

GENERAL GUIDELINES AS WE READ & STUDY

REVELATION:

- **(Revelation 1:3 ESV)** “Blessed is **the one who reads** aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are **those who hear**, and **who keep what is written** in it, for the time is near.”
- Remember and follow the blessing of Revelation 1:3. So ask, Am I **reading** what is written? Am I **hearing** what is written? Am I **keeping/obeying** what is written?
- **(Revelation 2:7 ESV)** “He who has an ear, **let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**”
- Always keep in mind that John was commanded by Christ to write down what he saw. And that what John saw was what God intended for him to see.
- So we may conclude that the message of Revelation to us is very intentional according to the plan and purpose of God.
- Understand the genre: God knew that John would not understand everything and that John’s descriptions would fall short of the reality of the things described.
- Understand the genre: God knows that we will not understand everything about John’s account, but this does not set aside his purpose.
- We will understand what God intends for us to understand from John’s account if we study the words and hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- Trying to understand everything and cover every angle will likely obscure the main point that God is trying to communicate.
- Chasing a multitude of theories may make for good conversation around the coffee table or in a Sunday School class, but is that approach helping us to hear and understand what the Spirit is saying.

- **A DOZEN THEORIES** as to what this represents or that represents? **NO.**
- **Table talk?** **NO.**
- **Opinions?** **NO.**
- **Pursuing what God want us to get from that text?** **YES.**

KEEPING THE WORDS:

- **EMBRACE** the vision that God has given us.
- **LIVE** in full view of this amazing panorama.
- **NEVER LET GO** of the purifying reality of God’s prophetic word.

THE “LIVING ONES” [CREATURES]:

- “Living creatures” better “living ones” (Gk. “ζῴων”): zōōn. **Probably the cherubim that Ezekiel described** in 1:5-24 and identified in 10:15.
- (Ezekiel 1:5-6 ESV) And from the midst of it came the likeness of **four living creatures**. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings.
- (Ezekiel 1:13 ESV) As for the likeness of **the living creatures**, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.
- (Ezekiel 10:15 ESV) And **the cherubim** mounted up. **These were the living creatures that I saw** by the Chebar canal.
- A consistent interpretation of the entire throne-room vision requires us to understand **the living creatures as an exalted order of angelic beings** who, as **the immediate guardians of the throne**, lead the heavenly hosts in worship and adoration of God. [Mounce, R. H. (1997). Book of Revelation (p. 124). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]
- This passage introduces the four living creatures who will play a significant role in the events that unfold in Revelation. That they are said to be both in the center and around the throne **means that their station is in the inner circle nearest the throne**. The similar passage in Ezekiel 1:12, 17 suggests they are in constant motion about it. The translation living creatures is somewhat misleading, since these are not animals. The phrase derives from a single word in the Greek text, the noun form of the verb zaō, which means “to live.” [MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1999). Revelation 1-11 (p. 152). Chicago: Moody Press.]
- **Ezekiel’s description** appears incomprehensible, almost incoherent, as he **struggled to make sense out of the spectacular, supernatural scene that he witnessed**. Both Ezekiel’s description and that in Revelation 4 describe what could be called the divine war machine ready to unleash judgment. [Ibid.]
- **Those descriptions view the four cherubim in relation to the created world;** the lion represents wild creatures, the calf domestic animals, the eagle flying creatures, and man the pinnacle of creation. Symbolically, the lion represents strength, the calf service, the man reason, and the eagle speed. [Ibid.]