

Ezekiel

"Then you will know I am the Lord"

A series of studies
in the Old Testament book
of Ezekiel



STUDIES IN EZEKIEL

Study 1.	The Glory & Presence of God' Ezekiel 1-3
Study 2.	'Theatre of the Doomed' Ezekiel 4-5
Study 3.	'When God leaves the Building' Ezekiel 8-11
Study 4.	'A History of Unfaithfulness' Ezekiel 16 & 23
Study 5.	'The Nations will Know' Ezekiel 25-32
Study 6.	'Watchmen & Shepherds' Ezekiel 33 & 34
Study 7.	'From Rigor Mortis to New Life' Ezekiel 36 & 37; John 14.15-27
Study 8.	'Glory & Restoration' Ezekiel 43 1-12; Rev. 22.1-6

Commentaries consulted include:

- Ezekiel Christopher J.H. Wright BST
- Ezekiel Peter C. Craigie DSB
- Ezekiel John B. Taylor IVP
- Ezekiel Iain M. Duguid NIV Application

Making the MOST of these studies!

These studies are meant to be a compliment to the Ezekiel sermons heard at St Alban's.

So prior to the study it is best to have heard the sermon and read the relevant chapters.

Introduction to the book of Ezekiel

Historical Background

Ezekiel's life spanned a period of significant political upheaval in the world. He lived through the decline of Assyrian domination only to see the rise of the all powerful Babylonian Empire. Important dates are listed below (Dates are often approx.)

931 BC	Israel Divided: Northern Kingdom Israel ; Southern Kingdom Judah
722-721 BC	Nth Kingdom conquered by Assyria
612 BC	Assyrian capital Nineveh falls to Babylonians
622 BC	Ezekiel born
627 BC	Jeremiah called to be a prophet
609 BC	Death of Josiah King of Judah (Last good king!)
605 BC	Babylon conquers Egypt (Battle of Carchemish)
605 BC	Judah becomes a vassal state (Jehoiakim) Small deportation of some nobility incl. Daniel; (see Daniel 1.3)
597 BC	Jehoiakim rebels against Babylon (1st major deportation. 10,000 people including Ezekiel) Jehoiachin new puppet king of Judah (See 2 Kings 24.14)
592 BC	Ezekiel called to prophecy—30 years old!
596? BC	Zedekiah replaces Jehoiachin as puppet king
587 BC	Zedekiah rebels—Jerusalem incl. temple destroyed (2nd major deportation to Babylon)
572 BC	Ezekiel's days of prophecying conclude.

Who was Ezekiel?

We don't know a great deal about Ezekiel. He was the son of Buzi, a priest. Ezekiel was in training to be a priest at the Temple in Jerusalem when he was taken captive in 597 BC. He was 30 years old when called to be a prophet of the Lord to the exiles in Babylon. He was married but his wife died at the time of the fall of Jerusalem. (See Ez. 24.18)

It seems the exiles lived approx. 75 kms south of Babylon on the Euphrates river, at Nippur. (See map) They would have seen its famous hanging gardens (See picture), its massive fortifications and magnificent Ishtar gate. (see picture back cover)

Life for the exiles was far from a prison-like experience. They had restrictions but significant freedom to build homes, produce crops, worship and maintain communication with those left back in Judah.

Prophets & Kings

In the lead up to the exile, during the exile and following the exile there were a number of prophets that God raised up who had a significant ministry to God's people.

Prophet	Approx. Dates	Kings of Judah	Foreign Kings
Jeremiah (In Judah)	627-580 BC	Josiah, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah,	Nabopolassar; Nebuchadnezzar
Habakkuk	609 BC	Jehoiakim	Nabopolassar
Daniel (in Exile)	605-530 BC	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah	Nebuchadnezzar; Cyrus the Persian
Ezekiel (in exile)	592-572 BC	Zedekiah	Nebuchadnezzar

The Message of Ezekiel

The main themes of the letter which develop throughout are:

1. The Glory and Sovereignty of God

The Book of Ezekiel opens and concludes with visions of the glory of God. Throughout the book the phrase that is repeated over and over again is, 'That you may know that I am the Lord.'

2. The Sinfulness of Humanity

This theme cannot be separated from God's glory. It is because of the glory of God that the failings of Israel and indeed all the nations come into such sharp focus. Jeremiah had preached in a similar vain. Ezekiel chapters 16 & 23 are particularly hard hitting as the sin of Israel is portrayed in a rather graphic and confronting way.

3. The Inescapable Judgment

God cannot sweep the sins of his people under the carpet. In his righteous anger he brings judgement on Jerusalem and Judah but ultimately his judgment will extend to the ends of the earth. Who can possibly intercede and turn away God's wrath? Our only hope is in the return of the righteous king, who will pay the penalty for his people's sins, and finally turn away God's wrath.

4. The Return of the King and the restoration

The book of Ezekiel concludes with a vision of a restored Temple and the return of the divine glory. The restoration in view is not just to the land of Palestine but involves the renewal of the people of God themselves as God promises to give them a new heart and a new spirit. The glory that Ezekiel speaks of points us to the coming Saviour, the Lord Jesus whom John describes in this way. '*We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who has come from the Father.*' (John 1.14)

The Christological Purpose of Ezekiel

The book of Ezekiel anticipates and points to Jesus Christ throughout. Jesus is the fulfiller of the promises laid out in the book. For example: Jesus is the glory of God (10:18,19) the renewer of the covenant (16.60); the shepherd of the flock (34.23) the cleanser of the Temple (36.24f) and the regenerator of Israel (36.25, 26)

Did Daniel & Ezekiel know each other?

It is difficult to imagine that Daniel & Ezekiel did not know each other. Although they both were prophets of the exile, they had vastly different ministries. Daniel looks forward to the political restoration of Israel while Ezekiel anticipates Israel's religious restoration. Daniel focusses on world kingdoms and the kingdom of God, while Ezekiel is concerned with the restoration of the Temple and the religious system.

The Structure of Ezekiel

The simplest way to understand Ezekiel is to recognise that it essentially comes in three sections that are in chronological order.

Ch's 1-24	Oracles of judgment prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC.
Ch's 25-32	Oracles against the foreign nations.
Ch's 33-48	Oracles of hope after the fall of Jerusalem, between 587 and 571 BC.

The Book of Ezekiel

Focus	Inward		Outward		Onward																																											
Divisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
	Ezekiel's Vision		Jerusalem's Signs		Condemnation for Idolatry		Condemnation for Leaders		Parables		Pronouncements		Judgment on Judah's Enemies		Judgment on Egypt		New Shepherd				New Life				New Temple				New Worship																			
Topics	Predicting Jerusalem's Fall											Announcing the Fall											Promising Restoration																									
	Judgment Near											Judgment Now											Hope Ahead																									
Place	Babylonia																																															
Time	About 22 Years (592-570 B.C.)																																															
Author	The Prophet Ezekiel																																															



The Hanging Gardens of Babylon -
one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

Study 1.**'Then You will know'**

THE GLORY & PRESENCE OF GOD
Ezekiel 1-3

1. The people of Judah thought God's glory and presence were contained in the Temple in Jerusalem. As a result they believed that Jerusalem could never fall to an invading army.
 Do you think many people today believe that God's presence can only be found in particular physical places? Holy places? Give examples.

Or

Where do people go to try and find God these days?

2. If you did a survey and asked people to describe the appearance of God, what sort of terms do you think they would use?

Read Ezekiel 1.1-28

3. Ezekiel experienced this vision in his 30th year, the very year that he became eligible to take up full priestly duties in the Temple. Instead he is called to be a prophet to God's people in exile in Babylon.

In v4-28 Ezekiel gives a description of his vision of God's glory. It is nearly impossible to put the different features together. (Some have tried—see picture over) Are there any particular features that stand out for you? It is best to focus on the overall impression rather than each small detail.



