

- I) **V1-3 INTRO:** Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year in the fourth month on the fifth day of the month
 - a) **BACKGROUND:** Nothing is known of Ezekiel beyond what is found in his book
 - 1) He is not mentioned in any other OT book, and is not directly mentioned in the NT
 - 2) **STILL:** Some of the imagery we will see in Ezekiel is similar to what is in Revelation

- II) **FACT:** According to V3, he was a priest, the son of a priest named Buzi
 - a) If V1 is referring to his age, he would have been around 30 when he began his ministry
 - 1) Thirty years is the age when priests began to minister (Nu 4:23)

- III) **EZEKIEL:** Means God will strengthen and what he experiences will clarify the meaning of his name
 - a) He shuts himself up in his house, is bound, and then becomes mute (3:24-26), he is ordered to lay on his right side and then on his left side for a total of 430 days (4:4-8), he eats bread baked with fuel made from human waste (4:12), shaves his head and beard (5:1), is not allowed to mourn at the death of his wife (24:15-24), and loses his speech (24:27)
 - 1) God intends to use Ezekiel as a sign to Israel by what he goes through

- IV) **BABYLON:** Invaded Judah and enacted a series of three deportations
 - a) 605 BC, 597 BC, and 586 BC
 - 1) **IN V2:** Ezekiel says he was taken to Babylon in the 2nd deportation, 597 BC (2 Ki 24:12-15)
 - 2) **V1** He tells us where he was living: By the river Chebar, which was a canal

- V) **THIS TIME:** Was one of great sorrow for the Jewish people who had been taken captive
 - a) There was a great mourning over their deportation, and a great sorrow they suffered
 - 1) Ps 137:1-4 By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept When we remembered Zion. We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, those who plundered us requested mirth, Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How shall we sing the LORD'S song In a foreign land?

- VI) **GOD RAISED UP THREE PROPHETS:** After Babylon invaded and deported the Jews
 - a) Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel all prophesied during the time of their captivity
 - 1) Jeremiah ministered to the Jews in Jerusalem, Daniel in the courts of Babylon, and Ezekiel ministered to the Jews taken captive in Babylon

- VII) **KEY:** His ministry can be summed up in this: His was most concerned with the glory of the Lord
 - a) Moses communed with God on Mt Sinai, and from that point on was marked for life
 - b) Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord, and his ministry became centered on the holiness of the Lord
 - c) Paul saw Jesus while on the road to Damascus, and became willing to suffer the loss of all things
 - d) John was exiled on Patmos, but upon seeing what God was going to do, remained steadfast

- VIII) **EZEKIEL:** Here sees the glory of God, and his ministry never strayed away from it
 - a) His book covers from 592-570 BC

- IX) **V1-2 NOW:** It came to pass in the thirtieth year in the fourth month on the fifth day of the month
 - a) Ezekiel is giving information concerning his calling: 7/31/593 BC
 - 1) He precisely knows the day that the Lord call him into the prophetic ministry
 - 2) He simply says the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God!

- I) **V3 THE WORD:** Of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest the son of Buzi in the land of

- a) This was his calling: Like when He called out to Samuel
 - 1) Jer 1:4 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:
 - 2) Hosea 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beer...
 - 3) Joel 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel
 - 4) LOCATION: He is by the River Chebar in Babylon (a royal canal) 50 mi. south of Babylon

- II) NOTICE: There *the hand* of the Lord was upon him
 - a) THE HAND OF THE LORD: Is a way of speaking of how God grabbed hold of him
 - 1) Ac 11:21 The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord
 - 2) It was a personal and powerful experience that was beyond imagination or hallucination

- III) KEY: This was God's calling and empowering of Ezekiel
 - a) IMPORTANT: God's calling will always have God's power to fulfill His calling
 - 1) When He calls you, He also strengthens you, as He did with the prophet Jeremiah
 - 2) Jer 1:6-9 Then said I Ah, Lord God Behold, I cannot speak for I am a youth! But the Lord said to me Do not say I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me Behold, I have put My words in your mouth

- IV) THIS IS ALSO TRUE: When Jesus sent His twelve disciples out
 - a) Mt 10:1 When He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He *gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.*
 - b) Mt 10:5 These twelve Jesus *sent out*
 - c) Ac 1:8

- V) V4-14 THEN: I looked and behold a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging
 - a) As mentioned earlier, Babylon invaded Judah three times: 605, 597, and 586 BC
 - 1) This prophecy relates to the third invasion that *was yet to occur* (found in Jer 39-40)

- VI) V4 NOTICE: Behold a *whirlwind* was coming out of *the north*, a *great cloud with raging fire*
 - a) This is a picture of the glory of the Lord (V28) and He broke upon them in judgment
 - 1) Judgment is coming in a totally devastating way, and will be terrible

- VII) V4 PICTURE: God's wrath will burst upon Judah, revealed by wind, cloud and fire
 - a) Wind, cloud, and fire are all images of God's glory
 - 1) Ps 18:8-13 Smoke went up from His nostrils, and devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down with darkness under His feet. And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters And thick clouds of the skies. From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire. The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire.

