

God's Limo
Read Ezekiel 1

Perhaps it is the startling descriptions--like the wheel inside a wheel with watchful eyes all around *or* the angels with animal-like faces bypassing the speed of light *or* the bolts of lightning crackling through ebony clouds of smoke—that prevents my book from being dusted off and read. Certainly these details are fearsome to the timid; however, we are of those who fear nothing and no one but God. Therefore, it must be puzzlement that claims your heart, for it cannot be that my book, bearing my name Ezekiel, is too dull.

No, dullness cannot describe a book that records God's relentless movement, from His throne room in the temple of Jerusalem, toward my people held captive at the River Chebar, in Babylon. And puzzlement can disappear with explanation (although I thought I had made clear what I observed at the river). Did you not notice that, in the first chapter of my book—to prevent confusion--I used the words “like” and “the appearance of” multiple times to describe the indescribable?

Yes, indescribable. For which of you, with simplicity could depict a Mack truck to a peasant in King Arthur's court. You also would resort to such terms as “like” and “the appearance of.” You might even say to him, “The wheels of a Mack truck have the appearance of huge, thick wagon wheels dyed black, like tar.” Or, you could explain its enormous body as being like a ponderous tree, felled, squared off, and wrapped in gleaming iron. But would the peasant grasp the idea of such a freakish monstrosity? Likewise, my heavenly vision would fall short of comprehension with a use of ordinary terms.

Nonetheless, the vehicle being portrayed in my vision can be grasped, if you have a mind to imagine. It was a majestic limousine consisting of four angels with multiple wings and four faces, traveling past human speed—“like bolts of lightning.” And with their wheels within wheels, they could navigate in any direction “without turning,” advancing in “a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually.” These angels, whose wings had a sound “like the noise of abundant waters” or “like the sound of an army camp,” bore a passenger. He was one who had an “appearance of a man” and sat on something “resembling a throne.” God Himself, glowing like metal which “looked like fire.”

This spectacular limo was persistent as it sped over a highway not made with hands toward a people who had, ironically, forsaken their God. They had ignored the warnings of their prophets, and were wallowing in bondage far from their homeland. At a time when men thought of their gods as being bound to a limited location, they felt abandoned by a God they feared was still back in Jerusalem. But the God of the Israelites, who had no borders around His Being, not even a speed limit, arrived at the River Chebar in all His glory.

Startling though this description may be, it should no longer be boring or confusing to an imaginative reader, for there is a phenomenal message captured in its description. The One portrayed by David as the God who is “there”—whether I “ascend to heaven” or “make my bed in Sheol”— is right there with His people, even in captivity. Therefore, when I saw the glory of the LORD at the river in Babylon, “I fell on my face” before the God who is “there.” Where? He is there, wherever *we* are.