

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 10

In this chapter is a vision, very much like that in the first chapter, with some difference, and with a different view, the design of it being to represent the wrath of God against Jerusalem, and his departure from the city and temple. A throne much like that in (^{2302b}Ezekiel 1:26) is described, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 10:1); orders are given from it to scatter coals over the city, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 10:2); the situation of the cherubim when these orders were given, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 10:3); the removal of the glory of the Lord from the cherub to the threshold of the house, and the consequences of it; the house filled with smoke; the court with the brightness of the Lord's glory; and the sound of the cherubim's wings heard to the outer court, as the voice of God, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 10:4,5); the orders of taking and scattering fire over the city executed, and the manner in which they were, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 10:6,7); a description of the cherubim and the wheels, much like that in the first chapter, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 10:8-17); the departure of the glory of God from the threshold to the east gate of the Lord's house, with the motion of the cherubim and wheels along with him, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 10:18,19); and the chapter is concluded with observing, that the cherubim are the same with the living creatures seen in the vision of the first chapter, and had the same form, likeness, and motion, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 10:20-22).

Ver. 1. *Then I looked, and, behold,* &c.] After the vision of the destruction of the greater part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem by the six men with slaughter weapons, and of the preservation of a few by the man clothed with linen; another vision is seen by the prophet, in some things like to that he saw, of which there is an account in the first chapter; though in some circumstances different, and exhibited with a different view; partly to represent the destruction of Jerusalem by fire, and partly the Lord's removal from it, before or at that time:

in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim; the same with the living creatures, (^{2302b}Ezekiel 1:22,26); where the firmament or expanse of heaven is said to be over their heads, as here; (see Gill on "^{2302b}Ezekiel 1:22"):

there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne; (see Gill on “^{<3026>}Ezekiel 1:26”).

Ver. 2. *And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, &c.]* That is, the God of Israel, or the glory of the Lord, that sat upon the throne before described; he gave orders to the man clothed in linen, who appears in another character, and represents the Chaldean or Roman army:

and said, go in between the wheels, [even] under the cherub; the singular for the plural, the “cherubim”; the wheels were under these; the churches are under their ministers, their pastors, guides, and governors; or rather, since the wheels were by the cherubim, it should be rendered, as by some, “unto the cherub”, or “cherubim”^{f143}:

and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter [them] over the city; these “coals of fire” were an emblem of the wrath of God against Jerusalem, and of the destruction of it by fire; and these being fetched from between the cherubim, show that the cause of this wrath and ruin was the ill treatment of the prophets of the Lord; (see ^{<4865>}2 Chronicles 36:15-19); as the destruction of the same city afterwards by the Romans was owing, as to the rejection and killing of the Messiah, so to the prosecution of his apostles, (^{<3025>}1 Thessalonians 2:15,16);

and he went in my sight; in the sight of the prophet, as it appeared to him in vision he saw him go in, as he was ordered, between the wheels, and under the cherubim; but as yet he did not see him take the coals of fire, and much less scatter them; these were afterwards done, as related in the other part of the vision.

Ver. 3. *Now the cherubim stood on the right side of the house, &c.]* According to the Targum, it was the south side of the house; and so Jarchi interprets it opposite to the north, where the gross idolatries were committed, (^{<3028>}Ezekiel 8:3,5,14); standing at the greatest distance from them, and bearing their testimony against them:

when the man went in; they stood as it were in a levee, through which the man passed, waiting upon him; paying a respect to him; assenting to what he did; and approving of it: this circumstance is mentioned, because they were not always in this position, only at this time; nor did they continue so; we afterwards hear of their motion:

and the cloud filled the inner court; the court of the priests, not as a token of God's presence, as at the dedication of the temple; but rather of judicial blindness and darkness, which the people of the Jews were left unto.

Ver. 4. *Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, &c.*] Or, "cherubim"; those that were upon the mercy seat, between which the Shechinah or glorious majesty of God dwelt, in the most holy place: this is a token and intimation of the Lord's leaving of the temple; and a little before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, to which this vision chiefly, if not together, refers, a voice was heard in the temple,

"let us go hence^{f144}:"

[and stood] over the threshold of the house; either of the holy of holies, from whence he was removing; or rather of the holy place, the court of the priests, the inward court, and so open to the outward court, and view of the people in it:

and the house was filled with the cloud; the temple, being forsaken of God, was filled with darkness; as an emblem of that blindness which is come upon the Jews, and will continue on them till the fulness of the Gentiles brought in:

and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory; either the inward court, as the glory of the Lord passed through it, from the holy of holies; or rather the outward court, of which mention is made in (²³⁰⁰Ezekiel 10:4); the glory of the Lord being on the threshold Of the house, which looked towards that, and so enlightened it. This outward court signifies the Gentiles; who, when the Lord removed from the Jewish nation and people, were favoured with the glorious light of the Gospel, and ordinances of Christ; whereby they were enlightened, and filled with the knowledge of the Lord; with the knowledge of him, who is the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person; so through the fall of the Jews salvation came to the Gentiles, (⁴⁵¹¹Romans 11:11,12).

Ver. 5. *And the sound of the cherubim's wings was heard [even] to the outer court, &c.*] Or outward court. The sound of the Gospel, which is a joyful sound; a sound of love, grace, and mercy; of life, liberty, peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; the sound of this in the swift ministry of the apostles, signified by the "cherubim's wings", went into all the earth, and throughout the whole Gentile world; by which many souls were quickened and enlightened; many churches were formed; and

the glory of the Lord, being revealed, was seen by all flesh; and the whole world was filled with the brightness of the Lord's glory, as it will be again, and more abundantly, in the latter day: and this sound was

as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh; the Gospel is as thunder, which is the voice of God; and the ministers of it are "Boanergeses", "sons of thunder", (⁽⁴⁰⁸¹⁷⁾Mark 3:17): it shakes the conscience; shows men their danger; and points at the Saviour: it is not the word of man, but in deed and in truth the word of God: it is the voice of Christ, who is the Almighty; and it appears to be so, by its powerful effects, when attended with a divine energy, in quickening dead sinners; enlightening dark minds; unstopping deaf ears; softening hard hearts; and turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; it is so when God speaks in it, and by it; when it comes not in word only, but in the Holy Ghost, and in power.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, [that] when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, &c.]* After the orders were given by him that was upon the throne to the man thus described:

saying, take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubim; as in (⁽³⁹⁰²⁾Ezekiel 10:2);

then he went in; immediately, into the place where the wheels and cherubim were; even under the firmament of heaven, and the throne that was in it:

and stood beside the wheels, or "wheel"; to see what it was, as Kimchi thinks; or rather in order to go in between them, as he was bid to do, (⁽³⁹⁰²⁾Ezekiel 10:2).

Ver. 7. *And [one] cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim, &c.]* One of the four living creatures, or cherubim, put out his hand from among the rest:

unto the fire that [was] between the cherubim; so fire is said to go up and down among them, (⁽²⁹¹³⁾Ezekiel 1:13); to which the reference is here:

and took [thereof], and put [it] into the hands of [him that was] clothed with linen: denoting, as before observed, that it was for the ill usage of the ministers of God's word that wrath came upon the people of the Jews, and the destruction of their city by fire; so wrath will come upon antichrist, and the antichristian states, for their usage of the ministers and churches of

Christ, and in consequence of the prayers, and by the instigation of such persons; (see ^{<668>}Revelation 6:9-11 18:4-7); so one of the four beasts or living creatures, the same with the cherubim here, is said to give to the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, (^{<657>}Revelation 15:7);

who took [it], and went out; took the fire, and went out of the temple, and scattered it upon the city of Jerusalem; so representing the Chaldean, or rather the Roman army, burning it with fire; (see ^{<427>}Matthew 22:7); where they are called the armies of the King of kings.

Ver. 8. *And there appeared in the cherubim, &c.*] The Septuagint version is, “I saw the cherubim”; and so the Syriac version, “I saw in the cherubim”; what follows:

the form of a man’s hand under their wings; one of them put forth his hand, which was seen by the prophet, as declared in (^{<267>}Ezekiel 10:7); but this was only the “form” of one; which is observed to show that it is not to be taken literally, but as seen in the vision of prophecy; and being under their wings denotes secrecy and privacy: and the whole being applied to the ministers of the word is expressive of their activity and diligence in the work of the Lord, both in private and in public; and that they make no boast nor show of their works and labours, and ascribe nothing to themselves, but all to the grace of God that is with them, (^{<650>}1 Corinthians 15:10); (see Gill on ^{<208>}Ezekiel 1:8”).

Ver. 9. *And when I looked, behold, the four wheels by the cherubim, &c.*] The churches by the ministers: of these “wheels”, and why the churches are so called, and of their number “four”, and their situation “by” the cherubim, (see Gill on ^{<205>}Ezekiel 1:15”);

one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: a minister to a church; every church has its own pastor, elder, or overseer, by it, and over it:

and the appearance of the wheels [was] as the colour of a beryl stone; a precious stone of a sea green; (see Gill on ^{<206>}Ezekiel 1:16”). The Targum renders it in general, “a precious stone”; the Septuagint version, “a carbuncle”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “a chrysolite”.

