

## Chapter 10

**Date:** **The 5<sup>th</sup> of Elul, 3,169** (based on the Hebrew Calendar),  
or **Sunday, August 13, 592 BC**

**Historical Setting:** The prophet Ezekiel is living among his fellow Jewish captive's in the exile community of Tel-abib just outside the capital city of Babylonia, Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar reigns during the entire time period of this chapter. King Zedekiah rules Jerusalem as a "Puppet" King under King Nebuchadnezzar's control. Jerusalem is forced to pay tribute to the Babylonians, which by 588 BC, Zedekiah had stopped paying. The events of this chapter occur just prior to, or during, the time period in which Zedekiah made this bold decision. This caused great anger on the part of the Babylonians, most especially King Nebuchadnezzar. King Zedekiah and most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were stiff-necked, prideful, and even outright wicked. During this time period, Nebuchadnezzar was involved in the expansion and beautification of Babylonia.

**Preview:** This chapter is yet another continuation of a vision that Ezekiel began to receive back in chapter eight. It should be recalled that the prophet was sitting in his own home, surrounded by the elders of Israel, when the Lord opened up a vision to him. In chapter eight, Ezekiel was brought in the spirit to the city of Jerusalem, and was shown the gross sins of the inhabitants. Chapter nine continued the revelation by showing Ezekiel the Lord's wrath on Jerusalem for their wickedness. Ezekiel, much to his own discomfort, witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the slaughter of it's people. Chapter ten of the Book of Ezekiel continues from this point. Ezekiel is standing in the inner court of Solomon's Temple. Before him is a heavenly guide, whom we suppose to be Jesus Christ, and a man, whom we suppose to be an archangel. The Lord pronounces His judgement upon Jerusalem. Part of the Lord's judgement is

the withdrawal of His presence from Jerusalem and the Holy temple. As this takes place, the Prophet Ezekiel sees the magnificent throne of God accompanied by a host of celestial beings. He is privileged to see the wondrous creations of God. Ezekiel conveyed the contents of his vision to us in highly symbolic form.



**Verse 1:** "Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne."

Verse one of chapter ten starts by saying that Ezekiel looked, and beheld. Ezekiel is standing in the inner court of the Temple of Solomon. We know this because chapter ten is a continuation of chapter nine, which left off in the courtyard of Solomon's Temple. Standing with Ezekiel is the Lord, Jesus Christ, and a man dressed in linen, the same man who marked the foreheads of the repentant in chapter nine. From this vantage point, Ezekiel looks into the firmament. The term "*firmament*" is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as follows.

**Firmament** *n.* The vault or expanse of the heavens; the sky.

Ezekiel apparently looked into the sky directly above the "*head of the cherubims*". The King James Version of the Holy Bible inaccurately records the plural of cherub as cherubims, when the plural form of cherub is cherubim. The term "*cherub*", according to the American Heritage Dictionary, is defined as follows.

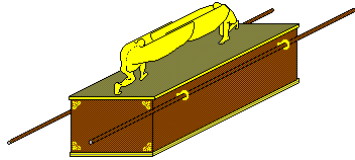
**Cherub** *n.* **1.** pl. cherubim **a.** A winged celestial being **b.** One of the second order of angels.



The modern day Apostle and scriptural scholar, Bruce R. McConkie wrote, "*Apparently a cherub is an angel of some particular order or rank to whom specific duties and work are assigned. That portion of the Lord's word which is now available among men does not set forth clearly either the identity or work of these heavenly beings. The concept of sectarian scholars that they are 'mythological living*

creatures', who filled for the Hebrew people the same position that the griffins did for the Hittites, is utterly false (Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, page 124)".

A cherub is obviously an angel of some sort; however, the exact definition of such an angel leaves a lot of questions unanswered. The Bible can give us clues as to a cherub's nature; however, the full nature of cherubim is still unclear to us. In the very beginning of man's mortal existence, we find record of Cherubim. After Adam fell, the Lord placed Cherubim and a flaming sword to guard access to the tree



of life (Genesis 3:24). No other references in the King James Version of the Bible is made to Cherubim until the Days of Moses, some 2,500 years later. After the Lord gave Moses the famed Ten Commandments, He directed the prophet to build a vessel to house them in. The lid of this vessel, known as the Ark of the Covenant, contained two golden cherubim (Exodus 25:18-22). There was obviously significant symbolism associated with the Cherubim. The next step in Israel's progression was to construct a place of worship. As Moses followed the Lord's commands and constructed a traveling Temple known to us as the Tabernacle, the Lord instructed him to embroider the curtains entering the holiest room in the tabernacle with cherubim (Exodus 26:1). It could be suggested at this point that a Cherub has some sort of symbolic or actual role as a guardian or protector.

About a thousand years before the birth of Christ, King Solomon constructed a permanent Temple for Israel. Here, again, the Lord gave precise instructions for it's construction. Two large cherubim were to be built and set in the Holy of Holies in the Temple (2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 3:10-13, 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 6:23-28). Similar to the Tabernacle of Moses, Solomon placed the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies between the two large Cherubim (2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 5:8, 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:7). In both the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, God was said to dwell between the Cherubim (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 6:2, Psalms 80:1, Psalms 99:1, Isaiah 37:16). In fact, as occasion arose for God to converse with His children, His voice would come from between the Cherubim (Numbers 7:89). The Cherubim appear to be associated with, or symbolize the presence or dwelling place of, deity.

Another name for cherub is seraph. The great prophet Isaiah had a vision that was in many ways similar to Ezekiel's. In his vision he saw Seraphim that had six wings each surrounding the throne of God. The Bible dictionary defines Seraphim as another word for Cherubim, with the word Seraph being derived from a word meaning "fiery beings". This probably refers to their glory and splendor.

As a point of interest, *"the Hebrew word for angel is Seraphim, שרפים, bright, or shining angels, a flying dragon, and is derived from*

*the root word 'serpent'. Because Satan chose to misuse the symbol in an attempt to duplicate things heavenly, snakes have been given a bum rap ever since. Moses used the serpent as a symbol of Christ because it is an effective 'type' symbol for resurrection; the snake is periodically reborn into a new body by the shedding of its old skin" (Written by the Finger of God, Joe Sampson, page 123).* It would appear that Seraphim and Cherubim are both Hebrew words for angel.

Modern day references to Cherubim and Seraphim are few. The reason for this is unsure; it could be because we refer to them as angels (if that is the proper application for the word). Several revelations given in this dispensation mention these celestial beings. One revelation mentions that Seraphim surround the throne of God (Doctrine and Covenants 109:79) while another passage references "*all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made" (Doctrine and Covenants 38:1).* Cherubim are obviously eternal beings associated with the courts on high. They existed prior to the world's creation and will exist after the earth has completed its temporal existence.

It would appear that in verse one, the prophet Ezekiel is referring to the cherub statues in the Temple when he says that "*above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone*". This theory however, is unclear since later in chapter ten other cherubim are named and located outside of the Temple. If the verse is referencing the cherubim statues it is referring to inanimate objects. On the other hand if it is referring to the cherubim referenced later on in Ezekiel's book it is speaking of literal angels of God.

The term "*sapphire stone*" is used in this verse for its symbolic meaning. The American Heritage Dictionary helps us understand what an actual sapphire stone is. It defines the term as follows.

**Sapphire** *n.* **1.** A clear, hard variety of corundum used as a gemstone that is usually blue but may be any color except red **2.** A corundum **3.** Color. The blue color of a gem sapphire.

The color of the sapphire stone is usually associated with the color of the deep blue sky. With this association, it shares in similar symbolic meaning. The sky and the color blue symbolize the heavens, truth, eternity, and faith. The sapphire stone alone symbolizes truth, heavenly virtues, celestial contemplation's, chastity, intellect, heaven, and eternity. Stones in general symbolize durability, stability, immortality, and eternal reliability. The prophet appears to have looked up into the expanse above the cherubim only to see a sight of celestial glory and splendor. The vision conveyed feelings of eternity, truth, power, and immortality.

Some scholars feel that the translation for this verse should have been translated as "*the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a lapis lazuli stone*". The change in wording doesn't significantly affect the meaning of the verse. The lapis lazuli stone is an opaque to translucent blue, violet-blue, or greenish-blue semi-precious gemstone comprised mainly of lazurite and calcite. Though it is obviously different in composition from sapphire, the color relationship is close. The symbolism associated for Lapis Lazuli is divine favor, success, and ability. In all probability, the sapphire is the appropriate symbol.

In further clarifying or describing what he saw, Ezekiel said that the sapphire stone was "*as the appearance of the likeness of a throne*". The throne, when used as a symbol, stands for the seat or center of authority. It also represents knowledge and rule both in the spiritual and the temporal. As in Chapter one of Ezekiel's Book, it would appear that Ezekiel was going to be privileged to see the throne of God, or at least a symbolic representation of the Lord's strength and power. Similarly, the Apostle John saw what appeared to be the throne of God. He recorded,

*"...a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald"*  
(Revelation 4:2-3).

Note that in John's vision, the throne was occupied and the stones used to describe it were different than Ezekiel's. In Ezekiel's vision, the throne does not appear to be occupied, as if awaiting its King. Keep in mind that the Lord is standing next to the prophet in this scene. The symbolic stone descriptors are different in nature; however, they offer similar symbolic meaning. The Jasper and Sardine stones are defined in the commentary for verse two.

**Verse 2:** **"And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight."**

The "*he*" speaking in this verse is the heavenly guide who has been with Ezekiel since the start of this vision in chapter eight. We assume this guide to be the Lord, Jehovah. In this verse, He speaks to the man clothed with linen. For commentary on this man and his attire please refer to the commentary in chapter nine.

The Lord instructs the man to go between the "wheels". Before we proceed further, it should be noted that many scholars feel that the revelation contained hereafter is but a repeat of the revelation contained in chapter one of the Book of Ezekiel. During the course of chapter ten's evaluation it will be found that though the revelations have similar imagery, they are quite different and distinct.

Chapter one makes mention of the term "wheels". In the commentary for chapter one, the term wheel was discussed. At this point a closer look at the term will be taken. Hereafter several theories will be presented. It should be noted that the powers of Heaven have not seen fit to define the term in scripture. Hence, our commentary contains speculation, which might or might not be correct. Only prayer and influence from heaven can accurately reveal the truth associated with Ezekiel's vision. Theories behind the wheel are as follows.

1. As discussed in chapter one, the wheels could represent physical and spiritual tabernacles or bodies. The wheel is used in symbolic language to represent movement. It is also used to represent becoming and passing away.



