

Ezekiel Study Chapters 9-10

This was also an old religion, forbidden in the Mosaic code (Deut. 4:19). Josiah had removed this ritual from Judah in his reformation (2 Kings 23:5, 11). But once again it had been revived, this time by the priests. **These twenty-five men were probably priests, since the Scripture indicates that only priests were permitted into the inner court of the Temple (cf. 2 Chron. 4:9; Joel 2:17). They had transferred their service to the sun-god (Shamash of the Babylonians, most likely) and turned their backs on their true Temple service (2 Chron. 29:6-7).**

With these abominable things that Judah was involved in the temple complex, of all places, God says “they have filled the land with violence and provoked Me repeatedly.” His verdict is, “...I indeed with deal in wrath. My eye will have no pity nor will I spare; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I will not listen to them” (v. 18).

2. The coming slaughter of the wicked Jerusalemites ch. 9

9:1-2. Verses 1-2 are self-explanatory. This is God shouting out orders to what was probably angelic beings (“executioners of the city”) carrying out both God’s judgment and God’s protection. Remember what chapter 8 ended with, “...I indeed with deal in wrath. My eye will have no pity nor will I spare; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I will not listen to them” (v. 18).

9 Then He cried out in my hearing with a loud voice saying, “Draw near, O executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand.”² Behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his shattering weapon in his hand; and among them was a certain man clothed in linen with a writing case at his loins. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

Evidently Ezekiel’s position at this time, in his vision, was in the inner temple courtyard, and the Lord spoke from inside the temple structure (cf. v. 3).¹

9:3-8. Ezekiel then saw the “glory of God” that had entered the temple after Solomon had completed it (2 Chron. 7:1-3), move to the threshold of the temple at the porch. He then told the man with the writing case to mark the foreheads of those who sighed and groaned in Jerusalem over the abominations of the city. Then to the six others with their weapons, he told them to go through the city and “strike,” without pity every man, woman, child except for those who have the mark on them starting from the temple and moving outward. They were even to defile the temple with those slain in it, who he had just shown in chapter 8. Ezekiel is horrified. Verse 8 reads, “As they were striking *the people* and I *alone* was left, I fell on my face and cried out saying, “Alas, Lord God! Are You destroying the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out Your wrath on Jerusalem?”

¹ Constable, *ibid.*, Eze 9:1.

9:9-10. God then explains: “⁹ Then He said to me, “The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is very, very great, and the land is filled with blood and the city is full of perversion; for they say, ‘The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!’ ¹⁰ But as for Me, My eye will have no pity nor will I spare, but I will bring their conduct upon their heads” (Ezek. 9:9-10).

9:11. ¹¹ Then behold, the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case reported, saying, “I have done just as You have commanded me.” Alexander writes:

At this point Ezekiel saw the manifestation of God’s glory rising from the cherub in the Holy of Holies and moving to the threshold of the Temple. This glorious God of judgment was about to execute His judgment upon these idolatrous worshipers who had defiled the Temple precinct. The departure of the glory of God from the Temple, Jerusalem, and Judah is a significant theme in Ezekiel’s prophecy, God would not be simply another God in a pantheon worshipped by the leaders of Israel. He is God alone, and Israel is to worship none other but Him (Ex. 20:1-7). Therefore, He was departing from Israel as He had warned in Deuteronomy 31:17 and Hosea 9:12. He would leave the nation temporarily as it underwent discipline. But one day the glory of God will return to Jerusalem when God restores His people to their land, according to Ezekiel 43.²

3. The departure of God’s glory from the temple ch. 10

10:1-5. “God would not share His dwelling place with other “gods,” and the sanctuary had been polluted with idolatry.”³ In this vision Ezekiel sees “the expanse” (10:1) that he saw earlier over the head of “the four living beings” where “the likeness of the glory of God” (1:5, 28) resided atop the “expanse” (1:22). For the first time, the “living beings” are referred to as *cherubim*. Here, on this expanse above the cherubim was a sapphire stone that looked like a throne (cf. 1:26-28). Apparently there is again someone sitting on the throne since in verse three he speaks and says, “... to the man clothed in linen ..., “Enter between the whirling wheels under the cherubim and fill your hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatter *them* over the city” (v. 2). The man did just as he was told and a cloud filled the inner court.

10:6-8. The text here is pretty self-explanatory. He writes, “⁶ It came about when He commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, “Take fire from between the whirling wheels, from between the cherubim,” he entered and stood beside a wheel. ⁷ Then the cherub stretched out his hand from between the cherubim to the fire which was between the cherubim, took *some* and put *it* into the hands of the one clothed in linen, who took *it* and went out. ⁸ The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man’s hand under their wings.” The “fire” apparently represented God’s judgment in Jerusalem and the man in linen would have taken it and scattered it over the city. The Babylonians would destroy Jerusalem by burning it (cf. 2 Kings 25:8–9).

Though God was at the entrance to the sanctuary, His throne-chariot was “on the south side of the temple” (10:3). ... God told the angelic scribe, **Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim** and take **burning coals ... and scatter them over the city**. The “burning coals” among the cherubim had been seen by Ezekiel earlier (1:13; cf. Isa. 6:6). Now God

² Alexander, *ibid.*, 31.

³ Dyer, *ibid.*, 1246.

was going to use similar coals to purge His “holy” city. 10:3–5. Ezekiel’s attention shifted back to God’s throne-chariot beside the sanctuary. **A cloud filled the inner court**, signifying God’s presence at the threshold of the sanctuary (cf. Ex. 33:9–10; 1 Kings 8:10–11; Isa. 6:1–4). Ezekiel repeated the fact that **the glory of the Lord had moved** from the throne-chariot **to the threshold** (Ezek. 10:4; cf. 9:3). As **the cloud filled the temple ... the court was full of the radiance of the glory** (cf. comments on 1:28) **of the Lord**. The manifestation of God’s glory pierced through the cloud to illuminate the plaza where Ezekiel stood. Along with this dazzling brightness was **the sound** of the cherubim’s **wings**, so loud that it was **heard** in **the outer court** (cf. 1:24).⁴

One of the cherubim took some fire from between the cherubim and “put it into the hands of the one clothed in linen who took it and went out” (10:7; cf. 9:2, 11, 10:2). “Taken in context, these coals represented the fire of judgment which God was pouring out on the city.”⁵

10:9-17. Verse 9:11 focus on the wheels. Much of this information was already given to us elsewhere where the chariot-throne was mentioned. In verse 12, we are told that not only the wheels were full of eyes but also the cherubim’s backs, hands, wings as well and the wheels themselves were called by the cherubim, “whirling wheels.” There is another mention here in verse 14 of the cherubim’s faces but instead of calling the first face the face of a bull, as in 1:10, here the first face is called the face of a cherub implying that this is the common face of a cherub, that of a bull. Verse 16-17 describes the movement pattern of the cherubim chariot.

10:18-19. In 9:3, the “glory of the Lord” moved from the “cherub on which it had been, to the threshold [main entrance] of the temple.” Then, in 10:4, “the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple” again. This time causing the temple to be filled with a cloud and the courtyard was filled with the brightness of the glory of the Lord (cf. 1:27). Now, in 11:18, the “glory of the Lord” is mentioned again and his movement is from the threshold of the temple apparently upon to the chariot-throne. The chariot of cherubim moved out to the east gate of the Lord’s house and the glory of the Lord hovered over the cherubim” (v. 19).

10:20-22. Ezekiel then makes clear that this is the same “living beings” he had seen at the River Chebar in chapter 1.

⁴ Dyer, *ibid.*, 1246.

⁵ Alexander, *ibid.*, 37.