

Ezekiel 1:3-28 • “The Glory of the Lord”

Background First 3 verses we read the who, when, where of prophecy...
July 31, 593^{BC} @ at Jewish settlement near irrigation canal in Babylon
God speaking thru Ezekiel to His people in exile

v4 “I looked and behold” — not uncommon in prophetic writing.
Ezekiel saw something from the Lord and it shook him!
What did he see? Presence of God (cf v1b).
Fire reminds us of burning bush, pillar of fire, Mt Sinai.
Even more provocative: fire and cloud (Mt Sinai AND wilderness)
Amber = molten metal = refining / purifying (cf Deut 4; Malachi 3).
Coming from the north: Babylonian army coming to purify Judah

v5-14 “Living creatures” (also Ch 10) = cherubim
Angelic beings associated with God’s holiness & glory
Also often connected with worship and praise
First appearance = Eden (keeping sinful people out of a holy place)
Also pictured in tabernacle gatekeeping God’s holiness
Presence of cherubim here implies presence of God in His holiness!

Qualities of cherubim:

- A. “Likeness of a man” – image of God? Or pinnacle of creation?
- B. Four faces: each the highest of its realm (wild, farm, air, world)
- C. Straight legs with hooves: strong / stable / able to turn.
- D. Hands like human under wings (unity: always touching neighbor)
- E. Move straight in any direction (four creatures moving as one)
- F. 2 wings @ platform / two wings @ neighbor (stability & unity)
(don’t need add’l wings cf Isaiah – humility – beneath throne)
- G. Following Spirit of God (God directing action)
- H. Bronze / coals / torch = radiant = presence of God (Ex 34; Gen 15)
General idea is God’s glory within cube framed by living creatures.
- I. Moving like lightning – committed to obeying immediately

Taken together: angelic, animalistic, and human elements created by God and serving God in unity, in humility, immediately.

God revealing Himself to be present, powerful, and praiseworthy!

- v15-21 More than living creatures; wheels! (one per cherub)
 Seem to be connecting cherubs to the ground?
 Made of beryl (topaz?) – all the same color.
 Not just 4 wheels; wheels in wheels – casters? Move all directions!
 More than functional; awesome (fearsome)
 Full of eyes: God’s omniscience (sees all / knows all)
 Are the wheels alive? Hard to say...
 Spirit of God directs the cherubim who direct the wheels
- v22-25 What’s above the cherubim and wheels?
 Firmament = dome (evokes idea of the heavens?)
 Cherubim carrying platform that from bottom looks like crystal (ice)
 Even from bottom looks awesome (cf angels / God) – evokes awe.
 Cherubs wings supporting platform.
 Eagles faces looking inward; able to coordinate.
 Sound: great waters; voice of God, noise of army (cf Rev 1:15)
- v26-28 On top of platform is throne (chariot because mobile?)
 “In appearance” – so majestic Ezekiel struggles to describe
 Ps 18:10 @ “God rode upon a cherub and flew...”
 More amber: holiness (purifying)
 Rainbow: universality (God of all lands / peoples); promise-keeping?
- Application Why is God appearing to Ezekiel in this place at this time?
 Even before we get to substance of message, we see three things:
Greatness of God (God greater than Judah’s problems)
Holiness of God (God purifying not destroying)
Presence of God (God is close, even in exile)
- For us tonight, the same three things are true!