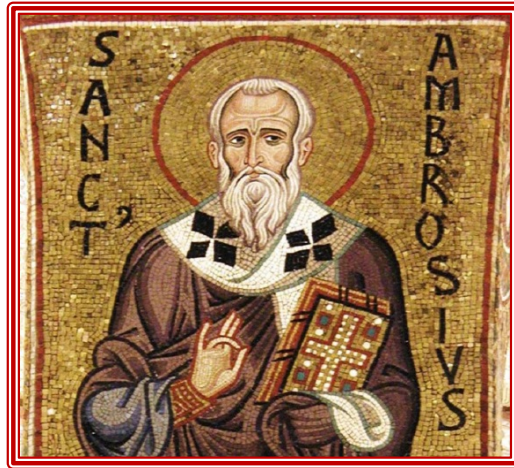

ST. AMBROSE ON THE SOUL CHARIOT



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INTRODUCTION

The chariot vision in Ezekiel 1:1-28 and Plato's chariot myth (*Phaedrus* 245c–257b) supply two maps of the human soul, and it is advantageous to compare them. An excellent start to this project has been made in the Patristic literature by Origen of Alexandria, St. Ambrose of Milan, St. Jerome, and Pseudo-Macarius, among others (Christman, 2005). Here we investigate the insights of St. Ambrose.

St. Ambrose interpreted Ezekiel's vision, noting parallels with Plato's myth, at least three times: in the treatise *On Virginité* (*De virginitate*, a one-book work not to be confused with his earlier three-book work, *De virginibus*), and two much shorter treatments in *Abraham* and *On Jacob and the Good Life* (*De Iacob et vita beata*). Here we consider the first of these treatments — as found in Chapters 15 through 18 of *De virginitate*.

St. Ambrose (c. 340–397) was the bishop of Milan, in Northern Italy. He wrote in Latin, but was literate in Greek, and extremely well educated in general. St. Ambrose was a seminal influence on his younger colleague, St. Augustine. Among other things, Ambrose is well known for his detailed psychological/moral exegeses of the Old Testament.

Sometimes Ambrose has been criticized for borrowing extensively from earlier exegetes, including Philo of Alexandria, Origen, St. Jerome, and St. Basil the Great, but this view is unfair for three reasons: (1) Ambrose wrote his works as homilies to deliver before his congregation, and, as should be obvious, it is quite proper for a homilist to borrow liberally from any source whatsoever in the interests of improving and uplifting hearers — originality is not the goal or measure of success; and (2) while it is true that Ambrose borrowed much from these authors — and, as well, from Plato, the Neoplatonists Plotinus and Porphyry, Virgil, Cicero and Greek mythology and epic and tragic poetry, he nonetheless weaved all this material into new forms, always creatively adding his own distinctive message; sometimes his original contributions are subtle, but they are always there.

Ezekiel's vision and Plato's myth both portray the human soul as a mystical chariot. The details are partly the same, but partly different, and that itself is what makes their comparison interesting and productive.

Plato's chariot is traditionally understood as having two elements: (1) a white horse on the right, corresponding to the passions of boldness, irascibility, and ambition; (2) a dark horse on the left, corresponding to passions of desire and appetites; and (3) a charioteer, who wishes to control the two horses so that they both pull the chariot upwards (which symbolizes an ascent of the mind to a contemplative condition; see Uebersax 2014).

Ezekiel's chariot, on the other hand, has four, not three, figures. These four have, respectively, the faces of: (1) a lion; (2) an ox; (3) a man; and (4) an eagle. By various arguments it's fairly easy to draw correspondences between elements (1) to (3) of both, as shown in Table 1. It may also be noted that the association of a lion with the irascible side of human nature is also found in Plato (e.g., *Republic* 9.588d), and similarly of an ox with the appetitive nature (Kries, 2002, p. 69f.)

Note that in paragraph 114 Ambrose explicitly refers to the four figures with Greek psychological terms (amidst a work written in Latin), the first three of which are cognates of the terms Plato uses in his myth. A close reading of Plato's myth, further, will reveal that there is a fourth element to his chariot, which Plato (as is characteristic of him) merely hints at; at *Phaedrus* 247d, he mentions "mind [*nous*], the pilot of the soul." This fourth element corresponds very well with the eagle-figure of Ezekiel's chariot.

Table 1 Elements of Soul Chariot in Ezekiel and Plato

Four "Affections" of Soul	Virtues of Perfected Affections	Ezekiel's Chariot	Plato's Chariot
θυμητικὸν (Irascibility)	Fortitude	Lion	White horse
ἐπιθυμητικὸν (Desire)	Temperance	Ox	Black horse
λογιστικὸν (Reason)	Prudence	Man	Charioteer
διορατικὸν (Discernment)	Justice	Eagle	<i>Nous</i> (pilot)
		Driver = Christ	('One' of the soul?)

In sections 114–117, Ambrose explores the meaning of the eagle figure. Like Origen and St. Jerome before him, he associates it with human Conscience, understood as a form of inner seeing; the eagle, with its keen eyes and lofty flight is an apt symbol.

Conscience, as Ambrose, discusses, involves a keen discernment of Justice (Harmony), which requires that our mind be free from agitating perturbations associated with moral error.

He then proceeds to associate Conscience with the *wheel within a wheel* of Ezekiel's vision. This he sees as symbolizing a harmony of the soul, one wheel corresponding to the operation of our body or material nature, the other with our inner psychic/mental/moral life.

If Ambrose's 'take home' message were expressed in a single sentence it might be: be in the world while above it (107–110).

However one must simply read Ambrose' own words to fathom his meanings.



DE VIRGINITATE (CAP. 15-18)

Source: Albany J. Christie S. J. (trans.), *St. Ambrose: On Holy Virginity*, Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1843 (Chs. 15-18; pp. 43-64); see ref. 1 below for link to Latin text.

CHAPTER XV

The Word calms and steers the restive horses of our soul, enabling its ascent.

(93) **S**EEK Him, O virgin, yea let us all seek Him, men and women (the sexes of our souls are not different),

(94) with prayer and supplications let us call Him to us, that like a fair *south wind* [Cant 4:16] He may breathe upon us and *blow upon our garden* the freshening gale of the heavenly Word, that breaks not the fruitful trees therein with rude blast, but gently moves them with its kindly breeze. The soul is, as it were, wedded to the body, whose more masculine and fervid heat it calms and tempers; and so it is written, *my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadab* [Cant 6:12]. The soul is, while joined to the body, as a chariot drawn by restive horses, and it looks for an *Amminadab* to rule them. Amminadab was the father of Naasson, the prince of the tribe of Judah [Num 1:7], and is a figure of Christ the true prince of His people, who, as a charioteer, directs, with the reins of His Word, the soul of the righteous, lest it be carried headlong by the fury of its steeds.

(95) These horses are the four passions of wrath, avarice, desire, fear; when these are harnessed to the soul and begin to draw it, it is bewildered; the *corruptible body presseth down the soul* [Wis 9.15], commits it, against its will, to the mercy of brute force, which whirls it violently in

the eddy of worldly cares, till the fiery steeds are tamed by the power of the Word.

(96) The Word, like a skilful charioteer, would secure the soul, itself not liable to death, against the fearful tossing caused by its wild horses. First he will check the rapidity of their course and rein them in by the curb of reason; then guard against the inequality of their motions, lest they get entangled, and one by its viciousness infect, its lagging retard, or its restiveness throw into confusion, the rest. The fretful horse at once endangers the chariot, and harasses his yoke-fellow; his fretfulness the skilful charioteer allays by gentleness, and He who is figured here diverts His steeds from the winding road of error, and guides them to the open plain of truth. The upward course is safe, but the down-hill road is perilous. ' At length, their labours ended, the soul's affections, obedient to the yoke of the Word, are brought to the manger of the Lord, where their food, no longer earthly, is that Bread which came down from Heaven.

(97) Smooth and unhampered are the wheels of this chariot, and free from all obstruction, and of them the prophet speaks when he says, *The spirit of life was in the wheels* [Ezek 1.20; D-R].

CHAPTER XVI

Seek with humble and confident faith; a thorn in the flesh is an asset.

(98) **B**ut to return to the Song of Songs: the Word of God is called too the *garden of nuts* [Cant 6:11], emblems of the study of the prophets as well as of the grace bestowed on Christian priests, whose sore temptations are figured by the almond's bitterness, their toils by the hardness of its shell, their fruits of inward holiness by its hidden kernel. A like figure was the blossoming of Aaron's rod, it was in its own nature dead, but by a secret and Divine power it *brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds* [Num 17:8]. Let Him then come down into His garden, gather the vintage of faith, receive the fragrant odours, find the spiritual food, and feast on the sweetness of our honey; as Himself saith, *I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse: I have gathered My myrrh with My spice; I have eaten My honey-comb with My honey* [Cant 5:1]. The sweet compound, collected from the flowers of Christian holiness by the toil of those bees whose active labour is in agreement with the wisdom which they preach, is by holy Church laid up in honey-combs, to be the food of Christ.

(99) Let us seek Christ, let us call Him to us, for He is all in all to us. Is any soul diseased with sins of the body; is any soul cramped as it were with an iron band of worldly desire; is any yet imperfect though pressing forward with earnest meditation; is any perfect in manifold graces; let all come to Him, for all are in His power and Christ is all things to us. Art thou wounded and wouldst be healed, He is the physician [Matt 9:12]; dost thou burn with fever, He is the refreshing fountain [Zech 13:1]; art thou pressed down with iniquity, He is righteousness [1 Cor 1:30]; needest thou help, He is the power of God [1 Cor 1:24]; fearest thou death, He is life [John 11:25]; desirest thou Heaven, He is the way [John 14:6]; fliest thou darkness, He is light [John 1:9]; seekest thou food, He is the bread that came down from Heaven [John 6:35]. *O taste, then, and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him* [Ps 34:8].

(100) The woman that was plagued with an issue of blood trusted in Him and immediately was

healed, for she came to Him in faith [Luke 8:43-48]. Do thou, too, daughter of the Church, come with faith, and touch though but the border of His garment. The torrent of worldly pleasures, that overfloweth like a flood, shall be staunched and dried up by the heat of the Sun of Righteousness, the health-giving Word; only approach in faith like her; take hold, with like devotion, of the very fringe of His heavenly words; throw thyself trembling at the feet of thy Lord; and where are His feet, but where His Body is? O faith richer than all treasures! O faith mightier than all bodily strength! more health-bringing than all physicians! She came near, she felt His power, she obtained her cure; even as when the eye is brought to the light, it is enlightened before it sees, and the operation of the light anticipates the vision. A disease inveterate, incurable, that had baffled every invention of art, that had drained all her resources, is cured by merely touching the border of a garment!

She was ashamed of being seen to approach Him; imitate, O virgin, her shamefacedness; she was confident in her faith, take pattern by her devotion.

(101) Great, truly, was her grace; she desired to conceal herself, yet desired not to conceal her fault, for she seemed to have done presumptuously. Neither do thou conceal thy faults, which He already knoweth, but confess them. Be not ashamed of doing what prophets have ere now done, and not been ashamed. These are the words of Jeremiah; *Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed*, words which express her meaning when she touched the fringe, as though she said, *Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed: Save me and I shall be saved, for Thou art my praise* [Jer 17:14]; and none is really healed unless Thou heal her.

(102) There may be some who will say to thee as was said to Jeremiah (for often are the faithful thus tempted), *Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come now* [Jer 17:15]; yea, to the Lord Himself was said, *Let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him; He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him* [Matt 27:42-43]. If any in mockery speak thus to thee, and try to entrap thee in vain words, see that after thy Master's example thou answer him not. Let thy converse be only with Christ; if thou speak to them, they will not believe, and if thou ask them, they will not answer thee [Luke 22:67-68]; say to the Word, *As for me, I have not fainted in following after Thee; Lord, Thou knowest* [Jer 17:16; variant? (see Origen, *Hom. Jer.* 4, PL25 625A)]. Thus spake the woman with the bloody issue, and it was staunched. Though worn out by her long seeking, though full of sickness, still her words were, *Lord, I have not fainted in following after Thee;*

(103) nor shall any faint, who, like her, sincerely follow Christ, for He calls the faint and heavy-laden to find rest in following Him [Matt 11:28]. *Let us too follow Him and we shall not faint; the promise to Jacob shall be ours, he shall be in rest and quiet, as well as the promise in Isaiah, They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint* [Is 40:31].

(104) Christ asked who touched Him, and the woman seems to say, "Lord, why askest Thou, for Thou knowest; the words that pass from my lips are all before Thee, wherefore I am not ashamed to confess my sins unto Thee. *Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me*

be confounded [Jer 17:18].

(105) In like manner blessed Peter was not ashamed to say, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord* [Luke 5:8], for he knew that the Lord could read his thoughts. St. Peter in whom the Church and the authority of her discipline was to be established, felt by his deep Wisdom and foresaw, that nothing could be more profitable for him than that he should not be exalted above measure at the great miracle with which he had been favoured; therefore he says, *Depart from me*, praying, not that Christ should abandon him, but that He should save him from arrogance.

(106) And so, St. Paul also glories in the thorn in his flesh [2 Cor 12:7], given to him lest he should be exalted above measure. Arrogance is an alluring temptation which even St. Paul dreads, a danger against which even he is specially protected (even he, I say, for few things could make him arrogant, whose danger arose from the *abundance of the revelations*); and his rejoicing is that of the perfect warrior of Christ, who gladly purchases his soul's health at the expense of a body wounded by a *thorn in the flesh*.

CHAPTER 17

The Virgin must shun arrogance, yet rise above the world in holiness.

BEWARE, Christian maid, of arrogance; if thou be conscious that Divine grace abounds and overflows in thee, still measure thy virtue by the standard of perfection, give thanks to God and reflect on the infirmities of thy body; so, like a ship laden with ballast, thou shalt not be at the mercy of the wind of arrogance, amid the threatening waves of this world. The prudent bee is said to poise itself with little stones as a security for its light wings against the uncertain gusts of wind,

And as when empty barks on billows float,
With sandy ballast sailors trim the boat,
So bees bear gravel stones, whose poisoning weight
Steers through the whistling winds their steady flight
(Virgil, *Georgics* 4; Dryden 284-287).

St. Paul and St. Barnabas at Lystra rent their clothes when the people honoured them as gods [Acts 14:11-15]. Do thou, O virgin, beware also, as thou hast the bee for thy example, lest any flattering gale of this world unduly exalt the flight of thy soul's wings.

(107) For the soul has wings, according as it is written, *who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows* [Is 60:8]? It has its spiritual flights, whereby in the twinkling of an eye it traverses the whole world.

The contemplations of the wise are free and unbounded, and the higher they rise heavenwards, the less are they clogged by earthly hindrances; and the soul, cleaving to God and reflecting in itself the Divine image (with the passions, its fiery coursers, quieted and calm), is home aloft by

the motion of its spiritual wings into the pure ether and looks down upon the world. Intent on everlasting graces, it escapes the world and rises far above it. Such a grace is righteousness, and righteousness is above the world, love is above the world, goodness is above the world, wisdom is above the world; yea, though it be in the world, yet is it above the world.

(108) Righteousness was above the world when Satan offered all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them [Matt 4:8]. He was above the world, who would touch nothing that it possessed, even as He said, *The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me* [John 14:30]. Learn ye too, like your virgin Master, though in the world to be above it; and though ye bear about with you a body, let your soul within you wing its flight heavenwards. He that bears God in his body is above the world.

(109) We cannot indeed be like God and holy as He is; let us imitate the Apostles, whom the world hated because they were not of the world [John 15:19]. Imitate them, be thou a follower of them. Thou thinkest it hard to rise by human virtue above the world; and it is even so. The holy Apostles won not this grace by being equal with Christ, but by following Him as His disciples; be thou too, Christian virgin, Christ's disciple and follow Him; then does He pray for thee as He prayed for them. *Neither pray I, saith our blessed Lord, for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one* [John 17:20-21a]. The Lord would have us all one, that we may all be above the world, one in chastity, one in will, one in goodness, one in grace; for by these gifts the wings of the soul are exercised and strengthened.

(110) Let us not therefore be idle, but let us rise from earthly things; our wings will gather strength by exercise. Whatever our soul delights in, will aid our flight, so that if it always follow after God, and long to dwell in the house of the Lord and feed on joy in Him, and to be nourished by the miracles of virtue which His grace worketh, then will it cast out envy which finds no entrance into the angelic choir, then will it banish all bodily lusts which may not defile the temple of God; which temple since we are, let us renounce all worldly cares.

CHAPTER 18

The four virtues which make for harmony in the Virgin's soul.

(111) **T**HINK not that heathen philosophy and poetry supply us with the images which we have referred to the soul, a chariot, wings and horses: they rather have derived their images from us, and we use our own resources, the language of inspired prophecy. Thus it is written by holy Ezekiel, *The hand of the Lord was upon me, and I looked, and behold, a whirl— wind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber out of the midst of the fire ; also out of the midst there came the likeness of four living creatures* [Ezek 1:1-10; variant = Jerome/Origen].

(112) Consider the description of these four living creatures; *as for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the*

face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle [Ezek 1:10-11].

(113) Here too (we have been taught) the soul of man is described. The four living creatures are its fourfold affections, not those untrained passions figured by the four horses in course of discipline and subjugation [see Ch. 15], but the affections of the matured and perfect soul. The soul in the former state is under probation, with Heaven before it as its reward; in the latter it is in Heaven with the Word of God. The four living creatures, which are also appropriate symbols of the books of the Holy Gospels, are here emblems of the purified affections.

(114) These affections (as the wise among the Greeks even have defined) are four.

1. Wisdom or Reason [λογιστικὸν; Prudence] exercising its natural authority, wherewith man was endued at his creation;

2. Holy Resentment [θυμητικὸν; Fortitude] at the sense of wrong, like that wherewith the lion resists aggression; Christian daring and contempt of death;

3. Desire of what is good [ἐπιθυμητικὸν](imaged in the calf), which by due discipline grows into Temperance, careless of bodily pleasures, absorbed in the contemplation of heavenly mysteries, rejoicing in the bond of sacred charity;

4. The power of discerning right from wrong [διορατικὸν], Justice with its eagle eye, which, raised on its high tribunal, tries and searches all things, unselfish, careful of others' right, the bond of social union. Well does the eagle figure justice; soaring above earth, intent in its sublime elevation on the celestial mystery, it wins for its meed the glory of the Resurrection; and so it is written, *that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's* [Ps 103:5].

(115) Hence it is plain that the holy Psalmist also describes the soul as borne up by spiritual wings; and not in this place only, but again he saith, *Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler* [Ps 124:7], and elsewhere, *In the LORD put I my trust: How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?* [Ps 11:1]? The soul, then, is not wholly earth-bound ; it has its wings, and its wings impart to it freedom; wings, however, not of material substance, but whose feathers are holy deeds arranged in seemly order, like that wing of God, *in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge* [Ps 58:1]. Specially indeed those outstretched Arms upon the Cross are our sheltering wings, but no less truly every act of holiness is a refreshing shadow of salvation, tempering the burning of a flaming world.

(116) Let every Christian therefore stir up the grace of God; forgetting what is behind, reaching forth unto those things which are before, let him press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. Let him forego the honours and contentions of this world, otherwise the fable of Icarus may be verified in him, a fable indeed, but truly teaching in poetic imagery that they alone, who are ripe in wisdom, can safely fly through this world's atmosphere, while the undisciplined youth, too adventurous and indulgent to his passions, loses the firm compact of his wings by neglect of holy deeds, and forgetful of the maxims of wisdom falls back to earth and perishes with more fearful destruction than if he had never known the way of truth.

(117) And as our flight is perilous, so in the chariot-race of this life, the passions, our restive coursers, threaten us with danger. If, however, they be duly balanced, the prophet shall again see in us *one wheel upon the earth, by the living creatures* [Ezek 1:15]; yea, Ezekiel shall see it, for he is still alive, he sees, he is mighty, and shall live in strength for ever; he shall see upon the earth *a wheel in the middle of a wheel*, [Ezek 1:16] gliding without obstacle. The *wheel upon the earth by the living creatures* is in its spiritual meaning the life of the body when brought into harmony with the soul, and fashioned in uniform obedience after the evangelic precepts; the *wheel in the middle* of this outer wheel is an inner life, within the former, even as we see that the life of saints is not at variance with itself, the former part thereof agreeing with the later; and again, the life which they shall live for ever in Heaven being even now begun and involved in their bodily life.

(118) When this harmony is brought to pass, then shall the echo of the Divine voice be heard, *then above the firmament shall appear the likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne the likeness as the appearance of a Man above upon it* [Ezek 1.26; paraphrase]! This Man is the Word; *the Word was made flesh* [John 1:14]; and He is the charioteer who subdues our passions; He is our Ruler, either (according to our several conditions and deserts), as a charioteer, as a teacher on the mount, or as a pilot. But He steers no ship in which there are not Apostles to sail, or St. Peter to fish; it is no common ship which is launched *out into the deep* [Luke 5:4]; the ship wherein Christ sits and teaches the people is the Church, which moves in safety through the world, borne onwards by the outstretched sail of the Cross of Christ, filled by the gale of the Holy Spirit.

(119) In this ship St. Peter, now with hook and now with net, is bid to fish. O wondrous mystery! he, the spiritual fisherman is bid to cast the hook of holy doctrine into the sea of this world, that he may take” out thence the first martyr Stephen, bearing within him the *tribute* of Christ; for Christ’s Martyr is the Church’s Treasure. He was the first lifted from the sea to Heaven, caught by Peter to be a minister of the Altar; caught, not in a net, but by the hook, that alone in his own blood he might be taken up to Heaven. In his mouth was the tribute, when in his confession he spake of Christ ; for what other treasure can be in us but the Word of God? Whoso is more perfect is God’s fisherman, both with hook and net; the one surrounds, the other stings; by one multitudes are encircled, by the other man by man is chosen. Would to God that I might be allowed to swallow that spiritual hook, which by a rapid sting and slight wound would bring me to salvation!



EZEKIEL'S CHARIOT VISION (EZEK 1:1-28; KJV)

EZEKIEL [CHAPTER 1](#)

1. **N**ow it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.
2. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,
3. The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.
4. And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.
5. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.
6. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.
7. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.
8. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.
9. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.
10. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.
11. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.
12. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.
13. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was

bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

14. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

15. Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.

16. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

17. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.

18. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

19. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.

20. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

21. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

22. And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

23. And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

24. And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.

25. And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

26. And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

27. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

28. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.



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