Ezekiel 10

The Glory at the Threshold: Fire from the Throne

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God does not leave His house in a hurry. The glory steps from the cherub to the threshold, then to the east gate, as if He is lingering, giving one more chance. But the same holy presence that once filled the temple now sends fire on a city that has filled His house with idols. God's throne still rules, His purposes still go straight ahead — and His glory will not stay where it is despised.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 10 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1]Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were ▲ a sapphire stone, as the appearance of ▲ the likeness of a throne.

[2]And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and Green fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and ⚠ scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight.

[3]Now the cherubims stood Amber on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and ▲ the cloud filled the inner court.

[4]Then ▲ the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and Amber stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of ▲ the brightness of the LORD'S glory.

[5]And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, ▲ as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.

[6]And it came to pass, that Green when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels.

[7]And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out.

[8]And there appeared in the cherubims Amber the form of a man's hand under their wings.

[9]And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone.

[10]And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.

[11]When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went.

[12]And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were ▲ full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had.

[13]As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel.

[14]And Amber every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

[15]And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw Amber by the river of Chebar.

[16]And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them.

[17]When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for ▲ the spirit of the living creature was in them.

18 Then ⚠ the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the ⇄ cherubims.

19 And the ⇄ cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the ⇄ wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of ◷ the east gate of the LORD'S house; and ▲ the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

20 This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel ◷ by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the ⇄ cherubims.

21 Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.

22 And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw ◷ by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: ★ they went every one straight forward.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ⇄ cherubims *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** ▲ a sapphire stone
- **v1** ▲ the likeness of a throne
- **v2** ⇄ clothed with linen *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ⇄ wheels *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ▮ fill thine hand with coals of fire
- **v2** ⚠ scatter them over the city
- **v3** ◷ on the right side of the house
- **v3** ▲ the cloud filled the inner court
- **v4** ▲ the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub
- **v4** ◷ stood over the threshold of the house
- **v4** ▲ the brightness of the LORD'S glory
- **v5** ▲ as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh
- **v6** ▮ when he had commanded the man
- **v8** ◷ the form of a man's hand
- **v12** ▲ full of eyes round about
- **v14** ◷ every one had four faces
- **v15** ◷ by the river of Chebar *(every occurrence)*
- **v17** ▲ the spirit of the living creature was in them
- **v18** ⚠ the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house
- **v19** ◷ the east gate of the LORD'S house
- **v19** ▲ the glory of the God of Israel was over them above
- **v22** ★ they went every one straight forward

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 10:2 (KJV)

2 And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight.

Setting

This chapter sits in the middle of one long vision (chapters 8–11). Ezekiel is an exile in Babylon, among the captives by the river Chebar, taken there with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC (1:1–3). The vision is dated in the sixth year of that exile, the sixth month, the fifth day (8:1) — about September 592 BC. Zedekiah still sits on the throne in Jerusalem, and the city still stands. In chapter 8 the Spirit carried Ezekiel to the temple and showed him its abominations; in chapter 9 the man clothed in linen marked those who grieved over the sin, and the executioners struck the rest. Now the fire falls and the glory begins to leave.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the throne and the coals:** above the cherubim Ezekiel sees "something like a sapphire stone, in appearance resembling a throne" (v1). God tells "the man clothed in linen" to "fill your hands with coals of fire" from between the cherubim and "scatter them over the city" (v2).
- vv3–5 — **the glory at the threshold:** "the cloud filled the inner court" (v3). "Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple," and "the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD" (v4). The sound of the wings is "like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks" (v5).
- vv6–8 — **fire handed over:** the man in linen "entered and stood beside a wheel" (v6). A cherub reaches into the fire and puts it into his hands, and he takes it and goes out (v7). Under their wings is "the form of a man's hand" (v8).
- vv9–17 — **the cherubim and the wheels:** four wheels, one beside each cherub, "like the gleam of a Tarshish stone" (v9), "as if one wheel were within another wheel" (v10). Bodies, wings and wheels are "full of eyes all around" (v12). The wheels are called "the whirling wheels" (v13). Each has four faces — "the first face was the face of a cherub," then a man, a lion and an eagle (v14). They are "the living beings that I saw by the river Chebar" (v15). They move as one, "for the spirit of the living beings was in them" (v17).
- vv18–19 — **the glory moves to the east gate:** "Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim" (v18). The cherubim rise and stand "at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house," and "the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them" (v19).

