***The "Shekinah" Glory Cloud
RO47-01***

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We're continuing in Romans 5:1-5, and we're looking at the effects of justification, as Paul has summarized them in these five verses.

**The Glory of God**

Every believer in the church age is destined to experience the glory of God. That's part of our future. It's described as a hope, and it's described, therefore, as a certainty, because that's what the word "hope" means in the Bible. We've been looking at the meaning specifically of glory. And we have pointed out that the basic idea of glory is something impressive about a person which sets that one apart from others, and gives them influence over people.

This basic idea of glory is used in the Bible in reference to things. When it speaks about a thing having the quality of glory, it is referring to its beauty; its majesty; its size; or, its splendor. We have an example of that in 1 Chronicles 22:5. This is glory applied to things: "And David said, 'Solomon, my son is young and tender (young and inexperienced), and the house that is to be built (the temple that is to be built) for the Lord must be very magnificent of fame and of glory throughout all countries. I will therefore now make preparation for it. So, David prepared abundantly before his death." Here the word "glory" is used to describe the temple that David's son Solomon was to build. David said that this temple has to be a thing of glory." And by that, he meant it had to be a thing of great beauty; of great majesty; of magnificent appearance; and, of great impressiveness. It would set itself apart from all of the heathen temples, and all the heathen places of worship.

**Solomon**

So, here you have this idea of glory applied to a thing. This basic idea of glory is also used to people. When it is used to people, it speaks of their wealth; their power; their position; their prestige; and, their wisdom. This, again, was true indeed of Solomon. Solomon was a man of glory. He was viewed as a man of glory in terms of the splendor of his court; his wealth; and, above all, the depth of his wisdom.

In 1 Kings 10:4-7, we have an evaluation given by the Queen of Sheba, who came to visit Solomon, having heard of his fame and of his glory: "And when the Queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup bearers, and his assent by which he went up into the house of the Lord (that is, the sacrifices as he approached, and the whole ceremonial structure); and, the appearance of his court, there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, 'It was a true report that I heard in my own land of your acts and of your wisdom. Howbeit, I did not believe the words, and my eyes had seen it? And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceeded the fame which I heard."

What she was saying to Solomon is: "I heard that your glory was very great. But what I heard has not half-described what I have seen now that I have arrived." So, here you have the word "glory" in terms of a person which separate him from all other people, and gives him, therefore, great influence. However, as great as was the glory of Solomon as a human being, I must remind you that the Lord Jesus Christ also gave us an evaluation concerning Solomon in Matthew 6:28-29. This is an evaluation of his glory when the Lord said: "And why are you anxious for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field – how they grow. They do not toil; neither do they spin. Yet I say to you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." Solomon, with all the beauty that surrounded him, and the garments he wore, and the court around him, did not carry the beauty of a lily that God has created, particularly if you're enough of a botanist to know all the ins-and-outs of the structure of a lily.

So, God recognizes that man has the glory that separates and puts him apart, but not like anything that God Himself has produced. The glory of a nation is its prestige among other nations in terms of population and military power. This is pointed out to us in Isaiah 16:14 and Isaiah 21:16.

However, Peter tells us that human glory, at best, is a transient thing. 1 Peter 1:24-25: "For all flesh is like grass, and all the glory of man like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord (Bible doctrine) endures forever. And this is the word which, by the gospel, is preached unto you." So, Peter says, "While there are some magnificent people who are set apart from the rest of us, no matter what their glory is, it's transient. For this reason, the apostle Paul never sought it in his ministry glory from people. 1 Thessalonians 2:6 reads: "Neither did we seek glory of men; neither of you, or yet of others. But we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ." Paul did not seek glory from other people. Paul says, "No matter what you make of me, and no matter how you promote me, it doesn't mean a thing. All of my human glory is a transient thing."

