

Bible Reading Notes  
**Ezekiel**

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## Ezekiel 1

The book of Ezekiel was written from Babylon. Ezekiel was a priest (1:3) and a contemporary of Daniel.

The book begins with a record of Ezekiel's call to be a prophet. He is taken up into the heavenly throne room to receive his call. There are great similarities to the call of Isaiah in Isaiah 6.

**1:1 – thirtieth year** – This is probably a reference to Ezekiel's age. According to Numbers 4:3, a priest would begin his work at the age of 30.

**1:1 – Chebar canal** – an area east of the city of Babylon.

**1:2 – fifth year of the exile** – This was in 593 BC. Ezekiel was one of the first to be taken into captivity.

In his vision Ezekiel is taken into the throne room of God and witnesses the glory of God.

**1:5 – four living creatures** – Ezekiel tells us later (10:15) that these are cherubim. John sees these same creatures in his vision of heaven (Revelation 4:16ff).

**1:10 – face** – The cherubim have four faces which means they are able to see in all directions. This same theme is seen in the wheel rims filled with eyes (v. 18). There is no escaping the view of the Lord.

## Ezekiel 2

**2:1 – Son of Man** – This is a common name used of Ezekiel in the book. It highlights his humble standing as a human in distinction to the glorious Lord.

**2:3 – nation of rebels** – Like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel is called to be the messenger of the Lord to a nation in rebellion against the Lord (c.f. vv. 5, 6, 7).

## Ezekiel 3

**Ezekiel 3** continues the narrative of Ezekiel's call from the Lord.

**3:7-9** – Israel still has a hard heart and will not listen to God's word. But God has prepared Ezekiel to persevere in his calling.

**3:17 – watchman** – Ezekiel was to be the one who sounded the alarm for Israel like a watchman on the city wall looking for the enemy approaching. The shocking thing is that the enemy is the Lord who will be coming in judgment. This same imagery is used in 33:1-9 as well.

**3:22-27** – It is not clear when this took place. Part of Israel's judgment for their rebellion is that they will not hear the word of the Lord. This situation lasted until after the fall of Jerusalem (24:27).

## Ezekiel 4

**4:1-8** – Like previous prophets, Ezekiel is called to communicate the Lord's message through actions that convey the message.

**4:10-12** – This amount of food and water would be considered rations during a siege.

Israel will not hear the Lord's word because they have not listened and responded to the word they have already heard. Is there Scripture you have heard and not responded properly to?

## Ezekiel 5

The Lord is continuing to disclose the future of Jerusalem and its destruction.

**5:1-4** – Ezekiel is to cut off his hair and beard to make a sign-act to the captives about the future destruction of Israel. In their culture, this would have been a deeply humiliating thing to do. **5:2 – a third part** - See 5:12 for the interpretation of the thirds.

**5:10** – The siege of Jerusalem will be so severe the Jews will turn to cannibalism. This is part of the covenant curse (Deuteronomy 28:52-57) that God had warned them about.

**5:13 – And they shall know that I am the LORD** – This phrase will be repeated often in the book, referring to both Israel and the nations.

## Ezekiel 6

**6:2 – mountains** – Idolatrous worship often took place on the mountains and hills.

**6:10** – When God fulfills his word about Jerusalem and captivity, the rebellious Jews will know that he is in fact the Lord.

## Ezekiel 7

**7:2 – An end** – The Day of the Lord has come in all of the Lord's fury and wrath.

**7:19** – Nothing will save Israel from the wrath of the LORD, certainly not their wealth.

## Ezekiel 8

**8** – This chapter begins Ezekiel’s temple vision that lasts through chapter 11. The vision shows the great idolatrous sin of Israel and God’s response to it.

**8:1** – It is now September 17, 592 BC, about fourteen months since Ezekiel was called and six years before the fall of Jerusalem.

