

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL THE PROPHET

Intro remarks about the class.

Josephus, the ancient historian, wrote that Ezekiel “left behind him in writing two books.”

Josephus (Aniq. 10.5.1)

If you search for a commentary on the book of Ezekiel,
most often that is exactly what you will find - two books.

Volume One: Chapters 1 thru 24 - consist largely of doom prophecies

AND

Volume Two: Chapters 25 thru 48 - which are full of comforting prophecies - consolations

Chapters 25 thru 32 - contain several prophecies against the surrounding nations.

Phoenicia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt were all to suffer.

preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

diagram of Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry.

NOTE: I guess that doom for your enemies would bring comfort, if you lived in Judea.

Ezekiel is the third LARGE collection of ancient prophecies,

in what we today, call the Old Testament.

The other MAJOR prophetic books (in size) are Isaiah and Jeremiah.

The books were arranged in chronological order. Isaiah prophesied during the last four decades of the 8th century, Jeremiah during the 7th century (627 to 587) and Ezekiel during the 6th (592 to 570) [dates approximate].

There is another tradition recorded in the Babylonian Talmud, which arranges the writings in topical order, and this order appears in some early mss. Jeremiah (along with Lamentations) is almost all doom and gloom. Ezekiel is doom (first part) followed by consolation (second part) and Isaiah is mostly consolation. So they put doom next to doom, and consolation next to consolation.

Isaiah was many years pre-exile,
Jeremiah was immediately pre-exile,
Ezekiel and later Daniel were intro-exile (they wrote from Babylon).

Recommend:

1. Reader's Digest, "Who's Who in the Bible" - Illustrated Biographical Dictionary
2. "The Kregel Pictorial Guide to THE TEMPLE," by Robert Backhouse, Kregel Pub.
3. "The Reese Chronological Bible"
4. "Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps & Time Lines" by Rose Publishing

1. Web site: Biblos.com

@ the website there is a recommended reading and recommended viewing list with pictures of the volumes, or CDs. If you go to that page, you can link right to amazon.com, for purchase.

You folks online are picking up this class in our third year. We began with Genesis 1:1 and have slowly worked our way thru, with detours to Hebrews (just after Leviticus) and to the Letters of Paul (to see what he said about The Law). We studied through to the Babylonian exile. Those class recordings are archived at the web site, www.prophecyviewpoint.com. You can print out the written study, (not all classes had written notes) for something to look at, while you stream the recording, or you can download from the site to a CD or mp3, so you can listen while you drive to work.

And now we have come to Ezekiel.....

The book certainly rivals The Revelation - in vivid imagery.

Chapt 1 - the "four living creatures" who transport the LORD's throne
are the same as described by John in Revelation chapter 4.

Chapt 3 - v.1, Ezekiel is told to "eat" a scroll" given to him by the LORD. He did so, and it
"tasted sweet." In Revelation 10:8-10, John is told to eat a "little scroll."

Chapt 9 - Revelation chapt 7, speaks of a seal, upon the foreheads of the "servants of God" (the
144,000), and Ezekiel calls it "a mark on the foreheads"

Chapt 10 - a “man clothed in linen” is told to scatter live coals over the city of Jerusalem.

Then “the cloud filled the inner court and the entire “house” (Temple).

In Revelation chapt 8 John saw an angel with a golden censer, take fire from the alter and throw it to the earth. Destruction follows as the seven trumpets, and the seven vials.

In Revelation 15:8 - “the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues were completed.” All of this is Day of Atonement imagery.

Chapt 16 - the parable of the nymphomaniacal adulteress

(not so different from the “great harlot” of Revelation)

Chapt 17 - the parable of the eagles and the treacherous vine

Chapt 24 - the parable of the filthy pot

Chapt 37 - the dry bones come to life

Chapt 38 - Gog and his confederation are defeated.

(the only other mention of God is in Revelation chapter 20)

Chapt 40-46 - a vision of the future Temple

Chapt 47 - the life giving stream (That’s Revelation 22:1-2)

Chapt 47 - the division of the land.

Many of these prophecies have never come to pass.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:11 “Now all these things happened to them (ancient Israel and Judah) as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” (NKJ)

So – to anyone who says, “Oh, Ezekiel is Old Testament. It has nothing to do with us today.” - I would say ----- “Sure.....”

Imagine yourself as Ezekiel. You are a priest. You are a captive in Babylon. You are a fairly young man - you have a wife - but no children are recorded. And you are wondering if your faith was misplaced. WHAT AM I DOING HERE????? Has our God failed us??? Has HE abandoned us???? What’s going to happen to us???

AND then the LORD chooses you, to speak for HIM - to His people.

Does HE come to Ezekiel as a still small voice – NO!!

After a vision of the throne of the LORD (which we will examine in more detail later), Ezekiel is given his commission.

Ezekiel chapters 2 and 3.

Ezekiel 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

2 On the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity,

3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

(NKJ)

NOTE: To what "era" the "thirtieth year" belongs is unknown. There have been many scholarly explanations. The one I like best - If you count back 30 regnal years, you come to year 18 of King Josiah, the year that Hilkiah the priest found the Torah Scroll in the Temple during the renovations following its desecration during the reign of Josiah's father. (II Kings 22:8) Upon hearing the scroll read, King Josiah instituted great reforms, and Ezekiel may be looking back to this time, since it WAS the LAST time that Israel actually followed and obeyed their GOD. It would have been a great time for Torah/Yahweh loyal priests (and Ezekiel WAS a priest).

2:1 And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you."

NOTE: The LORD called Ezekiel, "Son of Man." Never any other name. Jesus called Himself "the Son of Man."

Their mission was similar. To warn a rebellious, spiritually deaf people, who would "not listen." Do you suppose - when Jesus studied this passage - that He heard His Father speak to Him. There is one other reference, in Daniel chapt 8, where the LORD called Daniel, "son of man."

2 Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me.

3 And He said to me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has **rebelled against Me**; they and their fathers have **transgressed against Me** to this very day.

4 "For they are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'

5 "As for them, **whether they hear or whether they refuse-- for they are a rebellious house-- yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.**

6 "**And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house.**

NOTE: Ezekiel - the name means "God strengthens."

7 "You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious.

8 "But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and **eat what I give you.**"

9 Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it.

10 Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and **written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe** (Eze 2:1-10 NKJ)

NKJ Ezekiel 3:1 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, **eat what you find; eat this scroll**, and go, speak to the house of Israel."

2 So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

3 And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." **So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.**

NOTE: One wonders if, after eating the scroll, whether it turned to bitterness, as it did for John (Rev chapt 10)

4 Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

5 "For you are not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, but to the house of Israel,

6 "not to many people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, **had I sent you to them, they would have listened to you.**

NOTE: It is human nature - the first time you hear a startling message - you listen. You may even make changes to your behavior or activities. But the more often you hear the message, the less effect it has. And in this culture, we are bombarded with messages - It's called advertizing. And we ARE numb!!! And we have heard the gospel, and the warnings of God preached - all our lives. And we ARE numb!!!! It was no different with ancient Israel.

7 "But **the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me**; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.

8 "Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads.

9 "**Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.**"

10 Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears.

11 "And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and **speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse.**"

12 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: "Blessed is the glory of the LORD from His place!"

13 I also heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, and a great thunderous noise.

14 So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, **and I went in bitterness**, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

15 Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days (Eze 3:1-15 NKJ)

Ezekiel was carried captive to Babylon in a first wave. Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in Nov-Dec of 598 BC, and the city fell on March 16, of 597. King Jehoiachin (with his mother/wives/servants/etc) was taken prisoner to Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar appointed over Judea a new king of his liking - to pay the tribute money, and to keep the people in line. (He also took heavy spoils, including 10,000 captives - craftsmen, mighty men, men of valor (including Ezekiel the priest)).

Zedekiah - Jehoiachin's uncle - the King set up by Nebuchadnezzar - also finally rebelled, and when King Nebuchadnezzar came back - the citizens of Jerusalem did not fair so well the second time around. This time, they destroyed the city and the Temple. The prophet Daniel was apparently taken captive at this time.

I could go into all the national and political struggles, and how the Bible compares very well with extra-Biblical historical sources. It is very interesting reading. But I want to focus on the prophecies themselves, on Ezekiel's experience - which may be OUR experience one day soon - asking the questions: Why did God allow His people to be conquered by Babylon? Can we trust a God who promises protection, only to allow suffering and defeat?

For your "home work" this next week, I would like for you to read through the book of Ezekiel, and look for the moving Spirit of God. From which direction does HE come?? To which direction does HE go? Where does HE linger for a short while??

THE VISION OF GOD'S THRONE

www.oracion.com/~mm9n/articles/cherub/index.htm