However, this idea of glory in terms of things and people here exemplifies the basic concept of glory, separating from others of its kind, and giving it an influence because of that outstanding position that it holds. Of course, we are interested, here in Romans 5, in the word "glory" relative to God, because we are told that we have the hope of the glory of God as believers. Again, the same idea of separation and influence is applied to this meaning of glory in reference to God. When it is used in terms of God, it refers to His essence, which separates Him, obviously, from everyone else, and makes him a unique person and a unique influence. But when we speak of the glory of God, we bring in one other factor, and that is the visible, dazzling, magnificent brilliance of His glory. His Holiness is His glory. And when we speak about the glory of God, the glory of God is something that is visibly demonstrated.

**Creation**

However, God indeed is separated as being a unique person in three specific ways. When we speak about the glory of God, that is His uniqueness being demonstrated, we may, first of all, notice it in creation. In Psalm 19:1, David says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork." God is a unique person on the basis of His creation, and the basis of the glory of God (His uniqueness, and thus His influence) is easily demonstrated by His creation; that is, the universe testifies to the unique greatness of God, and thus to the glory of God. All you have to do is think a little bit about the heavenly bodies that He has put out there. You and I are overwhelmed at the realization of the kind of handiwork that God has produced.

It takes about 100,000 years for light (which travels at 186,000 miles per second) to go from one end of our galaxy to the other. It takes 5,000 to 10,000 years for a speck of light to go from the top of our galaxy to the bottom. It's so thick. And our galaxy is only one of about a billion galaxies that have been photographed so far. That boggles the mind. Who on earth has put that together? All of these galaxies are fantastic. The universe is created on such a vast scale to demonstrate the uniqueness of God: His glory; and, his separateness.

So, David says that you look out there in space, you know what's out there as the handiwork of God. His glory is staring you right in the face.

Psalm 113 says, "The Lord is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens."

Verse 6 says, "Who humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth." God has to humble Himself to look at His own glory that He has produced in the universe, because to God this is nothing that He has done.

It puts man in perspective in Psalm 8:3-4: "When I consider Your heavens; the work of Your fingers; the moon; and, the stars which You have ordained, what is man, that You are mindful of him; and, a son of man, that You visit Him."

So, God demonstrates His glory and His uniqueness by His creation. But God also demonstrates His uniqueness by His supernatural intervention in history. Those are some of the greatest occasions in which He demonstrates His glory.

For example, on one occasion, the Assyrian army was brought full force against the people of Israel. The thing looked very, very grim indeed for the people of God in Hezekiah's day. And, we read in 2 Second Kings 19:35 that the Lord Jesus Christ came to the assistance of His people, and thus demonstrated His glory as God by His intervention into human events: "And it came to pass that night that the Angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ) went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000. And when they arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies." 185,000 troops of the Assyrian army were slaughtered by the Lord Jesus Christ in one night.

The Lord, in contrast to American politicians, knew how to make peace. Boy, there was peace the next day. 185,000 crack troops of the Assyrian army were slaughtered by Christ that night. And there was peace the next day, because that's how the Bible, again and again, says that you establish peace by breaking the back of the enemy who is trying to make war. The Syrian army turned tail and straggled home – a beaten, defeated foe, because they had stood there threatening God's city of Jerusalem, and making fun of the Most High God.

In 2 Kings, 19:19, we read where Hezekiah was saying: "Now, therefore, O Lord our God. I beseech You. Save us out of his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are the Lord God, even You only. Hezekiah was saying, "God, demonstrate Your glory. God, demonstrate Your uniqueness in the universe by saving us out of the certain death of the army that has us trapped.

Verse 34 says, "For I will defend this city to save it for My Own sake, and for my servant David's sake." The day before, God gives the answer, and says, "I'll save it. I'm going to defend the city."

The Lord Jesus Christ, however, is going to outdo himself in the Battle of Armageddon. His all-time record is 185,000 troops in one campaign. In the Battle of Armageddon, He is going to slaughter millions upon millions upon His return. He's going to beat his own record.

Obviously, the flood (we need not go into details) was another demonstration of the intervention of God to demonstrate His glory and His uniqueness. For that reason, you see, Satan leads the evolutionary unbeliever to say that there are no interventions in natural processes. Everything has gone on always the way it's going on today. They cannot stand the thought of a flood that interjected God's power into the human, normal, natural processes.