**8:5** – **image of jealousy** – That which provokes the holy jealousy of God.

**8:14** – **Tammuz** – He was a Babylonian fertility god, associated with agricultural productivity.

## Ezekiel 9

**Ezekiel 9** continues the temple vision of Ezekiel that began in chapter 8.

**9:4** – **mark** – It is the Taw, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, that is placed on the foreheads of the faithful.

**9:6** – Peter refers to this verse in 1 Peter 4:17 in his argument that judgment begins with the household of God.

## Ezekiel 10

**10:1** – **cherubim** – These were the same angelic creatures that Ezekiel saw in his vision in chapter 1 (10:15).

**10:2** – **burning coals** – These will be used to burn the city as part of God’s wrath.

**10:18** – **glory of the LORD went out** – The glory of the Lord will be seen departing Jerusalem in stages as part of his judgment on his unfaithful people.

## Ezekiel 11

**Ezekiel 11** concludes the temple vision of Ezekiel that began in chapter 8.

**11:3 – city is the cauldron and we are the meat** – They believe that Jerusalem is secure and the people will be safe within her.

**11:13 – Pelatiah** – This name means “Yahweh provides escape.” With his sudden death Ezekiel was fearful that the Lord was going to provide no escape to his people.

**11:17-20** – God promises a return to the Promised Land for the exiles and, even more significant, the blessings of the covenant in a relationship with him.

**11:22-25** – But first the glory of the Lord will depart from Jerusalem as he brings the Babylonians against them in his wrath. But this is not permanent, as is seen in Ezekiel 43.

## Ezekiel 12

**12:1-16** – Ezekiel is given another sign-act to perform to convey a message from the Lord concerning Zedekiah, the prince (v. 10), and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**12:13 – him** – This refers to Zedekiah who was king when Jerusalem fell.

**12:17-20 – quaking...trembling** – This act is to convey the overwhelming fear of the residents of Jerusalem as they await the fall of the city.

## Ezekiel 13

**13:10 – whitewash** – The false prophets have whitewashed the truth of coming judgment

**13:18 – magic bands** – The false prophetesses were selling things like this as having magical powers to protect people.

## Ezekiel 14

**14:1 – elders of Israel** – These were some of the leaders of Israel taken in the first captivity along with Ezekiel.

**14:12-23** – This reminds us of Abraham negotiating with God over the destruction of Sodom. God is announcing that even if the most righteous were present, he would not spare Jerusalem.

**14:14 – Daniel** – This is possibly a reference to the biblical Daniel, but it more likely refers to an ancient Syrian king known for his righteousness.

## Ezekiel 15

**15:2 – vine** – The vine is often used as a picture of Israel (Psalm 80; Isaiah 5; Jeremiah 12). Here it is a picture of the uselessness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who are doomed for judgment.

## Ezekiel 16

Ezekiel uses the picture of a bride to describe Israel. This imagery is used in Hosea and in Ephesian 5 for the church.

**16:8 – spread...my garment over you** – Sign of intention to enter into a marital covenant.

**16:14 – splendor** - The splendor of Jerusalem was always from the Lord and based on his relationship with her.

**16:15 – But** – After being cared for by the Lord, Jerusalem turned away from him to serve the gods of the nations.

**16:30 – How sick is your heart** – The Lord's diagnosis of the root problem. This will only be solved by getting a new heart.

**16:37-43** – The Lord's judgment is coming on Jerusalem for their idolatry. This would be accomplished in just a few years by Babylon.

16:46-52 – Jerusalem’s sins are even greater than Sodom’s or Samaria’s, making those wicked cities appear righteous (v. 52).

16:53-63 – But there is still grace. The Lord will restore Jerusalem and his covenant with them after a time of discipline.

## Ezekiel 17

Ezekiel 17 is a parable about Israel. The great eagle is Babylon and the twigs carried away are a reference to Jehoiachin who was taken to Babylon. Zedekiah is the willow twig planted by Babylon who went after the other great eagle, Egypt. Vv. 11-15 give the inspired interpretation.

17:22 – **sprig** – This is a reference to Christ. He will be the sprig or branch that the Lord plants that will establish an everlasting kingdom in the line of David.

