

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 17-Chapter Ten (Ezekiel 10:1-20)

Executive Summary

The central theme is the physical movement of the Divine Presence (Shekinah glory) from the temple threshold to the east gate, signaling God's abdication of His throne among the people. This departure is portrayed not as a sudden disappearance but as a structured, deliberate exit involving high-level celestial beings and specific symbolic actions, most notably the distribution of "burning coals of fire" taken from between the wheels of the cherubim.

I. The Divine Throne and the Command of Fire

The chapter opens with a vision of the firmament or expanse above the cherubim, which Ezekiel identifies using the Hebrew word *henné* to focus attention.

- **The Appearance of the Throne:** Consistent with Ezekiel's previous visions (specifically Ezekiel 1:22, 26), he observes an expanse resembling the "awesome gleam of crystal" and a throne made of sapphire stone (resembling lapis lazuli).
- **The Command to the Man in Linen:** The "Word of the LORD" commands a man clothed in fine linen to go between the "whirling wheels" and the cherubim to take fire.
- **The Action of the Fire:** One of the cherubim reaches into the fire between the beings and places it into the hands of the man in linen, who then departs. This fire is described as "burning coals" that dart back and forth like torches, producing flashes of lightning.

II. Anatomy and Movement of the Cherubim

Ezekiel provides an exhaustive description of the celestial beings (cherubim) and their accompanying wheels, emphasizing their unified movement and supernatural characteristics.

The Cherubim

- **Physical Form:** They possess the form of a man's hand under their wings. Their legs are straight, their feet resemble a calf's hoof, and they gleam like burnished bronze.
- **Wings:** The sound of their wings is described as being as loud as the voice of "God Almighty when He speaks," audible even in the outer court of the temple.
- **Eyes:** The entire bodies of the cherubim—including their backs, hands, and wings—are covered in eyes.

The Whirling Wheels

- **Appearance:** The wheels have the gleam of Tarshish stone (beryl). All four wheels are identical in likeness.
- **Structure:** Ezekiel describes their form as "a wheel within another wheel."
- **Intelligence and Spirit:** The wheels are "full of eyes all around." Their movement is perfectly synchronized with the cherubim; when the cherubim rise or stand still, the wheels follow because "the spirit of the living beings was in them."
- **Movement:** They can move in any of their four directions without turning, following the direction they face.

III. The Composition of the Four Faces

A notable aspect of Ezekiel 10 is the description of the four faces of each cherub, which varies slightly from the description in Ezekiel 1.

Face Position	Ezekiel 1:10-11 Description	Ezekiel 10:14 Description
First Face	Man	Cherub
Second Face	Lion	Man
Third Face	Bull	Lion
Fourth Face	Eagle	Eagle

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Reconciliation of Descriptions: The document addresses whether this constitutes a contradiction. Ezekiel confirms in verses 15 and 20 that these are "the exact same living beings" he saw by the River Chebar. The analysis suggests that while some faces are described differently, the "likeness" (*demooth*) and "sameness" (*haym*) refer to the specific type of celestial creature. The variation in the description of the faces does not indicate a change in the substance or form of the beings.

IV. The Departure of Divine Glory

The primary movement in this chapter is the transition of the "glory of the LORD" away from the sanctuary.

1. **Movement to the Threshold:** The glory of God moves from the cherub to the threshold of the temple. At this stage, the cloud fills the temple, and the inner court is filled with the brightness of the glory.
2. **Departure to the East Gate:** The glory then departs from the threshold and stands over the cherubim. The cherubim lift their wings and rise from the earth, stopping at the entrance of the **east gate** of the temple.
3. **Linguistic Context:** The word for "departed" used here is *yawtsaw*, a simple active verb indicating a clear exit or going forth.

V. Prophetic Significance

The movement described in Ezekiel 10 is a precursor to the destruction of Jerusalem.

- **Abdication of the Throne:** By exiting the Temple, God is physically and symbolically leaving the building vacant of His presence. This signifies the end of His immediate protection and residence among the people of Judah.
- **Significance of the East Gate:** The east gate is identified as the location where the glory of God exited and, according to Ezekiel 44:1-3, it is the same gate through which the Messiah is prophesied to enter to claim His place as King of Israel.
- **The Future Return:** The document notes that the presence of God would not return to the temple in this manner until the future arrival and installation of the Messiah.

VI. Conclusion: Movement of the Divine Glory

The vision concludes with the return of the man clothed in linen. Having completed his task of marking the faithful, he reports back to God: *"I have done just as You have commanded me."* This confirms that while the destruction was extensive and horrific, it was also precise, sparing those whom God had identified as faithful. The judgment serves as a definitive act to show the people "that I am the LORD."