

The Guidelines for practicing prophesying in Lord's day meetings
2016 Winter Training : Crystallization-Study of Ezekiel (1)
Message Three : The Four Living Creatures

I. Overview :

When we experience God as the blowing wind, the overshadowing cloud, the burning fire, and glowing electrum, we become the four living creatures and those who are living and active. The four living creatures bear the appearance of a man. They are the means for God to manifest His glory, to move on the earth, to administrate on the throne. The four living creatures have four faces: the face of a man indicates that they live in a proper humanity; the face of a lion signifies boldness, vigor, strength, victory, reigning; the face of an ox expresses serving others, bearing responsibility, sacrificing himself; the face of an eagle signifies that the powerful life is transcendent and causes us to be buoyant.

II. Truth and Enlightenment :

Day 1 --

A. How can we, who are dead, become living ?

We were dead, but by experiencing God as the wind, cloud, fire, electrum, we become living. The Lord Jesus said that "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God" and that "those who hear will live". Paul said that we were dead but God has made us alive. The more we have the cycle of the wind, cloud, fire and electrum, the more living we become.

B. What is the twofold proof that we are living creatures ?

The inward proof that we are living creatures is that we now have a feeling, or sense, of life. The second proof is outward and is related to our activities. Prayer is a Christian's spiritual breathing, and it is often spontaneous. Other activities that prove that we are living creatures include reading the Bible, functioning in the meetings, serving God, and preaching the gospel.

Day 2 --

A. What does it unveil that the four living creatures bear the appearance of a man in the main point of Ezek.1:5 ?

Verse 26 says that "upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man,above it." Man is a great word in the Bible. God's

intention, thought, heart is set upon man. The fact that four living creatures bear the appearance of a man and that God on the throne also bears the appearance of a man indicates that God's central thought and His arrangement are related to man.

B. Explain that there are four man in the Bible.

In the Bible there are actually only four men: the first man, the second man, the new man, and the man-child. We were the first man; Christ is called the second man; we have become the new man by regeneration; and now there is the prospect that we may become the man-child. The Christ whom the church must express is the man upon the throne. We as the living creatures express Him as a man. God needs a man.

Day 3 --

A. What are the differences between the religious teachings and the divine revelation in God's desire ?

The religious teachings in Christianity encourage us either to be like an angel or to be like God. However, the divine revelation unveils that God's desire is to have a man. God's redemption and salvation are to bring us back to the beginning and to recover us to being a proper man. We are the living creatures and we have God's life within us, yet we bear the appearance of a man.

B. What are the three crucial matters concerning the four living creatures being revealed in Ezek.1 ?

First, God's glory is manifested upon them. The manifestation of God's glory depends upon their having the appearance of a man. Second, these living creatures are the means of God's move. God's move depends on them. When they move, God will move, for His move is with them. Third, the four living creatures, who bear the appearance of a man, are the means of God's administration.

Day 4 --

A. Explain that the Lord's salvation is to make us proper men.

The Lord's salvation is to make us proper human beings. Thus, we all should bear the face of a man. However, some Christians are so "spiritual" that they do not seem to be human beings rather strange creatures. We need the face of a man, simply being human. However, we should be human not by our natural humanity but by the humanity of the Lord Jesus.

B. Why does it say that we should be ordinary, the same as common human beings?

We are ordinary, not peculiar or eccentric. Yes, we experience the Lord as the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, but the issue of this experience is that we bear the face of a man. As living creatures, we are not angels but are very human. In fact, the more spiritual we become, the more normal and human we will be.

Day 5 --

A. How do we bear the face of a lion as the Lord does ?

A lion signifies boldness, vigor, strength, and victory. We must be as bold as a lion toward anything sinful or worldly. For example, when He went into the temple and found "those selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there," He became angry and made a whip out of cords and "drove them all out of the temple." He severely rebuked the religionists, saying to them, "Serpents! Brood of vipers!" He surely was as bold as a lion.

B. How does the face of a lion need to be balanced by having the face of an ox ?

If in your office you have the face of a lion, that alone will not convince others. You need to be balanced by having the face of an ox. An ox is one who is willing to bear the burden and even to sacrifice himself. We all need to have such an appearance and to express such a reality of serving others, bearing the burden, caring for the responsibility, and even sacrificing our life.

Day 6 --

A. Use the example of that God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt to illustrate the face of an eagle.

After God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness, He said to them, "I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself". An eagle signifies the powerful, transcendent and buoyant God. A Christian has God's life within him, and this life is transcendent, causing him to have an expression of buoyancy and transcendence.

B. How does Paul's word reveal that he had the wings of an eagle ?

A Christian should not be held by anything. If we would be a proper Christian, we should be held neither by poverty nor by riches. Like Paul, we should be able to say, "I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be

filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. I am able to do all things in Him who empower me". Paul's word really revealed that he had the wings of an eagle.

III. Conclusion :

When we experience God as the blowing wind, the overshadowing cloud, the burning fire, and the electrum, we become the four living creatures. There is a twofold proof that we are living creatures. Inwardly, we have a sense life; outwardly, we engage in activities of prayer, reading the Bible, functioning in the meetings, even more willingly serving in the gospel and shepherding. The living creatures have four faces for expressing Christ in a complete way, exactly as being revealed in the four Gospels. We should be human by the humanity of Jesus in our church life; we are bold like lions toward sin, the world and Satan; we must be like an ox who is willing to labor, to bear the burden, to sacrifice himself and to express the reality of serving others; we need to be like an eagle, being buoyant, transcendent and not allowing anything to hold us in every human situation.