

Chuck Smith:

Shall we turn at this time to the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel said,

It came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month (Eze 1:1),

So that would be July the fifth. It would be probably the thirtieth year of Ezekiel's life, when he was thirty years old.

as he was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God (Eze 1:1).

Ezekiel was taken to Babylon in the second captivity at the time when Jehoiachin was also taken captive. There were three times that Nebuchadnezzar's armies came against Jerusalem, taking captives back to Babylon. Daniel went back in the first captivity. Ezekiel went in the second captivity.

Now, basically Ezekiel was prophesying to the captives, and when he began his prophecy Jerusalem was still standing. Now, there were false prophets in Babylon that were telling the people, "Look, don't settle down. Don't get a house. God is going to soon defeat Babylon, and we're going to go back right away. So, hang loose, because we're only going to be a little while. The Lord is going to deliver His people, and we're going to return from Babylon very shortly. So just don't settle down."

Now, Jeremiah had been writing to them saying, "Don't listen to the prophets or so-called prophets who are telling you not to settle down. But instead, settle down, get adjusted, because you're going to be there for seventy years. Most of you are going to die in Babylon. So you might as well get used to that fact and just settle down, make the best of the situation."

And so, there were two schools of prophets: the true prophets, the false prophets. But Ezekiel, the true prophet of God, was declaring to them the same thing that Jeremiah was saying--that Jerusalem is not going to be restored immediately, but that Jerusalem is going to be completely destroyed by Babylon. The people are going to be destroyed and scattered, and he is telling the people in Babylon. Now, Jeremiah is writing from Jerusalem, but Ezekiel is there among them, saying, "Now, look, listen to the word of the Lord. Just go ahead and settle down here and settle in, because it's going to be a long time that you'll be in captivity."

So, at the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecies, he began his prophecy before Jerusalem was destroyed in 596. So, in the beginning of his prophecies, he is predicting the destruction of Jerusalem. As he moves further into his prophecy, as time goes on and the prophecy is fulfilled and Jerusalem is destroyed, then there is a change, and now he is encouraging the people that God, in His time, is going to restore again the glory to Israel. Now, he saw the glory of God depart from Jerusalem through the east gate. But as the prophecies continue and as the people are discouraged, when they hear the news that Jerusalem has been devastated, destroyed, he then begins to encourage them, "God is going to work yet again among His people. The glory of God shall return. The glory of God is going to fill the house and the latter glory is going to be greater than the former glory." Israel has not yet seen its heyday, in a sense. It's not yet seen the peak. God is going to yet restore His glory and all, upon Jerusalem and upon Israel. Hard times will intervene or be in the intermittent periods, yet God's work will yet be accomplished among His people.

So, Ezekiel's prophecies actually then go out beyond even our present day. Now Ezekiel saw the restoration of the land. He saw the nation being reborn. He predicted the modern Zionist movement, and the rebirth of the nation Israel. And he predicted that when Israel was born again as a nation, that Russia would come and invade Israel. And as we move on into the prophecy of Ezekiel, we get into all of these interesting, marvelous things, because we move actually from the present on into the future. And we see not only what is happening now, but Ezekiel continues to move on and we see things that will be happening within a year or so, or five, ten years at the most. And then he moves on even beyond that. And we see things that will be happening in Israel during the Kingdom Age and the glorious reign of Jesus Christ, as He comes again and enters in through the east gate of the city and establishes His kingdom here upon the earth.

And so, the prophecy of Ezekiel really begins from this point, when he was about thirty years old, when the word of the Lord first came to him, when he saw these visions of God. This is before the fall of Jerusalem, the

complete destruction, and he describes here his vision of God.

Now, Isaiah had a vision of God. Ezekiel had a vision of the throne of God, and John in the New Testament had a vision of the throne of God. And so from these insights of these three men, we gather our information, concerning the throne of God, concerning the heavenly scene. Now, immediately there arises a difficulty because we are talking now of heavenly things. But we are seeking to describe them in earthly language. Now, there is, no doubt, words we do not yet know that aptly describe the things in heaven. But at the present time they have to remain to us only as word pictures.

So, you take the language that is common to man, words that are common to man, and you use them to the best of your ability to express things that you've never seen before. Weird-looking creatures like you've never dreamed of, intelligent beings, and you try to describe with human language what you're seeing. And immediately you're limited by language, even as if we tried to describe, if we should suddenly have an insight to, say, the year 2000 and we could see all the technical advances and all that man will have achieved by the year 2000. And we try to describe now with our present language, the modes of transportation and all that man will have developed by that time. As we're looking at weird gadgets that we have no concept what they are all about, and yet we see them operating and moving and all, and we say, "You know, the thing just has these stacks or whatever, and the smoke comes out. And people, you know..." and you try to describe the things, but you're limited because of language.

So, it makes the defining of them or the relating of them difficult because of limitation of language. So, we'll have to sort of try to envision those things which Ezekiel is talking about.

