

chariot] stood on the right side [i.e., south] of the house” (3). The divine conveyance has taxied into position.

God’s glory cloud now leaves the ark in the holy of holies and moves to the temple entrance or the threshold of this mighty edifice: “Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub [in the inner sanctum], and stood over the threshold of the house [i.e., temple]; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD’s glory” (4).

Thus God’s glory cloud is at the temple threshold and His chariot is just to the south in the inner court. The four living creatures are, as it were, raring to go: “And the sound of the cherubims’ wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh” (5). Like motorbikes revving loudly on the grid of a grand prix, the angels are eager to get started. Once God’s glory cloud mounts the throne of His chariot, they will be off!

Indeed, this is what happens, for Jehovah enters His magnificent chariot and sits on His throne: “Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims” (18). Next, God’s glory leaves the temple building and its precincts: “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” (19). Almighty God has departed from His temple!

So what is the lesson in all this for us? Ezekiel 10 teaches that a congregation or denomination can (and often does) apostatize, like Judah, so that the Triune God leaves it. This stands over against the Church of Rome’s claim that it is indefectible, that it cannot depart from God’s Word so that He departs from it. Rome states that, whereas *individuals* within her communion may apostatize, it is impossible for the church or institute of Roman Catholicism ever to do so.

The truth is that it is not only possible for Rome to apostatize and for God to leave it, but that this happened a long time ago! Rome is committed to evolutionism and higher criticism of sacred Scripture. It denies God’s all-encompassing providence and the infallibility of the Bible. The papacy’s seven sacraments are unbiblical, including baptismal regeneration, transubstantiation, masses for the dead, the worship of the wafer and the last rites. Rome’s doctrines of Mariolatry, free will, salvation by works, purgatory, indulgences, etc., are an attack on God’s sovereign grace and Christ’s cross (Gal. 2:20).

Moreover, any church or denomination can fall way and many have. In the history of Protestantism, some churches are now false and others no longer exist in any form. But this will have to wait until the next issue of the *News*, DV. Rev. Stewart

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God’s Chariot Departs From the Temple

In the last issue of the *News*, we saw that the four cherubs or living creatures or angels of Ezekiel 10 each possess four faces and four wings. Now we note that every one of them has hands (1:8; 10:21). Probably these cherubs had two hands each since angels in Scripture are presented as having a largely human form: “the hands of a *man*” (21). Next month, we will say more about the important use to which one angel’s hand is put, DV. Here we merely observe that horses that pull earthly chariots are excellent beasts but, given that they have no hands, there are a lot of things that they cannot do!

These four living creatures with four faces, four wings and (two) hands are also full of eyes (12), like the four wheels. Their amazing vision enables the cherubs to avoid any collisions and escape all attacks.

Having concluded our consideration of the wheels and steeds of the divine chariot in Ezekiel 10, we now turn to its platform. In earthly chariots in biblical times, the platform was made of wood or metal. Thus we read of Sisera’s 900 “chariots of iron” (Judg. 4:3). This is Ezekiel’s description of the platform above the angels: “the likeness of the firmament [i.e., expanse] upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above” (1:22). Whatever it was, the platform had a crystalline sparkle that induced awe!

There were no seats in the chariots of Old Testament days. Depending on the size and function of the vehicle, one or two or three men stood in the chariot, which must have been tiring over long distances. So what was above the platform of the divine chariot? Ezekiel “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” (10:1). The word rendered “sapphire” is lapis lazuli. Resting upon the platform of God’s chariot is a brilliant deep blue throne made of one gorgeous stone!

A chariot in the ancient world was a sign of wealth, power and prestige, but what about God’s chariot in Ezekiel? It moves on four gigantic, omnidirectional wheels full of eyes; it is pulled by four cherubs with four faces, four wings and (two) hands; it has a platform of brilliant crystal, on which rests a throne of sparkling blue lapis lazuli!

Now that we have explained the nature of Jehovah’s magnificent chariot, we turn to its movement in connection with God’s glory. In the Old Testament, as is well known, God’s glory cloud was over the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies, the most sacred part of Solomon’s temple.

Jehovah’s chariot (with its wheels, living creatures, platform and throne) moves to the south of the door of the temple building: “Now the cherubims [conveying God’s

The Advantage of the Jews

One of our readers writes, “In Romans 3, Paul says that the Jews, as a people, had an ‘advantage’ compared to the Gentiles in that ‘unto them were committed the oracles of God’ (1-2). Were not the Jews, therefore, externally *blessed* in this regard? They had tremendous access to the Word of God, not only in written form, but they also heard it directly from the prophets themselves—whereas the rest of the world were not given this (Ps. 147:19-20; Amos 3:2). The Jews also had the rite of circumcision and the privilege of being the covenant people of God. Paul writes in Romans 9 that to them, as a people, also pertained ‘the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises’ and even the privilege of being the very people ‘of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came’ (4-5). Were they not therefore *blessed* in this regard, having been given so many advantages, privileges and benefits? Similarly, surely a child born into a believing household can be said to be advantaged. He has the Scriptures read to him by his parents, he hears the gospel preached in church, and is even baptized and included as a member of a church, whereas children born outside the church to unbelieving parents are not given such an advantage; they’re not *blessed* in this way ...”

The brother who submitted the question is correct in using the word “tremendous” to describe the privileges the Jews enjoyed in the Old Testament and still enjoy in some ways in the New Testament age. Romans 9:4-5 describes many of those privileges and so do other passages, such as Deuteronomy 4:7-8: “For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” and Deuteronomy 4:20: “But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day” (cf. 4:32-36). Romans 11:23-27 speaks of the privilege they still enjoy.

The brother is also right in suggesting that these privileges are the “advantage” to which the Word of God refers in Romans 3:1-2. Their advantage was not that they were able to save themselves by their own works, that is, by the works of the law, but simply that they were given privileges which the heathen nations were not given. As Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22) or was in Old Testament days, before our Lord’s atoning death and His pouring out the Holy Spirit.

As the brother points out, these privileges are similar to those enjoyed by a child born into a covenant home, whose parents are believers. It is not only a covenant child, however, who enjoys such privileges but anyone who is a member of a faithful Christian church, whose friends and family are fellow believers, who has the Word of God (the “oracles” of Romans 3:1-2) at hand, who hears the preaching of the gospel regularly and who, in times of need, has others who will help and pray for him. Some even enjoy the privilege of working for a Christian employer or with believers.

These privileges or advantages are not to be taken lightly. They are means God uses for the salvation of elect covenant children, and for our growth in grace and knowledge. He shows us that He is pleased to use such means when they work for our own spiritual profit and the profit of others, but He also reminds us that He is sovereign and depends on no one and nothing when these privileges bear no good fruit, as among many of the Jews. When a child goes astray in spite of the instruction and example he received, and when our efforts to help and admonish a brother are in vain, then God especially shows that salvation is of the Lord.

Nevertheless, when God does use them for good, they are inestimable blessings. They work, as do all things, for the salvation and good of those who love God and who are the called according to His purpose. But the crucial question is, Are they also *blessings* to those who do not profit from them, like the unbelieving Jews? Does God bestow mercy, grace, lovingkindness upon those who ultimately perish in unbelief?

That God does not show grace, mercy, lovingkindness to those who perish is the teaching of the CPRC and the PRC, the churches to which I belong. If some of our readers are interested in further reading on that point there is material in the CPRC bookstore and on the CPRC website (www.cprc.co.uk/resources-on-uncommon-grace).

Several things must be remembered as far as the good things received by the reprobate are concerned: (1) they are temporal and temporary only; (2) they have nothing to do with any saving grace of God in Jesus Christ for them.

It is not wrong to say that God gives good things to those who never believe and who perish in their unbelief, but that does not mean He loves them or shows favour to them. In fact, such things are cursed by God and work for the ruin of the reprobate who receive them (Ps. 73:18-20). They leave their recipients under greater condemnation.

Jesus makes that clear in His words of judgment against Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum (Matt. 11:21-24): “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee” (cf. Matt. 12:41-42).

It all comes down to this: “But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48). We, who profess to follow Jesus Christ, have many privileges and blessings, and we must be thankful to the living God for them, treasure them, profit from them and use them well or we stand where the unbelieving Jews stood, who had everything taken away from them for their hardness of heart, unthankfulness and disobedience.

Rev. Ron Hanko