

Ezekiel 1:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

Analysis

The 'colour of amber' (Hebrew: chashmal, possibly electrum—gold-silver alloy) and 'appearance of fire' surrounding the divine figure emphasizes glory and holiness. Fire throughout Scripture represents God's consuming holiness (Heb. 12:29), while amber/electrum suggests refined preciousness. The brightness 'round about' indicates God's glory radiating in all directions—nothing escapes His presence. This theophany reveals that approaching God requires reverence; His holiness consumes all impurity.

Historical Context

Electrum, a naturally occurring gold-silver alloy, was highly prized in ancient metallurgy for its beauty and rarity. The combination of amber and fire creates a brilliant, terrible appearance beyond natural experience. Ezekiel's description attempts to communicate transcendent reality through earthly metaphors. Ancient Near Eastern divine appearances typically involved fire, but Yahweh's glory surpasses all pagan theophanies.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the fire surrounding God's appearance remind us that His holiness makes casual approach impossible?
 2. What does the precious metal imagery teach us about the infinite value and beauty of God's glory?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֵת	כְּמַרְאָה	אֲשֶׁר	בַּיּוֹת
בָּאֵת	כְּמַרְאָה	אֲשֶׁר	בַּיּוֹת
בָּאֵת	כְּמַרְאָה	אֲשֶׁר	בַּיּוֹת
בָּאֵת	כְּמַרְאָה	אֲשֶׁר	בַּיּוֹת

לְהַ	סְבִיבָן	כְּמַרְאָה	מִתְנִי	וְלֹמֶן עַלְהָ
H0	round about	and from the appearance	of his loins	even upward

בָּא יְתִי וְלֹמַטְה מִתְנִי כְּמַרְאָה
and from the appearance of his loins even downward And I saw
H4758 H4975 H4295 H7200

סְבִיבָה	לֹז	וְגַה	אֵשׁ	כְּמֹרֶאָה	and from the appearance	of fire	and it had brightness	H5051	H784	H4758	round about
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Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 1:4 (Parallel theme): And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

Ezekiel 8:2 (Parallel theme): Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.

Hebrews 12:29 (Parallel theme): For our God is a consuming fire.

Psalms 97:2 (Parallel theme): Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

Psalms 50:3 (Parallel theme): Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

Deuteronomy 4:24 (Parallel theme): For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

2 Thessalonians 1:8 (Parallel theme): In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: