

Ezekiel 10:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

Analysis

The four faces—cherub, man, lion, eagle—represent the fullness of created life under God's dominion: angelic (cherub), human (man), wild animals (lion), and birds (eagle). This fourfold pattern appears in Ezekiel 1:10 and Revelation 4:7, connecting this temple vision to cosmic worship of God.

The cherub face replaces the ox face from chapter 1, possibly indicating judgment's focus—cherubim associated with guarding God's holiness (Genesis 3:24) now execute divine judgment. The man's face represents rational, moral creatures accountable to God. The lion signifies strength and royalty, while the eagle denotes swift, far-seeing judgment from above.

The Reformed doctrine of common grace recognizes that all creation exists under God's governance. These faces surrounding the throne demonstrate that nothing escapes divine sovereignty. All creatures participate in accomplishing God's redemptive purposes, including judgment necessary for purification.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern iconography frequently combined human and animal features in divine representations. Israel's cherubim, however, were servants of Yahweh alone. The four faces may represent the four standards of Israel's tribal camp (Numbers 2)—Judah (lion), Reuben (man), Ephraim (ox), Dan (eagle)—

connecting covenant history to this judgment vision.

For Ezekiel's audience, these symbolic associations would communicate that the entirety of Israel's covenant identity was involved in current judgment. The same God who formed them now disciplines them as a father (Hebrews 12:5-11). The comprehensive nature of the faces suggests comprehensive judgment leading to comprehensive restoration.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do the four faces representing all creation remind you of God's universal sovereignty?
2. What does it mean that the same God who created also judges?
3. How does this imagery of comprehensive divine governance shape your understanding of providence?

Interlinear Text

פָנִים	הַכְּרָבִים	וּבְנִי	וְאֶרֶבֶץ	ה	וְאֶת	פָנִי	וְאֶת	פָנִי	וְאֶת	פָנִי	וְאֶת	פָנִי	וְאֶת	פָנִי	
had four	face	And every one	face	And every one	face	of a cherub	face	face							
H702	H6440	H259	H6440	H259	H6440	H3742	H6440								

פָנִים	וְרַבִּיעַ	וְשָׁנִי	פָנִי	אֶת	מִ	פָנִי	וְשָׁלִישִׁי	אֶת	מִ	פָנִי	וְאֶת	הַ	פָנִי	וְאֶת	הַ	פָנִים	
and the second	face	of a man	face	and the third	face	of a lion	face	and the fourth	face	face	face	face	face	face	face	face	face
H8145	H6440	H120		H7992	H6440	H738		H7243	H6440								

נֶשֶׁר:
of an eagle
H5404

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 4:7 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Kings 7:36 (Parallel theme): For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about.

Ezekiel 10:21 (Parallel theme): Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.

1 Kings 7:29 (Parallel theme): And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges there was a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work.