

Current Affairs #58 – The Four Living Creatures, Part 3

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So now, let us continue to look at these four living creatures. We have seen their descriptions, so let us move now to their appearance and how they move. Because their appearance, you see, is routinely described in and with the metaphor of light, whether it is lightning, whether it is burning, glowing, and these things stand for something. Indeed, they stand for the glory of God. Verse 13 of Ezekiel 1 says,

*As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning (Ezekiel 1:13-14 NKJV).*

Again, you see the ease and the power with which they move. Gravity means nothing to them. The natural world is no impediment to their movement. Why am I saying these things? Because this is true of the corporate man. This is true of the Body of Christ. But as long as our minds remain clouded by a false vision of who the Body of Christ actually is, namely, an institutional vision, we can never clothe our minds with this truth. We can never see ourselves from the accuracy of this perspective, and therefore, we will be groveling and scratching by the sweat of our brow to try to survive while we are terrorized in the spirits of our minds by the threat of disaster. This should not be you. The guarantee of this exalted place comes not from creation, or even from the throne of God; it comes from the mind of God who lives and functions outside of creation, holding heaven and earth together by the power of His Word. And you are being described as being amongst these four living creatures. This is the description of the corporate man to which you have been assembled as an integral part.

*Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces (Ezekiel 1:15).*

You note again, the description here is on the earth. We saw them in heaven in Revelation 4, but they are functioning now on the earth. And it is for a very particular purpose. When God commissions the prophet Ezekiel to go to ancient Israel and bring a word of harsh rebuke to them,

he is caught up amongst the four living creatures and transported by the four living creatures, and for all intents and purposes, functions as one of or from in the midst of the four living creatures. So even in antiquity, when the purposes of God were limited to, say, a rebuke of Israel for its derelict ways, the functioning of this prophetic voice was in consort with the four living creatures. Whether in the ancient world or in the modern times, it is obvious that God intended this to be the instrumentality for His doing. This is described variously in the Scriptures as the pillar and ground of the truth,<sup>1</sup> the general assembly and church of the firstborn<sup>2</sup>—not Mount Sinai, by contrast. I am quoting Hebrews, as you know.

As he looked there was a wheel on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces (just to remind you there is a living creature with four faces).

*The appearance of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl, and all the four had the same likeness (Ezekiel 1:16a).*

You will remember from our reference to the man above the waters, the man clothed in linen who was above the waters, he had a body like beryl—the color of beryl. Again, this represents the splendor of God, and in this case, the splendor of the movements of God. The wheels had the workings like the color of beryl.

*The appearance of their workings was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel (Ezekiel 1:16b).*

The word “middle” there refers to a circular entity in between (or a smaller version of the bigger thing), so it is like concentric circles. “In the middle of” seems to refer to more like an axle—the place where an axle would come from the structure out into the rest of the wheel, so that itself would be round. Their workings were like one wheel having the axle inside of a bigger wheel that was turned.

*When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went (Ezekiel 1:17).*

So, their feet are straight, these four living creatures—their feet are straight means they do not deviate from the standard. And their momentum, their mobility, is by these wheels; and those wheels can go in four directions, but they do not crash into each other. They are moving in this perfect harmony, this perfect symmetry.

*As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome (Ezekiel 1:18a).*

- “As for their rims”— Again, the idea of a wheel in the middle of a wheel; you have the internal wheel and the external wheel, and the external wheel is the rim of the perimeter. So you have this picture of a smaller wheel, a bigger wheel, and the rim being the outer portion. It is so high, it is towering.

*...and their rims were full of eyes, all around the four of them (Ezekiel 1:18b).*

Each creature had a wheel that was like a wheel in the middle of a wheel. And the four wheels (because there were four creatures) had eyes in the wheels, and the eyes were on the rims of the wheels. The turning and movement over the earth was with full cognition of where they were going, because they were seeing everything. Now here, this is not to be confused with a mechanical creature. It has to do with a living being. Even the wheels are living, and they are attributed eyes, intelligence to see and to understand.

