

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Four

(Part III) The Four Wheels in Ezekiel

God has so arranged the scriptures that there are numerous associations that help guide us in our studies of His word. There are associations between bible numbers and specific bible subjects. There are associations between bible colors and specific bible subjects. There are associations between bible metals and specific bible subjects. Also there are associations between bible geometric shapes and specific bible subjects. In our previous studies we have shown the association between the bible number four and the bible subject of the work of the Holy Spirit. Last issue in the book of Ezekiel we examined the four faces of the living creatures (who are a type of the gospel ministry) and the working of the Holy Spirit in the gospel ministry. In this issue we will examine the association between the four wheels in Ezekiel and the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

In the scriptures things that are round or circular are often associated with covenants. Before I retired from my secular job, my job required me to make numerous airplane flights every year. I probably averaged about twenty five round trips a year over about 20 years. I would guess I made approximately a thousand flights. Occasionally the planes would fly over the top of thunderstorms. When we did we could see the rainbows in the clouds while we were above the clouds. Above the clouds, the geometric shape of the rainbow is circular. Below the clouds, of course the geometric shape is semi-circular. In Genesis chapter nine God made a covenant with every living creature that he would never again destroy the earth with a flood and he set the bow in the cloud as a token of the covenant that when he looked upon the bow he would remember the everlasting covenant. When God looks upon the bow from above he sees a circle which is a sign of his everlasting covenant with all living creatures.

In Genesis chapter 17 God made a covenant with Abraham and his seed. As a token of the covenant every man child of his seed was to be circumcised when he was eight days old. The word, "circumcised," literally means circular cutting (circum=circular; cision=cutting).

In Exodus, the tabernacle, the furniture of the tabernacle, and the high priests

garments testify many things to us in types and shadows of both God's covenant of redemption and covenant of worship. In the pattern God gave, rings were used to couple or link together curtains, the furniture and staves to carry them, the various parts of the High Priestly garments. Similarly, God's covenant of redemption is linked together such that his election, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification embrace all of the elect. The religious world stumbles when they try to unlink these parts, but God's church rejoices to leave them linked together.

In II Chron. Chapter 4 we read of a circular molten sea connected with the temple that was founded upon twelve oxen. Similarly in Eph. 2:19-22 we read, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Thus the church is built on the covenant work of God and is founded upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone

In Ezekiel chapters one and ten the church is described as a wheel within a wheel. The Lord's people who worship him in Spirit and in truth are embraced by two great covenants. The first is the covenant of redemption as stated for us in Rom. 8:29, 30, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." According to Rev. 7:9 this covenant embraces "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues..." The second covenant is the covenant of worship as stated in John 4:23, 24, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Also in Heb. 8:10-12 we read, "For this is the covenant that I will make with house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." This covenant of worship embraces only those who worship him in spirit and in truth to which the Lord said, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Thus the wheel within a wheel would embrace only that

portion of God's people who worship him in the new covenant church.

Ezekiel chapters one and ten show a very strong relationship between the living creatures and the wheels. Similarly there is a very strong relationship between the gospel ministry and the church. There were four living creatures and four wheels. Each living creature had a wheel beside him. Please note the relative positions of the living creatures and the wheels. The wheel was located not under or over the living creature, but beside the living creature. This indicated they were partners in work and worship. Similarly the gospel ministry is not over the church and has no business "lording it over God's heritage, but are to be "examples to the flock." Also the work of the gospel ministry is not separate and apart from the church, but is a part of the church.

Next, the four wheels had one likeness (Eze. 1:16). Some people look at the great multitude of denominational religions and think that they are all part of the Lord's church. If that were so then there would be thousands of likenesses, not one likeness. Song 6:8, 9 reads, "There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one: she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her." The Lord's churches (wheels) have but one likeness and that is the likeness given her in the new testament and they are not to deviate from it! The way to know if a group is a true new testament church is to compare them to the scriptures. There are no Sunday schools; preacher schools or preacher seminars; salaried ministers; tithing; raising money for foreign mission work; church auxiliaries; church sponsored schools, hospitals, day care, or nursing homes; youth camps; or organizations above or apart from the local church in the new testament church.

Eze. 1:19-21 reads, "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. 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 creatures was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels." The same spirit that was in the living creatures was also in the wheels. In most of the religious world man is exalted. The preacher's work is exalted and man's response to their teaching is exalted. The laborers and their labor in all their auxiliaries are exalted. In the Lord's church there is no room for man to be exalted. The preacher is called by the Holy Spirit. He learns thru the leadership of the Spirit. He is given messages by the Holy Spirit. His field of labor is directed by the Holy Spirit. He preaches in power and demonstration of the

Spirit. Likewise the members of the church have all been born of the Spirit and are thus enabled to receive spiritual things. They are given listening ears to hear the gospel and the spirit within gives them hearts to praise God. The Spirit gives them both the desire and the ability to worship and to serve God (Phil. 2:13). Therefore it is no wonder that when the gospel minister is raised up to praise the Lord and his work, they also are raised up to praise Him. Likewise when the gospel minister stands to defend and confirm the gospel, then the members of the church do also. Since the work of the gospel ministers and of the churches is under the leadership of the Spirit, then all the praise belongs unto God.

“The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of beryl.” The color of the beryl stone is green. “Green” is associated with “life” in the scriptures. The church is compared to the “body” of Christ in Eph. 4:15, 16 “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” The church is more than just a bunch of individuals gathering to hear the gospel and then going home and going their own way until the next meeting time. Rather the church is a functional organism that grows in grace, knowledge, service; helps one another; prays for one another; loves one another; considers one another as brothers and sisters; admonishes one another; encourages one another; mourns one with another; rejoices one with another; labors together for the good of the cause; fellowships one with another. Now these things happen because of the indwelling of the Spirit. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 12:4-7, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the administration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

“When they went, they went upon their four sides.” One of the biggest enemies of the church and God’s people is pride. Some people thru pride are controllers. They want to control the actions of others and to have the attention and/or the lead on just about everything. They have a big I mentality. God’s church is not to be so. All the members have gifts and works to do in the church (thus all four sides). The Spirit divided spiritual gifts to every man severally as he will. Also “God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him.” All the members of the body have a function and a work to do and they all have gifts that God has given them.

“And they turned not when they went.” Just as the gospel ministry went forth

under the leadership of the Spirit, so also does the church go forth under the leadership of the Spirit. When we are following the Spirit we shouldn't ever turn back or turn away.

“As for their rings, they were so high, they were dreadful.” Rings are used in the scriptures to connect things together. We are connected to God and the Lord's people by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gave us spiritual life and enabled us to understand spiritual things. The fruits of the Spirit connect us to God's love and to the love of God's people. Thru the fruit of the Spirit we rejoice in a Savior's love and rejoice in fellowship with the saints of God. Thru the Spirit we have peace with God and rejoice in the gospel of peace and have peace one with another.

“And their rings were full of eyes round about them four.” As the work of the Holy Spirit connects us to God and to the Lord's people, He also gives us insight unto godly living, repentance, true worship of God, and the proper order and government of the Lord's church.