Ezekiel's vision - Chapter 1

It may be helpful to recognise that the structure of the vision comes in three parts:

- i.) The four living creatures 1.5-14
- ii.) The Wheels within wheels 1.15-21
- iii.) The Throne 1.22-28

4. What is striking about the vision of the throne? 1.22-28
5. Did Ezekiel actually see God? If not what then did he see? v28

Why do you think Ezekiel fell face down?

6. What aspects of God's character does this vision highlight?

Read Ezekiel 2.1-10 & 3.1-15

7. In these chapters note how many times God tells Ezekiel not to be afraid. Why do you think he does that?

8. Repetition is a common feature in Ezekiel. What is he repeatedly told will be the response of the people to his message? See Ex. 32.9; Jer. 7.27-28
9. What is Ezekiel specifically called to do?
See 2.7; 2.8, 3.1

Ezekiel in his vision is told to eat the scroll. It contained words of lament, mourning and woe (2.10) and yet it tasted as sweet as honey (3.3—see also Psalm 19.10) What do you think might be the significance of this (ie. Both the eating and the taste)

10. What do you make of Ezekiel's response to this vision and calling? (3.14-15) Why do you think he was angry? Who was he angry at—God, himself, the rebellious people?
11. What do you think is the significance of the 'glory of God' being **'there'** in Babylon with Ezekiel? 1.3; 3.23

How do people today experience God's glory and presence according to the NT? See Hebrews 1.1-3; 10.19-22

12. Do we delight in all of God's word or only the positive parts? Should we always delight in ALL of God's word?
Discuss

In preparation for next week: Read Ezekiel Chapters 4 & 5

Study 2.**'Then you will know'****THEATRE OF THE DOOMED**
Ezekiel 4 & 5

1. It would seem that most people find the idea of a God who judges people and even condemns them totally contradicts their idea of God. Why do you think that is the case?

Read 3.16-27

2. How is Ezekiel's role described here? v16-17

You may need to do some research but historically what were the characteristics of someone in that role?

3. What would be the consequences of Ezekiel fulfilling the role of watchman v17-22 for:
 - i.) Those he warns
 - ii.) For himself

Read Chapter 4.1-5.4

4. In these verses Ezekiel is commanded by the Lord to mime or act out the coming judgment of God on Jerusalem.

There are 3 'acts' or scenes played out:

Act 1: 4.1-8

Act 2: 4.9-17

Act 3: 5.1-4

Try and identify what each act is depicting?

5. Why do you think God made his prophet/watchman suffer so terribly? Ezekiel had to lie on his side with minimal food and water for over a year? (390 + 40 days)

Note: the 390 days seems to represent the years from the time of Solomon to the fall of Jerusalem, while the 40 days seems to be a number representative of a generation in exile. (ie. Like the generation in the wilderness for 40 years.) However, scholars are divided on the best way to understand these time periods.

Read 5.5-17

6. In what way do you think Jerusalem was 'set in the centre of the nations'? v5. See Ex.19.3-6; Isa. 42.6;Isa. 49.6
7. v8. 'I myself am against you' v11. 'I myself will withdraw my favour' What shocking statements! Why would the exiles find these hard to believe?
8. Why was God's judgment against them so severe? v7.

9. What sin is singled out as particularly repugnant to God?
v8-12 Also see 6.1-6

10. God's acts are never without cause or purpose. What would the outpouring of his wrath achieve for God's people? See 5.13, 6.7, 10

Why was it important for God's people to 'know' this was not just an accident of history?

11. How was God's judgment on his own people to be of benefit to the nations around? See 5.14-17

12. How does God's judgment on his people in the Old Testament serve as a warning to the Christian Church today?

What did they do that we must be sure not to repeat?

13. Read Luke 12.47-48 & 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

How do you reconcile the challenge of judgment with the hope of the gospel?

In preparation for next week: Read Ezekiel Chapters 8-11

Study 3.**'Then you will know'**

WHEN GOD LEAVES THE BUILDING
Ezekiel 8-11

1. Consider the following scenarios:
 - a.) Have you ever had a situation where you felt betrayed by someone close to you? How did you feel towards that person? (Don't say betrayed!)

