

From the Garden to Glory

Ezekiel

Author: Ezekiel

Timeline: 593 - 573 B.C. (2 Kings 25)

Location: Babylon

Category: Prophetical, Major Prophet

Theme: Visions of Judgment and Consolation

Overview:

Ezekiel, a priest and a prophet, ministered during the dark days of the seventy-year period of the Babylonian captivity of Judah. Ezekiel had been carried to Babylon before the final assault on Jerusalem. He ministered to those in captivity immediately before and during the first twenty-some years of captivity. The people had falsely expected to return immediately to Jerusalem. Ezekiel reminded them of the reason for their captivity and taught them they must first return to the Lord. Ezekiel prophesied and used signs and symbols to dramatize God's message to His people.

Introduction:

As we begin our study of the book of Ezekiel, consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. The Hebrew name Ezekiel means "God Strengthens" or "Strengthened by God." One of our worship songs includes these words about the Lord, "You are my strength when I am weak." Think of a specific time when the Lord was your strength when you were weak. What did He do? How were you strengthened?

2. Consider the following words from W. G. Helsop, "Ezekiel was a captive and in the land of a stranger. God opened heaven and gave him visions and revelations of His word and will." What is one revelation the Lord has shown you about His word and His will when you were in the midst of suffering? Why might it have been difficult for you to learn this lesson during a time of ease and comfort?

3. Variations of the phrase, "then they will know that I am the Lord", occur over sixty times in the book of Ezekiel. List five experiences in your life that have caused *you* to know that He is the Lord.

The Prophet's Call

Read Ezekiel 2:1-3:9

1. In 2:1, the Lord calls Ezekiel the "son of man". This term is used over ninety times in the book of Ezekiel to describe the prophet, and it refers to his humanity or his humanness. What does it mean "to be human"? Why is it important that we are aware of our own humanness?

2. Look at 2:3-5. To whom did the Lord send Ezekiel? How did the Lord describe the children of Israel? The Lord directed Ezekiel to deliver a message, but the people were held personally accountable for their response. Describe a time when the Lord asked you to deliver a message in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to Him.

3. Look at 2:6-8. The Lord tells Ezekiel not to be afraid three times in these verses. When have you been afraid to follow the Lord's direction for your life? How did you overcome this fear and respond to Him in obedience?

The Prophet a Watchman

Read Ezekiel 3:10-27

1. What did the Lord tell Ezekiel in verse 10? How do *you* do this on a day-to-day basis? Be specific.
2. Look at verse 17. According to John MacArthur, "The role (of the watchman) was spiritually analogous to the role of watchmen on a city wall, vigilant to spot the approach of an enemy and warn the residents to muster a defense." In what way(s) is the Lord calling *you* to be a "watchman"? How are you being vigilant in this position? Of what dangers are you warning others?
3. Look at verse 24. The Spirit directed Ezekiel to shut himself in his house. Describe the ministry that you have within your own home.

Israel Shall Be Saved

Read Ezekiel 11:14-21 and 28:25-26

1. Look at 11:16. What was the Lord's promise to His people? Look up the word *sanctuary* in a dictionary and write the definition. How is the Lord *your* sanctuary?
2. Look at 11:19-20. A stony heart is hard and unyielding, while a heart of flesh is soft and malleable. How has the Lord changed your heart from one of stone to one of flesh?
3. Summarize the Lord's promise to Israel in 28:25-26. Which part of this promise do you think was the most encouraging to the exiled people? Why do you believe this was so?

Israel's Sins

Read Ezekiel 22

1. Look at verses 4-13 and 25-29; list the sins that appear in God's indictment against Israel.
2. Look at verses 17-22. God's judgment of Jerusalem is pictured here as a smelting furnace. Extreme heat is used to separate the dross and impurities from the bronze, tin, iron and lead, leaving behind the purified metal. How has the Lord used a fiery trial in your life to purify you?
3. Look at verse 30. How can you be a woman who "makes a wall and stands in the gap" for the Lord on behalf of our land? Be specific.

Israel's Future

Read Ezekiel 34

1. Look at verses 1-10. Summarize the Lord's accusations against the irresponsible shepherds. What did He say would happen to them?
2. Look at verses 11-31 and summarize what you learn about God as the True Shepherd. What do you appreciate most? Why?
3. Read Psalm 23. What do you appreciate most about having the Lord as *your* Shepherd?

Israel's Restoration

Read Ezekiel 36

1. Look at verse 9. What does it mean to you to know that God is *for* His people? Read Romans 8:31-39. How does this add to your understanding?
2. Look at verses 2-7, 13, 22, 33 and 37. Ezekiel stated, "Thus says the Lord God", ten times in these verses. According to Walvoord and Zuck, "The fact of Israel's future restoration seemed so remote after her fall to Babylon that God put great emphasis on His personal character (rather than external circumstances) as the basis for the fulfillment." During times of difficulty, how do *you* keep your focus on God's character rather than on external circumstances?
3. Look at verses 26-27. Consider this comment on these verses from The New Believer's Bible, "Make no mistake about it: You will be tempted to do some of the things you have now tried to put out of your life. But you do not have to give in to those temptations. In fact, this passage should encourage you." How has the truth of this quote been borne out in your own life?

Vision of the Dry Bones

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14

1. Look at verses 7-10. The Lord's directions may not always make sense to our finite minds. Although Ezekiel may not have understood, he did exactly what the Lord commanded him to do. Describe a time when the Lord commanded you to do something that didn't make sense. How did you respond? What was the outcome?
2. The dry bones in this section of Scripture represented the condition of Israel. The nation was dry and lifeless. When has your own life felt this way? Look at verse 10. It was the Lord's design to turn the dry bones into an exceedingly great army. There is always a beginning and an ending to the Lord's work, and He promises to complete the

work that He begins. Look at Psalm 37:3-5 and Philippians 1:6. How could these verses encourage you during times of dryness and waiting?

3. Summarize God's promise in verses 11-14.

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Ezekiel consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?
2. What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?
3. List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord: