

The Book of Ezekiel

Doctrine of Ezekiel

1. In the year 586 BC, the Jewish nation was carried away into captivity by the Babylonians.
2. Eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel (Heb. “God will strengthen”), the son of a priest named Buzi, was taken to Babylon in the captivity of Jehoiachin.
 - 2 Kings 24:12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. 13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said. 14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. 15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.
3. In Babylon, Ezekiel, and other Jewish exiles, was settled on the banks of the River Chebar.
4. Here, along the River Chebar, the message of God came to him.
 - Ezekiel 1:3 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.
5. Ezekiel's call to minister came “in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile”, 592 BC.
 - Ezekiel 1:2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,
6. The only personal facts we know about Ezekiel is that he was married, and had a house. His wife died suddenly of a stroke.
 - Ezekiel 8:1 8 And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me.
7. The last date Ezekiel mentions is the 27th year of the captivity. Therefore, his public ministry extended over a period of 22 years.
 - Ezekiel 29:17 And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

8. In the ancient world, the concept of conquering people, deporting, and enslaving them was common.
9. When enslavement came to the Jewish nation, the people of God wondered, “Where is God?” “How could God allow this to happen?” “Has God abandoned us?”
10. The book of Ezekiel functions as a theodicy, or a defense of God and His dealings with Israel in His wrath, and in His righteousness.
11. Ezekiel was uniquely qualified to give a defense of the justice of God because he was a priest, and he was prophet. There was not a dramatic distinction between these two offices.
12. The compassion, generally associated with the priestly office, and the stern rebuke associated with the prophets, is united in Ezekiel.
13. Though trained to be a priest at the age of 30, God interrupted his priesthood, and ordained Ezekiel to be a prophet.
14. As a prophet, the theodicy begins in the second chapter.
 - Ezekiel 2: 1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. 2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. 4 For they are impudent children and stiff-hearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. 5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. 6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. 7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.
15. In the midst of a clear call to minister to the Jews in exile in Babylon, Ezekiel begins his ministry amidst a strange spiritual setting.
16. What Ezekiel initially beheld in chapter 1, was a visible manifestation of the chariot throne of God.
17. In the Old Testament, when the Ark of the Covenant was moved, it was carried from one place to another by pole inserted through loops on the outer edges of the Ark.
18. The Ark signified the throne of God and His leadership of His people.
19. All that was going on in the earth symbolically was a reflection of spiritual realities that defied human comprehension in the inner chamber and inner sanctum of God.

20. There were times when God manifested Himself in a chariot of fire to reflect a mobile form of judgment. That is what Ezekiel saw.
- Ezekiel 1:15 Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. 16 The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. 17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. 18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. 19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. 20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. 21 When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.
21. Ezekiel saw an outward vision of the heavenly throne of God. The throne of God in the form of a chariot was on the move. Judgment was coming to Israel. When Ezekiel saw it, he fell on his face. “And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.” (Ezek. 1:28)
22. God spoke to Ezekiel out of the vision of the judgment throne. The message God gave to his new priestly – prophet was a message of judgment.
23. Ezekiel was called, “Son of man,” a title that later was given to Jesus.
24. The theodicy was understood by Ezekiel. He was to tell the people that what was going on in the Babylonian Captivity is the providential judgment of God upon Israel because of their rebellion.
25. After this bad news was given to Ezekiel, God required something very unusual of him. Ezekiel was to literally eat a roll of a book.
- Ezekiel 2:8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. 9 And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; 10 And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.
26. Ezekiel’s image of the book will be found again in Scripture in the New Testament in the Apocalypse. No one was worthy to open John’s book until the Lamb of God prevailed to open the seals and look upon the hidden message.

- Revelation 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.
27. This point is important to understand for much of Ezekiel, like Daniel, is cloaked in apocalyptic literature, a style of writing designed to conceal, and to reveal.
28. In apocalyptic literature there is much which is enigmatic, and there are strange images.
29. Ezekiel shared what was written on the scroll he was to literally eat. On it were written “lamentations, and mourning, and woe” (Ezek. 2:10).
30. The scroll that Ezekiel was called to eat, is a message of doom and judgment.
31. Ezekiel was obedient, and ate the scroll.
- Ezekiel 3:1 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. 2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.
32. Ezekiel did not just taste the scroll. He consumed the Word of God so that it permeated his whole body. This was not a casual encounter with the Word of God but a digestion of it.
33. In his mouth, the scroll was like honey in his mouth. That is a jarring contrast to the effect of the words on the scroll. How could a message of woe and doom be sweet?
34. The sweetness of the message is found in that it was the Word of God. Every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God is to be sweet to the child of God, no matter how disturbing the message may be.
35. Jonathan Edwards was a modern day prophet like that of the Old Testament men. Yet, in his writings, one of the most common adjectives discovered in his writings was the word, “sweetness”. The second word was the word, “excellence”. He spoke of the sweetness and the excellence of Christ.
36. While Jeremiah was prophesying in Jerusalem, Ezekiel was prophesying in Babylon.
37. The final explanation Ezekiel gives for all that was happening to the Jews is revealed in an often repeated phrase: “that they might know that I am the LORD.” Sixty times God said this.
- Ezekiel 6:10 And they shall know that I am the Lord, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.

38. The Psalmist said, “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10). This passage is misunderstood. The Hebrew could be translated, “STOP YOUR COMPLAINING! SHUT UP! HOLD YOUR MOUTH! BE QUIET! AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.” It is not a peaceful passage, but a passage that exalts the righteous judgment of God.
39. That is what Ezekiel is saying.
40. Though Ezekiel delivers his prophesy of judgment he does not leave the people without hope. The nation shall yet live again.
- Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.
41. In the Valley of Dry Bones, Ezekiel sees bones bleached by the sun because they have been exposed for so long. This open graveyard, filled with the dead, was a place where God would work and cause the dead to live again.
42. When God asked Ezekiel a question, the prophet was wise to bow before the sovereignty of God. He did not say, “Of course the dead cannot live again.” Rather, Ezekiel deferred to the omniscience and omnipotence of God.
43. Here is a message for the dead in trespasses and sin. The dead can live again. Sinner, you can live again. You who are dead to God, can live, if God so wills it.
44. You who have no ears for God, no eyes for God, no heart for God, can be given a new heart that beats for God, new ears that will listen to His Word, and new eyes to behold the Lord of Glory.
45. What must be done is to preach to the dead.
- Ezekiel 37: 4 Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.
46. When the gospel is faithfully preached with divine power, the dead live again. There is a spiritual resurrection.

- Ezekiel 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. 9 Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

47. The end of the book of Ezekiel comes with the promise that God is not going to leave His people. There will be an end to their captivity. There will be a resurrection of His people.