

EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION

BIBLE TEXT : Ezekiel 1:1-28; 2:1-10; 3:1-27

LESSON 407 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 3:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Ezekiel 1:1-28

1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the river of Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

2 In the fifth *day* of the month, which *was* the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness *was* about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

5 Also out of the midst thereof *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this *was* their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

7 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 colour of burnished brass.

8 And *they had* the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

9 Their wings *were* joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

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

11 Thus *were* their faces: and their wings *were* stretched upward; two *wings* of every one *were* joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; *and* they turned not when they went.

13 As for the likeness of the living

Bible References:

Notes:

The Captivity

God had meant just exactly what He said when He told the Israelites that if they would not obey His commandments, He would punish them. "Because ye have not heard my words, . . . this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jeremiah 25:8-11. See Lesson No. 375.) The time had come when God let wicked kings take the people hundreds of miles from their homes in Jerusalem. The mighty men, the craftsmen, and the royal families were driven from their homes into Babylon. In a future lesson we shall study about Daniel and the three Hebrew children who were among those sent away from home.

Ezekiel, the priest, was one of the good men who was a captive in Babylon. While there God used him to preach to the people. The name "Ezekiel" means "God strengthens" or "God will prevail."

The Visions

On the fifth day of the fourth month, as Ezekiel was by the river of Chebar with his fellow countrymen, he had a marvellous experience: "The heavens were opened" and he saw "visions of God."

We read in the Bible of others who had visions and dreams from the Lord. Today, the Lord does not very often give visions to His people; and dreams, which are really from the Lord are not common. He expects us to read His Word and to be led by His Spirit, and we have ministers and Sunday School teachers to show us the way.

The vision which Ezekiel saw was by no means mere imagination for he was wide awake and alert at the time; "The hand of the LORD was there upon him." All of a sudden as he looked, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud and a fire, and brightness the colour of amber came out of the fire. Then he saw four living creatures something like a man, with the hands of a man, but every one had four faces. One face was as a man, one as a lion, one as the face of an ox, and one as the face of an eagle. Each creature had four wings; the tips of two touched together, and the other two covered their body. Ezekiel noticed that the creatures, or angels, went straight forward — "they turned not when they went," for they had a face looking each direction.

They sparkled like polished brass and their appearance was as burning coals of fire and bright lamps. Swiftly, as the flash of lightning, they moved back and forth. Then Ezekiel saw a wheel, and another wheel in the middle of the first wheel. When the wheels were lifted up from the earth the creatures were lifted up; whenever the creatures stood still, the wheels stood still. When the creatures stood, they let down their wings and covered their bodies.

The Glory of the Lord

When they flew, it sounded as the noise of great waters or as

creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, *and* like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

15 Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.

16 The appearance of the wheels and their work *was* like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work *was* as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: *and* they turned not when they went.

18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings *were* full of eyes round about them four.

19 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.

20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, 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.

21 When those went, *these* went; and when those stood, *these* stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature *was* in the wheels.

22 And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature *was* as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

23 And under the firmament *were* their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

24 And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.

25 And there *was* a voice from the firmament that *was* over their heads, when they stood, *and* had let down their wings.

26 And above the firmament that *was* over their heads *was* the likeness of a

the voice of the Almighty. Then as Ezekiel watched he saw them reverently let their wings fall as there appeared in the heavens a throne with fire around it, very bright as a beautiful rainbow. Above it appeared a man surrounded by the glory of the Lord. Ezekiel fell upon his face as he heard a voice that spoke to him.

Just as John, of whom we read in Revelation, fell upon his face when he saw a vision of the glorified Christ, so Ezekiel fell upon his face. That is the right attitude to take toward the Holy Lord. Before we enter into any service for God, we feel our unworthiness and we kneel in prayer to God, the Almighty One, asking His help.

Isaiah, too, had a vision from the Lord and saw the seraphims and cherubims, or angels, and the Lord high and lifted up sitting upon a throne. The Lord gave him a message for the people. No doubt both Isaiah and Ezekiel recognised the living creatures as cherubims or angels (**Ezekiel 10:20** ²⁰ This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they *were* the cherubims.). Solomon's Temple contained beautiful carvings of angels (II Chronicles 3).

