

Message #13

Ezekiel 10:1-22

It is predicted by Paul that at the Rapture of the Church, the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit will be removed (II Thess. 2:6-7). When that happens, many things will happen: 1) The Antichrist will surface; 2) Wickedness and Evil will break out in full force; 3) God's judgment will come against the world in full force.

If you watch any sport you will notice that before one actually gets in the game, they warm-up. A baseball player will take some swings and throw some balls. A football player will run and loosen up and throw and catch some footballs. A hockey player does some warm-up skating and shooting. It is this way in any sport.

When it comes to God pouring out judgment, He has a warm-up time. Before He actually pours out ferocious judgment, He gives some preliminary warm-up signs that it is coming. He will let some negative things happen to try to get people to turn to Him. He may send a hurricane. He may send a tornado. He may send a disease. He may send some drought or disaster. These are judgment warm-up signs that warn people if you do not get right with God, His judgment will come.

Ezekiel got to see one of the most depressing things that anyone can ever see and that is the glory of God leaves His property. In Chapter 8, Ezekiel is taken to Jerusalem to the Temple to see the evil, the immorality and idolatry. It leaves His Temple and it leaves Jerusalem. Make no mistake about this, Ezekiel actually saw this. In fact, twice in this chapter he specifically says, "I looked, and behold" (10:1, 9).

There is a very important lesson to learn from this text:

WHEN GOD'S PRESENCE AND GLORY LEAVES HIS PEOPLE AND PROPERTY, IT MEANS HE IS AUTHORIZING HORRIBLE JUDGMENTS TO COME AGAINST HIS PEOPLE AND HIS PROPERTY.

Now the average person who was in Jerusalem had no idea what was happening in the unseen world. They had no idea that these cherubim were even there. They certainly had no idea that God's glory was present in the Temple and in the city; but they would certainly understand it when it was gone.

It is like the churches today. Jesus Christ specifically says that He watches over every church. It is also stated in Revelation 2-3 that there are angels connected to the various churches. Now most people never know this or sense this and certainly don't see this. But believe me they are there. If Jesus Christ decides to remove the candlestick of a church so that it no longer shines forth His glory, people will soon realize that. **God can and will authorize the destruction of His own property if His people do not deal with their sin and rebellion. God can bless and God can curse. When God gets angry at His people, He may use His angelic forces to corral human forces to punish His people.**

One thing is very obvious here and that is when God makes a determination to remove His glory and destroy His own people and property, it is a very systematic process. God finds no delight in doing negative things to His own people. But if His people do not turn to Him, He will do it.

In this chapter Ezekiel sees five incredible realities. Remember Ezekiel had been training to be a priest, so God is letting him see priestly things.

REALITY #1 – Ezekiel saw the throne of God. **10:1**

Ezekiel is standing beside the altar and he looks and sees a throne that is above the cherubim. This was the cherubim that he had seen by the river Chebar (1:22, 26). These cherubim are closely connected to the glory of God at all times.

The description of something like a sapphire stone parallels John's description of the Throne of God in Revelation 4. So all that was happening in regard to this Temple and in regard to Jerusalem and in regard to the people of God was being authorized and monitored by the Throne of God and had to do with the glory of God.

We need to realize this in our lives and church. We are about reflecting the glory of God in a variety of contexts. God's glory is at stake in each one of us.

REALITY #2 – Ezekiel heard God instruct the man to take fire coals to pour out on the city. **10:2**

Ezekiel saw a special man in linen, who was told by God to go in among the whirling wheels and cherubim and collect judgment coals or wrath coals from the fire.

Now coals of fire are used as a metaphor for several things: 1) Coals of fire for destruction; 2) Coals of fire for purification—fire purifies Isaiah's unclean lips (Is. 6:6-7); 3) Coals of fire for conviction—when we do good things, we heap coals of fire on the heads of people; 4) Coals of fire for consecration—O.T. sacrifices consecrated God's people using coals. These are not blessing coals, so when the man takes these coals into his hand, serious judgment is on the way.

Now the man in linen is none other than Jesus Christ. He has the right and privilege to go between the highest ranked angels and pour out the wrath of God. He is authorized by the Father to begin the process of pouring out judgment on Jerusalem. At the end of **verse 2**, Ezekiel is clear to point out this man entered in "my sight."

Again we cannot help but think of Revelation 4-5 when no one is worthy to get the seven sealed book and start pouring out the wrath of God and all of a sudden Jesus Christ steps into the picture and begins the process.

REALITY #3 – Ezekiel saw the cherubim very active in the process of judgment. **10:3-5**

In chapter 1 Ezekiel identified these as “living beings,” but here he identifies them as “Cherubim” which communicate that these living beings are the highest ranked angels in the angelic world. These are the angels that display the glory of God and carry out the will of God from the Throne of God.

It is stated in **verse 3** that the cherubim were standing on the right side or the south side of the Temple. This right side is significant because we may recall from chapter 8 that the abomination were on the north side (8:3, 5, 14). What this indicates is that even though these sacred agents saw all of the evil, they were far removed from the evil. The cloud symbolized the very presence of God. This would certainly mean much to a priest like Ezekiel. **The glory of God will not ever associate with those pursuing evil. It will be far removed from it.**

We are all priests unto God and we need to realize that the very presence of God is in our lives in the Person of the Holy Spirit. We will not have intimate fellowship with God if we associate ourselves with that which is evil.

The court was filled with the brightness of God’s glory. According to **verse 4** the glory of the LORD began to move out from the Holy of Holies and into the Temple and into the courtyard. God’s glory seems to be “reluctant to leave.” First, it fills the Temple but then it moves to the court. Ezekiel was seeing God’s glory that typically was in the Holy of Holies on the move. God is very slow to remove His glory from His property. But He will do it. God is very slow to take a believer home early, but He will do it.

Verse 5 says that as this was happening the cherubim were making incredible movement with their wings that was heard in the outer court. This is a serious moment. These cherubim are about to take off, like a jet revving up its engines. God Almighty is authorizing His glory to leave His people.

REALITY #4 – Ezekiel saw the man in linen take coals of judgment in His hands. **10:6-7**

God commands this one special priestly man to take fire of judgment that these cherubim have into His hands. He is a highly qualified agent of God and the image here is that God the Father is turning over all judgment matters into this man’s hands. This is what Jesus said in John’s gospel. All judgment had been turned over to Jesus Christ. Now notice carefully; in the previous chapter this man (9:3-4) was to go and save. In this chapter he is to go to destroy—two comings of Jesus Christ

These cherubim are God’s special, sacred angels and this one man has the right to go and take those coals of sacred judgment and pour them out. It is interesting that when the man entered, He stood still and the cherubim served Him.

Now it is important to see from II Kings 25:8-9 that Nebuchadnezzar literally burned down the Temple and buildings and houses in Jerusalem. Even though it would be months before this would happen, what we are seeing here is that God was the one authorizing every bit of this.

It is interesting that after the man takes the coals in his hand, we would expect that he would immediately begin to pour out judgment; however, once more Ezekiel is drawn to that which reflects the glory of God.

This is significant because judgment cannot come and will not come until God authorizes it.

REALITY #5 – Ezekiel saw the cherubim's features and movements. **10:8-22**

Dr. Thomas Constable said that what Ezekiel is seeing here is God preparing to depart His Temple.

Fact #1 - The cherubim appeared to have man's hands under their wings. **10:8**

What this means is that these cherubim have the ability to do anything God wants them to do. They can use their own hands or they can authorize men to use their hands to carry out God's judgment.

Fact #2 - The cherubim each had glorious wheels that enabled them to move any direction.
10:9-11

There was one wheel beside each cherub, so each cherub has an individual purpose and judgment (**v. 9**). We believe from Revelation 2-3 that one key angel is assigned to every true church of God. That angel monitors what is happening in the church and reports to God.

Each of the angels had the same look (**v. 10**). They looked the same and functioned the same as a Divine unit.

They were all focused on doing God's will according to His direction and there was no deviation from that objective (**v. 11**).

These wheels made it possible to move any direction to carry out any judgment.

Most people have no clue how sovereign God is or how much His angels are involved in carrying out His assignments.

Fact #3 - The cherubim's entire body was full of eyes. **10:12**

These beings are able to see all things at all times. We have often said that if anyone dared to stand before God and suggest they had not sinned, God would be able to not only call up His own record, but He could call His angels to testify of what they have seen.

These cherubim are able to see all things at all times. This fact was also stressed by John in Revelation 4:8. These cherubim are able to see God at all times and also see all other things at the same time.

Fact #4 - The cherubim had whirling wheels. **10:13**

The Hebrew word “whirling” (hagalgal) means revolving or rolling. They were actually given a name that Ezekiel heard. These wheels were actually named for their function. The naming of these wheels seems to be suggestive of the fact that the glory of God was about to “whirl out of His temple.” These wheels are not in a park or rest mode, they are ready to move.

Fact #5 - The cherubim each had four faces. **10:14**

Each cherub had the face of a cherub, a man, a lion and an eagle. We may recall that earlier in chapter 1 the four faces were man, lion, bull and eagle (1:10). Obviously in this listing the bull is missing and the cherub face has replaced it.

Now some have suggested that the reason for this is due to the fact that a scribe copying the text made a mistake. Others have suggested that the face of the cherub is the face of the bull. However, we think there is an explanation that is very explainable.

Each face represents a judgment that God authorizes against Israel to be carried out using these high-ranking angelic beings. When the living beings show up in Revelation they are down to one face, not four. **The reason here for the change is that judgment number 1 of the 4 is now in progress.**

In other words, this is the moment when Babylon is authorized by God to destroy His Temple, Jerusalem and His people. Judgment #1 is now in operation, which is the powerful bull judgment and there are three more to go after this. Actually as we are here tonight, there is only one more to go. We believe things are shaping up for the final judgment.

Fact #6 - The cherubim are involved in removing the glory of God from His sacred people and property. **10:15-22**

According to **verses 16-17** the cherubim began to move up from the ground. The wheels stayed still and the cherubim moved upward, so the wheels worked in harmony with the cherub.

According to **verse 18** the glory of the LORD stood over the cherubim as if it was about to fly away out from His temple and city.

Verse 19 describes the fact that the glory of the LORD hovered over the cherubim in one final pause. This is so sad. The cherubim with the glory of the LORD started to move. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the Temple and took one more look.

This Temple was supposed to be the place of His special presence (Ps. 132:14; Is. 66:1). His presence among His people was a sign of His favor and blessings (Deut. 4:29, 31). But God said if His people persist in their rebellion, He would remove His favor (Deut. 31:17; Hos. 9:2-3). The time had come. This is so sad; it is so sad.

Ezekiel stresses in **verses 20-22** that these were the same cherubim that he had seen in chapter 1.

What this meant was that the city was doomed. God had removed Himself and His blessings from the city. He had abandoned His own people and His own Temple because His people had abandoned Him.

As we mentioned there is just one judgment left to go and before it happens God is going to remove His people from this earth in the Rapture of the Church. When that happens, the horrors of the Tribulation and the Antichrist will be unleashed. We do not think that moment is too far away.

We do not know how long we have, but while we are here, let us remember that we are God's temple and our job is to glorify God.

One of the great blessings for a N.T. believer is that God has promised that His indwelling presence will never leave the believer (John 14:17; I Cor. 6:19). But we do have the responsibility to reflect God's glory.

The glory of God did come back to this earth in the Person of Jesus Christ. He came the first time and was rejected.