*When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up (Ezekiel 1:19).*

The wheels were basically that which served their motion or their movement upon the earth.

*Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels (Ezekiel 1:20).*

There was no discord between their motion and who these beings were. As they moved, everything was moved, the wheels included, by the spirit within each creature. This, of course, would be the Spirit of the Lord, whom we see in representation in the fourth chapter of the book of Revelation that describes the seven Spirits of God standing before the throne of God. And the four living creatures are encircling the throne of God, therefore, being the embodiment, as it were, at least being influenced by the seven Spirits of God. These are not misguided functionings within the earth; they are, very precisely, the functionings of heaven in the corporate man on the earth. Jesus would put it this way, “As I am, so shall you be in this present world.” Or He put it this way in John 20:21, “Now as the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you.” There is no independence from the head. These four living creatures, as they are moving in the earth, are moved by the Spirit.

*When those went, these went; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels (Ezekiel 1:21).*

Twice it says that. Now this is where it gets even more interesting.

*The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures was like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads (Ezekiel 1:22).*

From the book of Genesis, when God established the heavens, He described the partition between the natural and the eternal or the heavenly, between the natural heavens, as a firmament clear as crystal. And underneath the throne of God, as described again in Revelation 4, was a pavement of crystal, clear as the sky. So, it is obvious that the functioning of these creatures is not before the throne of God; they are seen prophetically functioning on earth, but under this canopy of heaven. What do you want to bet that before we are done with this reading, it will tell you that where they are standing and moving is right under the throne of God? Now, do not be foolish, I have already read the rest of it. Do not bet against it. It is the implication that they are entirely representative of the throne of God and of the living God Himself. That is where this is leading to. So where the four living creatures were, there was a firmament the color of an awesome crystal stretched above their heads.

*And under the firmament their wings spread out straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body. When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty... (Ezekiel 1:23-24a).*

They are speaking for God (the sound of their wings). So here, we are not thinking so much as creatures propelled by wings and wheels, as much as we are thinking about creatures speaking for God on the earth. The four of them together, the noise of their wings was...

*... like the voice of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army... (Ezekiel 1:24b),*

That is another analogy for the Body of Christ. In fact, you will see in the book of Ezekiel, reference to a great army that had been decimated. The bones were many and very dry, but the spirit of prophecy would revive them (cf. Ezekiel 37:1-14). Which would suggest a time of departing from the ways of God, where the word of the Lord was not present; therefore, the bones would die, because a man does not live on bread alone, he lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. When you die because you have not been nourished by the word, the bones are many and they are very dry. But when the word of the Lord comes again, this mighty army will stand up on the earth and will be again the voice of the Almighty—and like a tumult, the noise of an army, an army on the move, a living army, not a collection of dry bones. This is, as I said before, in the book of Ezekiel, further over in our reading.

*And when they stood still, they let down their wings [So whenever they were at rest, they were not saying anything.] A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings (Ezekiel 1:24c-25).*

So, they are connecting. They are at rest while a voice is speaking over their heads. Which is to say, when you are at rest you will hear the voice of God.

*And above the firmament over their heads [This is what I said to you that you should not bet against. So if you could look up and see through the crystal-clear partition...] was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne, [So there was a likeness of a throne, and on the likeness of the throne...] was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it (Ezekiel 1:26, comments added in brackets).*

In other words, Ezekiel was being allowed to see into heaven, catching the shadow of the throne of God and the One who sat on it. Let us see if that is accurate.

*Also from the appearance of His waist [so he saw a likeness of a man] and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; [once again, the brightness of God] and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. [So upward and downward, because they are looking up and they are looking down; they are seeing the top and they are seeing the bottom—brightness all around.] Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day... (Ezekiel 1:27-28a, comments added in brackets).*

When you go back and you read the book of Revelation, chapters 4 and 5, what do you actually see? You see the throne of God sitting on a pavement like sapphire, clear as the sky, and you see a rainbow encircling the throne like an emerald. So Ezekiel sees up into the heavens, and it is the same as the picture presented in the Revelation. Well, there you go...

*Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it [the throne of God and the One sitting on the throne]. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.*

*So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking (Ezekiel 1:28, comments added in brackets).*

Who are the four living creatures? They are the corporate man bringing the messaging of heaven. They move back and forth on the earth under the authority of the throne of God. They represent

the plenipotentiary of the *exousia* (Strong's Greek 1849) of Christ's *dunamis* (Strong's Greek 1411). They are the executive function of the throne of God upon the earth. "As the Father has sent Me, so now I am sending you."

Between chapters 2 and 9 of the book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel is commissioned to go to the nation of Israel and to bring a word of rebuke and reproach of God's judgment, in fact, to bring about a repentance from having abandoned the ways of God. Because God, even then, He took Israel into Babylonian captivity, in a sense, to purge out of them the apathy for which the nation had been historically known, whether it was in the wilderness because of unbelief—the New Testament word for unbelief and disobedience is the word *apeitheia* (Strong's Greek 543), for apathy. A generation died in the wilderness because of apathy. When they came into the land and they saw the goodness of God, they continued, apathy again took hold, and for 490 years they refused to observe the Sabbath year. For 70 years they were taken into captivity and the land was idle. But while they were in captivity, God sent Ezekiel to bring them back to an accuracy of alignment with divine purposes because this nation was given with the principal purpose of bringing forth the Son of righteousness with healing in His wings. And the fruit of the work of the Son of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, arising out of the Hebrew people would be this corporate man to carry the executive authority of heaven upon the earth.

Even in antiquity, the work of Ezekiel was to restore the mindsets of the people so they could come back out of Babylonian captivity and resume their purpose, ultimately culminating in the Lord Jesus Christ coming—being born, growing up, dying on the cross—and then bringing forth the corporate man in the earth, which is the gospel. It is not this foolish schlock that is pandered and presented so routinely. This is the gospel. This is the central theme of the Scriptures. The central theme of the Scriptures is not about going to heaven when you die. You get to do that as a natural extension of belonging to Christ. The central theme of the Scriptures is the representative man, the archetypal man, that man perfectly prototyped in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is that man who carries the glory of God in the earth as it is in heaven. That is what we are seeing at the end of the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel, that prophetic picture.

Now Ezekiel is sent to the nation of Israel to redeem them in the way that this corporate man is put in the earth to redeem the earth at the end of the age, to restore the mountain of the Lord so that people who have been co-opted, whose vision and understanding and mindsets have been co-opted by the evil one, might have hope in the presentation of this glorious man. So he says in chapter 10,

*And I looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne (Ezekiel 10:1 NKJV).*

He picks up in chapter 10 right where he left off, but here he says, “above the head of the cherubim,” which is a plural representation (cherubim). He calls the four living creatures “the cherubim.” The word “cherubim” means an ox, one who plows the ground; an ox, one who overturns the sod. I do not have time to unpack it in this message, but I will in a subsequent message. Above the head of the cherubim—it would seem that He is talking about an angel, but indeed he is not. He is talking about those who carry the glory of God as one man, the cherubim.

Then he spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, “Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands...” Ezekiel's commission is to function along with the cherubim, and he picks right back up where he left off from chapter 1, in continuing to describe the activities of the four living creatures. And now, he is describing them corporately as the cherubim. I will unpack that later since I am running out of time on this particular session.

*Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, “Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” And he went in as I watched.*

*Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. (Ezekiel 10:2-3).*

I will unpack this in the next broadcast, so continue to view all five of these together [Current Affairs # 55-59], because it is a depiction of the four living creatures and the voice who speaks from among the four living creatures.

Endnotes:

1. See 1 Timothy 3:14-15 NKJV: “These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
2. See Hebrews 12:22-24 NKJV: “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”