## Ezekiel 18

18:2 – This proverb is also quoted in Jeremiah 31:29.

18:4 – **the soul who sins shall die** – This is repeated again in v. 20 and forms the main theme of the chapter. We are responsible only for our own sin.

18:6 – **eats upon the mountains** – This is a reference to idol feasts which were often eaten on hill tops and mountain tops.

18:23 – God’s great pleasure is not in judging someone but in their repentance. This thought is repeated in v. 32 and reiterated by Peter in the New Testament (2 Peter 3:9).

18:31 – **make yourself a new heart and spirit** – These are gifts which come from God, but they are received through genuine repentance and faith.



## Ezekiel 19

**Ezekiel 19** - A lamentation over the state of Israel covering the final years of Jerusalem.

**19:4 – him** - Refers to Jehoahaz who was taken to Egypt in 609 BC.

**19:9** – In 597 BC Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon.

**19:11 – strong stem** – This refers to Zedekiah whose reign will end in 586 BC with the destruction of Jerusalem (v. 14).

## Ezekiel 20

**20:1** – This is August, 591 BC, about two years after Ezekiel's call and five years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

**20:3 – I will not be inquired of by you** – A justification for God's statement is given both from the past (vv. 5-26) and then for the present generation (vv. 27-32).

**20:9 – sake of my name** - God's redemption of Israel from Egypt was not due to Israel's deserving but for the glory and reputation of God (c.f. vv. 14, 22).

**20:11 – by which if a person does them, he will live** – This is a key theme in the chapter and is repeated in vv. 13 and 21.

**20:33ff** – The typical pattern of God's grace as revealed in the prophets is once again followed as the Lord promises restoration after judgment.

## Ezekiel 21

**Ezekiel 21** – This chapter's theme is the coming judgment on faithless Israel.

**21:17 – satisfy my fury** – Through judgment the Lord will satisfy his fury (v. 17) against his own people as well as the Ammonites. God's fury against us has been satisfied through the work of propitiation by Christ.

## Ezekiel 22

**Ezekiel 22** – This chapter lays out the charges against Jerusalem. The charges are based on commands found in the book of Leviticus.

**22:17 – dross** – God’s furnace is not used to purify Israel, because she has no purity left in her.

**22:23-31** – Israel’s great sin is found in the context of her leaders failing to fulfill their roles. The prophets, priests, and kings (princes) are all condemned for their sins.

**22:30 – stand in the breach** – There is no one who can turn aside the wrath of God, so Israel will face the Lord’s wrath. Christ is the one who has stood in the breach for us.

## Ezekiel 23

**Ezekiel 23** – This chapter is an extended account of both Israel and Judah’s great sin and the judgment they received from the Lord. The irony is that the means of judgment are the very nations that they desired instead of the Lord. At times, the Lord judges us by giving us what we desire and its consequences (Romans 1:24ff).

**23:31 – cup** – The cup is a reference to the cup of God’s wrath.

## Ezekiel 24

**24:1** – This is January 15, 587. The siege will last 1 ½ years.

**24:3-11** – Israel is the corroded pot which cannot be cleansed, even with fire, because her impurities are so extensive.

**24:14** – The Lord’s righteous judgment will come and be fully poured out on Jerusalem.

**24:15-27** – Ezekiel is called to act as a sign to his fellow captives as to how they are to respond to the news that Jerusalem has fallen. This must have been one of the hardest of Ezekiel’s callings from the Lord.

**24:27 – mute** – The muteness the Lord gave Ezekiel in 3:26.

## **Ezekiel 25**

**25** – This chapter begins a series of oracles from the Lord against the nations. This section will continue through chapter 32.

**25:8 – Moab and Seir** - Ezekiel begins with Israel’s immediate neighbors.

## **Ezekiel 26**

**26:1** – This oracle was pronounced after the fall of Jerusalem.

**26:2 – Tyre** – Tyre was the chief city of Phoenicia, which was located west of Israel along the Mediterranean Sea coast. Tyre itself was built on an island, just offshore of the mainland.

## **Ezekiel 27**

**27:1-25** – The Lord rehearses all the great blessings Tyre once possessed. Tyre was very wealthy because she was a center for trade.

**27:26-36** – But after the Lord’s judgment, the great Tyre will be devastated.

## Ezekiel 28

**28:2 – prince** – Prince and king (v. 12) are used synonymously.

**28:2 – heart is proud** – The prince of Tyre will be brought low by the Lord for his great pride (vv. 6-7).

**28:21 – Sidon** – Sidon was another of the significant cities in Phoenicia.

**28:22 – I am against you** – The Lord announces his opposition to Sidon without giving any specific reasons for it as he did with Tyre.

**28:25-26** – The Lord promises that a time is coming after Israel's captivity in Babylon when they will once again know security and blessing.

## Ezekiel 29

**29** – This chapter begins the longest of the oracles which is directed to Egypt.

**29:1** – The date refers to January 7, 587 BC, when the Babylonians were beginning their siege of Jerusalem.

**29:6 – staff of reed** – Israel put their trust in Egypt several times for their security. Each time Egypt failed to provide it.

**29:17** – This refers to April 571 BC. This is the latest date mentioned in the book.

**29:18 – made his army labor hard** – It took the Babylonians 13 years to conquer Tyre's island fortress.

## Ezekiel 30

**30:1ff** – This section is undated, but it is likely in the early part of 586 BC, in light of the context later in the chapter.

**30:3 – day of the LORD** – The day the LORD comes in judgment. There are many of these in history and they all culminate on the last day.

**30:20** – The date mentioned is April 586 BC.

**30:20-26** – Israel had hoped that Egypt would come to their aid and defeat Babylon. Instead the Babylonians defeated the Egyptians. Once again, trusting in Egypt proved vain.

## Ezekiel 31

**31:1** – June 586 BC. The fall of Jerusalem is imminent.

**31:2-9** – Egypt is characterized as a great tree that towered over all the other nations.

**31:10 – its heart was proud** – Rather than give the Lord the glory for their greatness, Egypt took the glory for themselves. For this, they will be judged.

## Ezekiel 32

**32:1** – March 585 BC, about two months after Ezekiel received word of the destruction of Jerusalem.

**32:17** – It is now 2 weeks later than the word of v. 1.

**32:18-32** – This lament envisions Egypt in Sheol (the place of the dead) with other great armies that have gone before.

**32:24 – Elam** – This is thought to be modern day Iran.

**32:26 – Meshech-Tubal** – This area refers to modern day Turkey.

## Ezekiel 33

**33:7 – watchman** – This is at the heart of the prophet's calling.

**33:12-13** – Note that our righteousness cannot save us. We must learn to repent not only of our wickedness but our righteousness as well as a means of earning favor with God.

**33:21** – January 585 BC. It has been five months since the fall of Jerusalem. This has been what Ezekiel has been prophesying would happen for the last eight years.

## Ezekiel 34

**34:2 – shepherds of Israel** – Shepherds is used in the Old Testament for the leaders of Israel, who were charged with feeding, caring for, and protecting God's people.

**34:15, 23 – I myself...my servant David** – Because Israel's shepherds (leaders) have failed so miserably, the Lord will shepherd his people. He will do so through Christ, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).

**34:25 – covenant of peace** – This will be a restoration of the covenant blessings that Israel lost in their disobedience. The covenant curses will be replaced with covenant blessings.

## Ezekiel 35

**35:2 – Mount Seir** – This is a mountain range in Edom (v. 15).

**35:4 – Then you shall know that I am the LORD** – This familiar phrase in Ezekiel gives the main motivation for the judgment that is about to come.

## Ezekiel 36

**36:8-15** – Though Israel is experiencing the judgment of God, the time for exiles to return home and the land to once again be blessed is coming.

**36:16-23** – God’s great concern is for his own glory - that the nations know he is the Lord.

**36:25-27** – This is the language of regeneration and is behind Jesus’ statement to Nicodemus in (John 3:5).

**36:31 – loathe yourselves** – This is strong language but is similar to the language we use when one makes a profession of faith – “Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God...?”