To understand the symbolic interpretation of Ezekiel's wheels, we must understand a little of the cultural influence in which Ezekiel might have been subjected. We must also consider the literal definition of the wheel. Symbols often receive their definitions by the way in which they are literally used or viewed in society. For example, if a society had wheels that they attached to carts for transport, a symbolic use for the word wheel might be movement or transportation. The American Heritage Dictionary gives three definitions for the wheel that might be useful in determining the symbolic nature of the wheel. It should be kept in mind that these definitions are based on our modern language and don't represent the influence of the ancient Near East culture. The definition is recorded as follows.

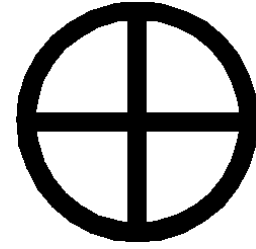
Wheel *n.* **1.** a solid disk or a rigid circular ring connected by spokes to a hub, designed to turn around an axle passed through the center. **2.** Forces that provide energy movement or direction. **3.** person with power and influence.

The wheel was common in ancient symbolism, "The Roman *quadrata* represents the four corners of the earth, and the center of



everything; the Romans always drew it this way ⊕. But it's also the picture of a wheel. The Babylonians combined the two very neatly in their cosmic design. It's the wheel that goes round and round but never moves" (Temple and Cosmos, Hugh B. Nibley, page 144).

Having been influenced by Babylonian culture, Ezekiel could have adopted the symbolic meaning for the wheel, from the Babylonians. This would say that the wheel represented the cosmic design of God. Interestingly enough the symbol for the earth used in ancient zodiac drawings also resembles a wheel.



**Zodiac Symbol  
for the Earth**

Later in chapter ten, Ezekiel refers to the wheels as though they were living creatures, with the ability to act and hear. He writes, "As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel" (Ezekiel 10:13). He also says that the spirit was within the wheel. At this point, let us ask this question; is it absurd to imply that Ezekiel's wheel was used as a symbol for a tabernacle or body? The wheel is often associated with vessels or vehicles. The physical body is but a vessel or vehicle, which houses the spirit. In the New Testament, the body is referred to as a vessel (1 Thessalonians 4:4). Consequently, the symbolic definition for the wheel spoken of by Ezekiel might well be literal physical and spiritual bodies of the celestial beings of heaven.

2. In the scriptures, we read of several instances where the wheel was used symbolically. In the Book of Proverbs, the wheel is used to symbolize destruction, most probably due to the wheel's association with the chariot, which was an instrument of war. It is recorded, "A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them" (Proverbs 20:26). This common symbolic interpretation in the scriptures does not seem to fit with Ezekiel's symbolic use of the wheel. However, the term wheel is commonly used to represent destruction and war. The psalmist wrote, "O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind" (Psalms 83:13). Though the symbolic interpretation probably doesn't fit our application, this is one application of the word wheel used in the scriptures.
3. Another theory for the meaning of the wheels spoken of by Ezekiel is that they are servants of the Lord. They are ministering angels, serving and following the commands of God. This theory would accept our first theory and merely build upon it. It would accept that the wheels represent spiritual and physical tabernacles combined together to create a celestial body. The wheels however

would represent those celestial beings that serve as ministering angels. Many would point out that the term "wheel" is often used in ancient and biblical script in association with chariots and war machines. Taking this theory one step forward, the second theory could be added to it. Ezekiel himself refers to this late in his Book by saying, "And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and **wheels**, and with an assembly of people, which set against thee..." (Ezekiel 23:24). Might the wheels be destroying angels or some other type of angel with a distinct calling? The answer is unclear, yet this theory has definite possibilities. Ezekiel himself links the four wheels to the four angelic creatures that both he and John the Beloved saw before the throne of God. Ezekiel wrote, "And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone" (Ezekiel 10:9).

4. The prophet Daniel wrote, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and **his wheels as burning fire**" (Daniel 7:9). Daniel was speaking of Father Adam and referenced the wheels as if they were a feature of his body or an object in his possession. Likewise, if one takes a closer look at the passage in Ezekiel quoted in the last theory, it appears that the wheels are similarly appendages to the four creatures. Ezekiel wrote, "And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone" (Ezekiel 10:9). It could be suggested that the wheels represent some form of heavenly transportation. In the Old Testament Book of Exodus, we read that the Israelites "saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness" (Exodus 24:10). Was this object under the Lord's feet His wheel? Joseph Smith saw the same type of object while sitting in the Kirtland Temple. He records in the Doctrine and Covenants, "We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber" (Doctrine and Covenants 110:2). This concept or theory



An Ancient Coin Showing a Man sitting on a winged "Wheel"



might seem far-fetched or even science fiction; however, there is some merit to the proposal. We have yet to understand the means by which heavenly beings travel. We know that they are able to travel great lengths and assume that they do so at incredible speeds. This theory would propose that Ezekiel's wheels are the means by which they accomplish this feat.

5. Probably the most complex theory that will be presented in this work concerning the wheels is their possible association with the Zodiac. Most people will probably cringe at the thought of a prophet of God referencing the Zodiac, which most members of the church often equate with false religion, cults, and even Satan. To appropriately present and explain this theory some definitions and basic groundwork needs to be laid.

The zodiac is by definition a circle, instantly making a connection or link to the wheel. The word zodiac came from the Greek word "zodiakos", literally meaning circle. The word is used in our era to denote a circular band in the celestial sphere or heavens within which the earth rotates. It is divided into 12 segments, each representing 30°, the sum of which represents a complete 360°. Each segment has a specific stellar constellation associated with it giving it a name, as well as associating it with specific symbolism. The zodiac has been altered and changed over time until it was developed into modern

day astrology; the science of referencing the position of the stars in association with the location of the earth which in turn influence the life of man. The zodiac has not always been used for the purpose of fortune telling as in modern astrology. As references are made to the zodiac in this work, they should be kept separate and divided from the science of "Astrology" and "Horoscopes". It should not be insinuated that this science is linked to God. The zodiac is a truly ancient map of the constellations. It existed in the earliest days of Babylon and Egypt, placing its origin prior to the year 2,000 BC. It is believed that the zodiac was not created in these early civilizations, but rather handed down from previous civilizations of which modern man has no record. It is suggested that the origin of the zodiac is God Himself.

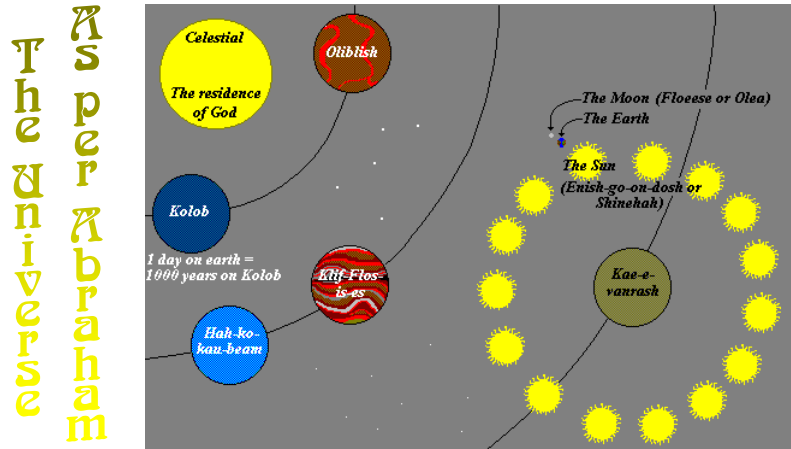


Artistic Drawing of  
the Zodiac

The question might be asked why the Lord would create the zodiac and why he would see fit to reveal such knowledge to man. What divine purpose does it serve? The answer might lie in the very beginning. Moses recorded in the first book of the Bible that the Lord, God created the stars. He wrote, *"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years"* (Genesis 1:14). Could the Lord have created the zodiac to help man gauge the time of year, the seasons, the days, and even the months? We do know that God has a perfect knowledge of the stars. The Psalmist wrote, *"He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names"* (Psalm 147:4). In the Book of Job, we even read of Job speaking of the constellations. Job wrote, *"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion"* (Job 38:31)? As Father Abraham was taught and instructed of the Lord, we find that the power of the priesthood is evident in the stars and planets. Abraham's record says, *"But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me"* (Abraham 1:31).

As Abraham grew in knowledge, the Lord opened his understanding of the stars, constellations and planets. Abraham wrote, *"And I, Abraham, had the Urim and Thummim, which the Lord my God had given unto me, in Ur of the Chaldees; And I saw the stars, that they were very great, and that one of them was nearest unto the throne of God; and there were many great ones which were near unto it"* (Abraham 3:1-2). The Book of Abraham records some of the knowledge that Abraham received. The second facsimile included in the Pearl of Great Price reveals the order of planets relative to the dwelling of God. The Lord told Abraham, *"And thus there shall be the reckoning of the time of one planet above another, until thou come nigh unto Kolob, which Kolob is after the reckoning of the Lord's time; which Kolob is set nigh unto the throne of God, to govern all those planets which belong to the same order as that upon which thou standest. And it is given unto thee to know the set time of all the stars that are set to give light, until thou come near unto the throne of God"* (Abraham 3:10-11). We understand through Abraham's writings that God dwells in a place where there is no time. Nearest to God is a planet called Kolob where the existence of time is extremely slow. As we venture further from God, time advances more quickly. The

following is a graphical representation of some of the information the Lord gave Abraham.



























The Lord obviously places value on the understanding of the stars and the planets. It is proposed that the constellations were not only created by Him, but they were named and taught to man from on high. The Zodiac, as it exists today, consists of 12 constellations.



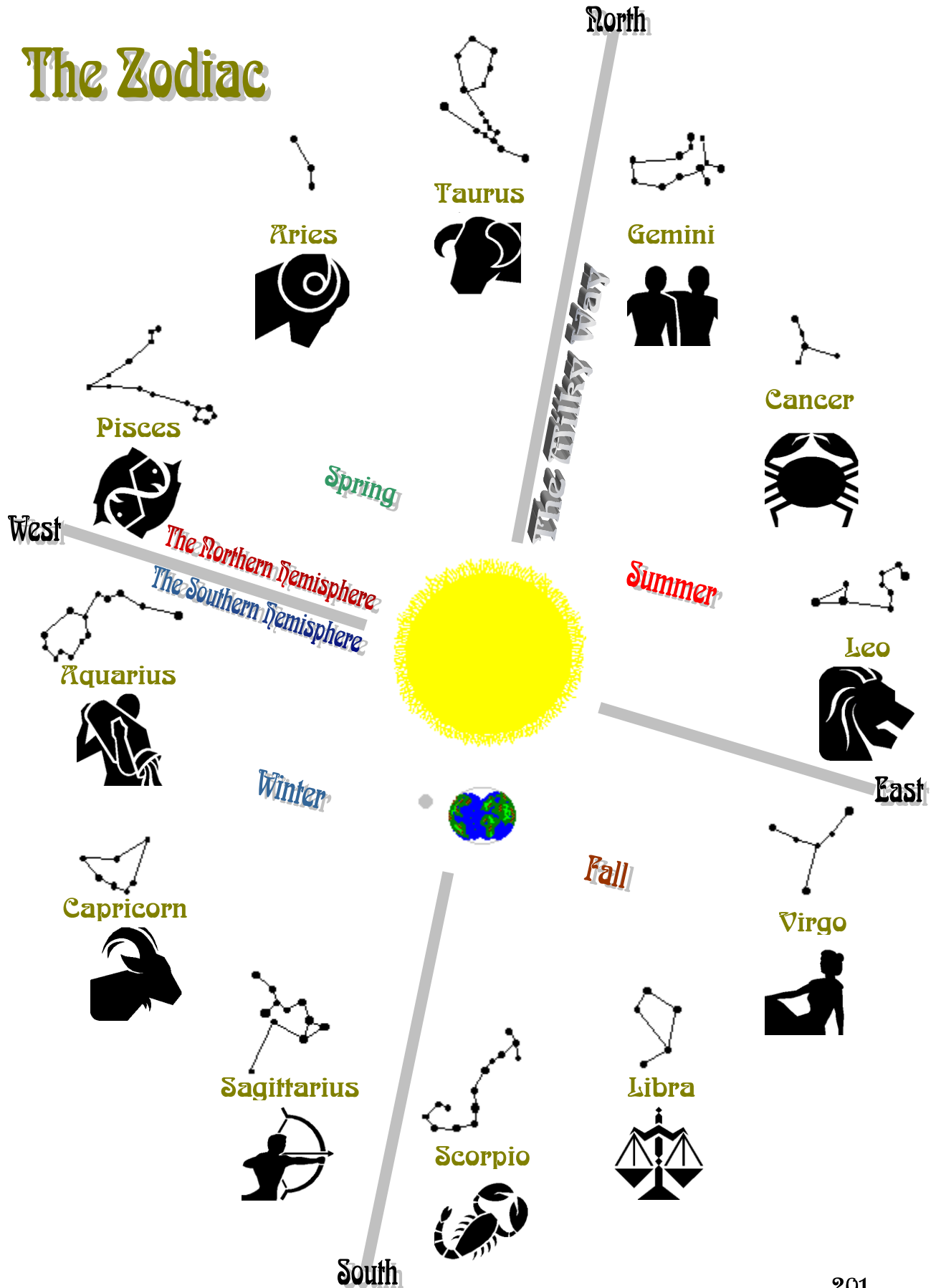
Each constellation represents an approximate period of one month during the course of the year. Each constellation is also associated with one of the four seasons and one of the four cardinal directions. It is an interesting side note that the Salt Lake Temple was carefully laid out to match the cardinal directions and constellations. The names of the constellations, in their sequential order, with their appropriate months are as follows.

#	Constellation Name	Month	Period
1.	Aries	April	March 21 - April 20
2.	Taurus	May	April 20 - May 21
3.	Gemini	June	May 21 - June 20
4.	Cancer	July	June 20 - July 22
5.	Leo	August	July 22 - August 22
6.	Virgo	September	August 22 - September 22
7.	Libra	October	September 22 - October 23
8.	Scorpio	November	October 23 - November 21
9.	Sagittarius	December	November 21 - December 21
10.	Capricorn	January	December 21 - January 21
11.	Aquarius	February	January 21 - February 21
12.	Pisces	March	February 21 - March 21

In addition, to the association between the constellations and the twelve months of the year, the zodiac is also associated with symbolism such as stones, animals, seasons, and directions (shown hereafter).

	<b>Name &amp; Constellation</b>		<b>Sign or Symbol</b>	<b>Stone</b>	<b>Location</b>
1.	<b>Aries</b>		Ram 	Diamond Or Bloodstone	Northern Hemisphere Spring Solstice
2.	<b>Taurus</b>		Bull 	Sapphire Or Turquoise	Northern Hemisphere Spring Solstice
3.	<b>Gemini</b>		Twins 	Agate	Northern Hemisphere Summer Solstice
4.	<b>Cancer</b>		Crab 	Emerald Or Pearl	Northern Hemisphere Spring Solstice
5.	<b>Leo</b>		Lion 	Sardonyx or Topaz	Northern Hemisphere Spring Solstice
6.	<b>Virgo</b>		Female 	Jade Or Cornelian	Southern Hemisphere Fall Solstice
7.	<b>Libra</b>		Scales 	Opal Or Lapis Lazuli	Southern Hemisphere Fall Solstice
8.	<b>Scorpio</b>		Scorpion 	Beryl Or Carbuncle	Southern Hemisphere Fall Solstice
9.	<b>Sagittarius</b>		Centaur 	Topaz	Southern Hemisphere Winter Solstice
10.	<b>Capricorn</b>		Ram 	Black Onyx, Jet or Ruby	Southern Hemisphere Winter Solstice
11.	<b>Aquarius</b>		Man 	Garnet Or Zircon	Southern Hemisphere Winter Solstice
12.	<b>Pisces</b>		Fishes 	Amethyst	Northern Hemisphere Spring Solstice

# The Zodiac



How does the zodiac fit in with religion? First, the symbolism associated with it has obvious connections with the symbolism associated with Israel. Note that there are twelve tribes in Israel, and twelve zodiac signs. Twelve is the numeric representation of completeness, totality, and perfection. If we start with the assumption that there is a link between the twelve tribes and the twelve zodiac signs, several other associations become apparent.

- a. The twelve tribes were associated or symbolized by twelve stones or gems. These stones were worn in the breastplate of the high priest and had very specific symbolic meaning. Likewise, in the last days the New Jerusalem is to be built using twelve stones of corresponding value.

The Old Testament book of Exodus records the stones and gems of the breastplate of the High Priest as follows.

### Arrangement Gems of the Breastplate of Aaron

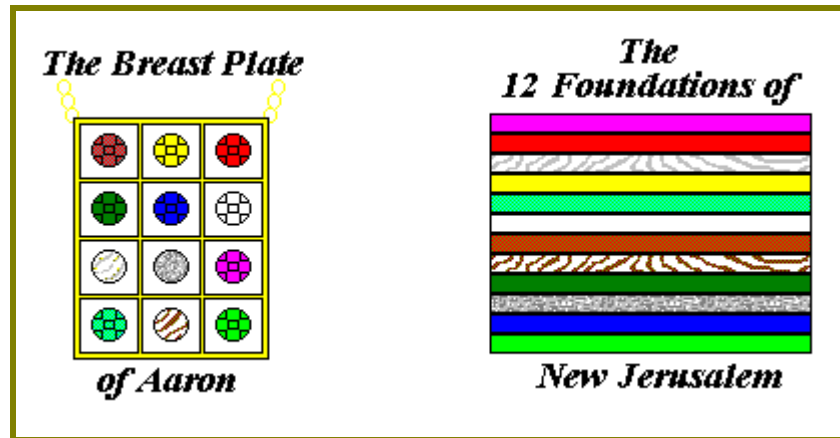
Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle
Emerald	Sapphire	Diamond
Ligure or Opal	Agate	Amethyst
Beryl	Onyx	Jasper

The Apostle John saw the twelve foundations and the stones or gems associated with each foundation in the building of the New Jerusalem. He records, "*The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprusus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst*".

### Arrangement Gems of the New Jerusalem

Amethyst
Jacinth
Chrysoprusus
Topaz
Beryl
Chrysolite
Sardius
Sardonyx
Emerald
Chalcedony
Sapphire
Jasper





Gems symbolize heavenly truth on earth, while stones represent the protection of God. Due to the hardness of the stone it also represents eternalness and immortality. Specific stones and gems, for the most part, derive their symbolic meaning from their color and appearance.

Similar to the breastplate of the Israelite High Priest, and the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem foundations, the zodiac is also associated with twelve stones (these were listed previously). Interestingly, the three series of stones correspond to each other. The three series are outlined below with their corresponding order (see parenthesis).

Breastplate Gem	Foundation Gem	Zodiac Gem
<b>Sardius</b> (1)	<b>Sardius</b> (6)	Jade or <b>Cornelian</b> (6)
<b>Topaz</b> (2)	<b>Topaz</b> (9)	<b>Topaz</b> (9)
<b>Carbuncle</b> (3)	<b>Jacinth</b> (11)	<b>Garnet</b> or Zircon (11)
<b>Emerald</b> (4)	<b>Emerald</b> (4)	<b>Emerald</b> or Pearl (4)
<b>Sapphire</b> (5)	<b>Sapphire</b> (2)	<b>Sapphire</b> or Turquoise (2)
<b>Diamond</b> (6)	<b>Chrysolite</b> (7)	Opal or <b>Lapis Lazuli</b> (7)
Figure or <b>Opal</b> (7)	<b>Chrysolite</b> (10)	<b>Black Onyx</b> , Jet or Ruby (10)
<b>Agate</b> (8)	<b>Chalcedony</b> (3)	<b>Agate</b> (3)
<b>Amethyst</b> (9)	<b>Amethyst</b> (12)	<b>Amethyst</b> (12)
<b>Beryl</b> (10)	<b>Beryl</b> (8)	<b>Beryl</b> or Carbuncle (8)
<b>Onyx</b> (11)	<b>Sardonyx</b> (5)	<b>Sardonyx</b> or Topaz (5)
<b>Jasper</b> (12)	<b>Jasper</b> (1)	Diamond or <b>Bloodstone</b> (1)

At first glance it might appear as if the association between the stones is not conclusive; however, upon further examination of the stones, their definition, appearance, color, and use, the matches between the three series were amazingly accurate. The following is a brief description of the stones included in the three series and a general description of each.

**Agate** - A fine-grained fibrous variety of chalcedony with colored bands or irregular clouding. The agate symbolizes different things depending on the color of the agate. The two most common colors are red and black. The red agate symbolizes health, wealth, longevity, and peace. The black agate represents courage, boldness, vigor, and prosperity.

**Amethyst** - A purple or violet form of transparent quartz used as a gemstone. It can also be a purple variety of corundum used as a gem. The amethyst typically symbolizes humility, peace of mind, piety, sobriety, and resignation.

