

EZEKIEL 10

COALS OF FIRE

As soon as Ezekiel's attention was withdrawn from what had been completely absorbing it in the last two chapters, he was favored with another sight of the glory of Jehovah, such as he had already beheld upon the plains of Chebar in chapter 1. Only the prophet's physical location as he saw this vision of the Divine glory was different, for the manifestation of itself was substantially the same. But the presentation of this glorious vision to the eye of Ezekiel took place in the midst of the vision which he was beholding, concerning the appointed executions of God's judgment. One part of these judgments was already past, and another part was still to come. And the leading reason why the vision of the Lord's glory and majesty was inserted here seems to have been in order to distinctly bring into view the immediate agency of God in this matter of judgment. It showed how this judgment proceeded, as by a law of imperious necessity, from the essential holiness of His nature. This understanding helps us to interpret the action of taking coals of fire from between the wheels that were associated with the cherubim, and scattering them over the city. It betokened the outgoing of God's disciplinary righteousness, which would destroy the wicked and purify the righteous.

The coals of fire here stand as a symbol of Divine anger. And it is noteworthy to observe that it is the same Man Whom we met in the last chapter – the One Who was clothed in linen, with the inkhorn hanging by His side – Who now took these fiery coals in hand to scatter them over Jerusalem! This was none other than the God-Man, Christ Jesus. His going in between the wheels, and filling His hand with coals, and scattering them over the city was intended to teach us that the whole government of nature, Providence, grace, and glory is all His! It is the Lord Jesus Himself Who is here expressly designated as the One Who executes the righteous judgments of His Father's holy justice.

So we see that the burning of the city and Temple of Jerusalem by the Babylonians was a fulfillment of the Lord's plan, which He had already determined would be done. The fire of Divine wrath, which kindles judgment upon a people, is just and holy. If a city or town or house is burned, either intentionally or by accident – when we trace that fire back to its source, we shall find that the coals which kindled the fire came from between the wheels of the cherubim; for there is not any evil of any kind that happens without the Lord's permission. And yet even in the midst of such scenes of tragedy like house fires, which we still witness in our own day, we may still behold a picture of the Lord's mercy, even in these manifestations of terror. As we see firemen holding back a multitude of onlookers from crowding too close to the danger zone, do we not see a

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *Coals of fire are scattered over the city of Jerusalem – verses 1-7*
- ❖ *The glory of the Lord removes from the Temple and departs – verses 8-22*



symbol of Christ the Mediator – standing between the fire of His Father’s consuming anger and the souls of lost mankind? And then, as other firefighters put their very own lives at risk and rush into the midst of the raging flames to rescue men, women, and children who are about to perish – what greater picture can we possibly use to illustrate the actions of our loving Savior? He sacrificed His own life as He plunged into the fiery furnace of the Lord’s righteous wrath against sin, in order to rescue poor lost souls who were in the very process of being burned alive. And He did not do this for one who was a grandmother, or a sister, or a friend, or even a person unknown to Him but needing help. No indeed! He gave His life for those who were His sworn enemies – who had already rebelled against Him, and who hated Him with all their hearts! What greater picture of amazing love and mercy can we possibly find?

Beginning in verse 8, this chapter gives a particular description of the vision of Jehovah’s glory that Ezekiel was beholding, especially in respect to the cherubim and the wheels. It was not only because of their gigantic size, but also because of their rapid revolutions, that a place was given them in this heavenly vision; for they signified the energetic and resistless movements in the accomplishment of God’s purposes. The wheels, the cherubim, and the cloud of glory – which were all represented as moving and resting simultaneously (verses 18-19) – are a picture of that perfect harmony and order which characterizes all the thoughts and operations of the Divine will in its goings forth among men.

It was very fitting for the Lord to give Ezekiel, the prophet in exile, such displays of His Divine glory as are recorded here – especially close to the beginning of his Book. Jehovah revealed His Divine presence to him in such glorious manifestations, for several reasons. First, it was for the purpose of calling him to play the part of a witness of that glory, in the midst of his God-forgetting countrymen. Then, too, the prophet was to behold this glory of the Lord’s presence before it took leave of its visible dwelling-place in the Temple – which it was about to do. Surely these two times when the Divine glory was revealed in vision to Ezekiel were periods in his life which he would never forget, and to describe them as best as he could (as he did here) was a thing which he could not possibly leave undone. Twice, his spiritual eye had beheld the very God of Israel on the throne over the cherubim; and this was the seal of truth, which he stamped upon his written communications. And in regard to himself personally, these privileged manifestations were the dearest pledge of the Lord’s love for the prophet; they revealed an inexpressible kindness on the part of Jehovah, which he felt constrained – by an elevated and grateful sense of the Divine presence – to record here.

Lord, we confess that we deserve to be consumed by the fire of Your righteous wrath, but we thank You that we find pardon and peace in Christ Jesus! Amen.