

Ezekiel 1: Summarized as a Chiasm with Alternating Structure at the Center

1. I SAW

Visions of God, the word of YHWH came to Ezekiel (v.1-3)

2. STORM CLOUD WITH BRIGHTNESS AROUND IT (v.4)

IN THE MIDST OF THE FIRE, AS IT WERE GLEAMING METAL

3. THE LIKENESS OF 4 LIVING CREATURES: A HUMAN LIKENESS (v.5-8a)

4 faces and 4 wings each, straight legs, soles of feet like a calf, human hands

4. A. WINGS (and FACES – human, lion, ox, and eagle) (v.8b-12)

Each one of them went straight forward, (wherever the Spirit would go), without turning as they went. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies.

5. B. THE LIKENESS/APPEARANCE OF THE 4 IN 3 METAPHORS Like Burning Coals of Fire/Torches/Lightning (v.13-14)

Darted to and fro like a flash of lightning.

6. A. WHEELS (and RIMS – with eyes like faces) (v.15-23)

When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went, (wherever the Spirit wanted to go they went). Their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body.

7. B. THE SOUND OF THEIR WINGS IN 3 METAPHORS (v.24-25)

Like Many Waters/the Almighty/Tumult of an Army

When they stood still, they let down their wings. (Voice/Sound from above the expanse.)

8. A LIKENESS WITH A HUMAN APPEARANCE (v.26)

One Seated Above the Throne-Likeness Speaking

9. AS IT WERE GLEAMING METAL, FIRE ENCLOSED ALL AROUND (v.27-28a)

METAPHOR OF RAINBOW IN THE CLOUD FOR BRIGHTNESS AROUND IT

10. WHEN I SAW, I HEARD (v.28b)

Likeness of the Glory of YHWH, The Voice of One Speaking

Note how many times the phrases noted in the outline are repeated almost verbatim (i.e., “each...went straight forward...without turning as they went” is in v.9, 12, and v.17; “when they stood still, they let down their wings,” is in v.24 and 25; “each creature had two wings...while two covered their bodies” or something like it is in v.11 and 23; “their wings touched one another” or something like it is in v.9 and 11; “wherever the Spirit would go [wanted to go], they went” is in v.12 and 20; “the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels” is in v.20 and 21).

These repetitions are to help you to identify the structure outlined above.

Note also, just for the intrigue, the gleaming 'metal' metaphors: “like burnished bronze” (v.7), “like the gleaming of beryl” (v.16), “like awe-inspiring crystal” (v.22), and “like sapphire” (v.26). This ties together parallel sections 3 and 8 with section 6.