

Ezekiel 43:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.

Analysis

Ezekiel connects this vision to two previous encounters:

1. the cherubim vision by the Chebar canal (Ezekiel 1),
2. the vision of Jerusalem's judgment (Ezekiel 8-11).

The phrase 'when I came to destroy the city' doesn't mean Ezekiel destroyed it but that he came with God's message announcing destruction—the prophet identified with God's purposes. Ezekiel's prostration ('I fell upon my face') demonstrates proper response to divine glory—overwhelming reverence, humility, and awe. This isn't casual observation but transformative encounter. The repetition emphasizes continuity: the same God who revealed His glory in exile, pronounced judgment on apostasy, now promises restoration. Reformed theology emphasizes God's unchanging character—He is both judge and redeemer, holy and merciful. The vision's consistency across contexts teaches that God's nature doesn't fluctuate based on circumstances. His glory remains constant whether in judgment (destroying) or mercy (restoring).

Historical Context

The Chebar canal (Ezekiel 1:1-3) was an irrigation canal near Nippur in Babylonia where Jewish exiles settled. Ezekiel's initial vision (593 BC) introduced the

merkavah (throne-chariot) imagery central to his prophecy. The vision of Jerusalem's abominations (Ezekiel 8-11, around 592 BC) showed God's glory departing the corrupted temple—tragic but necessary. Now in 573 BC (Ezekiel 40:1), fourteen years after Jerusalem's fall, the glory returns. This chronological progression—glory revealed in exile, glory departing from apostate Jerusalem, glory returning to restored temple—structures Ezekiel's theology. For the exiles, this continuity was crucial: their God hadn't abandoned them despite exile. The same divine presence encountered in foreign land would return to dwell among them. This assured that God's covenantal faithfulness transcends historical catastrophe.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when encountering God's glory—with prostrate reverence or casual familiarity?
2. What comfort comes from recognizing that the God who judges sin is the same God who promises restoration?
3. How does Ezekiel's progression (glory in exile, glory departing, glory returning) mirror your own spiritual journey?

Interlinear Text

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| כְּפָרָא הַ | כְּפָרָא הַ | אֲשֶׁר רַ |
| And it was according to the appearance | And it was according to the appearance | |
| H4758 | H4758 | H834 |
| בָּא יְתִי | כְּפָרָא הַ | בְּבָאִי |
| that I saw | And it was according to the appearance | that I saw when I came |
| H7200 | H4758 | H7200 H935 |
| לְשַׁחַת | וּמְרָא וֹתְךָ | כְּפָרָא הַ |
| to destroy | the city | And it was according to the appearance |
| H843 | H853 H5892 | H4758 |
| בָּא יְתִי אֶל | בָּא יְתִי אֶל | פָּתַח אֶל |
| that I saw | by the river | upon my face |
| H7200 | H413 H5104 | H413 H6440 |
| גְּבַר | כְּבָר | לְאָפָל |
| Chebar | H3529 | H5307 |

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 9:5 (Parallel theme): And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

Ezekiel 9:1 (Parallel theme): He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.

Jeremiah 1:10 (Parallel theme): See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

Ezekiel 32:18 (Parallel theme): Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.

Ezekiel 3:23 (Parallel theme): 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.