You remember when Jesus was talking with Nicodemus, and talking about the fact that a man has to be born again. And he was trying to explain to Nicodemus these concepts that were unfamiliar to Nicodemus. And Nicodemus was asking these questions, "Well how can a man be born again when he's old? You know, you can't return again to your mother's womb to be born. How can you do it?"

And Jesus said, "Look, if I have talked to you about earthly things and you can't understand them, how would you understand if I tried to talk to you about heavenly things? Now the Bible says, "No man understands the things of God, save the Spirit reveal them unto him." So, in getting into these areas, we're talking about things of God. We definitely need the help of the Holy Spirit in our understanding and comprehension of these things. That we might get somewhat of a glimpse or a grasp of them.

Now, I am convinced that what they saw we will be seeing when we enter into the heavenly scene. So it is well for you to acquaint yourself as best as possible with these things, though for right now they may seem to be difficult to really comprehend in your mind, yet one day when we actually see them, and we put, you know, this side by side, we'll say, "Well, he didn't do too bad a job. Yeah, it looks pretty much like that, you know."

So, this was the fifth year in which Jehoiachin had been brought as a captive unto Babylon. Zedekiah was presently the king in Judah, in Jerusalem. Jehoiachin had reigned only three months when Nebuchadnezzar came and took him captive along with his mother and his family, and others of Judah.

And the word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river of Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him (Eze 1:3).

Ezekiel uses this expression seven times, "the hand of the Lord was upon me." And this is the first of the seven times that he uses it. We'll find it again in our study tonight in chapter 3, verses 14 and 22, and then we won't find it again until chapter 8.

And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north (Eze 1:4),

Now the north here would be actually the dwelling place of God. In Isaiah in speaking of Satan's exalting of himself, he said, "I will ascend into the sides of the north." It is thought that in relationship, of course, to the earth that that heavenly kingdom of God dwells somewhere in the area of the north.

Recently this past week, in fact, there was an interesting article in the paper of a vast empty space that has been found in the universe that is baffling to the scientists. And it is sort of upsetting certain theories that they have had in the past. It could really be very disturbing to the big bang theory, because supposedly the debris of the big bang was sort of distributed equally throughout the entire universe and doesn't really give place for vast areas of empty space. But yet, there has been discovered recently this extremely vast area of empty space. And

the area happens to be actually towards the North Star. And there is this vast area of emptiness in space, which at the present time is a real enigma to the astronomers that are studying it, as they try to align this discovery with the current theories that exist of the origin of the universe.

This whirlwind came out of the north. This would not be out of Babylon. He was in Babylon when he saw it.

a great cloud, and a fire that is infolding itself (Eze 1:4),

Now, have you ever seen fire that enfolds itself? It sort of rolls when there is an explosion of highly volatile materials. And as the fireball goes up, it enfolds itself. It rolls around and catches into itself as it goes up. It's quite a phenomena to observe.

I was coming home from Los Angeles years ago, when I was going to school up there and living in Santa Ana. And there was this... there used to be a lot of olive orchards over here in the area of La Mirada. And there was an olive oil factory there and the thing had caught fire. As we were coming home, we came by and of course, you know, you're always fascinated by fire. We got out to watch the fire. We were getting up sort of close, and suddenly the thing exploded. And we watched this ball of fire going up, and the fire enfolding itself as it went up. This ball of fire is going up, but it keeps coming around and enfolding itself on into this ball. And it's a fascinating phenomena to behold.

And as Ezekiel is seeing now, coming out of this area of the north, this great cloud, and it is interesting that the Bible speaks so often of God being covered with a cloud. The clouds of glory that surround God. There on the mount when God came down and spoke with Moses, there was the cloud of God's glory that covered Mount Sinai and the fire, again, the fireballs that were emitting forth from it.

the brightness was about it [there was a brightness about it], and out of the midst [or the middle] thereof was the color of amber, that was coming out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the middle thereof there came the likeness of four living creatures (Eze 1:4).

So here in the middle of this glorious brightness that's sort of a ball of fire enfolding itself in the cloud, there in the midst of it was this beautiful amber color and also these four leaving creatures.

And this was their appearance; they looked somewhat like a man. But every one of them had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass (Eze 1:5-6).

So, again, he's using human language to describe creatures like he had never seen before. And so we have to use our imaginations in trying to, in our minds, picture or visualize these four living creatures, looking somewhat like a man, each one having four faces, each of them having four wings. Their feet are sort of like a calf's, sort of cloven like a calf's foot, but they look like bright burnished brass.

And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. And their wings were joined one to another, and they turned not when they went; but they went every one straight forward (Eze 1:8-9).

So, their movement was in a straight-line type of movement, rather than rounding, sort of straight type of movement of these creatures.

Now as we go on with the description of these four living creatures, we realize that these are paralleled to the four living creatures that John saw, when in the book of Revelation, chapter 4, he also had a vision of the throne of God. And he saw these four living creatures with their four faces, and John also describes them in the book of Revelation. Ezekiel describes them again in chapter 10, when he sees them in chapter 10. And there he identifies to us what these living creatures are, and there we discover that these are cherubim--a created being of God, intelligent beings of God, beings that surround God. In Revelation we are told that they cease not day or night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, and which is to come."

