

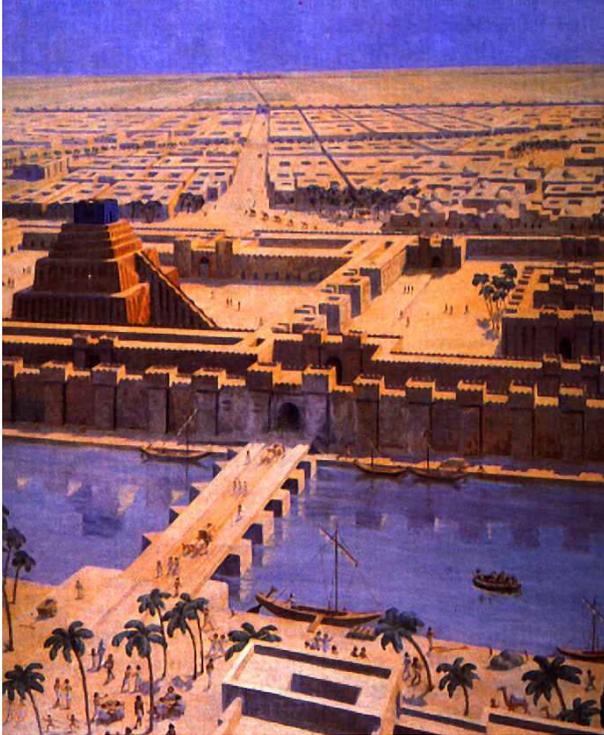


Ezekiel & The End Times



2. Ezekiel Chapter 1

Introduction Chapter 1



In the days of Ezekiel, Israel had turned away from God. In 605 B.C., Babylon defeated Judah¹, putting the nation under their control. Daniel along with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego had been taken captive to Babylon (Daniel 1-3), when Nebuchadnezzar tried to secure the Judah's submission to Babylon. Judah refused to submit to Babylonian authority, hoping to forge an alliance with Egypt they rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar attacked the city again, this time he took more hostages including the new king Jehoiachin captive along with Ezekiel. Nebuchadnezzar installed a new king, Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle.

The captives were settled in Babylon along the Chebar River, a branch from the Euphrates. Ezekiel was one of the captives taken to Babylon. He along with Jeremiah witnessed spiritual wickedness of the land and people. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah were priests; Jeremiah had a ministry to the Jews in Judah, while Ezekiel testified to the captives of Babylon. Both the captives in Babylon and the Jews in Judah did not take God's warnings seriously, they did not understand the seriousness of their sin and God's approaching judgment.

In Ezekiel chapters one and two, the *Glory of the Lord* commissions Ezekiel to testify against his people and the nations regarding the impending judgment. The Glory of the Lord who appeared to Moses, and established the Tabernacle and the Temple, now proclaims destruction on the Temple because of the sins of the nation.

Date	Verse	Event	Age of Ezekiel
605 B.C.	Jeremiah 25:1-7	First assault on Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon receives the submission of Jerusalem, Daniel and others are taken hostage to the land of Babylon.	17-years old
March 16 th 598 B.C.	2 Kings 24:10-12	Second assault on Jerusalem after they rebel against Babylonian authority. Ezekiel is taken captive to Babylon along with Jehoiachin King of Judah, Ezekiel is settled along the Chebar River in Babylon.	25-years old
July 31 st , 593 B.C.	Ezekiel 1:1	Ezekiel a captive 5-years, is called by God to testify against Israel's apostasy.	30-years old
August 17 th 586 B.C.	Jeremiah 52:12-16	The third assault on Jerusalem, the city along with the Temple are destroyed by Babylon fulfilling the words of Ezekiel	38-years old

¹ Israel was divided into two kingdoms following the reign of Solomon. A northern kingdom known as Israel and a southern kingdom known as Judah. Israel was taken captive by Assyria in 722 B.C., Babylon would later defeat Assyria to become the dominate nation in the East.

Ezekiel Called

Ezekiel 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.

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

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. **Ezekiel 1: 1-3**

Thirtieth year: Ezekiel is in his 30th year, a captive in the land of Babylon. At the age of 30, Ezekiel would officially be a priest according to Numbers 4:3. A priest was to minister from the age of 30 to 50, about the time of Ezekiel's ministry.

