

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: September 11, 2011

We're focusing on: Introduction of Ezekiel

Prayer

Background:

What is known of Ezekiel is derived solely from the book that bears his name. He was among the Jews exiled to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 b.c., and there among the exiles he received his call to become a prophet (see 1:1-3). He was married (see 24:15-18), lived in a house of his own (see 3:24; 8:1) and along with his fellow exiles, though confined to Babylonia, had a relatively free existence there.

He was of a priestly family and therefore was eligible to serve as a priest. As a priest-prophet called to minister to the exiles (separated from the temple of the Lord with its symbolism, sacrifices, priestly ministrations and worship rituals), his message had much to do with the temple (see especially chs. 8-11; 40-48) and its ceremonies.

(From Biblica.com)



Book Title: In Hebrew, the book of Ezekiel means "God strengthens"

PURPOSES FOR THE BOOK

- A. To speak locally to the exiles whom Jeremiah addresses by letter (e.g., [Jer. 29](#)), as people who continue to listen to false prophets and practice idolatry. The contents of Ezekiel indicate that little has changed in the attitude of the Jewish people who have come to Babylon
- B. To outline the blessing that follows necessary judgment
- C. To emphasize God's sovereignty which will bring about judgment and restoration
- D. To warn Israel as a watchman of imminent judgment
- E. To stress the need for individual responsibility and national accountability before God

Closing Prayer

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: September 18, 2011

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 1

Prayer

Ezekiel: His background

- Ezekiel is an Israelite (a Jew) who is living in captivity with his people in Babylon.
- The Israelites had turned their back on God and threw Him out.
- The year is probably 593 B.C.E.
- Ezekiel is part of the tribe called the Levites. Levites were the priests and Ezekiel is destined to become a priest like his father.
- Men became priests at 30 years of age. Ezekiel is how old?
- Problem is... the Jews are in captivity (5 years already) with no temple so Ezekiel is put on hold.
- Or is he? God appears to Ezekiel in a big way!

Let's think of our situation to understand Ezekiel and his people's situation.

- Does God disappear if our church was taken away from us (through natural disaster, bankruptcy or ???). Why?
- Does God disappear from your life when you leave the church? Why?
- The belief in Ezekiel's time held that if you captured people and took them out of their land – you took their God's power away. People-Land-God were understood to be inseparable. Now we understand why they were taken away to Babylon (south of current-day Baghdad, Iraq).
- God followed his people and appeared to Ezekiel in a foreign land.

The Appearance of God

- If you could use just one word to describe this chapter of Ezekiel, what would it be?
- What do you think the rest of Ezekiel will be like?
- What part of Chapter 1 stood out to you the most?
- Is the Bible easy for you to understand?
- What questions about God do you have?
- How big is the God of Ezekiel 1? Why?
- How big is your view of God? Describe how powerful you see God.

God Pursues...

- Knowing that the Israelites turned away from God, were captured, dragged to a foreign land...
- What choices did God have in His relationship with the Israelites?
- Why did God decide to be where the Israelites were?
- Are there consequences to turning away from God?
- What is God's response to any of our sins?

Where's Waldo?

- So where is God today?
- Do you have an amazing story of God? A crazy God-sighting?
- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 1, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

Good morning God. We love your weird and amazing spacecraft and strange friends. Help us to understand more about you and your Word. The Bible is great and we need your help to love and live it. We need your help in knowing that wherever we are... there you are. Thank you God! We have other prayers we would like to share now..... And everyone said together, AMEN!

Next Time on October 2: Chapters 2 & 3 / Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 3:16-27

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: October 2, 2011

Chapters 2 & 3

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 3:16-27

Prayer

Chapter Two: God Speaks!

- What does God say to Ezekiel?
- **Vs 6:** What does Ezekiel have to look forward to?
- Why is it hard to warn people?
- Why is it hard to be warned?
- **Vs 7:** Have you ever had to warn anyone who didn't want to listen?
- Have you ever been the one warned? Did you listen?

Chapter Three: Listen, I Want You!

- **Vs 16-21:** What is God asking Ezekiel to do?
- How do you feel about God judging the Jews and willing to let them die?
- If you were Ezekiel, how would you feel listening to God tell you this?

Does God Ask Anything Of Us?

- Name some things God asks us (all Christians) to do today?
- Matthew 28:19 – What do you think Jesus is saying here? What are we to do?
- Has God ever asked you personally to do something?

Faith vs Works

- Which is more important to God... "Who we are" or "What we do?"
- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 2 & 3, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

Good morning God! Thank you for speaking to us today and everyday. Help us to listen closely to you and follow you completely. We know we will mess up eventually so thank you for forgiving us and helping us to get back up and follow you. We have other prayers we would like to share with you now... and all God's people say, AMEN!

Next Time on October 9: Chapters 4 / Focus on Ezekiel 4:1-8

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: October 9, 2011

Chapter 4

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 4:1-8

Prayer

This is Goofy!

- What does God tell Ezekiel to do?
- Why? What's the point?
- Would you pay attention to Ezekiel if you encountered him on the street? Why/Why Not?
- What part of God's instructions would be the hardest for you to do?
- What do you think Ezekiel is thinking?

Bricks, Iron, Poop and Sideways Glances

- The brick represents the city Jerusalem where THE temple is and THE city for the Jews.
- What is your brick?
- The piece of iron represents the enemies of the Jews. It means oppression, slavery and worse...
- What are the things in your life that oppress you and keep you down?
- Lying on your side represents being unable to move freely, try as you might.
- What things in your life make you freeze, scare you, and cause you to not act?
- These are all used as a warning to the Jews!

Look at Me – Look at Me!!!!

- Where is God in all of this? Is He helping or hurting? Why?????
- God wants the people to turn away from other God and from their own needs.
- Does this make God vain? Does God only care about Himself and how He looks?
- Is this similar or different from what Christ did (another way to get our attention)?
- What are some reasons the people of Israel might not change their hearts and minds?
- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 4, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

Good morning God, thanks for being here with us! The book of Ezekiel is a little strange so help us to understand the messages you want us to hear. We try to follow you but it's not always easy and we often ignore every sign and message you give us. If possible we would like to pass on cooking our food over poop of any kind. Thanks in advance!

We have other prayers we would like to share now... and all God's people say, AMEN!

Next Time on November 6: Chapters 5-8 / Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 8

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: November 6, 2011

Chapter 5-8

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 8

Prayer

God is a Little... Mad (Chapter 5)

- What was your thoughts as you read chapter 5?
- What is the most scary or fearful thing for you about chapter 5?
- What does this say to you about God? About the Jews?

Aren't They the Chosen Ones? (Chapter 6 and 7)

- The Jews/Israelites are God's chosen people?
- So what does this say about God?
- What if the Jews listen to God through Ezekiel? Does anything change?

Chapter 8

The Secret Room

- What is happening in this secret room within the temple? (How secret is this room?)
- Why is this something God is upset with?
- What things do you try to hide from God? Can you?

The Women and Tammuz

- Tammuz was a God that had died and was traditionally worshipped each year.
- What were the women doing?
- Why is this something God is upset with?

The Men Bowing to the Sun

- What are the men doing?
- Why is the place and the direction they face also upsetting?

What God Hates

- So what does God find horrible according to chapter 8?
- What are things we do today that are similar to the people in chapter 8?
- What should we be doing?

Search me, O God, and know my heart;

test me and know my thoughts.

See if there is any wicked way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalms 139:23-24 (NRSV)

- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 8, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

We meet again God! Our prayer this morning is for you to help us turn away from all those things in our life that isn't about you. No matter if we are at school, home, work, sports, band or whatever... help us to honor you first and foremost. Lord we have other prayer that we would like you to hear now... and everyone said together, AMEN!

Next Time on November 13: Chapters 9-11 / Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 11:14-21

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: November 13, 2011

Chapters 9-11

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 11:14-21

Prayer

The Vision Continues and the Slaughter (Chapter 9)

- How upset is God now?
- What did you think about this chapter?

The Wheelwork (chapter 10)

- Do you think Ezekiel is crazy? Why or why not?

Those Left In Jerusalem

- How are those left in Jerusalem worshipping God?
 - Does God approve of their worship? Why or why not?
 - How do we outwardly show honor to God?
 - How do we honor God with our hearts? (Inwardly)
 - What verse(s) tell us about how our hearts should be?
 - What risks are there in letting God give us a "heart transplant"?
 - Are there things you have changed because of listening and following God?
 - Are there things you need to change because of God?
 - How does God give us this "heart transplant"?
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- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 11, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

We're back together again Lord and looking at your words in Ezekiel. Help us to listen to you and accept your gift of changing our hearts. So many things get in the way of following you and we need your help. Strengthen us as we continue to read the book of Ezekiel. We have other prayers that we want to share with you now...

And everyone said together, AMEN!

Next Time on December 4: Chapters 12-14 / Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 14:1-5

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: December 4, 2011

Chapters 12-14

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 14:1-5

Prayer

Danger Will Robinson! (Chapter 12)

- How serious is God about His judgment?

God Cries Foul (Chapter 13)

- What is a prophet? What is a false prophet?
- How does God describe these false prophets?
- Are there false prophets today or only in Bible times?

Mercy (Chapter 14)

- Where have we heard about idols before?
- What is an idol?
- What are the leaders of Israel doing with these idols?
- **Vs 4:** What does it mean to place the idols in your heart?
- **Vs 4:** What does a "stumbling block" mean?
- The Israelites (the Jews) are in captivity and exile. Is it wrong to blame God and even turn to other Gods to help you out of this mess? Why or Why not????
- Is it God's fault the Jews are captive and in exile?
- What Gods do we turn to today to get us out of our messes?
- **Vs 5:** Why does God want to take hold of our hearts?
- What could possibly be next? Hasn't God and Ezekiel done enough to get the attention of the Jews?

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever.

He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.

Psalms 103:8-12 (NRSV)

- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 14, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

It's a good morning God and thanks for being with us! Help us to not be captives to anything but your love. Open our minds and our hearts to you and turn away from all those selfish things that aren't good for us. We also have other prayer we would like to share with you now...

And all God's people say, AMEN!

We are not meeting next Sunday!

Next Time on January 8: Chapters 15-18 / Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 18:30-32

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: January 8, 2011

Chapters 15-18

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 18:30-32

Prayer

Prostitutes, Harsh Words and Forgiveness (Chapter 16)

- The prostitute isn't a "who," but what?
- Some strong words from God, what point is He trying to make?

The Eagles Have Landed (Chapter 17)

- What is the eagle story about?
- What lesson can be learned from it?

Sins, Generations, Repentance and Forgiveness (Chapter 18)

- What happens to someone who breaks God's commandments?
- **Vs 19:** What about their children? What is the popular belief of the time for a son or daughter whose father/mother has broken God's laws?
- Does that seem fair? Why???
- Why would they want to believe that?
- How does Ezekiel say it works now regarding sin?
- **Vs 25:** The Jews think God is what...? What do you think?
- Who is more fair, people or God?
- **Vs 30:** God says your life is ruined unless you what?
- **Vs 31:** What does getting a new heart and spirit mean?
- How do we can away our sins?
- **Vs 32:** What is God's desire for us?
- How do you know if you are living for God versus living for yourself (or others)?
- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 18, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

Good morning God and thank you for speaking to us through your Word, the Bible. You gave us harsh words, warnings and words of encouragement and forgiveness today.

Help us to throw our sins to the side and move closer to you. Help us to want to know you and follow you more closely.

We also have other prayers that we want to share with you now...

And everyone said together, AMEN!

