

# Ezekiel

**MEANING** “God Strengthens” “Strengthened by God” The name appears twice in the book and nowhere else in the Old Testament (1:3; 24:24)

**AUTHOR:** Ezekiel

**TIME WRITTEN:** Was probably completed by 565 B.C.

**POSITION IN THE BIBLE:**

- 26th Book in the Bible
- 26th book in the Old Testament
- 4th of 17 books of Prophecy
- 4th of 5 Major Prophet Books
- 25 have preceded it. 40 to follow it.

**CHAPTERS:** 48

**VERSES:** 1,273

**WORDS:** 39,407

**KEY WORD:** The Future Restoration of Israel

**TWO KEY PASSAGES:**

1. **Ezekiel 36:24-26** - “For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

2. **Ezekiel 36:33-35** - “Thus says the Lord GOD: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt.

The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by.

So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’”

**KEY CHAPTER:** Ezekiel 37

1. Central to the hope of the restoration of Israel is the vision of the valley of dry bones.
2. Ezekiel 37 outlines with clear steps Israel’s future.

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT EZEKIEL:**

1. Ezekiel, a priest and a prophet, ministers during the darkest days of Judah’s history—the seventy-year period of Babylonian captivity.

2. Carried to Babylon before the final assault on Jerusalem, God uses Ezekiel to dramatize His message of hope to His exiled people. To do this, Ezekiel uses four things:
  - a. Prophecies
  - b. Parables
  - c. Signs
  - d. Symbols
3. Though they are like dry bones in the sun, God will reassemble them and breathe life into the nation once again.
4. Present judgment will be followed by future glory so that “you shall know that I am the Lord.” (6:7)
5. Ezekiel was the son of Buzi.
  - a. He had a wife who died as a sign to Judah when Nebuchadnezzar began his final siege on Jerusalem. (24:16-24)
  - b. Like Jeremiah, he was a priest who was called to be a prophet of the Lord.
5. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in three stages:
  - a. 1st - In 605 B.C. he overcame Jehoiakim and carried off key hostages including Daniel and his friends.
  - b. 2nd - In 597 B.C. the rebellion of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin brought further punishment.
    1. Nebuchadnezzar made Jerusalem submit a second time.
    2. He carried off 10,000 more hostages, including Jehoiachin and Ezekiel.
  - c. 3rd - In 586 B.C. after a one year and 17 month long siege, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and disrupted all of Judah.
6. In “thirtieth year” in Ezekiel 1:1 refers to Ezekiel’s age, then:
  - a. He was 25 years old when he was taken to Babylon.
  - b. He was 30 years old when he received his prophetic commission. (1:2-3)
  - c. This means he would have been about 17 years old when Daniel was deported in 605 B.C.
    1. Thus, Ezekiel and Daniel were about the same age.
    2. Both were about 20 years younger than Jeremiah who was ministering in Jerusalem.
  - d. According to this chronology, Ezekiel was:
    1. Born in 622 B.C.
    2. Deported to Babylon in 597 B.C.
    3. Prophesied from 592 B.C. to at least 570 B.C. (an active ministry of some 22 years)
    4. Live approximately 62 years and died about 560 B.C.

- e. Ezekiel overlapped the end of Jeremiah's ministry and the beginning of Daniel's ministry.
- 7. By the time Ezekiel arrived in Babylon, Daniel was already well known.
- 8. Daniel is mentioned three times in Ezekiel's prophecy. (14:14, 20: 28:3)
- 9. Ezekiel's Babylonian home was at Tel Abib, the principal colony of Jewish exiles along the River Chebar, Nebuchadnezzar's "Grand Canal" (1:1; 3:15, 23)
- 10. From 592 to 586 B.C., Ezekiel found it necessary to convince the disbelieving Jewish exiles that there was no hope of immediate deliverance.
- 11. It was not until they heard that Jerusalem was destroyed that their false hopes of returning were abandoned.
- 12. The broad purpose of Ezekiel was to remind the generation born during the Babylonian exile:
  - a. The cause of Israel's current destruction.
  - b. Of the coming judgment on the Gentile nations.
  - c. The coming national restoration of Israel.
- 13. Two things are central to that hope:
  - a. The departure of the glory of God from Israel.
  - b. The prediction of its ultimate return. (43:2)
- 14. Ezekiel's prophetic ministry shows a priestly emphasis in his:
  - a. Concern with the temple.
  - b. Concern with the priesthood.
  - c. Concern with sacrifices.
  - d. Concern with the Shekinah (the glory of God).