**Beryl** - A transparent to translucent glassy mineral, essentially aluminum beryllium silicate,  $\text{Be}_3\text{Al}_2\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{18}$ , occurring in hexagonal prisms and constituting the chief source of beryllium. Transparent varieties in white, green, blue, yellow, or pink are valued as gems. Beryl symbolizes happiness, eternal youth, and married love.

**Bloodstone or Heliotrope** - A variety of deep green chalcedony flecked with red jasper. This stone represents understanding, peace, and the granting of wishes.

**Carbuncle** - A deep red garnet, uniaxial and convex. The Carbuncle stone represents determination, assurance, success, and energy.

**Chalcedony or Calcedony** - A translucent to transparent milky or grayish quartz with distinctive microscopic crystals arranged in slender fibers in parallel bands. This stone symbolizes bodily vigor, and the warding off of evil.

**Chrysoprasus or Chrysoprase** - An apple green chalcedony used as a gemstone. This stone is often used as a symbol for gaiety and joy.

**Chrysolite or Olivine** - A mineral made up of silicate of iron and magnesium, principally  $(\text{Mg,Fe})_2\text{SiO}_4$  found in igneous and metamorphic rocks and used as a structural material in refractories and in cements. The natural color of the mineral is olive. The symbolism associated with chrysolite is wisdom, discretion, and prudence.

**Cornelian or Carnelian** - A pale to deep red or reddish-brown variety of clear chalcedony used in jewelry. This gemstone represents friendship, courage, self-confidence, and health.

**Diamond** - An extremely hard, highly refractive crystalline form of carbon that is usually colorless and is used as a gemstone. The diamond is probably one of the most common symbols of the gemstones in modern society. It represents hardness, durability, incorruptibility, invincibility, consistency, sincerity, light, life, the sun, purity, righteousness, and innocence.

**Emerald** - A brilliant green to grass green transparent variety of beryl used as a gemstone. The emerald represents the giving of life. It also symbolizes immortality, hope, spring, youth, and faithfulness.

**Garnet** - Any of several common, widespread aluminum or calcium silicate minerals occurring in two internally isomorphic series,  $(\text{Mg, Mn, Fe})_3\text{Al}_2\text{Si}_3\text{O}_{12}$  and  $\text{Ca}_3(\text{Cr, Al, Fe})_2\text{Si}_3\text{O}_{12}$ , generally crystallized, often embedded in igneous and metamorphic rocks, and colored red, brown, black, green, yellow, or white and used both as gemstones and as abrasives. The garnet stone represents devotion, loyalty, energy, and grace.

**Jacinth or Hyacinth** - A reddish or cinnamon colored variety of transparent zircon used as a gemstone. It could also be a blue precious stone, perhaps the sapphire, known in antiquity. This stone is not commonly used as a symbol. When used it often represents modesty.

**Jade** - Either of two distinctive minerals, nephrite and jadeite, that are generally pale green or white and are used mainly as gemstones or in carving. Jade is used to symbolize life and the power of heavens.

**Jasper** - An opaque cryptocrystalline variety of quartz that may be red, yellow or brown. This stone is used to symbolize joy and happiness.

**Jet** - A dense black coal that takes a high polish and is used for jewelry. This less than common stone is used to represent grief, mourning, and safe travel.

**Lapis Lazuli** - An opaque to translucent blue, violet-blue, or greenish blue semi precious gemstone comprised mainly of lazurite and calcite. This stone is used to represent divine favor, success, and ability.

**Ligure** - A precious stone of ancient Israel. It was clear in color. The symbolism behind this stone is somewhat vague. The fact that it is clear possibly means that it was associated with purity, righteousness, and celestial glory.

**Onyx** - A chalcedony that occurs in bands of different colors and is used as a gemstone, especially in cameos and intaglios. The onyx symbolizes sincerity, spiritual strength, and happiness.

**Opal** - A translucent milky mineral of hydrated silica, often used as a gem. The opal symbolizes fidelity, religious favor, prayer, and assurance.

**Ruby** - A deep red, translucent variety of the mineral corundum, highly valued as a precious stone. The ruby represents royalty, dignity, zeal, power, love, passion, beauty, longevity, and invulnerability.

**Sapphire** - A clear, hard variety of corundum used as a gemstone that is usually blue but may be any color except red. The sapphire represents truth, heavenly virtue, and chastity.

**Sardius or Sard** - A clear or translucent, deep orange-red to brownish red variety of chalcedony. The sard stone symbolizes one's inner self.

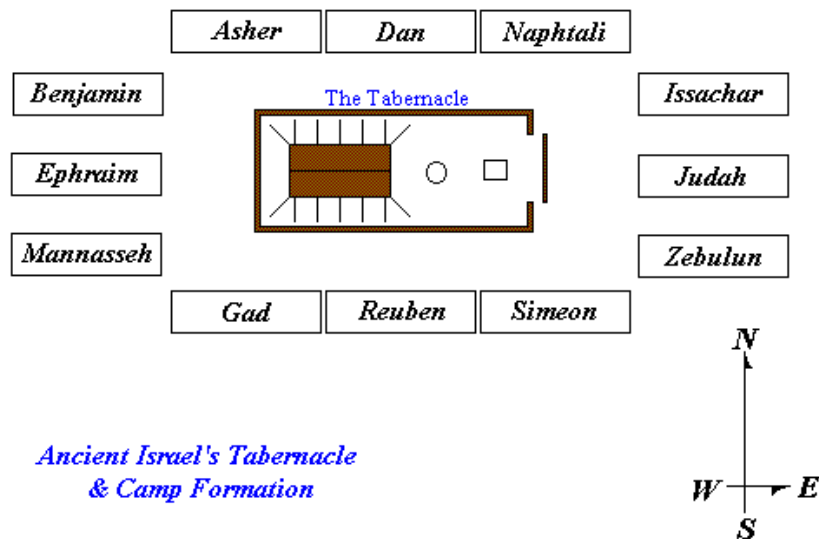
**Sardonyx** - An onyx with alternating brown and white bands of sard and other minerals. The sardonyx is a figurative representation of honor, renewal of life, brightness, and self-control.

**Topaz** - A colorless, blue, yellow, brown, or pink aluminum silicate mineral, often found in association with granitic rocks often valued as a gemstone, especially in the brown and pink varieties. Topaz can also be considered any variety of yellow gemstone, especially a yellow variety of Sapphire or corundum. The topaz symbolizes divine goodness, faithfulness, friendship, love, and the sun.

**Zircon** - A brown to colorless mineral  $ZrSiO_4$  that is heated, cut and polished to form a brilliant blue-white gem. The zircon symbolizes wisdom, honor, and riches.

The correlation between the stones of Israel and the zodiac is not conclusive, but the data has too great a correlation to be chance or happenstance. The twelve stones of the zodiac correspond quite well with the twelve stones of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem. The order of the zodiac stone and the foundations of the New Jerusalem even match. Such probability is too great to have occurred by chance.












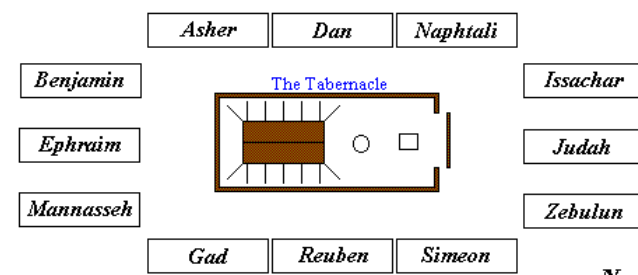













- b. The second item of similarity between the Israelites and the zodiac to be discussed in this work is that of the zodiac symbols. There appears to be a correlation between the location of the constellations and the placement of the twelve tribes of Israel with respect to the Tabernacle. The Twelve tribes of Israel were commanded of the Lord to camp around the Tabernacle in specific fashion. The tabernacle was always to face the east, and the tribes were to camp around the tabernacle in the same position every time. The tribe of Judah, for example, would always camp to the east of the tabernacle. Below is a diagram showing the camp layout of the twelve tribes.



The twelve tribes also had symbols associated with them. Though some of these symbols have been lost over time, the tribe of Judah for instance is associated with the Lion, the tribe of Dan with the Bull, Rueben with an Eagle (typically called Abraham's Eagle), and Ephriam with the Man. Knowing all of this, look at the relationship between the twelve tribes and the zodiac shown in the diagram hereafter.



**The Zodiac & The Tribes of Israel**

		
<b>Aries</b>	<b>Taurus</b>	<b>Gemini</b>
		
		
<b>Pisces</b>		<b>Cancer</b>
		
		
<b>Aquarius</b>	<b>The Tabernacle</b>	<b>Leo</b>
		
	<b>Ancient Israel's Tabernacle &amp; Camp Formation</b>	
<b>Capricorn</b>		<b>Virgo</b>
		
		
<b>Sagittarius</b>	<b>Scorpio</b>	<b>Libra</b>
		



The tribes line up in almost exact relation to the zodiac. One immediate exception would be Rueben who should have been symbolized by an eagle but the corresponding zodiac symbol is a scorpion. This exception is amazingly resolved when it is discovered that another symbol for the zodiac sign of Scorpio is an eagle.

The signs of the zodiac apparently match the symbols used to represent each of the twelve tribes of Israel. They also correspond in general layout.

- c. The final similarity, to be presented in this work, between the zodiac and the tribes of Israel is their relationship to the four cardinal directions, and the four seasons.

As previously discussed the twelve tribes were arranged in a specific order. Each tribe faced a cardinal direction. Facing the North was the tribe of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. Facing the East was the tribe of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Facing the South was the tribe of Rueben, Gad, and Simeon. Finally, the tribe of Ephriam, Benjamin, and Mannasseh faced the West. Similarly, the Zodiac is divided between the constellations Taurus and Gemini and the constellations Sagittarius and Scorpio by the Milky Way. The Northern and Southern hemispheres also divides the zodiac. It is divided between the constellations Pisces and Aquarius and the constellations Leo and Virgo. This neatly divides the zodiac into a North, South, East, and West arrangement. As one might expect at this point, the zodiac signs that match the tribes of Israel also match the cardinal directions. The cardinal directions symbolize all the directions of the earth and consequently represent all of the creations of God. Each direction has it's own symbolism associated with it. The following is a symbolic definition for each of the four directions.

**North** - The Hebrews symbolized the north as the winged ox. It is also a symbol for winter. It is related to death, coldness, darkness, and destruction.

**South** - The Hebrews symbolized the south as the winged eagle. It is also a symbol for summer. It is related to fire, warmth, the noonday sun, purification, and cleansing.

