



## Study Guide: Ezekiel – Chapter 1

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Ezekiel Chapter 1 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

### **Introduction**

Ezekiel Chapter 1 serves as the dramatic introduction to the prophetic book of Ezekiel, unveiling the prophet's initial vision that sets the tone for the entire message. This chapter introduces the divine encounter that commissions Ezekiel and reveals the glory of God in a vivid and symbolic manner. Readers should watch for the complex imagery of living creatures, wheels, and the manifestation of God's presence, which together emphasize God's sovereignty, holiness, and mobility even in exile. This vision is foundational for understanding Ezekiel's role as a watchman and the nature of God's activity among His people.

### **Context**

Ezekiel was a priest and prophet taken into Babylonian exile around 597 BC, during a time of national crisis for Judah. The book opens with Ezekiel's call vision by the Kebar River in Babylon, where he receives a divine revelation amidst exile. The immediate literary context is the beginning of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry, marked by a covenantal framework that highlights Israel's unfaithfulness and God's impending judgment, yet also His promise of restoration. The key speaker in this chapter is God, who reveals Himself through a complex vision to Ezekiel, commissioning him to be a watchman for the house of Israel. The setting in Babylon underscores the tension between God's presence and Israel's displacement.

### **Outline**

The chapter can be divided into three main movements. First, the temporal and geographical setting is established, situating Ezekiel by the Kebar River during the fifth year of exile. Second, the detailed vision of the four living creatures and the wheels is described, emphasizing their appearance, movement, and symbolic significance. Third, the vision culminates with the appearance of the divine glory above the creatures, portrayed



as a radiant throne with a figure resembling a man, signifying the presence of God. This structure moves from setting to symbolic vision to the revelation of God’s glory, preparing the reader for the prophetic messages to follow.

### **Verse-by-Verse Study**

Verses 1–3: Ezekiel introduces the time and place of his vision, noting the fifth year of King Jehoiachin’s exile and the Kebar River in Babylon. This situates the prophecy historically and geographically, emphasizing the exile context.

Verses 4–14: Ezekiel describes the four living creatures, each with four faces and four wings, moving in unison without turning. Their faces—human, lion, ox, and eagle—symbolize various aspects of creation and divine attributes. The creatures’ appearance is fiery and radiant, suggesting holiness and power.

Verses 15–21: The vision shifts to the wheels beside the creatures, described as “wheel within a wheel” with eyes all around. These wheels move in coordination with the creatures, symbolizing God’s omnipresence and omniscience, and the dynamic movement of divine judgment and presence.

Verses 22–25: Above the creatures is a firmament like crystal, supporting the throne-like structure. The creatures’ wings make a sound like rushing waters, thunder, or the voice of God, underscoring the awe-inspiring nature of the vision.

Verses 26–28: Atop the firmament is a figure resembling a man, glowing with fire and brilliance, seated on a sapphire throne. This figure represents the glory of the Lord, whose radiance fills the space and inspires reverence. Ezekiel falls facedown, overwhelmed by the vision.

### **Key Themes**

One central theme is the glory of God manifesting even in exile, demonstrating that God’s presence is not confined to the temple or homeland. The vision emphasizes God’s sovereignty over all creation, symbolized by the four living creatures and the wheels, which represent divine attributes such as power, wisdom, and mobility. Another theme is the holiness and mystery of God, portrayed through the radiant and awe-inspiring imagery that both reveals and conceals God’s nature. Finally, the chapter introduces the prophetic calling, highlighting Ezekiel’s role as a watchman who must faithfully convey God’s message despite difficult circumstances.



## **Cross-References**

The vision in Ezekiel 1 parallels the cherubim imagery found in Exodus 25:18-22, where God's presence dwells between the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant, clarifying the significance of the living creatures as bearers of divine glory. Revelation 4:6-8 echoes the four living creatures with their multiple faces and eyes, linking Ezekiel's vision to the heavenly throne room and emphasizing God's eternal sovereignty. Daniel 7:9-10 presents a similar throne vision, underscoring the theme of divine judgment and authority. These cross-references help illuminate the symbolic language and affirm the continuity of God's revelation across Scripture.

## **Application**

Modern disciples can draw encouragement from Ezekiel 1 that God's presence is not limited by circumstances such as exile or hardship. Just as God revealed His glory to Ezekiel in a foreign land, believers today can trust that God is sovereign and active in all situations. The vision challenges Christians to recognize God's holiness and majesty, inspiring reverence and worship. Additionally, Ezekiel's commissioning reminds believers of their calling to faithfully witness and serve, even when facing opposition or isolation. This chapter invites a posture of awe, obedience, and trust in God's dynamic presence.

## **Summary**

Ezekiel Chapter 1 introduces the prophet's divine encounter by the Kebar River, where he witnesses a complex and symbolic vision of living creatures, wheels, and the radiant glory of God enthroned above. This vision establishes key themes of God's holiness, sovereignty, and presence amid exile, commissioning Ezekiel for his prophetic mission. Through vivid imagery and profound symbolism, the chapter prepares readers to understand the nature of God's judgment and restoration that will unfold throughout the book.