

Ezekiel Chapter 1

Ezekiel 1:1 "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth [month], in the fifth [day] of the month, as I [was] among the captives by the river of Chebar, [that] the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God."

Ezekiel, son of Buzi, a priest, was carried into captivity by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar in the second deportation from Jerusalem with Judah's king Jehoiachin (597 B.C.; see 2 Kings:11-16), and settled by the River Chebar, a great canal southeast of Babylon.

He began his prophetic ministry at the age of thirty (see Numbers 4:3), in the fifth year of his captivity (in 592 B.C.).

Two major visions appear in the first eleven chapters, the first in Babylon (chapters 1-3), and the second a visionary spiritual revelation of what was happening in Jerusalem (chapters 8-11).

“Thirtieth Year”:

Most likely this was Ezekiel’s age since the date relative to the king’s reign (is given in 1:2).

Thirty was the age when a priest began his priestly duties.

“River of Chebar”.

A major canal off of the Euphrates River south of Babylon.

“Visions of God”:

This scene has similarities to the visions of God’s throne (in Rev. 4 verse 5), where the emphasis is also on a glimpse of that throne just before judgment is released (in Rev. 6-19).

The setting is in captivity.

It is strange to begin the book with the word "now".

I believe that he is saying, there was a separation of his life up until this time.

Now, he has accepted the role God intended for him all along.

"The heavens were opened" is an expression stating that this was not Ezekiel's doing. This was a miraculous act of God.

In the following Scripture, we see the heavens opened at the baptism of Jesus.

Matthew 3:16 "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:"

One other time, that is mentioned specifically, is at the stoning of Stephen.

Acts 7:56 "And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

We can easily see from these Scriptures; this type of thing seldom happens.

When they do happen, God is revealing something to man.

The visions of God were not night dreams, but something that happened while he was fully awake.

These visions were to reveal something from God to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 1:2 "In the fifth [day] of the month, which [was] the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,"

"Fifth Year":

This is 593 B.C.

The King, Ezekiel and 10,000 others had been deported to Babylon in 597 B.C.

Ezekiel is the age of 25.

We will notice in Ezekiel that he did not recognize Zedekiah's reign.

Zedekiah had been put into power by Nebuchadnezzar, and Ezekiel did not consider him, truly king.

There had been many false prophets who said that Judah would not stay in captivity.

They prophesied the fall of Babylon within 2 years.

The true prophets, like Ezekiel and Jeremiah, were prophesying no such thing.

Ezekiel 1:3 "The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him."

"Word of the LORD...hand of the LORD".

As God prepared Isaiah and Jeremiah, so the LORD prepares Ezekiel to receive revelation, and strengthens him for his high and arduous task to speak as His Prophet.

"Ezekiel the priest" (as noted in this verse).

The word "expressly" shows us, that even if others were there, they did not hear the word God sent to Ezekiel.

This Scripture shows us that Ezekiel was not only a prophet, but priest, as well.

This is the only mention of Buzi in the Bible.

The "hand of the LORD":

This speaks of the power that came into Ezekiel from the touch of the LORD.

The hand also symbolizes work.

If the work is connected with God, then it is a holy work.

The priests were anointed on the thumb of their right hand, showing that their work was to be holy.

The land of the Chaldeans is Babylon.

Ezekiel was a priest in exile.

He was with his people.

He did not prophesy in the palace, as Daniel did.

He prophesied in the country in exile.

Remember, Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem with the people who were left.

All three prophesied the same thing, but to different people in different places.

Verses 4-14

The opening vision focuses on angels surrounding God's presence.

Verses 4-6

Behold a whirlwind.

Out of the whirlwind and cloud (see 2 Kings 2:11; Job 38:1), emerge "four living creatures."

These are the cherubim, exalted angelic beings who constantly attend the throne of God.

Verse 6 says, that each angel had four wings.

They appear in similar form (in Rev. 4-5), but there they are seen with six wings, which means their shape and form may vary.

Some think the seraphim of (Isaiah 6:1-3), are the same celestial beings assuming a slightly different appearance.

In his vision Ezekiel saw four living creatures, the first of four key elements in the revelation.

These are identified later as cherubim, an angelic order (Ezek. 10:15, 20).

The faces of the beasts were the faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (verse 10).

Some have suggested that these animals represent four aspects of God's creative work: man is the only creature made in the image of God; the lion is the sovereign of the animal kingdom; the ox is the strongest domesticated animal; and the eagle is considered by many to be the greatest bird.

The fact that the creatures covered their bodies, point to their reverence in God's presence.

Ezekiel 1:4 "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness [was] about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire."

"Whirlwind ... fire":

Judgment on Judah in a further and totally devastating phase is come out of the North and did come from Babylon (in 588-586).

Its terror is depicted by a fiery whirlwind emblematic of God's judgments and the golden brightness signifying dazzling glory.

Many times, the presence of God is spoken of as being in the north.

The Hebrews had always feared the power coming from the north.

We see in the following Scripture, that God speaks from the whirlwind.

Job 40:6 "Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,"

We see in the following Scripture, the movement of the power of God in the whirlwind, as well.

2 Kings 2:11 "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, [there appeared] a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

God revealed Himself in a fire by night and a smoke by day to the Israelites.

There is no question in my mind that this is speaking of a presence of Almighty God.

Hebrews 12:29: "For our God [is] a consuming fire."

The word translated amber, here, means bronze.

"Bronze" symbolizes judgment.

The Lord is the Judge of the entire world.

This is speaking of God.

Ezekiel 1:5 "Also out of the midst thereof [came] the likeness of four living creatures. And this [was] their appearance; they had the likeness of a man."

"Four living creatures":

Four angles, most likely the cherubs (in 10:1-22), appearing in the erect posture and figure of man (note face, legs, feet, and hands in verses 6-8), emerge to serve God who judges.

The number 4 may have respect to the 4 corners of the earth, implying that God's angels execute His commands everywhere.

We have studied in some of our other books, that these 4 living creatures are symbolic of the 4 gospels, and more specifically Jesus in the 4 gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

This likeness of a man is speaking of Jesus in the book of Luke, which shows the manhood of Jesus.

Notice, this likeness came from the middle.

We will find that the middle of the wheel is Jesus in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The focal point of the entire Bible is Jesus in the 4 gospels.

We must, also, look at the word "appearance".

This reveals there is a symbolic meaning here.

Verses 6-14

"Four faces ... four wings":

The four faces may prefigure the revelation of Christ in the four gospels (lion – Matthew; ox – Mark; man – Luke; eagle – John), an idea advanced by early Christian writers.

They are, however, real.

Their actual wings were outstretched, one pair being linked to those of the next creature, apparently forming a close knit square.

Since they were thus connected, they could fly forward without turning.

Ezekiel 1:6 "And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings."

“Four faces”:

These symbols identify the angels as intelligent (man), powerful (lion), servile (ox), and swift (eagle).

“Four wings”:

Four wings instead of two symbolize speed in performing God’s will.

"Four" means universal.

This message is for those in captivity everywhere and not just for those of Judah captive here.

The wings symbolize the rising above the earthly to the heavenly.

"Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint."

Everyone has a time in his life, when he would like to fly away from his troubles.

This would be especially true of those in captivity.

Ezekiel 1:7 "And their feet [were] straight feet; and the sole of their feet [was] like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass."

They were not bent like an animal’s, but straight like pillars showing strength.

“Calves foot”:

This points to their stability and firm stance.

"Burnished brass" symbolizes judgment.

The straight feet could be speaking of their walk before God on the straight and narrow path.

The calf mentioned here, is speaking of the book of Mark, which shows the miracles of Jesus.

The calf symbolizes work.

Ezekiel 1:8 "And [they had] the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings."

“Hands of a man”:

This is a symbol of their skillful service.

The book of Luke is symbolized by the face of man.

These 4 faces mean they were looking to all mankind, and not just the Hebrews.

This shows the strength of the LORD to hold up all of humanity.

It is Jesus in these 4 gospels, who lift them up to the heavenlies.

Each of the four gospels reaches out to the 4 corners of the earth.

These 4 faces in each appearance reach to the north, south, east, and the west.

This just shows the universality of the gospel.

Ezekiel 1:9 "Their wings [were] joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward."

“They turned not”:

They were able to move in any direction without needing to turn, giving swift access to do God’s will.

Apparently, all were in harmony as to the way they moved.

Their faces being connected in a square, they could fly straight forward without turning.

God's power to lift them up is not separated.

All of God's children are united in their belief of God.

They moved forward and not backwards.

They were on the path which leads to God.

Ezekiel 1:10 "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."

“Faces”:

These symbols identify the angels as intelligent (man), powerful (lion), servile (ox), and swift (eagle), as noted (in verse 6).

Now we see the four faces.

The "eagle" symbolizes God, and therefore the book of John, which shows Jesus as God the Word.

