

## Handout 1: Revelation Lesson 7

As in Chapter 1, there is a combination of the three aspects of the Glory-Cloud imagery of the Divine Presence in Revelation 4:1-5: (1) the voice in Rev 4:1, (2) the brilliant Glory of God in Rev 4:3, (3) God the Holy Spirit in Rev 4:5.

What John heard in his vision of the heavenly Sanctuary:

1. *the same voice speaking to me, the voice like a trumpet, saying, "Come up here: I will show you what is to take place in the future."*
2. peals of thunder
3. four creatures singing: *"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty; who was, and is, and is to come"*
4. the antiphonal response of the elders: *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you made the whole universe; by your will, when it did not exist, it was created."*

What John saw in his vision of the heavenly Sanctuary:

1. God sitting on a throne looking like a diamond and a ruby with flashes of lightning coming from the throne
2. a rainbow encircling the throne that looked like an emerald
3. twenty-four elders sitting on thrones dressed in white robes and wearing golden crowns
4. seven flaming lamps in front of the throne that were the seven Spirits of God
5. a transparent sea in front of the throne
6. four living creatures studded with eyes in front of the throne with faces like a lion, a bull, a human, and an eagle; they all have six wings also studded with eyes
7. the twenty-four elders prostrating themselves before God's throne answering antiphonally to the hymn of the four creatures and throwing down their crowns

The etymology of the word "liturgy" is from the Greek *leitōs* meaning "people" + *ergon*, meaning "work" or "duty" = *leitourgia*, meaning a public duty or public work, which in religious terms is understood to refer to the unity of the community actively participating in worshiping God (Catholic Dictionary, "Liturgy" page 232).

Liturgy is, therefore, the exercise of public worship, whether here on earth or in the heavenly Tabernacle. The function of liturgy is to give honor and praise to God, which fulfills a twofold purpose:

1. to offer God worship in the unity of a communal act
2. to obtain sanctification, the blessings which come from worship

There is a liturgical reason and purpose for John's vision recorded in the Book of Revelation in which Jesus instructs him to "write down" what he sees and hears (Rev 1:19) just as there is a liturgical reason and purpose for viewing all of sacred Scripture in a liturgical context. It is humankind's liturgical destiny that separates him from the beasts also created on the sixth day (Gen 1:24-31).

"Elders" are mentioned twelve times in Revelation: 4:4, 10; 5:5, 6, 7, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; and 19:4. In Scripture, the term "elder" only applies to men and never to God's spirit messengers/angels.

12 is the number of perfection in government and associated with the people of God as the Sacred Assembly of the Church: the twelve tribes of the sons of Jacob that became

Old Covenant Israel and the Twelve Apostles of the New Covenant Israel (see Mt 19:28; Mk 3:14-19; Acts 1:15-26; Jam 1:1). 24 is a multiple of 12 and, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that it is also associated with the Church.

The three actions of the twenty-four elders after the Living Creatures proclaim God’s holiness in verses 10-11:

1. kneel (or prostrate themselves) before God’s throne,
2. throw down their crowns, and
3. join in with antiphonal (responsorial) praise to God.

In the liturgy of the Mass, the congregation also kneels after the Sanctus. Heavenly worship is (1) corporate, (2) ordered, and (3) responsorial.

### **The Four Living Creatures of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John**

ISAIAH 6:1-7	Four Living Creatures
	Called <i>Seraphs</i> , which means “the burning ones”
	Six wings: two covered their faces, two their feet, two for flying
	He couldn’t see their faces; covered by their wings
	They sing before the throne of God: “Holy, Holy, Holy”
	One purified Isaiah with a burning coal
	They encircle the throne of God

EZEKIEL 1:4-28 10:1-18	Four Living Creatures in what looked like fire
	They had four faces and four wings each face on four sides: man, lion, bull/ox, and eagle (Ez 1:10), or bull/ox, man, lion, and eagle (Ez 10:14)
	They had straight legs with feet like a calf, and hands like a man
	They were called cherubim (Chapter 10:20)
	Their bodies were full of eyes (10:12)
	They transport the fiery chariot of God. Ezekiel could see the throne <b>above</b> them in the throne room of God in 10:18 (some translations vary on how they list this verse, but it comes after 10:17).

Both Ezekiel and John see a rainbow associated with God’s throne (Ez 1:28; Rev 4:3 and 10:1).

The Living Creatures in Revelation Chapter 4	
Four living creatures covered with eyes front and back	
Faces like a lion, bull/ox, man, and eagle	
Six wings; eyes front and back, inside and out	
Sang Holy, Holy, Holy but with a different second verse than Isaiah 6:3	
Stood around the throne of God	

Comparing the descriptions in Isaiah Chapter 6 and Revelation Chapter 4, there appear to be two classifications of heavenly beings: Seraphs and Cherubs.

Handout 2: Revelation Lesson 7

The Fathers of the Church saw the Four Living Creatures as symbols of the four Gospels.

<b>Early Church Fathers</b>	<b>Creature with a human face</b>	<b>Creature with a lion face</b>	<b>Creature with the face of a bull or ox</b>	<b>Creature with an eagle face</b>
St. Irenaeus of Lyons	Matthew	John	Luke	Mark
St. Augustine of Hippo	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Pseudo-Athanasius	Matthew	Luke	Mark	John
St. Jerome	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John

**THE MASS IN THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN**

*Let us raise our hearts and hands to God in Heaven. Lamentations 3:41*

“the golden thread of liturgy is what holds together the apocalyptic pearls of John’s Revelation.”

Dr. Scott Hahn

<b>Revelation</b>	<b>Revelation Scripture References</b>	<b>Celebration of the Mass</b>
<b>Introductory Rites</b> “The Lord’s Day” = Sunday	1:10	<b>Introductory Rites</b> (on the Lord’s Day, Sunday)
High Priest Priesthood of the Faithful	1:13 1:6; 20:6	Processional
Antiphonal chant	4:8-11; 5:9-14; 7:10-12; 18:1-8	Entrance Antiphon
Altar  Incense Vestments	6:9; 8:3-5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7 5:8; 8:3-5 1:12, 13; 2:5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9; 15:6; 19:13-14; 14:4	Priest reverences the altar by kissing it and with incense if celebrating a high Mass. He wears the appropriate vestments
Consecrated celibacy Lampstands (menorah)	14:4 1:13; 4:5	Celibate clergy Baptismal candle, Eucharistic candle, etc.
Sign of the Cross	7:3; 14:1; 22:4	Sign of the Cross and Greeting
Blessing	1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6	The Rite of Blessing
Penitence	Chapters 2 and 3	The Penitential Rite
Gloria	15:3-4	Gloria Opening Prayer

<b>Revelation</b>	<b>Revelation Scripture References</b>	<b>Celebration of the Mass</b>
<b>Liturgy of the Word</b> The prominence of the Virgin Mary	1:19  12:1-6; 12:13-17	<b>Liturgy of the Word</b>
Book or Scroll Readings from Scripture	5:1 Chapters 2-3, 5; 8:2-11	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading, Responsorial Psalms, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading

Alleluia	19:1, 3, 4, 6	Alleluia and Gospel
Intercession of angels and saints	5:8; 6:9-10; 8:3-4	Intercessions

<b>Revelation</b>	<b>Revelation Scripture References</b>	<b>Celebration of the Mass</b>
<b>Liturgy of the Eucharist</b> Eucharistic Host	2:17	<b>Liturgy of the Eucharist</b>
Chalices	15:7; Chapter 16; 12:9	Preparation of the Gifts (the wine and bread)
Invitation to “Come up here!”	2:1 and 11:12	Eucharistic Prayer, Preface dialogue: <i>Sursum Corda</i> = “Lift up your hearts;” acclamation: “We lift them up to the Lord”
Holy, Holy, Holy Elders kneel before God	4:8 4:9-10	“Holy, Holy, Holy” (Sanctus) Kneel after the Sanctus
Great Amen	19:4; 22:21	The Great Amen Communion Rite
Lamb of God	5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4 twice, 10; 15:3; 17:14 twice; 19:7, 9; 21:14, 22, 23; 22:1, 2	“Lamb of God You take away the sins of the world”
Marriage Supper of the Lamb	19:1-10	“This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his table”
Silent Contemplation	8:1	Silent Contemplation
Devotion to Archangel Michael Worldwide/universality (catholic) of the Church	12:7  7:9	Concluding Rites  Mass celebrated around the world

See CCC # 1090; 1137-1139; 2642

St. John’s experience of entering the heavenly throne room is also our experience in the sacrifice of the Mass. When we receive the Eucharistic bread and wine which has become the glorified Body and Blood of the Savior, we the faithful are no longer inside time, but we momentarily enter an existence without time. As in St. John’s experience, the division between heaven and earth becomes blurred when the voices of angels and saints join with our voices in singing the Sanctus—the acclamation of praise to the Triune God (Is 6:3; Rev 4:8)—and as we process forward to receive communion. Like St. John in Revelation Chapters 4-6, we find ourselves standing in the presence of the Living God, in the midst of the heavenly liturgy, bearing witness to the victory of Jesus Christ in whom time as we know it is contained within His holy and redeeming sacrifice offered on the altar of the Cross in 30 AD!

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## Is There a Connection Between the Four Living Creatures and the Zodiac in the Book of Revelation?

*The heavens declare the glory of God, the vault of heaven proclaims his handiwork ...*  
Psalm 19:1

*The sun, at his command, forbears to rise, and on the stars he sets a seal.*  
Job 9:7

There is an aspect of the symbolism of the four creatures John saw in Revelation Chapter 4 that has caused many scholarly debates and the spilling of much ink, and that is the possible connection between the Four Living Creatures and the signs of the zodiac. The word zodiac is not an occult word. Our English word “zodiac” comes from *zodiacus*, the Latinized form of the ancient Greek *zoidiakos kyklos*, meaning “cycle” or “circle” and referring to the path of the sun through the heavens. However, some linguistic scholars believe the Greek word derives from the primitive Hebrew root word *zodi* (or *sodi*), which means “way” or “path.” The word zodiac refers to the twelve major constellations or groups of stars arranged along the sun’s path.

The inspired writers of the Bible were familiar with the same system of constellations that we know today except with some substitutions like the scorpion for the eagle. These symbols for the constellations date back in history to the beginning of civilization. The same (or similar) twelve signs, their names, and their order appear in every ancient culture from the Sumerians (3300-2300 BC) to the Chinese (with entirely different signs)<sup>1</sup> to the Chaldeans (Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldeans), and the Egyptians. Archaeologists have found complete records and artifacts of the zodiac symbols that date from 2,000 BC, but there is evidence that may date the symbols of the zodiac back to 4,000 BC.

As mentioned, there have been some substitutions in the symbols; for example, the scorpion for the eagle whose name in ancient Greek means “to hold together” and in the crab, which in Arabic means “the rest” or “everlasting habitations.” Some scholars have suggested that the substitution by Biblical writers of the eagle for the scorpion may have been because of the association between the scorpion and the serpent, a creature symbolic for the devil (Luke 10:17-19, Revelation 12:7-9). But archaeologists have discovered that the ancient Chaldean’s system of constellations also had an eagle instead of the scorpion. Perhaps the scorpion form is the newer innovation, and the zodiac symbols were usurped and perverted by Satan and the occult (Richard Hinckley Allen, *Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning*, New York: Dover Pub., 1899, 1963 p. 57; c.f., page 362).

The Bible, the word of God written down for our instruction, and the Church strongly condemn all types of occultism that is the desire for any form of wisdom or knowledge through secret means apart from God. Included in this condemnation is all kinds of astrological occultism (see Deuteronomy 18:9-13; 2 Kings 23:3-5; Is. 8:19-20; 44:24-25; 47:8-15). St. Augustine strongly refuted astrological occultism in his book, *City of God*.

We should be diligent in avoiding all astrological occultism including the seemingly harmless daily horoscope that appears in newspapers or on the internet. Nothing about astrology is either benign or harmless. All forms of occultism are satanic and extremely dangerous! But this does not mean the constellations themselves are evil or that the symbols that stand for them are evil any more than pagan sun-worship should keep us from seeing the sun as a symbol of Christ the light of the world.

Most Jewish scholars suggest that each of the twelve tribes of Israel carried banners with a symbolic image (Num 10:14, 18, 22, etc.), but they cannot agree on them. There is no doubt, however, that Judah's sign was a lion (Gen 49:9; Rev 5:5). In any case, it is interesting that the Four Living Creatures that John and Ezekiel saw are the middle signs in the four quadrants of the Zodiac. John lists them in counterclockwise order, backward around the zodiac (perhaps because he is viewing the scene from above in heaven and not from below on earth). However, he does list them in the structure of his prophecy in the direct order of the seasons of the year, with each sign coming exactly mid-season. There may also be a connection between the Four Living Creatures and the divisions of the Book of Revelation. After the Preamble in Chapter 1, the book divides into four different quadrants corresponding to the four times series of seven curse-judgments in Leviticus 26:18-29 that are perhaps symbolically ruled by each of the Living Creatures.