And, of course, the glory of God was uniquely demonstrated along with creation, and along with His intervention in historic events, with the nation Israel. Isaiah 46:13 says that that is the very thing that Israel will be called. She's going to be called by God: "His glory:" "I bring near My righteousness. It shall not be far off. My salvation shall not tarry, and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel, My glory." And what He has done with the nation of Israel has been a great demonstration of the uniqueness of God; His power; and, who He is. And He is obviously not through with that yet.

Israel's divine purpose was to display the glory of God. She's doing that, and she will yet do it. Isaiah 43:7 says, "Even everyone who is called by My name; for I have created him for My glory. I have formed him. Yea, I have made him." Here he is referring to the Jewish people.

In Isaiah 44:23 we read, "Sing, O you heavens, for the Lord has done it. Shout, you lower parts of the earth. Break forth into singing, you mountains; O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord has redeemed Jacob and glorified Himself in Israel," bringing glory to Himself.

**"Shekinah" Glory**

So, this is a very impressive quality about God: in creation; His intervention in historical events; and, certainly His dealing with the people of God. It demonstrates His glory. But as we said, the unique thing about the glory of God is that it's visible. For this reason, the rabbis, following the writing of the Old Testament, described the glory of God because of its visible quality as the "Shekinah" glory. The term means "the dwelling in glory." It referred to the fiery cloud in which God dwelt, and from which He spoke to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. This fiery cloud had the form of a flaming sword. It had this appearance. It came to a point as a sword, and it's described in that way. It refers to the visible, fiery cloud in which God dwelt, and from which He spoke to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. It signified the presence of God among the people. The cloud itself was not the presence, but it was the shield which protected the viewer from seeing God, and from being destroyed by approaching God's holiness. By day, this "Shekinah" glory was a lustrous, luminous cloud. By night, it was a blazing torch.

So, here are the things that we have summarized thus far on the doctrine of the glory of God, relative to the "Shekinah" glory. We found that it was the "Shekinah" glory that called Moses to lead the Jews out of slavery in Egypt. We found that it protected the Israelites in the escape from Egyptian slavery. The "Shekinah" glory led the Israelites in the Sinai wilderness travels while they were returning to the Promised Land. The "Shekinah" glory appeared on Mount Sinai in giving the law to Israel. It gave the face of Moses a dazzling appearance, because he had been in the presence of the glory of God. The "Shekinah" glory indicated that God dwelt right there in the midst of His people, Israel. And He spoke to them from this cloud. The "Shekinah" glory abode over the tabernacle, and on the mercy seat in the holy of holies between the two cherubim – the statues of the two angels on the mercy seat on the top of the ark of the covenant. It was from there that God directly communed with the Jewish people. The "Shekinah" glory left Solomon's temple centuries later because of the negative volition of the Jews consistently over the centuries. It will return to the temple in the millennium. The "Shekinah" glory is present on occasion to discipline the evil of the Israelites.

**Unholiness cannot Approach God**

Now let's continue. There are two things thus far, therefore, that the "Shekinah" glory cloud (as we have read about it in these various examples in Scripture) has taught us. First, the "Shekinah" glory teaches us about the unapproachable holiness and terrifying power of God against evil. Unholiness cannot approach God. In fact, God called Moses after he told them how the next day He was going to come down and meet Him on the mountain, and give him the Law. He said, "Moses, I want to tell you once more. You want to be sure that you have this straight. Do not let the people come near and touch this mountain once you see My glory descend upon it, or they will die. When My glory descends upon this Mount Sinai, it's just as holy as the ground around that bush that didn't burn out in the desert when I called you some years ago. Now get it straight, Moses. Be sure Aaron understands that. Be sure that the people are told this. Be sure all the parents know about this – to handle their children, lest a child should run out and touch this mountain while I'm on it, he'll be destroyed."

