

WEEK 3 —OUTLINE

The Four Living Creatures

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:5-6, 10, 26

« DAY 1 »

- I. When we experience God as the blowing wind, the overshadowing cloud, the burning fire, and the glowing electrum, we become the four living creatures, a corporate entity expressing Christ (Ezek. 1:5-6):
 - A. In the Bible the number four is related to God's creation and signifies man as God's creature (Isa. 11:12; Jer. 49:36; Rev. 7:1).
 - B. The number four indicates that we are the people redeemed from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (5:9).
 - C. The four living creatures are regarded as a group; they are counted as a single entity.
- II. The more we experience the cycle of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, the more living we become (1:18; John 6:51; cf. Psa. 95:1-2):
 - A. Through the experience of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, we, who were dead, have been enlivened to become living creatures (John 5:25; Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 1:13).
 - B. If we continue to experience the cycle of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, we will become living and vibrant in our inner being (1 Pet. 1:23; 2:4-5).
 - C. There is a twofold proof by which we can know that we are living creatures:
 1. The inward proof is the sense of life in our regenerated spirit (Rom. 8:6).
 2. The outward proof is that we engage in a number of spiritual activities:
 - a. The first of these activities is prayer (1 Thes. 5:17; Col. 4:2; cf. Lam. 3:55-56).
 - b. Other activities that prove that we are living creatures include reading the Bible (Col. 3:16; Psa. 119:15, 140), functioning in the meetings (1 Cor. 14:26, 31), serving God (1 Thes. 1:9; Rom. 1:9), and preaching the gospel (1:1; 1 Cor. 9:23).
 3. Every time we meet the Lord as the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, our inner being will be made alive, and we will become vital believers—those who are living and active (Dan. 11:32b).

« DAY 2 »

III. The four living creatures bear the appearance of a man and are the corporate expression of the man on the throne (Ezek. 1:5, 26):

- A. The fact that the four living creatures bear the likeness of a man and that God on the throne also bears the appearance of a man indicates that God's central thought and His arrangement are related to man (Gen. 1:26).
- B. We need to have a proper appreciation of the Lord's humanity, and we need to see how marvelous it is that we are men.
- C. In the Bible there are actually only four men: the first man, the second man, the new man, and the man-child; we were the first man; Christ is called the second man (1 Cor. 15:47); we have become the new man by regeneration (Eph. 2:15); and now there is the prospect that we may become the man-child (Rev. 12:5).
- D. The Christ whom the church must express is the man on the throne (3:21; cf. Acts 7:56).
- E. It is man who fulfills God's plan, it is man who expresses God, it is man who defeats the enemy, and it is man who brings the kingdom of God into the human race; God needs a man.

« DAY 3 »

F. In Ezekiel 1 there are three crucial matters concerning the four living creatures' bearing the appearance of a man:

- 1. The living creatures are the means for God to manifest His glory; apart from their bearing the appearance of a man, God's glory cannot be manifested (v. 28).
- 2. The living creatures are the means for God to move on the earth; God's move depends on them (vv. 12-21).
- 3. The living creatures are the means for God to administrate on the throne (v. 26):
 - a. God's throne, the center of His administration, dominates everything on earth and everything recorded in Ezekiel (Rev. 4:2, 6).
 - b. Because the living creatures bear the appearance of a man, there is the administration of God's throne (Jer. 17:12).
 - c. Man is the means of God's manifestation, man is the means of God's move, and man is the means of God's administration.

IV. The four living creatures have four faces (Ezek. 1:6a, 10):

- A. The face of a man indicates that the living creatures live in a proper humanity, the humanity of Jesus (v. 10a):

« DAY 4 »

- 1.The glorious beauty of the Lord Jesus is manifested in His humanity (cf. Exo. 28:2; Rom. 13:14).
- 2.The Lord’s salvation is to make us proper human beings.
- 3.The more spiritual we become, the more normal, ordinary, and human we will be (Col. 3:4, 10-11).
- 4.We need to be human not by our natural humanity but by the humanity of Jesus; this is to be “Jesusly human.”
- 5.In the Epistles we are taught by the apostles to be proper human beings, in particular how to be proper husbands, wives, and parents (Eph. 5:22—6:9; Col. 3:18—4:1).

