

# THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | JANUARY 5, 2020



## Class 2 – Ezekiel’s Close Encounter (1:1-28)

**PURPOSE:** To relate to the early Jews in Exile -leaving their glory days, entering into hostile territory, always looking ahead to the Kingdom of Redemption.

### Mental Preparation for a Colossal Task

And he said to me, “Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. <sup>4</sup> The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD.’ <sup>5</sup> And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. <sup>6</sup> And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, **though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions.** Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. <sup>7</sup> And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.

(Ezekiel 2:3-7)



## I. The Four Living Creatures (Ezekiel 1:5-14)



### A. Ancient Near East Themes

As shown in the above Assyrian depictions of *Lamassu* (hybrid celestial beings), what Ezekiel first saw in his vision was unavoidably pointing to the foreign lands Judah would be carried off to.

### B. Overriding Biblical Themes

In 1 Kings 6:23-28 and 7:23-37 we find the above images were not at all strange to the architecture of Solomon's Temple which had cherubim creatures with "wings

touch[ing] each other in the middle..” (see 1 Kings 6:27 compared to Ezek. 1:9) and oxen with wheels supporting the water basin (see 1 Kings 7:29-32). In all, what we have here appears to be an overshadowing of distinctly *biblical* themes running dominant upon the familiar *foreign* themes of might, strength, and conquest. Unlike pagan idols which are motionless (Psalm 115:5) these creatures of Ezekiel’s vision are alive and appear to move at the command of the Spirit. It could be that these creatures are in fact angels since in Scripture angels can take on earthly forms (Gen. 3:1; Isaiah 6; Hebrews 13:2).

## II. The Four Wheels (Ezekiel 1:15-21)

### A. Strict Orthogonal Directions X, Y, and Z

Up, to the side, and forward are the directions of the wheels. They follow the edges of a cube which outline heavenly structures (1 Kings 6:20 and Revelation 21:16).

### B. Of Glory, Omniscience, and Omnipotence

The wheels underscore dominant themes already developed by the cherubim. The **glory** of the blazing bronze creatures is underscored by the shine of green stone whirling wheels. The *governing hands* coming out of the cherubim wings (**omnipotence**) are flanked by the *watching eyes* (**omniscience**) coming out of the wheels.

Later in the book of Revelation we find these celestial elements can be rearranged (e.g., “eyes” in the wings instead of “hands” in the wings –see Revelation 4:8).

## III. The Throne *Above* the Expanse (Ezekiel 1:22-28)

### A. The Top-Down Order of Things

For all the ferocious noise the four living creatures make, when the One above their heads speaks they stand still and be silent (Ezekiel 1:25) -like Commander to army.

B. Enthroned: One “with a Human Appearance”

It can be deduced that the One appearing as a human on the throne is in fact Jesus Christ. In the similar vision of Isaiah chapter 6 of the cherubim encircling One enthroned, “Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him [Christ]” -John 12:41 (cf. Rev. 4:1-11, 7:11, and 14:1-5).

**For the Church (Revisiting *The Trellis and the Vine Book*)**

As a prerequisite for going into ministry we need our minds gripped by God’s supreme majesty. Confronting sin involves boldness (character) in our keeping God’s revelation before us no matter how hostile the audience may be.

**The Book of Ezekiel Course Outline:**

- Introduction to Ezekiel
- Ezekiel’s Close Encounter (1:1-28)
- Ezekiel’s Strange Commissioning (2:1-3:27)
- Four Signs of Coming Judgment (4:1-5:17)
- Two Messages of Coming Judgment (6:1-7:27)
- Idolatry in the House (8:1-18)
- God’s Glory Departs (9:1-11:23)
- Straight Talk to the Covenant People (12:1-19:14)
- Defective Leadership (20:1-23:49)
- The Purge (24:1-27)
- Foreign Raiders Not Exempt (25:1-33:20)
- Reentering the Land on God’s Terms (33:21-39:29)
- Restoration of Temple Worship (40:1-46:24)
- Restoration of the Land (47:1-48:35)