

# Revelation 4:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

## Analysis

**And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind....** This verse from Revelation's vision of throne room of heaven - god's sovereignty, holiness, and worship employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

## Historical Context

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John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does Revelation 4:6 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?
2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?

3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	ἐνώπιον	τοῦ	θρόνου	θάλασσα	ναλίνη	όμοία	
And	before	G3588	of the throne	there was a sea	of glass	like	
G2532	G1799		G2362	G2281	G5193	G3664	
κρυστάλλω	καὶ	ἐν	μέσῳ	τοῦ	θρόνου	καὶ	κύκλῳ
unto crystal	And	in	the midst	G3588	of the throne	And	round about
G2930	G2532	G1722	G3319	G2362	G2532	G2945	
τοῦ	θρόνου	τέσσαρα	ζῷα	γέμοντα	όφθαλμῶν		
G3588	of the throne	were four	beasts	full	of eyes		
G2362		G5064	G2226	G1073	G3788		
ἔμπροσθεν	καὶ	ὄπισθεν					
before	And	behind					
G1715	G2532	G3693					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 15:2** (Parallel theme): And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

**Revelation 5:6** (Parallel theme): And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

**Revelation 14:3** (Parallel theme): And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

**Revelation 19:4** (Parallel theme): And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

**Ezekiel 10:12** (Parallel theme): And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had.

**Revelation 7:11** (Parallel theme): And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

**Ezekiel 10:14** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Revelation 15:7** (Parallel theme): And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

**Revelation 22:1** (Parallel theme): And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

**Revelation 21:11** (Parallel theme): Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;