



CCC Ezekiel 1  
“Our unexpected  
disappointments and our  
response to God’s vision”

19 Apr 2020

# Ezekiel 1: 1-14

In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

<sup>2</sup> On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin—<sup>3</sup> the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the LORD was on him.

<sup>4</sup> I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The centre of the fire looked like glowing metal,<sup>5</sup> and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human,<sup>6</sup> but each of them had four faces and four wings.<sup>7</sup> Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze.<sup>8</sup> Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings,<sup>9</sup> and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.

<sup>10</sup> Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.<sup>11</sup> Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body.<sup>12</sup> Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went.<sup>13</sup> The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it.<sup>14</sup> The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

## Ezekiel 1: 15-21

<sup>15</sup> As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. <sup>16</sup> This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like topaz, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. <sup>17</sup> As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not change direction as the creatures went. <sup>18</sup> Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around.

<sup>19</sup> When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. <sup>20</sup> Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. <sup>21</sup> When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

## Ezekiel 1: 22-28

<sup>22</sup> Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked something like a vault, sparkling like crystal, and awesome. <sup>23</sup> Under the vault their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. <sup>24</sup> When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.

<sup>25</sup> Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. <sup>26</sup> Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. <sup>27</sup> I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

# The Bible story up to Ezekiel's time

- God created the world
- Humans rebelled against God (context: cosmic war that is won through Christ)
- God chose to show Himself to and through a group of people (Israel), and spoke through prophets like Ezekiel

# Why study Ezekiel?

## 1) **God spoke through the prophets**

- Hebrews 1:1: **“God spoke to our fathers by our prophets’**

## 2) **God reveals Jesus through the prophets**

- Luke 24: 27: **“..beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.”**

## 3) **God reveals Himself through Ezekiel for our encouragement**

- Ezekiel was a prophet at the time when:

1) Jerusalem – his hometown – was destroyed

2) His people were taken as captives and slaves

3) He lost his career and dreams for the future

- Very tumultuous time for him, his family (further tragedies) and Israel.

- **As God revealed Himself to Ezekiel in his challenging time, this same God can reveal Himself to us in our tumultuous/ cataclysmic times**

**\*\*To help us find hope in suffering and hardship**

# A few key passages in Ezekiel that reveal God's heart 'for such a time'

19 April: Ezekiel 1: Our unexpected disappointments and our response to God's vision (Lanver)

26 April: Ezekiel 18: It wasn't me (Pete)

03 May: 'Forgiven and forgiving' (Pete)

10 May: Ezekiel 34: The Good Shepherd (John)

17 May: Ezekiel 37: Valley of the Dry Bones (Steve L)

24 May: Ezekiel 47: 1-12: From a trickle, to a stream, to a flood (David)



# Ezekiel – life story so far, with huge unexpected disappointment:

Ezekiel 1: 1-3: **In my thirtieth year**, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was **among the exiles** by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.<sup>2</sup> On the fifth of the month—**it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin**—<sup>3</sup> the word of the LORD came to **Ezekiel the priest**, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the **hand of the LORD was on him**.

- Grew up in Jerusalem – in family of priests
- Expected to be a priest too (trained for 25 years)
- At 25 years old – taken captive in the exile
- His whole world changed – Imagine being trained to do (be) something for 25 years and have it disappear
- At 30<sup>th</sup> birthday...the day he was supposed to be a priest

Chapter about gathering the priests of Israel

Numbers 4: 3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47: “Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work at the tent of meeting.”

- God gives him vision that will change his life

# Have you experienced unexpected disappointments?

- Many facing illness or death of loved ones
- Many did not expect to die alone or be unable to say goodbye to loved ones or not hold or have to downsize funerals
- Key workers anxious of infection
- Many facing job losses; businesses facing closure
- Students cannot continue exams or schooling like they expected
- Holidays, weddings & celebrations cancelled
- Domestic violence and suicide on the increase

\*\*Ezekiel – young man with life/career/hopes/dreams – loses everything – taken as slave to serve an enemy state (foreign culture/language/faith)

\*\* **He is my kind of guy** – faced incredible disappointment yet was looking to God – very encouraging verse: v3: “There the **hand of the LORD was on him.**” God was still with him, not abandoned him.

BUT on special 30<sup>th</sup> birthday – game changer

# Vision of God: 4 creatures point to God

## Ezekiel 1:

5: four living creatures...human form

6: four faces and four wings

7: feet like...a calf...gleamed with bronze

10: four faces of human, lion, ox, eagle

13: bright, lightning flashing



## Significance of Creatures:

They were instantly recognisable in Ancient Mesopotamia as guards to temples of God. They pointed to God's **Splendour**: presence, power and majesty.

# Vision of God: Wheels point to Spirit of God



- V19-21: When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved....Wherever the spirit would go, they would go...When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still; they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.
- **Significance of the Wheels: The Spirit of God was moving and there with Ezekiel.**

# Vision of God on the throne (of sapphire)



- V24-25...There came a voice from above...like the voice of the Almighty..
- V26: Over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli (sapphire), and high above on the **throne** was a figure like that of a man.
- V27:...as if full of fire...and brilliant light surrounded him.
- V28: Like the appearance of a rainbow...so was the radiance around him.
- **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord (His Sovereignty)**

## **In unexpected disappointments (v 1-3) God can give us an expected appointment with Him – A vision of Himself**

- V.5-14: The creatures: His Splendour: presence & power
- V.15-21: The wheels: His Spirit is on the move
- V.22-28: The throne: His Sovereignty: King, ruling/control
- God is in Babylon; not stuck in Jerusalem
- God is where we are; not stuck in the past or in a place (e.g. church building) – new opportunity to be people of God and for God to move and touch lives...

# Our response

ACTION/POSTURE	VERSE	MEANING
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<b>FACE FORWARD</b>	2:3: God said: "I am sending you"	Obey God in new future – God gave Ezekiel a new calling (from priest to prophet)

How do we face disappointment?

**Come to the throne. Ezekiel 1:28:**

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

Though Ez 1 and Rev 4: speak on same glorious throne with rainbow and gemstones, the Throne of Jesus is not unapproachable.

Hebrews 4: 16: Let us then **approach God's throne of grace** with confidence, so that we may **receive mercy** and **find grace to help us in our time of need.**



**How do we face disappointments?** Find mercy, grace and help at the feet of the throne. To be with God. Disappointments can help drive us there.



**Larry Crabb:** “The world is too bad a place — and far too uncertain — to build a home and to count on enjoying it. But it's a perfect place to find God.”