

Pentwater Bible Church

Revelation Message 15

December 3, 2023



The Book of Kells, Irish Bible Manuscript Cir 800 AD, Located in Trinity College, Dublin

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Pentwater Bible Church

Revelation Message Fifteen

GOD'S THRONE PT. II

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Chapter 4, Continued

Revelation 4:4

⁴And round about the throne [were] four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold (KJV).

While the text does not clearly state who these elders are, we are given enough information to understand their identity. They have:

1. White Garments which in this book are symbols of salvation. Only human beings need salvation. No celestial being needs this as they were not lost to begin with.
2. Wearing Crowns. This is a strong clue. The Greek word is *stephanos* and that is the crown given to a victor as a result of some achievement. It is not the diadem or the crown for royalty. This type of crown is given to the overcomer at the Bema Seat of Christ for the exercise of God given spiritual gifts for the body of believers.
3. Elders. This title is always used to describe humans in positions of authority either in the synagogue or the Church.
4. 24 Elders. This represents the Church and not angels or other levels of celestial beings.

The number 24 is probably taken from I Chronicles 24 & 25 where David divided the Tribe of Levi into 24 families representing 24 courses to represent the whole as to when each would serve. Divided up into 24 courses of order so the priests know when to serve. Chapter 25 represents the 288 musicians divided up into 24 courses and heads of families to match the priests for service in the Tabernacle and Temple. They represented ALL of ISRAEL. Israel is still on the earth though at the time of John being spiritized to see the Throne Room of God, so it represents ALL of the Church. Since the Church is also a kingdom of priests, these 24 elders represent the Church as a whole. (I Peter 2:9)

We therefore see from these four clues that the 24 elders represent the raptured church after the judgment seat has been completed. They are on thrones because believers get to sit on thrones.

Revelation 3:21 says to the church of Laodicea that we (believers) will be able to sit with Jesus on His Throne as He sits on God the Father's Throne. This then is clearly the raptured Church in heaven on Thrones in the Throne room of God.

Revelation 4:5

⁵And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and [there were] seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God (KJV).

The sounds coming from the throne of God are representative of wrath and judgment that is about to occur. When God was about to judge Egypt for the sins they committed He sent thunder, hail and fire which ran along the ground. (Exodus 9:23,28)

When God wished to show Israel the terribleness of His anger over sin, He sent thunder, hail and fire. Here are three examples:

1. *“There were thunders and lightning’s, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud”* (Exodus 19:16).
2. When He sent forth His wrath upon the Philistines *“the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel”* (I Samuel 7:10).
3. *Samuel said that the Lord would send thunder and rain so that the Israelites could see that their sin was great. All the people feared.* (I Samuel 12:17, 18)

These instances show us that this in chapter 4 is not a throne of grace but of judgment. These lightning’s, thunders and voices proceeding from it tell us of justice and wrath to come upon all transgressors.

The seven torches that are before the throne are the seven spirits of God. These are not the Holy Spirit but the angels who will carry out the commands to bring the Tribulation to earth. These are the same ones which we were introduced to in chapter one.

Revelation 5:6

⁶And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth (KJV).

The Holy Spirit is never described in the Bible as having seven horns and seven eyes.

Revelation 8:2

²And I saw the seven angels, which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. However, God gave seven angels, which stand before God trumpets, seals and vials among other things to bring judgment on the earth (KJV).

Revelation 3:1

¹And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead (KJV).

The seven stars and the seven spirits of God and shown here to be one in the same. Which is further clarified in the next verse.

Revelation 1:20a

²⁰The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches (KJV).

The seven stars are explained here as the angels of the seven churches. So, we have absolute consistency regarding the identification of the seven spirits. They are messenger angels, which stand before to deliver the seven messages to the seven churches and take peace from the earth through the implementation of the Great Tribulation.

Revelation 4:6

⁶And before the throne [there was] 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 (KJV).