Fourth month...fifth day: This is the start date of his ministry; the date is July 31st, 593 B.C., the **fifth year** of Jehoiachin's captivity.

Captives: These are Ezekiel fellow captives, who are prisoners/hostages of Babylon. Prior to these captives, Babylon had taken Daniel captive in 605 B.C., The Assyrian Kingdom, defeated by Babylon, had taken the 10-northern tribes captive to Assyria. These captives would later have been part of the Judean captivity, since Babylon defeated Assyria in 605 B.C. at the battle of Carchemish.

River Chebar: The exact location is not certain, some have speculated it is the same location where the 10-tribes were taken, by Assyria in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17:6), about 200-miles north of Babylon. Others have identified the Chebar as the Grand Canal in Babylon which branched off from the Euphrates River and flowed east of the city. The settled Jews could have been part of a forced Babylonian work detail, digging the canal which would have been labor intensive work.

Heavens were opened: Ezekiel revelation was supernatural as he saw Heaven opened; he was able to see the throne of God along with Cherubim. John in Revelation (Rev. Chapters 4 & 5) also witnessed events at God's throne in Heaven.

Visions of God: Ezekiel saw the very presence of God, who revealed to him plans for the His people and how the Temple, the house of God was involved in God's plans.

Jehoiachin's Captivity: Jehoiachin was 18-years old when he became king; he only reigned for 3-months before the Babylonians captured the city. Over 10,000 were taken from Jerusalem to Babylon, the flower of Judah was removed from the land, Ezekiel was amongst this group. (2 Kings 24:10-14)

Word of the Lord: This phrase is used fifty-nine times in the book of Ezekiel and is the direct communication of God. The Word proceeds from God directly to Ezekiel; Ezekiel is to proclaim the message to the people.

Ezekiel the priest: Ezekiel was of the tribe of Levi, from the family of Aaron, all priests were Levites but not all Levites were priests. Priests were descended from the family Aaron

Hand of the Lord: The force of the Lord as in the power in the hand to pull and push. Ezekiel was being moved by the power of God, to testify and witnesses the message to the people of Israel. This term is used 7-times signifying the force of Lord upon the priest.



The Cherubim

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.

5 Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.

6 Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings.

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.

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

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

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.

11 Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one

touched one another, and two covered their bodies.

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

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.

14 And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning. **Ezekiel 1:4-14**

Ezekiel like Moses, Abraham, Isaiah, Zechariah, Paul and John had visions of God. God choose to reveal Himself to His creation through the eyes of His prophets. Each vision and description unveils reveals more details upon the one who created the universe, the source of matter and all reality. The first part of Ezekiel's vision of God is his description of the Cherubim(The living creatures), which are in the presence of God, the *Glory of the Lord*.

(Vs. 4) Ezekiel sees a storm cloud gathering to the North, a whirlwind like a tornado of fire, radiating out from the midst of the cloud. He describes fire emanating from the midst of the cloud as having the

Color of amber: The Hebrew word is *hasmal* and is only used here and in verse 27. The word refers to glow of metal, like brass.

(Vs. 5) Four living creatures: Ezekiel begins to describe these creatures, which are later called Cherubim in chapter 10. The Hebrew word for creatures is *חַי* *Chay*, which means *living, alive* and can be translated as *living being, creature* or *beast*. The description of these beings parallels the description in Revelation 4 and 5 and Isaiah's description of the Serephim (Isaiah 6:6).



They had the likeness of a man: Ezekiel is describing what he sees, and their form was human or like man. Angels and God Himself is described in human form. The *Arc of the Covenant* is a model of the

throne of God; the carved Angels are cherubs covering the throne.

17 "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. 18 "And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 "Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. 20 "And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat **Exodus 25:17-20**

Solomon's Temple also included carved Cherubim in the Temple, the Holy of Holies where the Arc was placed, carved were also to decorate the walls of the temple (I Kings 6:27,28,32).

