

# The Living Creatures and the Bow

*"The four living creatures rest not day and night, saying,  
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was,  
and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:8).*

## EZEKIEL CHAPTER ONE

The two deepest and most beautiful symbols of the Scriptures are the Cherubim and the Rainbow – God-Manifestation and the Everlasting Covenant. Both appear in the first chapter of Ezekiel. The Rainbow occurs three times only in the whole Bible: Genesis, here, and in Revelation. The Cherubim are mentioned many times, from Genesis to Revelation, but this first chapter of Ezekiel is by far the fullest and most detailed reference.

We must have a clear picture of the eternal purpose of God as revealed in the plain and literal portions of Scripture to understand these symbols and to appreciate and enjoy their deep beauties and lessons. Viewed in the light of the Yahweh-Name and the Gospel of the Kingdom, these symbols fall marvelously into place.

God-Manifestation – the Yahweh-Elohim Name – "*He who shall be Mighty Ones*" – is the true and beautiful Bible picture of which the Trinity is the confused and ugly counterpart. The Trinity is an attempt by Greek philosophers to define the relationship of Christ to God. The Cherubim and the Multitudinous Son of Man symbols are the BIBLE representation of that relationship, and of the Eternal purpose of God with mankind.

God's purpose is to manifest Himself through a multitude of redeemed, perfected, immortalized and glorified men and women whose Head is Christ, and this community is symbolized by the Cherubim. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, calls this community the "*Cherubim of Glory*" – the vehicle and medium of the manifestation of God's glory, and the instrumentality by which the earth will be filled with that glory.

The Cherubim are the ruling powers of the Age to Come: the four-square Camp of Spiritual Israel. Ezekiel 1, like Revelation 4, portrays the Messiah of Israel in glory upon his throne, surrounded by his saints, and all energized and made glorious by the Spirit of God.

The opening visions of Ezekiel and Revelation are very similar. Both Ezekiel and John were captives and exiles. In both visions appear the throne, the One sitting on it, the brightness, lightning, Rainbow, fire, lamps, crystal, voice, four living Creatures full of eyes: man, lion, ox and eagle, feet of burnished brass. Both had wings (but John's, like Isaiah's, had six: Ezekiel's had four). Both prophet and apostle fell on their faces, a symbol of death and resurrection.

Ezekiel's prophecy opens with "*visions of God*" (E1). It ends with the magnificent Millennial Temple of the Age to Come, the center of world worship. Its closing verse names the new world capital of Jerusalem, Yahweh-Shammah, "**THE LORD IS THERE.**"

Chapter 1 is clearly the beginning of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry. He prophesied for twenty years, from the fifth to the twenty fifth of the captivity (chapters 1 and 4).

*"Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year" (v. 1).*

The thirtieth year of what? It would seem most probable that it was the thirtieth year of his life. Christ and John began their ministries at thirty, and Ezekiel, the "**Son of Man**" of the Old Testament, was typical of both. His last vision, that of the Millennial Temple, would then be in his fiftieth year. This was the period of priestly service, thirty to fifty, and Ezekiel was of the Priesthood. It would be very fitting, too, that he had the vision of the new Millennial Temple at the end of his period of Mosaic service.

Isaiah 6 is similar. This depicts the beginning of Isaiah's ministry. He sees the Seraphim, or "*Burning Ones*," (a variant symbol of the Cherubim multitude), who sing "*Holy, Holy, Holy*," as do the Cherubim or four Living Creatures in Revelation 4. John applies this vision to Christ when he says (12:41) that Isaiah – "*Saw his glory, and spake of him.*"

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*"In the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity" (v. 2).*

This was, of course, the fifth year of Zedekiah's reign, the year after Jeremiah wrote to the captives in Babylon to build houses, for the captivity would be long. Ezekiel prophesied at a time when the Temple, the City, and the Nation were to be destroyed. He was the one to make the announcement to the wicked house of David –

*"Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, till he come whose right it is" (21:26-27).*

Ezekiel prophesied in a time of trouble and captivity and darkness and fear. God's Kingdom was being eclipsed and scattered and possessed by the heathen. The long 2,520 year Gentile night of "seven times" was beginning.

But shining above and through all is the eternal reality—the glorious, divine, eternal, unfailing purpose—

*"As surely as I live, all the earth SHALL be filled with My glory!" (Num. 14:21)*

—and all who are steadfast and faithful in present, passing adversity will share the glories of that endless day. The Cherubim are the instruments and the result of filling the earth with God's glory. All the divine purpose with man is compressed into this chapter, but its principal aspect is the final phase—the latter days—the establishment of the Kingdom (v. 9)—

*"They turned not as they went: they went every one straight forward."*

And finally, at the end of the chapter, they stood still, and let down their wings and the glory of the Lord appears encircled by the Covenant Rainbow, signifying that the storm of conflict is over and, as Zechariah shows in a different symbol of the same time (1:11)—

*"All the earth is quiet, and is at rest."*

The Cherubim have a warlike aspect: they are a "host" or an army. They manifest thunder and lightning. From them the avenging angel gets coals to scatter on Jerusalem for its destruction. In the Revelation they direct angelic judgments on Babylon and the nations.

The Cherubim are the conflict between good and evil: they are the victory and glorification of good. This is a ceaseless, deadly conflict, from the Garden of Eden to the Paradise of God, and in our every act, word and thought, we are on one side or the other.

The world's man-oriented religions fail to realize that God MUST be justified and vindicated, and evil MUST be punished and destroyed, before good can be enthroned and the nations blessed. Many prophets and apostles speak of the coming of Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom as a time of worldwide judgment and display of divine power and wrath—

*"Behold what desolations He hath made in the earth!" (Psa. 46:8)*

*"To execute vengeance on the nations, and punishment on the people" (Psa. 149:7).*

*"When thy judgments are in the earth, THEN will the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).*

*"By fire and sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isa. 66:16).*

*"The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other" (Jer. 25:33).*

*"The Beast was slain, and his body given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11).*

*"A time of trouble such as never was" (Dan. 12:1).*

*"Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals: He drove asunder the nations: He threshed the nations in anger" (Hab. 3:5-6, 12).*

*"I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight" (Zech. 14:2-3).*

*"The Lord shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God" (2Thess. 1:7-8).*

*"In righteousness he doth make war, and smite the nations: he treadeth the winepress of the wrath of God" (Rev. 19:11, 15).*

But the fiery, flashing, irresistible Cherubim symbol is not just war and destruction. That is but a minor, necessary, preliminary aspect of their glory. They are God manifest in the flesh: God's eternal, joyful family.

The broad picture is clear and beautiful, though many details are very difficult to fathom. This is as we would expect and desire: the basis clear, but always more depths to plumb and explore. The Cherubim represent the glorified saints, doing God's will and worshipping Him. They are Yahweh Elohim—God manifest in the flesh—partakers of the divine nature.

How do we know they represent the redeemed? It is clear in many ways: they are connected with man, their general form is human, they share Christ's throne, they are holy, they are glorious, they worship and serve God, God inhabits—or dwells in—them, their faces connect them with the camp of Israel, their principal characteristic is life, their voice is both the voice of God and the voice of a multitude.

But perhaps the clearest indication of their identity is when they sing to Christ (Rev. 5:9) –

*“Thou hast redeemed us out of every nation, and hast made us kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth.”*

The Cherubim symbolize mankind in perfection: fullness of life, holiness, glory, unity, worship, service, knowledge, un-changeableness and power.

Whenever the Cherubim occur – usually in times of great change and tribulation for the people of God – they are symbols of hope and promise and future glory for faithful men. They proclaim the Everlasting Covenant (Rev. 21:3) –

*“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”*

The Cherubim occur in the Garden of Eden, the Mosaic Tabernacle, the Psalms, Solomon’s Temple, Isaiah, Ezekiel’s visions and Temple, and in Revelation.

They always appear in the nearest relationship to God: in the Garden of Eden, excluding natural man; in the Most Holy, where men could not enter; in Isaiah and Ezekiel they execute the judgments of God. God rides on them and dwells in them. In Revelation 4, they are about the throne and also in the MIDST of the throne.

Christ is the Mercy Seat: the solid gold cover-lid of the Ark of the Covenant. The Cherubim, standing upon the foundations of the Mercy Seat, are solid gold also, and of one piece with him.

They are IN the Most Holy; they have access thereto by sacrifice and prayer and unity with Christ, and in their future solid gold state they will be there with him forever.

*“And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man” (v. 5).*

– of One Man, THE Man. This is the basic key to their identity: they are the “*M a n o f O n e*” – the M u l t i t u d i n o u s M a n .

They are described in this their first mention by Ezekiel as “*LIVING Creatures.*” Their fundamental characteristic is LIFE (just as natural man’s fundamental characteristic is death).

And life not just as passive existence, but intense, endless, tireless activity and motion – never stopping, never resting. To our weak, mortal constitutions, even contemplation of this is tiring. This helps us to realize in a faint way the glories and joys of immortality. We are so used to mortality that we tend to project its frailties and limitations into the eternal future. In Ezekiel’s vision, the Cherubim are always in flashing, lightning-like motion, and in the Revelation they –

*“Rest not day and night” (4:8).*

– from rejoicing and worshipping God.

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The meaning of the word “*Cherubim*” is uncertain. Several meanings have been suggested. Actually in this chapter they are not spoken of as Cherubim, but in chapter 10 he speaks of them at length again, and says at the end of the chapter –

*“This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar, and I knew that they were the cherubim” (v. 20).*

The simplest and most fitting explanation of Cherubim (singular, Cherub, with a hard “ch” sound in the Hebrew) seems to be from Che-rab, “like the Head” (compare Mi-cha-el, “Who like God”). Certainly the basic idea of the Cherubim is likeness to the Head – no meaning could possibly be more fitting or significant.

And Rab, “Head,” means greatness, especially numerical greatness. It is translated “great” one hundred twenty-eight times, “many” one hundred ninety times, “multitude” seven times. They are a “*great multitude that no man can number.*”

This matter of likeness to the Head is indeed the very heart of the Truth. The Redeemed who form the Glorious Cherubim figure will be so constituted SOLELY on the basis of their LIKENESS to God and to Christ. Only such as have spent their lifetime endeavoring to develop this likeness will form part of the heavenly host. Those who have spent their energies on other things will not be there.

The Ark and the Cherubim were the heart and center of the whole Mosaic system. This was the only object in the Most Holy Place, and God’s glory as it dwelt in the midst of Israel was manifested “*between the Cherubim.*” The Mosaic Cherubim were of “*beaten gold.*” Gold is Faith, and beaten gold is tried, proved, adversity-tested Faith. In Exodus 25:20 we are told –

*“Their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall their faces be.”*

The Cherubim looked perpetually toward each other and toward the Mercy Seat. They looked nowhere else: their interest was nowhere else. Only such as do likewise will become part of them. In like manner, Ezekiel’s Cherubim “turned not” (1:12) –

*"They went every one straight forward: whither the Spirit was to go, they went."*

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Natural Israel never saw the glorious golden Cherubim: the veil was in the way—the *"veil of the flesh."* The priests who served in the Holy Place continually looked on representations of the Cherubim, for they were woven on the inner veil and the ten inner curtains.

The Mosaic Tabernacle represents the wilderness journey; the Solomon Temple represents the Millennial state. So we find the Cherubim more prominent and visible in Solomon's Temple. Representations of them are there found in the outward Appointments of the Temple, so they can be seen by all the worshippers and not just by the priest. The Cherubim multitude will in that day have been manifested to the world.

In addition to the two golden Cherubim on the Mercy Seat, Solomon's Most Holy Place had two great Cherubim fifteen to twenty feet high, of olive-wood covered with gold. These are the two glorified Olive-trees, or "Sons of Oil" — the golden Spirit-oil (Zech. 4:14). This makes four Cherubim in the Most Holy: the complete Cherubim number.

Likewise the outer doors of the Temple are four-fold: two double-doors, and on them Cherubim are represented. And again we find them portrayed on the ten lavers in the court.

The first item David prepared for the Temple was gold for the covering of the two giant olivewood Cherubim, and in the reference recording this (1 Chr. 28:18), the Cherubim are called the *"Chariot of the Cherubim"* — so-called because they are God's vehicle of war and majesty.

This connects them both with Zechariah's Chariots (6:1) and Ezekiel's four-square wheeled representation. In Zechariah 6, horses and chariots go forth from between two mountains of brass. They are called the *"four spirits of the heavens"* which subdue and quiet the earth. These four Chariots are the "Cherubim of glory" which constitute the "Chariot of Yahweh." Psalms 104:3 says —

*"He maketh the clouds His chariot."*

These are the Clouds of glory that accompany Christ: another symbol of the Redeemed. This was the symbolic Chariot of God-Manifestation that Elisha saw when Elijah was taken up. Habakkuk speaks (3:8) of God's wrath poured out on the sea—the great, churning, mire-and-dirt sea of nations—by God's "Chariots of salvation." In Exodus 25:22 God says —

*"There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from between the two cherubim."*

In 1 Sam. 4:4, God is spoken of as "dwelling between" the Cherubim, or, more correctly and meaningfully, as "inhabiting" the Cherubim. God "inhabits" the righteous. Jesus said of his faithful and obedient friends (John 14:23) —

*"We (God and Jesus) will come unto him, and make our abode with him."*

Paul told the Ephesian brethren (2:22) —

*"Ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."*

*"Ye are the Temple of God" (2 Cor. 6:16).*

—God's holy dwelling-place. The Cherubim were at the very center of the Tabernacle and Temple symbol: the dwelling and manifestation of God's glory. The basic significance of "Tabernacle" or "Temple" is the dwellingplace of God. The idea of a place of mediation or reconciliation is a secondary meaning — a means to an end. The end itself is DWELLING.

The Hebrew word for Tabernacle is *Mishkan*, meaning "dwelling place, residence, abiding place." It is related, in meaning, to *"Shekinah,"* the "indwelling" — the Hebrew name for the glory of God that rested on the Cherubim.

The Hebrew word for "Temple" has a similar meaning, but goes further in the sense of size, spaciousness and splendor. It is often translated "palace" — the dwellingplace of a King. Both the Tabernacle and the Temple are frequently spoken of in Scripture as the "house of God," using the general, basic word for "house."

We are told the Edenic Cherubim were "placed" at the east of the Garden. The word for "placed" is *shakan*, "caused to dwell" (from the same root word as *Mishkan* and *Shekinah*). The Edenic Cherubim represented a promise, not a punishment. Cain said (Gen. 4:14) —

*"Behold, thou hast driven me out this day . . . and from Thy face shall I be hid."*

The Edenic Cherubim were God's throne, presence, meeting-place, place of sacrifice and mercy.

*"And, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud."*

Ezekiel's "visions of God" came from the north (v. 4), and the first thing he sees is a whirlwind and a cloud. In chapter 38, Ezekiel speaks of Gog as "coming like a cloud" to cover the land, and Daniel speaks of the King of the North as "coming like a whirlwind."

This is the dark and troublous background of the vision. The cloud and whirlwind from the north were the judgments of God embodied in the Northern invader both of that day and of the latter-days, but they were judgments heralding and leading up to a manifestation of deliverance and glory.

The Northern invader, for all his power and pride, is but an incidental aspect of the glorious and unfailing divine purpose of self-manifestation. The major, permanent aspect is the coming of Christ in the glory of his Father, with his saints and this we MUST see in every step of the development of Russia's position and power.

Russia is nothing in the picture: a mere blind instrument; a mere brief and passing phase. The more bitter and evil and threatening Russia gets against Israel, the closer the end is.

It is out of this whirlwind of judgment that the glory of the Cherubim, and the Everlasting Rainbow, and the Eternal Throne, appear. And so it will be when the latter-day Assyrian comes in fury against God's land.

And out of the cloud a —

*"... fire infolding itself..." (v. 4).*

—or revolving with flashing brilliance —

*"And out of the midst thereof as the color of amber" (v. 4).*

This is not amber as we know it: all authorities agree upon that. What it is, is not positively known, but most agree that it is electrum—a mixture of gold and silver, which was much used and highly prized in ancient times, and which has greater brilliance and beauty than either gold or silver alone. The Hebrew word is "chashmal," of which a Bible dictionary says —

"Supposed by Gesenius and most to be a brilliant amalgam of gold and silver."

And International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says —

"Thothmes III is represented as standing in his chariot of electrum."

This is very fitting. Gold and silver combined are more glorious than either alone. A refined golden Faith, tried and perfected in the fire, is very glorious. But it is not glorious enough for salvation. It must be combined with silver, for silver is Ransom and Redemption.

Silver is the original word wherever we read "money" in the Old Testament. Literally translated, therefore, we have —

*"The atonement silver" (Ex. 30:16).*

*"The redemption silver" (Num. 3:49).*

*"The trespass silver, the sin silver" (2 Kgs. 12:16).*

Every male Israelite gave Moses a shekel of silver as a ransom for his life, and this silver was made into the foundation sockets of the Tabernacle. The brilliant electrum glory of the Cherubim was a combination of Christ's atonement and men's faith.

Why four Cherubim? It would seem primarily because the Cherubim are a dwellingplace and a vehicle, both of which typically have four sides. The plan of the Camp of Israel, God's abiding place on earth, naturally formed a square; the Cherubim are an encampment, an Israelitish encampment. Four-square is a feature of many aspects of both the Tabernacle and Temple. Four denotes universal dominion: the four winds, the four corners of the earth.

Four-square is perfection and completion of the *plan*. The Holy City goes a step farther: the length and the breadth *and the height* were equal — a perfect cube. This was the shape of the Most Holy Place: perfection and completion of *building*.

*"As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (v. 28).*

*"And their feet were straight feet" (v. 7).*

"Straight" is "jasher." This Hebrew word is never applied to shape but always moral condition. It is almost always translated "right" or "upright."

*"Like a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass" (v. 7).*

Brass represents the flesh, and burnished (or refined) brass is purified flesh. These calves' feet are hooves of judgment, a symbol of the Jews, God's appointed weapon of war in the last days (Mic. 4:13) —

*"Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion: I will make thy hoofs brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people."*

Malachi uses the same symbol (4:2-3) and John's multitudinous "Man of One" has burnished brass feet (Rev. 1:15).

*"And they had the hands of a man under their wings" (v. 8).*

Here is the human agency: man's place in the divine purpose – the human hands UNDER the Spirit wings.

*"As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle" (v. 10).*

These are the heads of the four divisions of animate creation: man over all; lion, wild beasts; ox, domestic animals; eagle, birds. These, too, were the four standards of Israel's camp. Israel was God's son –

*"Israel is My son" . . . "Out of Egypt I called My son."*

It seems strange that we are not told in Scripture that the four standards of Israel's camp were the same as the four faces of the Cherubim. We have to glean this important link from Josephus who is notoriously inaccurate and undependable. But in this case it seems strongly confirmed in these ways –

1. It fits the picture exactly: just what we would have to assume if not told.

2. The arrangement is identical, viewed looking north, as Ezekiel was –

LION	–	Judah	–	right	–	East
MAN	–	Reuben	–	front	–	South
OX	–	Ephraim	–	left	–	West
EAGLE	–	Dan	–	back	–	North

3. Judah is elsewhere identified by the lion, and Ephraim by the ox. These are the two principal tribes or encampments.

In this use of the Israelitish encampment as the natural basis of the spiritual Cherubim symbol, we have emphasized the Jewish foundation of the Way of Life –

*"Salvation is of the Jews" (Jn. 4:22).*

*"Though I make a full end of all nations, yet will I not make a full end of thee" (Jer. 30:11).*

*"The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Isa. 60:12).*

These four faces or aspects of the Cherubim symbol of God Manifestation primarily refer to Christ – the phases of his work and character –

MAN: He was THE MAN; the one and only true Man; the "Man made strong"; the "Man of God's right hand." To him in its fullness Paul (in Heb. 2) applies Psalm 8 –

*"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (v. 6)*

*"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thine hands" (v. 7).*

LION: On the right side; majesty and dominion; the Lion of the tribe of Judah; the side of honor.

OX: On the left side; labor, service, sacrifice. The left side is rejection: as a servant and a sacrifice, Jesus was rejected (Isa. 53). But (Psa. 110:2) his people shall be willing in the day of his power: the day of lion-majesty.

EAGLE: The back: not seen from the front; the last face, contrasted with the first (man), as the lion on the right side is contrasted with the ox on the left: first the natural, then the spiritual. The eagle is the symbol of the endless youth and strength and freedom of the Spirit-body –

*"They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary" (Isa. 40:31).*

*"Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psa. 103:5).*

The eagle, too, is a symbol of God's Spirit-care for his children –

*"I bare you on eagles' wings" (Ex. 19:4).*

*"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young . . . so the LORD alone did lead him" (Deut. 32:11-12).*

These four Cherubim faces, in the order that they appear in Rev. 4:7, fit very beautifully into the pattern of the four gospels, as emphasizing the respective phases of Christ's mission –

MATTHEW: The lion, the King of Israel, addressed to Israel, tracing the line from Abraham and David.

MARK: The ox; the servant; the gospel of work and activity, no genealogy.

LUKE: The man, tracing the line from Adam; addressed to mankind.

JOHN: The eagle; the spiritual presentation, the spiritual discourses; again, as fitting, no genealogy.

*"And every one had four wings" (v. 6).*

We are told several things about their wings: – Each had four; two covered their bodies; two were spread upward and joined the wings of other Cherubim; the noise of their wings was like the noise of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, the noise of a host; when they stood, they let down their wings.

Wings represent the spiritual aspect (as the eagle does), and they symbolize four things; overshadowing, dominion, exaltation, and swift, free movement.

OVERSHADOWING AND CARE –

*“Under whose wings thou art come to trust”  
(Ruth 2:12).*

DOMINION – The word for “wing” is also translated “uttermost part,” “end (of earth).” The Cherubim have four wings – universal dominion.

EXALTATION –

*“They shall mount up with wings as eagles”  
(Isa. 40:31).*

The Cherubim were joined together into one by the union of their wings above them; that is, they were spiritually united, and this was the basis of their unity.

Two wings covered their bodies, and two were spread abroad: the necessary inner and outer aspects – inward covering, spirituality, holiness, perfection; outward glory, overshadowing and dominion.

*“Whither the spirit was to go, they went” (v. 12).*

They were wholly and exclusively the Spirit’s instruments, vehicles of divine power. They were in complete unity and harmony with God. There was nothing about them contrary to or disharmonious with God.

*“They went every one straight forward: they turned not when they went” (v. 12).*

There was no deviation nor wavering. And they were irresistible: they could not be stopped, diverted, or delayed.

*“Their appearance was like burning coals of fire” (v. 13).*

“Coals of fire” are to purge and cleanse and purify (Isa. 6:6-7). Fire is judgment and destruction, but “coals of fire” carry the idea of controlled, purposeful, constructive and ultimately beneficial burning. “Coals of fire,” as in the natural, represent fire under control and put to a good use.

*“And like the appearance of lamps” (v. 13).*

These are the seven Spirits of God, as we see in a parallel passage (Rev. 4:5) –

*“And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”*

While coals of fire indicate judgment, lamps indicate guidance and illumination and instruction. These are the twin and inseparable duties of the Living Creatures in the Age to Come: they must discipline men and guide them in the Way of God.

*“It went up and down among the living creatures.”*

We are immediately reminded of the angels of God going up and down upon the Christ-ladder that Jacob saw (Gen. 28:12; Jn. 1:51). Here is communication between heaven and earth, another aspect of the work of the Living Creatures. The Cherubim are the Zadok priesthood, the communication and mediation between God and man. The Spirit of God is in constant living motion among and within them – continuous direction and guidance and energizing.

*“The living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning” (v. 14).*

Lightning is brilliance and power and rapidity of motion: undeviating, irresistible. Lightning, the most stupendous and awesome of all the manifestations of the powers of nature, travels at the speed of light and electricity: 186,000 miles per second – the maximum speed in the universe.

Electricity is the most elementary form of the manifestations of the Spirit of God. All matter and all energy are forms of electricity. This – in striking confirmation of the Scriptures – is one of the most significant and stupendous facts that man in his little scratchings of nature, has stumbled upon.

The atom bomb is the result of disturbing the electrical composition of the basic elements. A simple handful of common dust is in reality a vast storehouse of locked-in and incalculable power. In light, and lightning, and electricity, we are on the borders of the Spirit-world.

*“Behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures” (v.15).*

In this context, what is the wheel symbol? – the “rolling, whirling thing” – as the word means, “so great they were dreadful” (v. 18)? This is perhaps the strangest and most difficult part of the picture. The wheel, the circle, is a symbol of perfection, endlessness, eternity, and it is also the CHARIOT aspect – the “Chariot of the Cherubim” (1 Chr. 28:18), God’s chariot of royalty, God’s chariot of war – that in which and with which He crushes and threshes His enemies.

Daniel 7:9 records of the Ancient of Days (and here again we are in the same time and events as the Cherubim portray) –

*“His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.”*

A forward movement in the accomplishment of purpose: especially judicial and administrative purpose. In the same context in Daniel we have the thrones cast down and the four Beasts—the nations of the earth—judged.

