

## EZEKEIL 1:1-28 – “BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF THE LORD”

### OBSERVATION

Monday 7:30pm, H 106 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by doughnut/vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell # 714 425 9221; email – [ptwente@gmail.com](mailto:ptwente@gmail.com) For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column.

*Eze 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.*

*Eze 1:2 On the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity,*

*Eze 1:3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.*

*Eze 1:4 Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.*  
*Eze 1:5 Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.*

*Eze 1:6 Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings.*

*Eze 1:7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze.*

*Eze 1:8 The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings.*

*Eze 1:9 Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.*

### INTERPRETATION

30<sup>th</sup> year is probably Ezekiel's age. (*Num. 4:1-3*) Ezekiel uses his personal pronoun “I”. River Chebar - A branch (canal) of the Euphrates flowing southwest from Babylon. “Heavens were opened” – as with all true prophets of Israel, the visitation of God was at His incentive, calling certain people to certain responsibilities. (*Jer. 1: 1-9*)

The “fifth” day of the fourth month, his 30<sup>th</sup> year was probably 597 BC when Jehoiachin was deported to Babylon (2 *Kgs. 24*.) The fifth year of captivity as 593BC, is arrived at by using the Babylonian calendar, which begins Mar. 1.

The “word of the LORD” is an introductory phrase used 50 times in the Book by Ezekiel. It always introduces a divine message and sometimes a new section. The name Ezekiel means “to seize” or “hold fast”, coupled with “God”, so Ezekiel's name seems to indicate that he was a man “seized” by God. (*Ez. 3:8*) also indicates another meaning – the one whom God has strengthened.

Whirlwind....great cloud....raging fire...*Ex. 19:16-20; Ps. 18:7-15; Mic. 1:2-4; Heb. 12:29* “Amber” – glowing metal, v. 27.

“Living creatures” (*Gen. 3:24; Ex. 26:1, 25:18-21; Rev. 4:6-9, 5:6-14, 6:1-11, 14:3, 15:7, 19:4*); are related to the cherubim in Chapter 10 – celestial beings associated with God's holiness and glory and sometime poetically with storm winds upon which God travels (*Ps. 18:10*)

“Four living creatures” as highly symbolic representation of deity, or as of angelic beings who serve n God's presence. God isn't revealed until (v. 26), so they may well be the latter. Stunning, dazzling attendants to God's majesty!

“four faces” (“man” – similar in likeness of God; “lion” - sovereign in facing the enemy; “ox” – strong in serving; “eagle” – swift in caring out God's will) – This image may suggest complete awareness with nothing “behind” or “beside” these creatures. – (vs. 8, 10). “four wings” contrasted to the six wings of the seraphim (*Is. 6:2*). Wings are further described in vs. 9, 11.

Legs.....feet: Imagery portrays strength and beauty.

The “humanlike” representation includes hand and presumably arms. “did not turn” – seems to follow from the four faces in v. 6.

### APPLICATION

It's important to understand the context – where, when, and why – as we read and meditate on any part of God's Word.

v. 3 – This prophecy was a revelation from God Himself! – *“the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel” – (50X in the Book)*

It was a realization of God's presence! – *“the hand of the LORD was upon him there.” - (Ex. 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1)*

We need to heed the writings of Ezekiel as here we are told they came expressly from the hand of the LORD!

v. 4 *“like the color of amber”* \_The words, “like” or “likeness” are found 25 times – referring the symbols of the realities behind them. Such symbolism also often appears in the Book of Revelations. The cloud of fire that brought Ezekiel's attention to the four living creatures.

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***Eze 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.***

***Eze 1:11 Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies.***

***Eze 1:12 And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.***

***Eze 1:13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning.***

***Eze 1:14 And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.***

***Eze 1:15 Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces.***

***Eze 1:16 The appearance of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel.***

***Eze 1:17 When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went.***

***Eze 1:18 As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims were full of eyes, all around the four of them.***

***Eze 1:19 When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.***

### INTERPRETATION

“man...lion...ox...eagle” Composite figures in the classic combinations have been found in Mesopotamian and Egyptian iconography. The idealized strength of each figure were presumed to reside in the living creatures as described. One pair of wings was stretched upwards, as in reverence; the other pair was used to cover the body as if in reverence submission. Compare (*Is. 6:2*)

“Coals of fire” – “like burning coals of fire” – “appearance of torches” (*Rev. 4:5*) – “as the appearance of a flash of lightning” - “fire....lightning” – Phenomena regularly attending descriptions of the appearances of God to His people (*v. 4; Ex. 19:16-20*)

“beryl” – this may be chrysolite, a yellow or gold colored stone.

