

Ezekiel 1:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Analysis

The vision concludes with overwhelming glory that prostrates the prophet. The rainbow (qeshet) surrounding the throne evokes God's covenant faithfulness, recalling Noah's rainbow (Genesis 9:13-16) as a sign that God remembers His promises even in judgment. The 'brightness round about' (nogah saviv) depicts radiant glory emanating from God's presence, creating an atmosphere of unapproachable holiness. The phrase 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD' employs three distancing terms (appearance/likeness/glory) to indicate that this is visible manifestation, not God's essential being which no one can see and live (Exodus 33:20). Ezekiel's response—falling on his face—demonstrates proper human response to divine holiness: reverent fear, humility, and worship. This posture anticipates worship in God's presence (Revelation 4:10). Hearing 'a voice of one that spake' transitions from vision to auditory revelation, preparing for the prophet's commission in chapter 2.

Historical Context

Ezekiel's vision occurred in a context where Israel had largely abandoned faithful worship. The rainbow's appearance reminded the exiles of God's covenant promises extending back to Noah and forward through Abraham, Moses, and

David. Despite the catastrophe of exile, God's commitment to His people remained intact. The glory Ezekiel saw was the same kavod Yahweh (glory of the LORD) that filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35) and Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:10-11). Ezekiel would later witness this glory departing the temple (Ezekiel 10:18-19; 11:22-23), explaining theologically why Jerusalem fell—God's presence had withdrawn due to persistent abominations. Yet here in exile, the glory appeared to Ezekiel, demonstrating God's faithfulness beyond the temple's destruction.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the rainbow imagery assure us that God's judgment operates within the framework of His covenant faithfulness?
2. What does Ezekiel's prostrate response teach us about the proper human posture before God's revealed glory?

Interlinear Text

מֵרָא הַ	הַקֵּן שֵׁת	אֲשֶׁר	יְהוָה הַ	בְּעֶנָן	בֵּי יוֹם
As the appearance	of the bow	H834	H1961	that is in the cloud	in the day
H4758	H7198			H6051	H3117
הַגֶּשֶׁם	כִּי	מֵרָא הַ	הַנִּגְהַ	סָבִיב	וְאֵל
of rain	H3651	As the appearance	of the brightness	round about	H1931
H1653		H4758	H5051	H5439	
מֵרָא הַ	דָּמ וְת	כְּבוֹד	יְהוָה הַ	וְאֶרְאָהּ	
As the appearance	of the likeness	of the glory	of the LORD	And when I saw	
H4758	H1823	H3519	H3068	H7200	
עַל וְאֶפֶל לִי	פָנַי	וְאֶשְׁמַע	קוֹל	מִדְבָּר:	
it I fell	H5921	upon my face	and I heard	a voice	of one that spake
H5307		H6440	H8085	H6963	H1696

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 10:1 (Parallel theme): And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

Revelation 4:3 (Parallel theme): And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

Genesis 17:3 (Parallel theme): And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

Ezekiel 3:23 (Glory): Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.

Acts 9:4 (Parallel theme): And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Exodus 24:16 (Glory): And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

Ezekiel 8:4 (Glory): And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.

Daniel 8:17 (Parallel theme): So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

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