



The Wheels of God's Throne

The Heavenly Visions
of Daniel and Ezekiel

G.Thomas Windsor

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Unfolding the Mystery in the Visions
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Introduction

There are descriptions recorded by the prophets that provide rare glimpses into heaven itself. Ezekiel, Daniel, the apostle John and others saw these visions. These often came in the form of prophetic dreams and spiritual revelations. Hereby what is usually unseen becomes visible, even describable in human language. They offer a lens, as it were, to "look" into the celestial unknown. These heavenly spiritual concepts are typically described in metaphors. This imagery uses earthly things as types and shadows whereby the Lord communicates to us of heavenly things, and specifically, in this case, God's throne.

God uses his Word to describe a reality foreign to us---a place of strange angelic beings surrounding the Lord: the cherubim and seraphim enveloped by thunder, lightning, blazing lamps, and a glorious "likeness of a human form" seated upon a fiery throne, sometimes seen with wheels.

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The words used in the imagery eventually fall short and stretch us to the limits of our imagination, invoking many questions.

This leads us through one of the most mysterious areas of scripture. Why is the Lord enthroned between the cherubim as the Scripture states on a number of occasions? What do the wheels signify beside the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision and beside the throne in Daniel's dream? For ages God's throne, the cherubim, and the wheels beside them have posed a mystery. The ancient Hebrews prohibited its discussion in public and its teaching was restricted to a very few initiates. The early and medieval Church seem to have gone in the other direction and produced fanciful embellishments and excessive allegorizing on the subject.

An added difficulty regarding this topic is that there have been many outright erroneous views of the heavenly realm propagated. For instance, the word "cherub" has come to mean in people's minds adorable, harmless baby-like angels. The truth is, the Bible portrays it very differently as we shall see. Upon reading the title of this book, many may react in puzzlement. Many in our day have never heard of these concepts or what they mean. (Aside from perhaps those who

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pursue angelology, or Kabbalah mysticism; and that's *not* what this writing is about.) The subject is usually delegated as one of those subjects in the Bible that many believers think is not important because it does not seem relevant to the New Testament. However, consider this: When Christ proclaimed his final claim of Deity to an unbelieving generation, He said: "*I am,... and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven*" (Mark 14:62). He was referencing Daniel's vision and that throne was a throne with fiery wheels.(Dan. 7:9,13)

There is much discussion and fictional propaganda in our time related to Bible codes, mysteries, etc. The subject of this writing comprises, I believe, one of the genuine biblical mysteries, but it will not be treated in a reckless or sensationalistic manner. There has been much curiosity and oft-repeated interpretations of "Ezekiel's Wheels" (i.e. UFOs/aliens, the planetary orbits, God's providence, sovereignty, etc.) However, rarely is solid evidence from the Scripture offered as proof or a method shown as to how the conclusions were formed. Many commentators are simply quoting past speculators or theologians. This writing may not necessarily be easy reading as it references some of the more

difficult passages in Scripture. However, these are some of the very ones that speak of His mysterious, visible throne. The greatest challenge is the attempt to make all of this consistently sensible, because the visions of the throne by the prophets occurred at various times, in varied contexts, and were noted by various authors.

This writing is limited in its scope. For example, I do not seek to focus upon issues of eschatology in Daniel 7 or historical background from Ezekiel. (There is already much written on these subjects). This writing is focused on possible meanings in the metaphoric descriptions of the wheels. I am using other references in the Bible to assist in the interpretation, and there's far less written on this subject. I believe it is important to gain a macro-view (the whole counsel of the Word) involving dozens of passages that relate, rather than the typical micro-view involving only Ezekiel. The micro-view has limited what can be gleaned about the "wheels." I don't believe that we should spend our time in idle speculation. This only serves to muddy the waters in our quest for truth.

I trust that the arguments set forth here will begin to show the way through which we can gain an assured understanding. The finest interpretation

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always includes comparing Scripture with Scripture. Though this book specifically addresses the wheels in detail, I am seeking to present a broader message. I don't claim it is the complete or last word by any means, but it reveals what I believe are some sure foundations of understanding regarding the "wheels." The theological model presented here, I believe, is somewhat unique. (This author has tried to find other similar writings and is not aware of any parallel conclusions either presently or historically.) I also realize a higher burden of proof is expected from one who sets forth a unique interpretation or perspective. Others have found some individual pieces to the puzzle, but I believe this study provides a larger picture and seeks to bring together various ideas and to integrate them.

This writing may sound redundant at times, but that is necessary to show the weight of the foundational points leading to the final conclusion. Please bear with me. Hopefully this presentation will make the understanding from the passages self-evident. I've endeavored to approach this subject with humility, recognizing that we must take into account what many devout believers have found over the centuries. As Peter the apostle said, "*some things are difficult to understand.*" I pray

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I'm not somehow missing the mark. If I have truly discovered any truths that others may have overlooked, let's not make the messenger the issue. Ultimately, what do we all have or understand that we haven't received from God?

So, what do the wheels beside the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision and the throne in Daniel's dream really mean? That is the focus of this book. Let's begin our journey of discovery. If we pursue the knowledge of God and His Word wholeheartedly, it isn't unreasonable to expect that God can reveal even mysterious truths. I hope I can translate it all into relevant words. It is my prayer that this will help us to fix our eyes on things above, where Christ is seated, for we will all one day appear before the throne of God.

Thank you,

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Part One

Ezekiel and the Throne with Wheels

Background: During a time of exile in the kingdom of Babylon, the Lord came to speak to His people. God had been sending warnings through the prophets because a final invasion was coming upon those left in Jerusalem. A very significant event was to happen: the destruction of the first temple. The (southern) kingdom of David was coming to an end and the northern kingdom of Israel had already been vanquished. In this setting, God was to reveal his throne. This was a throne with wheels, first made known to Ezekiel. In the beginning chapters of Ezekiel's prophecy, we find the Lord commissioning him as a prophet and sending him to carry the message. God is a God of self-revelation and was showing Himself to his servant in an awesome way. The Lord was also to show His sovereignty, not only over his own, but over all nations.

Ezekiel, Chapter 1: 4 *"I looked, and behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with flashing lightning, and a brightness around it, and out of its midst as it were glowing metal, out of the midst of the fire. 5Out of its midst came the likeness of four living creatures. This was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. 6Everyone had four faces, and each one of them had four wings. 7Their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished brass. 8They had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and the four of them had their faces and their wings thus: 9their wings were joined one to another; they didn't turn when they went; each one went straight forward. 10As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and the four of them had the face of a lion on the right side; and the four of them had the face of an ox on the left side; the four of them also had the face of an eagle. 11Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above. Two wings of each one touched another, and two covered their bodies. 12Each one went straight forward: where the spirit was to go, they went; they didn't turn when they went. 13As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches: the fire went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth*

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lightning. 14The living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. 15**Now as I saw the living creatures, behold, one wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, for each of the four faces of it.** 16The appearance of the wheels and their work was like a beryl: and the four of them had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel within a wheel. 17When they went, they went in their four directions: they didn't turn when they went. 18**As for their rims, they were high and dreadful; and the four of them had their rims full of eyes all around.** 19**When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.** 20Wherever the spirit was to go, they went; there was the spirit to go: and the wheels were lifted up beside them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. 21When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up beside them: **for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.** 22Over the head of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the awesome crystal to look on, stretched forth over their heads above. 23Under the expanse were their wings straight, the one toward the other: each one had two which covered on this side, and every one had two which covered on that side, their bodies. 24When they went, I heard the noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, like the voice of the

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*Almighty, a noise of tumult like the noise of an army: when they stood, they let down their wings. 25There was a voice above the expanse that was over their heads: when they stood, they let down their wings. 26Above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and on the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man on it above. 27I saw as it were glowing metal, as the appearance of fire within it all around, from the appearance of his waist and upward; and from the appearance of his waist and downward I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. 28As the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh.** When I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke "(Web Version).*

In the introduction of the book, the prophet Ezekiel states he had visions of God. Ezekiel begins relating what he saw with the phrase "*The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God* " (v.1). It is the Lord who opened a window in order for the prophet to see. Obviously this imagery of heavenly realities describes something very different from what is normally seen in the natural world. Ezekiel used the closest words he knew to describe these things. God himself is allowing the

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prophet to behold his dwelling.

The Storm Cloud: He wrote "*a whirlwind came out of the north*" (v. 4). In the distance he saw an immense storm cloud, a whirlwind with lightning flashing like fire. This storm has relevance, for often in the Old Testament the Lord would appear and manifest himself in a cloud or a storm: "a meteorological theophany."

Note: The closest comparable O.T. account of God being "seen " is found in the book of Exodus. In that passage Moses went up to mount Sinai. The Lord visited him in a glory cloud of fire and with thunder and lightning. God's awesome voice made the mountain tremble (Ex. 24). One ancient historian, Josephus, wrote that Moses actually saw the throne and the cherubim. (*Josephus , Antiquities 3.6.5.*)

Four Living Creatures: This cloud is described in increasing detail as the vision progresses. It is as if the lens is zooming in and showing more and more of the detail as unfolding before the eyes of the prophet. Initially, out of the storm cloud, the prophet sees In the center of this, Ezekiel sees what looks like four living

creatures---four strange creatures with different faces and multiple wings. Their appearance is in the form of men, but each have four faces and wings. Each have the face of a man, an eagle, a lion, and an ox (respectively). These creatures move about and have wheels beside each of them. They are identified as the cherubim (Ezek.10:21). We further read that the glory of the Lord (in human form) is enthroned upon them.

Cherubim were historically thought of as God's personal attendants as well, as angelic beings and bearers and guardians of God's throne. They were at the place separating the holy from the unholy (as on the curtain and doors of the temple). These were like the cherubim that were modeled both in the temple at Jerusalem and at the Tent of the Tabernacle. (We will examine more about the cherubim in a later section). Ezekiel, as a priest, would have been familiar with temple worship and thus was privileged to behold a manifestation of God's presence, like those who saw it at the Tent of Meeting.

Descriptions of the wheels: Ezekiel went on to describe that beside each of the living creatures was a wheel following every movement of the living creatures: *"Their appearance was like coals of fire; like torches... fire moved back and*

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forth from among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it." The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning".

The wheels touched the ground and each was like a "*wheel within a wheel.*" (v-17-21) The wheels of the cherubim were said to be "*high and awesome,*" or dreadful (v. 18). There was something about them that invoked fear. We also note that the cherubim and the wheels were full of eyes all around. Other passages in the Bible have related this as a spiritual reference to God's omniscience and his Spirit (Prov.15:3, 2 Chron.16:9, Zech 4:10). Various commentators have noted that this a case in which the eyes may reflect divine attributes such as omniscience.

The Unity: The cherubim and the wheels appear to be bound together in a unity. As the cherubim move, rise and stand still, so do the wheels. Practically every characteristic of the two are the same. Both are full of eyes. The fire between the cherubim is between the wheels. The sound of the wings is like the sound of the wheels, described as "*like the voice of God Almighty*" (v-24). This suggests another divine attribute: His personal nature. We also read that the creatures move "*like a tumult of an army...*" The Lord is often referred to as "*the Lord of hosts* " which

means Lord of the angelic armies of heaven. Thus, a military comparison is introduced.

