

EZEKIEL CHAPTER ONE (PART 2)

Jon Macon

Ezekiel begins with God's revelation to the prophet in the thirtieth year by the river Chebar (Ezek 1:1-3). Ezekiel then saw four living creatures described in verses 4-14 of the first chapter. Next, wheels with the four creatures are described in verses 15-21. As we continue to examine the first chapter of the Book of Ezekiel, we see a description of a firmament above the creatures, and then a throne above the firmament. The glory and authority of God, and its association with the proclamation of His work is emphasized by this entire magnificent vision.

The firmament and throne

In Ezekiel 1:22-28, there was a firmament above the heads of the creatures, and then a throne above the firmament. "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. 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. 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. And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings. 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. 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. 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 creatures and wheels

The entire description of the creatures and the wheels is very awe-inspiring. The whirlwind, great cloud, fire, the brightness around it (Ezek 1:4), and the creatures that came out of the whirlwind with their four faces and four wings (Ezek 1:5-11), their appearance like burning coals of fire and lamps with lightning coming out of the fire (Ezek 1:13), and the wheels (Ezek 1:15-21; 10:9-10) with their dreadfully high rings (Ezek 1:18), definitely give the impression of great power and authority, such that comes only from God. Some speculate that various attributes of God are represented by each of the

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four faces of the creatures (Ezek 1:10; 10:14-15,20-21), but we really do not know exactly what these four faces are intended to represent, if anything. The same can be said of the four wings (Ezek 1:6,8-9,11), the sparkling, straight feet (Ezek 1:7), the eyes in the body, back, hands, and wings of the creatures and in the rings of the wheels (Ezek 1:18; 10:12), etc. Instead of speculating, there are certain things that we know with certainty are represented by the creatures and the wheels. For example, God by His wisdom instructs us to “*let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil*” (Prov 4:25-27). Just as we should walk only in a straight direction (God’s way) without deviating from it either to the right or left, the creatures “*went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went*” (Ezek 1:12). The wheels also “*turned not when they went*” (Ezek 1:17; 10:11). The creatures and wheels moved in absolute unison, wherever the spirit sent them (Ezek 1:19-21; 10:9-13,15-17,19). The movement of the creatures and the wheels reveals absolute control of them by God.

The glory of the Lord on his throne

Furthermore, a firmament was stretched out over the top of this whole system (Ezek 1:22), (collectively called “the living creature,” Ezek 1:22), and above the firmament was “the likeness of a throne” with the Lord sitting on the throne (Ezek 1:26-2:4; 10:1-2). Therefore, this entire “living creature” is totally associated with the throne of God Himself. That is why the whirlwind, creatures, and wheels are summed up in this fashion: “This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord” (Ezek 1:28). The creatures and wheels are consistently referred to as “the glory of the Lord” throughout the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 1:28; 3:23; 8:4; 9:3; 10:4,18; 11:22-23; 43:1-5).

The word of God

As the creatures and wheels represent the glory of the Lord, they also are intricately associated with the proclamation of His word. When the creatures moved, the noise of their wings sounded like “*the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host*” (Ezek 1:24; 10:5). And when they stopped and stood with their wings down, then “there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads” (Ezek 1:25). Whenever Ezekiel saw these creatures and the wheels, God’s voice was heard, and God told Ezekiel something to speak to the house of Israel (Ezek 1:26-2:7; 3:22-27; 8:1-4; 10:1-6; 11:22-25; 43:1-12).