

Cover to Cover: From Genesis to Maps
Sermon # 26 – “Ezekiel”
January 13, 2008

Ezekiel the Man

Ezekiel was a contemporary of both Jeremiah and Daniel. Like Jeremiah, he was a “preacher’s kid.” He was the son of a priest and he also was a priest-in-training. At the age of 25, he was taken captive by the Babylonians and his wife was killed (24:15ff). At the age of 30, while exiled in a foreign land, God called him to be a prophet. Between about 593 BC and 570 BC he ministered to his fellow exiles. Ezekiel’s name means “God strengthens.”

A Timetable of Events

605 BC – The Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar, launch the first of 3 major invasions of Judah. This also is the first of several deportations of Jewish captives to Babylon. (Daniel is in this group.)

597 BC – A second group of Jews is deported to Babylon. (Ezekiel, age 25, is part of this group.)

592 BC – Ezekiel, living in exile, is called to be a prophet of God. He is 30 years old.

586 BC – Jerusalem is destroyed. (Jeremiah remains in the land. While Jeremiah ministers to the people back home, Ezekiel preaches to the captives in Babylon.)

The Book of Ezekiel

The message of Ezekiel places a strong emphasis on the glory of God. The heart of the message is that a people who rebel against the Lord will have His glory removed from them (though they may not even realize it). This book deals with the reality of judgment while also ultimately offering a message hope regarding the future.

Ezekiel’s prophecy is notable for its many unusual visions.

The Book of Ezekiel is not mentioned anywhere else in the scriptures, but it does have some striking similarities to the New Testament book of Revelation.

Outline of the Book of Ezekiel

Chapters 1-3 – The Prophet’s Call

God's glory is revealed through a series of visions (Chapter 1)—(a) a fiery storm cloud, (b) 4 living creatures—man, lion, ox, eagle, (c) wheels, (d) an expanse, and (e) a throne

Ezekiel is commissioned (Chapters 2-3):

- Ezekiel is addressed as “son of man”, a designation that occurs 93 times in this book. 2:1
- Ezekiel is instructed to eat the scroll that is handed to him. 2:8-10, 3:1-3
- Ezekiel is appointed as a watchman for the house of Israel. 3:17

Chapters 4-24 – God's Judgment on Jerusalem

Through a series of symbolic acts, Ezekiel visually portrays the catastrophic unfolding of God's judgment upon the people of Jerusalem—(a) the siege of the city, (b) exile, (c) famine, and (d) death by famine, pestilence and sword.

The ultimate catastrophe: God's glory is removed (10:18-19). His divine presence vacates the temple. This is the ultimate judgment—a people without God. (“*Ichabod*” - 1 Samuel 4:21)

Ezekiel, through many other symbolic acts, parables and allegories, makes clear the guilt of the House of Israel, as well as her impending doom.

Chapters 25-32 – God's Judgment on Surrounding Nations

7 nations—guilty of crimes against God and His people—are indicted and condemned. Five of those nations are briefly addressed. Two—Tyre and Egypt—are the object of more elaborate discussions.

Chapters 33-48 – God's Restoration of Israel

- The promise of restoration (Chapters 34-39)
 - Dry bones and 2 sticks: The resurrection and reunion of Israel (Chapter 37)
- The vision of restoration (Chapter 40-48)
 - A new temple and the return of God's glory
 - A revitalized worship
 - A life-giving river and a promised land of inheritance
 - A new name (48:35): “The Lord is There.”