Here is the argument that could be made to support that theory:

1. The first quarter would be Chapters 2-3 ruled by the creature with the appearance of the Bull with emphasis on the "Seven Stars" (Revelation 2:1). There are seven stars on the shoulder of the constellation Taurus (the Bull).
2. The second quarter would be Chapters 4-7, ruled by the figure of "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah" (see Revelation 5:5).
3. The third quarter in Chapters 8-14 would be ruled by the Eagle, who flies between earth and heaven with cries of woe throughout the third quarter.
4. And finally, the fourth quarter in Chapters 15-22, which is ruled by the Man, the sign of Aquarius in the zodiac symbols of the "Water-Pourer."

In this last quadrant, we see the pouring out of the Chalices of Wrath and also the River of Life flowing out from the New Jerusalem, which is ruled by the Son of Man in all His glory. Perhaps this interesting connection is more than coincidence.

Sacred Scripture tells us that the constellations were created to manifest God's glory (Psalm 19:1-6). They are not random groups of balls of gas but are instead part of God's divine plan and are precisely placed where there are by God Himself (Job 9:7-9; 26:13-18; 38:31-33; Amos 5:8). Even the arrangement of the twelve tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Numbers Chapter 2 and handout 4) corresponded to the order of the zodiac (3 tribes on each of 4 sides of the rectangular Tabernacle forming a cross pattern). And what is more amazing in this connection, like the Four Living Creatures, four of the tribes represented the middle signs of each quarter: The tribe of Judah was the Lion, the tribe of Reuben the Man, the tribe of Ephraim the Bull, and Dan the Eagle. Is it possible that God wrote the whole plan of Salvation History for us in the constellations of the heavens from the Virgin (Virgo) to the Lion of Judah/ Christ (Leo)?

If you begin with the Virgo and go around the Zodiac chart, you will end with Leo (see the zodiac images at the end of the document).

Scripture supports this connection to the stars when Joseph, in Genesis 37:9, has a dream which compares his father Jacob, his mother, and his brothers to the sun, moon, and stars. Celestial bodies are frequently referred to in Scripture as God's heavenly army (Deuteronomy 4:19), while the armies of Israel are His earthly army (Josh. 5:14 and throughout the Book of Numbers). Lastly, the birth of the Messiah Himself was written in the heavens by the hand of God. It was the Star of Bethlehem, read by the Chaldean Magi, that brought the first Gentiles to the Christ Child (Matthew 2:2) as prophesied in the star prophecy in Numbers 24:17 and Isaiah's prophecy in 60:1-3.

There is a possibility that God wrote His plan of salvation in the constellations through which the sun passes. The constellation of Virgo, the Virgin, holds in her hands two objects: a sheaf of wheat in one hand and a broken branch in the other. Can this be a connection to Jesus the bread of life and His messianic title of "The Branch?" The ancients knew that there were more constellations than those that made up the path of the sun, but they didn't know of all the constellations that we have identified today. It is interesting, in terms of the symbolism of numbers in Scripture, that the total number of constellations identified in our solar system is 88 constellations; in the symbolic significance of numbers in Scripture, 8 is the number of salvation, redemption, and rebirth (see in the document "The Significance of Numbers in Scripture" see, <https://www.agapebiblestudy.com/documents/The%20Significance%20of%20Numbers%20in%20Scripture.htm>)

There are other possible connections between the constellations of the zodiac and the redeeming work of Jesus, the Redeemer Messiah:

1. The Ram (a male lamb): Jesus is the Lamb of God, which was foreshadowed by the sacrificial male lamb of the Passover.
2. The Bull: One of the four Living Creatures John saw in Revelation and in the sacrificial system of the Sinai Covenant, a bull was the sacrifice of a priest or a king; the Messiah was prophesized to come as prophet, priest, and king.
3. The Twins: Jesus was both fully human and divine.
4. The Crab: corruption of the "everlasting rest" and the promise of our salvation (this constellation contains the polar star = the star that points the way). The transition to the symbol of the crab seems to have come from the Romans. The word for "rest" or "circle" in Latin is very similar to the word for crab.
5. The Lion: One of the four Living Creatures in Rev. 4:7; the Messiah is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Gen 49:8; Rev.5:5).
6. The Virgin: This constellation points to Mary and the Virgin birth. The other constellations in conjunction with Virgo are a branch and a sheave of wheat each held in the Virgin's outstretched hands. Jesus is "the Living Bread come down from heaven"; "house of bread," *beth lehem*, is the name of the village where Jesus was born = Bethlehem. He is also "the Branch" = His messianic title, in Hebrew the word *netzer*, which many scholars believe is the root of the name of the city where Mary and Joseph raised Jesus, Nazareth.

