Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 344 – The Heavens Opened Through The Glory Of The Lord (Ezekiel 1:1-28)

1. As Ezekiel was among the captives, whose hand was upon him giving him visions?
   The hand of the Lord was upon him: *"(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. (2) In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, (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"* (**Ezekiel 1:1-3**).

   - It could be that the 30th year mentioned here is in relation to Ezekiel's age which could have tied to his being a priest (**Numbers 4:1-3**). It was not saying that the Lord appeared to him for the first time in the 30th year of captivity, for later we find the Lord speaking to him in the 25th year of captivity (**Ezekiel 40:1**).
   - Among the captives, as well as the timeline of king Jehoiachin's captivity, shows us this was in the days of Babylonian captivity (**II Kings 25:27-30**).
   - The heavens opened and Ezekiel saw visions of God (**Ezekiel 8:3** and **Ezekiel 40:2**).
     - He didn't see God the Father (**John 1:18**, **John 6:46**, and **I John 4:12**).
     - He will see multiple visions in this book (**Ezekiel 43:3**).
     - Remember, as we proceed through our study of Ezekiel, visions were often unclear (**II Corinthians 12:1-4**).
     - God appeared to prophets in this manner (**Numbers 12:6** and **Hosea 12:10**).
     - In times of apostasy, God would at some points cease visions (**Lamentations 2:9**).
     - There were false visions (**Jeremiah 23:16** and **Ezekiel 13:7**).
   - Among the captives during the time of Jehoiachin's captivity, while in the land of the Chaldeans, makes Ezekiel a prophet during these times… (**II Kings 24:8-15**; **II Kings 24:27-30** and **II Chronicles 36:8-10**). Jeremiah was a prophet then too (**Jeremiah 52:31**).
   - The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel (**II Peter 1:20-21**) just as other prophets had unto them (**I Kings 6:11**, **I Kings 18:1**, **I Chronicles 17:3**, **Isaiah 38:4**, **Jeremiah 1:1-4**, **Hosea 1:1**, **Joel 1:1**, etc.).
   - Ezekiel was a priest meaning he was a descendant of Levi (**Deuteronomy 31:9**) and had responsibilities such as offerings, etc. (**Ezekiel 40:46**).
   - There is a lot of significance to the fact that the hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel. Such a statement implies direct intervention (**I Samuel 5:6**, **Ezekiel 3:14**, **Ezekiel 3:22**, **Ezekiel 37:1**, **Acts 13:8-11**, etc.).

2. Before the four living creatures appeared, what did Ezekiel see in this vision?
   "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 colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire" (**Ezekiel 1:4**).

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- A whirlwind (**Job 38:1**, **Isaiah 66:15**, and **Nahum 1:3**).
- A great cloud (**Deuteronomy 5:22**).
- Bright fire infolding itself (**Psalms 50:3**, **Psalms 97:2-3**, and **Psalms 104:3-4**).

3. What did the four living creatures look and sound like?

"(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. (6) And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. (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 colour of burnished brass. (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. (9) Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. (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. (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. (12) And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. (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. (14) And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. (15) Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. (16) The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour 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. (17) When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. (18) As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. (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. (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. (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. (22) And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. (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. (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 an host: when they stood, they let down their wings" (**Ezekiel 1:5-24**).

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- Key word "LIKENESS" [Strong's # 1823] shows the figurative of what is to come (vs. 5; 10; 13; 16; 22; 26; 28). The word translated in various ways that should show us how to take it (**Genesis 1:26**, **Genesis 5:1-3**, **Ezekiel 8:1-2**, etc.).
- Heavenly beings in the likeness of a man (**Genesis 18:1-2**, **Genesis 19:1-11**, and **Hebrews 13:2**).
- Four faces and four wings (**Ezekiel 10:14** and **Ezekiel 10:21-22**).
- Their appearance, whether to be symbolic of other things or not we cannot tell, was an awesome sight (cf. **Ezekiel 10:1-17**).
- The noise (**Ezekiel 3:12-14**), as the voice of the Almighty (**Ezekiel 10:5**; cf. **Psalms 29:3-4**), like an host (**Isaiah 13:4**).

4. What came forth from the firmament that was over their heads?

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

- A voice from the firmament [sky; heaven (**Genesis 1:8-9** and **Psalms 19:1**)], in a vision (**Revelation 14:1-2** and **Revelation 21:3**).
- The voice from above has meaning (**Hebrews 12:25**).

5. As the vision above the creatures is described (Ezekiel 1:26-28), what did Ezekiel see?

The likeness of the glory of the Lord: *"(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. (27) And I saw as the colour 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. (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"* (**Ezekiel 1:26-28**).

- Likeness of a throne with the likeness of a man above on it (**Isaiah 6:1**, **Acts 7:55**, and **Revelation 4:1-11**).
- Fire round about it, appearance of fire (**Deuteronomy 4:24**; cf. **Revelation 1:14-16**).
- The likeness of the glory of the Lord brought Ezekiel to his knees (**Ezekiel 3:23**, **Leviticus 9:24**, and **Matthew 17:1-6**; cf. **Revelation 1:9-20**).

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