« DAY 5 »

B.The face of a lion (Ezek. 1:10b):

- 1.In the Bible a lion signifies boldness, vigor, strength, victory, and reigning (Prov. 28:1; Gen. 49:9).
- 2.If toward sin, the world, and Satan we are bold like lions, God will be able to establish His reign through us (Rev. 5:5; Rom. 5:17).

C.The face of an ox (Ezek. 1:10c):

- 1.An ox signifies one who is willing to labor, to bear the burden, and to sacrifice himself (1 Cor. 15:10, 58; Acts 20:24; Phil. 2:30).
- 2.We all need to express the reality of serving others, of bearing responsibility, and of sacrificing our life (1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18; Rom. 12:1).

« DAY 6 »

D. The face of an eagle (Ezek. 1:10d):

- 1.In the Bible an eagle signifies the powerful, buoyant, transcendent God (Exo. 19:4).
- 2.As believers in Christ, we have God’s life within us; this life is transcendent and causes us to have an expression of buoyancy and transcendence (Isa. 40:31; John 6:15; Phil. 4:12-13):
 - a.We have the divine and almighty capacity to express God in every human situation.
 - b.We are indestructible, unconquerable, and invincible for the carrying out of God’s economy (Rom. 8:37).
- 3.We need to be like an eagle, not allowing anything to hold us, to suppress

us, or to depress us; this means that we should be able to overcome both persecution and praise (cf. John 6:15; Phil. 4:12-13).

V. The four living creatures are a corporate, fourfold expression of Christ, living out the life of Christ in a corporate way (Ezek. 1:10):

- A. The four living creatures with their four faces signify a coordinated, corporate entity, the corporate Christ as the corporate expression of God among human beings (1 Cor. 12:12 and footnote 2).
- B. The four faces of the living creatures correspond to the four Gospels: Matthew—Christ as a lion, the King of God's kingdom; Mark—Christ as an ox, the Servant of God; Luke—Christ as a man, the Man-Savior; John—Christ as an eagle, the very God.
- C. The four living creatures are a corporate entity expressing Christ in a complete way, exactly as He was in His living on earth.

« WEEK 3 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:5-6 And from the midst of it there came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings.

John 5:25 Truly, truly, I say to you, An hour is coming, and it is now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

We need to pay attention to the first word in Ezekiel 1:5a, and. Not only does electrum come out of the fire; something else also comes out. The wind brings in the cloud; the cloud enfolds the fire; and the fire produces the electrum plus something else—the four living creatures. When we experience God as the blowing wind, the overshadowing cloud, the burning fire, and the electrum, we become the four living creatures. We were dead, but by experiencing God in this way we become something living. The Lord Jesus said that “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God” and that “those who hear will live” (John 5:25). Paul said that we were dead but God has made us alive (Eph. 2:5). The more we have the cycle of the wind, cloud, fire, and electrum, the more living we become. Every time we are blown upon by God and overshadowed and consumed and burned by Him, we are enlivened. As a result we become lively and vibrant. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 43-44)

Today's Reading

The word living in Hebrew has the same root as the word for life in Genesis 2:9, which speaks of the tree of life. How can we, who are creatures, become the living creatures? We become living creatures by experiencing God as the tree of life. This life, the divine, eternal, uncreated life of God, is the real life. Only by having this real life can we become a living creature. Whenever we experience God as the tree of life, we sense that we have something living within us. We have a living element, a living factor, within us. This living element, or factor, will always make us living.

How can we prove that we are no longer dead but have become living creatures? There is a twofold proof, that is, an inward proof and an outward proof. The inward proof that we are living creatures is that we now have a feeling, or sense, of life. Living persons have feelings....A person who is spiritually living will have a deep feeling whenever he lives in a way that does not glorify God or that is not pleasing to Him. If our inner feeling, the inner sense of life, is sensitive, deep, and fresh, this is a proof that inwardly we are living and that we are therefore a living creature.