**East** - The Hebrews symbolized the east as the winged lion. It is also a symbol for spring. It is related to the dawn or rising sun, hope, and the second coming of Christ.

**West** - The Hebrews symbolized the west as the winged angel or man. It is also a symbol for fall. It is related to the dying sun or sunset.

It should be noted that with each direction that Israel faced existed a symbolic season. Each of the four seasons existed in the camp of Israel. Likewise, the zodiac incorporates the four seasons. The seasons do not match exactly; however, there is a correlation. The seasons appear to be offset, nevertheless, they follow the same pattern. Subsequently, a relationship exists. This point can be summarized as follows.

	Zodiac Sign	Zodiac Sign	Zodiac Sign
Zodiac Sign	Aries	Taurus	Gemini
Zodiac Symbol	Ram	Bull	Twins
Zodiac Location	Northern Hemisphere	Northern Hemisphere	Northern Hemisphere
Zodiac Position	1	2	3
Zodiac Season	Spring	Spring	Summer
Israelite Tribe	Asher	Dan	Naphtali
Israelite Symbol	?	Bull	?
Israelite Camp Direction	North	North	North
Israelite Equivalent Season	Winter	Winter	Winter

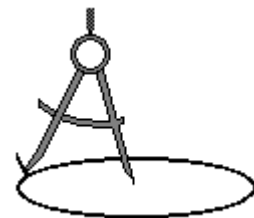
	Zodiac Sign	Zodiac Sign	Zodiac Sign
Zodiac Sign	Cancer	Leo	Virgo
Zodiac Symbol	Crab	Lion	Female
Zodiac Location	Northern Hemisphere	Northern Hemisphere	Southern Hemisphere
Zodiac Position	4	5	6
Zodiac Season	Summer	Summer	Fall
Israelite Tribe	Issachar	Judah	Zebulon
Israelite Symbol	?	The Lion	?
Israelite Camp Direction	East	East	East
Israelite Equivalent Season	Spring	Spring	Spring

	Zodiac Sign	Zodiac Sign	Zodiac Sign
Zodiac Sign	Libra	Scorpio	Sagittarius
Zodiac Symbol	Woman	Scorpion	Centaur
Zodiac Location	Southern Hemisphere	Southern Hemisphere	Southern Hemisphere
Zodiac Position	7	8	9
Zodiac Season	Fall	Fall	Winter
Israelite Tribe	Simeon	Rueben	Gad
Israelite Symbol	?	Eagle	?
Israelite Camp Direction	South	South	South
Israelite Equivalent Season	Summer	Summer	Summer

	Zodiac Sign	Zodiac Sign	Zodiac Sign
Zodiac Sign	Capricorn	Aquarius	Pisces
Zodiac Symbol	Goat	Man	Fishes
Zodiac Location	Southern Hemisphere	Southern Hemisphere	Northern Hemisphere
Zodiac Position	10	11	12
Zodiac Season	Winter	Winter	Spring
Israelite Tribe	Manasseh	Ephraim	Benjamin
Israelite Symbol	?	Man	?
Israelite Camp Direction	West	West	West
Israelite Equivalent Season	Fall	Fall	Fall

In conclusion to theory number five, the zodiac could easily be the symbolic interpretation of Ezekiel's wheels. In the zodiac we find representations of all of God's creations. We find reference to the four creatures seen by John and the four faces seen by Ezekiel, which also represented God's creations.

6. This theory could be called the Celestial Sphere. The wheel is often associated with such symbols as the sun and the circle. Since it is circular, and has no real beginning or end in respect to where the circle starts and ends, it can be used as a symbol of immortality, eternal existence, and God who is the giver of such gifts. The circle is often pictured or associated with the compass, which symbolizes the exactness and completeness of God's eternal creations. Such symbolism might well be used in the regards to Ezekiel's wheels. This theory is much like theory number five, but negates any relationship between the





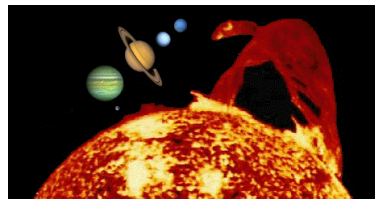
God of Israel and the Zodiac. It assumes that the circular shape of the wheel is the key to the symbolic definition. It takes the circle and links it to the creations of God, especially in the circular sphere that we call earth.

7. In addition to what could be called feasible theories, lie a litany of theories that have relative low probability of being true. For whatever reason, there are many theories that exist for Ezekiel's wheels that are off the beaten path. Some examples of these theories are that Ezekiel's wheels are modern day automobile motors and even alien spaceships. Though these theories have little merit, they are mentioned for the simple fact that it illustrates how little we really know about the true identity of Ezekiel's wheels. From the information given, much can be construed.

8. Another theory for the meaning of Ezekiel's mysterious wheels is that they represent the universe around us. It is probably apparent that some of these theories are very similar, yet, there are some distinct differences. It should be noted that our galaxy and most of the galaxies we have seen resemble wheels. They are circular with large clusters of stars in the center resembling hubs. Taking this one step further, the wheel within the



Our Galaxy  
"The Milky Way"



call the milky way, lies our solar system. In our solar system lies a yellow star that we call the sun. The sun could represent the hub of a wheel. Around the hub orbits nine planets in a semi circular pattern. The system could easily represent a wheel. One could conclude that our galaxy symbolizes a wheel, while our solar system symbolizes another wheel within it. Taking it even further, the very earth that we live on could be considered a wheel.



9. The last proposed meaning behind Ezekiel's wheels is that it is a symbolic representation of God's one eternal round. That is to say the wheel goes beyond God's creations, and includes all of God's works, words, and actions. We find that God, because of his perfection, is predictable, repeatable, and reliable. His ways are described as one eternal round. The Book of Mormon records, "*For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, **the course of the Lord is one eternal round***" (1<sup>st</sup> Nephi 10:19). Similarly, the modern day Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, "*Listen to the voice of the Lord your God, even Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, whose course is one eternal round, the same today as yesterday, and forever*" (Doctrine and Covenants 35:1). The circular shape of the wheel, and the fact that God's ways are described as an eternal round, leads one to theorize that Ezekiel's wheels might represent the pattern of the Lord's actions.

The list of theories presented in this work for Ezekiel's wheels could probably go on much longer than it already has. In conclusion, the meaning behind the wheel could easily be one of the theories already mentioned, or even a combination of them. The beauty of symbolism is that multiple meanings and teachings can be incorporated into the same symbolism. Unfortunately, due to the fact that we have no clear divine interpretation for the wheel, the real meaning remains vague. At the very least, the theories presented have opened avenues for thought and pondering. The author's personal view follows theory number one incorporating certain elements of some of the other theories.

Looking at the rest of verse two, it should be recalled that the linen clothed man went between the wheels and filled his hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim. The location of the cherubim was discussed in the commentary in verse one. The coal, however, is another issue. Coal in its unrefined, and natural state is the darkest of black. Because of its color, the symbolism behind black coal is associated with evil, wickedness, and sin. Burning coal creates a whole new set of symbolism. Fire by itself represents refining, purification, and transformations. As coal is burned, the fire burns away the carbon contained in the coal. This carbon could easily be equated with impurity. It is the carbon that gives coal its black color and consequently its negative symbolic meaning. As the carbon is burned away the coal takes on a new appearance. It is transformed into white ashes. The color white represents purity, righteousness, and that which

is godly. One can see that the burning coal represents transformation, and refining.

The location of the coals in this seen is probably either of two locations; the altar of incense located within the Temple of Solomon or the great brazen altar located within the inner court just outside the main doors to the Temple of Solomon. Since the altar of incense lay in the main sanctuary and not in the Holy of Holies where the Cherubim stood, it is probable that the coals were taken from the brazen altar. If this line of logic is correct, then the location of the cherubim and the details surrounding them, discussed in verse one and two, could be interpreted as literal angels of God in the inner court.

The great brazen altar also has some points of symbolism associated with it that might clarify the verse even further. The altar had four horns, one on each corner. The horns symbolized each of the cardinal directions. They also symbolized each of the four creatures spoken of by Ezekiel in chapter one. Later in this chapter, the four creatures are equated with the mysterious wheels (see the commentary on verse seventeen). This might explain what the Lord meant when He said to take the coal from *"between the wheels, even under the cherub"*. It might have simply been a direction to take the coal from the bed of coals burning under the four horns of the altar.

The coals of the brazen altar took on additional meaning relative to the symbolism beyond just ordinary fiery coal. The brazen altar was the location of Israel's burnt offerings to their God. It represented their sacrifice, atonement, and subsequent forgiveness for their sins. The removal of the fiery coal symbolized the removal of the ability to repent and receive divine forgiveness. This thought might seem foreign in the minds of those that believe in a God of forgiveness, but that belief is not being challenged. The Israelites had had ample opportunity to repent. They had almost been begged by their God through His prophets, yet they rejected the offer. Even a hundred years before this vision the prophet Isaiah saw this event and warned his kindred. He wrote, *"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar"* (2<sup>nd</sup> Nephi 16:16). After years of opportunity, the chance was being removed. The God of forgiveness is also a God of Justice. We, the society of the last days, should give great attention to this section of scripture. The truth be known it will be all too familiar to many of us. In speaking of the last days the Apostle John wrote, *"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake"* (Revelation 8:5).

The linen clad angel was told to take the fiery coal in his hand. It should be remembered that this passage is rich with symbolism. The hand symbolizes many things. Here it most probably symbolizes the



power of action, the ability to move and issue judgement, and even the power of control. The message is starting to come into shape. The Lord is giving this divine servant the power and ability to pronounce judgement and justice on Jerusalem.

Repentance is closely associated with Judgement. We will be judged on those sins for which we have not repented and been forgiven. Such is the message contained in the phrase, "*Scattered them*", the coals, "*over the city*". Isn't it interesting that the coals which had for centuries represented forgiveness to the Israelites, now symbolized the wrath and judgement of God? The coals represent purification. There are two ways in which to purify; take that which is impure and purify it leaving only that which is good (repentance), or removing by destroying that which is impure leaving only that which is good (judgement). Unfortunately, Israel chose the latter. Let us hope that our generation chooses the first option.

Much has been discussed in this verse. To summarize, the Lord, Jehovah, commands the linen clad angel to take a fiery coal (symbolizing judgement) into his hands (signifying the power of action and the ability to issue judgement) and scatter them over the city of Jerusalem. All this was done as Ezekiel watched. The prophet wrote, "*He went in my sight*".

**Verse 3:** **"Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court."**

The great altar of burnt offerings or the brazen altar is said to have lain directly in front of the Temple of Solomon. In contrast, many scholars say that it was better placed just in front of the Temple of Solomon, but off to the right side of the front doors. If the latter is the case, it makes a strong argument for the theory in the commentary on verse two that the cherubim spoken of in the verse are the figurative representations of the four horns of the altar. This verse states that the cherubim stood on the right side of King Solomon's Temple.

If the cherubim spoken of in this verse are not figurative representations for the four horns of the altar, then we must assume that there were other angels present in the courtyard of the temple. We know from chapter nine that there were five other men or angels that accompanied the linen clad angel. Even so, we are not given a clear explanation of who the cherubim might be.

It is significant that the cherubim stood on the right side of the house. The right symbolizes the righteous, pure, clean, and that which is on the side of God.

In chapter nine's commentary, the linen clad angel's identity was discussed. Without repeating that commentary, one theory presented

identified the six men or angels as the Babylonians. The question then must be asked: if the man clothed in linen represented, in part, the Babylonians did his entering the temple defile the Lord's house and drive the spirit from it? This speculation might be applicable since as the man entered, the cloud which was previously discussed as representing the presence of the God, appears to fill the Lord's house and the court. Shortly thereafter, the cloud appears to leave the scene resulting in a Temple absent of the Lord's spirit.

**Verse 4:** **"Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory."**

After the man entered the Lord's house, the "*glory*" of the Lord is said to have gone up from the cherub. Recalling Old Testament history, one might remember that the day in which Solomon dedicated the Temple to the Lord a fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices placed on the brazen altar. The fire represented God's glory and power. Tradition says that the Israelites never let that holy fire die. It burned year after year with its smoke rising to the heavens as a symbol of the prayers of the righteous. The smoke or cloud released from the fire also represented the presence of God. In fact, it was His power that brought it to be. In verse two, the man is told to take the fiery coal from between the cherubim or the brazen altar. It might be implied here that he took all the fire that burned there. In this verse we find that the glory of the Lord went up from him. Evidently the fire was extinguished. As this occurred, the cloud or smoke filled the house. It should be noted that a very similar thing happened at Solomon's dedication of the Temple. After the fire came from heaven, a thick cloud filled the house and the court. The difference between the two accounts is that this verse represents the leaving of the Lord's glory, presence, and power, while the dedicatory meeting by Solomon was the arrival of the Lord's glory, presence, and power.

**Verse 5:** **"And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh."**

Despite the fact that the vacating of the Lord from His house was a sad day in the lives of the Hebrews, it was a necessary and important event in history. The event stands as testimony as to whom is the God of Israel.



It teaches us that though God is patient, He will not be mocked. This verse, if taken literally, states that the wings of angels were heard by Ezekiel coming from the outer court. It might be said that the hosts of heaven were gathered together. It would seem though that there was more to the passage than is literally written. Apparently, the noise of the cherubims' or angels wings were a symbolic representation for the voice of the Almighty God.

Did God the Father actually speak at this point? We know that God the Son was standing with Ezekiel in the inner court of the Temple. If He did speak His words are not recorded at this point. A further question might be asked as to why God's voice would be symbolized by the sounds of angels' wings. A somewhat similar occurrence happened as the Kirtland Temple was dedicated in the early 1800's. The History of the Church records, "*Brother George A. Smith arose and began to prophesy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people of the neighborhood came running together*

*(hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place"* (History of the Church, B.H. Roberts, volume 2, page 428). The voice of



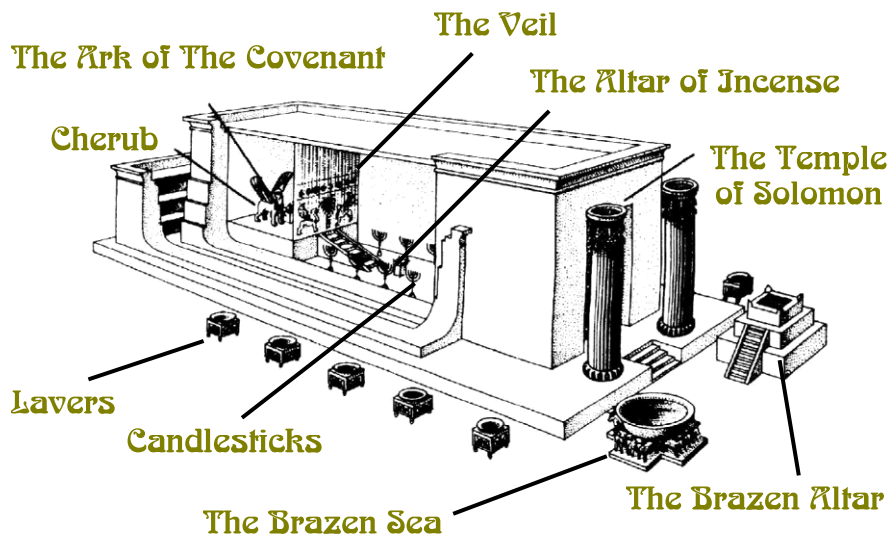
God is often symbolized by rushing waters, rushing wind, or the sounds of the wing's of angels. Each represent a beautiful symbol of the Lord's majesty, grace, and beauty while at the same time conveying the idea of His power and might.

**Verse 6:** **"And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels."**

This verse starts with the phrase "*And it came to pass*" which is common in scripture. It is usually used to convey the idea of a passage of time. In the overall scope of chapter ten, it would not appear that much time passed. In fact, it appears that the phrase is not used in this instance to convey a passage of time, but rather to convey the idea that

all of the events that have transpired, or come to pass, did so by the command of God. This is a crucial point. The events in Jerusalem did not come at the command of the Babylonians or any other force, but rather at the command of the Lord.

Ezekiel recounts the Lord's command, which ends up being a close reiteration of verse two. The following couple of verses continue to reiterate verses three through five. It is probably appropriate at this point to show a layout and cross section of Solomon's Temple to help us understand the locations spoken of in the chapter.



Another point that should be made when considering the overall symbolism of the vision contained in chapters eight through eleven is its relationship to Old Testament Temple worship. In the Book of Leviticus the prophet Moses recorded the words of the Lord concerning His worship in the Temple.

*"And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for **I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.** Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. **He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy***

*garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. And...the scapegoat...shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness...And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: **And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times...And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness...And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there... And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments...And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses” (Leviticus 16).***

Several items need to be pointed out as they relate to the vision Ezekiel received in chapters eight through eleven and chapter sixteen of Leviticus.

1. Several times in Ezekiel's vision, the prophet makes mention of a cloud in the Temple of Solomon and the inner courtyard of the Temple. Previously, in Leviticus we read that as the priests worshipped in the Temple, the Lord would "***appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat***".
2. Early in chapter ten, the prophet Ezekiel sees a linen clad angel taking fiery coals from the altar into his hands. In the Book of Leviticus we read that the priest was to "***take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar***". Note that the censer is a symbol for the open or cupped hand. It represents offering and sacrifice.
3. Ezekiel continually refers to a man dressed in linen in the vision contained in chapters eight through eleven. The linen clad man was responsible for marking the righteous in the forehead, and performing various tasks in and around the Temple of Solomon. The significance of linen clothe as it relates to the Temple dates back to at least the days of Moses. The Lord commanded that the priest who was to enter the Holy House of the Lord was to "***put on the holy linen coat, and... have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and... be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre ...***". The relationship to the heavenly servant in Ezekiel's vision is quite pronounced.
4. The purpose and message contained in chapter sixteen of Leviticus has to do with the Israelites receiving forgiveness for their sins. It was a symbolic act that represented the great atonement of Jesus Christ who at that time was promised to come into the world and make the great sacrifice for sin. In the ancient Temple ceremony, the priest was to sacrifice animals to "***an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation***". The atonement represents purification. In Ezekiel's vision the linen clad man was also involved in an act of purification, but his actions involved the destruction of the wicked who refused to repent and partake of the atonement.
5. The last note of similarity that shall be mentioned in this work is that of the direction "East". The vision makes mention of the East gate of Jerusalem and the Cherubim were said to have stood on the East side of Solomon's Temple. Similarly, the priest performing the



sacred act of atonement in the ancient temple ceremony was to *"take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward"*. The East is the direction from which the Lord and Savior is to come in the last days. It represents the Lord's power, might and dominion.

**Verse 7:** **"And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out."**

It would appear that another angel is on the scene. This cherub or angel stretches forth his hand into the fire between the cherubim, which we assumed to be a reference to the four horns on the brazen altar, to take the fiery coal. The coal was then placed in the hand of the linen clad man. The linen clad man in turn takes the fiery coal and leaves the altar.

The outstretched hand symbolizes giving, sacrifice, and offering. The correlation between this symbolic definition and verse seven is unclear. It appears the message is that the removal of the fiery coal was heaven sent.

**Verse 8:** **"And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings."**

This verse begins a description of the angels or cherubim, which continues for the rest of this chapter. In this verse, the prophet makes note of the fact that the angels' hands take the form of a man's hand under their wings. Interestingly, Ezekiel is specific in stating that it was a "form" of a man's hand. This verbiage might very well be an indication to us that the prophet's message was going to be symbolic in nature. The wings of angels, we are taught through modern prophets are mere representation of power to act and move. Similarly, the hand symbolizes the ability and power to move and act. The difference between the two symbols might be in the sphere in which they reside. The wings might represent the power to move and act on a celestial sphere. It could also be an indication of their exaltation. The hand represents power to move and act on a mortal sphere. The hands being under the wings might suggest the domination of the celestial over the mortal.



**Verse 9:** "And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone."

The prophet continues to look and describe the angels which he saw. As stated previously, the word cherub is a form of the Hebrew word seraph meaning angel. Ezekiel states that four wheels, which were discussed in the commentary for verse two, were by the cherubim or angels. Each cherub had a wheel by it. It might be suggested that Ezekiel is making reference to the fact that each angel had a physical as well as a spiritual body. The actual meaning is unclear.

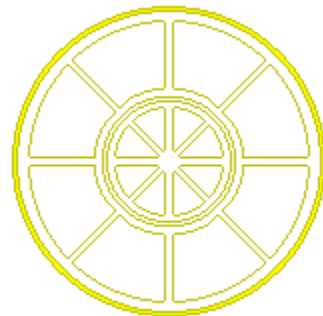
The prophet continues by stating that the wheels were as the color of beryl. The term "*were as*" or as stated "*was as*" is a clue that symbolism is going to be used rather than literal description. The term "*beryl*" is defined by the dictionary as follows.