The seal of glass is representative of the Laver used in the Tabernacle and Temple for cleansing. It was referred to as a molten sea. (Exodus 30:18–21; 38:8; I Kings 7; 23; II Chronicles 4:2) The surface of the water in the sea (Laver) is now still and hard because the time for cleansing is over and in the Throne Room of God all is Holy there is nothing impure and in need of cleansing.



The Laver of the Tabernacle From: <https://delevensschool.org/en/the-priest-in-the-order-of-melchizedek-4/>

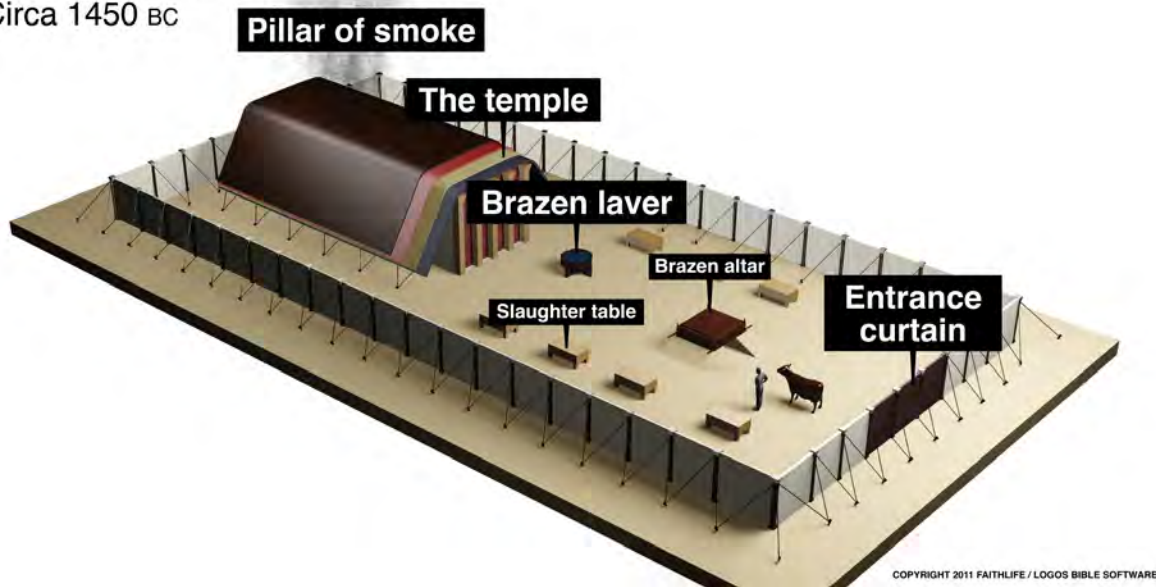
Exodus 30:17–21

¹⁷ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹⁸ Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. ¹⁹ For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: ²⁰ When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: ²¹ So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a

statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations (KJV).

The Tabernacle

Circa 1450 BC



Exodus 38:8

⁸ And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking-glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation (KJV).

The copper mirrors for the manufacture of the laver, do not refer to the mirrors as objects, but to what they reveal. Anyone who looks in a mirror sees himself, as it were, as a ‘revelation’ of who he/she is. At the laver, the priest/disciple sees himself reflected in the copper. So, the Church in Heaven sees itself redeemed.

THE CHERUBIM

The four beasts (actually creatures) represent the cherubim (Ezekiel 10). They are the highest order of celestial beings and have been presented in several Old Testament passages.

