EZEKIEL 1

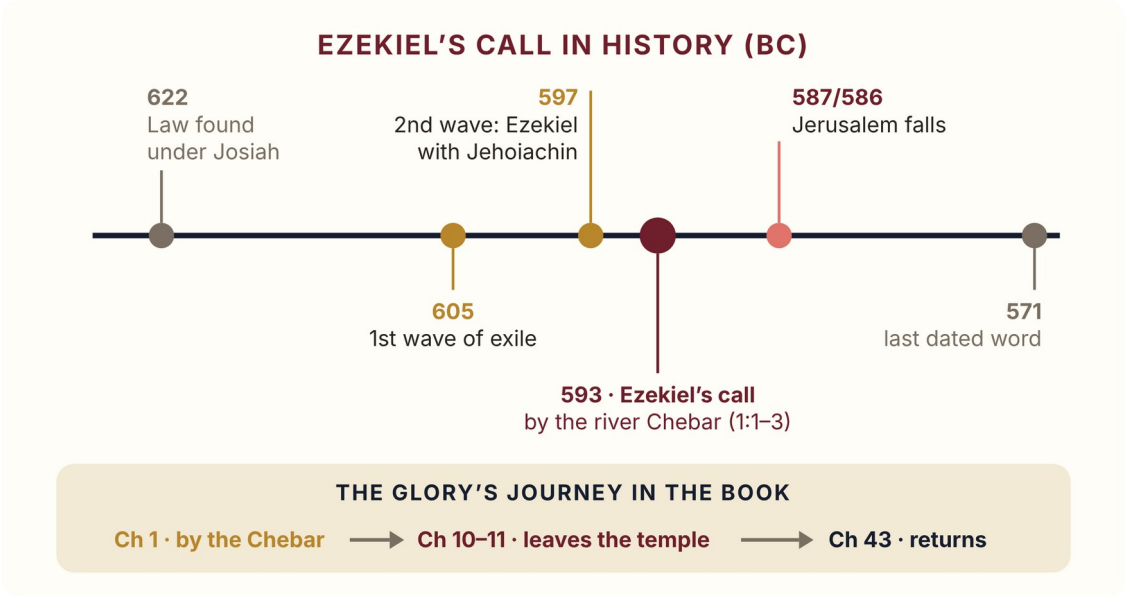
The Throne Above the Storm

> *“As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.”*
> EZEKIEL 1:28

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. Ezekiel opens his book with a date: “the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month” (1:1), in “the fifth year of King Jehoiachin’s exile” (1:2) — about 593 BC.

2. Chapter 1 is the doorway to the whole book.



The Heavens Opened by the Chebar

A captive priest, a dated day, and visions of God

EZEKIEL 1:1

Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik stresses that Ezekiel's year, month, day and place anchor the vision in real history. He takes "the thirtieth year" (v. 1) as Ezekiel's age — the year a priest began to serve (Num 4:3).

WHAT IT MEANS

Ezekiel was in the wrong place for a priest — "by the river Chebar among the exiles" (v. 1), in "the land of the Chaldeans" (v. 3), with no altar to serve and no temple to enter.

Hand (יָד)

YAD · "HAND, POWER"

The Hebrew yad means hand, and by extension power. Verse 3 says "the hand of the LORD came upon him," and that phrase will mark Ezekiel's whole ministry (3:14, 22).

The Storm and the Four Living Beings

Out of the north: fire, and four faces that never turn aside

EZEKIEL 1:4

As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik hears the storm "from the north" (v. 4) as the direction Babylon's armies would come from (Jer 1:14), and he reads the whole vision as a message that Yahweh ruled over Babylon and its gods.

WHAT IT MEANS

The storm came out of the north — the very direction the judgment was coming from (v. 4). Hard seasons are not outside God's rule; sometimes He rides in on the very storm we fear.

Living beings (חַיָּה)
CHAYYAH · "LIVING THING, CREATURE"

Chayyah simply means a living thing, a creature. Ezekiel uses it again and again in this chapter (vv. 5, 13, 14, 15, 19–22), because he has no better name for them yet.

Wheels Full of Eyes

A throne-chariot that goes everywhere and sees everything

EZEKIEL 1:17

Whenever they moved, they moved in any of their four directions without turning as they moved.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik sees a throne-chariot here. Guzik, quoting Wright: 'Each wheel is composed of two wheels apparently at right angles to each other' — so the chariot can go in any direction without turning (v. 17).

WHAT IT MEANS

The exiles thought God was stuck in Jerusalem and had forgotten them in Babylon. The wheels say otherwise.

Wheel (אוֹפַן)

OPHAN · "WHEEL"

Ophan is the ordinary Hebrew word for a wheel, but these are no ordinary wheels. Each one looked "as if one wheel were within another" (v. 16).

The Throne, the Rainbow and the Glory

Above everything, a Man on a throne — and Ezekiel on his face

EZEKIEL 1:28

As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik follows the vision as it builds from the bottom up and peaks at the throne.

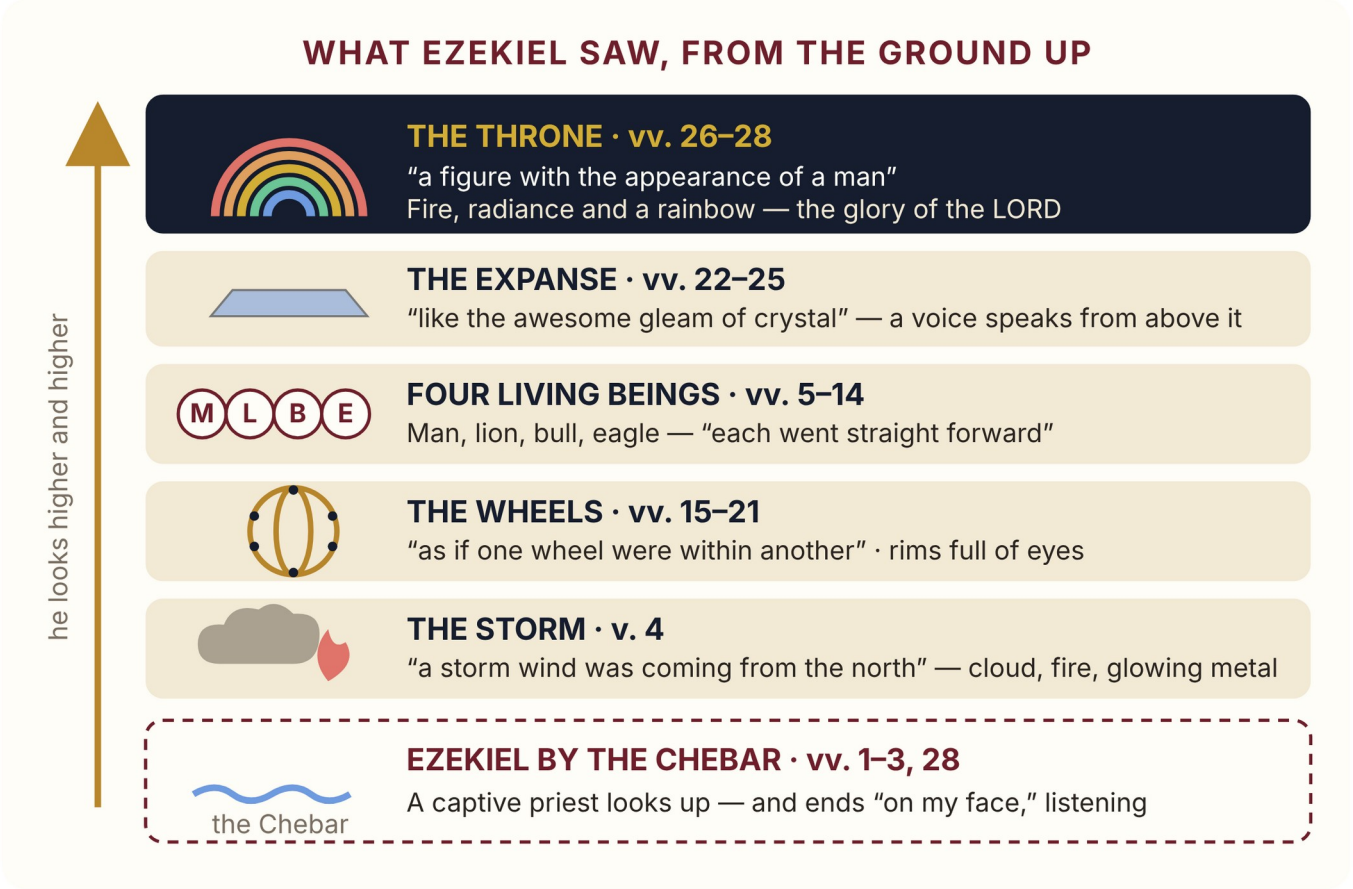
WHAT IT MEANS

Above the storm, above the creatures, above “an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal” (v. 22), there is a throne — and on it “a figure with the appearance of a man” (v. 26).

Glory (כָּבוֹד)
KABOD · “WEIGHT, HONOR, GLORY”

Kabod grows out of the idea of weight. God’s glory is His heaviness — His full worth.

The Vision from the Ground Up



Ezekiel describes the vision from the storm upward to the throne — the higher he looks, the nearer he comes to the glory (1:4–28).

What to carry from this chapter

1

A dated vision.

Ezekiel gives a year, a month, a day and a place, anchoring the vision in real history (1:1–2).

2

Heaven opened to a captive.

God opened the heavens “by the river Chebar among the exiles,” not in the temple courts (1:1).

3

Strengthened by God.

Ezekiel’s name, Yechezqel, means ‘God strengthens’ — and the hand of the LORD came upon him (1:3).

4

Out of the north.

The storm came from the direction of Babylon’s armies, yet God’s throne rode inside it (1:4).

More to carry

5

Perfectly responsive.

The living beings went wherever the spirit went, without turning — the very thing sinful people are not (1:12).

6

Everywhere and all-seeing.

Wiersbe, in Guzik, reads the wheels as God's omnipresence and the eyes as His omniscience (1:15–21).

7

Glory has weight.

Kabod means weight, honor, glory — the quality that evokes awe in the one who sees it (1:28).

8

A rainbow round the throne.

The bow in the cloud recalls God's promise to Noah: His sovereignty is bound to His promises (1:28).

Talk it through

1. Where were Ezekiel and the exiles when “the heavens were opened”? What does that say about where God can meet you?

2. The storm came “from the north,” the direction of coming judgment. How have you seen God at work inside a storm you feared?

3. The living beings went “straight forward” wherever the spirit went. Where are you tempted to turn aside or live a double life?

4. The rims were “full of eyes round about.” Is it comfort or discomfort to you that God sees everything? Why?

5. Ezekiel’s first response to the glory was to fall on his face and listen. What would that look like in your week?

CLOSING

Above the storm, above the creatures, above the expanse, there is a throne — and a rainbow around it. The God who opened heaven to a captive by a canal still rules over every Babylon. Fall on your face before Him, and listen.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.