

Glorify the One Riding the War Chariot

Humbled . . . That is a good description of how I have felt as I have studied the book of Ezekiel. When I read the first chapter of Ezekiel, I was thrilled as I saw the glory of God displayed. We are told in verse 4 that the prophet Ezekiel was given a vision. In this vision was a dark storm cloud with flashing fire coming from the north. In the cloud, the prophet could see four cherubim who had four faces and four wings, as well as four whirling wheels beneath them as they emerged from the cloud. The wheels spun and were full of eyes all around. They were like tires on an automobile. Together the cherubim and wheels symbolically formed a war chariot. On top of that chariot was something like glowing metal sitting on a throne. It symbolized our God. Ezekiel 1:28 says His appearance was like a rainbow. The same type of description is given of Yahweh in Revelation 4:2-4 and Exodus 24:10 (also see Isaiah 6:1-3; Ezekiel 8:2). I have wondered if the rainbow promised to Noah (Genesis 9:13) was designed to remind us of our



God. Anyway, the vision was incredible. It illustrated the glory of our God or Yahweh. The entire book of Ezekiel is about the glory of Yahweh. It exalts Him.

Then in the opening verse of chapter 2, the glory of God is still evident as the prophet Ezekiel is humbled. Ezekiel writes that God commanded,

“Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!”

Ezekiel 2:1 (NASB)

A careful reading of this verse reveals some very important insights into this verse. First notice the Hebrew words for “son of man” literally means “son of Adam.” Or as one Bible commentator said, God called him “human.” God did not call Ezekiel by his first name. Without a nice introduction, God said, “Human.” It would be a humbling experience for most of us to be simply called “human” and not by our first name. Second, notice that Yahweh commanded him to stand on his feet. “Human, stand up!” Third, Yahweh said, “That I may speak with you.” Now how would you feel at that moment after

seeing the war chariot and something sitting on a throne surrounded by the appearance of a rainbow?

The same thing happened to Abram when God command him to go to Palestine (Genesis 12:1-4). Yahweh did not ask him if he wanted to

go to Palestine. Also, when the apostle Paul was on the road to Damascus, Jesus appeared to him and commanded him to preach the gospel (Acts 26:12-18). Paul was killing Christians! He did not plan to become a Christian, but Jesus did. For us the message is simple. When God wants us to serve Him, He does not advertise the position for a servant in ministry and wait to see if we will sign up. Instead, He chooses and com-

mands us. The servants of our God must be humble men and women. He assigns the ministry that He has chosen for us!

So, Yahweh said, “Human, stand up” and assigned him to his ministry. Ezekiel was being sent to a rebellious people who would not listen to his messages. Seventeen times in the book of Ezekiel, Yahweh said they were a rebellious people. Yahweh said they had eyes but did not see and ears that did not hear (Ezekiel 12:2). But God told Ezekiel to speak anyway!

“But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.” Ezekiel 2:7 (NASB)

So, Ezekiel’s ministry was a difficult one. His audience did not like him and did not listen to him. Eventually, Yahweh had all the rebellious people killed by the Babylonian army except for a remnant. The city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed with fire because the people were rebellious.

Imagine having a ministry to people like them! I think we would agree that some believers would not be interested in Ezekiel’s ministry. Yet, they might be eager to have this ministry because of the visions, the opportunity to see the cherubim, the whirling wheels, the war chariot, and view some vague resemblance of Yahweh. They might even like blasting the people to whom they spoke with various warnings from Yahweh about the coming judgment. Many like rebuking others who are sinners. But would they like the fact that no one listened, repented, obeyed, or followed them? I have had people tell me that they needed a break from ministry and quit. They said that they knew God would bring someone to fulfill their ministry role. They needed a long break. But that is not what Ezekiel did. He served Yahweh for twenty hard years (see Ezekiel 1:2 and 40:1).

During those twenty years of ministry, the prophet remained humble while continuing to speak for God even after he was commanded to cut off his hair (Ezekiel 5:1), to perform various skits, not being able to speak except when allowed, and being confined to his house (Ezekiel 3:26-27). The worst tragedy for Ezekiel was God had his wife die as an illustration to these rebellious people (Ezekiel 24:18-24). Then he was commanded to not grieve loudly. Throughout his entire ministry, no one praised him. No one responded spiritually, and

no one repented. So, the Babylonian army came and destroyed them (except for a remnant), the city, and the temple.

So why did God call Ezekiel to serve Him (Ezekiel 2:4-7)? Why did God warn him to not be like the rebellious people (Ezekiel 2:8-10)? Why did God warn him about his responsibility (Ezekiel 3:16-21)? Why did Yahweh command Ezekiel to remind these rebellious people almost 60 times that when the Babylonian army did invade and destroy, then they would “know that I am the Lord.” The answer is that all that Ezekiel did and would do was to bring glory to God. Ezekiel suffered and labored in order to bring glory to God.

Ezekiel was a faithful slave of God. 2 Timothy 2:1-4 reminds us that God desires faithfulness like a soldier because we are in a battle.

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. 2 Timothy 2:1-4 (NASB)

Before closing, we should think about the fact that this “human’s” actual name occurs only two times in 48 chapters. The first time is in Ezekiel 1:3 when he is introduced. The second and last time was after the prophet lost his wife because Yahweh took her life as an illustration to the rebellious people. Then Yahweh said,

Thus Ezekiel will be a wondrous sign to you; according to all that he has done you will do; when it comes, then you will know that I am the Lord God. Ezekiel 24:24 (LSB)

Most Bibles just say Ezekiel was “a sign.” But the Hebrew word for “a sign” is *mopet*. Most of the time, this Hebrew word is translated as a “wonder.” Therefore, the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB) translates it as “a wondrous sign.” Ezekiel was a wondrous sign for our God.

He humbly and faithfully brought glory to God. Consequently, the rebellious people eventually discovered “that I am

the Lord God” (Ezekiel 24:27). There is no greater joy that a servant of the Lord can have than to humbly bring glory to the One riding the war chariot.