The second proof is outward and is related to our activities. A dead person is inactive, but a living person is very active....A Christian who is living, that is, who is a living creature, will engage in a number of activities. The first of these activities is prayer. Just as we cannot live physically without breathing, so we cannot live spiritually without praying. Prayer is a Christian's spiritual breathing, and it is often spontaneous....Other activities that prove that we are living creatures include reading the Bible, functioning in the meetings, serving God, and preaching the gospel.

It is significant that Ezekiel 1:5 speaks of four living creatures. Many verses in the Bible indicate that the number four is related to God's creation and signifies man as God's creature (Isa. 11:12; Jer. 49:36; Rev. 7:1). Revelation 5:9 says that the Lord has redeemed us out of four sources: out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Furthermore, Revelation 21 tells us that the New Jerusalem has four sides—the east, the north, the south, and the west—and that each of the four sides has three gates. This means that from every direction of the earth we can enter the city. Therefore, the number four symbolizes that we are the people redeemed from many tribes, tongues, peoples, and nations. In the eyes of God we are the four living creatures.

The four living creatures are reckoned not as individuals but as a group. All of them are counted as one entity. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 44-47)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:5 And from the midst of it there came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man.

26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

The main point of Ezekiel 1:5 is that the four living creatures bear the appearance of a man. Verse 26 says that “upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.” Man is a great word in the Bible. God’s intention is with man, God’s thought is focused on man, and God’s heart is set upon man. God’s desire is to gain man. The fact that four living creatures bear the appearance of a man and that God on the throne also bears the appearance of a man indicates that God’s central thought and His arrangement are related to man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 47)

Today’s Reading

In our reading of the four Gospels we may be under the influence of a religious concept that places undue emphasis upon Christ’s divinity. As a result, we may not have the proper appreciation of the Lord’s humanity. When we read in the Gospels how the Lord Jesus manifested His divinity by performing miracles, we may praise the Lord for the power of His divinity. However, when we read in John 13 about how the Lord washed the feet of His disciples, we may not offer any praise. Likewise, when we read about the miracle of the Lord’s feeding more than five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, we may feel that this was something great, but we may have no appreciation for His ordering the people to sit down in groups or for His directing the disciples to gather the broken pieces left over so that nothing would be lost. Such things may make no impression on us. If we know how to read the Gospels in a proper way, we will realize that the glorious beauty of the Lord Jesus is manifested in His humanity. He manifested His glorious beauty not through His divine dignity but through His humanity with its lowliness and tenderness. At the Lord’s table meeting, we need to praise the Lord for His humanity...We need to see how glorious and how marvelous it is that we are men.

God wants to be like us. He even became a man in order to declare God (John 1:18), and today in the heavens the Lord Jesus, who is God, is still a man. There is a man on the throne (Acts 7:56).

The Bible clearly reveals that man is the means for God to manifest Himself. God cannot be manifested without man. Man was created in God’s image in order to be God’s expression. God is the center of the universe, but He needs an expression, and this expression is through man. Without man, God has no expression....God needs a corporate man to express Him. You should never despise the fact that you are a man.

In the Bible there are actually only four men: the first man, the second man, the new man, and the man-child. We were the first man; Christ is called the second man (1 Cor. 15:47); we have become the new man by regeneration; and now there is the prospect that we may become the man-child.

We may talk about the church as the expression of Christ, but we may not realize what the expression of Christ is. The Christ whom the church must express is the man upon the throne. If we would express Christ, we need to realize Christ today is still a man. We do not express merely God; we express God in a man. The church is the expression of Christ. This means that the church is an expression not merely of God but also of a man.

Ezekiel 1:26 shows us that the Lord today is a man on the throne. God needs a man, and eventually He became a man. We as the living creatures express Him as a man. He is the man on the throne, and we also bear the appearance of a man. It is man who fulfills God’s plan, it is man who expresses God, it is man who defeats the enemy, and it is man who brings the kingdom of God into the human race. God needs a man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 47-49)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:21 Whenever those went, these went; and whenever those stood still, these stood still; and whenever those were lifted up above the earth, the wheels were lifted up alongside them; for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