## Ezekiel 37

**37:1 – full of bones** – In Ezekiel 6:5 God refers to the bones of his people as evidence of his judgment against them. Now the Lord will bring life and salvation to his people.

**37:9 – breath** – This is the same Hebrew word for Spirit. It is God who will give life to his people through the work of the Holy Spirit.

**37:24 – king** – This future promised king will be Christ.

**37:27** – This is quoted by Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:16.

## Ezekiel 38-39

Ezekiel 38-39 is the background to Revelation 20:8-9, which refers to the beast waging war against Christ and his church and suffering defeat.

**38:2 – Meshech and Tubal** – These are lands in modern day Turkey. Dispensationalists believe this is a reference to Russia who will physically attack the nation of Israel in the last days.

There is no justification for that understanding.

Our text describes a large gathering of the enemies of God and his people who are determined to destroy the church. But the Lord will defend his people and the enemies of the church will suffer a great defeat. All of this is presented in language that resonates with the exiles in their time and place.

**39:25-29** – The exile will not be the end for God’s people. He will protect them and restore them so that they will know that he is the Lord their God.

## **Ezekiel 40-41**

As you read these chapters, remember that the temple has been destroyed for 12 years. The vision of a new temple was to grant the captives assurance that there is hope for the future.

Some have understood the temple described here as something to be yet built in Jerusalem. It is better to understand these chapters as symbolically promising God’s continued presence with his people.

Ezekiel describes the temple from the outside to the inner sanctuary.

**40:5 – reed** – The measuring reed was about 10 feet long. A long cubit was a little less than 20 ½ inches, while a regular cubit is about 18 inches.

**40:6 – steps** – One difference between the original temple and this temple is elevation. The closer one comes to the Most Holy Place the higher they are in elevation.

**40:28 – inner court** – Only the priests were allowed to enter the inner court of the temple.



## Ezekiel 42-43

**42:1-14** – Ezekiel’s tour of the new temple continues with the temple’s chambers. These are rooms for the use of the priests.

**43:4-5** – **entered the temple** – This is the reversal of when the glory of the Lord departed from the temple in 10:18-19.

**43:7** – **my throne** – In both Solomon’s temple and this one, the Lord was said to sit on his throne in the Most Holy Place above the ark of the covenant.

**43:13-27** – Now that the glory of the LORD has returned to the temple, the temple worship is to be restored. Ezekiel gives the directions so that the temple worship will be done according to God’s word.

## Ezekiel 44-45

**44:3** – **prince** – This is a reference to the promised Davidic king (Christ) in 37:24.

**44:15-31** – With the temple worship restored (43:13-27), it was necessary for there to be priests ready to fulfill their calling.

**44:15** – **sons of Zadok** – Zadok was the high priest during Solomon’s reign and was blessed because he supported Solomon to succeed David as king (1 Kings 1:8).

**44:23** – This was the calling of the priests in Israel. It will be seen in Ezra’s ministry to the restored people after the exile.

**45:9-10** – This is the summary of the prince’s role and responsibility in the restored land. He is to treat the people justly by using just weights and measurements (vv. 10-12).

## Ezekiel 46-48

Ezekiel's vision of the idealized temple and practices continues. Remember the point of the vision to get Israel to repent of their sins related to temple worship and give the exiles hope that the Lord has not forgotten or deserted them forever.

**46:16-18** – The Lord once again stresses the need for Israel's rulers to be just in their dealings with their subjects. But he also makes clear that the prince's property is also to be maintained.

**47:1 – water** – Water is used as a symbol of the blessings that flow from the Lord. Zechariah (14:8) and John (Revelation 22:1-2) use this same imagery.

**47:21-23 – inheritance** – Those in exile have not lost their inheritance. The Lord will return them to the land and they will once again have their inheritance.

**48:1-29** – The division of the land here is quite different than that before the exile. The allotments are given in horizontal strips starting in the north and working to the south.