

EZEKIEL

THE PROPHET

PART TWO :

VISIONS OF THE LORD GOD

Merkabah: The Chariot

Ezekiel (and probably Daniel also) were taken in a first wave of prisoners, to Babylon. Jeremiah said that the LORD allowed this “FOR THEIR OWN GOOD.”

Jeremiah 24:5-6 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: `Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans.

`For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up.” (NKJ)

NOTE: When the unthinkable happens, could you have the faith to believe that the LORD has your best interests at heart.

We know from ancient documents, that a colony of Jewish captives were settled near Nippur, on the Chebar canal. And Ezekiel was standing by this canal when he received a vision from God.

The vision is recorded in Ezekiel, Chapter 1:1-:14.
The same glorious Being returns in Chapter 8:2-4,
and this vision continues through Chapter 11:34.

The description of the vision in Chapter 1, is somewhat garbled.
The reason for this is most likely, the prophet’s extreme emotional state.
Later in Chapter 10 and 11, the description becomes more refined.
By this time, Ezekiel understands that the “creatures” of chapter 1, are cherubim.

Now - do I believe that cherubim have four faces, four (or six wings) and feet like cattle.
Truth is - I don’t know. The message - from Yahweh to His prophet, may be given in symbols - symbols which the prophet and his audience would understand. The faces of the cherubim may tell us more about their role, than their actual appearance.

We see and understand symbols every day. We see horns depicted on a blue and gold helmet, and we think Rams. We see logos everywhere - for companies, teams - even charities and ministries. The Red Cross, the pink ribbon for the fight against breast cancer. Symbols are a part of our everyday lives.

SO - LET'S READ THROUGH THIS VISION OF THE MOVING THRONE .

NIV Ezekiel 1:1 In my thirtieth year, (30 was the minimum age for entry into the priesthood) in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

2 On the fifth of the month--it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin--

3 the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the LORD was on him.

4 I looked, and I saw **a windstorm coming out of the north (Babylon is North of Jerusalem)**--an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal,

5 and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human,
6 but each of them had four faces and four wings.

7 Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze.

8 Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings,

9 and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.

(Eze 1:1-9 NIV)

10 Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.

11 Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body.

NOTE: This is the posture of the wings of the two cherubim standing at either end of the Ark of the Covenant, according to more recent discoveries. The angels have been depicted for many years as kneeling ON the cover of the Ark, but have recently been described as standing - one at each end.

NOTE: The four faces - human being, lion, ox and eagle, are similar to those described by John the Revelator (Revelation 4:6-8). In John's vision there were also four "living creatures" but each one had only one face - not four faces. Now Ezekiel does say that the creatures were moving around rapidly - so perhaps he only thought that he saw four faces on each one. In John's vision each one had six wings. In Ezekiel's vision they had four. The animal faces were the same - man, lion, ox and eagle.

These shapes were common in ancient middle eastern art - especially royal art.

www.oracion.com/~mm9n/articles/cherub/index.htm

These shapes had significance for Israel.

<http://www.ensignmessage.com/archives/standards.html>

East Side	Judah: Ensign - a lion	LION
North side	Dan: Ensign - an eagle	EAGLE
South side	Reuben: Ensign - a man Prophecy: weak as water	MAN
West Side	Ephriam: Ensign - ox Prophecy:	OX

EAGLE

ASHER – DAN – NEPHTHALI

BENJAMIN –
OX - EPHRIAM –
MANESSEH--

--ISSACHER
– JUDAH - **LION**
– ZEBULUN

GAD – REUBEN – SIMEON

MAN

Looking at the Sanctuary from the South - Reuben would be facing you - face of a MAN.
To your right would be Judah - face of a LION
To your left would be Ephriam - face of an OX
Facing away from your would be Dan - face of an EAGLE.

Just as Ezekiel describes in his vision.

THE MESSAGE: I AM THE GOD WHO WATCHES OVER ISRAEL,
AND I HAVE ANGELS WHO SERVE ME AND THEREFORE - YOU.

SECOND MESSAGE:

The four faces are a composite description of Messiah:
Strength of a King - LION
Swift as an EAGLE - one having wider vision
Patient as an OX - a burden bearer and animal of sacrifice
Who would one day come as a MAN.

CONTINUING IN EZEKIEL CHAPTER ONE

12 Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went.

13 The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it.

14 The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

15 As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces.

16 This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like topaz, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. (Eze 1:10-16 NIV)

17 As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not change direction as the creatures went.

18 Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around.

NOTE: From commentaries I read - the “eyes” refer to precious or semi precious stones that had the appearance of shining eyes.

19 When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose.

20 Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

21 When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

22 Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked something like a vault, sparkling like crystal, (of blue sapphire) and awesome.

23 Under the vault their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. (Eze 1:17-23 NIV)

24 When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.

25 Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings.

26 Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli (sapphire), and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man.

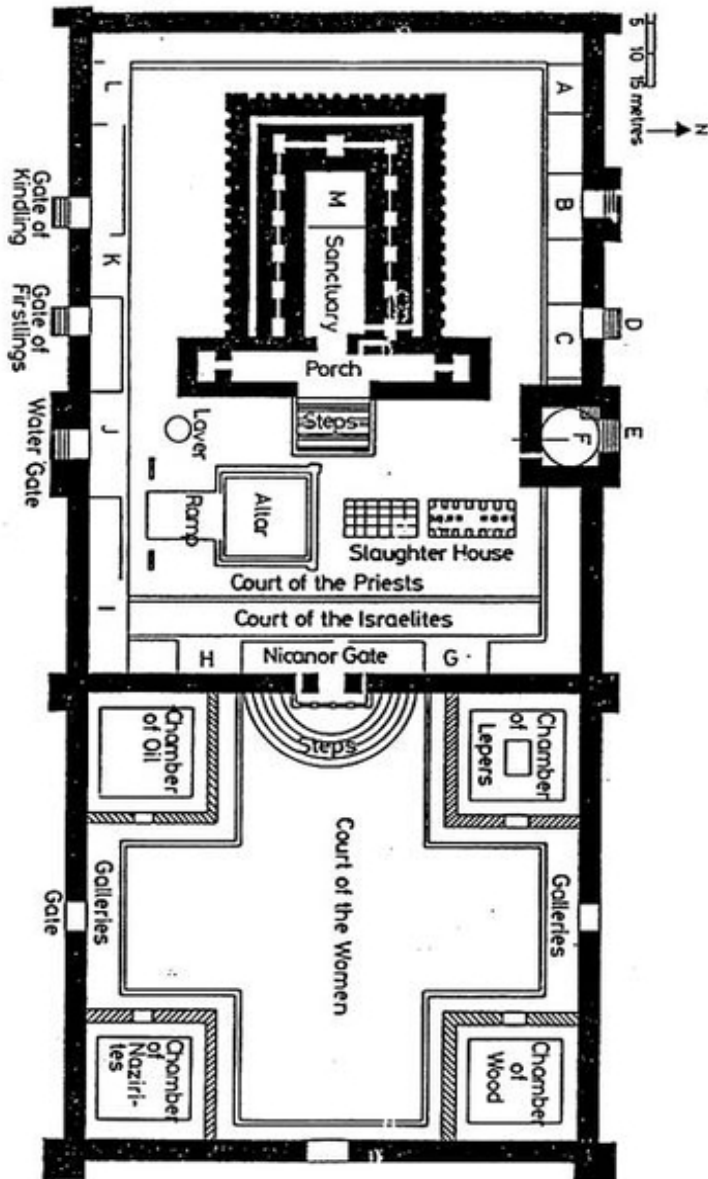
NOTE: Exodus 24:10 Moses saw the God of Israel. “Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky.” (NIV)

27 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.

28 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. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking. (NIV)

LETS COMPARE EZEKIEL 8:2-4

Ezekiel 8:2 I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. 3 He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood. 4 And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel, as in the vision I had seen in the plain. (Eze 8:2 NIV)



AND EZEKIEL CHAPTER 10:
continuation of the vision which began in chapter 8.

NIV Ezekiel 10:1 I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of lapis lazuli above the vault that was over the heads of the cherubim.

2 The LORD said to the man clothed in linen, "Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city." And as I watched, he went in.

3 Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and a cloud filled the inner court.

4 Then the glory of the LORD rose from above the cherubim and moved to the threshold of the temple. The cloud filled the temple, and the court was full of the radiance of the glory of the LORD.

5 The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far away as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.

6 When the LORD commanded the man in linen, "Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim," the man went in and stood beside a wheel.

7 Then one of the cherubim reached out his hand to the fire that was among them. He took up some of it and put it into the hands of the man in linen, who took it and went out.

8 (Under the wings of the cherubim could be seen what looked like human hands.)

9 I looked, and I saw beside the cherubim four wheels, one beside each of the cherubim; the wheels sparkled like topaz.

10 As for their appearance, the four of them looked alike; each was like a wheel intersecting a wheel.

11 As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the cherubim faced; the wheels did not turn about as the cherubim went. The cherubim went in whatever direction the head faced, without turning as they went.

12 Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands and their wings, were completely full of eyes, as were their four wheels.

13 I heard the wheels being called "the whirling wheels."

14 Each of the cherubim had four faces: One face was that of a cherub, the second the face of a human being, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

15 Then the cherubim rose upward. These were the living creatures I had seen by the Kebar River.

16 When the cherubim moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels did not leave their side.

17 When the cherubim stood still, they also stood still; and when the cherubim rose, they rose with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in them.

18 **Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple** and stopped above the cherubim.

19 While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them. They **stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house**, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

20 These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar River, and I realized that they were cherubim.

21 Each had four faces and four wings, and under their wings was what looked like human hands.

22 Their faces had the same appearance as those I had seen by the Kebar River. Each one went straight ahead. (NIV)

WHERE DID THE SPIRIT GO FROM THE LORD'S HOUSE?

EZEKIEL 11:23 "And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city." (The Mt of Olives) And in verse 24 the Spirit returns Ezekiel to Babylon.

WHEN WILL HE RETURN TO HIS HOUSE?

MESSAGE: THE LORD'S THRONE IS MOVABLE - AND HE GOES WITH HIS PEOPLE.
Like the pillar of cloud and fire which lead them through the wilderness.

Does the LORD have to ride on a chariot - move His throne from place to place, in order to be WITH His people - NO! He is omnipresent - as spirit. But that is the message He would give through His prophet Ezekiel. I believe that God our Father, and Christ His Son took form - that created beings, with eyes and ears and whatever senses angels possess may better relate to them.

EZEKIEL 40:1-2 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, **at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month**, (this is Day of Atonement!) in the fourteenth year after the fall of the city-- on that very day the hand of the LORD was on me and he took me there.

2 In visions of God he took me to the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, on whose south side were some buildings that looked like a city.

3 He took me there, and I saw a man whose appearance was like bronze; he was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand. (NIV)

This is the vision of the NEW TEMPLE, and the NEW CITY

EZEKIEL 43:1-7 NIV Ezekiel 43:1 Then the man brought me to the gate facing east,

2 and I saw **the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east**. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory.

3 **The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River**, and I fell facedown.

4 **The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the gate facing east.**

5 Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

6 While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple.

7 He said: "**Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever.**" (Eze 43:1-7 NIV)

EZEKIEL 44:1-4

NIV Ezekiel 44:1 Then the man brought me **back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, the one facing east**, and it was shut.

2 The LORD said to me, "This gate is to remain shut. It must not be opened; no one may enter through it. It is to remain shut because the LORD, **the God of Israel, has entered through it.**"

3 The prince himself is the only one who may sit inside the gateway to eat in the presence of the LORD. He is to enter by way of the portico of the gateway and go out the same way."

4 Then the man brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple. I looked and saw **the glory of the LORD filling the temple of the LORD**, and I fell face down. (Eze 44:1-4 NIV)

Today I want to ask the question - Who was this glorious being?

I'm going to share two different studies with you.

The first is "The Angel of Revelation Chapter Ten."

The second is called "The Mediator" and is already loaded at the web site.

BEFORE WE GO TO THOSE STUDIES:

This week we have considered - "Who?"

Next week we will consider - "Why?" Why did the LORD who had made so many promises of blessing, and protection, allow His people to be conquered and torn from their land.

Was this part of HIS plan?