Now this ties in then with God's directions to Moses in the building of the tabernacle, which the book of Hebrews tells us is a model of heaven. Now most of you fellows have built at some time or other in your life a model of either a car or a plane. And you're not building a P-51, but you're building a model of the P-51. You can't get in and fly it, but when you build the model, it looks like, it resembles the real thing. A model is just a resemblance of the real thing. So, the tabernacle was just a model of the real thing. The real thing is in heaven.

The tabernacle was a model of heaven. And in the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies, which is a model of the throne of God in heaven, Moses was told to have these cherubim made out of gold above the mercy seat. Their wings touching each other, and the edges of their wings touching the edge of this little cubical, which was fifteen feet cubical, golden room, and this is again the model of the heavenly things.

So, there are these cherubim, these living creatures, no doubt highly intelligent creatures, though they look like they are, perhaps, some kind of a genetic freak, as far as combining with four faces and feet like a calf and all, but yet they are these creatures that are there about the throne of God.

He goes on to describe them.

As for the likeness of their faces, the four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they had the face of an ox on the left side; and they also had the face of an eagle (Eze 1:10).

So, there were four faces on each of them. The front face was like a man. The right side of it was like a lion. The left side like an ox, and behind like an eagle. Now, as I say, they looked like some kind of genetic monstrosity as you look at them. There are some who see in these four faces the four gospels as they describe Jesus Christ. For in the gospels, Christ is described as the Son of man in Luke's gospel. In Matthew's gospel He is described as the Lion of the tribe of Judah--or rather, Mark's gospel. Matthew's gospel, He is the servant, the ox, the beast of service. And in John's gospel, the deity, the eagle.

But thus were their faces: their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went everywhere straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went (Eze 1:11-12).

Now because they had faces going in every direction, you just, you know, move you straight. You don't have to turn your head to go, you just move in straight movements.

And as for the likeness of these living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire (Eze 1:13),

Now picture your barbecue and the burning coals of fire on it.

and like the appearance of lamps: and it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire there came forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning (Eze 1:13-14).

So they could move with the speed of light almost. Their movement was extremely fast and like a lightning bolt, just, you know. The appearance of a flash of lightning.

Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. And the appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four (Eze 1:15-16)

Which would be green.

they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel (Eze 1:16).

So, again, he's using human language trying to describe their appearance and so forth, and these wheels. And it was like a wheel within a middle of the wheel and these flashes of light and so forth as they move in this green glow, like a beryl in color.

And when they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went (Eze 1:17).

This is the third time he mentions this, so it's probably quite remarkable to him. He hasn't seen anything like this, as far as, you know, the earth and on the earth.

As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful [awesome]; their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. And whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, and thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature

was in the wheels. Now when those went, these went; when those stood still, these stood still; and when they were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature (Eze 1:18-21)

Again he repeats,

was in the wheels. And the likeness of the firmament [above their heads] upon the heads of the living creatures was the color of an awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above (Eze 1:21-22).

In other words, now he's describing the area around the throne of God. These creatures were under the throne of God. And this was like an awesome crystal.

John saw this sea of glass likened to crystal that was there before the throne of God. And as you read, Revelation 4, you'll find that it parallels very much this vision of Ezekiel as both of these men, bound by human limitations, tried to describe the heavenly scene, the throne of God and the glory of God that they behold in these visions.

And under the firmament were their wings straight, and one toward the other: every one had two, which they covered their side, every one had two, which covered the sides of their bodies (Eze 1:23).

With two they touched each other, with two they covered the sides of their bodies.

And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters (Eze 1:24),

Have you ever been to Niagara Falls? Ever been up in Yosemite to Vernal Falls or Nevada Falls and you hear this noise of great waters, sort of a roar. And so, as they moved there was this roar. The flash is like lightning and the straight direction type movements.

as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of a host: when they stood, they let down their wings (Eze 1:24).

So, when they were standing, their wings would come down to their side.

And there was a voice from [this heaven] this firmament [this expanse above them] that was over their heads, when they stood, and they had let down their wings. And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone [which is blue]: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake (Eze 1:25-28).

So, you might find it interesting when you have your own study to read Daniel 7, 9, and 10, as Daniel describes his vision of God. Isaiah chapter 6, as he describes his vision of the throne of God, and then Revelation chapter 4, as John describes his, and you put them all together and you get a pretty good composite of what the heavenly scene must look like.

This bow, John describes it in Revelation chapter 4, a bow like emerald, sort of a greenish in color that is around about the throne of God. Ezekiel describes it here. John had much the same reaction of just falling on his face. Daniel was weak as a result of his vision. He just was totally weakened by it. Ezekiel fell on his face and he heard the voice of one that spake.

Now, flying saucer buffs declare that Ezekiel actually sighted a flying saucer. That there are extraterrestrial beings that have visited the earth and have been visiting the earth during the historic period of man. And that they actually account for many of the otherwise unaccountable phenomena of history, some of the mammoth building projects of ancient man, which still baffle us today. And they, of course, go out to the desert or to various areas, and they have these sightings of these flying saucers, and there is just an awful lot that has been written, has been discussed, has been talked about flying saucers, and there have been many reports and much interesting phenomena surrounding these flying saucers.

Many of them can be accounted for as, perhaps, swamp gases and other things, but yet there are others that reasonably intelligent men have expressed and described and it's hard to discount them all.

Lambert Dolphin who is a scientist up at the University of Stanford, one of the scientists, I believe his area is that of astrophysics, quite outstanding, very intelligent man, was asked to speak at one of these flying saucer conventions. And so he prepared a paper on flying saucers in which he thought that he would, before the convention, thoroughly debunk this whole flying saucer kind of a... what he thought mythology. And he was approaching it from just a purely scientific standpoint, and was going to take so many of the concepts that they had about moving on the magnetic forces and all of this, and seek to thoroughly, from a scientific standpoint, debunk the thing.

As he was sitting there on the platform, and there were about three thousand people at this convention, the speaker, and of course he was interested that these weren't freaky people. You know, you think that people who see flying saucers and all are sort of fringe, freaky kind of people. But he realized that among them there were professors, other scientists, peace officers, a wide cross-section of our society.

The leader of the convention asked the people, "How many of you have ever seen a flying saucer?" And he was shocked that about two-thirds of the hands in the auditorium went up. People had said they had sighted flying saucers. He then asked, "How many of you have been taken aboard a flying saucer?" And a third of the people raised their hands. And he began to get a little concerned. When he stood up to speak, he heard this screaming noise that was extremely distracting to him. And he wondered, "Where is that coming from?" And he looked around the audience to see what direction the people might be looking, because he figured that those that were closest to the screaming noise would be looking at it and he could localize where it was and then ask the ushers or someone to take care of that and get rid of it. But he said, suddenly he realized that nobody was looking around anywhere and that he was the only one that was hearing this screaming noise. And to this man of science there came suddenly the awareness, "Hey, this whole thing is demonic." And he got so shook that he was unable to deliver his paper in which he was going to debunk the whole flying saucer theory or ideas, concepts. He was just totally shaken.

Now, the interesting thing to me is that these people do try to bring Ezekiel into their fold, into their number. "Look, he describes it. He perfectly describes it in his book." Wait a minute, what does Ezekiel describe? As I said, in chapter 10 Ezekiel again describes it, but he tells us what it is, "These are the cherubim that are there before the throne of God." These wheels within the wheels, with the flashes of lightning and the movements and so forth. And if you heard them describe how the flying saucers move in the straight type of lines, they don't make a wide arc when they turn. They just... straight line type of movement, being able to change directions and so forth with tremendous speed. Able to hover and then suddenly move off with tremendous speeds.

Is it possible that these people who are sighting these UFO's are also dabbling into the occult and are seeing fallen cherubim? We know that when Satan fell that one-third of the angelic host went with him. It is interesting that the Bible says that Satan was indeed a cherubim. He was the anointed--not a cherubim, because cherubim is plural. Cherub is the singular. He was an anointed cherub that covered. But there are cherubim, plural. It is very possible that we are dealing in an interesting area of the occult and that there are these cherubim that are making themselves visible to those who are dabbling into that realm of occultism.

Now what Ezekiel saw were the cherubim there at the throne of God, but it would also stand that the cherubim who fell would have a similar likeness or appearance and movements. So, it is possible that we cannot thoroughly discount this whole flying saucer phenomena as a bunch of junk, but it could indeed be that in these last days, as satanic forces are growing, as far as the demonstrations of their power. That as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man. And there was strong demonic activity in the days of Noah, and we're coming into the area again of strong demonic activity.

Now I offer that as only a suggestion. I'm not declaring to you, "Oh, I've got some great mysterious truth I'm revealing now, you know. This is the way it happened or this is the way." This is just a suggestion. Something to think about. And I'll let it go at that.

Chapter 2

And he said unto me, Son of man (Eze 2:1),

Now this is a title that Ezekiel uses quite often. It is a title that Jesus uses in the New Testament concerning

Himself. It is a title that was used here for Ezekiel, and quite often the Lord refers to Ezekiel as son of man.

He said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet (Eze 2:1),

Now you remember he fell on his face when he saw this whole thing, saw the throne of God and the brightness and the flashes and all. He fell on his face, and he heard a voice of one speaking. And the voice said, "Stand up."

and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me (Eze 2:1-2).

First he saw, now he is hearing this word of the Lord.

And he said unto me, Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: and their father's have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children, they're stiffhearted. And I send you unto them; and you shall say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah God (Eze 2:3-4).

So, he is now commissioned by God to go, not to the house of Judah only, but to the whole children of Israel.

