
Mission 119 Ministries

**EZEKIEL - THE GLORY OF GOD
LESSON 1: INTRODUCTORY MATTERS
AND THE CALLING OF EZEKIEL**

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Ezekiel 36:24 “ ‘For I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. ²⁵ I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances. ²⁸ You will live in the land that I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

PRELIMINARIES

- **The only prophetic book written entirely in first person**
 - **Like Jeremiah and Zechariah, Ezekiel was a priest**
 - **He is referred to as a “watchman” (3:16-19) whose task is to warn the people of imminent judgment for sin**
 - **His name means “God strengthens,” which may be indicative of his purpose of strengthening those in exile**
 - **He is a priest in the line of Eleazar, son of Aaron, through whom the high priests descended**
 - **Ezekiel was taken captive and ministers in Babylon while the prophet Jeremiah stayed behind to minister in Judah**
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PRELIMINARIES

- **Ezekiel's ministry begins at age 30, the year he would have formally entered the priesthood (Num. 4)**
 - **This was in the 5th year of the exit of Jehoiachin (593 BC), thus he was probably born about 623 BC**
 - **This means he was born just before (ca. 621 BC) a copy of the Law was found in the Temple and he likely grew up hearing about the messages of Jeremiah**
 - **He was part of a group of about 10,000 taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC**
 - **He was married and lived by the Chebar canal (off the Euphrates) in a Jewish colony called Telabib near Nippur in southern Mesopotamia**
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PRELIMINARIES

- **Ezekiel's wife died the same day the siege of Jerusalem began, Jan. 15, 588 BC (Eek. 24:1, 18)**
 - **His ministry lasted at least 22 years, from 593 - 571 BC**
 - **Famous for doing peculiar things (e.g., laying on his side motionless for more than a year) as part of his prophetic ministry**
 - **He is referred to as the "son of man" more than 90 times, a term used only once elsewhere as a formal title (Dan. 8:17)**
 - **He dates his prophecies to the day 14 times, showing his ministry began July 31, 593 BC and continued to at least March 26, 571 BC**
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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **During his ministry, Judah was under the control of the Chaldeans (or Babylonians)**
 - **In 633 BC, the Chaldean Nabopolassar became powerful and led a revolt against the Assyrians after the reign of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal**
 - **He defeated Assyrians in battle and declared himself king of Babylon on November 23, 626 BC, then later expelled the Assyrians from Babylonia**
 - **Nabopolassar then began invading Assyria and in 612 BC he took Nineveh**
 - **Assyrians moved their capital to Haran and made an alliance with Pharaoh Necho, who marched his forces through Palestine in 609 BC to aid the Assyrian army**
 - **Judah's King Josiah attempted to stop Necho's advance and was killed in battle, being the last good king of Judah**
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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **The Babylonians under general Nebuchadnezzar (son of Nabopolassar) defeated the Assyrians and Egyptians at Haran, pushing the Assyrians across the Euphrates River**
 - **The last great battle was at Carchemish in Syria in 605 BC, which ended the long-reigning Assyrian Empire and forced the Egyptians to flee back to Egypt**
 - **Following his victory at Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem in 605 BC, forcing Jehoakim (son of Josiah) to swear allegiance**
 - **Shortly after arriving in Jerusalem, the general heard of his father's death in Babylon and rushed back to secure the throne**
 - **He took with him many captives including Daniel, Hannah, Mishael, and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego)**
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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **Jehoakim remained loyal for 3 years but then rejected the advice of the prophet Jeremiah and rebelled**
 - **Now King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and as his armies approached Jerusalem, Jehoakim was killed by his own people**
 - **He was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah) who reigned only 3 months before Nebuchadnezzar replaced him with Zedekiah**
 - **Jehoiachin and the Temple treasures as well as useful inhabitants of Judah were taken to Babylon, including the prophet Ezekiel in 597 BC**
 - **Zedekiah was Jehoiachin's uncle and the son of Josiah and would reign from 597-586 BC, the last king of Judah**
 - **Nebuchadnezzar would return once more to Jerusalem and siege the city from January 15, 588 to July 18, 586**
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PURPOSE

- **We must bear in mind the larger context of God's people (the Jews) living under the Law Covenant**
 - **This was a "bilateral" covenant between God and the nation he freed from Egypt**
 - **Two parties to the contract — God and Israel**
 - **God made promises and the people had obligations in order to secure God's continued protection and prosperity**
 - **The people accepted the terms (Exodus 24:1-8)**
 - **Blessings and cursing (Deut. 28 and Leviticus 26)**
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PURPOSE

- **Ezekiel's messages are a lot like those of Jeremiah, except that he ministered among the people in exile**
 - **They thought the exile would be brief and then they would return home, and that the city of Jerusalem would survive — no doubt they listened to the false prophets that figure prominently in the book of Jeremiah**
 - **Ezekiel's messages would defend God's justice in bringing judgment on Judah, warn the nations around Israel of God's coming wrath, and give hope to the remanent of a future restoration**
 - **Thematically, over 60 times Ezekiel says things will happen so that "you/they will know that I am the Lord"**
 - **God's glory is central throughout the book**
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HIGH LEVEL OUTLINE

- **Ezekiel's Calling to the Prophetic Ministry (1-3)**
 - **Ezekiel's Messages (Warnings) to Judah (4-27)**
 - **Ezekiel's Messages (Warnings) to the Surrounding Nations (28-32)**
 - **Ezekiel's Messages Promising a Future Restoration to a Faithful Remnant (33-48)**
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THE EZEKIEL AIRSHIP

BAPTIST MINISTER AND INVENTOR BURRELL CANNON (1848-1922) LED SOME PITTSBURG INVESTORS TO ESTABLISH THE EZEKIEL AIRSHIP COMPANY AND BUILD A CRAFT DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLICAL BOOK OF EZEKIEL. THE SHIP HAD LARGE, FABRIC-COVERED WINGS POWERED BY AN ENGINE THAT TURNED FOUR SETS OF PADDLES. IT WAS BUILT IN A NEARBY MACHINE SHOP AND WAS BRIEFLY AIRBORNE AT THIS SITE LATE IN 1902, A YEAR BEFORE THE WRIGHT BROTHERS FIRST FLEW. ENROUTE TO THE ST LOUIS WORLD'S FAIR IN 1904, THE AIRSHIP WAS DESTROYED BY A STORM. IN 1913 A SECOND MODEL CRASHED, AND THE REV. CANNON GAVE UP THE PROJECT.

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