Ver. 10. *And [as for] their appearances, they four had one likeness, &c.*] They were exactly like one another; they were all composed of the same

matter, had all the colour of a beryl stone, were all in the same form of a wheel; and in matter, form, and shape, entirely tallied and agreed one with another, as true Gospel churches do: (see Gill on “⁻²⁰¹⁶Ezekiel 1:16”);

as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel: not included in one another, but were formed in a cross or transverse way; (see Gill on “⁻²⁰¹⁶Ezekiel 1:16”).

Ver. 11. *When they went, they went upon their four sides*, &c.] Which four sides they had, by being made in the transverse way before mentioned; just as the New Jerusalem church state is said to be foursquare, (⁻⁶²¹⁶Revelation 21:16); and this may denote the uniformity of Gospel churches in every state and condition, prosperous and adverse; and the constancy of their walk, conduct, and conversation:

they turned not as they went: neither to the right hand or the left, but went on in the path of faith and duty, keeping close to the word of God, and keeping up a conversation, discipline, and worship, according to it:

but to the place where the head looked they, followed it; meaning either the rulers, guides, and governors of churches, pastors and elders; whose faith and conversation are followed by the members: or rather Christ himself, the head of the church, who is to be followed whithersoever he goes or directs: unless by the head is meant the same as the spirit, (⁻²⁰¹³Ezekiel 1:20); the Spirit of God, by whom the true members of Gospel churches are led, and after whom they walk. The Targum is,

“the place to which the first turned (or looked), after it they went;”

that is, the first of the wheels; and so may signify that the primitive churches are the pattern after which all the churches in after ages are to go;

they turned not as they went; this is repeated partly for the confirmation of it; and partly to excite attention to it, as being worthy of observation; (see Gill on “⁻²⁰¹⁷Ezekiel 1:17”).

Ver. 12. *And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings*, &c.] This is to be understood not of the wheels, to whom body or flesh, backs, hands, and wings, do not belong, but of the cherubim; and the sense is, that as the wheels were alike, and had one and the same form and appearance, so had the cherubim; they were exactly alike in their body,

backs, hands, and wings; denoting the agreement between Gospel ministers, in their doctrine, work, and conversation:

and the wheels [were] full of eyes round about; that is, the rings or circles of the wheels, as in (³⁰¹⁸Ezekiel 1:18); signifying that churches consisted of enlightened persons, who had a sight of their sin and danger, and looked to Christ for salvation, and walked circumspectly, and watched over one another:

[even] the wheels that they four had: the wheels that belonged to the four living creatures or cherubim.

Ver. 13. *As for the wheels, it was cried to them in my hearing, &c.*] Or they were called, as the prophet heard in the vision, by the following name:

O wheel, or, “the wheel”: for though there are several particular churches, yet they make up but one general assembly and Church of the firstborn, written in heaven; and will be all together in their perfect state, signified by the round form of the wheel; (see Gill on “³⁰¹⁵Ezekiel 1:15”).

Ver. 14. *And everyone had four faces, &c.*] That is, everyone of the wheels, for of these the words are continued; and which agrees with (³⁰¹⁵Ezekiel 1:15);

the first face [was] the face of a cherub; this being in the room of the ox’s face, (³⁰¹⁰Ezekiel 1:10), shows that the face of an ox and a cherub are the same; and that the living creatures have the general name of cherubim, from the face of an ox; and are so called from *brk*, which in the Syriac and Chaldee languages signifies to “plough”, that creature being made use of in such service:

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; how these are applicable to Gospel churches, and the true members of them, (see Gill on “³⁰¹⁵Ezekiel 1:15”).

Ver. 15. *And the cherubim were lifted up, &c.*] From the earth; (see Gill on “³⁰¹⁹Ezekiel 1:19”);

this [is] the living creature that I saw by the river Chebar: a river in Chaldea, where the prophet was when he had the vision of the living creatures recorded in the “first” chapter; and hence it is out of doubt that the living creatures and the cherubim are the same.

Ver. 16. *And when the cherubim went, the wheels went by them, &c.]*

Ministers being guides to the churches in doctrine, worship, devotion, and conversation; (see Gill on “²⁰¹⁹Ezekiel 1:19”);

and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them; ministers and churches go together; if the one remove, the other do also; they cannot long subsist without each other; and, generally speaking, as are the light, knowledge, zeal, affection, and devotion of the one, such are those of the other; (see Gill on “²⁰¹⁹Ezekiel 1:19”).