- vv20–22 — **"I knew":** these are the same beings Ezekiel saw at Chebar, "so I knew that they were cherubim" (v20). "Each one went straight ahead" (v22).

Repeated words

cherubim / cherub (vv1–9, 14–20); wheel / wheels (vv2, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19); glory (vv4, 18, 19); clothed in linen (vv2, 6, 7); fire / coals (vv2, 6, 7); living beings (vv15, 17, 20); the river Chebar (vv15, 20, 22); threshold (vv4, 18).

Contrasts

the glory filling the court (v4) ⟷ the glory leaving the threshold (v18). The throne above (v1) ⟷ the city about to burn below (v2). Fire that came from God's own presence (v7) ⟷ fire scattered in judgment over Jerusalem (v2). Beings that go "straight ahead" (v22) ⟷ a people who had turned every direction but God's. Ezekiel the exile sees the glory ⟷ the priests and elders in the temple court see nothing.

Chapter theme (my words)

God does not leave His house in a hurry. The glory steps from the cherub to the threshold, then to the east gate, as if He is lingering, giving one more chance. But the same holy presence that once filled the temple now sends fire on a city that has filled His house with idols. God's throne still rules, His purposes still go straight ahead — and His glory will not stay where it is despised.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 10:1 (KJV)

[1]Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the ⇄ cherubims there appeared over them as it were ▲ a sapphire stone, as the appearance of ▲ the likeness of a throne.

The throne above the cherubim (vv1–2)

Ezekiel sees again what he saw at the river Chebar in chapter 1: an expanse, a sapphire throne, and the living beings that carry it. Guzik notes that the man on the throne is only implied here. The point is clear without him — the King is present, and He is about to act. The man clothed in linen is the same figure who marked the faithful in chapter 9. Guzik takes him to be an angel, since angels are sometimes described as men in Scripture, and he notes how promptly the man obeys. Some readers see in him a picture of Christ, the great Priest dressed in linen who both marks His own and carries out judgment; Guzik does not press that view.

Fire from the throne (vv2, 6–7)

In chapter 9 the city's idolaters were struck; now Jerusalem itself will burn. Guzik: "Now we learn that Jerusalem will also be burnt, and the fire comes from the throne and glory of God itself." He links the coals to the Babylonian burning of Jerusalem in 586 BC, drawing on Feinberg, and notes Taylor's

comparison of the city's fate to Sodom and Gomorrah. The same fire that purged Isaiah's lips (Isa 6:6–7) falls here as judgment. God's holiness is one thing; whether it cleanses or consumes depends on whether we come to it in repentance.

The glory at the threshold (vv3–5)

The cloud of glory has a long history: the pillar in the wilderness, Sinai, the tabernacle, Solomon's temple (Exod 40:34–35; 1 Kgs 8:10–11), the mount of transfiguration, and Christ's return in the clouds. Guzik lists these and then points out the tragedy that only Ezekiel sees it. He quotes Wright: "The sad thing was that Ezekiel was evidently the only person who saw the glory of God." The worshipers of chapter 8 were in the very courts and missed it.

The cherubim and the wheels (vv9–17)

Ezekiel now names the "living beings" of chapter 1: they are cherubim (v20). Guzik explains that cherubim were everywhere in the temple — Solomon's great carved cherubim stood in the holy of holies (1 Kgs 6:23) — so here the name fits. The wheels show that God's throne is mobile; it was in Babylon with the exiles, and now it is in Jerusalem. McGee, in Guzik: "These wheels are in ceaseless activity and speak of the fact that God is busy." The eyes speak of a God who sees everything.

The face of a cherub (v14)

In 1:10 the four faces are man, lion, ox and eagle. Here the ox is replaced by "the face of a cherub." Guzik gives three explanations without choosing: the reason is simply unknown (Wright, Wiersbe); a cherub's face resembled an ox's (Alexander, Smith); or a copying error crept in (Taylor). The second view is common — the Hebrew *kerub* may be related to a word for a winged bull-like guardian known in the ancient world.