And they, whether they hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall they know that there has been a prophet among them (Eze 2:5).

I'm going to send you to speak in My name, and whether they listen or not doesn't matter. They are a rebellious people. When you're through, they're going to know that there was a prophet among them.

And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and you do dwell among scorpions: don't be afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house (Eze 2:6).

Now, he's telling him, "Hey, they're not apt to receive you. They're rebellious, they're impudent children, and they may take the thorns and pull the thorns across you. A method by which they would punish people is take these thorns and pull them across a person's body. They have some really heavy thorn bushes over there. But don't worry about that.

For you are to speak my words unto them, whether or not they listen. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto you; Don't you be rebellious like that rebellious house: open your mouth, and eat that which I give to you. And when I looked, behold, there was a hand that was sent unto me; and, lo, [there was a scroll of a book within it, or] there was a roll of a scroll [actually] therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was writing therein, which were lamentations, and mourning, woe (Eze 2:7-10).

So, the Lord says, "You know, now you're to eat what I set before you." And the Lord sets before him this scroll. And he opens it out and all of these woes and lamentations and mournings are written therein.

The eating of it, of course, is symbolic, even as in the book of John. John was given the scroll and he did eat it. And when it was in his mouth, sweet as honey, but in his belly it was bitter. Here he is told to eat the words. Now, you read of a person devouring a book. We say, "Oh, he really devoured that book." Now you don't mean that he roasted it and put ketchup on it and took his knife and fork and ate the thing. But he absorbed it, and even as your food becomes a part of your being, so words, ideas, thoughts can become a part of your being as you absorb them. They affect your life. So he is told to eat, to digest in a sense, or eat, devour the words that are here.

We are to feast on the Word of God that it might become a part of our lives. We're to have an appetite, a hunger for the Word of God. And as we partake or eat of God's Word, it is as it was to Ezekiel, sweet, it was good, the Word of God.

Chapter 3

Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that which you find; eat this scroll, and then go and speak to the house of Israel (Eze 3:1).

In other words, devour it and then go give it forth. You see, that's really what the ministry is all about. You devour the Word of God and then you give it forth to the people, where it is now a part of you. You read and absorb the Word until it becomes a part of your very life, and then you give it out unto others.

So I opened my mouth, he caused me to eat that scroll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause your belly to eat it, and fill your bowels with this scroll that I give to you. Then I did eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, and get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with them my words. For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech (Eze 3:2-5)

Notice he sent to the house of Israel. You're not sent to a bunch of strangers, foreigners, people with the language that you have difficulty with. You can't understand.

but you're sent to the house of Israel; Not to many people of a strange speech and of a hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, I had sent thee unto them, they would have hearkened (Eze 3:5-6).

If I'd send you to these heathen, they would have listened to you. But I'm sending you to the house of Israel.

But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all of the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted. Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house (Eze 3:7-9).

They're going to give you some dirty looks, but don't be afraid. Speak My word.

Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all of my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in your heart, and hear with thine ears (Eze 3:10).

So, receive in your heart, hear with your ears all of these words. Let them become a part of your life.

And go, get thee to them of the captivity, the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; and whether they will hear or not. Then the spirit took me up (Eze 3:11-12),

Now, he's caught up by the Spirit.

I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing (Eze 3:12),

You remember like the rushing waters.

saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place. And I heard also the noise of the wings of these living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and the noise of a great rushing. So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me. (Eze 3:12-13).

So, he had this fascinating experience now. As people say they've been taken up in these flying saucers and all, it would appear that he had somewhat a similar experience of an astro projection with these cherubim.

Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, those that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and I remained there astonished among them for seven days (Eze 3:15).

So he comes to the east of the captives, there at Telabib, and he's just astonished by what he sees. And he just sits there for seven days in silence, sort of overawed and astonished.

Now you remember when Job was having all of his difficulties and his friends came to comfort him, for seven days they didn't say a word. They just sat there in silence until Job opened up his mouth and began to complain about his condition. Sitting in silence. So here is Ezekiel doing much the same thing, just sitting in silence as he observes this whole scene of these people.

And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word of the LORD at my mouth, and give them warning from me (Eze 3:16-17).

So God is now calling him, commissioning him. "Look, I've made you a watchman. That's your commission. Your duty is two-fold: number one, hear My word; two, give them My word." Hearing the voice of God, hearing the word of God and then giving forth the word of God. This is always the method of God. There are many people who do not listen to God. Their ear is out of tune, out of frequency. God always uses those who are in touch with Him to reach those who are out of touch with Him. God uses you, in touch with Him, to reach the world out of touch with Him. And that is the primary purpose why you are still here. God has a work for you to do. God is wanting to touch this needy world. God uses those who are in touch with Him to, through them, touch the needy world. "Hear My word, and then speak My word to them."

Now, when I say to the wicked, You will surely die; and if you do not warn him, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hand. Yet if you warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul (Eze 3:18-19).

