

The Prophets
Falls International Baptist Institute
Class Ten
The Book of Ezekiel

Text: Ezekiel 1:1-3 *“Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.”*

Introduction: The book of **Ezekiel** is the fourth major prophet. This book was written by the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was a priest who was called to be a prophet of God. **The name Ezekiel means “strengthened by God”.** This prophet needed the strength of God to fulfill the ministry God called him to. Ezekiel was not sent as a missionary to the people of another country. **He was sent as a prophet of God to his own countrymen who were in Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel prophesied at the end of Jeremiah’s ministry and at the beginning of Daniel’s ministry.** Jeremiah was preaching in Jerusalem just before their complete fall while Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon. Ezekiel’s work was to remind the generation born during the Babylonian Captivity of 1) The cause of Judah’s current destruction. 2) God’s coming judgment on the Gentile nations. 3) The people being restored back to Jerusalem. *“The phrase, “They shall know that I am the Lord,” is used nearly 70 times in this book. The Israelites had been sinful and stiff-necked. When other nations did what Israel had done, God destroyed them. However, God did not intend to allow Israel to be destroyed because of His covenant with Abraham. He was punishing them for their sin and at the same time was drawing them back to Himself.”* - Pastor Phil Spencer

I. THE PROPHET:

- A. According to chapter 1:1, Ezekiel was thirty years old when his ministry began. This is interesting because as a priest (1:3), that is when his ministry would have begun according to Numbers 4:1-3, 23. Remember he was a priest who could not fulfill his priestly duties because he had been taken captive in the second deportation from Jerusalem by Babylon in 597 BC (II Kings 24:10-16). God called him from the priesthood to the ministry of the prophet.
- B. For the sake of understanding a little history, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were contemporaries. Jeremiah was an old man and was never deported to Babylon. He ended up ministering to the remnant in Egypt. Daniel, a young man, was taken in the first deportation to the court of the king of Babylon and became his prime minister. Ezekiel was with the captives who were placed a few miles from Babylon by the river of Chebar.

- C. *“The message of Ezekiel is the most spiritual of all the prophets because he dealt particularly with the Person of God. Some has said ‘Ezekiel is the prophet of the Spirit, as Isaiah is the prophet of the Son, and Jeremiah the prophet of the Father.’” – J. Vernon McGee*
- D. *“Ezekiel’s call was accompanied by a majestic vision of the glory of God. He saw the mysterious cherubim, the throne, and the burning likeness of One like unto a man. The prophet was addressed by God as ‘son of man’ (2:1), and this important title was used by God of Ezekiel one hundred times. The corresponding title ‘the Son of man’ is found in the Gospels eighty-eight times.” – John Phillips*
- E. in Ezekiel 3:26-27 God told Ezekiel that he would be dumb, except when God relieved him of his affliction for the delivery of a specific message. His job would be to act out the messages that God gave him to the people to get their attention. He would literally use “a tile, filthy food, a razor, a pot, and a fire” to dramatize his message. He would lie on his right side for a long time and then lie on his left side; he would pack luggage to move; he was to smite his hands together; and tragically, he would not be allowed to mourn when his wife died. The prophet became the prophecy; the messenger became the message to the people.

II. THE PEOPLE:

- A. God sent him to a people who were stubborn and hardhearted according to Ezekiel 3:4-9 *“And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel; Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted. Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.”*
- B. **Ezekiel’s ministry was specifically to the those whom he was in captivity with by the rivers of Babylon.** Interestingly enough, *“Psalm 137 is the psalm of the remnant in Babylon: ‘By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.’ But at the same time Ezekiel writes ‘the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God’ (Ezekiel 1:1). What a contrast! While these people had already put their harps on a willow tree and at down to weep, this man Ezekiel was seeing visions of God!” – J. Vernon McGee*
- C. While Ezekiel ministered to the captives in Chebar, and God described them very clearly in Ezekiel 3; his prophecies were to the people remaining in Jerusalem and Judah concerning the coming fall of Judah and

God's judgment upon Jerusalem. Once that happened, then his prophecies would be to the peoples of the nations who were the foes of Judah. He distinctly prophesied to seven nations that God's judgement was coming upon them. Lastly, he prophesied concerning the future of Judah. Though under the judgment of God, God's glory would be experienced in a united nation of Israel once more.

III. THE PROPHECIES:

As we study the book of Ezekiel and its prophecies, I will borrow Herbert Lockyer's outline from his book "*All the Books and Chapters of the Bible.*"

- A. The Preparation and Call of the Prophet: Chapters 1-3
 1. In chapter 1, we read about the appearance of the glory of the LORD. This chapter is hard to grasp initially. But when you understand that God is giving Ezekiel a vision of the glory of the Providential God and His cherubim's who are constantly moving fulfilling His will among nations, you realize that He is showing Ezekiel that He is in control.
 2. Warren Wiersbe says "that in chapter 1, Ezekiel sees God's glory. In chapter 2, he hears God's Word. And in chapter 3, he becomes God's watchman."
- B. Prophecies of the Destruction of Jerusalem: Chapters 4-24
 1. We learn in these chapters of the Departure of the Glory of the LORD from the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Judah. Just like in olden days when Ichabod was born "and the glory departed", God's glory was being removed from Jerusalem.
 2. Warren Wiersbe says that in chapters 4-7, judgment is predicted. In chapters 8-11, God's glory departs. In chapters 12-17, Godless leaders are exposed. In chapters 18-21, God's justice is defended. And in chapters 22-24, he predicts the end of Jerusalem.
- C. Prophecies against Seven Nations: Chapters 25-32
 1. These prophecies concern the glory of God and the surrounding nations.
 2. Here is a list of those nations:
 - a. Ammon: 25:1-7
 - b. Moab: 25:8-11
 - c. Edom: 25:12-14
 - d. Philistia: 25:15-17
 - e. Tyre: 26:1-28:19 In this prophecy, we have the only glimpse in the Bible of the past history of our adversary, the devil. Ezekiel 28:11-19
 - f. Sidon: Ezekiel 28:20-24
 - g. Egypt: Ezekiel 29-32
- D. Glorious Prophecies in Relation to Israel's Future: Chapters 32-48
 1. In these chapters, Ezekiel preaches the Return of the Glory of the LORD.

2. Again, Warren Wiersbe says that in “chapter 33-34, the city of Jerusalem is restored. In chapters 35-36, the land of Israel is renewed. In chapters 37-39, the land of Israel is resurrected and reunited. In chapters 40-48, the temple and the priesthood are reestablished.
3. In my opinion, the greatest chapter in the book of Ezekiel is chapter 37 where Ezekiel has the Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones. Judah was represented in the Valley of Dry Bones. But God promised that He would both Revive and Restore Judah again!!! While in the immediate context, Judah was revived from Babylonian captivity after seventy years, the greater prophetic context is being fulfilled before our eyes. After being in the graveyard of nations for nearly two thousand years, Israel was rebirthed as a nation in 1948, and we are watching as God revives and restores His people!

