

Ezekiel 10:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings.

Analysis

The appearance of 'the form of a man's hand under their wings' reveals the anthropomorphic nature of Ezekiel's vision. The Hebrew *tavnit* (תַּבְנִית, 'form' or 'likeness') indicates a recognizable pattern resembling human hands. This detail emphasizes that the cherubim, though celestial beings, serve God's purposes in ways comprehensible to human understanding—they act with purpose, agency, and directed intention.

The visibility of hands 'under their wings' suggests both concealment and revelation. The wings both hide and disclose, illustrating the mystery of divine operations. God's ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9), yet He condescends to reveal His purposes through visions and prophecy. The hands represent divine action in the world—God is not distant or passive but actively engaged in human history, particularly in executing covenant judgment.

This passage reinforces the Reformed doctrine of divine providence. God governs all things, even using heavenly agents to accomplish His will. The cherubim's hands working in coordination with the wheels (God's providence) shows the harmony of heaven's operations. Nothing occurs by chance; all serves God's eternal decree and redemptive purpose.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern art frequently depicted winged creatures (cherubim, seraphim, griffin-like figures) in temple contexts, often with human or animal features combined. However, biblical cherubim are unique in their exclusive service to Yahweh and their role as guardians of His holiness rather than independent divine beings.

The hand imagery would have been significant for Ezekiel's audience. The 'hand of the LORD' is a recurring biblical phrase denoting divine power and action (Exodus 9:3, 1 Samuel 5:6, Ezekiel 1:3). Seeing hands under the cherubim's wings confirmed that God's power was at work even in the traumatic events of Jerusalem's destruction and Israel's exile. This reassured the exiles that their suffering had meaning within God's sovereign purposes.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God's active hand in history (including judgment) affect your view of current events?
2. What does the combination of concealment (under wings) and revelation (visible form) teach about mystery and knowledge of God?
3. In what ways should understanding God's providential control bring comfort even amid difficult circumstances?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּאָרֶא	לְכֶרֶב יָם	תְּבִנִית	יָד	אֶדְם	תַּחַת
And there appeared	in the cherubims	the form	hand	of a man's	H8478
H7200	H3742	H8403	H3027	H120	
כַּנְפֵיהֶם:					
under their wings					
H3671					

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 1:8 (Parallel theme): And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

Ezekiel 10:21 (Parallel theme): Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.