Now, look, I've set you as a watchman, and you are responsible to hear My word and to speak My word. And if I say to the wicked, "You're going to die," if you warn them and they listen, great, they will live. If they don't listen, at least you've delivered your soul. If you don't warn them and they die, then you're responsible. The blood is on your hands.

What does it mean to have the blood on my hands? What does it mean to fail in my service to God? If God is saying to the wicked, "Hey, you better turn," and God uses or calls me to be the spokesman to warn those people that they better turn from their wickedness or God's judgment is coming, and if I fail to do it and God's judgment comes and they're destroyed, what does that mean that their blood is on my hands? It means that God holds me responsible, and that the reward that I would have for faithful service will not be given to me.

Now, notice he wasn't told to convince the wicked to turn. He wasn't told to argue with them. He was only told to declare to them the warning of God. That's all. We so often in our Christian experience make the mistake of thinking that we've got to somehow convert people to Jesus Christ. You can't convert them to Jesus Christ. God doesn't call you to convert people to Jesus Christ. He calls you to warn people. And therein is the calling of God. "I've called you," He said, "to warn them." You've got to obey it. You've got to be responsible.

Now, again, When a righteous man does turn from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, and he shall die (Eze 3:20):

In other words, here's a guy turned from God, going down the wrong path, and God puts the stumblingblock that's going to trip him into hell.

and because thou has not given him a warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at your hand (Eze 3:20).

What does this have to do with eternal security? Really nothing. We're dealing in the Old Testament. And that righteousness which existed in the Old Testament was the righteousness of obedience to the law; whereas the righteousness that we have in the New Testament is the righteousness that is imputed to us by our faith in Jesus Christ. So you're dealing with a different righteousness.

Secondly, there is an association, because there are many who have made a profession, and there are many today who do profess to be Christians, but whose lives are being lived after the flesh. And I don't care what profession you might make. John surely warns us that there are people who are making false professions. "He that saith he is in the light, and walks in darkness lies. He doesn't know the truth. He that says he has no sin deceives himself. God's truth isn't in him. If a man say... " and men say a lot of things, but there's got to be a corresponding action in his life. If I say I'm walking in the light, and yet I am living after the flesh and walking in darkness, I'm only deceiving myself. The truth isn't in me. And there are a lot of people who have deceived themselves because they have made verbal professions of faith, but there is no fruit in their life to indicate any change. And they are still living and walking after the flesh. And yet, the Word of God plainly warns us concerning those works of the flesh.

As Paul said, "For the works of the flesh are manifest which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strifes, seditions, heresy, envyings, murder, drunkenness, revelry, and such like of which I tell you. I've told you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

Now I don't care what profession you've made. If you're living and walking after the flesh, if you are living in the practice of sin, opposed to God, I don't care what righteous things you may have done. Your very life is denying Jesus Christ and faith in Jesus Christ, through which faith God imputes righteousness to us. But your very life denies Him, and you're going to perish in your sin.

And God is commissioning Ezekiel to warn the people of the truth of God. "That's what you got to do, Ezekiel, and once you do, you've delivered your soul." And I'm warning you, as the servant of God, according to the Word of God and my understanding of the Word of God, if you continually are living after the flesh, not walking after the Spirit, not being led by the Spirit, not seeking the things of the Spirit, it makes no difference what profession you may have made, your life is denying Christ. And many people have been lulled into a false sense of security by false prophets who encourage them to just live however you want. It doesn't really matter. "Just send your offering in and things will be okay." Don't believe them.

And the hand of the LORD was there upon me (Eze 3:22);

And this is, again, the third time he uses this phrase.

and he said unto me, Arise, and go forth into the plain, and I will talk with thee there. So I arose, and I went forth into the plain (Eze 3:22-23):

Now this is from the river Chebar. He left and went to the plain. Now he had sort of a divine transport to the river Chebar, but he has to walk away.

Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face (Eze 3:23).

God isn't limited to one locality. He's everywhere, and He's in the plain as well as by the river. And sometimes He will give directions and will allow you to do things one way, but then other times it's different ways. Our problem is that we try to pattern God. "Well, now, this is the way that God did it before," as though God has to continue in the same pattern. And we oftentimes make mistakes of thinking that God is patterned and God is bound to one method or one way. And we as men so easily fall into that rut of trying to do, "Well, this is the way, you know, they did it. This is the way our fathers did it." You know, and we get in these ruts. And that's one of the problems with the church. It's so filled with "rutuals" that it doesn't communicate to people anymore.

Then the spirit entered into me, and he set me upon my feet (Eze 3:24),

Notice, He's always setting him on his feet. It's interesting, he's always falling on his face every time he sees the glory of the Lord, falls on his face, and then the Spirit comes along and sets him up on his feet.

and he spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within your house. But thou, Son of man, behold, they're going to put bands on thee, they're going to bind thee with them, and you shall not to go out among them (Eze 3:24-25):

Now, go, set yourself in the house. But they're going to come and bind you there.

