

**Chapter 8
Part I**



**A Radical New Christian Worldview
- World Sociology -**

The book of Revelation has long been one of the most puzzling and enigmatic documents of the Christian church. It is filled with metamorphic icons which appear to blend world reality with fanciful surrealistic images of otherworldly content.

The working hypothesis of ChristianText is that it grounds the Revelation in world reality, the underlying operating structure of the document, and then proceeds to address the otherworldly imagery it contains as a series of meaningful encoded symbolic representations which, when decoded unlock historic messages, period by period.

Revelation Chapters 4 & 5

- The Court Tribunal -

The Executive Review of World History

"After this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this.' (Revelation 4:1 RSV)

The assertion is that the executive tribunal depicted in Revelation Chapters 4 & 5 was to convene sometime after the writing of the Revelation.

"At once I was in the Spirit, and lo, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne!" (Revelation 4:2 RSV)

According to the text, the writer of Revelation is transported forward in time by the Spirit to the occasion of this executive tribunal and is shown the proceedings of the celestial convention--to the human experience, this is evidence of transcendence, as either the writer exhibits madness, or a Divine transcendent presence and message logic is manifest--the experience and the material that follows is other-worldly. The result is a recognized Christian document that has withstood the test of

time, a document that has been included in the sacred Canon. It is a book championed by such figures as early church leader Athanasius (296/298-373 A.D.).

Graphic details of the components of the celestial tribunal and attribute descriptions continue:¹

"And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald. Round the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clad in white garments, with golden crowns upon their heads. From the throne issued flashes of lightning, and voices and peals of thunder, and before the throne burn seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God; and before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass, like crystal." (Revelation 4:3-6 RSV)

"And round the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind; the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!'" (Revelation 4:6-8 RSV)

"And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, 'Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created.'" (Revelation 4:6-11 RSV)

It is clear from the tenure of the text that this convocation is concerned with the justification and allocation

of 'glory, honor and power' to the Most High--and that in a public and open setting of the transcendent universe for all to witness, to approve, to challenge or contradict. It was to be a full audit review of the acts of the Godhead--a review of God's dealings with mankind.

The description of the tribunal contained in the Revelation just cited is juxtaposed with the conclusions of humanistic philosophy and scientific analysis of Western civilization concerning the basic nature of the universe--it contradicts and simultaneously transcends man's collective view of the world. It challenges the concept of relativism which does not recognize anything as definitive and relates everything to individual ego and desires. It is this distinction that makes the record uniquely Christian.