There are two words in Hebrew for wheel: “*ophan*,” meaning “circle”; and “*galgal*,” meaning “roll.” (The word for “roll of a book” is from the same root as this latter). Both words are used by Ezekiel for “wheel,” and apparently interchangeably, though there must be a significance in the difference of use. Both are used in Eze. 10:13 —

*“As for the wheels (ophan-circles), it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel! (galgal— Roll on!).”*

Wheels indicate going forward, progression, unfolding, movement, mobility. The laver of the Tabernacle was singular and stationary; but the lavers of the Temple were ten-fold, and had wheels. The former was for the cleansing of Israel alone, the latter symbolized the going forth of the Gospel of purification to all the world in the Age to Come.

To “*bring the wheel over*” someone is to crush and subdue them, as the millennial promise in Proverbs 20:26 —

*“A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.”*

This is the wheel of threshing, as in Isaiah 28:27-28 (where again we find both words for wheel used.)

But “wheel” in this vision symbolize much more than rolling and motion. The Cherubim fly, the wheels are lifted up with them, and they whirl even when the Cherubim are standing still. The Spirit of life is in the wheels, and the wheels are full of eyes.

There is something that adds great power and fittingness to the wheel symbol of the Spirit, that has only become known in our own day. Man, in his little scratchings on the surface of the limitless depths of the glories of creation, has discovered that all creation is made up of wheels; that all the infinite varieties of Creation—from the rose to the hippopotamus, from the ant to the glorious sun—are simply varieties of the arrangement of wheels within wheels: atoms, neutrons, protons, electrons, etc.—an inconceivable variety of arrangement of a few simple basic things.

And these in turn break down to one basic thing—electricity. And the life and power of all these “wheels within wheels” is the Spirit of God. Each infinitesimal atom is a tremendous concentration of pure divine power, so that a handful of dust could easily send a rocket to the moon. Every atom is a miniature universe, whirling at astronomical speeds.

*“The noise of their wings was like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host” (v. 24).*

The same symbol of the roar of mighty rushing waters as the noise of an invincible host occurs throughout Revelation —

*“I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, as the voice of mighty thunders” (19:6).*

*“When they stood, they let down their wings” (v. 24).*

Then, when the Cherubim have completed their work of subduing the earth, and have let down their wings, vs. 25-28 give us the final vision of the chapter: the Voice, the Throne, the Man, and finally, the Bow in the cloud.

The Rainbow is the Everlasting Covenant of God to man. There are two essentials for a rainbow: water and the sun. Water is life. The cycle of water is the cycle of life for the earth: drawn up by the sun, formed into clouds, poured down on the earth in rain, running into rivers, then down to the sea, and then up again into the clouds to begin its joyful and beneficent cycle over and over again.

Water—joyful, flowing, cascading, glistening, living water—is the dominant aspect of Ezekiel’s Millennial Temple. Water is everywhere around. Water flows in abundant profusion from its central and holiest point, the up-raised Altar on the top of the mount. It cascades down the slopes and pours forth out of every entrance. Without water, the beauty of the Temple would be but the beauty of a tomb: bare dead stone, and bare dead sand.

The Rainbow reveals the whole range of colors that make up light. The Covenant Rainbow is spoken of as emerald green in the Revelation (4:3). Green is the central color of the natural rainbow. The word for “green” in Hebrew means moist, fruitful, flourishing, LIFE.

With it, the whole Temple swarms with life and greenness. The vast and beautiful masonry of the Temple structure is but the underlying form and foundation of a great flourishing canopy of lush and



verdant flowering greenery that transforms it into one huge and glorious arbor of most delightful shade and atmosphere and perfume.

Here, indeed is the *HOLY CITY*—not a “city” as the horrible, crime-laden, corruption-filled, rat-infested ant hills of man’s creation have given us a picture, but a true, beautiful divine polity —

*“The wood of life in the midst of the paradise of the Deity” (Rev. 2:7).*

The Rainbow manifests to us all colors. Color is prominent in the symbols of Scripture; red, purple, blue, green, and the yellow-gold of faith. Where does color come from? What is color? Why do we see red, purple, green, etc.?

THE COLOR IS IN THE LIGHT. Light contains all color. Objects of themselves have no color. They just have the capacity to reflect color that shines upon them. In the dark they are all the same. They are all NOTHING.

There is a great lesson here. In our natural darkness we are all the same—all nothing. There is no royal purple, no spiritual heavenly healing blue, no fruitful, verdant, living green, no yellow-gold of faith. In any active, meaningful accountable sense, there is even no red of sin for (Rom. 4:15) —

*“Where there is no law, there is no transgression.”*

*“The times of this ignorance God winked at.”*

*“Man that is in honor and understandeth not is like the beasts that perish” (Psa. 49:12).*

There is just the solid black darkness of death. Black is the absence of all color, as white is all colors combined. Let us always remember that —

THE COLOR IS IN THE LIGHT.

We must come to the light to be anything. We must keep the light shining on us to continue to be anything. As soon as we step, even for a moment, out of the light into the darkness, we immediately become nothing again. We have nothing in ourselves, no matter how long we have been in the Truth. Cut off from the Vine, we are useless and dead.

*“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”*

—John declares (1 Jn. 1:5). All is of God. The light of God for us is manifested through the Sun. The sun represents Christ—the “*Sun of Righteousness*” — “*God with us.*”

In the Rainbow the glory of the light of God is manifested in a multitude. The Rainbow is the Covenant, the symbol of the Eternal Purpose. In it we see revealed all the colors that together make up the Divine Light for man.

How does the Rainbow separate the light and manifest the different features of the Divine Plan? The rainbow is the Sun’s light reflected from multitudes of tiny drops of water in the air. These drops are a very fitting symbol of the Redeemed. They are from the great ocean of nations—the “*waters of the Great Sea.*” But they have been called out, separated, drawn up into the heavenlies by the mighty attracting power of the sun. In this process they have been purified.

We hear much today about polluted waters. Man has suddenly been jolted by discovering that in the stupidity of his cleverness he is destroying the earth and himself. Even under the curse that man brought upon himself by disobedience, God has given man a beautiful earth, a beautiful habitation, and has in infinite wisdom and love established thereon a beautiful, balanced self-purifying natural cycle of life. But man in his godless ignorance and greed and violence is rapidly destroying all the beauty and balance, and bringing death and desolation to whatever he touches.

But these tiny drops of water have been purified from all this as they have been drawn up by the power of the sun.

As they are being drawn up, they are invisible to the world. But suddenly, at the proper time, they will be manifested in clouds which will cover the earth, streaming down in floods and torrents: God’s long pent-up wrath and judgments against the universal wickedness of man. Then the sky clears, the Sun is revealed, the Rainbow appears, and the glory of God is manifested to the world in all the marvelous details of the Divine plan for mankind.

Each of these drawn-up drops of water is a sphere—a circle or wheel in three dimensions. The different colors are the different wave lengths of which light is composed. Each separate color is reflected in the raindrop at a slightly different angle—so each ray of white light is thus spread out in all its range of colors, and the glorious beauty of the rainbow appears.

To us, a Rainbow is an arc. How can an arc, a part of a circle, represent the fullness and completeness and endlessness of the Divine Glory? Here, by deeper examination, we find a beautiful hidden fitness. If we ascend high enough, we discover that the Rainbow is a complete and perfect

circle. It is only the earth and our low viewpoint that obscures this fact for us. The higher we ascend, the more of the circle we see.

Viewed from a mountain top under the right circumstances, the whole circle of the Rainbow would be revealed. The lesson for us is that we must constantly be ascending the mountain of the Lord, never satisfied with the present limits of our understanding or our spiritual accomplishments.

*"As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.*

*"And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake" (v. 28).*

This is the culmination of the vision of the manifestation of Yahweh—Christ and the Saints ruling a peaceful and purified earth. The Cherubim of Glory have let down their wings. Their work of destroying the wicked and subduing the earth is ended.

*"The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power.*

*"And no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled" (Rev. 15:8).*

But now the plagues are over, and all the smoke of judgment and destruction has cleared away. The horsemen among the myrtle trees have accomplished their work, and —

*"All the earth sitteth still, and is at rest" (Zech. 1:11).*

This final verse of Ezekiel 1 is the glory of God now revealed in full and unrestrained effulgence. The Tabernacle of God is with men, and God is all in all—

*"As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain."*

(Taken from "Be YE Transformed" Volume 2 pages 129-146 by Bro. G. Growcott)