And I will make your tongue cleave to the roof of your mouth, and you're going to be dumb, you're not going to be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house (Eze 3:26).

Now, I'm going to smite you with dumbness. You're not going to be able to talk to them. Now, he's just been commissioned to tell them, but for a period now he's not going to be able to speak.

But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear (Eze 3:27);

Now remember over and over in the New Testament Jesus said, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." Now, this was to impress upon Ezekiel the fact that he wasn't to just blurt out his own ideas to these people, but he was to wait until God spoke, and when God spoke then he was to speak. But not before. And to insure it, God was just going to smite him with dumbness so he couldn't. Sometimes I wish God would smite me with dumbness. I wish I could take back some of the things I have said.

and he that forbeareth, let him forbear (Eze 3:27):

If they don't listen, so what.

they're a rebellious house (Eze 3:27).

Don't bother with that. You just tell them what I tell you to tell them.

Chapter 4

Now thou also, Son of man, take a tile (Eze 4:1),

Now this is a brick, and it's about twelve inches by fourteen inches. The archeologists have uncovered thousands of these bricks there in the area of Babylon. This is what they wrote their records on. And their libraries were full of these tiles or bricks. They were a clay brick and they would write, they would scratch in these clay bricks. And so the Lord is telling him to take one of these drawing boards, one of these drawing pads, and draw a picture of Jerusalem and then draw a siege against Jerusalem.

casting up a mount against it; and set the camp also against it, and set battering rams around it. And take unto thee an iron pan [or an iron plate], and set it for a wall of iron between you and the city: and set thy face against this iron plate, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. And this shall be a sign to the house of Israel (Eze 4:2-3).

So he's going to give them now a little illustrated sermon. He takes this clay tile, clay brick, and he draws the picture of Jerusalem. And draws these armies camped against it. And he draws these battering rams knocking down the wall. And then he takes this iron plate and he puts the plate there and pushes it against between him and the city, as the city is in siege, and of course, he is there showing how that God Himself is coming against the city. God is destined to turn it over into the hands of their enemies.

Now, the false prophets were saying to the people, "Don't worry, Jerusalem is going to conquer the Babylonians. They're going to destroy them and then they're going to come and take us home." Ezekiel's saying, "Not so," and he's drawing these pictures and saying, "This is the way it's going to happen. This is the way it's going to be."

Now the second illustration. And there are four ways by which he is to illustrate the truth to them. The second is a little more difficult.

Lie also upon your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when you have accomplished them, then turn on your right side, and you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah for forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year (Eze 4:4-6).

So the Lord says, "Lie there on your left side for three hundred and ninety days in which you bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. This is how many years they were filled with iniquity against Me." So he had to lie there for three hundred and ninety days on his left side, bearing the iniquity of the house of Israel. A day for a year. Then after that, turned over--I bet it felt good--over on his right side. And then another forty days lying on his right side.

Now, I don't think that he lay there the whole while. Probably each day would go down and lie out there on his side. But I do feel that he probably got up and moved around and so forth, but he was always... whenever the people would see him, he was lying there on his left side, going out every morning and assuming the position and then just saying, "I'm bearing the iniquity of the house of Israel. This is how many years." And then forty years for the house of Judah.

Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and your arm shall be uncovered, and ye shall prophesy against it. And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till you have ended the days of the siege. Now take also (Eze 4:7-9)

And this is the third way by which he was going to illustrate to these people what was going to happen to Jerusalem. It wasn't going to conquer the Babylonian army, but it was going to be defeated.

Take unto you wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and fitches [which is a kind of a corn], and put them in one vessel, and make thee the bread [by these mixed grains] (Eze 4:9),

So he had multiple grained bread.

according to the number of days that you shall lie on your side; three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof (Eze 4:9).

So, for this period that he's lying there, he's got to be eating this bread.

And thy meat which thou shalt eat by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time you shall eat it. And thou shalt drink also thy water by measure (Eze 4:10-11),

In other words, measure out the water.

a sixth part of a hin (Eze 4:11):

So it's about a quart of water a day that he's allowed.

And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with the dung that comes from man, in their sight (Eze 4:12).

Now this is to show the siege that is going to happen to Jerusalem, how that the people who were in Jerusalem are going to be suffering from famine. There is going to be a water shortage. They'll be measuring out the water. There is going to be a shortage of grains, so that they'll be mixing their grains together for their bread, gathering whatever they can to make the bread. And there is going to be a shortage of food and the people are going to be starving to death, and this is to be a picture to these people in Babylon. "Look, Jerusalem is not going to be victorious. They're going to be destroyed. The people are going to be starving to death there within the city."

And the LORD said, Even thus shall their children of Israel eat the defiled bread [they will be defiled; they'll eat defiled bread] among the Gentiles, where I'm going to drive them (Eze 4:13).

I'm going to drive them out of the land and they're going to be eating this defiled bread.

Then said I, Ah Lord, GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dies of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth (Eze 4:14).

Lord, I've been kosher all my life, and now you're telling me to be non-kosher. Lord, I can't do that.