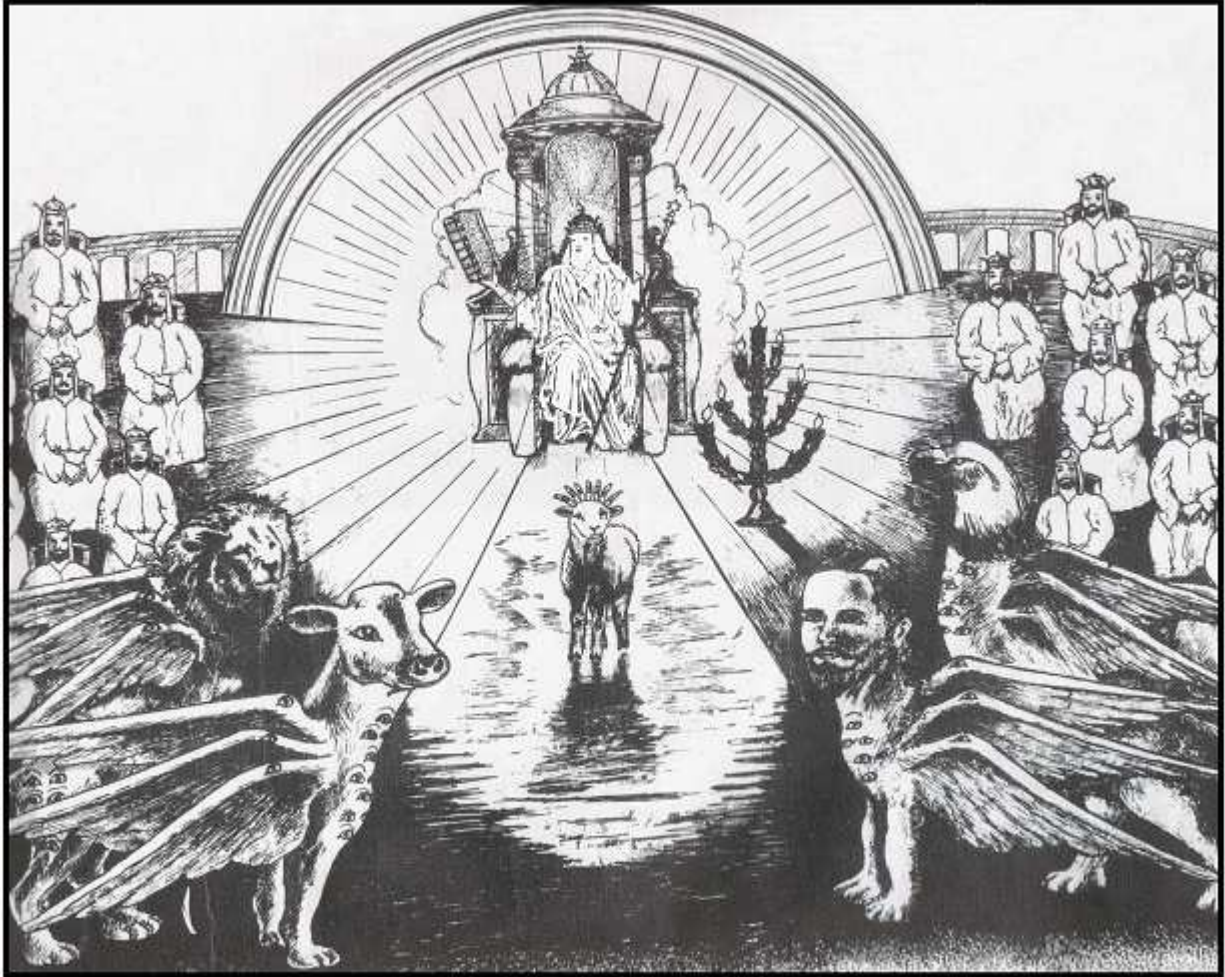
Attempted Graphic Representation of Revelation's Images

A Christian document as universal as is the Revelation has been the subject of years of speculation--and myriad attempts have been made by artists and near artists to create a likeness of the tribunal elements portrayed. But all efforts to capture a visual likeness of that which is clearly a description of a dynamic transcendent event are, of necessity, works of reductionist time-slice limitation and are often inaccurate. Nevertheless, some representations are helpful in aiding a mental visualization of the materials. The image on the following page attempts to capture part of the tribunal's central figures and is such an image. This static stylized graphic image dates circa 1930s and is partly accurate per the description. Note the lamp stand with seven burning lamps--an example of near accuracy in graphic portrayal of the tribunal's setting. The portrayal is nearly accurate in that the text only specifies 'seven torches of fire' (Revelation 4:5 RSV)--the lamp stand is an imaginary addition. No location is specified for the 'seven torches of fire', other than that they are 'burning' before the throne.

The reference to 'torches of fire,' as translated in the Revised Standard Version, further illustrates the accurate image representational issue. The Greek source text for Revelation 4:5 reads:

ἑπτὰ	λαμπάδες	πυρὸς	καιόμεναι
seven	lamps	of fire	burning

The Greek word (λαμπάδες - lampades) is the noun, nominative, feminine, plural, common form of the word which can be variously translated as lamp, torch, or lantern. Thus seven 'lamps, torches, or lanterns' of fire burning before the throne.



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are shown
as a sample of this
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