Here Ezekiel is witnessing what the models are meant to convey. The Tabernacle and Temple were models of the greater reality of Heaven. Daniel describes angels in human form; these angels differed from the other angels we read about, only the Cherubim and the Seraphim angles are described as having wings in scripture.

15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." **Daniel 8:15-16**

(Vs. 6) Each one had four faces: The description of the Heavenly beings is one of the hardest images for the reader to grasp since, nothing like it really exists that we know of. Ezekiel describes them as having the appearance of man, but with four faces. They **had four wings**, two wings were connected to the other Cherubs and two wings were used to cover themselves in the presence of the Glory of the Lord.

(Vs. 7-8) Their legs: Ezekiel describes the legs as straight meaning they were standing, their feet were like polished (burnished) bronze with hooves (calf's feet).

The hands: Each of the four Cherubs had human arms along with two sets of wings.



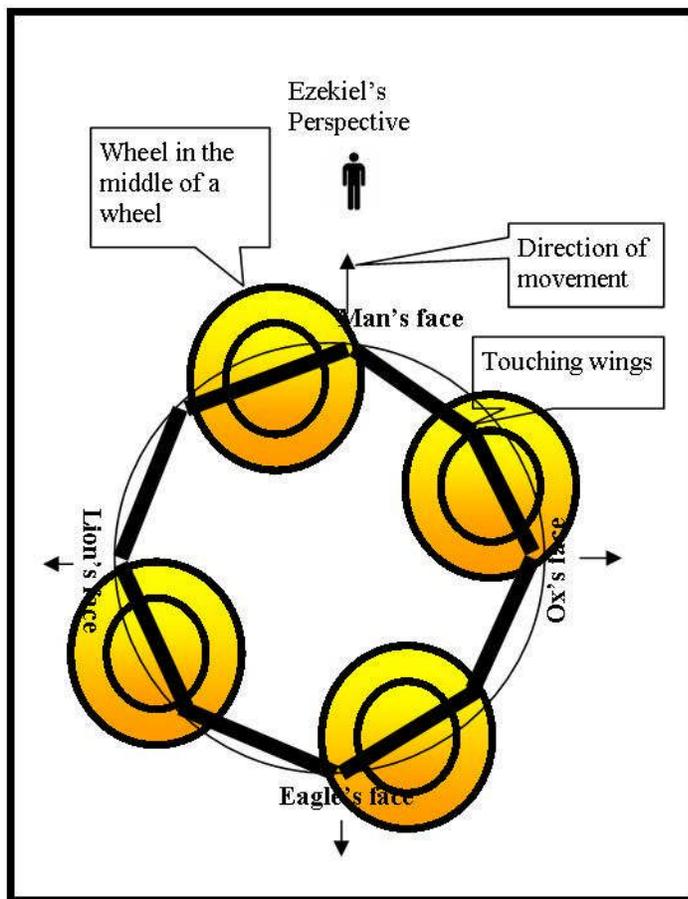
(Vs.9) Did not turn: With their wings touching and working together as one, the creatures did not turn but whatever direction they were moving Cherub in lead became the lead angel looking forward.

(Vs. 10-12) Likeness of their faces: Ezekiel like John in Revelation describes the appearance of the Cherubs around the throne of God. Each had 4 faces, a man, lion, ox and eagle. The faces are positioned with face of the man in the front, the lion to the right, the ox to the left and the eagle at the back. We must remember Ezekiel is describing what he sees, just like John in revelation described what he saw. Another way of looking at the positions could be from Ezekiel's position the face of the man was first, then to the right of the man's face was the lion, the ox was to the left and the eagle behind. So if you looked at it from another vantage point you would see the face of the eagle, then the lion,

John describes the scene in heaven:

6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. Revelation 4:6-7



John describes them as four beings, each with one face as opposed to four faces. Again John is describing it as he sees, his perspective in Heaven could have been different than that of Ezekiel.

Wings stretched upward: The two wings which touched the other wings were stretched upward, touching the other wings.

Each...straight forward: The four cherubs moved in unison, each would be the face of the direction which they move; they did not need to turn. They went in the direction the **spirit** wanted. The spirit here could be the Holy Spirit, although angels are also called spirits.