The "lion" symbolizes the Lion of the tribe of Judah in Matthew.

The "ox" and the calf are the same.

They both symbolize work in the book of Mark.

The "face of the man" as seen in Luke, shows the manhood of Jesus.

These four books show the fullness of Jesus.

Each of these had four faces, and each had a message for the entire world.

Ezekiel 1:11 "Thus [were] their faces: and their wings [were] stretched upward; two [wings] of every one [were] joined one to another, and two covered their bodies."

Notice, these wings and faces were lifted to heaven.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are all lifting Jesus heavenward.

These are not earthly messages in these books, they are looking to heaven.

They are not like the Old Testament, which is caught up in the law.

They are reaching into heaven to God.

Flesh and blood bodies cannot rise to heaven.

The body that rises to heaven is the spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:50 "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

1 Corinthians 15:44 "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

The natural body, in Ezekiel here, cannot rise to heaven.

It is covered with the wings, because it is not the heavenly body.

The wings, which lift up, are speaking of the spiritual body which rises to heaven.

Ezekiel 1:12 "And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; [and] they turned not when they went."

"The spirit":

This refers to the divine impulse by which God moved them to do His Will (compare 1:20).

God does not change His ways.

He is straightforward.

James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

God does not turn from side to side.

His approach is the Truth.

The path is narrow that leads to righteousness.

There is no looking back, or turning back, for the believer, any more than there is for God.

The Spirit is the movement of the Word in the Gospels.

The Word is alive, it is not stagnant.

Ezekiel 1:13 "As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance [was] like burning coals of fire, [and] like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning."

"Like...fire...lightning":

Their appearance conveyed God's glory and pure, burning justice which they assisted in carrying out even on Israel, who had for so long hardened themselves against His patience.

Jesus is the Light of the world.

He is the Baptizer in fire.

This constant fire, or Light, is speaking of the brightness of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels.

It is Jesus who shines forth from these 4 books.

It is His fire that purges our sins away.

The same appearance was in the burning bush and in the fire by night that led the Hebrews.

He is the Lamp, which brings Light to the whole world.

Hebrews 9:2 "For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein [was] the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary."

The candlestick symbolized the Light of Jesus in the church.

He was the table and the bread on the table, as well.

In the 2nd chapter of Revelation, the candlesticks are the seven churches.

The Light in the candlestick is Jesus.

His Light goes forth through His church.

This is what the lightning is speaking of.

We, Christians, should show forth His Light.

These visions seem to have been sent to possess the prophet's mind with great and high thoughts of God.

To strike terror upon sinners.

To speak comfort to those that feared God, and humbled themselves.

In (verses 4-14), is the first part of the vision, which represents God as attended and served by a vast company of angels, who are all his messengers, his ministers, doing his commandments.

This vision would impress the mind with solemn awe and fear of the Divine displeasure, yet raise expectations of blessings.

The fire is surrounded with a glory.

Though we cannot by searching, find out God to perfection, yet we see the brightness round about it.

The likeness of the living creatures came out of the midst of the fire; angels derive their being and power from God.

Ezekiel 1:14 "And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."

Intense, relentless motion signifies God's constant work of judgment.

They have the understanding of a man, and far more.

A lion excels in strength and boldness.

An ox excels in diligence and patience, and unwearied discharge of the work he has to do.

An eagle excels in quickness and piercing sight, and in soaring high; and the angels, who excel man in all these respects, put on these appearances.

The angels have wings; and whatever business God sends them upon, they lose no time.

They stood straight, and firm, and steady.

They had not only wings for motion, but hands for action.

Many persons are quick, who are not active; they hurry about, but do nothing to purpose; they have wings, but no hands.

But wherever the angels' wings carried them, they carried hands with them, to be doing what duty required.

Whatever service they went about, they went every one straight forward.

When we go straight, we go forward; when we serve God with one heart, we perform work.

They turned not when they went.

They made no mistakes; and their work needed not to be gone over again.

They turned not from their business to trifle with any thing.

They went whithersoever the Spirit of God would have them go.

The prophet saw these living creatures by their own light, for their appearance was like burning coals of fire; they are seraphim, or burners; denoting the ardor of their love to God, and fervent zeal in his service.

We may learn profitable lessons from subjects we cannot fully enter into or understand.

But let us attend to the things which relate to our peace and duty, and leave secret things to the Lord, to whom alone they belong.

This is speaking of the message that goes forth to the whole world from the Gospels.

The appearance shown is Jesus, the Light of the world.

