

## THE GLORY OF GOD REVEALED TO CAPTIVES

***Ezekiel 1:1** Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.*

The children of Israel were captives in exile in Babylon. The glory of God had left the Temple in Jerusalem which was destroyed because of the sins of the people. They sat by the rivers of Babylon, remembered the beautiful Temple of God in Zion, and wept. They even sang of this profound loss in the Book of Psalms.

***Psalms 137:1** By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*

***Psalms 137:2** We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*

***Psalms 137:3** For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.*

***Psalms 137:4** How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?*

***Psalms 137:5** If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.*

But now, suddenly, this majestic glory of God comes to Babylon, to the captives who thought God had abandoned them. The heavens were opened in Babylon and the glory of God was revealed to one of the captives, Ezekiel. You may be a captive of some sin that appears to have taken you hostage in some land far away from the presence and glory of God, but, as Ezekiel discovered, God does not abandon his people; his glory will make its way to his captives wherever they are. Israel were captives in Babylon, but they are still the “captives” of God, not the Babylonians. Allow me to personalize this message and address Apostolics in Europe. There may be some here who look to Ethiopia and want to sit down by the rivers of Europe and compose songs of loss about Wara, Gofa etc. Do not get me wrong, we know how mighty and powerful the glory of God has visited and visits Ethiopia, but, just as the glory of God surprised the Jewish captives in Babylon, the glory of Jesus will surprise us in Europe. God does not want us to compose songs of loss and sadness, but songs of joy and glorious worship. Let us declare together with faith, “the glory of Jesus is coming to Europe!” Hallelujah!

Whatever trial, tribulation or distress you may be going through now, God’s message to you is that he will find you – his glory will come to you and lift you up out of your captivity, as the Lord Jesus said.

***Luke 4:18*** *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*

Ezekiel noticed that there were four creatures in his vision. “As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle” (Ezekiel 1:10). God was declaring emphatically to his people that he is the Creator and sustainer of all living creatures. Humans represent the image of God, lions represent strength, fearlessness, authority, the ox is a symbol of strength and endurance, and the eagle is sharp sighted and swift. All these qualities are in the hands of God. He will give spiritual strength, physical strength, boldness, authority, sharp sightedness and swiftness to his people. This is the opposite of what the state of captivity may suggest. Jesus was declaring the same thing in Nazareth – he will heal our broken heartedness, deliver the captives, recover our eyesight (eagles) etc. Expect the glory of Jesus to come to his people anywhere, especially when you feel weak, broken and a captive. His glory is sufficient!

***Ezekiel 1:15*** *Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.*

***Ezekiel 1:16*** *The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.*

The four creatures were moving unstoppably forward powered by the Spirit of God. God wanted his people to know that his glory, like an unstoppable giant wheel, will power us towards heaven. As we move towards the good, acceptable and perfect will of the Lord Jesus, we may move with little strength – like the small wheel in the vision. However, God is the wheel within our wheel: nothing and no one can stop us from fulfilling the will of the Lord. Jesus will empower us to keep moving – to keep keeping on. Have you noticed these windmills that generate electricity dotting the landscapes of Europe? Those powerful and gigantic blades are powered by the wind. No wind, no movement! The Spirit of Jesus powers the wheel of our spiritual lives! He is the giant wheel within our little wheels. Our you running out of momentum, Brother, Sister? Have no fear – soon the power of the spiritual wind from Jesus will turn the blades of your spiritual engine.

**John 3:8** *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

It was the glory of God that guided the children of Israel to the Promised Land. The cloud by day and fire by night not only took care of the physical needs of these newly-freed captives, but gave them strength and reassurance to continue. Nothing and no one could stop the move of the cloud of God's glory. "He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" (Exodus 13:22). Ezekiel also noted that the wheels had eyes all around them. "As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four" (Ezekiel 1:18). God's eyes are every watchful, looking out for our safety. "And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" (Genesis 16:13). Jesus is our Jehovah Roi – the Lord who sees us. Never imagine for a moment that God has lost track of us – if God watched over Hagar, who was cast out of Abraham's presence, how much more will he watch over us who are Abraham's children.

In the same way, please believe that the glory of Jesus has come to you and will stop at nothing until you and I enter the gates of heaven. God has a habit of appearing in his glory to captives. When Paul and Silas had been tortured, chained and thrown into jail, the glory of God appeared, shook the prison and brought salvation. When the apostle John was a captive in Patmos, the one God, Jesus, appeared in his glory to this captive.

**Revelation 1:10** *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,*

**Revelation 1:11** *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.*