Visual Description of the Throne: Finally, over the heads of the living creatures there is the likeness of a firmament or dome shining like crystal. The thunderous sound the prophet hears is like the voice of the Almighty. He wrote: *"Then I looked, and behold, on the firmament that was covering the heads of the cherubim there appeared above them something like a sapphire, in form resembling a throne; and seated above this was a likeness as it were of a human form. And upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze, like the appearance of fire enclosed round about ... Like the appearance of a bow that is in a cloud ... such 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 the voice of one speaking."* (v-26-28)

It is helpful to try to get a mental picture of what is occurring in these passages. Images convey meanings. When the words of Scripture were penned, they had a purpose for all time (both for then and now). In these glorious visions the Lord was seen enthroned upon the cherubim, and beside them were the wheels. All three together comprise the manifestation of the glory of the Lord. What is

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being portrayed is a throne of fire coming out of the storm and upon this throne is the Glory of God on some sort of moving platform. This throne comes down out of heaven and the wheels make contact, "*touching the earth*" (v-15). The Lord could have had Ezekiel simply see an ornate stationary throne, yet here a dynamic "mobile " throne (a sort of vehicle) is seen. It is helpful to note that the Lord is spoken of in other biblical passages as "enthroned upon the cherubim" and in Psalm 18 and others as riding upon a cherub.

Note: *Winged angel*. Cherubs, as depicted in the OT, ... They are pictured as winged creatures (Exod.25:20; 37:9; 1 Kgs. 6:24-27; Ezek.10:8,19) and serve as the very throne of God when the ark of the covenant is in view (Ps. 80:1; 99:1; see Num. 7:89; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs. 19:15.) The picture of the Lord seated on the cherubs suggests they might be used by him as a vehicle, a function they carry out in Ezek. 1:22-28 (the "living creatures" mentioned here are identified as cherubs in Ezek. 10:20.) In Ps. 18:10 the image of a cherub serves to personify the wind (see the next line of the psalm). (Net Bible notes)

"Chariot of the Cherubim" model: So what do we make of what is portrayed in the text? Let's start with the ancient Hebrew understanding,

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as this historic background is helpful. The ancient Hebrews thought of the cherubim as forming a "chariot throne." The cherubim (living creatures) were viewed as forming the "vehicle "upon which God rode in the heavens.

Note: In the early days of Israel's history the cherubim became the divine chariot, the bearer of the throne of Yhwh in its progress through the worlds (I Sam. iv. 4; II Sam. vi. 2; I Chron. xiii. 6). ... At an earlier period the cherubim were the living chariot of the theophanic God, possibly identical with the storm-winds (Ps. xviii. 11; II Sam. xxii. 11: "And he rode upon a cherub and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind ".) Jewish Encyclopedia.com "Cherub" , pg. 13

This is evidenced by the description of the two huge models of the cherubim that were in the temple at Jerusalem. They were called "***the chariot of the cherubim***" in the text and thought by some to have had wheels. *1 Chron. 28: 18: "And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot [Hebrew, merkabah] of the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD (KJV).*

In the book of Hebrews we are told that the

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"cherubim of Glory" are part of the *"copy of the heavenly things"*. (Heb. 9:5,23) With this New Testament interpretation of the Old, the earthly temple and tabernacle were shadows; a type of the heavenly realities.

The Chariot Throne: At this point let's examine more of this less known, though important, concept. In the Old Testament, the imagery of God as "riding" a chariot comprised a way that the people of that time could understand the Lord as a great King. This is perhaps different from our modern western 'medieval' view of a king. In ancient times a king typically rode in a splendid chariot, and a chariot was also a symbol of military strength (2Chron. 35:24, Jer.17:25, 22:4). Also, the king typically rode forth to face his enemies (2 Kings 8:21).

Many commentators have traditionally pointed out that the ancient Jewish understanding of what Ezekiel beheld was the *Merkabah*, the Hebrew (literal meaning) for the Lord's chariot-throne. There is historical evidence for this and internal biblical support as well. In the Greek Septuagint a variant rendering from the Hebrew text in Ezekiel 43:3 reads: *"and the vision of the chariot that I saw was like the one that I saw by the river of Chebar"* (this referencing the cherubim

and the throne in earlier chapters). In Habakkuk 3, we read in reference to the Lord: *"that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation"* (Hab. 3:8, KJV). In the Jewish rabbinic interpretation (Midrashim) of Psalm 68:18 it states: *"Twenty-two thousand chariots descended at Sinai, and each of them looked like the chariot (Merkabah) that Ezekiel saw."* There are also historic writings (extra-biblical) that indicate the common understanding of that time. In the apocryphal writing of Ecclesiasticus is a quotation: *"It was Ezekiel who saw the vision of glory, which God showed him above the chariot of the cherubim"* (Sirach 49:8 NRSV). It is also interesting to note that Irenius, an early church father, described one of the titles of the Lord as the "Charioteer of the Chariot." In the Dead Sea scrolls we read: *"In the vision Ezekiel saw the gleam of the Chariot (Merkavah) and the four Living Creatures"*

Note: (Dead Sea Scrolls Translated, F. Martinez) (4Q385 frag. 4:5-6) (Irenius Against Heresies- book 5)

Representations: Once we understand this important context, it assists our understanding of other passages. Yet the Old Testament chariot imagery shouldn't be confused with pagan concepts of their deities, which are but counterfeits

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or distortions of the true concept. This doesn't answer the question as to the meaning of the wheels specifically, but it does help with some context and a framework. Also, it should be stated here that all the descriptions of the throne and cherubim wheels, etc., are only representations. God certainly doesn't literally ride a throne with wheels. However the cherubim are actual angelic beings and He is enthroned upon them in the vision. God doesn't inhabit a physical location or a seat. These are simply distant approximations of heavenly realities for our finite minds.

Understanding the Metaphor (the similitude of heaven?): In the first chapter of Ezekiel, the words, "*the likeness, the appearance of,*" occur frequently. Sometimes they are three steps removed from the true heavenly realities. In Ezekiel 1:28 we read "*...such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.*" To get to the answers mentioned above involves a step on the part of the reader of thinking beyond the natural world. These are things related from God's Spirit. It also requires us to abandon stereotypical, popular views of the heavenly realm and examine it afresh, objectively from a biblico-prophetic view. The prophet related what he was given to see

in the form of similes. A simile is a comparison to illustrate something, often using "like" or "as." A metaphor is a figure of speech by which one word is analogous to another, usually in the form of images. Moving on to chapter two, the message from God's Spirit comes from the Lord upon the throne. He speaks to the prophet and commissions him to speak to the Israelites. *"And he said to me 'Son of man, Stand upon your feet and I will speak to you. ...I send you to the people of Israel, to a rebellious house... And you shall speak my words to them whether they hear or refuse to hear'"* (Chap. 2:3). This is a message from the throne of God. The prophet is overwhelmed by the Lord's glory, emboldened by His Spirit, and then compelled to deliver a message to the people. The Lord is speaking to them in a foreign land.

God allowed some glimpses of his glorious throne and when this happened, it was a sign that God was about to do something very significant in the history of his people. Ezekiel's vision contains some of the sternest words God ever voiced to Israel and also contains an appeal for repentance. Yet, out of grace He did not leave them abandoned and He offered them promises of restoration in the latter chapters of Ezekiel. God's Spirit entered the prophet and empowered him to proclaim His Word. (v. 22) In the first eight chapters the prophet

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speaks words of warning as the Lord pleads and admonishes his people, seemingly to no avail. In the ninth and tenth chapters we read of a further vision of this throne which adds to the understanding of the wheels:

*"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. 2He 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. 3Now the cherubim stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court. 4The glory of Yahweh 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 Yahweh's glory. 5The sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of God Almighty when he speaks. 6It 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. 7The cherub stretched forth 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***

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went out. 8There appeared in the cherubim the form of a man's hand under their wings. 9I 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. 10As for their appearance, the four of them had one likeness, like a wheel within a wheel. 11When 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. 12Their 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. 13As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, the whirling wheels " (WEB).

The Glory departs and Judgment comes:

The Lord by His Spirit had exposed the hearts of these leaders of men (Ezek. 8:6,12) the "princes of the sanctuary." At the holiest place in God's sanctuary was an image that provoked jealousy, an abomination that brought a desolation to God's house. (v. 5). In all the passages in Ezekiel we have a great contrast between God's holiness and pure glory visiting a people steeped in stubbornness and idolatry. Contrast provides clarity, because by the one we can see the other clearer. God "sees" and the record is kept in the heavenly realm and

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written down. Some are headed to judgment and others are marked off for deliverance and a great separation occurs of those who would receive temporal retribution (chapter 9:3,4). After persistently turning from God and remaining in unbelief, the people reached a point where no remedy was left. God, from his righteous throne, decreed that Jerusalem was to go up in flames and be given over to the sword, as history affirms (chap. 10:2).

Ezekiel is overwhelmed by the judgments, and he envisions an end of mercy as wrath is poured out. He is deeply troubled and he cries out, "*Ah, Sovereign Lord, will you destroy all who remain in Israel ...?*" (Ezek. 9:8). The wonder and fascination with the glorious vision of the throne is now replaced with a deep sorrow and a fear of God. Finally, God's Spirit leaves his habitation (the temple) because of wickedness (Ezek. 10:18). He was abandoning his House and the manifestation of glory (the throne-chariot) to ascend and depart. Thus, the vision closes.

The Meaning of the Wheels? (a beginning point): Historically, many have assigned a symbolic meaning as relating to God's overarching

sovereignty, divine providence, or omniscience. This was one of the views advanced by the early church fathers, and seems to have been the prevailing interpretation of the reformers. It is also often re-quoted by various commentaries today. In addition, some see the wheels as representations of the ministers of the gospels or churches. Some see cycles of nature or perhaps astronomical phenomenon. Some have even viewed the wheels historically as separate angelic beings called the "Ophanim." Yet, as we shall see, there is more evidence that the wheels are to be viewed in a metaphoric sense.

The problem with many traditional interpretations is that there is little internal evidence given, as derived from the text itself. We certainly do see God's providence and sovereignty in these Ezekiel passages, yet we also can observe these biblical themes in the dozens of other passages about the throne that don't mention the wheels at all. Another interpreter asserts that the wheels are speaking of God's kingdom; and, still another, thinks it speaks of God's power, etc. Admittedly, many of these things could be hypothesized from the passages. But it has become an arbitrary guessing game. Also, how do the proposed interpretations of the so-called "Ezekiel's

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wheels" fit into the wheels of the throne described in Daniel's vision? That is the only other direct reference to "fiery" wheels of the throne.

I believe we must begin with things that are exclusive and specific to these passages concerning the wheels. As we shall see, the Scripture lays it forth and makes it known. Also, the interpretation should be harmonious with the whole counsel of God's Word. In our quest to understand this mystery, let us start with some primary observations as we examine what is happening in the passages. Later more detail will be assessed to see how many of the things observed in these passages (and others) might be linked together.

"The spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels." In Ezekiel 1 we read that the "spirit" of the living creatures was within the very wheels. As noted in the Hebrew, the word "*Ruach*" can mean wind or spirit. The wheels contained the same spirit as the cherubim. The phrase is repeated in the text as a point of emphasis. This appears to be communicating an active, living phenomena. The cherubim were led by the Spirit (Ezek. 1:20,21; 10:17). It is the spirit of living creatures (their nature) that is animating the wheels. Here the line between animate beings and inanimate objects is blurred. The "Spirit" is associated with life, whereas "wheels" are typically inanimate objects. This is similar to the text in Zechariah

where inanimate chariots represented "*the winds*" or "*Spirits of heaven*" (Zech. 6:5). As noted earlier, they move in unity and share attributes. The chariot Ezekiel beheld was a living chariot made up of the cherubim.