“wheel in the middle of a wheel” (mobility) – The composite wheels were able to go in any direction without pivoting.

“rims...full of eyes” (message-the omniscience of God!) – the wheels were indeed beautiful and seem to indicate intelligence. “awesome” - the word means “compelling wonder”. Ezekiel stresses the association of the wheels with the living creatures, as well as their ability to travel wherever they wished. The mysterious phrase, “the spirit....in the wheels emphasizes the significance of the wheels. It seems the wheels represented the flexibility and mobility of the living creatures. A pictorial representation of God’s omnipresence.

### APPLICATION

***v.11-12*** – Their wings – “*four wings*” – “*hands of a man under their wings on their four sides*” – *stretched upward*” – “*joined one to another*”

It appears that the “*wings*” are referring to their flight always flying where the Spirit wanted them to go.

***vs. 13-14*** – The Coals of Fire – “*like burning coals of fire*” – “*appearance of torches*” (*Rev. 4:5*) – “*and out of the fire went lighting*”

***Vs. 15-21*** - The picture of wheels

***v. 16-*** Their mobility – “*wheel in the middle of a wheel*” – Can easily move in any direction! Reminds us of the omnipresence of God!

***v. 18*** – Their message – “*full of eyes*” - they could see what was taking place. It reminds us of the omniscience of God!

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*Eze 1:20 Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.*

*Eze 1:21 When those went, these went; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.*

*Eze 1:22 The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures was like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads.*

*Eze 1:23 And under the firmament their wings spread out straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body.*

*Eze 1:24 When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings.*

*Eze 1:25 A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings.*

*Eze 1:26 And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Eze 1:27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.*

*Eze 1:28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.*

### INTERPRETATION

The mysterious phrase, “the spirit....in the wheels emphasizes the significance of the wheels. It seems the wheels represented the flexibility and mobility of the living creatures. A pictorial representation of God’s omnipresence.. “firmament” – (*Gen. 1:6*) - the same word meaning an expanse or platform. “Sea of glass, like crystal” (*Rev. 4:6*)

“Almighty” – The divine name *Shaddai*, most likely based on a word meaning “mountain” to suggest God’s omnipotence and majesty (*Gen 17:1; Ez. 10:5*) This voice connects with the man of v.26. (*Gen. 1:3*) – The voice of God summons light from the darkness. Here above the din of angels’ wings there is a voice. (*John 1:1*) reveals the apostle’s term for the Savior: the Word! Isaiah (*Is. 6:1*) describes the elevation of the Lord’s throne. Ezekiel focuses on its beauty! “Sapphire” a precious stone, deep blue with golden specks. (*Rev. 21:19*) The enthroned figure with “the appearance of a man” is the culmination of this vision.

“Fire” burning like metal (amber) and rainbow-like “brightness” surrounded the One on the throne (v. 26, *Ps. 89:33-37; Rev. 4:3*). “the likeness of the glory of the Lord” – Human likeness here may reflect the personal nature of God’s revelation of Himself. Also, it points forward to the plan of a more personal revelation of God coming as the Messiah (*John 1:1-18*). The “glory” indicates the wonder, majesty, and worthiness of the living God. Amid the wheel, the creatures, the colors, and the dazzling light was a figure who appeared like a man (v.26). Compare the vision of Daniel who saw One “like the Son of Man” (*Dan. 7:13*) “I fell on my face” – Ezekiel’s response was to fall down in worship and submission. All believers should recognize God’s great glory and fall down in humble submission before Him (*Phil. 2:10-11*)

### APPLICATION

vs. 20-21 – Their motivation – “*Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, ....., for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.*”

vs. 22-25 – The proclamation of voices; their origin was the “*likeness of the firmament*”; the power of the voices was like “*the noise of the great waters, the voice of the Almighty*”;

vs. 26-28 – The person who appeared as a man. The throne seems to emphasize the sovereignty of God. The fire emphasized the judgment of God. The rainbow emphasized the faithfulness of God.

### CONCLUSION/SUMMARY:

The appearance was the “*likeness of the glory of the LORD*”

Ezekiel fell on His face, in humility and worship! (*Lev. 9:24*)

It seems clear that the One being pictured is our LORD JESUS CHRIST in a pre-incarnate appearance.