- VIII) PICTURE: A tremendous thunderstorm, seen from a distance
 - a) There is a cloud darkened sky, with flashes of lightning
 - 1) AMBER: Literally shining metal, perhaps bronze; reveals the Lord's glory and splendor

- I) V5-6 ALSO: From within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance
 - a) FOUR: May represent the four corners of the earth, picturing God's sovereignty over everything

- 1) Who were these four living creatures? They were angels, called cherubim
 - 2) Ezek 10:15 The *cherubim* were lifted up. This was the living creature I saw by the River Chebar
 - 3) This is like a moving throne, with the four living creatures connected
- II) **CHERUBIM: Are high-ranking angels**
- a) Eph 6:12 We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.
 - 1) **PRINCIPALITIES: Chief rulers (highest ranking angels)**
 - 2) **POWERS: Authorities**
 - 3) **RULERS: World rulers; angels who interfere with kingdoms**
 - 4) **SPIRITUAL HOSTS: General demonic hordes**
- III) **CHERUBIM: Are the highest ranking of angels, along with seraphim**
- a) Angels have a certain order, and have various functions and duties
 - 1) The cherubim are the highest order of angels, who are entrusted with upholding God's glory
 - 2) Whenever seen, they are related to the holiness of God
- IV) **V5 THEY: Had the likeness of a man**
- a) We will look closer at this in a moment
- V) **V7 THEIR LEGS: Were straight and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet**
- a) Their legs do not bend at the knees: they are ready to go in any direction
 - 1) Calves' feet speaks of stability
- VI) **V8-9 THE HANDS: Of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces**
- a) Hands of a man is a picture of readiness to serve
 - b) The wings that extended and touched is a picture of perfect unity of action
 - 1) Fallen angels are unified in their activity of rebelling against God and hindering people
- VII) **V10 AS FOR: The likeness of their faces each had the face of a man each of the four had the face**
- a) **MAN: Standing for intelligence**
 - b) **LION: Standing for majesty and power**
 - c) **OX: Represents service**
 - d) **EAGLE: Represents swiftness, and that it soars over everything**
- VIII) **INTERESTINGLY: The ancient church fathers recognized this as prefiguring Messiah**
- a) **Matthew: Represented by the Lion, of the tribe of Judah**
 - b) **Mark: The ox, Jesus the Servant**
 - c) **Luke: Man, in His incarnation**
 - d) **John: The eagle, representing His deity, even as the eagle soars above all things**
- IX) **V12-14 AND: Each one went straight forward they went wherever the spirit wanted to go**
- a) They went forward, wherever they were directed
 - 1) There was no deviation in their direction: they simply went straight ahead
 - 2) V13 Their appearance: communicates God's glory and fiery justice that they help carry out
- I) **V15-25 NOW: As I looked at the living creatures behold a wheel was on the earth beside each**
- a) Charles Feinberg says that Jews were to later refer to this as the vision of the chariot
 - 1) The wheels: Represent motion and irresistible progress

- 2) This may represent God's upcoming judgment on the nation
- II) **V16 THE APPEARANCE:** Of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl and all four
- a) This is an enormous wheel (V18) connecting heaven and earth
 - 1) It pictures God's judgment bringing about His purposes
 - 2) The wheel within the wheel reveals that God moves orderly and progressively
- III) **V17 WHEN:** They moved they went toward any one of four directions
- a) The judgment machine moved where the angels went, without deviation
- IV) **V18 AS FOR THEIR RIMS:** They were so high they were awesome and their rims were full of eyes
- a) This is the picture of God's perfect knowledge
 - 1) Pr 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good.
 - 2) Pr 5:21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths.
- V) **V19-25 SUMMARIZED**
- a) They are under the control of the spirit
 - 1) V24-25 When the cherubim stood, they let down their wings in reverence to God's commands
- VI) **V26-27 AND:** Above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne
- a) Ezekiel sees the throne of God, in heaven
 - 1) Ps 103:19-22 The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works, In all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!
- VII) **ON THE THRONE:** He sees the likeness of a Man
- a) Obviously, this would be Messiah, which is a prophetic prelude to the incarnation
 - 1) Col 2:9 In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily
- VIII) **V28 LIKE:** The appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day so was the appearance of the
- a) **RAINBOW:** Is the symbol of the grace of God
 - 1) Gen 9:13-16 I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.
- IX) **THE GOD:** Of majesty and power is also the God of grace
- a) The effect of such a magnificent vision was worship