"Fire from among the Wheels": The angelic servant is told in a prophetic sense to "*take fire from among the wheels*" and scatter it over Jerusalem which had turned to idolatry. The fire from wheels in Ezekiel, chapter 10, comprised the source of what was to happen to the city. It was the fire which formed an aspect of the great judgments of God poured out. Historically, the city was burnt with fire, though this certainly had implications beyond the physical (2Kg. 25:9). The word fire in Scripture often also refers to a judgment or spiritual purging or purifying (Ps. 21:9; 78:21; 79:5; Isa.4:4; 30:30; Jer.6:29; Amos 7:4; Nahum 1:6). In a related way, the cherubim and the angels take part in God's acts of judgment in other passages (Gen. 3:24; Ps. 18:8-10; Rev. 6:1-7, 7:1). This would also be compatible with the broader concept of the Lord's "chariots of fire" in Scripture, executing temporal punishment as shown in Isaiah 66:15. In Daniel's vision (as will be explored later), there is also the fire of judgment relating to the fiery wheels of the throne

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consuming the adversaries of the Lord (Dan. 7:9). In light of these things, it is understandable why the prophet, upon viewing the wheels, described them as having an awesome or fearful appearance (See Ezek. 1:18).

Worship from among the Wheels: In the third chapter, Ezekiel is again lifted up by the Spirit of the Lord. He hears a sound---the sound of the wings of the cherubim and the sound of the wheels. He hears it in this expression: "*May the glory of the Lord be praised in his dwelling place*" (v. 12). The sound of their wings and the wheels were also said to be like "*the sound of the voice of the Almighty when he speaks,*" like a rumbling or rushing sound (v. 13). The sound from the cherubim and the wheels (similar to the rush of a mighty wind in Acts 2) seems to bring forth praise to God. It is not that they are described as voicing this, but perhaps by their very nature they produce some spiritually harmonic sound. Historically, it was understood that worship surrounded the chariot-throne and the wheels.

Note: Dead Sea Scrolls "Divine Chariot Throne" text: "The cherubim bless the image of the Throne-Chariot above the firmament, and they praise the majesty of the fiery firmament beneath the seat of his glory. And between the turning wheels, angels of

holiness come and go..."

We can see that these cherubim are associated with giving praise and glory to God. It is part of their nature, for they are beings of worship as other Scriptures attest (See Rev.4:8).

The "Whirling" Wheels: Another observation concerning the meaning of the wheels (in chapter 10) is in what the wheels themselves are called. Verse 13 states, "*As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, the whirling wheels*" (WEB). Ezekiel heard them being called the "whirling wheels." Here the Scripture itself (a literal reading) is telling us what they are like. The wheels (*owphan* in the Hebrew) were called the whirling wheels (*galgal*). In the verse, two Hebrew words for wheels are used as follows: 1-*Owphan*, 2-*Galgal*. The latter also means "whirlwind" or "swirling chaff" in a rapid rotation. The adjective is very helpful as we shall later see. We also note the meaning of the words "spirit" and "wheels" being in a common association with the wind. The words for wheel as noted earlier also can mean the whirlwind. In addition, the living creatures and the throne of Glory itself came out of a stormy whirlwind (a metaphor for judgment in other passages). There is a meteorological element in the imagery.

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Note: v. 13 - O wheel "rather, 'they were called, whirling,' that is, they were most rapid in their revolutions ... or, better, 'It was cried unto them, The whirling' ... *galgal* here used for 'wheel,' is different from *owphan*, the simple word for 'wheel.' ***galgal* is the whole wheelwork machinery with its whirlwind-like rotation.** (J.F.B. Commentary).

As a sidenote, the first time we see cherubim referenced in the Bible they are described as with a "*flaming of a whirling sword*" (Gen. 3.24), and "*turning round and round.*" In the literal Hebrew (like a wheel) it is a threatening judgment. Note: Ft.4 tn *Heb.* "the flame of the sword that turns round and round." (Net Bible Notes).

A Summary of Some Important Clues:

1) The historic understanding that the vision was of a "throne-chariot" (how it would have been understood at that time) helps give a context of understanding. The chariot represented royal power and the exercising of the king's authority. Thus if we investigate the broader concept of the "chariot and chariots of the Lord" we can expect to find further answers.

2) There is a close connection to the wheels of the cherubim (they form a unity). The

cherubim are associated with sheltering God's holiness and, thus, the meaning of the wheels should relate to this. God's throne came down from heaven and the wheels touched the earth. The wheels are at the place of contact (holy and the unholy) as is in the nature of the cherubim.

3) We are told in the text that the sound of the wheels (and the wings of the cherubim) were like "the voice of the Almighty" and the sound is associated with worship, the praise of God's awesomeness and glory.

4) The fire from wheels represented the source of what was to happen to Jerusalem. The judgments of God came forth from the wheels. Also, the awesome and fearful appearance of the wheels was noted. This gives evidence that the meaning of the wheels relates to the judgments of God.

5) a. The living creatures and the throne of Glory came out of the great massive cloud (the whirlwind.) The Lord manifested himself in this storm theophany. The cherubim in other passages are also identified with the storm winds.

b. The wheels are called in the text "*the whirling wheels.*" The Hebrew word for wheel

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"*galgal*" can mean the whirlwind.

c. The "spirit" of the living creatures was in the wheels. The Hebrew word "*Ruach*" can mean spirit or wind, the wind often being a metaphor for the Spirit. There is the meteorological element in this imagery. All of these three points give evidence that the meaning of the wheels has something to do with the Spirit of God (another clue).

Final thoughts: God revealed his throne to the prophet. We read of angelic creatures and an awesome vision that comes out of a whirlwind---a theophany out of the cloud, out of the fire. In this context, at the beginning of Ezekiel, the prophet is overwhelmed by the Lord's glory and emboldened by His spirit to deliver a message. He declares to the people the Lord's great judgments. Ezekiel, the priest, then sees a manifestation of living cherubim, and the throne of glory---not an ark carried by four priests with golden cherubim models upon it, but an incredible glimpse into the true heavenly realities, seeing and hearing things (barely describable) that few have ever experienced. He witnessed the four living, heavenly throne bearers, the cherubim of Glory with the mysterious wheels beside them. This is the culmination and the climax of the entire vision,

a revealing of God's nature and form upon the throne, the personification of the Lord's Glory. This is One whose radiance and person is so incredible that even a distant approximation of Him is awesome, thus how beyond human imagination must the true heavenly manifestation be?

We shall now examine this further in the next chapter when we open Daniel's vision of the throne: *"I saw until thrones were placed, and one who was ancient of days sat: his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels burning fire"* (Dan. 7:9).

Part Two

Daniel's Fiery Vision

Daniel's vision of the Throne with Fiery Wheels: In Daniel, as in Ezekiel, God cracked the door that we might peer into the heavenly realm. In Daniel 7, we also have the only directly related vision referencing the Lord's throne with wheels. These two visions of the throne have similarities and there is much imagery. However, in Ezekiel the wheels are described in much greater detail. As we saw, Ezekiel's words can only go so far, and beyond that it is truly indescribable. How do other passages describe what wheels are like besides the obvious function or phenomenal activity? It is helpful to find parallels and what is common to both. The objects and characters in the vision and much of this passage were meant to be understood in a figurative sense. (We are told it is meant to be understood this way in the text). Like assembling many pieces of a puzzle, in searching out the truth of this biblical mystery, the fuller meaning can only be brought to light by carefully applying other

relevant scriptures. Here we will center on the question: What does it reveal concerning the wheels?

The Vision: Daniel, chapter 7 *“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head on his bed: then he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matters. 2Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the sky broke forth on the great sea. 3Four great animals came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I saw until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand on two feet as a man; and a man’s heart was given to it. 5Behold, another animal, a second, like a bear; and it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth: and they said thus to it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6After this I saw, and behold, another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the animal had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7After this I saw in the night visions, and, behold, a fourth animal, awesome and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the animals that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by*

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the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. 9I saw until thrones were placed, and one who was ancient of days sat: his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels burning fire. 10A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 11I saw at that time because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I saw even until the animal was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire. 12As for the rest of the animals, their dominion was taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 13I saw in the night visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. 15As for me, Daniel, my spirit was grieved in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. 17These great animals, which are four, are four kings, who

shall arise out of the earth. 18But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. 19Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth animal, which was diverse from all of them, exceedingly terrible, whose teeth were of iron, and its nails of brass; which devoured, broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet; 20and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three fell, even that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke great things, whose look was more stout than its fellows. 21I saw, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23Thus he said, The fourth animal shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings. 25He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. 26But the judgment shall be set, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end. 27The

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kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole sky, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. 28Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts much troubled me, and my face was changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart."

Background: Daniel was in Babylonian captivity at approximately the same time period as Ezekiel, and he had a very troubling dream/vision and wrote it down. In the book we read of various visions concerning the rise and fall of empires. These will help provide further background and context in seeing God's plan of ruling and reigning from his perspective. Daniel 7 also centers on some apocalyptic (end time) events that are beyond the scope of this writing.

A large volume of writings have centered on Daniel's visions, and there is much debate about the specifics of the subject of the return of the Lord to this earth, but we won't focus on those specifics here. In the text, the scenario of the vision is reiterated again with added detail and meaning assigned to the interpretation. The dynamic of clashing kingdoms as well as spiritual warfare comprise the focus and assist in understanding the throne.

Daniel is troubled and vexed in spirit regarding what awaits his people. What could these two passages have in common? We will focus on this without getting into all the debate and various views concerning specific details of events, specific earthly kingdoms and rulers, etc. At the end of the passage an interpretation is given of the vision, which helps in understanding the "wheels", the suffering and redemption of God's people, and the fact that, ultimately, "*heaven rules.*"

Vision Portrayed: The dream starts with four dreadful beasts coming out of the sea in succession, with various descriptions of beasts and behaviors, after being stirred up by the four winds of heaven. (Again we see meteorological phenomena). The beasts devour and ravage the earth. The beasts represent kings/kingdoms. These are ravenous, ferocious wild beasts (in the literal meaning of the Hebrew word), not simply animals. It should also be noted that the word for "beast" is very different than the word for "living creatures" as used in Ezekiel. If the living creatures are symbolic of the Lord's rule and reign, (creatures bearing God's throne, as some have understood them) then these four beasts could represent an evil imitation of the four cherubim. At a particular

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point in the narrative, one of the "horns" of the final beast directs his blasphemies toward God. Daniel then sees thrones being set up. Also we are told in the interpretation that in contrast to God's throne, other "thrones are cast down " and there is a stripping of authority which could help explain the work of the fiery wheels.

The Four Beasts (Satan's kingdoms): In the passage the four referenced beasts are depicting worldly kingdoms. Various commentators have ascribed these as representing similar earthly kingdoms, but there are divergent views relating to specifics in eschatology. However, it is commonly understood that they represent, in general, the devil's manifested kingdom on this earth and/or a final antichrist rulership in the future.

Note: v. 12 It is represented as the most God-opposed of all, and culminating at last in the blasphemous Antichrist. (J.F.B.)

Most commentators see these four earthly empires as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (these matching the ancient historical record). It is beyond the scope of this writing to endeavor to elaborate on this. However, there is a consensus that these are evil kingdoms, both then

and also proceeding into the future (some sort of revived "Roman" empire, the epitome of Satan's manifestation and kingdom on this earth.

The fourth king (the "little horn") is destroyed in the narrative, and the rest have their domain taken away. There is also a parallel with the four beasts of Rev. 13. The specific identification and details aren't as important as the fact that God, who is on the throne, puts them down. None of the earthly kingdoms suffered this final "last days" judgment of fire. It was only a temporal judgment (being put down and defeated). Yet we understand from the rest of scripture that it isn't simply an earthly struggle, but a great spiritual dynamic beyond natural earthly systems. Ephesians 6:12 reads: *"For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."* (World English Bible)

"Earthly" Kingdoms: The psalmist declared *"the kings of the earth have set themselves in array against the Lord and his anointed..."* (Ps. 2:2). In the Scripture we read of many kings exalting themselves, rising up in an attempt to be to be like a god or God. As an

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example, in the book of Isaiah we read that the king of Assyria (bent on world dominance) attacked Israel. The king exalted himself and mocked and reviled God (Isa. 37:4) King Hezekiah prayed in the LORD'S presence for deliverance :
"16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. 17 Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God" (KJV).

Hezekiah prayed for deliverance and the angel of the Lord swiftly smote the king of Assyria and his army (Isa. 37:36). God triumphed. In Ezekiel 28 we find a revealing passage concerning the "Prince" and "King of Tyre." Though as an earthly king he is figuratively a personified, or type of, Satan. (*Ezek. 28:2: Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas;...*" v. 16...*thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub...*" He was later cast out as profane and judged by fire in that account. As we've seen in our brief study of the nature of the cherubim, we saw the cherubim proclaim his

holiness and exult his honor and lead in worship. A great contrast is shown when we consider that Satan (the one ultimately animating all the kings/beasts toward blasphemy) is not just a fallen angel. He is a fallen cherub. In Daniel's prophecy the fourth King (little horn) is insulting and cursing God and seeking to change his laws and decrees, and thus stirring up the wrath of God. It makes his sin of reproaching God (and also his agents) ever more severe. It is treason in the highest degree toward the Most High!

From Above and Below: The beast's throne comes out of the sea and out of the earth (v. 3,17.) God's throne comes down from heaven. In Ezekiel, the mobile throne comes down and the wheels touch the earth. The wheels are at the place of contact, as noted earlier in the nature of the cherubim, they separate the holy from the unholy. In the text the four winds of heaven "strove upon the seas." Some translations use the word strove to mean a great tension which exists between the "heavens" and "seas" (identified with nations/peoples). The world powers come forth out of the stirring up or agitation of the "sea" (Jer. 46:7, 8; Rev 13:1; 17:15). We notice that the winds of heaven stir up the sea. This could also be referencing angelic powers, the Lord's agents and

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the four chariots of heaven (Zech 6:5) in conflict with the earthly realm.

Great Wickedness: The beasts of Daniel 7 culminate in a king who speaks great blasphemies. In other chapters of Daniel we read of forced idolatry by another king (Dan. 3). In Ezekiel 10 the Lord carried out his punishments upon the leaders of those who followed idolatry. In God's temple, in the holy place, was an idolatrous "*image*" the most profane thing (disgusting in God's sight). As a side note, these passages regarding wheels in Ezekiel and Daniel include two points of great judgment in the Bible (not coincidentally). The abomination in the temple that brought desolation, and the fourth beast. It could be argued that these foreshadow/portray the greatest related pinnacles of wickedness/darkness recorded in Scripture (the Abomination of Desolation and the rule of the Beast/Antichrist).

Thrones Set in Place: *26But the judgment shall be set, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end. 27" (v-). He wrote "... 9I saw until thrones were placed, and one who was ancient of days sat: his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels burning fire. 10A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousands of*

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thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I saw at that time because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I saw even until the animal was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire.See also -Rev.1:14 "His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire."

In another passage in Daniel it states: "*He (God) removes kings and sets up kings*" (Dan. 2:22). God is ruling over the affairs of men, here portrayed as on a moving throne. God allows the rising of the wicked at times. God allows evil kingdoms to continue for his mysterious purposes which we humans don't often see until later. We read of the great host of heaven similar to that in the book of Revelation. Many thousands are ministering to him; Tens of thousands stand ready to serve him v. 7:10. In a similar way, in Revelation 5:10-11, we read: "*... Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,...*"

In Daniel 7 the Lord is judging in his courtroom. The books are opened and, as in Ezekiel 10, an accounting is done, and the angelic

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being with a writing pad marks out those who will be delivered. See also Rev. 20:12 *“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened....”*

Ancient Of Days/Son Of Man: (anthropomorphic image) Daniel beheld an image upon a throne. In this description of the Lord, only the hair and the clothing of his divine form are described (v. 9). Neither his face nor his exact likeness is related. Just as in the other visions, it is a human form---it is anthropomorphic. These passages probably contain the most descriptive image or "likeness" of God in the Old Testament. His clothing is *"white as snow, the hair of his head like pure wool, and dazzling. There is a brightness of light..."* as in Ezekiel. The only two direct references to "wheels" and the Lord's throne also happen to include this form or anthropomorphic image, an important common denominator (See Ezek. 1.) He saw that the *"likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man on it above. 27I saw as it were glowing metal, as the appearance of fire within it all around."* God has no form in the physical sense, yet He condescends and describes things in our terms. He relates to us as we are, made in His image. These passages are greatly revealing in the visual sense and certainly in other ways as in the book of Revelation, chapter

4. The Lord could have just expressed these things in vague ethereal terms, yet here it is visual. The door is opened allowing us to peer into the unknown realm.

The Books Are Opened: God will bring all deeds into judgment before this seat of authority. Nothing escapes his eye. Those in attendance, a great multitude, serve him in his court. Like the cherubim and seraphim, the angels in general serve him. The angelic hosts, as in many passages, relate to the throne and they watch in this supreme court of divine law. Like the angelic beings with the writing pad (Ezekiel 10), books are opened. God's record is revealed. As a mighty king sends his servants, God himself simply directs all affairs. The hosts of heaven are mentioned throughout scripture. They speak for him, they act on his behalf, they represent him as ambassadors and as messengers, even executing his vengeance on occasion.

Fiery Throne: The throne in this dream is described with the Ancient of Days seated and the throne as "*burning as with fire and its wheels were ablaze.*" In and of itself this description wouldn't make much sense. However, in light of the historic understanding of the chariot throne, it does. It is reminiscent of the wheels in Ezekiel's vision. In

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the first chapter of this study, we observed that Ezekiel beheld a moving throne that included the chariot of the cherubim and their wheels. Those wheels were to the prophet burning with fire. In Daniel's account the throne is portrayed with similar details though not as descriptive. Again, the Hebrew word for "wheels" here in Daniel is *galgal* (not simply *owphan*.) As noted earlier, *galgal* is a more active word meaning whirlwind, like machinery or wheelwork. The fact that the wheels are included in a vision where many other things in the passage are interpreted as allegoric/figurative gives evidence that the wheels are to be understood in this same sense. Though these two passages are the only places in scripture that the wheels of the throne are spoken of directly, there are many passages that use related imagery. The words "chariots of the Lord" can be found in a greater number. This concept is important in that it sheds light on the more obscure passages where wheels are associated with the throne, as we shall see later. A stream of fire comes forth, and it is noteworthy that fire is the dominant imagery (similar to Ezek. 1). Also there is a Divine court from which fire and judgment emanate. The fourth beast is judged. Verse 11 reads: "*the animal was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire....* Also it is reiterated "*26But the judgment*

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shall be set, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end." The fire and destruction proceeding from the wheeled throne accomplished this.

Imagery in the Fire of God: As noted earlier, the wheels are associated with fire. In a related passage, Psalm 97 states: *"1 Yahweh reigns. Let the earth rejoice! Let the multitude of islands be glad! 2Clouds and darkness are around him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. 3A fire goes before him, and burns up his adversaries on every side."*

In this passage the Lord is also referred to as *"the most high"* (v. 9) as in Daniel. Fire in the Scripture often refers to a judgment and a purifying. God is essentially burning up the works of wickedness, committing them to the flames. Parallel chapters to this would be Rev. 19, 20--the final judgment when God destroys the Beast (also typically referred to as Antichrist and/or the Lawless One). The fate of those who challenge and oppose God and do not repent is flames that aren't quenched. The "river of fire" may be equated with the lake of hell's fire. Verse 9 states that *"thrones were set in place"* and the ancient of days took his seat. Later it states that *"the Ancient of Days came."* That is the rule of heaven coming down. God's throne is one with wheels and it is dynamic in every sense

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(figuratively speaking).

Note: Oriental thrones move on wheels. Like the rapid flame, God's judgments are most swift in falling where He wills them (Ezek. 1:15, 16). The judgment here is not the last judgment, for then there will be no beast, and heaven and earth shall have passed away; but it is that of Antichrist (the last development of the fourth kingdom), typical of the last judgment. (J.F.B.)

The activity of the beast continues until it reaches its height, until God's court is set in place. The King is in control; he sits, he judges, and all attend him. As noted earlier, the Lord is both "seated" and "coming" in the same text. This vision is also important in that it is a major prophetic passage concerning the Messiah, and applies to a future apocalyptic time at the end of the ages.

Note: Daniel 7:9. I beheld till, I continued looking till thrones were cast down, rather, "thrones were placed" [Vulgate and Luther], namely, for the saints and elect angels to whom "judgment is given" (Dan. 7:22), as assessors with the Judge.... In English Version the thrones cast down are those of the previously mentioned kings who give place to Messiah. Ancient of days: "The everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6). He is the Judge here, as THE Son does not

judge in His own cause, and it is His cause which is the one at issue with the Antichrist (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary).

Coming in the clouds with Glory and Power: *13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14-There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed".*

In this passage the "Son of man is coming on the clouds of heaven" and to the throne. In this chapter it speaks of "till the Ancient of Days came" (v.21) and that is on a throne with wheels. This is far more than simply clouds (meteorologically) in light of the rest of Old Testament imagery. It also speaks of great clouds of glory. In Ezekiel, the Lord's glory on the throne (in the form of man, a representation of Christ) came out of the great storm cloud. The concept of the Messiah coming on the clouds of heaven is also related to the storm theophanies of the OT: "*I am coming to you in a thick cloud*" proclaimed the Lord on Mt. Sinai to

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Moses. Other times He came down and was shrouded in a storm cloud and spoke out of the "pillar of Cloud," a supernatural whirlwind (Exodus). Also in Psalm 18 it states the "*Lord rode upon the cherubim*" with storm clouds "he rode swiftly upon the *wings of the wind*" (also alluding to the chariot) and "*He bowed the heavens and came down*" (v. 8) and delivered His anointed ones. In Daniel the Son of man comes with clouds of heaven (similar to the theme in Ezekiel account). All heavenly/earthly authority, eventually all kingdoms "*under the heavens*" are given to the Son of man. In this final epic battle, Christ triumphs at His return (Revelation 19).

The King receives the Kingdom: This great ceremony, in full view of all the heavenly host, is one in which the Son receives an investiture from the Father: the rule and reign of heaven coming down to the earth ("*On earth as it is in heaven*"). Thus he shares the Father's attributes. When Christ was asked if he was the Messiah (Mk. 13), he referenced this passage. At a time of His total humility in the form of a man, in public shame, He spoke of being seated at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds to the highest exaltation. The throne Christ referenced was one that had the wheels of fire, for the

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Messiah sits at the right hand of God.

Note: "Son of man" expresses his visible state formerly in his humiliation hereafter in His exaltation. He "comes to the Ancient of days" to be invested with the kingdom. ..." This investiture was at His ascension "with the clouds of heaven," (Acts 1:11; Mt. 26:64)...which is a pledge of His return "in like manner" in the clouds" and "with clouds" Rev. 1:7 (J.F.B.)

Worship: In verse 14 we read of the Son of Man being given the kingdom of the Most High. "*He was given dominion, glory and the kingdom....*" The whole host of heaven give worship to God and the Messiah. God is described as "the Ancient of Days," eternally Sovereign over all other thrones of men. This speaks of another attribute of His eternal nature. His hair was "*white as snow,*" portraying His symbolic purity. The prophet also speaks of another title, "the Most High" used in reference to the Lord. He stands alone. This superlative description sets Him apart from all others. This exclusive title and worship can only be ascribed to one. The Messiah cannot be viewed as an ordinary mortal king. His coming was looked to for many generations as a deliverer from the enemies of God. In Rev. 19 we read of Christ

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coming upon a white horse with a sword, triumphing over the "beast." He will return to triumph over the Evil One's throne and kingdom. The attributes ascribed to God are now given to the "Son of man.

God's Deliverance of the Saints: There has been and still is much debate as to the specific rulers, the "little horn," and the broader identity of the ten-headed "beast." The Lord gave a transcendent word that spans time. A word written for the saints: ages past, present, and future. Whether suffering in times past or future, there is a line stretching throughout history. Whether an Antiochus Epiphanes, a Nero, a pope of the Middle Ages, or a modern "messianic-like" dictator, all these are also types and a foreshadowing of a future, final Antichrist (Beast). In the passage we read of a great time of suffering for the saints of the most high " *the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of days came.*" That time will be a period of unprecedented evil, tribulation, and climactic spiritual warfare.

For a time it appears in the temporal world that the saints are defeated by the enemy of God. In a similar way, the book of the Revelation was written to suffering believers in the early church

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and throughout the ages until now. That promise is to sustain the believer through all tribulation and hardship; He is the Savior. His kingdom comes into this dreadful situation. In this passage there is also a very sobering account of events just prior to God's final deliverance. It troubled Daniel even after being told the incredible promise that the Messiah receives the kingdom and delivers His people from suffering under the kingdom of darkness. Then they are given the kingdom (as is fully elaborated in the New Testament). Christ Messiah (God's Anointed One) confers on his people a kingdom, and we are joint heirs with him. The saints (the anointed ones) are given the kingdom "in Christ." As noted earlier, when Christ was near His greatest time of suffering and future exaltation he quoted this Daniel 7 passage. The saints are also those set apart like those separated from the wicked in Ezekiel. He has His overarching plan even when it appears that everything is going against His saints according to the human perspective. He is Lord over all, and He will never let his people be given more than they can endure. All those things will ultimately work for His glory, praise, and kingdom.

Clues/Parallels with the Wheels in

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Ezekiel: Daniel 7 fits again into the historic understanding of the vision of a "throne-chariot" of Ezekiel.

1. The chariot represented royal power and the exercising of the king's authority: the Lord upon his throne is "casting down" the worldly powers and their seats of authority. Though we don't see the cherubim specifically, we are told of the vast multitude of heavenly angelic host surrounding the throne. The fiery wheels (*galgal*) of the throne are in a passage meant to be understood in a figurative sense (like other metaphors interpreted in the text).

2. The wheels in Ezekiel 10 (though not interpreted) were also called by a descriptive term, "whirling wheels."

3. The Son of Man coming with clouds of heaven associated with glory. The vision of living creatures and the throne of Glory emanated from the clouds of heaven also (Ezek. 1). The beasts come out of the sea after being stirred up by the wind (*Ruach*, wind or spirit in the Hebrew). There is again a meteorological element in the imagery of both visions.

4. In Daniel's vision we read of God

delivering his saints, those set apart. In Ezekiel we read of God sparing the ones marked out or called out.

5. The prophet Daniel is overwhelmed by the whole vision of the Lord (like Ezekiel.) Both are told that the Lord is bringing forth great judgments.

6. Fire from the wheels signifies the judgments and sentences of God in both visions. It was the source of judgment/destruction on the king, (little horn.) This corresponds to the awesome and fearful appearance of the wheels in Ezekiel.

7. In Daniel the Lord is executing Divine justice from a heavenly court. There is an accounting, as in Ezekiel 10 and a marking of those saved. God "sees" and the record is kept (the books are opened). In Ezekiel, the Lord exposes and judges the leadership of the people . In Daniel 7 the focus of judgment is on world rulers.

8. We are told in Daniel's vision that worship and glory is given to the Son of man. Worship is at the throne in Ezekiel 3. Also, in both, anthropomorphic images are evident.

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Summary: We now see that various patterns are coming together. The truth is revealed in both of these passages as they complement one another. The Daniel passage is in harmony with other passages of the Old Testament as we read of God metaphorically riding forth upon a chariot-throne (and a cherubim with the clouds of heaven). In both books we see the revealing of God's kingdom. As far as interpretation goes, yes we see sovereignty (probably the prevailing theory of the "wheels") yet more specifics are revealed (like judgment) by looking at both passages.

Other pieces of the puzzle are added. Earlier in Ezekiel we saw a separation occur. In Daniel, the Lord God and the Messiah vindicate his people. He lifts up his people and casts down their enemies in a great spiritual warfare. The initial common denominators are the Lord God acting upon nations from the mobile throne with wheels and fire. He is exercising his authority and judgment upon his enemies. Not only do the visions to his prophets reveal His glory, and the angelic host proclaim his glory, but the acts themselves manifest his greatness. God, who beholds all, intervenes as evil rises and does so according to his plan and his timing from his very throne.

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We will now go to other parts of scripture that shed light on this mystery of the wheels in a search for independent confirmation. If we are to interpret accurately we must continue to draw from the whole counsel of God. ***Psalm 68:17 reads: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place..." (KJV).***

Part Three

Of Chariots and Wheels

Chariots and Wheels, God's Ark and the Throne in Battle: Now that a general understanding of the two main "wheels" passages has been set forth, we can review and then use these foundational truths to look at the deeper mystery of the wheels in other contexts. These should also fit into the crux of the passages already quoted. Now we have links established between the wheeled throne and a chariot, as well as a beginning for understanding the cherubim. We can now examine further scriptures, each shedding light and answering the question: "What is the meaning of the wheels?"

In following clues, we can begin to see where they lead. As we saw previously, the "Chariot of the cherubim" was the "chariot" formed by the cherubs on the mercy-seat at the Ark of the Covenant. It was moved (with the pillar of cloud and fire) and, with it, the presence and symbolic throne of God. Earlier we noted a military concept relating to the cherubim. When God's presence moved with the Ark *"the cloud of Yahweh was over them by day, when they set forward from the camp.* Moses would say v. 3 *"Rise up, Yahweh, and let your enemies be scattered! Let those who hate you flee before you!"* Numbers 10:34-35 (WEB).

The ark went before them and was at times carried into battle as at the battle of Jericho. The Lord went before them to drive out the enemies so they could take possession of the land. (See also 2 *Sam. 6:2*) In the book of Psalms we have another reference that has relevance to understanding the throne chariot. (See also Ps. 80:1,2; Deut. 33:26). This psalm was a hymn to celebrate the ark being brought up to the temple at Jerusalem . It states that the Lord *"rides"* in the heavens, for He is the Lord of hosts of the armies of heaven (the angelic host). *Psalm 68 reads: "1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.... Sing unto God, sing praises to*

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his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him." We also see references to the Lord's appearance on Mt. Sinai , v. 8 *"The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel"*. Here again we note the connection with the cherubim and God's chariots going forth for the sake of his people. 14" *When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon....* 17" *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. .."*. We also read of God triumphing (wounding the head) over his enemies (scattering kings.) Verse-21 *"But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses."* The Psalm also leads to exultant worship and ascribing praise at His throne. v-33 *"To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.34 Ascribe yea strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.35 O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God" (KJV).*

We see many things matching what has already been referenced. It is very consistent with

the themes already noted concerning the chariot/storm theophany, judgment, worship, glory, and deliverance.

Habakkuk 3:3-8: In the book of the prophet Habakkuk we read words similar to those in Psalm 68 where the prophet again calls to remembrance God's appearance at Mt Sinai. *"God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.... Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet (KJV). Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and **thy chariots of salvation?**" (KJV). The Lord's great deliverance at the Red Sea is the focus here. As noted earlier, Moses is said to have seen the throne of God out of the storm cloud. God is the "charioteer" and his "*chariot of salvation*" triumphed over Pharaoh's army (see also Psalm 77) to save his "anointed" and strike down rulers of evil. Verse 13 reads: *"Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah"* (KJV). This matches the Daniel passage and parallels with the many things already listed. Again this confirms the understanding of this divine Chariot with its*

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wheels of deliverance.

Note: 30th *Heb* "you mount your horses." As the next line makes clear, the Lord is pictured here as a charioteer, not a cavalryman. ... v31 Or "chariots of deliverance." (NET Bible Notes)

Note: 8. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? Was the cause of His dividing the Red Sea and Jordan His displeasure against these waters?" The answer to this is tacitly implied in "Thy chariots of salvation." ... thy chariots---in antithesis to Thy foe, Pharaoh's chariots,..." Jehovah's chariots are His angels (Ps 68:17), or the cherubim, or the ark. (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary).

Other Wheels (*owphan and galgal*)
Portrayed in other Passages: So how does the rest of Scripture portray wheels and does that fit in with what has already been observed? We now have the two passages (Ezekiel and Daniel), along with others and the various similarities were noted. With these we can also assess if a further pattern emerges.

Threshing Cart Wheel: It should be mentioned at this point that the Hebrew word for

cart and chariot are similar. In Isaiah there is a passage referencing the wheels (*galgal*) of the threshing cart (or threshing sledge). This device was similar in construction to a chariot. It served an important role in biblical times, as its purpose was to separate the chaff from the wheat in the time of harvest. The Lord himself spoke of this in the book of Isaiah, chapter 28. In this chapter, methods of agriculture is obviously not God's point. Rather, the context was one of a warning to the nations. This was a somewhat cryptic passage, yet simply put, a message of spiritual warning.

Isaiah 28. *"1 Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fertile valley of those who are overcome with wine! 2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one. Like a storm of hail, a destroying storm, and like a storm of mighty waters overflowing, he will cast them down to the earth with his hand.... 21 For Yahweh will rise up as on Mount Perazim. He will be angry as in the valley of Gibeon; that he may do his work, his unusual work, and bring to pass his act, his extraordinary act. 22 Now therefore don't be scoffers, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord, Yahweh of Armies, on the whole earth. 23 Give ear, and hear my voice! Listen, and hear my speech! 24 Does he who plows to sow plow*

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*continually? ...28 Bread flour must be ground; so he will not always be threshing it. **Although he drives the wheel of his threshing cart over it, his horses don't grind it....29 This also comes forth from Yahweh of Armies, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom**"(WEB). In this passage the pride of Ephraim is spoke of as being cast down. (See Hosea 4.17,19 "*Ephraim is joined to idols...a whirlwind will sweep them away*") God brings "a destroying storm" metaphorically (translated as "**whirlwind**" in Douay-Rheims Bible) in the fall of Israel to Assyria. God is chastening his people. It is speaking of an unusual ("strange work" in other translations) work as his mysterious purposes unfold .God at times uses even pagan nations to punish or chastise his people. They become his agents and he uses those nations then to overthrow other pagan nations and so forth. The Lord is speaking of his work of separating out (winnowing) the chaff. The passage is essentially saying that God isn't going to keep trying to separate out the chaff endlessly. There is a limit, and after that judgment.*

Note: v21.... Perazim means, expressing a sudden and complete overthrow. strange-as being against His own people; judgment is not what God delights in; it is, though necessary, yet strange to Him (La 3:33). (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible

Commentary).