Ezekiel 1:5-11

⁵ And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man; ⁶ and every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings. ⁷ And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished brass. ⁸ And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings thus: ⁹ their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. ¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle. ¹¹ And

their faces and their wings were separate above; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.” (ASV, 1901)



The Cherubim over the Ark from <http://www.bibleprobe.com/ark.htm>

The Hebrew word for living creature is *chayot* and it is used in a number of places in the Old Testament. They stood guard at the Garden of Eden with flaming swords, which closed off access to the Garden (Genesis 3:24). Cherubim were placed on the top of the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. Their likeness was embroidered on the curtain of the Tabernacle to guard the Holy of Holies (Exodus 25: 10-22; 26:31). The apostle John saw the same four living beings in the Throne Room of God and around God (Revelation 4-5). The wings of the cherubim just touch each other across the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies (I Kings 6:27). The human shape supersedes the other characteristics as the predominate form. Each Cherub has four faces and four wings, which correspond to the human characteristics of each one. This is not a likeness of God (which is expressly forbidden), and these are beings He created, but are not Him (Exodus 20:4). They are obedient to His will, are His instruments used for His highest purposes, and they carry out His commands.

Placement wise, they are the closest celestial beings to God in His Throne Room. In these verses they appear to be underneath the throne because Ezekiel is looking at the vision from the vantage point of being on the earth. Here in Revelation chapters 4 and 5 John’s vision is from the vantage point of being in Heaven and in the Throne Room of God, and he sees the cherubim covering (or encircling) the Throne. We see a similar scene in Ezekiel chapter 28 where he describes the fall of the anointed cherub Halal (Latin: Lucifer), who became Satan the adversary. Before his fall, Hallel was covering the throne of God, and was above it as the arch cherub.

So, while the appearance of the Cherubim has the dominant characteristic of a human, they also have feet like an ox, which are straight, or upright. There is no foot set at a 90° angles from the leg. The sole of their feet in this vision is said to be like glowing brass, as if they were burning in a furnace. This has the implication of trampling the earth in righteous judgment.

They all had human hands under their wings. In contrast to the legs and feet, the hands provided them with dexterity, which the lower extremities did not have. The hand is the symbol of “*leading power, guided by skillfulness*” (Psalm 78:72). These creatures were not four footed, that is like

an animal with four feet, they were like a human. Their hands are under wings, which show that they are fitted for service in the celestial sphere. The wings are joined together so there is perfect unity of action among the four living creatures. That is, they moved together in perfect harmony of motion as the Lord directs. He guides and governs their actions. In the Throne Room scene here in Revelation 4:7 and chapter 5 the four living creatures are separated, but here in Ezekiel they are united for a different purpose.

“They had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle.” Here as mentioned, the dominant feature is of a man, followed by a lion, then an ox and finally an eagle. In the Revelation 4:7 the order of their likeness is the lion first, followed by man, then the calf (ox), and finally a flying eagle. The activity that is being carried out at God’s command is what seems to dictate what face is described first, and in what order. In Revelation 5 the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, our Lord Jesus, is taking control of the earth when He takes the seven-sealed scroll, the title deed to the earth, from the hand of God the Father (Revelation 5:5-10).

In Ezekiel 1:10 the focus is on man, and his face is the first described, indicating God’s tenderness of judgment. On the right Ezekiel sees the lion, on the left the ox, and the face of the eagle is behind. The human face represents the thought that man, who is made “after the image of God”, is the highest symbol of the Eternal Order (Genesis 1:27). The lion is the emblem of sovereignty, both in the Temple and in Solomon’s palace (I Kings 7:29; 10:20; II Chronicles 9:18, 19).

The ox here is aligned with the lion, as demonstrated in the twelve oxen that supported the “sea” or “laver” in the Temple, and clearly indicates doing work or providing a service (I Kings 7:25, 44). Here also we have an example of sovereignty, where the natural symbol of strength (ox) is made subservient to human uses.

The eagle is the emblem of kingly power, and is used elsewhere (Ezekiel 17:3, 7). The human face represents the Son of Man who shared in the glory of the Father. Jesus Christ is also linked to the ox with that of His sacrifice; with the lion with that of His sovereignty over Israel, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5); and with the eagle with Him bearing His people on eagles’ wings into the highest heavens (Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11).

