

Foobars, visualization, meta-language, rhyme, rhythm, metre—the dynamic power of meaning using multiple protocols.

- Rhythm: Doe, tea, la, so, fah, me, ray, doe.
- Rhyme: Roses are red, violets are blue...
- Visualization: It is time to **STOP!**
- Foobar: God is good all the time...

4:1-11. *Majesty Indeed!* After recalling all these messages to the church, I looked and saw a door, a door standing open in heaven. And that same Voice spoke to me as loud as a trumpet—

Come up here—I will show what must take place after this.



Instantly I was immersed by [εν] spirit—and there was a throne with someone sitting on that throne surrounded by a rainbow of light [ιρις, iris]. Twenty-four elders [πρεσβυτέρους] dressed in *white* clothing with gold crowns. From the throne came lightning, thunder, and rumblings. Seven lamps backlit the sevenfold Spirit. The throne was sitting on a transparent surface, clear as crystal.

Around the throne were four creatures, covered with eyes, even their back. One creature looked like a lion, another a young bull, another a human, and the last was like an eagle, flying. Each had six wings, covered with eyes, even under their wings. They never stopped declaring:

*Perfect, perfect, perfect
Is the Lord God Almighty,
Who was, and is, and is to come.¹⁶*

REVELATION 4:1-11

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.⁴ Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God [or *the sevenfold Spirit*].⁶ Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were **covered with eyes, in front and in back**.⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings and **was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings**. Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.”

⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹“You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.”

¹⁶The name of the Lord God Almighty is used here. See Exodus 3:13-15—

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” This is what you are to say to the Israelites: “I AM has sent me to you.” God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘THE I AM, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

When they declare this, the twenty-four fall down before the one on the throne [“him” is not there] who lives eternally, and they worship the one who lives forever. Laying down their crowns, they declare:

“You are worthy, our sovereign, our God,
Worthy to take¹⁷ and receive *the* glory and *the* honor and *the* power,¹⁸
For **You** created all things,
and for **Your** purpose all things were created
and possess existential reality.”

- Q Just who was sitting on that throne in verse 2? (Note the absence of gender.)
- Q What does a rainbow encircling the throne suggest? An iris?
- Q What translation error do you see in verse 6?
- Q What do the 24 presbyterians represent? ;-)
- Q What are the key differences between Ezekiel’s and John’s vision of the throne of the LORD God?
- Q How would you explain the throne of the Lord God to one who has yet to read chapter 4?

EZEKIEL 1:1-14

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River [near the Euphrates in Babylon], the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. ²On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin—³the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. [aka Chaldeans] There the hand of the LORD was upon him. ⁴I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, ⁵and in the fire was what looked like **four living creatures**. In appearance their form was that of a man, ⁶but each of them had four faces and four wings. ⁷Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. ⁸Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, ⁹and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.

¹⁰Their faces looked like this: **Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.** ¹¹Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upward; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side, and two wings covering its body. ¹²Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. ¹³The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. ¹⁴The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

¹⁷The Greek there is λαβεῖν, “lah-bain,” meaning also to take/obtain, not just “receive.” [2983](#).

¹⁸“The” is there in the Greek, but for some reason left out in the more popular NIV, NLT, ESV, KJV, NKJV versions and many others. The World English Bible is an exception—“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, the Holy One, to receive *the* glory, *the* honor, and *the* power, for you created all things, and because of your desire they existed and were created!” [As is LSV, YLT, WNT, NHEB.]

Revelation 5:1-14. Surreal But Real Views of Christ Jesus. Learn by asking...

- Q Who was this "him?" Where was this "him" seated? And what was He holding, perfectly sealed?
- Q Who called out to have the two-sided scroll opened? What was this entity's criterion?
- Q Why were not others worthy to open or look into said scroll? Why didn't the "him" open the perfectly sealed scroll?
- Q Who wept? Why? Who answered his question about worthiness?
- Q Just how has this Worthy One able to open this perfectly sealed scroll?

- Q Describe this Lamb. What have you concluded about the Lamb's nature?
- Q Were the twenty-four presbyterians of the church of Christ? ;-)
- Q Just what was in those 24 gold bowls? Why "incense" as a metaphor? Consider Psalm 141
- Q Who purchased people by the blood of the Lamb?
- Q What was the purpose of their purchase?
- Q How can we effectuate that purpose?

- Q Just how many angels were singing to the Lamb?
- Q What do you learn about the Lamb from their lyrics?
- Q Just what would you sing if you had the opportunity?

- Q Who sang *To Him who sits on the throne...*?
- Q To whom was this sung?
- Q And the response of the 24 presbyterians?
- Q What happens to the atheism construct when this last song is sung? Why?
- Q How do you feel differently about the Lord God Almighty after reading/studying Revelation 4 & 5?

REVELATION 5:1-14

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ²And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" ³But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

⁶Then I saw a [?] Lamb, looking as if it [?] had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of [the] God [aka *the sevenfold Spirit*] sent out into all the earth. ⁷He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

¹¹Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹²In a loud voice they sang:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

¹³Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!"

¹⁴The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

A Startling Image of Jesus

A helpless lamb—the mightiest of all creatures

I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Revelation 5:4

Images of Jesus abound in Revelation, and one way to study the book is to follow a single image through the entire book. After his luminous appearance in the first chapter, Jesus is presented as a king, a child, a warrior on a horse, the Lord of the whole earth, the husband of a bride. Of all the images, however, none is so startling and unlikely as the one in John's second vision. Yet it takes hold and appears repeatedly throughout the book.

To set the stage for this vision, the book of Revelation uses more visual drama than a science fiction movie. Lightning flashes, the sky growls, and awesome creatures encircle a lofty throne. Four of the creatures (4:6) seem to symbolize the most impressive examples of all creation, for a common saying in those days went,

- ℵ The mightiest among the birds is the eagle.
- ℵ The mightiest among the domestic animals is the bull.
- ℵ The mightiest among the wild beasts is the lion.
- ℵ And the mightiest of all is man.

ONLY ONE WORTHY

A question resounds in the heavens, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" (5:2). In other words, who is worthy to unloose the next phase of history? No one can answer, much to John's dismay. Not one of the four impressive creatures qualifies.

But suddenly John sees another creature, a "Lamb, looking as if it had been slain" (5:6). The image contains a great paradox. None of the majestic angels or elders or living creatures has the right to break the seals. Only a Lamb does—a helpless, slaughtered Lamb.

John records a song of celebration ("You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God" [5:9]), a song later set to earthly music in Handel's Messiah. And elsewhere in Revelation true believers are identified as being recorded in the "Lamb's book of life" (21:27).

This powerful image resurfaces often in Revelation, a book of warfare between good and evil. The Christ is the King AND also the Lamb, the one who died to demonstrate Father God's righteousness (according to Paul, Romans 3:25-30), and thereby atoned for our evil. His death on the cross, seemingly a great defeat, actually ushered in a decisive victory, for Him and for us. Good was not destroyed; God triumphed.

- ℵ What meaning does the image of Jesus as a slain Lamb have for you?
- ℵ What are your favorite "pictures," or images or metaphors of the Christ? Was Jesus of Nazareth one of those images/metaphors?