Next Time on January 15: Chapters 19-20 / Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 20:1-29

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: January 15, 2011

Chapters 19-20

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 20:1-29

Prayer

Lamentation (Chapter 19)

- **Lament:** To mourn for, or express sorrow for.
- Who is lamenting what?
- Have you ever felt like lamenting? When?
- How does it feel to lament?
- What is God saying here (through Ezekiel) in chapter 19?

Here Comes the Judge (Chapter 20)

- God is acting as both prosecutor and judge in this chapter?
 - Ever been to court? How serious is a courtroom?
 - God is laying out the "case" against Israel and how they broke the covenant.
 - What is a covenant? What covenants do you have?
 - Has anyone ever broken a covenant with you?
 - **Vs. 3:** The Preamble / Who are the people involved in this case?
 - **Vs. 4-7:** The History / What did God do and promise to do?
 - **Vs. 8-22:** Declaration of the future relationship / How does God explain the people broke the covenant?
 - **Vs. 21-29:** Details of the new covenant / What is in God's list of offenses?
 - What's the verdict? Do you think the Israelites are guilty or innocent?
 - Have you ever made a deal with God? Can you share it?
 - What has God agreed to do for you? (Think Father, Son and Holy Spirit)
 - What is your verdict? Are you guilty or innocent in the eyes of God? Why?
 - What's our sentence? What should be our sentence?
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- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 20, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

Good morning God! You make a pretty strong case against your people. We constantly ignore you, worship other things and easily forget about you once we leave church. Help us to remember you love us no matter what! Help us to take that love and let it change us forever.

We also have other prayers that we want to share with you now...

And all God's people say together, AMEN!

Next Time on February 5: Chapters 21-34 / Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 34:22-28 and Chapter 36:22-28

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: February 5, 2011

Chapters 21-36

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 34:22-28 and Chapter 36:22-28

Prayer

Chapter 22 Sins and Dross

- List of sins
- Israel is compared to dross (vs. 18)
- What is dross? Have you ever been told you were dross? How did it feel?

Chapter 23 Prostitutes and More

- Nearly pornographic description of what God's people have done.
- Jerusalem and Samaria are compared to prostitutes.
- Why is prostitution considered so horrible?
- What then is God saying about the people of Jerusalem and Samaria?

Chapter 24 The Death of Ezekiel's Wife

- By the end of the chapter Ezekiel's wife has died.
- What did God tell him to do?
- God does this for a reason... why ask Ezekiel to do this?

Chapter 34: 11-16

- Who is the shepherd?
- Vs. 12 depicts God coming to help the Israelites after Jerusalem is destroyed.
- How would you feel if you traveled away from home and heard your house/town/state had been destroyed?
- Who are the sheep?
- What are ways God says he will be a shepherd to the sheep?
- The Israelites are scattered (war, slavery, destruction, gave up).
- Does it matter where God's people are since God is going to find them?

Chapter 36:22-28

- What are some of the promises God makes to His people?
- Remember, Ezekiel is sharing all of this because God tells him to say it.
- How do you think the people felt after hearing these words? Why?
- So what is God wanting to do?

- If someone asked you today about Ezekiel 20, what is one thing you could share about God?

Closing Prayer

We're back together again God, looking at your words. Continue to help us understand the Bible and help us to see that over and over again you tell us you want to be with us. We need your help in living out the love you show us. We have other prayers we want to share with you now...

And all God's people say, AMEN!

Next Time on February 12: Ezekiel Chapter 37

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: February 12, 2011
Chapter 37

Prayer

Life As We Know It

How do you define life?

What does it mean to really live?

What things in your life help you to really live?

Vs 1: Where is Ezekiel brought to? What can we learn about this place from verse 1?

Vs 2: Why might it be important that Ezekiel says, "...and they were very dry."? Why add 'very'?

How did you see this place in your mind as you were reading?

How do the bones come to life?

How does each part of God help in this resurrection?

Vs 11: What do the bones say? What does it take to lose all hope and to feel completely alone?

What situations can cause this?

Has there every been a time in your life (or someone you've known) who could relate to what the bones were saying and feeling (aka the Israelites)?

Back to bones... what is the state of the bones? How are they arranged in this valley?

What is God's point in this vision (Vs 12-13) for Ezekiel and what do the bones represent (Vs 11)?

Not Just Living - LIFE

What is the point of the two sticks? Who do they represent and why put them together?

Why is two often better than one?

Why would God say that two is better than one?

Why is it important for two groups to become one?

Is there anyone in your family that you have a hard time living with?

How can God help us move from simply living together in the same house to sharing LIFE together in the same HOME?

Closing Prayer

Good morning God! Nice story about dried bones. A little spooky and creepy but thanks for showing us that you (and you alone) breathe life into our lives. Fill us with your Spirit this week and help us to bring your life and Spirit into all people we share life with and everyone we meet. We also have other prayers we would like to share with you now...

And all God's people say... AMEN!

Next Time on March 4: Ezekiel Chapters 38-39. Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 39:21-29

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: March 4, 2011

Chapters 38-39

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 39:21-29

Prayer

Gog's Army

What can we learn from Chapters 38 and 39 regarding Gog?

Have you every had a difficult time that caused you to thank God for bringing you through it?

Why are "bad things" sometimes useful?

Israel Restored

Vs 21-24: What is God's goal?

Vs 21: Where do you personally see God's glory?

Vs 24: Why does God punish?

Vs 26: How hard is to forget your really bad mistakes? Why?

Vs 27: Have you ever been apart from family and friends for a significant time and then rejoined them? How did it feel to be brought back? Why do we like homecomings?

Why does God want to bring His people together?

How can we as a church bring ourselves closer to each other?

Vs 28: Does God leave anyone behind?

Vs 29: Where do you see God's face or feel God's Spirit in your life?

After many, many chapters... what do you think of Ezekiel?

Closing Prayer

Good morning God! Thanks for bringing us together to learn from your Word. Help us to remember that because of Christ you forgive our sins and we need to confess to you and then forget our guilt and instead seek your face and help others. Help us to be a stronger church sharing your love with everyone! We also have other prayers we would like to share...

And all God's people say... AMEN!

Next Time on March 11: Ezekiel Chapters 40-48. Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 47:1-12

iWORD: Ezekiel

Date: March 11, 2011

Chapters 40-48

We're focusing on: Ezekiel Chapter 47:1-12

Temple Details Chapters 40-43

Why does Ezekiel record so many details about the Temple from his vision?

How well do you pay attention to what God is sharing with you? How?

Are You Invited To The Temple? Chapter 44

Vs 4-8 What things did people do to make God upset and refuse them to get close to Him (in the Temple).

The Priests Chapter 44: 15-26

What advantages do the priests have?

Name some of the rules that the priests have to follow?

What are the advantages to being a Christ-follower?

How do we choose to obey God as being a Christ-follower?

What's In An Offering? Chapter 45: 13-25

What are some of the things God asked for?

Does God require us to make an offering?

What offering does God require of us?

How does your family give? How do you give?

The River of Life Chapter 47: 1-12

Have you ever camped, fished, swam, boated etc. on a river?

What did you do, see, smell, feel, experience?

Name some interesting things about the river in the verses?

What is the purpose of the river?

How does a normal river get bigger?

The river described in Chapter 47 is about 1.33 miles long but goes from a trickle to a wide/deep body of water.

How does this compare to God and His people?

Do you have a story of small to HUGE when it comes to faith and a relationship with God?

How does this story of the river compare to Ezekiel?

Closing Prayer

Good morning God! We have been swimming in your story of Ezekiel and how you love us and won't give up on us. Crazy stuff in Ezekiel, thank you God for bringing us together all these months to grow in your Word. Help us to continue to open our Bibles and discover your amazing stories of faith and grace! We have other prayers we need to share with you now... And all God's people say... AMEN!

Next Time on April 1: Ezekiel Chapters 40-48. Focus on Ezekiel Chapter 47:1-12