

## REVIEW

# EZEKIEL LESSONS 1-4: WHEELS IN THE SKY



### THE TIME AND CULTURE IN WHICH EZEKIEL LIVED

- ◇ False (counterfeit) prophets and teachings
- ◇ Self-absorbed entertainment
- ◇ Does this sound familiar?

### THE TIME AND CULTURE IN WHICH WE LIVE:

- ◇ Mass communications and technology inundating every part of life, 24-7
- ◇ Globally pervasive culture of violence and self-absorbed, pleasure - seeking indulgence in sex and greed
- ◇ Worldwide manipulation of public opinion through the marketing and exploitation of FEAR
- ◇ Mass media journalism and social media frenzy will drive economic forces, political gamesmanship and religious deceptions (false prophets)

### BIBLICAL PROPHECY IN A MODERN CONTEXT

- ◇ The Information Explosion
- ◇ Instant International Availability

## JEFFERSONVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Fall 2016 Adult Bible Study

*Ezekiel*

By Elder Betsi Moise





# NOTES:



## Questions:

- ◇ What would you count as counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders today?
- ◇ In what ways does the American culture tend to be self– absorbed?
- ◇ What were the Jews afraid of in the time of Ezekiel?
- ◇ What are we afraid of today?
- ◇ How would you describe Ezekiel’s visions today?
- ◇ What type of language and symbolism would you use to describe the “wheels with the eyes”?
- ◇ How do you think Ezekiel would profess his message from God today?
- ◇ What type of TV show would Ezekiel be on?

## Reflection:

- ◇ How do you see the prophecies of God working through human history?



## **How would a Bronze Age man see something like an airplane, or a tank?**

Throughout human experience, we've adapted in many ways to accommodate experiences that were once new. One major adaptive tendency of our species has been language. From the first sunrise ever seen which demanded a way to express the colors, majesty and miracle of life itself, to Adam's task in The Garden to give every animal a name, our need for language is inherent in our species, and the need for that language to grow, adapt and evolve are similarly necessary. Many of us remember a time before the invention of a computer. Fewer, remember the first time we had a word for a television. The adaptive quality of our language may lend us to some interesting ideas, perspectives and questions about how we look at the Bible, especially in regards to the prophets.

John the Revelator has six winged, many-headed monstrosities, a glowing, bronze-footed, sword spitting Son of Man, and many other very strange images; but as we in the modern age have largely forgotten, one of the most outlandish concepts John the Revelator gave his contemporary readership was instant, global communication. That is an advantage that everyone on Earth now sees as common place. Just a few months ago, nearly 1 billion people watched the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games in Rio live from their home. In the second century, though, that was no more believable than 6-winged, ten-headed fire breathing man-horse-lion-eagles made of burnished brass.

Taking that idea further still gives us a new question, too. How would a man, say a priestly man, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, interpret the flood of data a timeless God gives him in prophetic visions? How would a Bronze Age man see something like an airplane, or a tank? How would space travel seem to a man whose perspective of "vehicle" included expensive, rare, unreliable and dangerous? A carriage was the pinnacle of personal transportation to him, and that required horses, wood and bronze.

How many of you drove to work this week? How many have taken a flight across the country? The world? The vivid images that a prophet was burdened with would invoke psychological hardship on anyone, leaving Ezekiel silent and in shock for a week, an effect we can see throughout the prophets. How can you describe something that you can't come to terms with? Did Ezekiel see satellite surveillance and have no way to describe it other than calling it intersecting wheels covered with many eyes?

If we can find contemporary meaning within the warnings of Ezekiel, how important are his warnings of death, pain, destruction and misery to us right now? How can we fail to speak the words that God has given us? We, as a species, may have advanced from the Bronze Age into the information era, but God is timeless. He lives outside of time, and at all times. We must take the prophets as they were in their times, but we can always learn from them.

The vivid details of Gods judgement, and His promises were never hoarded by His prophets, but shared. As we look at the fantastical descriptions of timeless visions granted by an omnipotent God, remember that while there is pain and fear and the burden of the future falls heavily upon his chosen prophets, the scroll was sweet to Ezekiel.

It's very easy for us, as Christians, to breath a heavy sigh of relief that the doom and gloom of the prophets is long past, and we are not responsible to carry those burdens. IT is, however, worthy to note the prophets wrote parts of the living, adapting, constantly relevant word of God, and if we can see the prophetic truths coming to pass in our life time, we still hold the burden of Godly action, speech and behavior, just as were his prophets. We can not see what they saw, but we are given their words to guide us nonetheless, and through the many gifts and talents we've acquired as a species, it's important for us to be ever vigilant as the deep wisdom of a God-out-of-time becomes clear to future generations.

“On Language”, Nathaniel Moise