OR

- b.) Have you ever felt like you knew someone really well only to discover they weren't at all like you thought? How did it feel when you made that discovery?

Ezekiel may have thought God's judgment on Jerusalem was harsh based on what he knew. In these chapters God gives him a behind the scenes look at what was really happened, and it was not pretty!

Read Ezekiel 8.1-18

2. This vision comes to Ezekiel in his home while in the presence of the elders. It is was about 14 months after the vision of chapter 1.

Be sure to understand:

- a.) Who is it that stands before Ezekiel v2
See Ch. 1.26-28
- b.) Where is he taken in the vision?

3. What four evil practices is Ezekiel given the privilege to see in the Temple?

i.) v. 3, 5

ii.) v9-11

iii.) v14-15 Worship of Tammuz

iv.) v16

4. Why did the elders think they could get away with their idolatry? V12-13

5. *'The idol that provokes jealousy'* v3, 5

Jealousy may be defined as, 'anger that is caused by the betrayal or rejection of love. It is the proper response of a betrayed spouse.' Wright p100

Why is it essential that God is a jealous God?

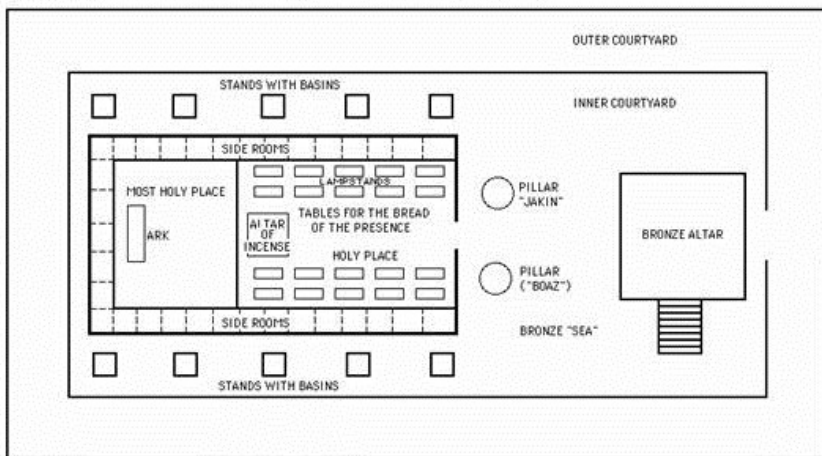
See Ex. 20.4-6; 34.14 Deut. 4.24

6. In the modern day church we seem to struggle in identifying the idols in our lives because we tend not to fall down and worship physical objects as in times past.

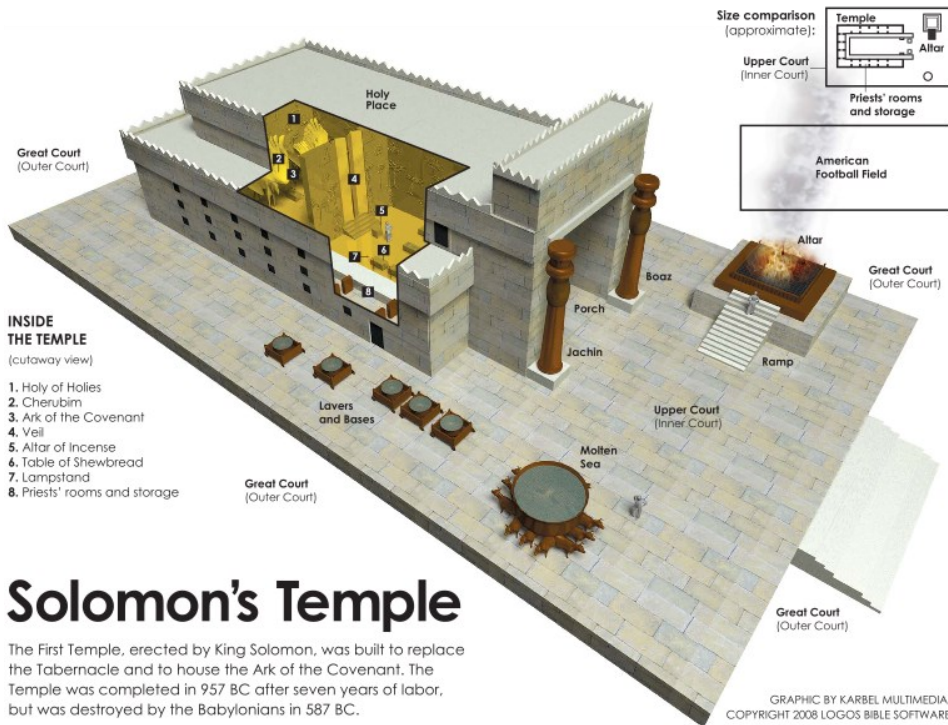
Idols are essentially anything that takes the Lord's rightful place in our lives. This being the case what idols are evident in the lives of Christians today? Discuss.

(BKC [07] P. 500)

PLAN OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE



Note: The exact positions and size of the lampstands and golden tables for the bread of the Presence in the holy place are uncertain.



Solomon's Temple

The First Temple, erected by King Solomon, was built to replace the Tabernacle and to house the Ark of the Covenant. The Temple was completed in 957 BC after seven years of labor, but was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC.

7. Do you think we fail to name modern day idols for what they are because we underestimate the 'jealousy' and holiness of God, or because we fail to recognise how detestable they are to God?

Do we sometimes fall into the same trap as the elder of Israel who said, 'The Lord does not see us.' 8.12
Do we think we can keep secrets from God?

Read 10.1-22

8. Like Chapter 1 we are given another description of the glory of God. Don't get bogged down in the detail.

What unexpected event takes place here? v18
Why would this have shocked and horrified Ezekiel and the exiles?

9. Where is God's temple to be found today? See 1 Cor. 3.16-17 Rev. 21.22

If God's presence now dwells in us, his church by his Spirit, can our idolatry have a similar consequence to that of Ezekiel's time whereby God's glory/ presence leaves us? Discuss.

10. God's judgment on Israel's leaders once again has revelation as it's goal—see 11.10; 12

Read 11.16-21

11. What hope is held out to the exiles in these verses?
12. Where do we see this promise fulfilled? 2 Cor. 3.3-6

In preparation for next week: Read Ezekiel 16 & 23

Study 4.**'Then you will know'**

A HISTORY OF UNFAITHFULNESS
Ezekiel 16 & 23

1. These chapters are rarely read in church or anywhere else for that matter because they are explicit in their detail and considered offensive to some! Don't let that deter you—they are the word of God written for our learning and edification!

Consider: Why is infidelity in a marriage relationship so painful? Why is reconciliation often so difficult?

Read Ezekiel 16.1-68

2. Just to be clear—what is being described in this chapter?

How is God's love, grace and generosity for his people evident in this allegory? v1-14

3. The word 'prostitute' is used 21 times in this chapter to describe Israel. This is not new imagery as the whole letter of Hosea is built around the idea of Israel's unfaithfulness.

God had chosen Israel and planned to make Israel famous—see Deut. 26.16-19.

How had Israel used her fame? Ez. 16.14-16

4. Read Deuteronomy 8.10-20

One of the failings of Israel highlighted in the allegory of Ezekiel 16 is that, *'she did not remember.'* v22, 43

Why is it so important for God's people to keep on remembering what God has done for us by his grace?

5. In Ezekiel 16 what were some of the consequences of Israel forgetting God?

What are possible consequences of 'forgetting' the gospel in the Christian life?

6. Following forgetfulness, Israel became proud and arrogant. v49

Give examples of pride and arrogance in the life of the Christian today.

7. Why will the sin of pride always lead to actions that dishonour God? Prov. 16.18-19

8. A further charge brought by Ezekiel was that they 'walked in their ways and copied their detestable practices' v47

Throughout history God's people have been called to be counter-cultural. We need to be connected to the culture yet distinct. Can you suggest ways in which the Christian Church might possibly be guilty of copying the ways of the world rather than standing firm and distinct on the truth of God's word?

9. Re-read Ezekiel 16.58-63

Much is said about 'covenant' here. The covenant with God is not a covenant of equals. It involves both law and love.

How are both of those aspects of covenant expressed in these verses. (A clue—what's the good news and bad news of God's covenant?)

10. Why is it both a comfort and a challenge to know that God never forgets? See 16.61 Also Luke 23.40-43
11. What is God's ultimate purpose in bringing both his righteous judgment and gracious restoration? V62

How might this help bring perspective to the events of our own lives? See Romans 8.28-30

12. Take a few moments for quiet reflection to consider how you may have been unfaithful to the Lord Jesus in your life. Repent and praise God for his faithfulness to you!
See 1 Peter 1.1-3

In preparation for next week: Read Ezekiel Chapters 25 & 28

Study 5

'Then you will know'

THE NATIONS WILL KNOW

Ezekiel 25-32

Chapters 1-24 have focussed solely on God's people and Jerusalem. Many strong words of rebuke have been given by the prophet Ezekiel to God's people. The exiles had been told in advance of the coming judgment of God on the Holy Land. However, God's judgment would also fall on the surrounding nations. Chapters 25-32 outlines what is in store for them. See the map below.



1. As you think about your own life, by which means do you think you learn the most—by observing the mistakes of others or by making your own mistakes? Discuss.

Read Ezekiel 25.1-17 & Ezekiel 28.1-10

2. There are two phrases that are repeated throughout this section and are particularly evident in Chapter 25. What are they?
 - i.) _____
 - ii.) _____
3. God gives himself the title 'Sovereign Lord' in this section. What message is he trying to make abundantly clear to these foreign nations as much as his own people?
4. Do you think these nations recognised their success or failure was due to the sovereignty of the God of Israel? See 28.1-2,9
5. When we look at the world around us and the seeming chaos amongst the nations—are we slow to recognise that God of the scriptures is still Lord of history? Why do you think that is the case?
6. What effect should knowing that Jesus Christ is Lord of all human history have on how we view world events?
7. How should our knowledge of the sovereignty of God affect our prayers?

Read Psalm 86

8. What can we learn from David's prayer about how to pray?
9. What does he acknowledge about God, his own need and the world around him?
10. The second major phrase in these chapters of judgment on the nations is 'Then they will know that I am the Lord.'

How are the nations of the world today meant to know that Jesus is Lord? See Matt. 28.16-20; 2 Cor. 2.14-16

11. When will the nations finally acknowledge the Lordship of Christ?

See Phil. 2.1-11; Rev. 7.9-10, 15.3-4

12. If we have truly recognised the Sovereign Lordship of Jesus, how should that affect our:
 - i.) Daily living? See Matt. 6.19-34
 - ii.) Our witness?
 - iii.) Our outlook on world history?

In preparation for next week: Read Ezekiel 33 & 34

Study 6**'Then you will know'**

WATCHMEN & SHEPHERDS
Ezekiel 33 & 34

Note: In Chapter 24.1, the Lord tells Ezekiel the exact month and day that Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem. The whole chapter speaks of the impending fall of Jerusalem. But then we have the suspense of chapters 25-32 before we hear any further news, of the actual fall of Jerusalem. The siege lasted about 18 months and then it took approx. a further 6 months for the news to reach the exiles, which is finally announced in Ezekiel 33.21.

From this point onwards, (Ch. 33-48) Ezekiel's prophet ministry takes on a whole new role. No longer does he speak of judgment and God's righteous wrath. Now he speaks of the future restoration and glory of God's name and God's people.

1. Oscar Wilde said, 'We are all in the gutter but some of us are looking at stars.' It is a picture of hope!
It has also been said, 'He that lives in hope dances with out a fiddle.'

How do you think the exiles felt when they heard the news of Jerusalem's fall? Were they without hope?

Why is hope so important to any of us as we live out our lives? What happens when we lose hope?

Read Ezekiel 33.1-33

2. This is not the first time that Ezekiel has been spoken of as a watchman. See 3.16-21

What was the role of the watchman? v1-9

3. What was the responsibility of the people of Israel?
v10-20

What picture are we given of the Sovereign Lord?

What do we learn about individual and corporate responsibility from these verses?

4. In verses 21-33 we hear of the fall of Jerusalem and then Ezekiel speaks. Previously God had made him silent and the only words he could speak were the words of judgment given to him. This is a turning point in his ministry as we shall see he moves from words of judgment to words of hope and restoration.

In verses 23-29 Ezekiel speaks of the blindness of the people in Jerusalem. Despite the calamity—they still don't get how they went wrong. What sins does Ezekiel highlight for them? See James 2.14-24

5. In v30-33 Ezekiel addresses the sins of the people in exile—they also still don't get it! What was their sin?

Do you think people (including us) are slow to learn from the hard lessons of life?

Are we reluctant to recognise our 'fault' or sin that may contribute to life's difficulties when things go wrong?

6. Who are the 'watchman' for God's people today?

Why is being a 'watchman' a difficult task? What do you think some of the challenges might be?

Read Ezekiel 34.1-31

This chapter swings back and forth between the present and the future. An outline of the structure may be helpful.

34.1-10 Judgement against Israel's shepherds

34.11-16 God the Good Shepherd

34.17-22 Judgement of the sheep

34.23-31 Future restoration of God's people

7. Just to be clear, who are the shepherds that God condemns in v1-10? See Psalm 78.70-72

List their failings as described by Ezekiel.

8. In v11-16 we are introduced to God the Good Shepherd. What are the characteristics that distinguish him from all the previous shepherds?

9. v23-31 are verses of great hope for a future shepherd.
See also Ezekiel 37.15-28

God promises to make a 'new' covenant with his people.

What are the main features of this covenant & the one shepherd God will place over his people?

10. Why would the promise of a new Davidic Shepherd King have encouraged the exiles? See 2 Samuel 7.4-16

Read John 10.1-21

11. In John 10, what are the characteristics of:

i.) The Good Shepherd?

ii.) The characteristics of the sheep?

How do these characteristics compare to Ezekiel 34?

12. The exiles finally had reason to hope. It was a hope founded on God's word—his promises.

Where do we sometimes foolishly seek to find our hope?

It has been said, '*Life with Christ is an endless hope, life without him is a hopeless end.*'

What hope for both the present & the future does Jesus bring to your life as the good shepherd?

In preparation for next week: Read Ezekiel Chapters 36 & 37

Study 7.**'The you will know'**

'FROM RIGOR MORTIS TO NEW LIFE'
Ezekiel 36 & 37

Chapter 35 deals with the country of Edom who gloated over the fall of God's people (See 35.10, 13, Psalm 137) as they had largely escaped the might of Babylon. However, God would bring his severest judgment upon them (v3-4).

Chapter 36 stands as a contrast highlighting that Israel who had suffered at the hands of the Babylonians (unlike Edom) would have their fortunes reversed for the better (unlike Edom).

1. Can you think of examples where people have had a dramatic reversal of fortunes, either for the good or the bad? Can such reversals ever be attributed to God? Should they be? Discuss.

Read Ezekiel 36.1-38

Once again it may be helpful to recognise the break up of the chapter:

- 36.1-7 Judgment on near neighbours for treatment of Israel.
- 36.8-15 Promised restoration of the Mountains of Israel (a complete contrast to Ch. 6)
- 36. 16-21 Sad reminder of Israel's past
- 36.22-38 The promise of vindication for God & his people

2. What reasons does God give for his actions in 36.1-7?
See v5-7

3. v20-23 are at the heart of Ezekiel's salvation theology. But there is a subtle change in the reason given for God's actions. What is it?

4. It is because of his Holy name that God sent Israel into exile and it is because of his Holy name that he will restore them. How do you reconcile the two?

5. God makes the most outrageous statement that he will show the nations that he is holy, through his people! v23

How could God's people ever hope to achieve this?

