

Lesson 111

Experiencing God's Glory

God reveals himself in visions of glory to Ezekiel, Isaiah, and John.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Prepare the Tray Game before class.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Remember how the people in the southern kingdom of Judah were captured and exiled, or taken from their homes, to Babylon? God gave the people hope, though, when the prophet Jeremiah said God would bring them back home after 70 years.

We've been talking about some of the Jews living in Babylon during those 70 years. We learned about Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Although they were living in a foreign country with many false gods, Daniel and his friends stayed obedient to the Lord; and he was faithful to protect them—even while they faced dangers like a fiery furnace and a den of hungry lions!

Spread 10–20 small objects on a tray and cover with a towel. Be sure to include everyday objects along with 2 or 3 that may be unfamiliar to your students (e.g., kitchen gadgets; gardening, sewing, or mechanic's tools).

We're going to start today's lesson with a game. I have several objects here that I want you to look at carefully. I'll give you 20 seconds to study them. When time is up, we'll see how many objects you can remember. There may be some objects you haven't seen before, so you'll get extra points if you can describe them for me. Now get ready to think fast. Invite students to gather around the tray. Uncover the objects and start timing 20 seconds then replace the cover. Ask students to tell you which objects they remember as you list them on the board. Give the class one point for each correct item. For the objects that are unfamiliar, ask students to describe them. Give extra points for good descriptions.

What made it difficult to remember everything I showed you? Allow discussion. Unfamiliar objects. Short amount of time. Too many things. Did any of you feel confused or nervous because there were so many things to remember in just 20 seconds? Show of hands.

Sometimes when there is too much of something, like too many things to remember or too much noise, we can feel confused and overwhelmed.

In our lesson today, we're going to learn about three men from the Bible who were totally overwhelmed when God showed them visions of heaven. These men did their best to describe the awesome things they had never seen before. Let's read about what they saw when God showed his overwhelming glory to them.

Ezekiel's Vision

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn in your Bibles to Ezekiel, one of the major prophets. Ezekiel's book comes before Daniel's in the Bible, but they were living in Babylon and writing what God told them to around the same time, during the 70 years in captivity.

Slide #3

Ezekiel 1:1

Who will read Ezekiel 1:1? Choose a reader.

Ezekiel is speaking in this verse. He was a priest and a prophet of God living among other Jewish people who had been exiled from their homes in Judah.

What opened before him? The heavens.
What did Ezekiel see? Visions of God.

God allowed Ezekiel to see something very special—he saw visions of God!

Slide #4

Ezekiel 1:4

Let's read more about this vision in Ezekiel 1:4. Will someone read that for us? Assign a reader.

What things did Ezekiel see in his vision? A stormy wind, a great cloud with brightness around it, flashing fire, and gleaming metal in the midst of the fire.

Wow! This is an interesting description of the glory of God—images of brightness, fire, and shiny metal. Ezekiel wrote more about what he saw in this amazing vision, including some creatures that were really hard to describe. They looked like men, lions, oxen, and eagles—all at the same time! There were bright torches, fire, and lightning. Ezekiel described what sounded like it might be some kind of giant chariot. There were bright colors, loud noises, creatures with wings—and a loud voice from above! This sounds overwhelming, doesn't it? Ezekiel had never seen these things before, so all he could do was describe them by telling what they looked like.

Slide #5

Slide #6

Slide #7

Ezekiel 1:26–28

Then Ezekiel saw something else even more amazing. Someone read Ezekiel 1:26. Choose a reader.

What did Ezekiel see above the expanse (in the air)? A throne.
What did this throne look like in appearance? A sapphire.

A sapphire is a beautiful blue jewel.

What did Ezekiel see above the throne? A likeness with what kind of appearance? A human appearance.

Let's find out more about this human appearance. Follow along as I read Ezekiel 1:27. Read the verse.

What did this man above the throne look like? Allow discussion. Gleaming metal, fire all around, very bright.

Ezekiel went on to describe more of what he saw. Listen as I read verse 28. Read the verse.

What else did he see? What did it look like? A bow in the cloud on a rainy day. A rainbow.

What was Ezekiel trying to describe here? The glory of whom? The Lord.

What did Ezekiel do when he saw this and realized what it was? He fell on his face.

Ezekiel fell down. And then, what did he hear? The voice of one speaking. Who do you think was speaking? The Lord.

Slide #8

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. What an amazing vision! It was hard for Ezekiel to describe such an experience. Ezekiel saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and he was completely overwhelmed by God's glory and majesty. God is holy, awesome, and powerful! All Ezekiel could do was to fall on his face in worship, praise, and fear.

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

God wants us to come to him in the same way! We don't always think about how truly awesome God is. But he deserves all of our praise and honor, and we should treat him with humility and respect.

Slide #9

Slide #10

Let's start the crossword puzzle on our Class Notes. Who will read #1 about Ezekiel? Choose a reader. Prophet. Have students complete #1.

How about #2? What was God showing Ezekiel? Choose a reader. Glory. Complete #2.

Who will read #3 about Ezekiel's vision? Choose a reader. Fire. Complete #3.

Who will read #4 about Ezekiel's response? Choose a reader. Fell. Complete #4.

Isaiah's Vision

God did not show his glory like this to many people. Ezekiel was one of only three men who got to see a glimpse of it. There are two other places in the Bible where God allowed someone to see his glory in heaven. Let's look at another vision given to the prophet Isaiah about 150 years earlier.