There is a direct connection between the Gospels and the Cherubim that has been recognized since the early Church Fathers. The Church Fathers identified them with the four Gospels like this:

- Matthew the Lion. The Lion expresses royalty, and calls Christ the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and is Christ’s prominent feature in the Book of Matthew.
- Mark the Ox. The Ox, expresses laboring in endurance, and is Christ’s prominent feature in the Book of Mark.
- Luke the Man. The Man, expresses brotherly sympathy with the whole race of man, and is Christ’s prominent feature in the Book of Luke.
- John the Eagle. The Eagle, expresses soaring majesty and also as the Divine Word, and is Christ’s prominent feature in the Book of John.

What is interesting regarding these symbols is that they do not express the personal character of the Evangelists, but express the different characteristics of the Lord Jesus our Christ in relation to the world.

This section of Scripture in Ezekiel closes with “*and their faces and their wings were separate above*”, that is they were stretched upward, touching the neighboring wings at the tip, and so

appear “joined,” while the other two wings covered their bodies and were never stretched out or up. The effect was to form a “box-like” pattern with a Cherub at each corner. Because they were ministering in God’s presence, they covered their bodies in holy reverence toward God the Father who is seated on the Throne. The Mercy Seat over the Ark of the Covenant was made of gold after a pattern of the “chariot” of the Cherubim. Their wings spread out over the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. This description was conveyed to David from God:

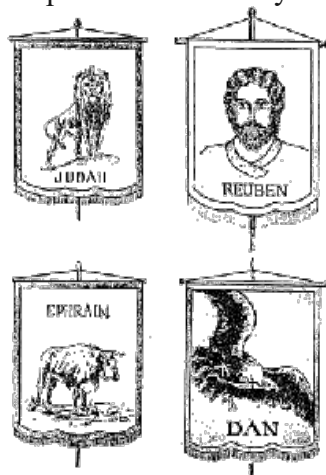
I Chronicles 28:18-19

“¹⁸and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot, even the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. ¹⁹All this, said David, have I been made to understand in writing from the hand of Jehovah, even all the works of this pattern.” (ASV, 1901)

Revelation 4:7

And 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 (KJV).

This description of the cherubim are similar to those found in Ezekiel chapter one and ten. In Ezekiel chapter one we are introduced to them as Ezekiel has a vision while he is on the banks of the river Chebar. He sees the same colors, the likenesses of a man, ox, lion and eagle. Further he sees the fire, the likeness of men’s hands, calves’ feet and four wings on each. They also were set upon wheels of fire that directed their movement, which seem to be like a gyroscope. They were led by the spirit and followed the spirit wherever they were told to go.



THE ENSIGNS (SYMBOLS) OF THE FOUR TRIBES

Ezekiel 1:22-24

²²And over the head of the living creature there was the likeness of a firmament, like the terrible crystal to look upon, stretched forth over their heads above. ²³And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies ²⁴And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a noise of tumult like the noise of a host: when they stood, they let down their wings ²⁵And there was a voice above the firmament that was over their heads: when they stood, they let down their wings (ASV, 1901).

The Cherubim had their wings outstretched to rise above their heads. The imagery let us see the adoration the Cherubim have for the almighty God. The wings extended into a firmament or space (Hebrew *rakeeah*). This space had the appearance of crystal. This Hebrew word *rakeeah* means to spread out or stretch. Some other places in Scripture where this same expression is used are:

1. Job 9:8 He alone stretches out the heavens.
2. Psalms 104:2 The heavens are stretched out like a tent curtain.
3. Isaiah 40: 22 God stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
4. Jeremiah 10: 12 The Lord has stretched out the heavens.
5. Zechariah 12:1 God stretched out the heavens.

These usages of the Hebrew word for stretch (*rakeeah*) are not quaint poetic hyperbole or exaggerations. They mean to express the properties of the heavens that we cannot see or fully understand. Space is not an empty vacuum. We have difficulty defining space and understanding the concept of the property of space. Scripture gives us some insight as to some of its properties.