The Potters Wheel: Another description of wheels elaborated in scripture was the potter's wheel. It allowed the potter to work the clay and to fashion it as it turned. He was making a work on the wheels. In Jeremiah 18:3 we read of the Potter's house, where he is laboring at the wheel: Jeremiah 18 *"1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying, 2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear my words. 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold, **he was making a work on the wheels.** 4 When the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. 5 Then the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, 6 House of Israel, can't I do with you as this potter? says Yahweh. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, house of Israel. 7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; 8 if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them. 9 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; 10 if they do that which is evil in my sight, that they not obey my voice, then I will repent of the good, with which I said I would benefit them. 11 Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah, and*

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to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says Yahweh: Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return you now everyone from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings. 12 But they say, It is in vain; for we will walk after our own devices, and we will do everyone after the stubbornness of his evil heart. 13 Therefore thus says Yahweh: Ask now among the nations, who has heard such things; the virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing. 17 I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity" (WEB).

One interpretation given concerning the potter's wheel is that the Lord "fashions a plan" in the heavenly realm like the working at a wheel. (This is a warning to Israel). It is "*to build up...or tear down a nation.* In Jeremiah 18:3, God states that if they wouldn't listen "*I will scatter them with the east wind.* Thus says Yahweh: *Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return you now everyone from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.*"

God's spirit is trying to bring them to a point of repentance for their idolatry and thus build them up. God is continually working at refining his people. We can see God's "work" at the wheel, the metaphoric description of God working in this manner to warn the nations (a pattern). His work is

to advance His purposes and kingdom. This brings together more themes. The potter's wheel and the threshing wheel (Isa. 28). They follow the pattern of the things already mentioned regarding the chariot wheels passages.

Chariots like a Whirlwind: In the search to understand the words "wheel" and "chariot" even more thoroughly, it is helpful to gain a broader understanding biblically of how they were specifically used in scripture. First, it becomes evident that these two words are connected through many similar passages. Let's now look further at how other passages portray and describe the wheels with their metaphors and adjectives in order to refine the meaning.

Heavenly Chariots as the Winds: As was cited earlier, there are references in Scripture to the concept of chariots moving as a whirlwind. This is significant, as we shall see. Chariots and wheels are as the whirlwind and the storm. This concept is validated in the book of Kings. Elijah was taken up in a *"chariot of fire."* He went *"up into heaven by a whirlwind."* 2Kings 2:11-12: *"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a Chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven... (KJV).* The chariots

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seem to be part of, or emanate from, the whirlwind. We also read of chariots and horses in the prophet Zechariah's vision and they are interpreted as follows in the text itself (Zech. 6:1-5): *"these (chariots) are the four winds of heaven"* or in a different translation *"these are the four spirits of heaven."* This forms an emphatic statement that the spirit of the Lord goes forth as a chariot (the merkabah). In Psalm 104:3-4 it states, *3"He (God) makes clouds his chariot, he rides on the wings of the wind. 4He makes his messengers (angels) winds; his servants flames of fire."* (See Hebrews 2:7) These angelic beings include the cherubim. Here the wind is personified. His metaphoric vehicle is one of His methods of causing things to follow His will through His messengers.

Earthly Chariots like the Whirlwinds/Chariot Wheels of War: Isaiah 5: 26*"He will lift up a banner to the nations from far and he will whistle for them from the end of the earth. Behold, they will come speedily and swiftly. ...28whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent. Their horses' hoofs will be like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind."*

As noted in the Old Testament, we are told of the wheels of the chariot, a swift military machine. In this passage, the message of the

chastisement of the Lord is portrayed as Judea was about to be invaded by a foreign army. They would be overpowered and overwhelmed. Again the Lord is sending a warning in order to bring them, his people, to repentance. The Lord is the one who is bringing this to pass v. 26. God is doing this "strange work " (Isa. 28).

Jeremiah 4: *"11At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A hot wind from the bare heights in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to winnow, nor to cleanse; 12a full wind from these shall come for me. Now I will also utter judgments against them." 13Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as the whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe to us! For we are ruined. 14Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved". (WEB)*

Here again the Spirit of the Lord is pleading with His people for them to turn lest this judgment come. As in Ezekiel, the prophet Jeremiah was grieved (v. 19) at the coming invasion to desolate the land and the Lord's temple. Again we see a military conquest of God's people. Here, similarly to Isaiah 5, is portrayed a lightning-swift advance of an army and the rumbling of wheels. In v. 13 it states "He comes up like clouds, his chariots like a whirlwind ..." A storm metaphor is used here (Also

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see Daniel 11:40). As in Isaiah 28, there was to be no more winnowing (separating out the chaff). As noted earlier, the people had forsaken the Lord and now He was pronouncing a storm of judgment (a hot wind, v.11) upon them (and fire, v. 4.)

Note: Definition of chariot: a vehicle generally used for warlike purposes. This word is sometimes used figuratively for hosts (Ps. 68:17; 2 Kings 6:17). Elijah..." (Easton's Bible Dictionary).

Isaiah 66: *1"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?...14 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. 15 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. 17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD. 18 For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. "* (KJV).

This chapter starts with God declaring his true dwelling place, speaking of his throne. Thus says Yahweh, "*Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool*" (v. 1). The Lord's throne is among those who do his will in the heavenly realm (angelic host) and in its coming to the earth. This prophetic chapter also centers on the terrible day of the Lord's final judgment. We see the common themes of fire and the sword and gathering nations for judgment (v. 18). Isaiah refers to God's "*chariots like the whirlwind.*" Here is another direct reference linking the two concepts. Both the heavenly and earthly chariots are described as being like the clouds, the storm/whirlwind.

The chariot and the whirlwind are again fitting the pattern of Ezekiel and Daniel. In v. 3 we see God exposing idolatry and abomination: "*Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*" He states it shall be well with His servants, a time of rejoicing, but a recompense of final justice to His adversaries. (v.14). In verse 18, he states, "*For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory.*" The eyes of the Lord behold all from where He sits and calls all to account.

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Summary: These particular clues point us in directions that lead to other confirmations. In the earlier chapter we noticed a link between the Spirit, the wheels and the whirlwind. Also, we start to see the spiritual meaning of the wheels (judgments/chastening) as they relate symbolically to the winds and whirlwinds, and these in turn relate to God's Spirit. This is a defining concept. This truth is witnessed by these various evidences. First, is the descriptive name of the "whirling wheels" given in the text (Ezek. 10:13) The second is the variant meaning (whirlwind) of the Hebrew word "wheel" throughout the Bible. Third, is the undeniable pattern of descriptions that emerge in the passages involving chariots and wheels as already mentioned (as in the storm). As we shall see, the storm and the whirlwind are specifically *the* closest representations or similes used in scripture of these mysterious wheels. All these passages taken together help one to form a composite picture of this "Throne-Chariot" of the Lord enveloped in and moving in the storm cloud. There is again a connection to meteorology in the many verses quoted.

It leads to another question on this path of discovery. What is the significance in the

references to the whirlwind and storm? How does this fit into the pattern discussed?

Some important clues and additional Parallels with the former Wheels Passages:

1. Many passage noted fit into the historic understanding of the "throne-chariot" with the cherubim.

2. The wheels of the throne (*galgal*) are like the whirlwind. Again, there is a defining repetitive meteorological concept in this.

3. God delivering his saints. There is a separating out (a winnowing). The Lord is bringing forth a great judgment upon his adversaries.

4. Fire related to the wheels was the source of the judgments of God.

5. In the passages we read of worship and glory, it is offered to the Lord enthroned. After seeing the links in the various passages, let us follow these clues.

Let's examine more descriptions of the storm wind in the natural world as we try to glean the spiritual meanings of these metaphors. *Ps. 77: "You alone are the God who did wonders; among the peoples you revealed your might 16 ... v. 20*

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***The thunder of your chariot wheels resounded;
your lightning lit up the world; the earth
trembled and quaked'' (NAB).***

Part Four

Heavenly Wheels like the Whirlwind

The "Wheels" in the Heavens and Nature's Whirlwinds: Let's examine more connections and look in depth at what the storm winds mean both in the Scripture and also in creation. As we have seen, chariot wheels have a definite metaphoric connection in scripture with whirlwinds (Isa. 66:14; Ezek.10:13; Isa. 5:28; Jer. 4:13; 2 Kg. 2:11; Zech. 6:5). When God speaks in His Word, He often repeats the same message in a variety of ways so that people will have ample opportunity to understand. As noted, the main Hebrew word for Spirit can be translated, "breath, air, wind, breeze, spirit." The Greek word is similar in meaning. There is also a connection of all three words: "cherubim, chariot, wheels" to the winds.

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This is supported by the various passages examined (Ps. 104:3; Ps.18:10, etc.) Aside from the many direct storm references, there are also indirect verses that speak of a wheel-like movement in the natural heavens.

In Eccles. 1, it states, *"the wind .. blows round and round on its circuits..." Ecclesiastes 1:6 (KJV)*. In another version it reads: *"The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits."* In the book of Job the winds are described as his messenger doing God's service (also Ps.148:8) And Job 37:12 reads: *"The clouds go **round in circles, wheeling** about according to his plans, to carry out all that he commands them over the face of the whole inhabited world (v. 13 NETBible).*

God comes in awesome splendor, as in Psalm 77. God delivered his people at the Red Sea, as described in Psalm 19: *"The thunder of your chariot wheels resounded; your lightning lit up the world;.* In another translation it states, *"The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind..."* (Ps. 77, ASV). These descriptions imply a supernatural tornado-like phenomena. Here the psalmist uses the Hebrew word for "wheels" (*galgal*) by use of an analogy and a metaphor in describing the storms in the heavens, again portraying the

heavens as in a rolling dynamic. 14- "*Your way, O God, is holy; what god is as great as our God?* 15 *You alone are the God who did wonders; among the peoples you revealed your might* 16 *With your arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. Selah* 17- *The waters saw you, God; the waters saw you and lashed about, trembled even to their depths.* 18 *The clouds poured down their rains; the thunderheads rumbled; your arrows flashed back and forth.* 19 ***The thunder of your chariot wheels resounded; your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked.*** 20- *Through the sea was your path; your way, through the mighty waters, though your footsteps were unseen "*(NAB).

Remember "*the Lord looked down out of it*" (pillar of cloud-whirlwind) and the Lord's "throne-chariot" metaphorically routed Pharaoh's army and chariot wheels! Ex.14:25: *And took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians' "*(KJV). This is similar to verses found in Habakkuk 3 and Psalm 68. The Lord worked on behalf of his people against those who oppressed them, and as in Daniel, issued judgments in favor of his saints. These are wheels of deliverance similar to Psalm 18. This passage also ascribes praise and worship: "*Your way, O God, is holy; what god is as great as our God?*" v.

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15. God's great acts, his works, show forth his glory.