## SUMMARY OF EZEKIEL

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. Ezekiel prophesies among the Jewish exiles in Babylon during the last days of Judah's decline and downfall.
  - 1. His message of judgment is similar to that of his older contemporary Jeremiah, who has remained in Jerusalem.
  - 2. Judah will be judged because of her unfaithfulness, but God promises her future restoration and blessing.
  - 3. Like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel proclaims a message:
    - a. Of horror and hope.
    - b. Of condemnation and consolation.
  - 4. Ezekiel places special emphasis on the glory of Israel's sovereign God who says, "They shall know that I am the Lord."
- B. There are four major divisions in the book.

1. The Commission of Ezekiel (1-3)
2. The Judgment on Judah (4-23)
3. The Judgment on the Gentiles. (25-32)
4. The Restoration of Israel. (33-48)

### **THE COMMISSION OF EZEKIEL. (1-3)**

A. God gives Ezekiel an overwhelming vision of his divine glory and commissions him to be His prophet. Other Biblical greats involved with visions include:

1. Moses. Exodus 3:1-10
2. Isaiah. Isaiah 6:1-10
3. Daniel. Daniel 10:5-14
4. John. Revelation 1:12-19

B. He is given three things:

1. Instruction
2. Enablement
3. Responsibility

### **THE JUDGMENT ON JUDAH. (4-24)**

A. Ezekiel directs his prophecies against the nation God chose for Himself.

1. The prophet's signs and sermons in chapters 4-7 point to the certainty of Judah's judgment.
2. In chapters 8-11, Judah's past sins and coming doom are seen in a series of visions:
  - a. The abominations in the temple.
  - b. The slaying of the wicked.
  - c. The departing glory of God.
    1. The priests and princes are condemned as:
      - a. The glory leaves the temple.
      - b. Moves to the Mount of Olives.
      - c. Disappears in the east.
    2. God's glory is no longer in the temple or the city of Jerusalem.
3. Chapters 12-24 speak of the causes and extent of Judah's coming judgment through:
  - a. Dramatic signs.
  - b. Powerful sermons.
  - c. Parables.
4. Judah's prophets are counterfeits and her elders are idolators.
  - a. They have become:
    1. A fruitless vine.
    2. An adulterous wife.
  - b. Babylon will swoop down like an eagle and pluck them up, and they will not be aided by Egypt.

- B. The people are responsible for their own sins, and they are not being unjustly judged for the sins of their ancestors.
1. Judah has indeed been unfaithful to God.
  2. Nonetheless, God promises that her judgment ultimately will be followed by restoration.

### **THE JUDGMENT ON THE GENTILES. (25-32)**

- A. Judah's nearest neighbors may gloat over her destruction, but they will be next in line.
1. They will be next in line.
  2. They will suffer the fate of siege and destruction by Babylon.
  3. Ezekiel shows the full circle of judgment on the nations that surround Judah by following them in a clockwise circuit: (25-28)
    - a. Ammon
    - b. Moab
    - c. Edom
    - d. Philista
    - e. Tyre
    - f. Sidon
  4. He spends an inordinate amount of time on Tyre.
  5. Chapters 29-32 contain a series of oracles against Egypt.
    - a. Unlike the nations in chapters 25-28 that were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, Egypt will continue to exist but as "the lowliest of kingdoms." (29:15)
    - b. Since that time it has never recovered its former glory or influence.

### **THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL. (33-48)**

- A. The prophecies in chapters 33-48 were given after the overthrow of Jerusalem.
1. Ezekiel's message no longer centers on coming judgment but on the positive theme of comfort and consolation.
    - a. Just as surely as judgment has come, blessings will also come.
    - b. God will be re-gathered and restored.
  2. The mouth of Ezekiel, God's watchman, is opened when he is told that Jerusalem has been taken.
    - a. Judah has had false shepherds (rulers), but the true Shepherd will lead them in the future.
    - b. The vision of the valley of dry bones pictures the reanimation of the nation by the Spirit of God.
    - c. Israel and Judah will be purified and reunited.

- d. There will be an invasion by the northern armies of God, but Israel will be saved because the Lord will destroy the invading forces.
- B. In 572 B.C., fourteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel returns in a vision to the fallen city and is given detailed specifications for : (40-48)
  - 1. The reconstruction of the temple .
  - 2. The reconstruction of the city of Jerusalem.
  - 3. The reconstruction of the land.
- C. After an intricate description of the new outer court, inner court, and temple (40-48).
  - 1. Ezekiel views the return of the glory of the Lord to the temple from the east.
  - 2. Regulations concerning worship in the coming temple (43-46) are followed by revelations concerning the new land and city. (47-48)