

---

EZEKIEL 10: 1 Then I looked, and see, in the expanse that was over the head of the cherubim there appeared above them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.

---

The same august vision which appeared to the prophet at first, is repeated here; and coals of fire are scattered over the city to intimate that it was to be burned. The symbol of the Divine presence is likewise represented as removing farther and farther from the temple, to signify that God's protection was about to be withdrawn from it, vv. 1-22. It may not be improper to remark, that whatever is particularly intended by the cherubim, wheels, firmament, throne, etc., described in this and the first chapter, the prophet several times informs us (Eze 1:28; Eze 3:25; Eze 8:4; Eze 10:4, Eze 10:18), that his vision was a manifestation or similitude of the Glory of Jehovah; or, in other words, consisted of a set of hieroglyphics by which this glory was in some measure represented. It is also worthy of observation, that the faces of the living creatures, of which we have an account in the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse, are precisely the same with those of Ezekiel's cherubim; and we may readily collect, as Mr. Mede remarks, the quarter of the heavens in which each cherub was situated in reference to the other three, from the consideration that as Ezekiel saw the vision proceeding from the North, (see Eze 1:4, Eze 1:10), the human face of the cherubim was towards him, or the south; on his right hand, or the east, was the face of a lion; on his left hand, or the west, the face of an ox; and towards the north, the face of an eagle.

#### Verse 1

As it were a sapphire stone - See the note on Eze 1:22-26 (note). The chariot, here mentioned by the prophet, was precisely the same as that which he saw at the river Chebar, as himself tells us, Eze 1:15, of which see the description in Ezekiel 1.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 2 He spoke to the man clothed in linen, and said, Go in between the whirling wheels, even under the cherub, and fill both your hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. He went in as I watched.

---

#### Verse 2

Coals of fire - These were to signify the burning of the city by the Chaldeans. It seems that the space between the four wheels, which was all on fire, was that from which those coals were taken.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 3 Now the cherubim stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.

---

#### Verse 3

On the right side of the house - The right hand always marked the south among the Hebrews.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 4 the LORD's glory mounted up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's glory.

---

Verse 4

The glory of the Lord went up - This is repeated from Eze 9:3.

The house was filled with the cloud - This is a fact similar to what occurred frequently at the tabernacle in the wilderness, and in the dedication of the temple by Solomon. What is mentioned here was the Divine shechinah, the symbolical representation of the majesty of God.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 5 The sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.

---

Verse 5

As the voice of the Almighty God - That is, as thunder; for this was called the voice of God.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 6 It came to pass, when he commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, Take fire from between the whirling wheels, from between the cherubim, that he went in, and stood beside a wheel.

EZEKIEL 10: 7 The cherub stretched out his hand from between the cherubim to the fire that was between the cherubim, and took of it, and put it into the hands of him who was clothed in linen, who took it and went out.

EZEKIEL 10: 8 There appeared in the cherubim the form of a man's hand under their wings.

---

Verse 8

The form of a man's hand under their wings - I am still of opinion that the hands and wings were not distinct. The arms were feathered like wings, and the hand terminated the arm; but as the long front feathers of the wings would extend much beyond the fingers, hence the hands would appear to be under the wings. See on Eze 1:8 (note). The human hand might be intended to show that God helps and punishes man by man; and that, in the general operations of his providence, he makes use of human agency.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 9 I looked, and behold, four wheels beside the cherubim, one wheel beside one cherub, and another wheel beside another cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was like a beryl stone.

---

Verse 9

The color of a beryl stone - אבן תרשיש *eben Tarshish*, "the stone of Tarshish." The Vulgate translates it chrysolith; Symmachus, the jacinct; the Septuagint, the carbuncle. In the parallel place, Eze 1:16, it is כעין תרשיש *keeyn Tarshish*, "like the eye of Tarshish;" i.e., the color of tarshish, or the stone so called, which the Vulgate translates visio maris, "like the sea," i.e., azure. The beryl is a gem of a green color, passing from one side into blue, on the other side into yellow. The chrysolith is also green, what is called pistachio green; but the chrysolith of the ancients was our topaz, which is of a fine wine yellow. The beryl, or chrysolith, is most likely what is here meant by tarshish. One name among the ancients served for several kinds of gems that were nearly of the same color. The moderns go more by chemical characters than by color.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 10 As for their appearance, the four of them had one likeness, like a wheel within a wheel.

---

Verse 10

A wheel had been in the midst of a wheel - It is difficult to comprehend this description. It is generally supposed to mean one wheel within another, cutting each other at right angles. This, in my opinion, will not account for the motions attributed to these wheels; nor can I see how, on this supposition, they could have any motion; for if one was moved on its axis, the other must be dragged contrary to its axis. I have conjectured it rather to mean a wheel within a wheel, or a wheel with two rims, working on the same axis. See on Eze 1:16-18 (note). It is however no matter of faith; and the reader may judge as he thinks proper. For other matters relative to this chariot, wheels, cherubim, wings, etc., I must refer to the notes on the first chapter. And perhaps from the whole of this vision and its difficulties, he will see the propriety of the council of rabbins ordering Rabbi Ananias three hundred barrels of oil to light his lamp during the time it would be necessary for him to employ in explaining this one vision.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 11 When they went, they went in their four directions: they didn't turn as they went, but to the place where the head looked they followed it; they didn't turn as they went.

EZEKIEL 10: 12 Their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes all around, even the wheels that the four of them had.

EZEKIEL 10: 13 As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, the whirling wheels.

---

Verse 13

As for the wheels, it was cried unto them - O wheel - Never was there a more unfortunate and unmeaning translation. The word הגלגל *haggalgal*, may signify, simply, the roller, or a chariot, or roll on, or the swift roller. And he clepide ilke wheelis volible, or turninge about. Old MS. Bible. Any of these will do: "and as to the wheels," לאופנים *laophannim*, "they were called in my hearing" הגלגל *haggalgal*, "the chariot." The gentleman who took for his text "O wheel!" and made God's decree of eternal predestination out of it, must have borrowed some of Rabbi Ananias's three hundred barrels of oil! But such working of God's word cannot be too severely reprehended.

As these wheels are supposed to represent Divine Providence, bringing about the designs of the Most High, how like is the above הַגִּלְגַּל haggalgal, taken as a verb, "roll on," to those words of Virgil in his *Pollio*: -

Talia saela, suis dixerunt, currite, fuis,

Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae. "The Fates, when they this happy web have spun,  
Shall bless the sacred clue, and bid it swiftly run."

EZEKIEL 10: 14 Every one had four faces: the first face was the face of the cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third face the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

#### Verse 14

The first - was the face of a cherub - In Eze 1:10, this is called the "face of an ox;" here, the "face of a cherub:" hence, a cherub was in the likeness of an ox, at least, as to its head. כְּרוּב kerub never occurs as a verb; and its meaning cannot be precisely ascertained. Parkhurst thinks the כ caph to be here the note of similitude; and then translates כ כ ke, "like," רב rab or רוב rob, "the mighty one;" and, in consequence, makes the cherubim an emblem of the Holy Trinity. See his lengthy Dissertation under כְּרוּב in his Hebrew and English Lexicon.

EZEKIEL 10: 15 The cherubim mounted up: this is the living creature that I saw by the river Chebar.

EZEKIEL 10: 16 When the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels also didn't turn from beside them.

EZEKIEL 10: 17 When they stood, these stood; and when they mounted up, these mounted up with them: for the spirit of the living creature was in them.

EZEKIEL 10: 18 the LORD's glory went out from over the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim.

EZEKIEL 10: 19 The cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight when they went out, and the wheels beside them: and they stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

EZEKIEL 10: 20 This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were cherubim.

#### Verse 20

And I knew that they were the cherubims - This formation of the plural is quite improper. In general, Hebrew nouns of the masculine gender end in ם im, in the plural; the s, therefore, should never be added to such. Cherub is singular; cherubim is plural. The s should be uniformly expunged.

I have already referred to the end of this chapter for farther information relative to this glorious chariot of Jehovah; but I must say that I have met with nothing on the subject that entirely satisfies

myself. In the preceding notes I have endeavored to make the literal meaning as plain as possible; and have occasionally given some intimations relative to the general design of this sublime vision. My readers are already apprised that I do not like conjectures on Divine things; many points, that had originally no other origin, are now incorporated with creeds of which it is deemed sinful to doubt. Because some learned and pious men have written to prove that this symbolical compound figure is a representation of the Holy Trinity; therefore, the sentiment now passes current. Now this is not proved; and I suppose never can be proved. The continuator of the Historical Discourses of Saurin has made some sensible remarks on the subject of this vision; and these I shall lay here before the intelligent reader. They deserve attention.

This intelligent writer observes: "For the right interpretation of this vision, the following rules should be laid down: - "The first rule is this: - An explanation, which accounts for all the parts contained in the vision, is much more probable than those which explain only one part. "The second is this: - An explanation which is conformable to the present circumstances of the prophet, and of the people to whom he is sent, as well as to the nature of the things which he is called upon to say to them, is incomparably more probable than those explanations which go in quest of past or future events, which have no connection with the immediate circumstances of the prophet, nor with the end of his mission. These rules, which appear incontestable, being laid down, we observe, that their opinion who think that God here draws out a plan of the government of his providence, applied to the present state of the Jews, accounts for all that Ezekiel saw; and that in a manner which refers to the end of the prophet's mission, and all that he had to say to this rebellious people. Why wish God to represent to his prophet the future state of the Christian Church, which was not to be founded till after a series of time, rather than the state of the Jewish Church, and the chastisements which hung over the heads of that hardened people? The people having revolted from God, and persevering obstinately in that revolt, notwithstanding the menaces of the prophet, it was proper to show to Ezekiel, in order that he might declare it to the rebellious, that Providence had its eyes open to all that had been done, all that had hitherto happened, and that it had seized upon the rod to smite. The people imagined, but too much according to the errors of infidelity, that God saw every thing with indifference and had given the world up to chance. It was necessary, therefore, to divest them of these fatal prejudices; and to teach them that the Supreme Being did not behold with the same eye order and disorder, contempt of his laws and submission to his will; and that all the revolutions of states are directed by a superior intelligence, which cannot be imposed upon. The Jewish people imagined but too much that the prophets exaggerated when they threatened them with the severest chastisements. They repeated with emphasis and complacency the promises of God made to the patriarchs; that their posterity should not only be more numerous than the stars of heaven, and the sand which covers the sea-shore; but that it should subsist for ever and ever. God had declared to Abraham, 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee,' Gen 17:7. It was proper, therefore, to show this stiff-necked people that the threatenings of God and his promises were not contradictory. That the people, conformable to the promises given by God to the patriarchs, should not be destroyed; but that, notwithstanding, they should be severely chastised, to correct them for their propensity to idolatry, and their scandalous irregularities. "These suppositions, which are reasonable, being granted, we shall have no difficulty to perceive the sense of this celebrated vision. We shall not follow the order observed by Ezekiel, in the description of what he saw; he raises himself from the nearest to the most distant objects, going back from effects to their general cause. We will begin with the First Cause which gives motion to all that happens, traces out the plan, and procures the execution, according to the rules of his ineffable wisdom, and agreeably to the nature of those creatures which are the object of his agency. Next, we will proceed

to consider the effects of this universal Providence, and the intelligent secondary causes which he frequently employs in the administration of the government of the universe. "'Ezekiel saw a firmament which was above the heads of the animals; there was the resemblance of a throne like a sapphire stone; and over the resemblance of the throne, there was, as it were, the resemblance of a man.' This vast transparent firmament represents to us the heaven, the peculiar residence of the Lord of the earth; and where he hath established the throne of his empire. This 'appearance of a man' was the emblem of Providence or God; considered as taking care of all the creatures whom he hath made. Man is the symbol of intelligence. The mind of man, with respect to his knowledge and wisdom, is a weak sketch of that mind which knows all things, and whose wisdom is unbounded. And yet, of all sublunary beings, there is none that approaches so near to the Divine nature as man. Under this emblem also it is that God, considered as seeing all things and directing all, would be represented. This resemblance of man was seated upon a throne to show that God governs all things as Lord and that without agitation and without labor. "The shining metal, and the fire which surrounded him who sat on the throne, were the symbol of his glory and his judgments, which are poured upon the wicked as a fire which nothing can withstand; agreeably to Isaiah, Isa 33:14. "The Jews acknowledged that there was a Providence which governs the whole universe with infinite wisdom. The psalmist gives us a description of it, equally just and pathetic, in Psa 104:27, etc. Christians, no less than Jews, admit this important truth; and the Gospel establishes it no less strongly than the law. See Mat 6:26; Mat 10:29, Mat 10:30. To raise the mind of the prophet up to the first Mover of those events which strike and admonish us in all the revolutions which happen to individuals, families, and states, God shows him four wheels above the firmament, over which the emblem of Providence was placed on a throne. These wheels are a symbol of those perpetual revolutions, which are observed in the earth; and which, by turns, lift up and abase individuals and nations. They are of a prodigious height, to show that man cannot fathom or know all that is great, wonderful, and astonishing, in the ways of Providence. See Job 11:7, Job 11:8; Rom 11:33, Rom 11:34; Isa 55:8, Isa 55:9. These wheels move themselves every way, and are full of eyes in the vast circle of their feloes. This shows, that all which God does he effects without pain; and that the eye of his wisdom ordereth all events. The wheels did not move of themselves; but they followed the impulse of the four living creatures; 'when the living creatures went, they went.' This shows that, in the government of the world, all the living creatures are subject to Providence; and that God subordinates the creatures one to another. He directs what those holy intelligences ought to do, who serve him as ministers, and are here represented by the four animals. And these intelligences, enlightened and supported by the Supreme Wisdom, contribute, as far as is suitable, to all that happens to mankind. The angels whom Ezekiel saw were in number four, in reference to the four cardinal points of the world; to show that their ministry extends every where, and that there is no part of the universe which the Providence of God does not govern in an immediate manner, or by the means of his ministers. The extraordinary shape of these angels, which appeared to the prophet in vision, is symbolical; for it is not to be supposed that those heavenly ministers are really thus formed. The 'four faces, wings, and arms of a man,' denote the sublime qualities of these immediate ministers of the Deity; qualities entirely essential to fill up the extent of their duty. The face of a man denotes their intelligence; of a lion, their intrepid courage; of an ox, their patience and perseverance in labor; and of an eagle, their great penetration, their sublime sight into heavenly things, and their readiness to rise up into all that is great and Divine. The 'wings being stretched out,' signifies that they are always ready to set forward, and run with rapidity wherever the commands of their great Master call them. The 'wings bent down,' are a symbol of that profound respect in which these heavenly ministers stand before the Lord of the universe. Under the wings there were men's arms, to show that zeal produces application and labor. Labour, without zeal, can never be supported; and zeal, without application, is only a hypocritical ardour, which amounts to nothing with that supreme

Master who requires sincere homage from those who serve him. If God chose to make known to Ezekiel that his providence extends to all things, and that even in this life it often takes up the rod to chastise nations and individuals, he would also show beforehand that he wished not the destruction of the Jewish people, whom he was about to visit in his anger, but only its correction and amendment. This is signified by the 'precious metal,' which the prophet found unmelted in the midst of the fiery cloud. This cloud of fire, urged on by a whirlwind, and involving on all sides the metal, represented the judgments of God which were about to fall upon this rebellious nation, not to destroy, but to humble and purify it. Nothing is more proper than afflictions to bring men back to their duty. As fire purifies metals, so the paternal chastisements of God have a tendency to purify the soul and heart, if the man be not entirely incorrigible. The people upon whom God was about to pour the vials of his anger, were not worthy of his lenity. But that great God, who is firm in his promises, remembers the covenant of peace he had made with the patriarchs. This covenant is made sensible to the prophet under the image of a rainbow, which was round about him who appeared upon the throne. Every one knows, that this splendid phenomenon, which seems to join heaven and earth together, was given to Noah and his posterity as a symbol of the covenant which God then made with mankind, and by which he declared to them that the earth should undergo a deluge no more. Thus, the Pagans considered the Iris as the messenger of the gods. See Virgil, Aen. lib. 4 ver. 694. But whereas the rainbow to the Jews was a symbol of peace, the Iris of the Pagans was a messenger of trouble. On the sight of this bow, the symbol of grace, Ezekiel was to be encouraged; and persuaded that his people were not threatened with an utter destruction. The event fully justified all that the prophet had contemplated, with surprise, in this enigmatical picture. The Chaldeans, the rod of the Lord's just severity, ravaged Judea; the people were carried away captive; they groaned for seventy years in a foreign land; but they were protected in a miraculous manner against the bloody designs of the cruel Haman; and at length, favored with various decrees of the kings of Persia, they had permission, not only to return to their own country but also to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.' See Dr. Dodd's notes on this place.

---

EZEKIEL 10: 21 Every one had four faces, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.

EZEKIEL 10: 22 As for the likeness of their faces, they were the faces which I saw by the river Chebar, their appearances and themselves; they went every one straight forward.

---