Ver. 17. *When they stood, [these] stood, &c.]* When the one were inactive, lifeless, and without motion, making no progress in knowledge, experience, and practice, the other were so likewise; (see Gill on “²⁰²¹Ezekiel 1:21”);

and when they were lifted up, [these] lifted up themselves [also]; like people, like priest, whether in things commendable or not, (²⁰¹⁹Hosea 4:9);

for the spirit of the living creature [was] in them; the same spirit that was in the cherubim was in the wheels; and the same Spirit of God, who is a “spirit of life”^{f145}, as the words may be rendered, is in the churches, as in the ministers; generally speaking, if the one are lively, the other are also, and both move as they are acted by the Spirit; and also their motion from place to place, which is spoken of in (²⁰⁰⁸Ezekiel 10:18), is directed by the Spirit; (see ⁴⁰¹⁶Acts 16:6,7).

Ver. 18. *Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, &c.]* Whither he had removed from the cherub or the cherubim, between the mercy seat, (²⁵⁰⁴Ezekiel 10:4); taking another step towards a general departure from the temple and city, of which this was another signal and warning:

and stood over the cherubim: not on the mercy seat from whence he came, for hither he returned not; but over the cherubim or living creatures seen in the vision, which were under the throne in the firmament of heaven; an emblem, as we have seen, of Gospel ministers: and this may denote the exaltation of Christ, who is the glory of the Lord, the brightness of his Father’s glory, above sheen; his protection of them, and presence with them; for, let him move where he will, he will not depart from his faithful ministers; he will be with them to the end of the world.

Ver. 19. *And the cherubim lifted up their wings, &c.*] As birds do, when they are about to remove and fly away; these being upon the motion, ready to depart, as well as the glory of the Lord:

and mounted up from the earth in my sight: the land of Judea, where the Gospel was first preached; but this being slighted and despised, the apostles and first ministers of the Gospel took their flight from thence, and turned to the Gentiles:

when they went out, the wheels also [were] beside them: wherever they went in the Gentile world, their ministry was successful, souls were converted, and churches formed; when the glory of the God of Israel departed from the temple, and from the city of Jerusalem, and from the land of Judea, the Gospel ministry and the Gospel church state were removed likewise, and carried and fixed elsewhere:

and [everyone] stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house; that is, the glory of the God of Israel, and the cherubim, and the wheels, they stood together in one place, the eastern gate of the temple, one of the outward gates: the gate of the court of the Israelites, or outward court, which looked to the east; which shows that they were just going, and leaving the house or temple desolate, no more to return to it; (see ^{<4238>}Matthew 23:38,39); the next remove was into the city, and then to a mountain on the east side of it; (see ^{<26123>}Ezekiel 11:23); it was in the eastern part of the world that the Gospel was first preached, after it was carried from Judea:

and the glory of the God of Israel [was] over them above; both over the cherubim and the wheels; great gifts were bestowed upon the ministers, and great grace was upon the churches; and the presence of God was with both, and a glory on them, and on that glory a defence.

Ver. 20. *This [is] the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel, by the river of Chebar, &c.*] This is repeated from (^{<2605>}Ezekiel 10:15); not only for the confirmation of it; but with an addition, to show that the appearance of the man upon the throne, (^{<26026>}Ezekiel 1:26), is no other than the God of Israel; and inasmuch as Christ is there meant, for the Father never appeared in a human form, it follows that Christ is the God of Israel, under whose power, protection, and influence, the cherubim, his ministers, are; and so this is a proof of the true and proper deity of Christ:

and I knew that they [were] the cherubim; not by having seen the cherubim on the mercy seat, and comparing these forms with them, which none but a high priest could ever see; for, though Ezekiel was a priest, it does not appear that he was a high priest; but by the forms of them he had seen carved on the doors and walls of the temple, (^{<105>}1 Kings 6:29,35).

Ver. 21. *Every one had four faces apiece*, &c.] Every one of the four living creatures, or cherubim, had four faces; which were the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle, (^{<3010>}Ezekiel 1:10);

and everyone four wings: the Septuagint version reads eight wings; and the Syriac version “six”; so many in all indeed they had, (see Gill on ^{<3023>}Ezekiel 1:23”);

and the likeness of the hands of a man [was] under their wings; (see Gill on ^{<3018>}Ezekiel 10:8”).

Ver. 22. *And the likeness of their faces [was] the same faces*, &c.] Or their faces were like the same,

which I saw by the river of Chebar; which prove that the living creatures and the cherubim must be the same:

their appearance and themselves; were exactly the same there was no difference in their faces or in their bodies:

they went everyone straight forward; their motion as well as their form were alike; they kept one even course, looking right on, and their eyes right before them.