. So he stresses the facet of the deity of Jesus Christ. He takes out of the life of Jesus those things that put Him forth in terms of deity. Yet each one of these, while slanting it to a particular group, all are uniformly consistent in what they say about the moral perfection of Jesus Christ. How in the world would four comparatively unlearned men write such a perfect, non-contradictory picture?

Other writers with great ability have also tried to write about Jesus Christ. We have ancient writings that are false gospels. They've come down to us. What do they do? Every one of them, as you read them, you suddenly realize what you're reading about is a God-like man. They do not produce a God-man. Only these four men produce a history of Jesus Christ, and He comes through as a God-man. Every other record, modern or ancient, ends up presenting a God-like man, which is totally different. You end up with a person that has passions and the brutalities of sinful man. He comes through as a person who is, in some degree, heartless, as an impassive spectator of the world's sorrows and the world's woes. They may portray Christ in a way that commands one's respect, but out of fear – not out of love.

The real cause behind the effect of the gospel picture is that the writers not only saw the God-man Jesus Christ, but that they had the guidance of the Spirit of God in presenting Him. They presented Him in the character that is the qualities that God brings to bear in His governing of the human race. Those are the things that John sees in those four living creatures. What each of them represents, in the way God works, would be a wonderful thing for politicians to know. Would this ever become a millennial earth before the millennium if politicians grasped the significance of the four living creatures, which give us the clue as to how God is going to function when He governs this world through Christ in the millennium? And it all revolves around the qualities that we have seen in Jesus Christ.

Next time we look in detail at that those governing qualities in the form our living creatures.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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