

The Four Living Creatures

The Four Living Creatures – a **corporate** entity

The four living creatures embody the entire economy of God. In the picture of the four living creatures we see God's dispensing, especially through the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum. In this picture we also see the expression of God's glory, God's move, and God's administration. **The four living creatures depict the building of the Body of Christ.** Paul's writings in the New Testament present the building in teaching and revelation, but the four living creatures in Ezekiel 1 illustrate how **the Body** moves and coordinates together.

The Four Living Creatures – a **living** entity

The first characteristic of these creatures is that they are **living**... *Living* implies **more** than the fact that they are not dead. They are not merely alive; the word living indicates that they are **full of life**. The word translated "living" in Ezekiel 1:5 has the same root as the word for life in Genesis 2:9, used in the tree of life. The only way to be genuinely living is to be **full of the divine life**, and the source of this life is the tree of life.

The word living is a particular word indicating **a divine reality**. In Matthew 16:16 Peter declared, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the **living God**."* Peter did not merely say, "The Son of God" but "the Son of the living God..." In John 6:57 the Lord Jesus said, *"As the **living Father** has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me."* Many times Jesus referred to the Father simply as "My Father" or "the Father," but in this verse He specifically spoke of "the living Father." Finally, in Revelation 1:17-18 He said, *"I am the First and the Last and **the living One**; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever..."* Although He died, He is living. Christ is the living One, and we as the living creatures must be living as He is living.

The Four Living Creatures – having four faces

The Lord's salvation is to make us proper **human beings**. The sisters must see that God has no intention to make them angels, and the brothers must see that God has no intention to make them superheroes. God wants the believers to be proper men like Jesus was... Thus, it is wrong to consider or desire to be so spiritual that we become angelic and so lofty that *"our feet never touch the ground."* Such a concept is not according to the goal of God's salvation. God's salvation is to make us all proper human beings.

Man

The more spiritual we become, **the more normal, ordinary, and human we will be**. In the past I thought like many, especially the young people, that to be spiritual was to become a super person, one whom nothing touches and one who enjoys the Lord all day long without having to care for practical things. Years ago, Brother Lee realized that there was such a concept among some of the young people. They loved the church life, and they loved the Lord greatly. However, they simply attended the meetings and did not care for their work or their studies. They considered that as long as they held a simple job that could pay their rent, they would be satisfied. However, Brother Lee charged them to go to school and study well. He told them not to think that the Lord's return was so soon that they needed only to pursue the Lord, become spiritual, and do nothing else. Brother Lee said, *"If this is your attitude, the Lord may delay His coming back until you have learned to study"*. We may have the thought that the Lord is coming tomorrow and ask, *"What is the point in obtaining a good job? What is the point of going to school? I will be satisfied simply with mowing lawns or cleaning pools in order to make a living. Other than that I will simply enjoy the Lord."* Again I say, Brother Lee pointed out for the sake of those who hold such thoughts that the Lord will delay His coming so that they will pass through the proper stages of human life in order to live as proper human beings. During the days that Brother Lee spoke those words, some brothers were encouraged to attend school and pursue a higher education. Eventually, these ones became useful to the Lord. The Lord needs us to become proper, normal, and ordinary human beings.

We are humans who live in a human society; thus, we need to take care of all our **human relationships**. Some believers may have unbelieving relatives or parents, yet these believers need to know how to relate to them. The fact that our relatives or parents are not yet believers does not mean that we should hold a negative attitude toward them. That is wrong. We need to know how to **care for our unbelieving relatives** and how to **love them as human beings** with a view that they also can be brought to the Lord.

Lion

On the one hand, that the four living creatures possess the face of a man indicates that we should be ordinary, normal, regular, approachable, and pleasant men. On the other hand, that the four living creatures possess the face of a lion indicates that we should be **full of boldness, vigor, strength, victory, and reigning**. The lion is often considered the king of the jungle, and there must be this aspect of the lion in our Christian life. According to our natural human life, we often do not wish to offend others or cause trouble. However, when the human beings around us take a way that opposes God, we must exercise the lion life within us to **stand one with Lord** and reject what God rejects.

For instance, some of our office mates at the place of our occupation may ask us to join their party and to drink and dance. We may desire to be nice, proper, and approachable toward them, but at such a time, when it comes to things that do not please the Lord, we must stand as a lion with boldness to tell our office mates that we belong to the Lord and that we do not do such things. We may say, *"I am a believer in the Lord, and I cannot go with you."* For example, when the Lord Jesus went into the temple and saw those buying, selling, and doing their business in the temple, He used a whip to chase them out of the temple (John 2:14-16). He was like a lion, devoured by the zeal of God's house (v. 17). With the living creatures there is the face not only of a man but also of a lion with boldness, vigor, strength, victory, and reigning.

Ox

The fact that the four living creatures have the face of a lion does not mean that all we do is roar and reign. The four living creatures also have the face of an ox; this face means that we also **work hard** and labor like an ox. Perhaps, while our office mates are having a "fun time" at a party, we are laboring on what most people may be trying to put off, taking care of our assigned portion of work. Such an attitude and practice become a testimony not only of rejecting the worldly and sinful things but also of **laboring faithfully** like an ox....With such a laboring spirit, man's heart will be touched, and others will realize that we are not just a bunch of "Jesus freaks" who speak religious things; they will see that we bear a testimony.

Eagle

The living creatures also have the face of an eagle. In the Bible an eagle signifies the powerful, buoyant, transcendent God. An eagle flying and soaring in the sky is free and transcendent. Nothing seems to be able to stop it. That the four living creatures have the face of an eagle indicates that we need to have this aspect of the face of an eagle in our living. We should be those who are not bound or held down by anything on earth, whether negative things, such as persecution and suffering, or positive things, such as acceptance and honor. When others try to applaud, praise, or appreciate us, instead of taking advantage of their admiration, we should fly like an eagle and transcend over all the things on the earthly plane.

Conclusion

The four living creatures are a corporate entity expressing Christ in a complete way, exactly as He was in His living on earth. **Jesus is living again as the four living creatures in a corporate way.** In other words, these four living creatures are a duplication of Christ on earth in a corporate way. (*Excerpt from the Ministry of the Word: Crystallization-Study of Ezekiel (1), 63-87*)