

Ezekiel's Vision of God (July 31, 593 BC)

Ezekiel 1:1–3:14

Introduction

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.

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.

The Windstorm

4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding 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.

The Four Living Creatures

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 color 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.

The Wheels

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 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.

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.

The Platform

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.

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.

25 And there was a voice from the firmament that *was* over their heads, when they stood, *and* had let down their wings.

The Throne

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 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.

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.

God Sends Ezekiel to be His Prophet to the Exiles

2:1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, *even* unto this very day.

4 For *they are* impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they *are* a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns *be* with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house.

7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they *are* most rebellious.

8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

9 And when I looked, behold, an hand *was* sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book *was* therein;

10 And he spread it before me; and it *was* written within and without: and *there was* written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

Ezekiel and the Scroll

3:1 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat *it*; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

5 For thou *art* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, *but* to the house of Israel;

6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel *are* impudent and hardhearted.

8 Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

9 As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house.

10 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

12 Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place.

13 *I heard* also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.

14 So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

Ezekiel Appointed as Watchman for Israel (August 6, 593 BC)

Ezekiel 3:15–27

15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

16 And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be

remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

22 And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.

23 Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.

24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.

25 But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them:

26 And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they *are* a rebellious house.

27 But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they *are* a rebellious house.

Scripture quotations are from The King James Version (KJV). The KJV is in the public domain.

Chronological Notes

1) Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon with king Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:10–17; 2 Chr 36:10; Ezek 1:1–3) and his prophecies show a genuine concern to date the significant events he lived through. He measured these dates in terms of the captivity of Jehoiachin (Ezek 1:2).¹ The following dates are given:²

- 5th year, 4th month, 5th day (July 31, 593) – Ezek 1:2.
- 6th year, 6th month, 5th day (September 17, 592) – Ezek 8:1.
- 7th year, 5th month, 10th day (August 14, 591) – Ezek 20:1.
- 9th year, 10th month, 10th day (January 27, 589) – Ezek 24:1.
- 11th year, ? month, 1st day (September 18, 587) – Ezek 26:1.³
- 10th year, 10th month, 12th day (January 17, 588) – Ezek 29:1.⁴
- 27th year, 1st month, 1st day (April 26, 571) – Ezek 29:17.
- 11th year, 1st month, 7th day (April 29, 587) – Ezek 30:20.
- 11th year, 3rd month, 1st day (June 21, 587) – Ezek 31:1.
- 12th year, 12th month, 1st day (March 15, 586) – Ezek 32:1.
- 12th year, 12th month, 15th day (March 29, 586) – Ezek 32:17.
- 12th year, 10th month, 5th day (January 19, 586) – Ezek 33:21.⁵
- 25th year, 1st month, 10th day (November 2, 574) – Ezek 40:1.⁶

¹ The single exception to this rule is found in Ezekiel 1:1 in which Ezekiel makes reference to “the thirtieth year.” Block comments: “the explanation Origen proposed long ago remains the most likely: the *terminus a quo* is the year of the prophet’s own birth” (Daniel I. Block, “The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24,” *NICOT*, 82). However, I believe Hoeh makes an insightful suggestion when he says: “The original Hebrew expression is not a reference to the age of the prophet Ezekiel, but to the fifth year of the captivity of the king (593–592) would clearly be the thirtieth year of the renewal of the covenant which occurred, in the eighteenth year (622–621) of Josiah (2 Chr 34:8–33)” (Herman L. Hoeh, “When Did Nebuchadnezzar Conquer Jerusalem?” This paper was delivered at the Symposium of “Frontiers of Knowledge” at Ambassador College, Pasadena, California, 1976).

² All Julian dates are based on the computation of R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 75*, BUS 19 (Providence: Brown University Press, 1956), p. 28. See also the online Babylonian Calendar Converter available at http://www.staff.science.uu.nl/~gent0113/babylon/babycal_converter.htm#converter.

³ The month is assumed to be the first month of the 11th year.

⁴ This is the first deviation from strict chronological order in the book of Ezekiel.

⁵ See the details of Rules 1, 3 and 7 in Rodger C. Young, “When Did Jerusalem Fall?” *JETS* 47.1 (Mar 2004): 26–27 where the length of time between Jerusalem’s fall and Ezekiel hearing from the fugitive is solved by the July 29, 587 date (it would be 18 months with the 586 date which commentators agree is too long [cf. Block]).

⁶ For confirmation that Ezekiel used the Tishri calendar and that the fall of Jerusalem is correctly dated to July 29, 587, see the following articles: Rodger C. Young, “Ezekiel 40:1 As a Corrective for Seven Wrong Ideas in Biblical Interpretation,” *AUSS*, Vol. 44, 265–283; Rodger C. Young, “When Did Jerusalem Fall?” *JETS* 47.1 (Mar 2004): 21–38.