28 Like the appearance of the rainbow,...such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah...

The religious teachings in Christianity encourage us either to be like an angel or to be like God. However, the divine revelation unveils that God's desire is to have a man. We need to remember that the subtle one tempted the first man by telling him that if he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would be like God (Gen. 3:5). From that day the concept of being like God has been in our blood. Every fallen human being has the concept of wanting to be like God. Certain devilish teachings encourage people to be something other than man. But in His redemption and salvation God has no intention of making anything other than man. God's redemption and God's salvation are to bring us back to the beginning and to recover us to being a proper man. We are the living creatures and we have God's life within us, yet we bear the appearance of a man. We should not try to be like an angel. Instead, in whatever we do, in whatever we say, and in whatever we express, we should be a man. This is what God needs today. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 49-50)

Today's Reading

The vision in Ezekiel 1 reveals three crucial matters concerning the four living creatures' bearing the appearance of a man. First, God's glory is manifested upon them. The manifestation of God's glory depends upon their having the appearance of a man. Where they are, there God's glory is. God's glory is not separate from them, and apart from them God's glory cannot be manifested. Second, these living creatures are the means of God's move. God's move depends on them. When they move, God will move, for His move is with them. Third, the four living creatures, who bear the appearance of a man, are the means of God's administration. Ezekiel 1 reveals that God is sitting on the throne. God's throne dominates everything on earth and everything recorded in this book. This throne, therefore, is the center of God's administration. However, the center of God's administration depends on the four living creatures having the appearance of a man. Because of this, there is the administration of God's throne. If we put these three things together, we will see that man is the means of God's manifestation, that man is the means of God's move, and that man is the means of God's administration. In God's eyes and in God's hands, man has such an important position.

We all need to realize that God's desire is to gain man. God uses the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum to enliven us in order to gain man as the means of His manifestation, move, and administration. Since man is so important to God, it is crucial for us to be a man and to bear the appearance of a man. We need to be a man for God's manifestation, for God's move, and for God's administration. For this we need to be the living creatures enlivened by experiencing the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum.

Each of the four living creatures has four faces. If we saw someone with four faces, we would be frightened, yet this is exactly what we should be. We all need to have four faces.

The first face is the face of a man. We are men, and because we are men, we should look like men. We were created as men, but we were corrupted, poisoned, and damaged by the fall. Therefore, we need the Lord's redemption. Through the Lord's redemption we are brought back to the proper humanity. Actually, the humanity we have now is not ours but His, for we have the humanity of Jesus. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 50-51)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Col. 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

10-11 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where...Christ is all and in all.

The Lord's salvation is to make us proper men. If you are a husband, the Lord's salvation is to make you a proper husband. If you are a wife, the Lord's salvation is to make you a proper wife. If you are a parent, the Lord's salvation is to make you a proper parent. If you are a child, the Lord's salvation is to make you a proper child. The Lord's salvation is to make us proper human beings. Thus, we all should bear the face of a man. However, some Christians, especially certain sisters, do not seem to be human beings. Rather, they are so "spiritual" that it seems that they have become strange creatures—half human, half angel. We need the face of a man. We should not prefer to be something else, and we should not pretend to be something else. We should just be what we are—a man. Instead of trying to be something other than a human being, we should simply be human. However, we should be human not by our natural humanity but by the humanity of the Lord Jesus. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 51)

Today's Reading

If we read the four Gospels again, we will see that Jesus was a person with a proper humanity. Many who read the Gospels only pay attention to the miracles worked out by the Lord in His divinity; they do not pay adequate attention to the things worked out by the Lord's humanity. For example, John 4 relates how the Lord Jesus was traveling with His disciples to a city in Samaria. He was tired and thirsty, and He asked His disciples to go into the city to buy something to eat. After they went away to buy food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well near which the Lord Jesus was sitting. Although He was the Almighty God, in this situation He conducted Himself just like an ordinary man, without any indication or hint that He was God. When He asked the woman for water, He gave no indication that He was anything more than a man. The woman questioned Him, saying, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, who am a Samaritan woman?" (v. 9). He responded to her question in a very human way. The four Gospels record many similar stories which show us how the Lord Jesus behaved Himself like a normal man, bearing the face of a man. Unlike certain religious people today who dress in a way that is very strange, the Lord Jesus did not dress in a peculiar manner. In His clothing He was not strange or different from others. On the contrary, His living was that of an ordinary human being. His living was ordinary to such an extent that some would say, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matt. 13:55). In the eyes of the people, the Lord Jesus was the son of an ordinary carpenter. Far from being strange, He was an ordinary man and He bore the face of a man. Today, we too need to bear the face of man.

Some believers have the thought that once they begin to pursue the Lord, they should be special or different from others. We need to realize, therefore, that we should be ordinary, that is, we should be the same as common, ordinary human beings. Although we pray, read the Bible, attend the meetings, and serve God, our appearance is still the appearance of a man, and our face is the face of a man. In our dress we are proper, but we are ordinary, not peculiar or eccentric. Yes, we experience the Lord as the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, but the issue of this experience is that we bear the face of a man. As living creatures, we are not angels but are very human. In fact, the more spiritual we become, the more normal and human we will be. The more we have of Christ as our life (Col. 3:4), the more we will bear the face of a man. In the Epistles we are taught by the apostles to be proper human beings, in particular how to be proper husbands, wives, and parents (Eph. 5:22—6:9; Col. 3:18—4:1). God's salvation causes us to be proper men for His manifestation, move, and administration. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 51-52)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and the four of them had the face of a lion on the right side, and the four of them had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four of them had the face of an eagle.

Rev. 5:5 ...Do not weep; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals.

We also need to bear the face of a lion. In the Bible a lion signifies boldness, vigor, strength, and victory. In our Christian life we first need to be a man. Wherever we may be—at our school, in our office, or among our neighbors—we should be a man. But we should also be a lion. If in the office you are a proper man, others will be drawn to you. However, those who are drawn to you may be “germs” that can corrupt you. Because they like you, they may invite you to participate with them in a certain kind of worldly amusement. At such a time you should behave not like a man but like a lion. This means that toward anything sinful or worldly, we must be as bold as a lion. All those who work in your office should know that if they talk to you about worldly things, you will behave like a lion. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 53)

Today's Reading

People often consider that the Lord Jesus was gentle and mild. However, at least on certain occasions, He was not at all gentle. For example, when He went into the temple and found “those selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers sitting there,” He became angry and made a whip out of cords and “drove them all out of the temple, as well as the sheep and the oxen, and He poured out the money of the moneychangers and overturned their tables” (John 2:14-15). Furthermore, in Matthew 23 He severely rebuked the religionists, saying to them, “Serpents! Brood of vipers!” (v. 33). In these situations He surely was as bold as a lion. In Revelation 5:5 He is even called “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” There are times when we also need to have the face of a lion.

In the Bible a lion signifies not only boldness, vigor, strength, and victory but also reigning. The lion is the king of the animals. We, who have become living creatures through regeneration, should not only be men to manifest God but also lions to reign for God. If toward sin, the world, and Satan we are strong and bold like lions, God will be able to establish His reign through us.

We need not only the face of a man and the face of a lion but also the face of an ox. The face of a lion is balanced by the face of an ox. If in your office you have the face of a lion, that alone will not convince others. You need to be balanced by having the face of an ox. An ox is one who is willing to bear the burden, to do the work, and even to sacrifice himself. We all need to have such an appearance and to express such a reality of serving others, bearing the burden, caring for the responsibility, and even sacrificing our life. If as you are working in an office you are a proper man, you are as bold as a lion, and you are also faithful in bearing responsibility, you will make a good impression on others. In order to make such an impression, you need to behave not only like a man and like a lion but also like a serving, suffering ox. When the office needs to be cleaned, you should take the lead to clean, doing more than the other employees. In this way you will show your colleagues that you are willing to sacrifice, to help others, and to serve them. Then you will have the reality of the face of an ox. When others see you with the face of a man, the face of a lion, and the face of an ox, they will say, “This is a real Christian.”

As the four living creatures we are not only the unique expression of Christ but also...the complete expression of Christ. We express Christ in every direction, toward every side. We are the four living creatures expressing Christ in an adequate and complete way. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 53-54, 47)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 19:4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Isa. 40:31 Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and will not become weary; they will walk and will not faint.

