

Chapter 4

John sees a glorious, almost indescribable vision of the throne of God. He beholds the power and glory of the Father, as he sees inside the celestial world.

Verse 1: John begins to see a vision that the Savior tells him is a vision of things from the future.

Verse 2: The vision is seen through the spirit as John is carried away to the throne of God in the spirit.

Verse 3: John looks and describes the person that sat up on the throne as Jasper and Sardine stones. Stones in themselves don't always symbolize things, as is the case with these two stones; however, the Hebrews used stones in correspondence with their colors. Jasper stone is deep green in color. Deep green often symbolizes life. Sardine stone, better known as Carnelian stone, is a reddish quartz color. Red, the color of blood, is often a symbol of life. These two symbols would be appropriate to symbolize the Father of all living life. The verse goes further to describe an emerald like rainbow about the throne. Emeralds are symbols of Royalty and Glory. The Bible dictionary states that rainbows are symbols of covenants and that the Lord will return to earth and dwell in Celestial glory.

Verse 4: Twenty-four (24) seats were arranged around the throne. In a good representation of degrees of power and glory, the seats were lower than the throne. Seated in those seats were twenty-four (24) elders clothed in white with crowns of gold on their heads. Being clothed in white is a symbol of purity. Crowns of gold symbolize royalty, and in this case the elders exaltation. The Doctrine and Covenants, section 77 verse 5 explains that the elders are twenty-four (24) deceased members of the seven (7) churches. These men had lived righteous and noble lives, and were thus exalted to paradise. The cloths and crowns are said to be symbols of purity and dominion.

Verse 5: From the throne came thunderings and lightnings. Together these two symbolize the might of heaven, or the power and authority of God. Before the throne sat seven (7) flaming lamps representing the seven (7) leaders of the seven (7) churches. This is an excellent representation in that the lamps stood before the throne, and that the leaders stand before the Lord.

Verses 6-7: Standing before the throne was also a *"sea of glass like unto crystal"*. The Doctrine and Covenants section 77, verse 1 states, *"The glass sea of crystal symbolizes the earth in its' sanctified, immortal and eternal state"*. The celestialized earth shall be the Lord's footstool. There are also four (4) beasts present before the throne. The beasts throw a totally different light on to "World Theology". Many of the bizarre descriptions we find in the scriptures can easily be explained through their symbolic meaning; however, the beasts presented in Johns' vision have not only a symbolic meaning, but are a literal representation. In the teachings of the prophet Joseph Smith, pages 291-292, we read, *"John saw actual beasts in heaven, showing John that beasts did actually exist there, and not to represent figures of things on earth"*. The prophet goes further to state, *"The four (4) beasts were four (4) of the most noble animals that had filled the measure of their creation, and had been saved from other worlds, because they were perfect. They were like angels in their sphere. We are not told where they come from"*. There is also symbolism associated with the representation of the beasts. The beasts had eyes before and behind. The Doctrine and Covenants section 77, verse 4, states that this symbolizes light and knowledge. They were full of intelligence and knowledge. The Doctrine and Covenants further explains that the beasts are figurative expressions of four (4) things;

1. *Heaven*
2. *The Paradise of God*
3. *The Happiness of Man*
4. *The Happiness of Beast*

In the Doctrine and Covenants section 77, verse 2, it says that the beasts are representative of temporal and spiritual creation, that all things created temporally were created in the same likeness spiritually. The Doctrine and Covenants also speaks of the beasts being literal beasts. In Doctrine and Covenants section 77, verse 3, we read, *"The four (4) beasts are limited to four (4) individual beasts, to represent the glory of the classes of beings in their destined order or sphere of creation, in the enjoyment of their eternal felicity"*. The beasts were in the likeness of;

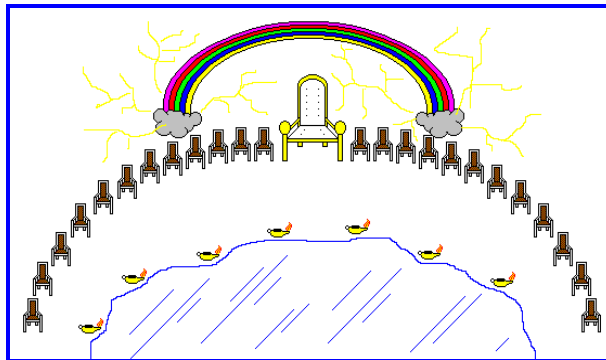


Verse 8: The beasts were said to have six (6) wings each. We know that angels don't really have wings, but that wings are figurative expressions for power of action. This is the case with the beasts' wings as explained in Doctrine and Covenants section 77, verse 4. As far as the scripture goes, the number six (6) carries the symbolic meaning of work, labor or action. The world was created in six (6) days. We are also told to work for six (6) days and rest on the seventh (7) day. This verse goes on to state that the beasts are praising God without stopping.



Verse 9: The beasts are praising God without stopping and in doing so are giving all the honor and glory to God. The verse states that God will be the same forever.

Verses 10-11: The twenty-four (24) elders begin to worship the Father. They cast their crowns before him. The crowns are symbols of their exaltation, power, and dominion. The casting of the crowns before God represents what they utter unto him, that He is worthy of all.



He created all things and his reason for doing so was because it pleased him to do so. In other words, He didn't have to do all that He did, but He did it because He loves us. We should all learn from the example of the elders, and give all that we have to the Lord in thanks for the blessings He has granted us.

*Artistic Viewpoint of John's Vision
Contained in Chapter Four*