The glory leaves in stages (vv18–19)

Follow the movement: from the cherub to the threshold (v4), from the threshold to above the cherubim (v18), and to the east gate (v19). In the next chapter it goes out to the mountain east of the city (11:23). Guzik calls this a shocking movement away from the temple. He quotes Block: "The departure of the glory signals the end of a relationship that had existed for almost four centuries." Since Solomon's dedication, the glory had dwelt in that house. Now Israel would have a temple without God — and soon no temple at all. But Guzik also notes the hope: in chapter 43 the glory returns by way of the east gate (43:1–5).

Straight ahead (vv20–22)

The cherubim never veer. Feinberg, in Guzik, sees this as a picture that God's plans cannot be frustrated. Judah's kings plotted, its prophets lied, its priests compromised — and God's purpose moved straight forward.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **expanse — *raqia* (H7549):** a spread-out surface, the firmament.
- **sapphire — *sappir* (H5601):** a deep blue precious stone, sapphire or lapis lazuli.
- **cherub / cherubim — *kerub* (H3742):** a heavenly guardian creature attending God's throne.
- **linen — *bad* (H906):** fine white linen, the cloth of priestly garments.

- **whirling wheels — *galgal* (H1534):** a wheel, whirl, something that rolls.
- **wheel — *ophan* (H212):** a wheel.
- **coals — *gacheleth* (H1513):** burning coals, embers.
- **scatter — *zaraq* (H2236):** to toss, sprinkle, scatter.
- **cloud — *anan* (H6051):** cloud, the cloud of God's presence.
- **glory — *kabod* (H3519):** weight, honor, splendor.
- **threshold — *miphtan* (H4670):** the doorsill, threshold.
- **brightness — *nogah* (H5051):** radiance, shining.
- **Almighty — *Shadday* (H7706):** the all-sufficient, almighty God.
- **Tarshish stone — *tarshish* (H8658):** a precious gem, perhaps beryl or chrysolite.
- **living beings — *chay* (H2416):** living creatures.

Cross-references

Exod 25:18–22; Exod 40:34–35; 1 Sam 4:21–22; 1 Kgs 6:23; 1 Kgs 8:10–11; Ps 80:1; Ps 99:1; Isa 6:1–7; Ezek 1:4–28; Ezek 8:1–18; Ezek 9:1–11; Ezek 11:22–23; Ezek 43:1–5; Matt 23:37–38; Heb 12:28–29; Rev 4:6–8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 10:6 (KJV)

6 And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels.

Command to obey — "fill your hands."

The man in linen did not argue or delay; he went in, took what God gave him and went out (vv6–7). I want that kind of obedience — even when the task is hard and the message is heavy. When God hands me something to carry, my job is to take it and go.

Sin to confess — a house full of idols

The glory left because the temple had been crowded with other gods (ch 8). Paul says my body is now God's temple (1 Cor 6:19). I'll confess the things I've set up in the inner courts of my life — screens, approval, comfort, control — that compete with Him. For the man in recovery, the idol often has a name and a dealer; naming it is where freedom starts.

Warning to heed — glory can depart

God lingered at the threshold and at the gate, but He did leave. "Ichabod" — the glory has departed (1 Sam 4:21) — can be written over a church, a ministry or a life that keeps going through the motions after God has stepped out. I don't want to be like the worshipers in the court who never noticed. I'll keep short accounts with God.

Promise to trust — His purposes go straight ahead

"Each one went straight ahead" (v22). Kings fell, the city burned, but God's plan did not wobble — and the glory came back through the east gate (43:1–5), and finally came in the flesh in Jesus (John 1:14). For the man sitting in a cell or a halfway house who thinks God has left for good: He is still on the throne, He still sees, and He still finishes what He starts (Phil 1:6).

Example to follow — the one who saw

Ezekiel was an exile, far from the temple, yet he was the one who saw the glory. Being "out of position" doesn't keep a man from God. Some of the clearest sight of God I've seen has come from men behind bars or at the bottom. I want to keep my eyes open like Ezekiel, wherever God has placed me.

Worship

God Almighty, whose voice is like the thunder of the cherubim's wings. Your throne is above everything. Your eyes see all, Your wheels never stop, and Your glory is too holy to be treated lightly.

Prayer

Lord God, clear the idols out of the courts of my heart, so Your glory has room to dwell. Don't let me grow so used to religion that I miss Your presence leaving or arriving. Give me the quick obedience of the man in linen, and the open eyes of Ezekiel. Thank You that in Jesus Your glory came to stay with those who trust Him. Amen.