



Messengers of the Most High

Ezekiel 1:4-9, 22, 26-28, 3:14-15 I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, but each of them had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. ... Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome. ...Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. ...The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the LORD upon me. I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Abib near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days—overwhelmed.

Being someone's messenger boy or girl isn't a very glamorous assignment. It can feel more like a job for a passenger pigeon than a person. In fact, it's so low on the totem pole that I've caught my kids doing the same thing I did growing up: passing the responsibility on to another sibling for to them deliver, "Mom told me to tell you to tell brother that supper is ready." It's moments like these that I'm thankful for smart speakers to make instant house-wide announcements!

But while bearing mom's dinner invitation to brother may seem rather mundane, there are two variables that can instantly and totally transform the messenger's meager self-perspective. The first is WHOSE message are we communicating? What if it came direct from the President or a king or a queen? What if we bore a personal communication from the infinite all-glorious eternal God in heaven, who dwells in majesty unapproachable? Then no matter how simple or ordinary the message may be, it would have the dignity, weight, and authority of the one who sent it. The other variable is THE IMPORTANCE of the message itself. Sure, proclaiming, "Supper's ready!" isn't such a big deal, but what if the message is, "There's a tornado coming!" or "We won \$200 million in the lottery!"? Such an announcement has immediate impact and urgency. The portion of God's Word for our devotion today gives us a glimpse of the glorious God we serve. Next week we will begin considering the critical message he has sent us to proclaim.

In Ezekiel Chapters 1-3 God gave the prophet a vision of his glory. It reads something like a motion picture with Ezekiel's focus jumping from one detail to the next before zooming back out again. He sees four cherubim angels, each with four wings and four faces—like a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (1:10). Throughout Scripture

these mighty angels are always near God's throne and serve as his honor-guard, praising him forever and ever (cf. Isaiah 6:2-3; Revelation 4:6-8). Seated on a sapphire throne resting on the sparkling expanse above their heads Ezekiel saw a likeness of God: one like a man bright and glowing like fire and radiant as a rainbow. Now as picturesque and awesome as this vision is, keep in mind that even this depiction of God is being toned down for the prophet's own protection. For the LORD once told Moses that no sinful human being can see his face and live (cf. Ex. 33:20). After the vision was complete the Spirit set Ezekiel back down among his fellow-exiles, and there he sat for seven days speechless and overcome.

No less than Ezekiel we are called to be messengers of Christ, who bring his words to our families and friends and total strangers. We are sent out by Jesus and God the Father who sent him (cf. John 13:20). When we are tempted to downgrade our role in God's kingdom and our pride longs for a more illustrious place in his plans than messenger boy or girl, may we recall Ezekiel's vision and reevaluate our assignment in the light of God's overwhelming majesty. When the world scoffs and wonders why it should care one bit about anything we have to say, remember these words and be reassured that as agents of the Lord Most High, we have a dignity that no amount of ridicule or disregard or even death can take away.

Prayer: Lord God of angel armies, you alone are to be praised and adored. Words cannot express nor our sight behold your infinite majesty. Keep us ever-humble and uphold us with the knowledge that we go out and speak with your glory behind us. Amen.