The "Shekinah" glory cloud made it clear that holiness (absolute righteousness) is required to be in the presence of God. That's why the apostle Paul has been striking so hard on the fact that without absolute righteousness, you cannot go to heaven. You're doomed. And that's why he is so happy to say that one of the consequences of justification is the certainty that you will have the glory of God. You would not have the glory of God if that did not signify that you were absolutely holy in God's standing. Therefore, the terrifying power of God against evil, which is ultimately going to be expressed in that lake of fire, was also demonstrated by the "Shekinah" glory – that God judges evil. He does not ignore it. He judges it with the most condemning, summary, violent ways – death.

**Grace or Discipline**

The second thing we have seen thus far about this "Shekinah" glory is that the use of God's power to administer either grace or discipline to His people. The "Shekinah" glory cloud could be blessing. It was – to take them through the Red Sea. Or it could be discipline. It was at Kadeshbarnea when they would not go into the land. So, the same cloud could be a blessing of grace, or the discipline of judgment.

Moses, therefore, warned the people. In Deuteronomy 28:1-14, you may read a very fascinating description of what Moses said: "Here's what God's glory will do for you if you're positive to His Word."

In Deuteronomy 28:15-68, the rest of that chapter, Moses said, "Now here's what God is going to do to you in discipline if you are negative to doctrine. Now, you may go either way." For this reason, Israel is the great object lesson of all ages to mankind of the consequences of positive and negative volition to Bible doctrine.

**Seraphim**

Point number two: Isaiah gives us some insight about the "Shekinah" glory. Isaiah saw the same "Shekinah" glory in awesome holiness. If you'll turn to Isaiah 6:1-4, we'll read about this: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I also saw the Lord sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim." This is a category of angels. The word "seraphim" means "the burning one." Again, we have the flame: "Above it stood the seraphim. Each one had six wings: with two, he covered his face; with two, he covered his feet; and, with two, he did fly. And one cried onto another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him who cried, and the house was filled with smoke."

What Isaiah is seeing is again the demonstration of the "Shekinah" glory of God in reference to the throne of God in the temple, and the holiness of God. The seraphim angels have to do particularly with holiness in individuals (in people). This is why here in Isaiah, he has this expression of woe in verse 5, as he recognizes his own lack of holiness. To the cherubim category of angels is committed the responsibility of defending the external throne room holiness of God – the external surroundings of God commensurate with His Holiness. But when it comes to sinfulness within individuals, we have the seraphim angels associated with that.

So, here Isaiah sees God seated on the throne in the temple. He is surrounded by these burning ones, the seraphim angels, who are proclaiming the holiness of God, and thus warning individuals what they must be.

When this happened, the temple shook, for the "Shekinah" glory cloud began filling the temple just as it had descended upon Sinai. The throne occupant was the Lord Jesus Christ. We find this if we compare John 12:41 in the context there. We see that the one who dwells in glory is the Son of God. And Isaiah, consequently, as he sees this demonstration of the holiness of God is distressed about his own sinfulness, and how that reflects upon the holiness of God.

So, in Isaiah 6:5, he says, "Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I'm a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts." So, what Isaiah sees here is the "Shekinah" glory.

Ezekiel saw, the "Shekinah" glory, and he saw it in all of its brilliant light display. Turn to Ezekiel 1. Ezekiel is a captive in Babylon. He is sitting by the river Chebar in Babylon. And he is given this vision of heaven opening. Notice Ezekiel 1:3: "The Word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel, the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar. And the hand of the Lord was there upon him.

Verse 4: "And I looked and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north – a great cloud, and a fire infolding it, and a brightness was about it. And out of the midst of it, like the color of amber – out of the midst of the fire. "Here, all the typical elements that we've become acquainted with in the "Shekinah" glory visible cloud. You have the whirlwind storm quality. You have the flashing fire. You have a cloud of fire whirling and twisting around itself in a sword-like shape. You have the dazzling, brilliant light. You have a concentration-like of glowing metal in a fire. As he looks, he sees these tremendous glows that look like metal which has been under intense heat, and has been brought to a white hot glow. All of this is a visible thing that he sees. All around him is a brightness – a fantastic unfolding fire.