From (verses 15-25), this section looks at the glory of God's throne in heaven.

Verses 15-21

"Appearance of the wheels ... wheel in the middle of a wheel".

Each of them had a connected wheel, possibly with two intersecting at right angles.

Thus, they could roll in all directions without turning.

Much spiritualized speculation has not solved this mystery of design.

What is evident is that supernatural energy, likely angelic (Heb. 1:7), at the center of each wheel caused them to rotate.

Their rims, adorned by eyes (see Rev. 4:6), speak of heavenly observation from God's celestial throne.

The wheels could move in any direction; the wheels seem to symbolize God's working on the earth.

Nothing stopped them, just as nothing stops the sovereign God who controls all events on earth.

This truth would have been very encouraging to the weary exiles to whom Ezekiel was called to minister.

Ezekiel 1:15 "Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces."

"One wheel":

This depicts God's judgment as a war machine like a massive chariot moving where He is to judge.

The cherubim above the ark are call chariots (in 1 chron. 28.18).

The wheel is near the living creatures; the angels are employed as ministers of God's providence.

The spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels; the same wisdom, power, and holiness of God, that guide and govern the angels, by them order all events in this lower world.

The wheel had four faces, denoting that the providence of God exerts itself in all parts.

Look every way upon the wheel of providence, it has a face toward you.

Their appearance and work were as a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

The disposals of Providence seem to us dark, perplexed, and unaccountable, yet are all wisely ordered for the best.

This wheel shows the movement of the Gospels in the earth.

Ezekiel 1:16 "The appearance of the wheels and their work [was] like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work [was] as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel."

"Wheel in the middle of a wheel":

This depicted the gigantic energy of the complicated revolutions of God's massive judgment machinery bringing about His purposes with unerring certainty.

This "wheel in the middle of the wheel" is like the hub of the wheel, which the outer wheel circles around, controlled by the hub of the wheel.

Jesus, in the 4 Gospels, is the hub of the wheel.

He is the focal point of the Bible; Genesis to Malachi points forward to Jesus; Acts to Revelation points back to Jesus in the Gospels.

The outside of the wheel is the entire Bible.

The inside wheel, or hub, is Jesus in the 4 gospels.

Jesus is in the entire Bible.

We do not always see Him spoken of by the name "Jesus".

Sometimes He is "Lord", sometimes He is the "Word", and sometimes He is "Light".

All are speaking of the personage we call "Jesus".

His name always describes what He is doing at the time.

Jesus means Savior.

That was His name when He came to the earth as our Savior.

He is also, Emmanuel (God with us).

There are about 98 names that Jesus was called by in the Bible.

All the work on this earth is caught up in the Bible (wheel).

The power in the wheel is the Spirit of God.

The beryl is, probably, the color of fire or blood.

The one likeness in all four Gospels is Jesus.

Ezekiel 1:17 "When they went, they went upon their four sides: [and] they turned not when they went."

Since the two wheels intersected at right angles, they could roll in all directions without turning.

"Did not turn aside".

The judgment machine moved where the angels went.

This just speaks of the unchanging message of the Gospels.

Ezekiel 1:18 "As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings [were] full of eyes round about them four."

"Rings":

Better, rims.

"Full of eyes", Indicates God's ability to see all.

"Eyes":

These may picture God's omniscience, or perfect knowledge, given to these angelic servants so that they can act in judgment unerringly.

God does nothing by blind impulse.

The fact that they were full of eyes shows the great wisdom they contain.

The rings are, probably, speaking of the wheels being in a circle.

They were so high they reached to heaven.

The consideration of the height and depth of God's counsel should awe us.

They were full of eyes round about.

The motions of Providence are all directed by infinite Wisdom.

All events are determined by the eyes of the Lord, which are in every place beholding the evil and the good; for there is no such thing as chance or fortune.

Ezekiel 1:19 "And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up."

This shows that the 4 living creatures (Gospels) are part of a greater whole.

They all work together.

When the Gospels are lifted up, the entire Bible is elevated, as well.

They all are in harmony of movement.

Ezekiel 1:20 "Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither [was their] spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature [was] in the wheels."

"The spirit".

This refers to the divine impulse by which God moved them to do His Will.

The law of the Old Testament, and the grace of the New Testament, are all bound up together in Jesus.

The types and shadows of the Lord Jesus are throughout the Old Testament.

You just cannot separate the Bible.

The Old and New Testaments complement each other.

Each book of the Bible is a piece of the whole.

They are separate books with one message.

