
SUNDAY SERMON

Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church

Willow, Alaska

Date: May 01, 2016

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 01.01-28

Text: Ezekiel 01.01-28

Subject: EZEKIEL SERIES – Introduction and Chapter 1

We know scarcely anything of Ezekiel except what we learn from the book that bears his name. Ezekiel was one of the prophets to Israel during the 70 years of Babylonian Captivity – so we know when this was written.

As with many of the Israelites, the name of Ezekiel ends with “el” which shows something relating to God. When we see these names, we are sure something relating to God was associated with their names – Abdeel, Adiel, Ammiel, Asahel, Asareel, Asiel, Daniel, Samuel, etc. Ezekiel literally means: "God strengtheneth" or "hardeneth," was the son of Buzi, a priest probably of the family of Zadok. He was one of those who went into exile with Jehoiachin which occurred about 600 B.C.

2 Kings 24:12-14 *And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. **13** And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as*

*the LORD had said. **14** And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.*

Ezekiel was a contemporary with both Jeremiah and Daniel. Ezekiel was a priest of the LORD.

Ezekiel 8:1 *And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me.*

The chief scene of Ezekiel's ministry was Tel-Abib in northern Mesopotamia, on the river Chebar, along the banks of which were the settlements of the exiles. The date of his entering upon the prophetic office is given in this passage;

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 was the son of Buzi.

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.*

Ezekiel lived in a house of his own, was married, and lost his wife in the ninth year of his exile. Of the rest of his life we know nothing.

In the first part of his book, Ezekiel is permitted of the LORD to see visions of God which are described in great detail in chapters 1 and 3. His message is characterized by these words which are found 18 times in the book, "And the word of the LORD came unto me saying . . ." The Lord spoke to Ezekiel naming him "son of man," which is found 93 times in the book. In the first 34 chapters of this book, Ezekiel's message is to the house of Israel and to the nations about them which were marked for judgment of the Lord. These nations were the Ammonites in chapter 25; Edom and Philistia also in chapter 25; Tyre in Chapters 26, 27 & 28; Egypt in chapters 29-32; then there were Ethical instructions to those of the captivity in chapter 33. In chapter 34, Ezekiel prophesied to the faithless shepherds of Israel and ended the chapter with a prophecy of Israel's restoration to the land in the last days.

The LORD prepared this remarkable man to preach and prophesy to the Israelites with the understanding that they would not hear him. Let us notice his commission to speak to them:

Ezekiel 3:1-9 *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.*

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.*

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, -- This is a bit difficult, but I believe this speaks of the time of Ezekiel's life. I can find nothing to establish a beginning point otherwise. Ezekiel was a priest, and we know that no Levite began his ministry until he was thirty years of age. So, this came in the fourth month and fifth day of Ezekiel's thirtieth year.

Numbers 4:1-3 *And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, **2** Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, **3** From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.*

Also found in verses 23, 30, 35, 39, & 43 of Numbers 4.

As I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, --

That is, Ezekiel was among those of Israel who had been led away captive to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. According to Jamieson-Faucett-Brown, the River **Chebar** is the same as Chabor or Habor, where the ten tribes had been taken by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser ([2Ki 17:6](#); [1Ch 5:26](#)). It flows into the Euphrates near Carchemish or Circesium, two hundred miles north of Babylon.

That the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. –

As they were at the Lord's baptism in Matthew 3 and the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7. Ezekiel saw visions of God - *אלהים el-o-heem'*.

2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

This is the Month Tammuz, and fifth day of the month the same as verse 1. Ezekiel, here seems to pinpoint the time more clearly – it was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity.

2 Kings 24:8-16 Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name *was* Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. 10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. 12 And Jehoiachin the king

of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. 13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. 14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. 15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, *those* carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 And all the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all *that were* strong *and* apt for war, *even* them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

Jehoiachin was carried away to Babylon about 600 B. C. So, we understand that he had been captive five years when this writing occurred. That would be about 595 B. C.