Verses 5-12 then describe the angelic beings which surround this "Shekinah" glory that Ezekiel has just seen. And it describes them in a variety of ways. Then in verse 13, we have something else added: flying concentrations of fire among angels with lightning flashes: "As for the likeness of the living creatures (these angelic beings), their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps or torches. And it went up and down among the living creatures. And the fire was bright. And out of the fire went forth lighting." So, now here's another feature. The visible glory of God, as Ezekiel saw it, had these torch-like concentrations of light which were flying around, hither and yon, within the cloud itself, adding to the brilliance. And out of it were these shots of lightning coming out, here and there, all over from this flame of fire: the dancing flames within; and, the shooting flames without.

Then drop down to verse 26: "And above the firmament 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 the likeness of the appearance of a man above and upon it." Here is a radiant throne now that he sees as he peers into the "Shekinah" glory cloud. And in the midst of this blazing, brilliant light display, he sees this throne.

Verse 27: "And I saw like the color of amber, like the appearance of fire roundabout about within it: from the appearance of its loins, even upward; and, from the appearance of its loins even downward. I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire, and it had the brightness round about, like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke."

**A Rainbow**

What he is seeing here on this throne (a human type figure) is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. You notice that he's surrounded with this blaze of glory, and he has a new feature. He says, "It had like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud; that is, the rainbow." So, we also know that the "Shekinah" glory cloud, while dazzling white in appearance, also has colors – multicolors. What he is describing to us is a fantastic, laser-beam-like, color display of the most amazing kind – of stunning dimensions with globs of colored lights just flying at you from all directions, and shooting out, and interspersing with one another, and twisting and turning. It was just an unbelievable spectacle. Of course, all of this conveying was one thing: God is holy – the glory of God. And poor Ezekiel, when you starts seeing the color show, that's all. He could take the brilliance; he could take the light; he could see the throne; and, he could see the Man. He is stunned while he sees all this – the glory of God. And he knows what he's seeing. But when they turned loose the colored part of the show, that was all. That was just too much for him. And he fell on his face, just stunned with the realization again of his own lack of holiness in the presence of God.

What he saw was a visible attempt to display just how great God is, and how holy He is.

**Flaming Angels**

No another point: what constitutes the strange "Shekinah" glory cloud? We have noticed that it doesn't consume. It could consume, and on occasion, it does consume. But it didn't consume the bush that Moses saw. It didn't consume the tabernacle when it sat on that. It didn't burn Moses to a crisp when he was called up into it by God. It didn't burn the top of Mount Sinai off. Well, the reason for this is that it is a very unique kind of flame. It is a flame that is made up of angels. Angels are the flaming spirits that constitute the fiery "Shekinah" glory cloud.

Notice Hebrews 1:7: "And of the angels, he said, 'Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." Here, the writer of Hebrews is quoting from Psalm 104:4 which we've already looked at as describing to us the nature of the glory of God. And when the writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 104:4, he points out a fact about angels. The psalmist says, "Who makes His angels spirits; His ministers, a flaming fire." The angels of God are His ministers. The angels of God serve the purposes of God. And we're told that God, who, in Psalm 104:2, covers Himself with light, has surrounded Him His ministers of light which are flaming angels. Angels as ministers of God are flames of fire.

**The Covering of Light**

So, the covering of light that God has surrounded Himself with, here and Psalm 104, is actually the holy angels who are displaying visibly the glory of God. The same "Shekinah" glory cloud as a pillar of fire, therefore, was an intertwining of multitudes of angels – flaming angels. And they constituted all of this light-colored display.

**The Glory does not Burn up that which it Touches**

This explains why the flaming quality of the "Shekinah" glory does not literally burn up that which it touches.

