

# Revelation 4:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**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....** 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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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does Revelation 4:7 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               | τὸ     | ζῷον          | τὸ       | πρῶτον           | ὅμοιον | λέοντι          | καὶ               | τὸ           |
| <b>And</b>        | G3588  | <b>beast</b>  | G3588    | <b>the first</b> |        | <b>like</b>     | <b>a lion</b>     | <b>And</b>   |
| G2532             |        | G2226         |          | G4413            |        | G3664           | G3023             | G3588        |
| δεύτερον          | τὸ     | ζῷον          | ὅμοιον   | μόσχω            | καὶ    | τὸ              | τρίτον            | ζῷον         |
| <b>the second</b> |        | <b>beast</b>  |          | <b>like</b>      |        | <b>a calf</b>   | <b>the third</b>  | <b>beast</b> |
| G1208             |        | G2226         |          | G3664            |        | G3448           | G5154             | G2226        |
| ἔχον              | τὸ     | πρόσωπον      | ὡς       | ἄνθρωπος         | καὶ    | τὸ              | τέταρτον          |              |
| <b>had</b>        | G3588  | <b>a face</b> |          | <b>as</b>        |        | <b>a man</b>    | <b>the fourth</b> |              |
| G2192             |        | G4383         |          | G5613            |        | G444            | G5067             |              |
| ζῷον              | ὅμοιον | ἀετῷ          | πετωμένῳ |                  |        |                 |                   |              |
| <b>beast</b>      |        | <b>like</b>   |          | <b>eagle</b>     |        | <b>a flying</b> |                   |              |
| G2226             |        | G3664         |          | G105             |        | G4072           |                   |              |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezekiel 1:10** (Parallel theme): As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

**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.

**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.

**Revelation 4:6** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Ezekiel 1:8** (Parallel theme): And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

**Daniel 7:4** (Parallel theme): The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

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