

# Worship of God and Warfare of Believers

## *Ezekiel 1-3*

God gave Ezekiel a vision of Himself riding His Chariot of Glory to prepare the preacher for his warfare of ministry. This is not the only time worship precedes warfare. The armies of Moab and Ammon arrayed themselves against King Jehoshaphat. God instructed the king how to win this battle in 2 Chronicles 20. The choir was to march in front of his army (I know some pastors who would like to take their choir out of the War Department and march them into battle): “he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, ‘Praise the LORD; for his mercy endures for ever.’” When the choir sang and praised the Lord, the enemy armies mistakenly turned on each other and wiped out their entire army.

The best preparation for a week of spiritual warfare is to worship God on Sunday. The best boot camp for each day of conflict is the worship of God before we leave for the battlefield each day.

### **1. The Worship of God (Chapter One)**

When Ezekiel was 25, He was carried captive to Babylon in 597 B.C. Before that Daniel was taken hostage in 606 B.C. So while Jeremiah ministered to the remnant in Judah and Daniel ministered to the government officials in Babylon, Ezekiel ministered to the captives in Babylon. To equip him for this difficult ministry God gave him a vision of His glory or His presence as 1:28 reveals.

#### ***A. The vision of God’s holiness (1:4-14)***

First, Ezekiel sees a storm out of the north gathering in 1:4. This storm is the impending war with Babylon who will attack for the third and final time in 586 and totally decimate Jerusalem. This storm is a powerful Hurricane Irene like storm. Out of the storm burst special angels created to worship God’s holiness 1:5-14. They are identified as Cherubim in 10:20-22 who guard God’s holiness.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God expelled them from the Garden of Eden and stationed Cherubim with flaming swords to keep Adam and Eve out. God hates sin and must punish the practice of sin.

On the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle and Temple were two Cherubim on the Ark. When blood was sprinkled on the Ark before the Cherubim, God forgave the people's sins.

In Revelation 4, these angels cease not to worship God saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

In your storm, worship God who is holy, who hates sin in our lives but who also forgives and cleanses when we confess.

#### ***B. The vision of God’s nearness (1:15-21) or God’s Chariot pulled by the Cherubim.***

This chariot is indescribable just like the God it symbolizes. The wheels of God’s chariot of glory were like a gyroscope top in 1:15-17, which could travel in any direction with the speed of lightning. This illustrated God’s omnipresence.

The wheels were so tall they were “dreadful” or awe inspiring because of their height. There is no place God is not.

The wheels were full of eyes because God sees all. Proverbs 15:3: “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”

The wheels were pulled by the Cherubim and led by the Spirit in all directions in 1:19-21 because God is at work in all places. Even in Babylon.

You might be saying, “I don’t like where I am in life.” “I’m in Babylon, not Jerusalem.” This is what the captives were complaining in [Psalm 137](#). But God tells Ezekiel and you and me, I am working in your life and circumstance where you are now.

### ***C. The vision of God’s sovereignty (1:22-28).***

Above the Cherubim pulled chariot was a platform of firmament on which rested the throne of God in 1:26. On this throne sat a man who was totally covered in fire in 1:27. This is the pre-incarnate Son of God in all his Shekinah glory. John wrote of the eternal Christ in John 1:1 and in 1:14 that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we held his glory. That eternal glory for the most part laid aside at his birth still flashed out on the mount of Transfiguration.

Christ who is King of kings and Lord of lords is also the man who can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. Ezekiel falls down in worship in 1:28. Ezekiel is broken, humbled, and submissive at the feet of this holy, intimately present, and sovereign, sympathizing king.

## **2. The Warfare of The Believer (Chapters Two and Three)**

Now we learn why God revealed Himself to Ezekiel.

### ***A. So we can stand in our warfare (2:1-2).***

Paul said it this way, “Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.” He did not say put on your PJs so you can sleep in.

We stand in His strength in 2:2 which comes from worshiping Him.

### ***B. So we can stand in a warfare with rebels (2:3-7)***

These rebels with whom we battle are hardhearted and stiff necked in 2:4. I read about church planters in New England who described their work as plowing concrete. Any farmers in the audience? Plowing concrete sounds rough. New England was once a place of great revival, some would say the spiritual birth place of America, under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield. Now is a burned over area that is hardened to the Gospel. All sinners are, however, hardhearted like concrete. It will take the convicting work of the Holy Spirit to plow up and turn over the soil of the heart to receive the seed of the gospel.

### ***C. So we can stand in warfare by eating well in 2:8-3:3.***

General Napoleon said, “An army marches on its stomach.” He knew an army can have the best training, experience and equipment and still suffer defeat if they are not sufficiently fed. Apparently the authors of Scripture also advocated this military strategy. Jeremiah 15:16, “Your words were found, and I did eat them; and your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart”

Job 23:12, “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.” Matthew 4:4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

Most of us do not leave the house without eating breakfast or at least drive through McDonald's for our sausage, egg, and cheese biscuit. So why should we march out of our battle stations without feasting on God's Word even if it means sacrificing Facebook, Good Morning America or Fox News?

God's Word hardens us against hardened sinners. God makes us hard headed against the hardhearted in 3:7-9. We can't stoop to their level of rebellion in our ministry to the rebellious. We must remain resolute. Yet, God's Word also breaks our hearts for the lost in 3:12-19.

Ezekiel hears the noise of the Cherubim pulled Chariot in 3:12-13 and is reminded of the threatening storm. God says go sit with them, i.e. network with them and warn them in 3:15-19. In all our relationships we are not just good buddies we are watchmen who warn them of the gathering judgment.

We were warned very well concerning Hurricane Irene for over a week. As of this morning 3 million homes and businesses are without power and 9 deaths have been attributed to Irene. Governmental officials, the National Hurricane Center and local meteorologists advised us to evacuate or batten down.

And yet some do not heed.

One news source reported that as the storm's outer bands reached New York on Saturday night, two kayakers capsized and had to be rescued off Staten Island. They received summonses and a dressing-down from Bloomberg, who said they recklessly put rescuers' lives at risk.

Jesus warned sinners to flee the wrath to come. This is a mandatory evacuation with eternal consequence if disobeyed.