How would God fulfil this promise? v24-32

6. Israel's restoration to the land is an amazing reversal of fortune but what is God's ultimate purpose for his actions? What does he hope to achieve among the nations and his own people? See 36.36; 38

Does this have anything to teach us about world history?

7. If God is going to show his holiness to the world through his people, how is he accomplishing that today through the church?

Read Ezekiel 37.1-14

8. The vision of the dry bones is a picture not just of death but of a cursed people, under divine judgment. To be deprived of a burial is the ultimate sign of deprivation and degradation.

Do you think God's question to Ezekiel was a test of his faith? v3. Why do you think God asked such an absurd question?

9. Note how many times the word 'breath' is used in these verses. Also note that the Hebrew word *'ruah'* can also be translated wind or spirit.

Can you see any similarities between the vision of Ezekiel 37.1-14 and the creation account of humanity in Gen. 2.7? What are they?

11. What two things are essential for new life to come and bring full restoration to God's people? See 37.4, 13-14
12. How is God presented in this passage? What features of his person and character are highlighted?
13. How is Jesus the fulfilment of the new life God promises to his people Israel? See John 20.19-22; Romans 8.10-11; 2 Cor. 5.17

When is this new life to be experienced?

In preparation for next week: Read Ezekiel Chapters 43-48

Study 8**‘Then you will know’****GLORY & RESTORATION**
Ezekiel 43-48

Following on from chapter 37 we find some of the most difficult passages in the whole of the Bible. If you take the time to read chapters 38-39 you will find an apocalyptic type description (like that in Revelation) of the destruction of God’s enemies and the victory of God and his people over them. Identifying the details with any particular time or person in history is fraught with danger. It is safest to stick to the main message of these chapters which is: i.) That God is the master of human history ii.) The purpose of God’s mastery in human history is to make his holiness known to all human nations, with God’s judgments demonstrating his holiness.

Chapters 40—48 are no less difficult for Western minds to discern their significance but they focus on the restoration of the Temple in great detail and the return of the glory of God to dwell amongst his people.

1. What do you think has been the main message of Ezekiel up to this point? What has stood out for you?

Read Ezekiel 43.1-12

2. Why would this vision have meant so much to Ezekiel and the exiles? See 40.1
3. What previous encounters had Ezekiel had with the glory of God? See Ch. 1 & 10. How is this one different?

4. What is required of Israel if they are to experience the glory and presence of God? v6-9

5. Consider verses 10-12

Why do you think the design of the temple once described to them would make them ashamed of their sin? V10 a clue what does the design of the temple emphasise about God, about people? (See page 17)

6. This vision speaks of a time when 'The House of Israel will never again defile my holy name'.

Has there ever been such a time? If not when do you think that time might be?

Read John 2.12-22

7. How does Jesus bring a different understanding of the temple and God's presence?

8. Consider the following verses which further expand our understanding of the Temple in the New Testament:

1 Cor. 3.16

1 Cor. 6.19

2 Cor. 6.16

Read Revelation 21.1-5, 9-14, 22-27

9. In Revelation we are presented with the final image of the New Jerusalem and the New Temple.

What are the outstanding features of this image where we see the coming together of God, his glory, his people and the temple?

10. What would you say to people who imagine that the restoration of Israel and the Temple (in Ezekiel 40-48) is a physical one that is meant to take place in modern day Israel? How do we know that is not the case?
11. What hope is there for the nations of the world to avoid the coming judgment of God and share in his final and glorious restoration of the creation? See Matt. 28.16-20
12. The Book of Ezekiel concludes with a cryptic note—'THE LORD IS THERE'. The thing that has always distinguish God's people from all other nations is that the Lord was in their midst. How is that true of the church today?
13. Ezekiel has shown us that the God of scripture is a God who acts in history so that the nations of the world, '**will know that I am the Lord.**' See Heb. 1.1-3, John 1.1-14

Pray for people and nations—that they might truly KNOW!

pray



Ishtar Gate, Babylon



Ancient Babylon



Babylon today