Note: Whirlwind in Psalm 77:18: "**Thy thunder was in the heaven,**" literally, "**in the wheel,**" i.e. the rotation of the visible heavens phenomenally round the earth, but the Septuagint, the Chaldee, and the Vulgate is rendered: "in a whirl, whirled about." **Ezekiel 10:13** translated "it was cried unto them whirling" and they were called to put themselves into rapid revolution (Fausset's Bible Dictionary).

The Natural Heavens and the Storm: It is important to realize that God uses the natural heavens to teach us of the heavenly spiritual world. This metaphor for the Spirit is used more than any other in the Bible. The whole concept forms a basis of understanding that can be universally understood by humanity throughout the ages. His Word is transcendent. The truth of the natural world acts as another independent witness of creation, the biblical model herein described.

Modern meteorology teaches that air mass movements can contain many circuitous swirling movements. For instance, the earth's windstreams, the largest of which is like meandering rivers of winds that circle the globe. These are commonly known as the jet streams (*the circuits*) as in

Eccles.1:6. Within these "streams" are also areas of clockwise and counterclockwise rotations (storms) on many scales, like swirls and eddies in a flowing river.

Note: (Jet stream is defined as a narrow band of strong winds in the atmosphere that controls the movement of high and low pressure systems and associated fronts. Jet streams meander from time to time. (N.W.S. Glossary),(also from Storm Prediction Center glossary of terms).

In our time we now see and comprehend much more of what is going on in the atmosphere. We behold features such as massive spiraling hurricanes and rotating tornadic thunderstorms (thanks to weather satellites and Doppler radar.)

Note: Cyclone: An area of low atmospheric pressure that has a closed circulation....rotating counter-clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere... they usually bring about clouds and precipitation. Definition of whirlwind: a small-diameter columnar vortex of rapidly swirling air. A broad spectrum of vortices occurring in the atmosphere, ranging in scale from small eddies that form in the lee of buildings...to tornadoes (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Though factors that shape severe thunderstorms (tornados) are very complex, yet

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simply put, they are typically a convergence and a clashing of two very different air masses. Along these boundary lines (areas of low pressure) storms develop. Added to this are dynamics of vertical turning or spin (vorticity) in the atmosphere. Wind shear also creates a horizontal rolling effect in the clouds of the thunderstorm. These can spawn tornadoes at the surface. Severe thunderstorms in the natural world, tornadoes are among nature's most violent winds---rotating columns of air lifting up and scattering vast amounts of debris. We also notice this scattering connotation in many related biblical passages.

Note: Directional wind shear is the change in wind direction with height.... Speed shear is the change in wind speed with height.... **This tends to create a rolling affect to the atmosphere** and is believed to be a key component in the formation of meso-cyclones which can lead to tornadoes (National Weather Service).

Storms, and specifically the coming of a great cloud (as in Ezek. 1) can signal a major shift in the weather. So it is in the spiritual realm---the clash of air masses marks the coming of a storm "front" (so named after warfare terminology).

Spiritual Collisions in the Biblical Realm:
The New Testament contains this same analogy.

God's Spirit came like *"the rush of a mighty wind"* (with accompanying fire) on the day of Pentecost and brought forth a new kingdom (Acts 2:2). It was a cataclysmic collision of spiritual kingdoms into the territory of Satan *"ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient"* (Eph. 2:2). The Scripture also uses this metaphor at other times (John 3:8; Jude 1:12; Eph. 4:14; Mt. 16:2,3; 2 Pet. 2:17).

The Storm of the Lord: What does the whirlwind represent in the spiritual metaphor? Nahum 1:3: *"The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: **the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm,** and the clouds are the dust of his feet. ... 4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry... 6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide the fierceness of his anger? 7 The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him"* (KJV).

God's working is directly portrayed and described by a seismic analogy. None can endure His wrath, yet He spares those who have faith in Him. Proverbs 10:25 says: *"the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more..."* (KJV). In Jeremiah 23:19, a whirling tempest is portrayed. The anger of God is stirred towards apostate Jerusalem. *"See the storm of the Lord will burst out in wrath, a*

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whirlwind swirling down on the head of the wicked." (See also Zech. 7:13,14: *So I scattered them among the nations with a whirlwind.*") Isaiah 29 reads, " *But the multitude of your foes will be like fine dust, and the multitude of the ruthless ones like chaff that blows away. Yes, it will be in an instant, suddenly. 6 She will be visited by Yahweh of Armies (Lord of Hosts) with thunder, with earthquake, with great noise, with whirlwind and storm, and with the flame of a devouring fire*" (WEB). The Lord again is described as routing the enemies with His great firestorm (all the nations) as chaff that is whirled away.

The Vanishing and Rolling of the Sky: If you will read the following series of scripture portions carefully, you will see that they link together the rolling of the heavens like a vast scroll, especially in times of divine judgment. In Isaiah 34, we read: 4 "All of the army of the sky will be dissolved. **The sky will be rolled up like a scroll**, and all its armies will fade away, as a leaf fades from off a vine or a fig tree.⁸ For Yahweh has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion." Herein is described the destruction of Satan's armies (angelic host) "the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12, WEB). In Hebrews 1:6 we read of the heavens perishing and the Son of God rolling them up: v. 12 "And as a mantle shalt thou

roll them up. Then God speaks to the Son and says, “*Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet*” (v. 13). God will crush the enemy under the feet of Christ, and the Son is given the scepter and is the heir of the kingdom (v. 2) similarly as in Daniel 7. In the passage we also read “*Who maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire,*” this describing God's angelic host. In a similar passage in Revelation, chapter 6, it states: **13** “*And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, ...even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15And the kings of the earth, and the great men,... 16And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*”

In Revelation, chapters 4 and 5, we read of detailed imagery of God's glorious throne. In the sixth chapter, the Lamb (The Son of man) opens the seals and the cherubim, calling forth a great shaking and a “*mighty wind.*” (Vss. 13,14). There is great turbulence (rolling in the heavens) and a spiritual clash as the Lord upon the throne summons the earth to judgment. The evil of the

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earth cannot even endure to look at Him or be seen of Him who sits upon the throne.

Summary: The metaphor of the heavens with its clouds, storms, and wind are the primary analogy in Scripture of His Spirit and the related spiritual conflicts. These metaphors lead the reader to an understanding of what might ordinarily not be obvious. In the metaphorical sense, a storm is but a figure of this conflict of two very different kingdoms colliding. The biblical message conveyed is that it signifies swift judgment, and deliverance and rescue of his own from the attacks of enemies. The Lord's "storm-chariot" of the cherubim triumphs over His enemies for His purposes. The spiritual tempest, with its effect upon humanity, is His agent. (This is not to imply that those who suffer from literal storm disasters in our time are necessarily under God's punishment). The tornadic whirlwind, with its thunder and lightning, is associated with the chariot of the Lord and the cherubim and the wheels. This was seen by the prophets as a manifestation of God's glory and presence and the outworking of His plan. There are some final specific aspects of that working that bring together many previous themes already discussed, as we shall see next. Isaiah 17:13 reads, *"The nations shall rush like the rushing of many*

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*waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and **like a rolling thing** (galgal/wheel) before the whirlwind" (KJV).*

The (Winnowing) Work of the Wheels at the Throne: The Lord spoke a repetitive message through His prophets. We have seen that the whirlwind (like the wheel) is used in the Bible as a figure of God's conquest, triumph and judgments. Yet, there is also something unique about the working of this figurative windstorm. The previously examined scriptures indicate that there is a purpose to this wind. We read that the enemies were winnowed and scattered like the chaff, and this comprises another significant point. Let us look in more detail and follow this thread.

What does the separation and the scattering signify? How is the process of winnowing implemented? When grain was harvested in biblical times it was beaten or winnowed with a cart wheel, then threshed out with a winnowing fan (something like a modern pitchfork). It was then thrown into the air and the strong winds would blow away the chaff and stubble. What was left was the wheat or other grain to be gathered into barns. Here are other Scriptures exemplifying this:

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Isaiah 40:22-24 The Lord enthroned *"brings princes to nothing; who makes the judges of the earth meaningless: They are planted scarcely... He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the whirlwind takes them away as stubble."* (WEB). In Hosea 13:3, the Lord speaks of the idolaters among the Israelites and warns they will be *"...like chaff swirling from the threshing floor"* and the *"east wind of the Lord will come...and they shall fall"* (v. 15). It is also relevant to note that when God's Temple was built, it was built on a threshing floor (1Chron. 21:14-18). It was as if the very ground itself had to be cleansed before the Lord could occupy it in his holiness.

The "Rolling" of the Chaff: In Isaiah 17:12,13, it states *"The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing (galgal) before the whirlwind"* (KJV). As we have noted, God deals with the nations (Assyria, Babylonia, and others) and He brings his winnowing fan upon them and they are scattered.

Note: V. 13. "...as the Assyrian army did, until it came to Jerusalem, and there it stopped; ...and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind; chaff upon the floor is easily chased away with the fan,

and, much more easily, chaff upon the mountains with the wind; it was usual with the Jews to thresh their corn, and winnow it on hills and mountains.... Kings and great men of the earth are but as dust with God; and the higher they are, or they exalt themselves, the more they are exposed to the power of his wrath, and as easily cast down as the dust is scattered by the wind...and **like a rolling thing before the whirlwind; or "like a wheel"**, as the word is sometimes rendered; (John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible).

Similarly, Psalm 35:5 states, "*Let them (God's enemies) be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them*" (KJV). Remember how the angel of the Lord routed the Egyptians at the Red Sea? The psalmist goes on to say: "23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.... This reminds one of Daniel's prophecy: "*Judgment was given in favor of the saints*" (Dan. 7:22). The Lord will indeed "*give relief to you who are afflicted with us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels (his Chariot/chariots) in flaming fire*" (2 Thess.1:7, WEB). Finally, he worships the Lord for his deliverance vss. 10,27..."*let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. 28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day.*"

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In Psalm 83.13 we find a similar verse including another usage of the Hebrew word for wheel: *"1 Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. 2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. 3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones ... 13 O my God, make them like a wheel; (galgal) as the stubble before the wind. 14 As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; 15 So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. 16 Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD. 17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: 18 That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth"* (KJV).

Again we see many nations rising up against the Lord's people, his saints, his "hidden ones" as in Daniel. Speaking of his enemies, the psalmist states: *"O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind."* Another version reads: *"My God, make them as a **rolling thing**...(YLT).* Like other passages, in verse 13, the Hebrew noun (galgal) refers to a wheel or metaphorically to a whirling wind. So the Lord treats them as chaff swirling before the whirlwind. In the next verse he speaks of the fire and the tempest terrifying God's

enemies (v.15, various nations) and desires that the name of the most high God would be exalted. This passage is again entirely consistent with the patterns referenced earlier. This also relates to the concept of the "rolling of the heavens."

Note: Verse 13. "O may God make them like a wheel. This alludes to the manner of threshing corn in the east. **A large broad wheel was rolled over the grain on a threshing-floor**, which was generally in the open air; and the grain being thrown up by a shovel against the wind. The chaff was thus separated from it, in the place where it was threshed (Clarke's commentary).

God threshing the nations with the "wheel": We have seen various references to the Lord bringing His mighty tempests to bear upon the nations as he goes forth in the "chariot" of His throne. We also saw in other passages concerning the earthly chariots moving like a whirlwind. This raises a question. Why are the wheels of the Babylonian chariots, for example, described in a similar way to God's chariot/chariots, that is, like the whirlwind? (See again Isa. 5, Jer. 4). In Daniel we saw how God deals with many nations. As noted in Isaiah 28, the threshing of the grain with the cartwheels was to separate the chaff. This was the work of God's Spirit. The Lord is *"working at*

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the wheel" as He fashions His plans concerning the nations (Jer. 18). Following these clues leads to the same message from many and various passages. The answer to the why lies in the truth that the Lord extends His rule from the heavens to the earth. For instance, in the earthly, temporal realm, God used his own people at times as His "threshing instrument" (i.e. the cartwheel). In *Isaiah 41*, speaking of the nation of Israel (God's servant), verse 15 reads: "*Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff 16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel"* (KJV).

This is similar to Micah 4:11-13: "*And now many nations have been assembled against you (Zion)... 12 But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, And they do not understand His purpose; For He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor. 13 Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion,..."* God has a plan to work his mysterious purposes as He chastens all the nations, though many do not understand.

God's Mysterious Plan: When Israel and, later, Judah were unfaithful He sends others

against them as we saw in Ezekiel 8-11. From His throne He then decrees that strange work, so unusual that he tells Habakkuk, *"...for I am working a work in your days, which you will not believe though it is told you. 6 For, behold, I (God) raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, that march through the breadth of the earth"* (Hab.1:5, WEB).

Thus, when the wheels of Babylon's chariots invaded apostate Jerusalem they were "like a whirlwind" (not coincidentally) for they were sent from the very throne of God! At that time they became His earthly agents, "His servants" (See Jer. 27.6). The Lord viewed upon His throne decrees at times things that can seem disturbing to our natural minds (1Kg. 22:19-24; Isa.6:8-10.) This raises additional questions about God's sovereignty that overarches mankind's will. This is another complex, often mysterious and debated subject. (But that is beyond the scope of this writing). Yet, as a starting point, we have to look at them through the lens of his Word and gain a good understanding of His gracious and just character: *"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne: Lovingkindness and truth go before thy face* (Ps. 89:14, ASV; See also Rev.19:3-4).

Note: In the vision of the throne that Micah the

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prophet saw, there is recorded that God sent an evil agent to execute an evil King Ahab. The King of Israel seated upon his throne in pride, didn't heed the word of the Lord and died later as he was being "*wheeled around*" in his chariot (1 Kings 22:19-24,31-35).

There may be simultaneous events going on, appearing very different, depending upon whose frame of reference we choose. One point of reference is the earthly; the other, the heavenly or spiritual realm as God looks down. It should be noted that God in His grace spared a remnant of His people as He always has (Ezek. 9:4). They were like the precious wheat even in the midst of this great pruning and everything about them appeared hopeless. The prophet Habakkuk, in trying to grapple with why God was allowing evil, found hope in recounting God's wondrous deeds of old, as we noted in Habakkuk 3. At some point, Babylon received retribution, just like the Assyrians (See Nahum 1-3). For, behold, the Lord would "*stir up the Medes and Persians*" against them (Isa.13:3). The yoke of Babylon would be broken as Daniel 7 and world history records. Throughout the centuries the Lord has brought the "*wheels*" in a temporal way upon nations/individuals. God's intention is to winnow and thresh all nations including His own. This brings us to some more direct New Testament

references.

God's Winnowing Fan: In a similar way, the Spirit of God cries out to Jerusalem through Jeremiah in an effort to correct them. Jeremiah 15 reads: "*O Jerusalem...7 And I have winnowed them with a fan in the gates of the land; ... they returned not from their ways* (ASV). Isaiah laments: "*O my people, crushed on the threshing floor.*" This is after they endured the chastening in Babylonian exile (See Isa. 21:10). In Matthew 3:11,12, it states, "*...He (the Lord) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn up with inextinguishable fire*" (*His winnowing fan* in other translations.) In Matthew 3, John is rebuking God's people and the religious leaders and warning them before the coming wrath. The Prophet pleads (like the many prophets of old) and is calling out to those who will hear and repent. After seeing visions of the Lord and the (the "high and dreadful " wheels of the cherubim) Ezekiel was sent by the Spirit of God to the house of Israel. He was told to speak a warning, whether they listened or refused to listen (Ezek. 2:7). A remnant did listen and was spared and God made a promise to gather them again like wheat (Ezek. 11:17-20). The winnowing fan is the

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work of His Holy Spirit and it brings a separation, a division (in the right sense). This is in harmony with the figuratively portrayed language used in connection with the wheels in Ezekiel's vision, "*for the Spirit was in them*" (v. 21). Throughout scripture there is a consistent theme, that of separation of the righteous and the wicked like the chaff. As was noted earlier in Proverbs 20:8 "***When a king sits on his throne to judge, he winnows out all evil with his eyes.***" This is also similar to *Psalm 11:4*: "*Jehovah's throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men.*"

Remember, the cherubim and the wheels are full of eyes all around and the wheels of cherubim are at the point of separation (the holy from the unholy). Does this not portray Christ, the King, whose eyes are like flame of fire and whose Spirit like a lamp "*searching out the innermost parts of mankind's being?*" (Prov. 20:27) The Lord is seated upon his throne, and from where He sits He beholds all men; He beholds the kingdom of darkness and knows those who are His own.

A Final Example of the "Wheels" of God:

The book of Proverbs speaks often of "a king sitting on his throne..." In the Proverbs, the Scripture sets forth what could be a summary

interpretation text of these themes as revealed in the many metaphors. Solomon, said to be the wisest man who ever lived, was given great wisdom from God to understand the deepest mysteries. He further wrote in Proverbs: "***A wise king winnows out the wicked; he drives the threshing wheel (galgal) over them***" (Proverbs 20:26). This is the defining spiritual dynamic going on and is an important principle in the noted passages from Ezekiel and Daniel as well as in other references cited. God, the wise King, acts from his seat of authority. The Lord "*winnows out the wicked and drives the threshing **wheel***" (his spiritual work) over the nations and His own. This is the Old Testament imagery of the New Testament reality.

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Part Five

That Great Harvest Day

We look forward to the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But what does the Son of Man do when he comes on "*the clouds of heaven* and sits upon the throne of glory...?"

Mt 24.30 "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (KJV). Mt

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25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats...41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (KJV).

At the glorious appearing of God and Christ, the "mobile" throne shall come to this earth in its fulness. Christ separates, and his angels gather His elect--His 'wheat' (Mt 24:30). This dark planet will be invaded by a great fiery throne of Almighty God surrounded by mighty angels and the innumerable armies of heaven, like lightning piercing the darkness. He shall come and "*shall weed out of the kingdom all causes or sources of evil*" and throw them in the furnace (ref.) 2 Thessalonians 1:7 ..."*when the Lord Jesus is revealed 9 from heaven with his mighty angels. 10 With flaming fire he will mete out 11 punishment on those who do not know God12 and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*" (NET).

Christ, the Son of Man, returns in an overwhelming cloud of glory, (not with "fair

weather" clouds) but in the awesome storm of the Lord. He shall come with the heavenly chariot/chariots of fire, with the cherubim and the other angelic host, the armies of heaven!

Overview: From the time of the tempest on Sinai, God has revealed the "wheels" of His throne among the people, first in defeating Egypt's chariots. Ezekiel saw the wheels of the throne and they were like the whirlwind, (the whirling wheels) for the wind (spirit) of God was in them. Ezekiel saw Christ on the throne as the glory of the Lord, and the temporal winnowing of his people that occurred with the wheels that contained fire. From His throne of glory He also punished the evil nations round about them over the centuries. Daniel beheld the throne of God as its wheels (the winds of heaven) stirred up the seas (nations) and God worked his work upon them with the burning wheels. In accordance with Daniel's dream, mankind's empires and kings have been brought down. That which was foretold has and will come to pass. The saints will inherit the kingdom and those who belong to the Evil One's kingdom go to their end. Daniel beheld a vision of the final separating work.

Ezekiel and Daniel highlight different ends of the spectrum: the Lord's judgment and fire as

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well as His deliverance and worship. God's severity and judgments were sometimes disturbing to the prophets and hard to understand. In some passages the wheels were "*high and dreadful*," and were part of the windstorm of judgment upon those called his people. Yet we also noted passages in which the wheels were associated with deliverance for His saints and this brought forth great worship. As the "wheels" of God's throne have advanced like the whirlwind, He has (in a temporal way) separated the chaff, and brought fire to it. The nations are being scattered as the earth becomes God's threshing floor up until the last days.

Definition of the "Wheels": The whole of Scripture interprets Scripture. The definition of the "wheels" in Ezekiel's and Daniel's visions is this. **The "wheels" are a representation of the working of the Spirit from the metaphoric chariot-throne of God as he judges the nations. The wheels are God's threshing instrument, like the winnowing fork/fan, a divine whirlwind of sheer power.** The wheels typify the mechanism of separating and threshing out the wheat, using the storm winds to scatter and burn the chaff (through His agents: cherubim/angels). They also are associated with the Lord's deliverance of the redeemed as the triumphant King, to the glory of His holy name.

We have looked at this mystery of the wheels from a macro-view (the whole counsel of the Scripture). We have pursued different clues and where they led in the Bible and have thus discovered truths. These involved dozens of passages that were related and provided a larger picture. It brought forth unique concepts concerning the wheels, yet they were always present in the passages, waiting to be unfolded. Also, some themes were brought together that have been set forth or realized over the centuries. Like a craftsman bringing individual pieces together in a new configuration--a collage--we can see the larger, clearer picture emerge. Though there certainly are still other questions to be addressed at another time, if we search out the truth, we are able to make these connections in the Scripture. Biblical truth is like a beautifully complex network: many verses and passages linking together with other independent confirmations (the historic witness and the witness of Creation). We have seen the many passages whose message by now (it is hoped) will be self-evident, brought forth by the verses themselves. When we plumb the deep mysteries of the Bible, we read descriptions that are difficult to understand, that use words which can take us from the limits of abstraction to the pure kernel of truth deep within.

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Yet it all fits into the simple gospel message that a child can understand.

Final Application: All humanity is being winnowed. Aside from God's final court, we are all being refined, chastened (winnowed) in a temporal way with God's holy fire. There are three classes of people referenced in all the biblical passages. 1. The pagan, unbelieving nations, exalting themselves in rebellion to God 2. Those among his people in rebellion, following idolatry, and hardened in sin. 3. Those faithful people (the righteous saints), who are grieved and vexed by the idolatry and wickedness around them. Those will be called out and finally delivered. There is a great storm coming which will bring about the separation of the wheat and the chaff. God (like a winnower) will scatter the wicked in his stored-up wrath.

God's winnowing fork is in the hand of Christ today. In light of this, it behooves all believers to examine ourselves---to let God's Spirit, His eyes, search us out. We must allow God's purifying work before He calls all to account. He chastens us now so that we might not perish. As we ponder God's awesome judgments we gain a far deeper appreciation of His mercy, especially for all who have been in that second

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category and can turn. Instead of experiencing the sight of a terrifying, blazing, wheeled throne with a river of fire, these can experience a throne of grace, and a river of living water! (Heb.4.6, Rev 22.1). Instead of experiencing the wrath of the Lamb as the cherubim call forth the judgments, these can worship the Lamb as the great sacrifice for sin, (the fulfillment of the mercy seat). Instead of becoming like chaff before the storm, they, too, can become God's gathered wheat, partakers of his lovingkindness, glory and kingdom. It has been determined that we must all appear before the throne of God. It remains to be seen how each shall experience it in that appointed time of great separation. May God strengthen us and preserve us till that day.

THE END

The Wheels of God's Throne

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(Matthew 10:8)

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