The Message

The Lord said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee." Part of the message the Lord gave him was: "I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted." God's message to the wicked was, "Thou shalt surely die." By that, God meant that such a person's soul would be forever lost.

Ezekiel was told to preach to the captive people; they should know that there had been a prophet among them. The Lord said for him not to be afraid of their looks or their words, even though briars, thorns and scorpions were with him. Perhaps the words from the wicked people would cut Ezekiel and hurt him as sharp thorns, or even as a serpent's sting. Sometimes words can "hurt" one as much or even more than actual wounds. Three times in these chapters the Lord told Ezekiel to speak His words "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear."

Today the Lord wants us to tell the Story of Jesus and warn sinners of the Judgement. That is why our church holds street meetings and prison meetings, publishes Gospel literature and holds church services. It is our duty to publish the message of salvation even though people often refuse to listen.

"Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house," the Lord said. Then Ezekiel was given a roll of a book to eat, which was symbolic of having his heart completely filled with the urgency of his message. They "will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me," the Lord said, for they were "impudent and hardhearted."

A Watchman

Then the Spirit lifted Ezekiel up and took him away. Later he came again to the captives by the river of Chebar and remained there seven days. After that the Lord said, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me." If Ezekiel would not be faithful to warn the people, and sinners would die in their sins, God said that He would hold Ezekiel responsible. On the other hand, if Ezekiel warned a person and he did not heed the warning and turn from his sins, should that person die, Ezekiel would not be held accountable.

God said also that if a righteous person should turn from his

throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne *was* the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

27 And I saw as the colour 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.

28 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 upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Ezekiel 2:1-10

1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

2 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.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, *even* unto this very day.

4 For *they are* impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

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

6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns *be* with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house.

7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they *are* most rebellious.

8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

9 And when I looked, behold, an hand *was* sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book *was* therein;

10 And he spread it before me; and it *was* written within and without: and *there was* written therein lamentations, and

righteousness and commit sin, or backslide, and should die in his sin, all the righteousness that he had done would not be remembered. His former goodness would not help him then.

Losing God's Love

This teaches us that when we are saved we must not let the love of God slip out of our heart. Some false teachers say that when once we are saved, it is impossible to be lost. But we see very clearly from the 20th verse of the third chapter that it is possible to fall back into sin and to be lost, even after having been saved. However, God is able to keep us from falling. How diligently we should read the Word and pray before we begin each day's activities.

Fulfilling the Call

Ezekiel was a faithful prophet of God and for more than twenty years he preached to the people and taught them that even though they were eager to return to their homes in Jerusalem they must first return to their God.

We, too, are called to be spiritual watchmen to warn sinners of the coming judgement. Let us not be disobedient to the voice of God.

"Would you care if some friend

You have met day by day

Should never be told about Jesus?

Are you willing that he in the judgement shall

say:

'No one ever told me of Jesus?'"

QUESTIONS

1. Give a brief description of the cherubims.
2. Describe the throne which Ezekiel saw.
3. What did he do when he saw the glory of the Lord?
4. Name two others of whom we read in the Bible who had visions from God.
5. Why did the Lord send Ezekiel to the Children of Israel?
6. Would Ezekiel's message be received by the people? How had they accepted previous messages?
7. What title did the Lord give Ezekiel?
8. What would happen to him if he did not sound the warning?
9. What if he sounded the warning but it was not heeded?
10. Give four words the Lord used in describing the Children of Israel. Do you think some people are that way today?

mourning, and woe.

Ezekiel 3:1-27

1 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat *it*; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

5 For thou *art* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, *but* to the house of Israel;

6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel *are* impudent and hardhearted.

8 Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

9 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.

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

11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

12 Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place.

13 *I heard* also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.

14 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.

15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them

seven days.

16 And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest 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 thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him 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 thine hand.

21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

22 And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.

23 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.

24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.

25 But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them:

26 And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they *are* a rebellious house.

27 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; and he that forbear, let him forbear: for they *are* a rebellious house.