

Revelation 4:6-11 The Cherubim

FOUR LIVING CREATURES

v6 Sea of glass like unto crystal: Sea is a symbol of nations: **Isa 57:20-21; Jer 51:42-44; Ezek 26:3-4; Rev 17:15**. In this vision nations are at rest: **Rev 15:2**. Nations will retain their independence during the millennium: **Dan 7:12**. At the end of the 1000 years there will be "no more sea": **Rev 21:1**. At that time the Kingdom will be delivered up to the Father. **Three phases of sea:**

1. From the fall in Eden to today, the troubled sea: **Isa 57:20,21**.
2. The calm sea, like crystal, after judgment: **Rev 15:2**.
3. No more sea: **Rev 21:1-7**, beyond the millennium.

Four beasts: Not wild beasts (as in **11:7; 13:1; 14:9; 17:3** etc) but literally "four living creatures". A different Greek word is used for the 4 creatures. These are **a contrast** to the **4 wild beasts** which represent the Kingdom of Men: **Dan 7:1-8**. The 4 creatures are explained further in **Rev 4:8-11; 5:9-10; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4-9**.

In **Revelation**, different symbols represent different aspects of their work. The **4 living creatures** describe the saints' **warlike aspect** (as **kings**) whereas the **24 elders** describe them in their **priestly** functions. This is the duality of God's character, the "goodness and severity of God": **Rom 11:22**. This is entirely consistent with **Rev 1** where Jesus Christ appears as the true high priest who "has made us kings and priests" **1:6; 5:10**. In **Rev 1** Christ is amongst lampstands in the **Holy Place** (as in the tabernacle). When he moves into the **Most Holy Place** in **Rev 4** there are the 4 living creatures, the saints in immortality!

In the midst of the throne: Christ promises believers they will sit with him in his throne: **Rev 3:21**. Yahweh also occupies the throne: **4:2**. The living creatures are "in the midst of the throne" and also "round about the throne". The saints are reigning as kings and priests but they are also worshipping: **5:9-10**. **Round about the throne were 4 beasts:** They encircle the throne with their 4 faces looking in different directions to what they did in **Ezek 1:5,6**. **Full of eyes before and behind:** RSV "in front and behind". The saints will be **all-seeing** in their immortality: **Isa 30:20-21**. See notes on **Rev 1:14**. This reminds us of the Cherubim in **Ezek 1:18; 10:12**. Saints have the "eyes of Yahweh, which run to and fro through the whole earth": **Zech 4:10**.

v7 Lion, calf, man, eagle: This is the **Cherubim** vision seen by Ezekiel in **Ezekiel 1**. In that vision they all were of "the likeness of a man" **1:5**. Also "every one had 4 faces" **1:6**. It is called "visions of Elohim" (Mighty ones). An important cross reference to **Daniel 7:9-10,18,22,26-27** shows that cherubim is **Christ and the Saints**.

When Israel came out of Egypt, they were **divided into 4 camps**, each camp with these standards: **Num 2**. There was a **principle tribe for each camp:** Judah (**Num 2:3**), Reuben (**2:10**), Ephraim (**2:18**), Dan (**2:25**).

These are the 12 tribes of Israel.

North: Dan, Asher and Naphtali = Eagle
East: Judah, Issacar, Zebulun = Lion
South: Reuben, Gad, Simeon = Man
West: Ephraim, Benjamin, Manassa = Ox



6 And before the throne there was ^m a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And ^q the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beasts had each of them ^s six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and ^t they rest not day and night, saying, ^o Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, ^u which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, ^v who liveth for ever and ever, ^w the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

ⁱⁱ ^m Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for ^p thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.



A sea of glass like unto crystal

Multitudinous Christ: **Ezek 1:24** "I heard the noise of their wings like the noise of many waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host." **Daniel 10:6** "The voice of his words (were) like the voice of a multitude." **Rev 1:13** "His voice as the sound of many waters"

The **4 major prophets** are represented by each of these standards: **Isaiah** (lion), **Jeremiah** (Ox), **Ezekiel** (Man) and **Daniel** (eagle). Likewise the **4 gospel records:** **Matthew** (lion), **Mark** (Ox), **Luke** (Man) and **John** (eagle). The Cherubim is the vehicle of God's glory.

The Cherubim is first mentioned in **Gen 3:24** in the form of an angel at the entrance to **Eden**. Cherubim was also part of the **tabernacle:** **Ex 25:10-22**. It was made out of **one piece** with the **Mercy Seat** - Christ: **25:18-19**. The saints are one with Christ! He is our mercy seat: **Rom 3:25; Heb 9:5**. **Cherubim** is from the Hebrew *rachav* meaning *to ride*. In **1 Chr 28:18** it is linked with the word *chariot*. In **Psa 99:1** Yahweh is enthroned on the cherubim. In **Ezek 1** and **10** wheels provide mobility. Cherubim therefore represents the vehicle of Divine manifestation: **Isa 19:1; 66:15; Hab 3:8,15; Psa 104:3-4; Ezek 43:1-2**. In **Daniel 7** there is an equivalent vision: **7:9-10,17-18,26-27**. Jesus Christ is also identified with these 4 symbols in the OT references to the **Branch:** Christ is **King:** **Jer 23:5; servant:** **Zech 3:8; man:** **Zech 6:12; and eagle:** **Isa 4:2; 11:1**. In **2 Sam 22:11** and **Psa 18:10** the singular form is used: "He rode upon a Cherub".

THE SERAPHIM OF ISAIAH 6

v8 Six wings: Identifies the **Cherubim** with the **Seraphim** of **Isa 6:2-6**. Also **Ezek 1:23-24; 10:5-19**. Each Seraphim had 6 wings, the number of man: **Gen 1:26-31; Rev 13:18**. They are from humanity.

Colour code: Blue (God and Jesus Christ); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words & phrases); Purple (return of Jews to the land); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for Rathmines Bible School Teenagers.

Wings also provide swift movement and a refuge: **Isa 31:5; Psa 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 91:1,4,11; Mt 23:37**. The word **Seraphim** means "burning ones" as they reveal Yahweh's judgment.

Full of eyes within: Angels are the eyes of Yahweh: **Heb 1:14**. In the Kingdom it will be Christ and the Saints: **Heb 2:5,6**. See notes on **Rev 4:6** and **1:14**. **Rest not day and night:** They are immortal and never tire. Under the Mosaic order, priests served day and night: **Psa 134:1**. **Holy, holy, holy:** Quote from **Isa 6:3** in context of Christ as High Priest. He entered the Most Holy Place by putting on immortality: **Jn 12:41; Heb 10:19-20**. Isaiah saw the Seraphim in "the year King Uzziah died" **Isa 6:1**. Uzziah in pride sought to be **priest** as well as **king** by offering incense on the altar. As such, he was struck with leprosy: **2 Chr 26:9-21**. Isaiah was then given a vision of **Christ as King and Priest!** He was awestruck and acknowledged his need for forgiveness: **Isa 6:5**. Holiness is one of Yahweh's most notable characteristics. It is also an imperative to live a holy life: **Psa 15:1; 1 Pet 1:15-16**. Understanding God's holiness enables us to appreciate His grace and our need to respond: **Isa 6:5-8**. The vision of **Rev 4** expands on **Isa 6** to also include **saints as kings and priests!**

Lord God Almighty: **Isa 6:3** Heb. equivalent is *Yahweh Elohim of Armies* ie. *He who will be mighty ones of Armies*. This is the Saints' role of subjugating the nations. God is now calling out of the Gentiles people for His Name: **Acts 15:14**. **Which was, and is, and is to come:** In **Isa 6:3** this reads "the whole earth is full of his glory". This is an equivalent and explanatory phrase expressing God's purpose. See notes on **Rev 1:4**.

THE SAINTS GIVE PRAISE AND THANKS

v9 Give glory, honour and thanks to Him: The connection between **4:9,10** shows that the cherubim (kings) and 24 elders (priests) praise God together. Both symbols represent the saints. **Ever and ever:** Phrase 14x in Revelation. See notes on **1:6**.

v10 Cast their crowns before the throne: See notes on **2:10; 3:11**. Their victory came come through God's Son: **5:9-12**.

v11 Created all things: The world's attention is drawn to this at Christ's return: **14:7**. **For thy pleasure:** The reason why God made the heavens and earth: **Col 1:16**. His creation gives him pleasure, and it all is for an ultimate purpose: **Num 14:21; Isa 11:9; Psa 72:19; Hab 2:14**. Are we giving God pleasure?