And he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for the man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread with it. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, I am going to break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by the weight, and with carefulness; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and they will be consumed away for their iniquity (Eze 4:15-17).

Chapter 5

Now the fourth thing that he uses as an illustration.

Take a sharp knife, sharpen it like a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon your head and upon your beard (Eze 5:1).

Shave your head and your beard. He must surely have been a colorful sight there to these people. No doubt they took notice. They would have a hard time not observing.

then take balances to weigh, and divide your hair. And you shall burn with fire a third part in the middle of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and you shall take a third part, and cut it [chop it up] with a knife: and a third part you're to scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. And thou shalt take thereof a few [a few of these hairs] in number, and bind them in your skirts. Then take those again, and cast them [those

that you bound in your skirt] in the midst of the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth unto all the house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her. And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness (Eze 5:1-6)

They've taken the judgments of God, the law of God, and they've turned it into wickedness. Look at our nation today, how we have taken the laws of God and turned them into wickedness. How that the laws today are supporting wickedness. It's exactly what they had done. God's judgment is coming forth upon them. God's judgment will surely come upon our land just as sure as God's judgment came upon Israel. God's judgment is coming upon our land because of taking the laws and making them support evil, wickedness.

and they have done so more than all of the nations, and my statutes they've changed more than all of the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, you've not walked in my statutes, neither have you kept my judgments, neither have you done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and I will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of all the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do anymore the like, because of all your abominations (Eze 5:6-9).

I'm going to do something to you like I've never done before, but it's because of the abominations.

Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee (Eze 5:10),

They'll cannibalize each other before the whole thing is over.

the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all of the detestable things, and with all your abominations, therefore will I diminish thee; neither shall my eyes spare, neither will I have any pity. A third part of thee (Eze 5:10-12)

Now here's the hair divided into three parts, a third part is burned.

So a third part of thee will be consumed by the pestilence [the burning pestilence], and the famine within the city (Eze 5:12):

Before Babylon conquers the city, a third part of the people will have already died because of the disease and the famine that exists within Jerusalem.

and then a third part of them will be destroyed by the sword (Eze 5:12)

When the Babylonian army comes in, another third part of them will be wiped out with the sword, and then the remaining third part will be scattered around, but God will bring the sword after them. And they will be destroyed. But there will be a small remnant that God will preserve and out of that small remnant, God will start over and He will ultimately bring them back into the land.

Thus my anger be accomplished, I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury upon them. Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by (Eze 5:13-14).

Speaking against Jerusalem.

So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I the LORD have spoken it (Eze 5:15).

So the judgment of God upon them would be for instruction to these nations as they are astonished at what God has done.

And when I shall send upon them the evil arrows of my famine, which shall be for their destruction, which I will

send to destroy you: and will increase the famine upon you, and break your staff of bread: So will I send upon you famine, and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it (Eze 5:16-17).

So God speaks of the judgment that is going to come, warning the people, "Hey, don't think that Jerusalem is going to conquer. Don't think that you're going to be delivered soon." God's judgment is not yet complete. He is going to bring utter devastation unto the city of Jerusalem. It's to be destroyed, those that remain there to the present time, a third of them will be killed with the famine, a third will be destroyed by the sword, the third that escape will also be destroyed, for He'll send out a sword against them.

And so then he makes a prophecy as we move on against the mountains of Israel. Now as we get to chapter 34, again, a prophecy to the mountains of Israel, but in chapter 34, it's God beginning His work of restoration. Remember the devastation is going to come, but after the devastation in time to come, God is going to restore. And so we are living in those days now, when God has begun His work of restoration. And as you read the thirty-fourth chapter and read of what God is going to do, "cause the mountains" --he's speaking here of the curses that are going to come upon the mountains because they've built altars upon them. They're going to be barren and so forth, and thus they were for centuries, for millenniums. But then in chapter 34, the prophecies again to the mountains and the restoration, and God is going to put trees on them and there'll be vineyards on them and so forth. And you go to Israel today, you can see the fulfillment of chapter 34 as God has begun His work of restoration in the land.

So the book of Ezekiel is exciting, because it tells, you know, of the judgment, which did come, but it also tells of the future restoration, which is happening today. And so the book of Ezekiel goes from the past history, but it will come right up to current events and then it'll go on into the future and gets ahead of us, even from where we are at this point. And so, you're going to find it an extremely fascinating book as we go through it.

Father, we thank You for Thy Word. Oh, God help us that we might devour Thy Word. That it might become a part of our lives. That we'll be able, then Lord, to speak Thy Word even as You have commanded us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May the Lord bless and keep you through the week. And may you live after the Spirit, walk after the Spirit, follow after the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Therefore, let a man examine himself, for if we will judge ourselves, then we will not be judged of God. For I speak to you in the name of the Lord, if you are living and walking after the flesh and indulging in the areas and the things of the flesh, God will bring you into judgment. It will destroy you. You need to walk after the Spirit and may God guide and help you. In Jesus' name.