This flaming fire quality of angels is also described in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8: "And to you, who are troubled, rest with us. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that do not know God, and that do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." In your King James Bible, you should not have a comma after the word "angels" at the end of verse 7. You should not have a comma until after the word "fire" in verse 8. As a matter of fact, they should have left those three words in verse 7: "His mighty angels in flaming fire." "His mighty angels" and "in flaming fire" go together. Those words describe what angels are. The angels are flames of fire. And for that reason, the "Shekinah" glory cloud that they make up has the appearance of a fiery flame.

The Lord Jesus Christ, at His Second Coming, is going to be accompanied by angels in flaming fire. The power of Jesus Christ, at His Second Coming, will be demonstrated in these flaming angels which accompany Him. The return of the Lord, in other words, is going to be one huge ball of fire, and that ball of fire is going to be the angels that surround Him. So, the "Shekinah" glory cloud, now that we know a little more about it, is made up of flaming angels.

**The Chariot of God**

There's one other thing. These flaming angels also form the chariot of God. In 1 Chronicles 28:18, we read, "And for the altar of incense, refine gold by weight, and go for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubim that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord." The word "pattern" could be more aptly translated by the word "model." In other words, the mercy seat on top of the ark of the covenant, with the two cherubim angels standing there, was a model of the chariot of God. It was a model of the transportation unit that God uses to move around.

Psalm 18:10 says, "And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly." Here it is describing again how God has transported Himself. So, the "Shekinah" glory cloud leading the Israelites in the wilderness was the chariot of God which was made up of these flaming angels. And God was in the midst of them on his throne. As we've already seen, when Ezekiel and Isaiah looked up, they saw the throne of God in the midst of the "Shekinah" glory. In other words, a throne was the driver's seat. Here within the flame of the "Shekinah" glory was also the throne of God. Here God sat upon His throne as the cloud moved, surrounded by this milling, slowly, millions-upon-millions of cherubic angels as flaming spirits surrounding the throne of God. And God was moving forward in that "Shekinah" glory cloud, and that cloud constituted His chariot. That's what the Scriptures mean when they speak about the chariot of God.

There is a prime example of this chariot of God in the case of Elijah. Please turn to 2 Kings 2:11-12. Elijah and his understudy Elisha, the younger prophet, are together: "And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that, behold, there whole there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire." Do you know what that is? There appeared the "Shekinah" glory made up of these swirling flaming angels in the midst of which was God's throne as the driver seat upon which He sat. And the appearance this time was with wheels and with horses. The angels had formed the appearance of a chariot. This is still God's throne. The cherubim angels had formed a platform for the throne of God as it was moving forward as a chariot structure.

"And separated them (that is, came between Elijah and Elisha), and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." Here again you have that thing that accompanied the swirling of the angels – the whirlwind sound. Perhaps an even better description here would be a fire storm.

One of the things that we discovered during World War II, and that our enemies discovered, was that American bombers came overhead in massive incendiary raids, as they did on some of the great cities of Germany and of Japan, and they created huge fires. These fires burned out of control. They could not put them out. The result was they created an atmospheric condition that actually created what was called a fire storm. And that caused a rushing, gushing wind to be sucked into those flames so that people learned that if they walked too close to a burning area, they were literally sucked in, and they could not stop themselves, and they were just drawn into that firestorm. Many of them who survived the bombs were killed because they walked too close to an area that was burning, that had created these wind conditions, so that a section was created that drew them into the fire.

That's what you have described here. This whirling, "Shekinah" glory fire is creating an atmospheric condition that creates the sound of a storm blowing, and creating an illusion of a tremendous wind with all the companies that. Verse 12 says, "And Elisha saw it, and he cried, "My father, My father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen." This is God – not Elijah, but God. God is the chariot of Israel and its horsemen; that is, a chariot was a sign of military power. A chariot was a sign of protection, and God was the protector of his people Israel. He was the military protector: "The chariot of Israel and its horseman; and he saw no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in pieces."

So, here we have the catching away of the famed Elijah into heaven on the chariot of God, which is the swirling, flaming angels. Later on, in 2 Kings 13:14, you have this Elisha described as a protector of his people because of his association with the "Shekinah" glory of God.

In Psalm 68:17, we have indicated that God's chariot are the elect angels: "The chariots of God are 20,000, even thousands of angels, and the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place" (that holy of holies). I must point out to you that in the Hebrew, the word angels is not in there. If you have a newer translation, you will find that the word "angels" is not actually there. But the verse does say this: "That the chariot are thousands of something which God dwelt among at Sinai and in the holy of holies in the "Shekinah" glory cloud. Since the "Shekinah" glory cloud, we have seen, is composed of flaming angels (Hebrews 1:7 compared to Psalm 104:1-4), these thousands of chariots of God are therefore angels, because we're told that these chariots are the same thing that God dwells among on Sinai and in the holy of holies.

So, gives us a clue that, while the Hebrew word angels is not there, the verse really conveys a true picture. The chariots of God are thousands of angels of God.

The identification is further confirmed by Psalm 18:10, turn that we already read, which says that: "God rode upon a cherub."

Isaiah 66:15-16: "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the Lord will plead with all flesh. And those slain by the Lord shall be many." We have already learned that the fire that God uses are flaming angels. These chariots are angels who come with great destruction here at the end of the tribulation, in executing God's judgment.

I want you to look at 2 Kings 8:8-17, to show you how Elisha, as the defender and protector of Israel, was protected by the horses and chariots of the flaming angels. The king of Syria in this passage is attacking, with hit-and-run raids, the people of Israel, during the reign of the Israelite king Joram. However, Elisha has been receiving the intelligence information directly from God as to what the Syrian king is going to do. Therefore, He has been telling Joram where the Syrians are going to hit. So, every time the Syrians make a raid, the Israelis are there waiting for them in force.

Finally, the king of Syria says, "Somebody in our camp is a traitor. Somebody is telling Joram where we are coming, and that's why they're always prepared for us." But his advisers say, No, that's not true, King. It's because of Elisha, the prophet of God. He's getting the information, and he is telling the king.

So, consequently, the king of Syria says, "In that case, I want to get Elisha. Where is he?" And they tell the king that he's at Dothan. Consequently, the Syrian king gives the order to surround him, and they do it in a night maneuver.

OK, now these chariot horses are surrounding in large number, and all avenues of escape have been cut off. The next morning, Elisha's servant gets up, and he looks out the window, and he is horrified to see this company of chariots surrounding them. Beginning at verse 15: "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold a host compassed the city, both with horses and chariots. And his servants said unto him, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" And he answered, "Fear not, for they who are with us more than they who are with them."

**Chariots of Fire**

Now this statement can be made by every one of you who is sitting here today. What Elisha said to that servant, you too can say: "Fear not, for they who are with us are more than they who are with them." And Elijah prayed and said, "Lord, I pray that you open his eyes that he may see. Here's what Elijah meant: "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." These were the same chariots of fire that carried away his master Elijah alive to heaven have now surrounded him as a protective cover. And as we've already seen, the chariots of fire and the horses are the angel of the Lord. These are the flaming elect angels which constitute the horses and the chariots.

**Guardian Angels**

So, Elisha says, "Just look at what's surrounding us out here. Now all I have to do is give the word, and man, that army of the Syrians is going to be just burnt to a crisp and devastated." And the book of Hebrews tells us that the same company surrounds you – that these flaming angels are your ministering servants. Sometimes we call them our guardian angels. They are there to minister and care for you. And they are greater than anything or anybody that ever comes to oppose you in life. And they are there at your disposal to be counted upon.

Well, Elisha handled the situation by causing the Syrians to be struck blind. He led them to Samaria; he fed them; and, then he said, "Now you better go home, because next time I'm going to turn loose my army of chariots, and you won't have a second chance." And by this time, the Syrian soldiers were in such panic that they were quite glad to beat it home and to escape.

Hebrews 1:14 tells you that these same flaming spirits are your servants as well.

So, here are some very impressive things that we have added concerning the nature of the "Shekinah" glory cloud. We have not yet come to the particular personal relationship that we have to this "Shekinah" glory cloud. We look at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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