1. Space can be torn (Isaiah 64: 1);
2. It can be worn out like a garment (Psalm 102: 25),
3. It can be shaken (Hebrews 12:26; Haggai 2:6; Isaiah 13:13).
4. It can be burnt up (II Peter 3:12).
5. It can be split apart like a scroll (Revelation 6:14);
6. It can be rolled up like a mantle (Hebrews 1:12) or scroll (Isaiah 34: 4).

The shining brilliance of the expanse above the Cherubim that Ezekiel saw reminded him of sparkling crystals in the light of the sun. When the Apostle John was spiritized on the Isle of Patmos to see into the Throne Room of God he said the expanse around God's throne is "clear as crystal" (Revelation 4:6). As the Cherubim moved their wings they created a sound that Ezekiel likened to a great waterfall with its deafening sound so loud that it overpowered any other sounds. As the creature moved, Ezekiel also hears the second sound "like the voice of the Almighty," which resembles thunder or the movement of ancient armed forces (host). These sounds only occurred as the Cherubim were in motion. Clearly their wings enabled them to propel themselves as the motion stopped when their wings stopped moving.

THE THRONE OF GOD

Ezekiel 1:26

²⁶And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above (ASV, 1901).

As the Cherubim came to a stop Ezekiel noticed another sound. It was a voice from the firmament over the heads and upstretched wings of the Cherubim. This is the voice of God on His Throne in heaven but connected to the earth in divine sovereignty. He had the appearance of a man. Daniel also saw and commented on God also having the appearance of a man (Daniel 7:9). Since humans were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), this appears to be the form of God. That is, He has a semblance of a human being, which are His created creatures. In the incarnation when God stepped out of Heaven and entered a human body it was corruption, He took on in similar form but for the purpose of atonement and Heavenly cleansing. In the Revelation He has a dual

appearance as God on the Throne and the Lamb. The Lamb is the Lord Jesus and is distinct from God the Father. In this vision it appears that the two characteristics of Spirit and human form are combined. The preincarnate visions of the Lord given to Ezekiel and Daniel allowed them only to see the human like characteristic of God. It was only given to them and was not given to Moses.

The Throne itself is the color blue as a sapphire, which appears to resemble the lapis lazuli stone. This vision is similar to that which was witnessed by Moses and the seventy elders.

Exodus 24:10

¹⁰and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness (ASV, 1901).

Revelation 4:8

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about [him]; and [they were] full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come (KJV).

The eyes represent supreme intelligence and omni vision. They are constantly praising God.

Revelation 4:9

And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever (KJV).

Revelation 4:10–11

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, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (KJV).

We will cast our crowns to Christ in honor and worship to Him. This is the reason we were created. This is the reason we are on this earth. This is our destiny and few there be that find this strait gate. Are our lives in total worship to the creator or are we living for ourselves? The God of the universe wants our love and worship. How do we view our worship?

The living creatures in Ezekiel had a different mission at that time. They were to assist the Shekinah Glory as He was leaving the Temple. The Glory of God left the Temple and has never returned. He will be there in the Millennial Temple though. In the book of Revelation, they are to assist in bringing the Great Tribulation upon the earth.

Psalms 59:8

But thou, O Jehovah, wilt laugh at them; Thou wilt have all the nations in derision (ASV, 1901).

Chapter four identifies the characters in God's Throne assembled for this occasion. The central character is God the Father. The subordinates are the four living creatures, which are the cherubim. Another subordinate group are the seven flaming torches, which are the angels that

are about to carry out the commands to implement the Great Tribulation. The twenty-four elders represent the raptured and judged Church, which is in heaven safe in God's comfort and away from the Great Tribulation coming on the entire earth.

We have seen clearly that the Tribulation has three distinct purposes.

To Make and End of Wickedness and Wicked Ones. (Sinfulness) (Isaiah 13:9; 24:19-20)

To Bring About Worldwide Revival. (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 7:1-17)

To Break the Power of the Holy People. (Daniel 11-12 & 12:5-7; Ezekiel 20:33-38).

NEXT WEEK: REVELATION MSG. XVI

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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