**Beryl** *n.* A transparent to translucent glassy mineral, essentially aluminum beryllium silicate,  $\text{Be}_3\text{Al}_2\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{18}$ , occurring in hexagonal prisms and constituting the chief source of beryllium. Transparent varieties in white, green, blue, yellow, or pink are valued as gems.

In symbolic language, beryl symbolizes hope, happiness, eternal youth, and married love. Defining the symbolism behind the color beryl is difficult since beryl comes in many colors and combinations. It is difficult to say just what color Ezekiel really wanted to convey to us. The typical color for beryl in the scriptures is green. The color green symbolizes life. This meaning is quite fitting if the wheels represented the physical and spiritual bodies of the angels.

**Verse 10:** "And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel."

This verse is a reiteration of a passage in chapter one of Ezekiel's Book. For commentary on this verse please reference the commentary for chapter one. It should be mentioned that the "four" spoken of are the four creatures that Ezekiel saw before the throne of God. The number four represents completeness. It is closely associated with the square, and is eternally connected with the four cardinal directions, the four seasons, and the four



**A Wheel within a Wheel**

elements. The number four often stands for all of God's creations. It is especially interesting that even though the number four represents such vast and all encompassing things, Ezekiel associates it with one likeness. He compares the likeness to a wheel in a wheel.

**Verse 11:** **“When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went.”**

Continuing to describe the angels of God, Ezekiel states that when the angels went, they went on their four sides. This phrase is almost as puzzling as the term wheel itself. The wheel, in a literal sense, is round and has no sides. Having four sides would make the circle a square. The term seems contradictory in nature. The sides might again be making reference to things like seasons, elements, and directions. This entire phrase might be a figurative expression indicating the angel's ability to move between spheres of existence, having no bounds or limits.

Adding to the verse, Ezekiel states that as the angels moved they did not turn as they went. They apparently did not even so much as turn their head as they went. They merely focused on the destination. It should be noted that the head symbolizes the center of rational thought and thinking. It is the center for logical decision and control. The fact that the angels turned not their heads might indicate that they totally and absolutely followed the directions of heaven. They deviated not from the path outlined by God. Straight was their way and narrow was their path.

**Verse 12:** **“And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had.”**

In his explanation of the angels or cherubim, Ezekiel describes them as having bodies. He saw that they had bodies, backs, hands, eyes, wings, and wheels. It is difficult to say how much of what he describes here is symbolic and how much is literal. Let us look at each case individually.

1. We will start with the eyes since the eyes are associated with all of the other symbols. According to this verse, the bodies, backs, hands, wings, and wheels of the angels were full of eyes round about. This phrase regarding the eyes is quite puzzling, and yet almost the same verbiage is used by the Apostle John when he was privileged to see the throne of God. John wrote, *"And before the*

*throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne were the four and twenty elders; and round about the throne, were **four beasts full of eyes** before and behind” (Joseph Smith Translation of Revelation 4:6). This whole concept of having body parts full of eyes was so puzzling that the prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord as to their meaning. The prophet asked, “What are we to understand by the **eyes** and wings, which the beasts had?” The Lord answered the question by saying, “Their eyes are a **representation of light and knowledge**, that is, they are full of knowledge; and their wings are a representation of power, to move, to act, etc.” (Doctrine & Covenants 77:4). The eyes usually represent the content of one’s mind and soul. They are used as symbols in the scriptures and many other works. An example is found in the Doctrine and Covenants which says, “Now, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness; they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness” (Doctrine & Covenants 68:31).*

2. The next item that should be addressed is that of the angels’ bodies. The body typically represents mortality, life, the frailty of man, and the center of the body. It houses the mind and the heart, which are the center of man's intelligence and emotion.
3. The back bears the weight of the body. Hence, the symbolic use of the term "back" has to do with bearing sin, iniquity, trials, hardships, and similar things.
4. The hands symbolize the ability to act and move on a physical plane. In addition, there are many other symbolic uses for the hand. The cupped hand symbolizes sacrifice, offering, and giving. The raised hand represents support, sustaining, and agreement. The clasped hands represent friendship and union. The right hand represents righteousness while the left represents wickedness. The list of symbols for the hand could go on much further; however, those that might be applicable in this verse have been presented.
5. The wings symbolize the ability to act and move on a spiritual plane. They symbolize divine power and authority.
6. The wheels were discussed extensively in verse two of this chapter. It is the author's opinion that wheels most probably represent the physical and spiritual tabernacles of the angels. This theory is presented as theory number one in verse two. It should be reiterated that the scriptures do not fully disclose the nature of the wheels spoken of by Ezekiel.

The angels that appear in this vision are depicted by Ezekiel using rich symbols as well as terms that might be taken literally. It is unsure which terms used in this verse are literal, symbolic or both. The Doctrine and Covenants teaches, *"There are two kinds of beings in heaven, namely: Angels, who are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones- For instance, Jesus said: Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. Secondly: spirits of just men made perfect, they who are not resurrected, but inherit the same glory"* (Doctrine & Covenants 129:1-3). Since we know that angels have literal bodies, some of the terms used by Ezekiel could easily have been literal.

The angels that were present were four in number, and we will find that they are indeed the same four angels or creatures that Ezekiel saw in chapter one. The number four might not necessarily be a literal number. The number four represents completeness and is closely related to the square. The four angels could represent the completeness of God's creations, be literally four angels, or both. If we assume that Ezekiel's four angels are the same as the four creatures seen by John the Revelator, we might have an answer to their identity. The prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord as to their identity. He asked, *"What are we to understand by the four beasts, spoken of in the same verse?"* The Lord answered and said, *"They are figurative expressions, used by the Revelator, John in describing heaven, the paradise of God, the happiness of man, and of beasts, and of creeping things, and of the fowl of the air; that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal; and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual; the spirit of man in the likeness of his person, as also the spirit of the beast, and every other creature which God has created"* (Doctrine & Covenants 77:2). Notice the beautiful correlation to the theory that the wheel within the wheel is actually a representation of the spiritual body within the physical.

**Verse 13:** **"As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing. O wheel."**

What does the phrase "O, Wheel" mean? The answer to that question is quite vague. First of all, the identity of the wheels is still not sure, and secondly, the significance of the phrase "O, Wheel" is not clear.

**Verse 14:** **"And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle."**

The four angels appeared to have four faces each. The faces were discussed in further detail in chapter one. One slight difference in this verse, compared to previous references to the four beasts, is that the cherub mentioned in this verse was a bull in previous references. This might be of significance since many ancient cultures had legends of angels or guardians that took the form of bulls. A summary of typical symbolic uses for the four faces of the beasts is as follows.

**Lion** - The lion typically symbolizes majesty, strength, and courage. The lion is the King of the beasts. Biblically, the lion is the King of Judah. The lion is also equated with the East (sometimes the South).



**Bull** - The bull is a symbol of strength. In the Old Testament, Jahveh is the Bull of Israel (This is the might of Israel). Generally speaking the bull symbolizes male strength, the solar, the sun, and the north.

**Man** - The man symbolizes the work and glory of God. Man represents the earth, life, mortality, and existence. The natural man represents sin, wickedness, and rebelliousness.



**Eagle** - The eagle symbolizes the solar, victory, pride, royalty, the element of air, authority, strength, and the directions south (sometimes East).

Rather than repeat the commentary in chapter one regarding the four faces, or creatures, this commentary will build upon that which has already been written.

One interesting correlation between the four faces that Ezekiel saw is that of the Egyptian sphinx. The sphinx is a figure from Egyptian mythology. It typically has the body of a lion, and the head of a man. Other than the main sphinx in Gaza, there are four minor sphinx. The four minor sphinx each contain a different face. As might be expected at this point, the faces of the minor sphinx are of a man, a bull, an eagle, and a lion. The absolute meaning of the four sphinx is considered a mystery; however, there is evidence to suggest that they are related to the zodiac, the cardinal directions, and the four elements. The correlation here between the faces Ezekiel saw and the



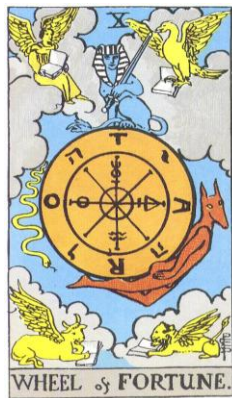


four sphinx is not conclusive but the similarities are striking. It is suggested that the knowledge of God was brought through the flood with Noah. Noah's son, Ham, sinned against God and was denied the priesthood. His posterity settled Egypt and, we are told, brought the knowledge of God with them. They organized their society after the order of the priesthood, but they were denied the power and authority thereof. Were the ancient sphinx actually personifications of knowledge from on high that were carried through the flood by the prophet Noah? The entire thought ties in nicely with some of the theories presented with the wheels in verse two.

The symbolism of the man, the eagle, the bull, and the lion were apparently very common in the ancient world. The Egyptians incorporated them in the sphinx while other surrounding civilizations used the same imagery in similar form. The Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and many other civilizations had, in association with heathen worship, a creature which they typically regarded as a guardian of the Gods that used the same imagery. This creature had the legs of a bull, the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the head of a man. The Assyrians called this creature "Adrammelech". Though the use of these symbols are obviously adulterated, the connections between this creature and the guardian nature of the angels Ezekiel saw with the same imagery is evident.



The final similarity or correlation that could be discussed regarding the four faces that Ezekiel saw is that of Tarot cards. Again, the caution must be clearly stated that the author does not believe that tarot card reading is a righteous or correct practice. On the contrary, they should be avoided. Even so, what are Tarot Cards and where did they come from? Tarot cards consist of a deck of seventy-eight cards used most commonly to read the future. There are many different renditions of Tarot decks. They are considered the father of modern playing cards. The cards of a Tarot deck are filled with symbolism, some of which comes from biblical origins. Direct connections with



Tarot card imagery and scripture are quite evident. The origins of Tarot cards are unknown; however, most scholars consider the theory that places their origin in early Egypt the most likely. The Tarot card imagery was most likely adopted from the divine. Its use however was less than endorsed by God. Even so, we





can see the use of the faces Ezekiel saw in his vision clearly shown in Tarot card imagery. The face of a man, an eagle, a lion, and a bull appear on certain cards on many decks. They are commonly associated with the world card, the cosmos card, and the wheel of fortune. This is especially interesting since it has been mentioned that the faces Ezekiel saw represented the creations of God, both from this world and throughout the universe.



