

## Life-Study of Ezekiel

### **Introduction**

Since Ezekiel was **thirty when he saw the visions**, in the year of captivity he was only twenty-five. Numbers 4:2-3 tells us that the priests began their ministry at the age of thirty, but Numbers 8:24 says that the Levites began to serve at the age of twenty-five. The reason for the difference here is that the priests needed five years of apprenticeship. They could not come into the priestly service immediately. Rather, they needed to be **trained and disciplined for five years**. At the beginning of the captivity, Ezekiel was an apprentice priest, a learner. He **did not yet have the maturity** required for seeing the visions. This indicates that in spiritual things there is the need of maturity. Due to the **lack of maturity**, some among us **cannot see the visions** which the Lord intends to show us from this book. We cannot see certain spiritual matters when we are young. Thus, we need to look to the Lord that He would grant us the maturity in life that we may see, accept, receive, and take in all the spiritual things.

When Ezekiel saw the visions, he was by a **river**. He says in verse 1, “I was among the captives by the river of Chebar.” The river of Chebar signifies the **power of the enemy to damage God’s people**. Chebar means “strong,” “many,” “powerful.” This river, the river of Babylon, indicates that Babylon was strong and powerful, and thus it signifies the power of Babylon in being against God’s people. Today the “river of Chebar” is the satanic tide of the age that carries people away from God to Babylon.

Today we need the **heavens opened**; we need the **vision coming to us**; we need the **word of the Lord to come expressly to us**; and we need the **hand of the Lord to be upon us**. If we speak and the divine hand does not follow, then our speaking is a vain babbling, and others should not pay attention to it. However, if what we minister is God’s express word, others should be careful about how they deal with such a word. The one who speaks God’s express word may be an insignificant person, but God’s hand is not an insignificant matter. God will come in to do what He says and to work according to His speaking.

### **The Wind, the Cloud, the Fire, and the Electrum**

The **blowing wind** brings the **covering cloud**. We have learned from our spiritual experience that when the Holy Spirit blows upon us and touches us, we sense that God is **overshadowing us and exercising His care for us**. His presence is like a cloud covering us and surrounding us, and we can sense both His presence and His care. Following this we experience the **burning of the consuming fire**. This burning makes us realize that we are wrong in many ways and with many persons. Such a burning exposes our condition and causes us to confess our transgressions and deal with ourselves before God. The more the fire burns, the more we **confess** and the more we are sanctified and purified. Once we have experienced the wind, the cloud, and the fire, the only thing that remains is the **glowing electrum**, the **redeeming God**. The wind and the cloud bring forth the fire, and the fire manifests the shining electrum. The issue of the spiritual transactions involving the blowing wind, the covering cloud, and the purifying fire is always the radiant expression of the redeeming God.

## The Four Living Creatures

These four faces—the face of a **man**, the face of a **lion**, the face of an **ox**, and the face of an **eagle**—portray the **life of Christ**. These four faces correspond to the four Gospels, which may be regarded as four biographies of the Lord Jesus, with each presenting a certain aspect of Christ. Luke shows Him as a man, Matthew shows Him as a lion, Mark shows Him as an ox, and John shows Him as an eagle. This fourfold life is the life of Christ.

The four living creatures are a **corporate expression of Christ**. They express Christ in four aspects—as a man, as a lion, as an ox, and as an eagle. This is the expression of the life of Christ in a corporate way. As Christians, we should be the living creatures, those who are a **corporate entity to express Christ** exactly as He was on earth. When He was on earth, He lived in the four aspects of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. Today we should be the corporate expression of such a Christ.

The vision in Ezekiel 1 reveals three crucial matters concerning the four living creatures' bearing the appearance of a man. First, **God's glory is manifested upon them**. The manifestation of God's glory depends upon their having the appearance of a man. Where they are, there God's glory is. God's glory is not separate from them, and apart from them God's glory cannot be manifested. Second, these living creatures are the **means of God's move**. God's move depends on them. When they move, God will move, for His move is with them. Third, the four living creatures, who bear the appearance of a man, are the **means of God's administration**. Ezekiel 1 reveals that God is sitting on the throne. God's throne dominates everything on earth and everything recorded in this book. This throne, therefore, is the center of God's administration. However, the center of God's administration depends on the four living creatures having the appearance of a man. Because of this, there is the administration of God's throne. If we put these three things together, we will see that man is the means of God's manifestation, that man is the means of God's move, and that man is the means of God's administration. In God's eyes and in God's hands, man has such an important position. *(Life-Study of Ezekiel, chapters 1-5)*