Slide #11

Slide #12

Slide #13

Isaiah 6:1-5

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn back two books to Isaiah 6.

Ezekiel was overwhelmed and fell down when he saw God's glory. Let's take

a look at what Isaiah saw and how he reacted. Who will start by reading Isaiah 6:1–3? Choose readers.

Whom did Isaiah see sitting on the throne? The Lord.

What was filling the temple? The train of his robe.

The train is the long part of a robe that trails behind the person. Maybe you have seen a bride wearing a wedding dress that had a long, flowing train.

Look in Isaiah 6:2. What did Isaiah see above the throne? Seraphim.

Some people think that seraphim are angels. But the Bible doesn't say that specifically. The seraphim are only mentioned here in Isaiah's vision. And from what we read here, we know that they are heavenly beings that worship God in heaven.

What were the seraphim saying about God? Listen to Isaiah 6:3 again. Reread the verse. He is holy.

Refer to the Attributes of God poster. They were calling God holy! What does that mean? God is perfect; he cannot sin.

What did they say is full of God's glory? The whole earth.

We can see God's glory all around us. Which attributes of God do we see in his creation? How does God's creation show us what he is like? Allow discussion. Answers may include his omniscience (knowing everything), omnipotence (creating by the power of his word, power in the weather, ocean, mountains, universe), and love (giving us good gifts on the earth like food, water, and resources for shelter).

What else happened in Isaiah's vision as the seraphim worshipped the Lord? Who will read verse 4? Assign a reader. The foundations of the thresholds (doors) shook; the house filled with smoke.

Wow! This would have been an awesome sight! Do you think Isaiah was overwhelmed the same way as Ezekiel? Let's find out in verse 5. Read the verse.

What did Isaiah say when he saw this vision of God's glory? What were his first three words? "Woe is me!"

Slide #14

Slide #15

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Isaiah was overwhelmed! "Woe is me" is a way of saying you're very sorry for something. Isaiah knew he was a sinner—he was unclean compared to the perfect, holy God. But here he was in the presence of our awesome Creator.

Let's fill in some more Class Notes. Who will read #5 about Isaiah's vision? Choose a reader. Throne. Have students complete #5.

What attribute were the seraphim praising the Lord for? That's #6. Choose a reader. Holy. Complete #6.

Who will read Isaiah's response in #7? Choose a reader. Sinful. Complete #7.

Isaiah was sorrowful and understood how sinful he was when he saw the glory of God. And Ezekiel fell on his face when he saw God's glory. These

great prophets, who loved and obeyed the Lord, were both humbled before our holy God.

John's Vision

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's look at one more biblical account of a spectacular vision. It happened many years after Isaiah and Ezekiel. Turn to the book of Revelation—the very last book of the Bible. It was written by John, a close friend and disciple of Jesus.

Slide #16

Slide #17

Slide #18

Revelation 1:12–16

Find Revelation 1:12–16. Let's read about John's vision. Choose readers.

What John saw was a little different from the others. What did John see in verse 12? Seven golden lampstands.

And who stood with these lampstands? What did he look like? Like the son of man.

Who is the Son of Man? Allow discussion.

Jesus is the Son of Man! Jesus often called himself the Son of Man while he preached and taught during his time on earth.

But in this vision, John was seeing Jesus in heaven, so he looked very different. What was Jesus wearing in verse 13? A long robe with a golden sash around his chest.

Look at verses 14–15 again. What did John say his hair was like? White like wool or snow.

What were his eyes like? Like a flame of fire.

What about his feet? Like burnished (shining) bronze.

What did his voice sound like? Like the roar of many waters.

And what did his face look like in verse 16? Like the sun shining in full strength.

Slide #19

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. John was so afraid at this awesome sight of Jesus that he fell at his feet. Jesus assured John that he didn't need to fear. He explained that he is the first and the last, which means he is eternal. This tells us Jesus is one of the persons in the Trinity—he has always been and always will be God.

Then he said he died and is alive forevermore. What was he talking about? Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

Jesus also said he has the keys to death and hades, or hell. That means Jesus is the only way we can be free from the punishment of hell. By trusting in Jesus and turning away from our sin, we can have eternal life in heaven with God.

This was another awesome vision! John fell down in worship and fear when he saw God's glory in heaven.

Slide #20

Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #8 about who John saw in his vision? Choose a reader. Jesus. Have students complete #8. And #9, who will read that? Choose a reader. Rose. Complete #9. Who will read John's response in #10? Choose a reader. Feet. Complete #10.

Application**Slide #21**

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Ezekiel, Isaiah, and John were each given a glimpse of God's glory. Not many people have ever had that privilege. It was a truly amazing experience for all three of them to be in the presence of God's glory and holiness. They were all completely overwhelmed. We could say they were filled with awe because what they saw was truly awe-some.

How many of you have ever used the word awesome? Show of hands. What are some things we might say are "awesome"? Allow discussion.

Awesome has lost its special meaning because we use it for words like "great," "terrific," and "amazing." But did you know that awesome is a word used in the Bible to describe God? No words can possibly explain who God is, but awesome is what God used in his Word—and it is a good word to use for God. But we have overused it, haven't we?

Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John did see something awesome—they saw the power, holiness, and glory of God! Let's try to save the word awesome just to describe God. Remember that there's nothing we could buy, eat, wear, play, or see that can ever be as great as our AWESOME God who is our AWESOME Creator and our AWESOME Savior.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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