The connections between the four faces of Ezekiel's cherubim and the heathen nations of the ancient world just mentioned were not meant to define Ezekiel's symbolism as being of heathen origin. The point was to show that the symbols were common in ancient civilizations. The symbols of God were obviously powerful in the eyes of early men, and even though they perverted His ways, they continued to incorporate many of them. Perhaps they were hoping to draw upon His great power.

**Verse 15:** **“And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar.”**

At this point in Ezekiel's vision the angels or cherubim exit the scene. Their exit is apparently not through the conventional gates of the inner court, but rather up toward the heavens. Ezekiel quite simply says that they were lifted up. How angels actually defy the laws of gravity is unclear, but we know that through the power of the priesthood nature can be controlled. One might recall that through the power of the priesthood Moses parted the Red Sea, Jesus walked on water, and Moroni hovered above the ground before Joseph Smith's bed. Using this same power, the angels just described in the previous verses float up into the heavens.

As a side note, Ezekiel makes a connection to the vision he saw in chapter one. He informs us that the creatures were the same creatures that he saw in that vision. See chapter one commentary for further clarification.

**Verse 16:** **“And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them.”**

As the angels made their ascent into heaven, the prophet informs us that their wheels went with them. Here again, we are left with the puzzle of the wheels. If the author's suspicions are correct that the wheels represent the physical and spiritual tabernacles of man, Ezekiel might be emphasizing that the physical body of man is

inseparable from his spiritual body after exaltation. Though this theory has appeal, it is still just speculation. Whatever the wheels are, it is evident that they accompanied the cherubim to heaven.

This verse continues to reiterate the message of the inseparability of the cherubim and the wheels. Ezekiel repeats the fact that the wheels moved in perfect harmony with the cherubim. He states that as the cherubim, or angels, lifted themselves to heaven the wheels were "*beside*" them. The American Heritage Dictionary defines the term "*beside*" as follows.

**Beside** *prep.* **1.** At the side of; next to **2. a.** in comparison with **b.** on an equal footing with

The rest of the verse is a mixture of symbolic and literal description. The cherubim lifted their wings. These were not literal wings but rather symbolic representation of movement, action, and power.

They then mounted up from the earth. The term mount is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as follows.

**Mount** *v.* **1.** To climb or ascend **2.** To place oneself upon; get up on **3. a.** To furnish with a horse **b.** To set on a horse **4.** To set in a raised position **5. a.** To fix securely to a support **b.** To place or fix on or in the appropriate support or setting for display or study. **6.** To provide with scenery, costumes, and other equipment for production **7.** To organize and equip **8.** To prepare and set in motion **9. a.** To set in a position for use **b.** To carry as equipment **10.** To post

The term mount is probably used in the context of ascension. Other examples of the word mount used in this content within the holy scriptures are as follows.

*"Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds" (Job 20:6).*

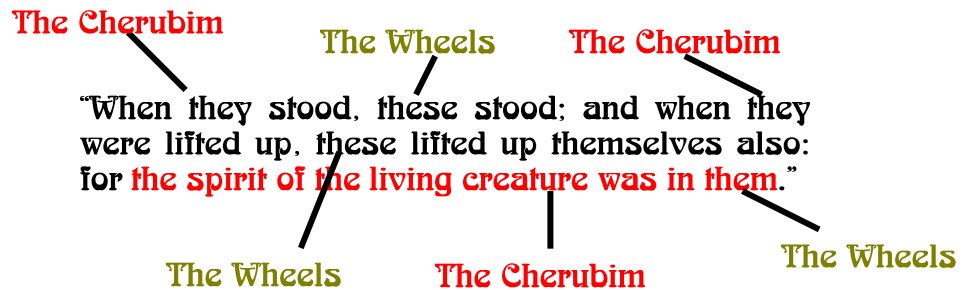
*"They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble" (Psalms 107:26).*

*"For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke" (Isaiah 9:18).*

The earth, in this case, probably represents the ground upon which the Cherubim stood. In summarizing the actions of this verse, the angels, using the power of heaven, ascended to heaven from the grounds of the inner court of Solomon's Temple.

**Verse 17:** **“When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for the spirit of the living creature was in them.”**

This verse probably represents the strongest support for theory number one, contained in the commentary for verse two of this chapter. Note that the theory says that the wheels spoken of by Ezekiel represent the physical and spiritual bodies of the cherubim. Notice how this verse connects the wheels with the cherubim.



The reader might argue that the verse speaks of the living creature and not the cherubim. As we read on, we will find that verse twenty clarifies that the living creatures are the cherubim.

In addition to a better understanding of the relationship between the wheels and the cherubim, this verse also reiterates their inseparable nature. Note that they stood together, and were lifted up together. The spirit and body act as one.

**Verse 18:** **“Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims.”**

As the cherubim, or angels, ascended to heaven, the presence of the Lord departed with them. This is the final and great blow to Israel. Hosea spoke clearly when he said, *“Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them” (Hosea 9:12)*! Worse than any judgement was the departure of God's presence. Such a fate represented a spiritual death rather than a physical. The physical was horrible, but the spiritual was eternal.

The Lord's glory, which represented His presence, departed from the threshold of the Temple. The threshold is defined by the Dictionary as follows.

**Threshold** *n.* **1.** A piece of wood or stone placed beneath a door; a doorsill **2.** An entrance or a doorway **3.** The place or point of beginning; the outset **4.** A point separating conditions that will produce a given effect from conditions of a higher or lower degree that will not produce the effect, as the intensity below which a stimulus is of sufficient strength to produce sensation or elicit a response.

Earlier in the vision, the glory of the Lord came to the threshold in preparation of departing from the house. In this scene the Glory actually departs. The cloud, or representation of the Lord's presence, ascended above the cherubim. This verbiage symbolically implies the status of the angels in respect to the Lord. They are under His protection and authority, while He leads and guides their way.

At this point another theory should be interjected. The Lord, Jesus Christ, was the supposed heavenly messenger who first appeared to Ezekiel in the vision contained in chapters eight through eleven. He was active in instructing Ezekiel, but when the scriptures speak of the cloud filling the court in chapter nine the dialog between Ezekiel and the Lord seems to cease. The cloud quite possibly referred to the Lord's actual and literal presence. It is quite possible that it was He who ascended above the Cherubim. Furthermore, it was probably He who was to ascend and occupy the throne that appeared vacant in verse one.

**Verse 19:** **“And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD’S house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.”**

A brief summary is given for the previous couple of verses with the addition of the testimonial comment by the prophet Ezekiel that all of this was done in his sight. He was bearing testimony of the truthfulness of what he saw.

The last part of the verse is not part of the short summary. It speaks of *"every one"* standing at the door of the east gate of the inner court of the Lord's house. This *"every one"* is very puzzling. Who else was there? We are unsure as to how many others were present in the inner court. We know that Ezekiel was. We might also assume that the

six men or archangels were still present; however, others are not mentioned. In fact, at one point during the vision, Ezekiel looked around to see that he was alone.

In the previous verse, it was theorized that the Lord himself ascended from the threshold of the temple to the heavens above with the four living creatures. This is of specific significance since the bystanders that remained in the inner court stood by the door of the East gate. The "East" is a symbol for the Lord, Jesus Christ. At His birth a new star appeared in the East. After His death and resurrection He ascended to the East, and at His second coming He will return from the East.

The East gate of Solomon's Temple is mentioned several times in scripture. A few examples are as follows.

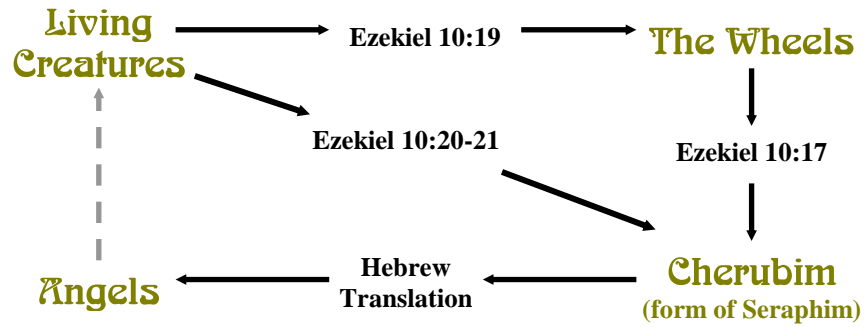
*"Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out" (Nehemiah 3:26).*

*"And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever" (Jeremiah 31:40).*

*"And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee" (Jeremiah 10:17).*

**Verse 20-21:** "This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims. Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings."

Verse Nineteen appears to conclude the description of the vision. These two verses sound almost like commentary from the prophet, as if he wanted to define some of the things which he saw. As mentioned previously, verse twenty helps define who the living creatures spoken of in chapter one, and again spoken of in chapter ten, really are. Ezekiel speaks rather plainly at this point and states that these living creatures were the cherubim that ascended with the Lord. Attempting to piece together some of the symbols used in connection with the living creatures, the following diagram has been created.



It would appear that the angels, living creatures, cherubim, and wheels spoken of throughout Ezekiel's vision are one and the same.

*The Four Living Creatures  
Seen by John the Beloved*




The prophet gives further description of the cherubim or living creatures at this point. Commentary on this description will not be given at this point. The same basic description was given in chapter one, and a full commentary was given at that point.

**Verse 22:** “And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward.”

The chapter concludes with the prophet Ezekiel testifying that the creatures which he saw were the same creatures, or at least had the same appearance as those that he saw by the River Chebar some thirteen months prior. The first time he saw the creatures they was in Babylonia, now he is viewing them in Israel.

Further commentary on the symbolism and descriptions in this verse can be found in the commentary on chapter one.

**Chapter  
Summary:**



The chapter starts off where chapter nine ends. It is the continuation of a vision in which Ezekiel saw the sins of Israel and their subsequent judgement. As chapter ten continues, the prophet Ezekiel is present in Jerusalem in the spirit. He is standing with the Lord in the inner court of the Temple of Solomon. Ezekiel witnesses a man dressed in linen, the typical clothing of a priest officiating in the temple, taking fiery coals from the great brazen altar into the Temple itself. This entire exercise is fashioned after the ancient temple ceremony connected with the atonement for sin. The prophet sees the angels of heaven and spends the rest of the chapter describing them. With extensive use of symbols, the prophet describes the majesty, power, and intelligence of the angels. It becomes evident that the angels had physical bodies as well as spiritual bodies.

Concluding the chapter, four of these angels ascend into the heavens. At their departure, the Lord himself leaves the temple with Ezekiel and several others looking on. To the east they ascended leaving Jerusalem void of its King and strength.

