

Message 1: The Chariot of God Three Visions of Ezekiel

This morning we are going to embark on a three-week journey into the mysterious supernatural visions of Ezekiel.

4 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, while I was sitting among the exiles by the Chebar Canal, the heavens opened and I saw visions of God. ...I looked, and there was a whirlwind coming from the north, a huge cloud with fire flashing back and forth and brilliant light all around it. In the center of the fire, there was a gleam like amber.

Ezekiel 1:1, 4 CSB

Pray

God does nothing without purpose. So purposely He chose to preserve the visions of Ezekiel. Why would God preserve for us writings that were not written directly to us?

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17 CSB

Let's take a couple of New Testament examples to see how we can apply all of God's Word to our own lives. Each of these can only be understood by crossing the timeless principle bridge.

"Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since that is one and the same as having her head shaved."

1 Corinthians 11:5 CSB

(Bridge on screens)



or

"Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way, says the LORD of Armies. See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure."

Malachi 3:10 CSB

(Bridge on screens)



¹ In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, while I was among the exiles by the Chebar Canal, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God

Ezekiel 1: 1 CSB

Ezekiel is among people who are oppressed and held captive. Ezekiel is a contemporary of Daniel. Babylon now rules Israel and Judah and it seems God has relinquished His authority over them.

Daniel prophesied concerning the future of Babylon and other Gentile powers that would follow; Ezekiel prophesied to Israel.

God is over all, working out His plans and carrying out His own decisions, in spite of Satan's attempt to thwart His purposes. God is in control of the destinies of nations and individuals.

What does Ezekiel see in his first vision?

While Ezekiel sat forborne with other exiles, God appeared to him in His majestic glory.

Ezekiel is gifted to see the appearance of a storm coming from the north and heading toward Babylon. This was no ordinary storm. The storm was inhabited by heavenly creatures.

¹³ The likeness of the living creatures was like the appearance of blazing coals of fire or like torches. Fire was moving back and forth between the living creatures; it was bright, with lightning coming out of it. ¹⁴ The creatures were darting back and forth like flashes of lightning.

Ezekiel 1:13-14 CSB

Beside each of the 4 creatures were enormous wheels, which towered into the sky.

¹⁶ The appearance of the wheels and their craftsmanship was like the gleam of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. Their appearance and craftsmanship was like a wheel within a wheel. ¹⁷ When they moved, they went in any of the four directions, without turning as they moved. ¹⁸ Their

rims were tall and awe-inspiring. Each of their four rims were full of eyes all around

Ezekiel 1:16-18 CSB

As the vision became clearer Ezekiel began to see that there was more above the living creatures.

²² Over the heads of the living creatures the likeness of an expanse was spread out. It gleamed like awe-inspiring crystal, ²³ and under the expanse their wings extended one toward another. They each also had two wings covering their bodies. ²⁴ When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings like the roar of a huge torrent, like the voice of the Almighty, and a sound of tumult like the noise of an army. When they stopped, they lowered their wings. ²⁵ A voice came from above the expanse over their heads; when they stopped, they lowered their wings. ²⁶ Something like a throne with the appearance of lapis lazuli was above the expanse over their heads. On the throne, high above, was someone who looked like a human. ²⁷ From what seemed to be his waist up, I saw a gleam like amber, with what looked like fire enclosing it all around. From what seemed to be his waist down, I also saw what looked like fire. There was a brilliant light all around him.

Ezekiel 1:22-27 CSB

These creatures were aflame like torches. Who are these 4 living creatures? Ezekiel later comes to recognize them. In another vision recorded in chapter 10 he says:

"These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Chebar Canal, and I recognized that they were cherubim."

Ezekiel 10:20 CSB

Above them there was a throne. The one on the throne appeared as a human. The fiery creatures only stopped when they heard His voice. (1:25) If we put the pieces of the vision together it becomes clear that Ezekiel is witnessing the pre-incarnate Christ as He is being carried in His chariot through the heavens.

Lessons Learned

The great chariot of Babylon's King is dwarfed by the chariot of God.

The king would ride on a mobile throne through city streets with footmen beside him while torches led the way.

Archaeologists have uncovered an ancient building in Babylon with a street leading to it 1/2 mile long with walls 49 feet high on each side. The gate and the mosaics are displayed in the Pergamom Museum in Berlin, Germany. The

building is the temple of Ishtar and the entrance is the Ishtar Gate. Several times a year a Babylonians led great processions down the Processional Way carrying idols of Marduk (dragon with birds feet) and Ishtar (lion with eagles wings) and Adam (a bull representing the storm god). It was all to impress and intimidate the crowds.

God rides a mighty chariot whose wheels stretch up into the sky. His footmen are the four living creatures who are Cherubim ablaze from God's holy altar.

God's power is greater than our captivity:

for those who are held captive by sickness He is "the son of righteousness who will rise with healing in his wings..."

for those who are held captive by poverty He is the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills...

for those who are in the bondage of addiction He is the redeemer who came to set the captive free.

for those who are lonely He is the friend who sticks closer than a brother

for those who are uncertain about tomorrow He has plans for you, plans to give you a hope and future...

for those who are tired of fighting one battle after another He is the God who shall renew your strength, you shall mount up with wings as eagles, you can run and be weary, you may walk and not faint...

and for you who have fallen under the weight of your burdens God invites you to cast all your care on Him, because He cares about you.

There is nothing greater than our God.