Furthermore, we also need, at the rear, a hidden face—the face of an eagle [Ezek. 1:10]. After God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness, He said to them, “I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself” (Exo. 19:4). This indicates that in the Bible an eagle signifies the powerful, transcendent God. God is transcendent, buoyant, and powerful. Nothing can suppress Him, oppress Him, or depress Him. The more you try to suppress Him, the more buoyant and transcendent He becomes. A Christian has God's life within him, and this life is transcendent, causing him to have an expression of buoyancy and transcendence. This is the significance of the face of an eagle. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 54)

Today's Reading

We need to be like an eagle, not allowing anything to hold us, to suppress us, or to depress us. This means that we should be able to overcome both persecution and praise. Sometimes it is more difficult to overcome praise than it is to overcome persecution. Some can overcome persecution, but they are unable to overcome people's praise. This should not be the case with us. Whether we are persecuted or praised, we need to be able to fly away on eagles' wings. We should be buoyant and transcendent. This is exactly how the Lord Jesus was in John when the people tried to make Him king after He fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. Concerning this John 6:15 says, “Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him King, withdrew again to the mountain, Himself alone.” He could not be held because He had the power of an eagle and was therefore transcendent.

A Christian should not be held by anything. However, it is possible for us to be held by many different things. One believer may be held by poverty, and another may be held by riches. If we would be a proper Christian, we should be held neither by poverty nor by riches. Like Paul, we should be able to say, “I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me” (Phil. 4:12-13). Paul's word reveals that he had the wings of an eagle. He bore the appearance of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and also of an eagle.

These four faces—the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle—portray the life of Christ. These four faces correspond to the four Gospels, which may be regarded as four biographies of the Lord Jesus, with each presenting a certain aspect of Christ. Luke shows Him as a man, Matthew shows Him as a lion, Mark shows Him as an ox, and John shows Him as an eagle. This fourfold life is the life of Christ.

The four living creatures are a corporate expression of Christ. They express Christ in four aspects—as a man, as a lion, as an ox, and as an eagle. This is the expression of the life of Christ in a corporate way. As Christians, we should be the living creatures, those who are a corporate entity to express Christ exactly as He was on earth. When He was on earth, He lived in the four aspects of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. Today we should be the corporate expression of such a Christ. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 54-56)

The church is built with the divine life in Christ, a life that is indestructible, unconquerable (Heb. 7:16; Acts 2:24), and able to withstand decline into death originating from any source. Hence, the church is the firm foundation of God that stands forever against any heresy. (2 Tim. 2:19, footnote 1)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

Hymns, #1201

From the north where God is dwelling

Experience of God — As the Wind, Cloud, Fire, and Electrum

1201

1. From the north where God is dwell - ing Comes a rush - ing, storm - y
 gale. Now the might - y Spir - it blow - ing All our be - ing does as -
Chorus
 sail. (C) We are stirred to our foun - da - tions— How this wind a - wak - ens
 us! Thus we're o - pen for God's deal - ings, And the cloud descends on us.

2. With the cloud we have His presence

Sweetly hov'ring over us;
 So enveloped by His nearness;
 In the Lord we put our trust.
 But the cloud brings with it fire
 To consume our selfish lusts;
 That as ashes something higher
 May be added into us.

3. Then from out the flashing fire

Comes th' electrum glowing bright.
 God as gold and man as silver
 Now are mingled. What a sight!
 This bright metal, O Lord Jesus,
 Is Thyself, Lamb-God sublime.
 O Lord, work Thyself within us
 Till th' electrum in us shines.

4. By our passing through this cycle,

Living creatures we become
 To express the life of Jesus;
 He with whom we've been made one.
 We express Him as a human,
 As a man so good and fine;
 Balanced, normal, never striving;
 Fully human, yet divine.

5. We express Him as a lion

Conquering every enemy;
 As an ox obedient, lowly,
 Faithful in His ministry.
 We express Him as an eagle,
 So transcendent, soaring high;
 Never held by fear or flatter,
 He above it all does fly.

6. Hallelujah! What a figure

Of the way God deals with us!
 From the wind, cloud, fire, electrum,
 To the creatures glorious:
 As the man, the ox and lion,
 As the eagle—all the four
 Will be our complete expression
 As we eat Him more and more.