

## Review

Last Thursday night, we began our study of the book of Ezekiel.

We learned that the book was written after King Nebuchadnezzar had carried the Jews off captive to Babylon, including a 25-year-old man named Ezekiel. Now, at the age of 30 (the year he would have been starting his Levitical priesthood, had he still been in Jerusalem), he is about to be called into the prophetic ministry.

God's call upon his life was no minor incident. It occurred via a vision he had while in a sort of refugee camp among the Jews at the River Keb-AWR at Tale Aw-BEEB. The vision began with Ezekiel seeing the heavens opened, and a huge storm cloud coming in. Fire flashed from the cloud and light shone all around it.

Within the cloud, he saw four cherubim. The cherubim were amazing in appearance, zooming like lightning back and forth without turning, and the strange wheel-like things in which were their spirits following along close to them. Coals of fire flashed forth between them

Now, as we pick up in verse 22, Ezekiel takes his eyes off of the cherubim and looks above them...

### 1:22 The Expanse

There is an expanse over the heads of the cherubim. The way this reads, this expanse could be describing empty space, or it could be something of substance spread out over them.

Once we find out that God's throne is above this expanse (Ezek. 1:26), then we can imagine that what Ezekiel is possibly describing is the crystal sea:

**Rev. 4:2-8 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. Out from the**

**throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."**

Whether this expanse is this crystal sea, or some form of space, Ezekiel says that it looked like crystal or ice, and its appearance was awe-inspiring or even frightening.

### **1:23-24 Under The Expanse - The Wings Of The Cherubim**

The cherubim each had four wings, and those wings were positioned in such a way that two covered their bodies, and the other two were each extended towards and touching another cherub (1:11).

I don't know if their wings were flapping, but they were making as much noise as a waterfall or waves crashing on the beach.

When they stopped, they would relax the two wings which were extended towards the others and drop them down to their bodies.

### **1:25 Above The Expanse - The Voice Of God**

Above the cherubim was the expanse, and from above the expanse came a voice. Ezekiel does not describe this voice, but we find out that it is the voice of God.

Now, most Christians have heard over and over that God's voice is a still, small voice. This is based on an account in 1Kings 19, when Elisha was hiding in a cave and God spoke to him through the sound of a

gentle blowing.

But God's voice is not always gentle and small. It is often described in the Bible as being quite loud. Remember that Ezekiel has just told us that the voice of God sounds very much like the cherubim's wings (1:24), the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:15). It is also equated to thunder (2Sam. 22:14; Job 40:9; Psa. 18:13; etc.) and to a roar (Jer. 25:30; Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2).

So, when you hear that God has a still, small voice, remember David's words in Psalm 29...

**Psa. 29:3-8 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; The God of glory thunders, the LORD is over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful, the voice of the LORD is majestic. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; Yes, the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness...**

And so Ezekiel hears God's voice above the expanse.

### **1:26a The Throne**

Ezekiel writes that above the expanse, he saw something resembling a throne.

The first time the throne of God is mentioned in the Bible is in 1Kings 22. King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah were considering forming an alliance to go to war against the Arameans. They summoned the prophet Micaiah. As Micaiah began to prophesy, he said,

**1Kings 22:19 "...I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left."**

Isaiah also saw a vision of the Lord sitting on His throne (Isa. 6:1).

This is where God sits as He judges righteously (Psa. 9:4), in fact, God's throne was established for judgment (Psa. 9:7) and its foundations are righteousness and justice (Psa. 89:14; 97:2). In the day of judgment, it will be ablaze with flames and its wheels will be a burning fire (Dan.

7:9). It seems to blaze so hot that it turns white (Rev. 20:11).

For the believer, God's throne is a throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). Rather than being white-hot, Ezekiel describes it as Lapis Lazuli (LAP-is LAZ-uh-lee). This is a gemstone which is incredibly gorgeous. It is the deepest blue you've ever seen, with tiny pits of Pyrite inside of it that twinkle like little golden stars. When staring into it, it almost seems like its own galaxy. It is also possible that this word means sapphire (Eze. 10:1), which is the same deep blue, but without the little stars inside of it.

God is often described as being "enthroned above the cherubim (2Sa. 6:2; 2Ki 19:15; Isa. 37:16; etc.), and the Bible tells us that it is located in heaven (Psa. 11:4; 103:19), is holy (Psa. 47:8), and will last forever (Psa. 45:6; Heb. 1:8).

But what is really "out there" for me to read is that David said in Psalm 22 that He is enthroned upon the praises of His people! And so when I am in worship, I often picture the throne of God as this deep blue throne, almost like a solidified galaxy was carved out for Him, and that my heart of praise and worship is forming and fashioning this seat for Him. I don't know how accurate that is in reality, but it certainly has biblical foundations.

### **1:26b-28 The Man On The Throne**

Now Ezekiel sees God sitting on His throne, having the appearance of a man. But while His shape may have looked humanoid, He certainly doesn't look like an ordinary human being. Ezekiel describes Him as looking like glowing metal from the waist up. And from the waist down, the prophet writes that He looked like fire.

### **The Glory Of The Lord**

All around Him was radiating a shining brightness, illuminating the area surrounding Him. It looked like a rainbow. The apostle John saw this rainbow as well, describing it as,

**Rev. 4:3 ...there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.**

And so while the throne is blue, it would seem that the rainbow is a

deep green.

What is this rainbow? Ezekiel tells us in verse 28 that it was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God.

The concept of the glory of God is difficult to grasp. "Glory" itself is a difficult word to define. It can mean honor, abundance, or brightness. God's glory is so bright that He is described as dwelling...

**1Tim. 6:16 ...in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see...**

In chapter ten, we're going to read that Ezekiel describes God's throne room as...

**Ezek. 10:4 ...the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD.**

And you may remember that when the Lord came to the Israelites at Mount Sinai,

**Exod. 24:17 ...to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top.**

The Hebrew word for "glory" is "Kaw-BODE," which comes from a root word that means "to be heavy, weighty, or burdensome." In other words, God's glory is not just extremely bright, but it is also heavy.

Remember that when Solomon finished the temple, God's glory filled it...

**1Kgs. 8:11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.**

It was more than the brightness of God's presence which prevented them from standing. It was the sheer weight and heaviness of His glory being present.

### **Fell On My Face**

Like the priests in Solomon's day, Ezekiel fell on his face at the glory of the Lord. This isn't unusual. Even when Abram was 90 years old, he fell on his face at the glory of the Lord (Gen 17:3). Also, the apostle John in his old age, when he saw Jesus in His glory, the result was...

**Rev. 1:17** When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man...

This will become Ezekiel's habit through the book:

**Ezek. 3:23** So I got up and went out to the plain; and behold, the glory of the LORD was standing there, like the glory which I saw by the river Chebar, and I fell on my face.

**Ezek. 43:3-4** And it was like the appearance of the vision which I saw, like the vision which I saw when He came to destroy the city. And the visions were like the vision which I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east.

**Ezek. 44:4** Then He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the house; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD, and I fell on my face.

Apparently, this isn't something that you ever get used to. Remember that in heaven,

**Rev. 4:10** the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever...

Whether we are young or old, and it's the first time or the hundredth time we've been exposed to the glory of God, we should fall on our faces, whether in fear or worship.