To truly understand the Spirit in the Word of God, one must study it all.

We understand better who Jesus is, if we study the tabernacle in the wilderness and the sacrifices made therein.

Each item tells us something else about the greatness of Jesus.

Colossians 2:9 "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

The spirit of life was in the living creatures.

Jesus is Life.

Ezekiel 1:21 "When those went, [these] went; and when those stood, [these] stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature [was] in the wheels."

Nothing stopped them, just as nothing stops the sovereign God who controls all events on earth.

This truth would have been very encouraging to the weary exiles to whom Ezekiel was called to minister.

This, again, speaks of the harmony of the Gospels with the rest of the Bible.

The Spirit of God is in His Word, the Bible.

Verses 1:22-24

The third part of the vision was the firmament.

The Hebrew word used here is the same one used (in Genesis 1:6-7), for the expanse created by God on the second day.

Its dazzling brilliance was an appropriate reminder of God's holiness and transcendent majesty (the description in Rev. 4:6).

These four living creatures seem to be conveying, with wings outstretched, a crystalline firmament above their heads, which glitters like transparent ice.

This is similar to the "sea of glass like unto crystal" before the throne of God (in Revelation 4:6).

In that passage, the four living creatures are not conveying, but standing upon the sparkling pavilion.

Moses and more that seventy others also saw the manifestation of the God of Israel on a sapphire-like pavement; transparently clear as the heavens (Exodus 24:10).

Ezekiel 1:22 "And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature [was] as the color of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above."

The wisdom of the Gospels is the wisdom from above.

It is the wisdom of God Himself.

"Terrible", can mean "beyond finding out".

"Terrible" is translated in the bible also as "Awesome".

Romans 11:33 "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

The crystal over their heads speaks of the great peace they bring.

The firmament above was a crystal, glorious, but terribly so. That which we take to be a dark cloud, is to God, clear as crystal, through which he looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

When the angels had roused a careless world, they let down their wings, that God's voice might be plainly heard.

Ezekiel 1:23 "And under the firmament [were] their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies."

Firmament, in the verse above, is the visible arc of the sky.

The body of man wants to be hidden from the view of God.

This is the meaning of the wings covering.

The physical body of man will be changed, before it can enter the heavenlies.

Its corruption must be changed to incorruption.

Ezekiel 1:24 "And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of a host: when they stood, they let down their wings."

"Noise of great waters":

This imagery could have in mind a thunderous rush of heavy rain or the washing of surf on rocks.

The great waters, many times, speaks of large amounts of people.

We have been speaking of the written Word in the wheel.

Now, it has extended to the spoken Word (the voice of speech).

This Word is what brings people to God.

Romans 10:8 "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;"

Jesus is the Word of God.

That Word is the written Word throughout the pages of the Bible.

He preached on the earth.

The message He brought, and that His followers bring, is the spoken Word.

This is what creates the host (large number of believers), clothed in white robes around the throne of God in heaven.

The spoken and written Word of God is what saves people.

Verses 25-28

Finally, there was a throne and the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

The important reality was that the throne was occupied, signifying that God was in control, and judgment proceeded from His throne.

Ezekiel did not see God, but the likeness and appearance of God.

The mention of the glory of the Lord (verse 28), is one of 16 such references in the book, and doubtless sets forth the favorite theme of Ezekiel (verses 28; 3:12, 23; 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18, 19; 11:22-23; 39:21; 43:2 (twice), 4, 5; 44:4).

Ezekiel saw God's glory in his vision; he saw it depart from the temple (in chapters 10 and 11); and he saw it return in the future temple (in chapters 43 and 44).

Above this expanse, sparkling like ice crystals, Ezekiel then saw a sapphire-like throne upon which was seated the semblance of a man, a manifestation of God.

This vision depicts God coming to earth in His moveable throne (suggested in Psalm 18:9-12), to reveal Himself to His chosen prophet, thus summoning this prophet into His special ministry.

This vision, of course, is only a semblance, a likeness, because no one (John 1:18), has ever seen God in His pure essence.

Only Jesus, God incarnate, could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:8-9; John 1:14; 4:24; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16).

Ezekiel 1:25 "And there was a voice from the firmament that [was] over their heads, when they stood, [and] had let down their wings."

"Voice":

No doubt this is the voice of the Almighty (verse 24), since God's throne was over their heads.

God speaks from the heavens to the people on earth through the Gospels.

They cannot raise themselves to heaven.

God will raise them up in Jesus.

Ezekiel 1:26 "And above the firmament that [was] over their heads [was] the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne [was] the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it."

A Throne: A Man:

The Godhead appears in the likeness of humanity, through God is a spirit.

The Messiah, God incarnate, is the representative of the "fullness of the Godhead", so this can be a prelude to the incarnation of Messiah in His character as Savior and Judge.

Just as there was a Holy of Holies in the tabernacle in the wilderness, there is a throne in heaven.

Jesus is the likeness of man that is seated on the right of the Father.

He took on the likeness of fleshly man, when He was on earth.

God is a Spirit.

Man was made in the image of God.

Man is a spirit housed in flesh.

Man's likeness to God is in the spirit.

Mankind saw the image of God in Jesus.

He was the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

He (Jesus), told the disciples the following:

John 14:9 "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou [then], Show us the Father?"

Jesus opened the way to the throne of God for all believers.

Ezekiel 1:27 "And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about."

This Fire and Light are both speaking of the presence of God.

Most times, when people see the presence of God, they see fire, as Moses did in the burning bush.

Ezekiel 1:28 "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so [was] the appearance of the brightness round about. This [was] the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw [it], I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake."

"The glory of the LORD":

This phrase and similar expressions occur seventeen times in the book.

The word "glory" (Hebrew "Kabod"), carries the idea of weight or magnitude or worthiness.

When used of God, it speaks of His presence, power, splendor, and radiance, that manifestation of His divine holiness, beauty, and effulgence that reveals Him worthy of worshipful praise.

Ancient rabbis also use the word "shechinah" (meaning residence) to denote the radiance, glory, or presence of God, "dwelling in the midst of His people," as in the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34), and the temple (2 Chr. 7:1-3).

The rabbinical term "shechinah" was reserved for occasions when God's glory was physically manifested.

The removal and ultimate return of this "glory of the LORD" is a major theme of this prophecy.

That glory shines fully in the person of Jesus Christ which is a constant theme in Ezekiel.

"Fell on my face":

John (in Rev. 1:17), had the same reaction to seeing the glory of the Lord.

The bow in the cloud is speaking of the rainbow.

The rainbow reminds us of the covenant God made with mankind.

It will not rain enough again to flood the entire earth.

God said it.

It is so.

The rainbow shows God's faithfulness.

The fire of judgment is overcome by God's love for mankind.

His new covenant is in Jesus.

The complete reverence of God by Ezekiel will not let him stand.

He falls face down and worships Him.

While Ezekiel is lying on his face, God speaks.

Ezekiel Chapter 1 Questions

1. Who is the penman of this book?
2. Ezekiel was from an upper _____ family.
3. How many years had the northern kingdom been in captivity, when Ezekiel began prophesying?
4. Who is the first of the prophecy directed to?
5. Where was Ezekiel, when he prophesied?
6. How old was he, when he began to prophesy?
7. How old was Jesus, when He began His formal ministry?
8. What must we do, for the book of Ezekiel to be meaningful to us today?
9. What does the name "Ezekiel" mean?
10. What are three words Ezekiel speaks often in this book?
11. What happened in verse 1?
12. Why does the author believe this book was started with the word "now"?

13. Name two other times when the heavens were opened?
14. What is God doing, when the heavens open?
15. Why is Jehoiachin mentioned, instead of Zedekiah?
16. What does the word "expressly" show us?
17. What was Ezekiel, besides a prophet?
18. What was his father's name?
19. What does the "hand of the LORD" speak of?
20. Why were the priests anointed on the thumb of their right hand?
21. Ezekiel was a priest in _____.
22. Where did Daniel prophesy?
23. Where did Jeremiah prophesy?
24. What message do we receive from Job chapter 40 verse 6?
25. Who was carried to heaven in a whirlwind accompanied by a chariot of fire?
26. How had God revealed Himself to the Israelites in the wilderness wanderings?
27. What does "bronze" symbolize?
28. Also out of the midst thereof came the ____ of ____ ____.
29. Who is the focal point of the Bible?
30. What did the 4 living creatures symbolize?
31. What does the number "4" mean?
32. What does "burnished brass" symbolize?
33. Each of the four Gospels reach out where?
34. What does the face of the "eagle" symbolize?
35. What does the face of the "calf or ox" symbolize?
36. What does the face of the "lion" symbolize?
37. What does the face of man symbolize?

38. What items in the tabernacle in the wilderness symbolize Jesus or His church?
39. What is the wheel in the middle of the wheel?
40. Where was the spirit of the living creatures?
41. What did the abundance of eyes symbolize?