(Vs. 13) Like burning coals: Ezekiel saw the glow of fire, going back forth between the four cherubs. At this point God's wrath was against Judah for their idolatry and wickedness, Ezekiel relayed the message of God's impending judgment against the nation. The fire is an indicator of God's coming wrath.

Flash of lightning: The movement of these beings was like a flash lighting.

The Four Wheels

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



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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.
Ezekiel 1:15-21

Now Ezekiel describes the movement of the Cherubim, which is probably one of the hardest parts of the Bible to understand or picture. He describes a wheel besides each being. They are described as the color of beryl, in the Hebrew **תרשיש** *Tarshiysh*, a yellow colored stone, yellow jasper. Each wheel resembled the other, they had the **same likeness**, and the rim of the wheel was **full of eyes**. The wheel described by Ezekiel was actually **a wheel in the middle of a wheel**. Some have taken it to mean a wheel intersecting a wheel as opposed to an inner wheel with an outer wheel. The wheels are described as having the **spirit of the living creatures**, the Cherubs. The creatures are created beings, and like humanity they have a living spirit, essence of their life. Ezekiel is describing the body of these creatures, in the same way our body is a description of our being, yet in each of us is a spirit. Therefore, wherever the beings went the wheels went, whether up or down because their spirit was inside the wheel.

The expanse

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.
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.
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. **Ezekiel 1:22-24**

Ezekiel now moves beyond the creatures and describes the covering over them. In Hebrew the word is **רקיע** *Raqiya*, meaning an expanse or solid base. He describes this expanse as **awesome crystal**, or fearful ice. Like crystal as in *ice crystal*, a translucent, ice like appearance was the covering over the four living creatures. Their wings connected together under the firmament point to each other and up, under the crystal like firmament.
the noise: Ezekiel uses two terms to describe the sound they make when their wings move. Noise of **many waters**, and the **noise of an army**. Ezekiel is describing what he sees and hears, so he reader will understand the awesome presence of God. The Cherubim are the angels which accompany God, now Ezekiel describes his vision of God, the *Glory of the Lord*.

The Glory of the Lord

25 A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings.
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.
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.
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. **Ezekiel 1:25-28**

Now Ezekiel describes what see he sees and hears above the Cherubim. He first describes a voice over the firmament. The voice is of Almighty God, the Glory of the Lord who is seated on His throne. When the voice was heard the Cherubim in submission let down their wings when they stopped.
Likeness of a throne: When he heard the voice, the living beings lower their wings, revealing the likeness of a throne. The throne is described in appearance as **sapphire stone** or **פפיר** *Cappiyr* in the Hebrew, described as *lapis lazuli*, a bright blue semi-precious stone.
Likeness...appearance of a man: Here Ezekiel is describing his vision of the Glory of the Lord, who will interact with Ezekiel throughout the prophecy. Notice Ezekiel describes God in human terms; seated on his throne, God has the likeness of man. Moses also described His vision of God

9 Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,
10 and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. **Exodus 24:9-10**

18 And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

19 Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

21 And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.

22 "So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

23 "Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen." **Exodus 33:18-22**

From the beginning in Genesis, God is described in human terms. Humanity is made in the image of God; Genesis tells us God walked in the cool of the garden Genesis 3:8. God's plan of redemption restores humanity relationship with God. The Glory of the Lord is the presence of God, who appeared to Adam and Eve in the Garden, He appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, before Sodom and Gomorrah was judged (Genesis 18). The Lord appeared to Moses and the children of Israel, he is called the Glory of the Lord in Exodus. The same Glory of the Lord who appeared to Moses and commissioned the Tabernacle, was

now commissioning Ezekiel to be His messenger of judgment on Temple, because of the sins of the people.



16 Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

17 The sight of the **glory of the Lord** was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. **Exodus 24:16-17**

From the appearance of His waist and upward: Like Moses, Ezekiel could not see the face of the God, he described his appearance as fire, with the glow of amber or melting brass.

The Glory of the Lord: The term "Glory of the Lord" is used through out the book of Ezekiel for the person of God who is manifested. In chapter one Ezekiel describes what he sees. He sees

God appear in great glory in human form seated on His throne in the midst of the Cherubim.

The Glory of the Lord