7. The Scales: The Hebrew name is *Mozanaim*, the scales, weighing. The Arabic name, from Aramaic (the language at the time Jesus lived) is *Al Zubena* = purchased or redeemed. The meaning could be that man has been judged and found to be condemned by his sins, but Christ has paid the price and has redeemed man through His sacrifice.
8. The Eagle (scorpion) One of the four Living Creatures? In nature, the eagle is the enemy of the scorpion. In the minor constellations that make up the major constellation of Scorpio, there is the form a gigantic scorpion endeavoring to sting the heel of a mighty man who crushes the scorpion with his foot placed directly on it. The Hebrew name is *akrab* which means “conflict or war,” and may be a direct reference to Genesis 3:15-18 where the seed of the serpent will strike the heel of the “seed of the woman”(Jesus is the seed of the woman, Mary) while the “seed of the woman” will crush the servant. Satan attempted to defeat Christ by manipulating the Jewish priesthood to condemn Him and the Romans to crucify Him. But Jesus defeated Satan and crushed him in His resurrection.
9. The Archer: In Revelation 6:2, John saw *a white horse, and He that sat on him had a bow*. The Hebrew name is *kesith*, the Archer, but the ancient Akkadian name is *Nun-ki*, meaning “Prince of the Earth.” The arrow in the figure’s bow is aimed directly at the serpent of Scorpio. Could this mean that Christ, the Redeemer and prince of Heaven, will conquer the serpent?
10. The Goat: one of the five animals of sacrifice. On the Day of Atonement a goat would be sent into the wilderness, symbolically carrying away the sins of the people = Jesus died to take away the sins of the world.
11. The Man Water Carrier: Jesus is the bearer of the “living water” of baptism. One of the four Living Creatures in Rev 4:7 had the face of the man.
12. The Fishes: Jesus’ miracle of the loaves and the fishes that symbolized the multiplication of His abundant grace. He will establish Peter and the Apostles as the “fishers of men” (Lk 5:10). A fish was an early Christian symbol. In Hebrew this sign meant “a great multitude.” The symbolism could then refer to the multitudes who will enjoy the blessings of the Redeemer’s gift of salvation, but more specifically, the means through which He offers the gift: the Church. Scholars agree that this sign always had been interpreted as being of Israel, the Old Covenant Church. It is interesting that there are two fishes symbolized in the constellation, one arranged horizontally and the other perpendicular. There is also a band uniting the two fishes, and the perpendicular fish is above the first and points to the polar star. Could it be that the horizontal fish is Old Covenant Israel while the perpendicular fish is the New Covenant Israel (the Catholic Church) rising above the Old Covenant Church and pointing the way to salvation?

There or may not be a connection between the Zodiac constellations and God’s divine plan for the Advent of the Messiah, but it is an interesting puzzle. It has always been my theory that there is a connection between Egyptian Sphinx and the zodiac in the head of “the Woman” (instead of a man, there is no beard as on other sphinx statues) and the body of “the Lion.” If one begins the zodiac circle with Virgo and moves clockwise around the zodiac circle as in most zodiac images, the last symbol is Leo, the Lion. However, in most Jewish zodiacs and in John’s vision of the Four Living Creatures that correspond to the zodiac signs, the movement is counterclockwise.



Every ancient culture from the Sumerians to the Egyptians to the Chinese to the Greeks and Romans had zodiac symbols. Archaeologists have discovered zodiac images on mosaic floors of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (and later) Jewish Synagogues with the best images (in a counterclockwise pattern) on the floors of ancient Synagogues at Sepphoris, Beth Shean, Hammath Tiberias, and Beth Alpha. Whether there is a link between the signs of the zodiac and the Book of Revelation is still open to debate.

Endnote:

1. The Chinese signs, with the exception of the ox or bull, are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon snake, horse, sheep, monkey, foster, dog, and pig.

Additional notes: Psalms 19:11-2 “*The heavens declare the glory of God, the vault of heaven proclaims His handiwork, day discourses of it to day, night to night hands on the knowledge*”. God created the stars and planets and they manifest His glory. They are not randomly placed in the heavens but have been specifically placed with plan and purpose. Job 5:8 “*It is He who makes the Pleiades and Orion....*” Pleiades is the string of 7 stars on the shoulder of Taurus. Job 5:7-9 “*The sun, at His command, forbears to rise, and on the stars He set a seal. He and no other has stretched out the heavens and trampled on the back of the Sea. He has made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the Mansions of the South.*” The Jewish historian, Josephus, writes about the traditions of the Jews in his book, Antiquities of the Jews. He tells us that “*God gave the antediluvians such long life that they might perfect those things which they had invented in astronomy,*” and he corroborated his reference to eight ancient Gentile authorities, whose works no longer exist. Josephus also asserts that the study of the stars originated in the family of Seth, son of Adam, and that it was Abraham (20 generations later) who introduced the patterns of the constellations of the zodiac to the Egyptians.

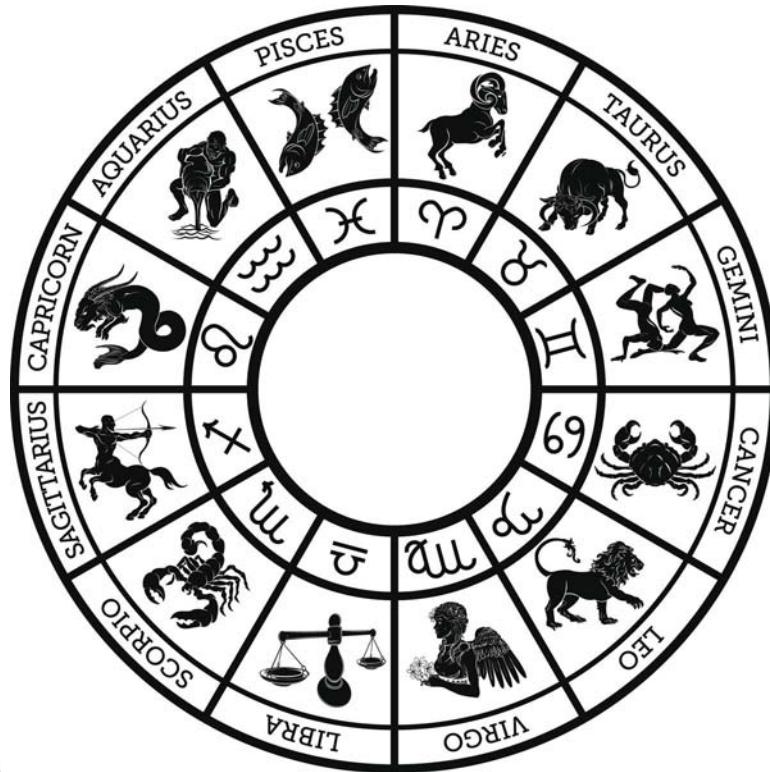
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Resources:

1. Richard Hinckley Allen, *Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning*, New York: Dover Publishers, 1899, edition 1963.
  2. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, Dominion Press, Tyler, Texas, 1987, pages 33 n., 379, 158-60, 300-303, 379.
  3. Avi Ben Mordechai, *Signs in the Heavens*, Miller Freeman Publisher, 1996.
  4. Ernest L. Martin, *The Birth of Christ Recalculated*, Pasadena, CA: Foundation for Biblical Research, second edition, 1980
- Joseph A. Seiss, *The Gospel in the Stars*, Grand Rapids, Kregel Publishers, 1972.

Zodiac images:



In the oldest images, an eagle replaces the scorpion.

Notice in this representation that the image of the man (water pourer) is opposite from the image of the lion, and the image of the bull is across from the scorpion/eagle, dividing the zodiac circle into four parts. These are the Four Living Creatures John named in counterclockwise order as the faces of a lion, a bull, a human, and an eagle (Rev 4:5).

Below, see a zodiac image discovered in the winter of 1928-29 at the ruins of the Synagogue of Beth Alpha in the Jezreel Valley, south of the Lower Galilee region of Israel. This third century AD image, influenced by pagan zodiac forms, has a scorpion instead of an eagle, and the center shows the image of the pagan sun-god Helios. Notice that instead of progressing from Virgo around the zodiac to Leo clockwise (see the images on the chart above), this chart shows the progression counterclockwise like John's vision of the Four Living Creatures with faces like a lion, a bull, a man, and an eagle.

See below:



# Encampment of the Tribes

