

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 4-Chapter One Part One (Ezekiel 1:1-11)

I. Historical and Geographical Context

The document emphasizes that Ezekiel provides three primary statements containing significant detail to establish the specificity of his visions.

- **Chronological Markers:**

Ezekiel utilizes two distinct dating systems to anchor his vision in history:

- **The Thirtieth Year:** The vision occurs on the fifth day of the fourth month of the "thirtieth year."
- **The Fifth Year of Exile:** The text provides a secondary reference, noting it was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile.
- **Dating Standards:** The introduction lacks mention of Hebrew months (such as Abib/Nisan or Ziv). Instead, it follows Babylonian standards, which highlights the fact that Israel was in captivity.

- **Location and Author Identity**

- **Geography:** The vision takes place in the land of the Chaldeans (the Babylonian Empire) by the **river Chebar**.
- **Authorship:** The author is explicitly identified as **Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi**. This lineage confirms his membership in the **Tribe of Levi**.
- **Historical Recording Style:** The text notes that recording history in relation to specific rulers (like King Jehoiachin) is common in Hebrew history, citing similar examples involving King Rehoboam and King Artaxerxes.

II. Linguistic and Theological Foundations

The analysis highlights specific Hebrew terms that define the nature of Ezekiel's experience and the authority behind it.

- **The Hand of the LORD (יְדֵי־יְהוָה)**

This phrase is a marker of supernatural intervention:

- **Frequency:** It occurs 35 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and 7 times within the Book of Ezekiel.
- **Associations:** It is linked to the supernatural works of God, specifically concerning His **wrath and judgment** (e.g., Exodus 9:3), the **origin of prophetic works** (e.g., 1 Kings 18:46), and the **ministry of the gospel** in the Greek Scriptures (e.g., Acts 11:20-21).

- **The Nature of "Vision" and "Appearance"**

- **Vision (mar'â):** Occurs 11 times in the Hebrew Scriptures (3 times in Ezekiel). It stems from a root meaning "sight" or "appearances."
- **The Storm Wind (sa'ar):** Translated as "whirlwind," this term can refer to a natural event, the destruction of God's judgment, or a tool for divine revelation intended to capture a person's attention.
- **Behold (hene):** This word is used to signal the transition to the unusual characteristics of the cloud, demanding Ezekiel's focus.

III. The Vision of the Great Cloud

Ezekiel's description moves from the general environment to the granular details of the divine manifestation:

1. **Direction:** A storm wind coming from the **north**.
2. **Size and Quality:** A "great cloud" characterized by "fire flashing forth continually" and surrounded by a "bright light."

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3. **Internal Elements:** Within the fire, Ezekiel observes something resembling **glowing metal**.

IV. The Four Living Beings (Cherubim)

Within the fire, Ezekiel identifies four "living beings" (*hay*). Although the description in Chapter 1 is esoteric, Ezekiel 10:20-22 explicitly confirms these beings are **cherubim**.

- **Physical Characteristics**

The beings are described with a mixture of human and animal traits:

- **Form:** They generally possess a human shape.
- **Faces:** Each being has **four faces**:
 - The face of a **man** (front).
 - The face of a **lion** (right side).
 - The face of a **bull** (left side).
 - The face of an **eagle**.
- **Wings:** Each has **four wings**.
 - Two wings spread upward, touching the wings of the adjacent being.
 - Two wings cover (conceal) their bodies.
 - **Human hands** are located under the wings on all four sides.
- **Appendages:** Their legs are straight, and their feet resemble a **calf's hoof**.
- **Gleam:** Their feet gleam like **burnished bronze** (*qālāl n^ohšet*). This specific attribute is also used to describe the glorified Jesus in Revelation 1:15 and a divine figure in Daniel 10:6.

- **Movement and Mechanics**

The movement of these beings is highly synchronized and unconventional:

- Their wings touch one another.
- Their faces do not rotate; they move "straight forward" in whatever direction they are facing.

V. Comparative Analysis of Celestial Beings

The source provides a comparative framework for different beings mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures:

Feature	Seraphim (Isaiah 6)	Angels (1 Kings 19)	Cherubim (Ezekiel 1 & 10)
Hebrew Term	<i>śārāp</i>	<i>mal'āk</i>	<i>k^orûb</i>
Wings	Six wings	No wings mentioned	Four wings
Faces	One face	Form of a human	Four faces
Hands/Feet	Two hands, two feet	Not specified	Human hands under wings; feet like calf's hoof
Unique Features	Speak to one another	Communicate to humans	Associated with four wheels; one face later called "cherub"
Scripture	Isaiah 6:1-2	1 Kings 19:5	Ezekiel 1:4-11, 10:1-14

VI. Conclusion

- The book of Ezekiel is going through great pains to describe what he had observed from God.
- To solidify his point, he mentioned the specifics of the date (in Babylonian dating), kings (from Israelite dating), location, lineage, and geography concerning this vision.
- The details of these creatures and some of the other qualities are consistent with other visions that have been seen by other people in Scripture.