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 word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, -- The word of Jehovah came clearly and certainly. Ezekiel is said to be the priest. His Father was Buzi. We know nothing of Buzi. This is the only time his name is

mentioned. We do know that all the priests were of the tribe of Levi.

In the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. -- This tells us where and what. Ezekiel was in Babylon, which was the land of Chaldeans – and by the River Chebar. The expression “the hand of the LORD” was there upon him, tells us that God’s word came with power! This is so very interesting – this expression is found exactly seven times in the Book of Ezekiel. Eze 1:3; Eze 3:14,22; Eze 8:1; Eze 33:22; Eze 37:1; Eze 40:1.

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 colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, -- This appears to be a thing in order to vividly claim the attention of the Lord’s servant – just as the Lord did with Job. He spoke to him out of the whirlwind.

Job 38:1 *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,*

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. -- The whirlwind, cloud, and fire which infolded itself came from the north which speaks of the judgment sent of the LORD upon

Israel which came upon them from the north.

Ezekiel was one of the three prophets who prophesied to Israel during the time of their carrying away to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar, who is called God's Servant for that very purpose. He was raised up to chasten His own people for their sins and their turning away from the LORD! Now the LORD will say to Israel through the mouth of these prophets, "Thus saith the LORD, I bring these things upon you!"

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.

That is, out of the midst of this whirlwind and the fire enfolding itself - ***came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.*** The number four is the bible number for the creation – the first creation. Thus, these were created by the LORD for His own glory. Interesting it is, that God became man in the person of Jesus Christ. These living creatures around and about the God of Israel speak of something the LORD is doing and something He is.

6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

Some have thought these were the Seraphim, but the description is far different. Each had four faces – and each had four wings, not six wings. Isaiah's Seraphim had six wings –

Isaiah 6:2 *Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain*

he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

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.*

And their feet were straight feet; -- that is, straight *legs*. Not protruding in any part as the legs of an ox, but straight like a man's – we recall that they had the likeness of a man (v.5).

And the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: -- That is the bottom of their feet were cloven - The *solid firmness* of the round foot of a calf seems to be the point of comparison.

And they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. – The antecedent of “they” is “feet,” so their feet sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. The word burnished means “polished!” How well does this preacher remember the color of polished brass from the time in the military! Beautiful when clean!

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.*

That they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; -- They had the hands of a man under their wings on all four sides, just as they had wings and faces on all four sides.

And they four had their faces and their wings. -- He returns

to what he had stated already in [Eze 1:6](#); this gives a reason why they had hands on their four sides, namely, because they had faces and wings on the four sides.

9 *Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.*

These creatures had no occasion to turn themselves round when changing their direction, for they had a face ([Eze 1:6](#)) looking to each of the four quarters of heaven. Their wings were joined above in pairs as we shall see in verse 11.

They went every one straight forward. -- There was no need for them to turn because each side had a face.

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.*

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.*

Here we see the likeness (the similitude, appearance) of their faces, -- The face of a man (apparently in front), of a lion on the right side; the face of an ox on the left side; and the face of an eagle (in the rear). The ox is called "cherub," in 10.14.

We can see something of the likeness of the LORD in these living creatures. The face of man speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as

the “son of man;” the lion speaks of him as the “lion of the tribe of Judah;” the ox speaks of him as one “who made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant...;” and finally the eagle speaks of him as “the lofty God of heaven.”

Ezekiel 10:14 And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth 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.

This shows something of the two cherubs which were placed atop the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant in the Tabernacle. The tips of the two outstretched wings reached to one another, while the other two, in token of humble awe, formed a veil for the lower parts of the body.

whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. -- There was one spirit which spoke of one conscious life completely in control of the whole, and guiding the motions of them four whole in perfect harmony.

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.

As for the likeness (similitude, resemblance) ***of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire,***

-- What an awesome sight! Bright and moving, intense – like burning coals of fire!

And like the appearance of lamps: torches – giving off sparks and flashes of light.

And it went up and down among the living creatures; -- That is the intensity and lights moved up and down among them.

And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. – Bright as the glory of God! When the LORD came down on Sinai just before the giving of the law, there was a similar appearance.

Exodus 19:16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

Exodus 19:18-20 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. **19** And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. **20** And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top

of the mount; and Moses went up.

14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Incessant, relentless motion these living creatures! They moved – going straight forward, not turning as they went – like a streak of lightning. Swift, quick, and powerful! Remember, Ezekiel is being shown visions of God (v. 1).

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

It appears that there was a wheel upon the earth which was by the living creatures.

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.

The wheels and the work of them was like the colour of a beryl. A beryl is the color of sea water – a blue green. The four wheels were alike. Ezekiel says it looked like a wheel within a wheel. If we can follow the description, we can kinda see what this was like.

17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.

This is still speaking of the wheels. ***When they went, they went upon their four sides:*** -- This suggests a wheel inside a

wheel in four directions. Like a globe with the equator and the meridians.

18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

As for their rings, -- This is the first mention of the rings. Rings comes from the Hebrew: גב gab which is translated as: eminent place 3, rings 2, bodies 2, back 1, backs 1, bosses 1, eyebrows 1, naves 1, higher place 1. This seems to speak of circumference of the wheel and their largeness. Too, the rings were full of eyes round about them.

They were so high that they were dreadful; -- Fearful.

And their rings were full of eyes round about them four. -- Like the living creatures of the Revelation, these wheels were full of eyes round about.

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.

So the living creatures and the wheels moved together. When the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were also 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.

All four creatures together with their wheels are here called "the living creature," because they formed a whole, one in motion, and in will, for one spirit was in them. This reminds us that our God is in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but all three are One God – and God's purpose is all one. As we read the pages of scripture, we cannot help but be struck with fact that God has purposed these things that occur and have occurred; and that shall occur.

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.

When those went (the living creatures), these went (the wheels). This verse adds more information about how they moved and stood – they did it as a single unit. No differences.

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.

Now we have the first mention of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature. The word firmament comes from the Hebrew: רָקִיעַ raw-kee'- ah which appears 17 times in the OT and is always translated firmament. We recall that the firmament was an expanse over the earth as described in the creation chapters. The firmament was the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. For me, words fail me to describe the awesome appearance of this! Crystal is very

beautiful – and this is an expanse upon the heads of the living creatures.

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.

This seems to be a further explanation of what Ezekiel describes in verse 11:

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.*

So with two wings, they flew – with two, they covered their bodies. This speaks of swiftness and humility.

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.

So their wings made a great noise like the noise of great waters – as the voice of the Almighty, like speech, as the noise of a great multitude – a host.

when they stood, they let down their wings. – This tells us that their wings had been upwards when they went.

25 And there was a voice from the firmament that was over

their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

This appears to be the voice of the Almighty from the expanse over their heads when they stood still and had let down their wings. This Ezekiel saw and heard.

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.

Brethren, this is a vision of the Almighty on his throne. It is much like the description John gives us in the Revelation.

Revelation 4:2-3 *And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*

Too, this is very similar to what Moses and the elders saw in the wilderness:

Exodus 24:9-10 *Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: 10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.*

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.

This is a description of what Ezekiel saw on the throne above the living creatures. There can be no doubt that this man was shown the glory of the LORD.

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 saw the of the brightness round about the throne was like the appearance of the rainbow in the cloud in the day of rain. What marvelous beauty and majesty this! He makes it clear now.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. – Remember, the prophet said, in the very first verse of this chapter, that “the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.” This is precisely what he saw! And when he did, like the prophet Isaiah, he fell on his face, and heard a voice of one that spake. I have no doubt that you and I would fall on our face before His glorious majesty!