**Ezekiel 1-4**

Ezekiel’s Inaugural Vision

**1**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.

**2**On the fifth of the month - it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin -**3**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.

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

**10**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. **11**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. **12**Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. **13**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. **14**The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

**15**As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. **16**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. **17**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. **18**Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around.

**19**When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. **20**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. **21**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.

**22**Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked something like a vault, sparkling like crystal, and awesome. **23**Under the vault their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. **24**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.

**25**Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. **26**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. **27**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. **28**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.

Ezekiel’s Call to Be a Prophet

**2**He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.”**2**As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

**3**He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. **4**The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says.’ **5**And whether they listen or fail to listen - for they are a rebellious people - they will know that a prophet has been among them. **6**And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briers and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or be terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people. **7**You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. **8**But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious people; open your mouth and eat what I give you.”

**9**Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, **10**which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.

**3**And he said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel.” **2**So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.

**3**Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it.” So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

**4**He then said to me: “Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them. **5**You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and strange language, but to the people of Israel - **6**not to many peoples of obscure speech and strange language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely if I had sent you to them, they would have listened to you. **7**But the people of Israel are not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for all the Israelites are hardened and obstinate. **8**But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. **9**I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people.”

**10**And he said to me, “Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. **11**Go now to your people in exile and speak to them. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says,’ whether they listen or fail to listen.”

**12**Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the Lord rose from the place where it was standing. **13**It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures brushing against each other and the sound of the wheels beside them, a loud rumbling sound. **14**The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the Lord on me. **15**I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days - deeply distressed.

Ezekiel’s Task as Watchman

**16**At the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me: **17**“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. **18**When I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. **19**But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself.

**20**“Again, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before them, they will die. Since you did not warn them, they will die for their sin. The righteous things that person did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. **21**But if you do warn the righteous person not to sin and they do not sin, they will surely live because they took warning, and you will have saved yourself.”

**22**The hand of the Lord was on me there, and he said to me, “Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you.” **23**So I got up and went out to the plain. And the glory of the Lord was standing there, like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown.

**24**Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet. He spoke to me and said: “Go, shut yourself inside your house. **25**And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes; you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people. **26**I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious people. **27**But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you shall say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says.’ Whoever will listen let them listen, and whoever will refuse let them refuse; for they are a rebellious people.

Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized

**4**“Now, son of man, take a block of clay, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. **2**Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. **3**Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the people of Israel.

**4**“Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the people of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. **5**I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the people of Israel.

**6**“After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. **7**Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her. **8**I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.

**9**“Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. **10**Weigh out twenty shekels of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. **11**Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water and drink it at set times. **12**Eat the food as you would a loaf of barley bread; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel.” **13**The Lord said, “In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them.”

**14**Then I said, “Not so, Sovereign Lord! I have never defiled myself. From my youth until now I have never eaten anything found dead or torn by wild animals. No impure meat has ever entered my mouth.”

**15**“Very well,” he said, “I will let you bake your bread over cow dung instead of human excrement.”

**16**He then said to me: “Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, **17**for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin.