

The Book of Ezekiel

I. THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE MAN OF GOD--EZEKIEL (EZEKIEL 1-3, 33).

- A. Ezekiel sees the vision of the living creatures (1:1-28). These magnificent beings are identified later by Ezekiel (10:20) as the cherubim, angels of high ranking order.
1. Each had four faces (1:6, 10; Rev. 4:6-8).
 - a. The face in front was as a man.
 - b. The face on the right was as a lion.
 - c. The face on the left was as an ox.
 - d. The face in the back was as an eagle.
 2. Each had two pairs of wings (1:6, 11).
 - a. One pair spread out from the middle of the back.
 - b. The other pair was used to cover the body.
 3. Each had legs as of men (1:5), but clovenlike calves' feet, which shone like burnished brass (1:7).
 4. Each had four human hands, with one located under each wing (1:8).
 5. They traveled in groups of four and could move with the speed of light (1:14).
 6. A whirling wheel, sparkling like a precious stone and full of eyes on its rim, stood next to each creature (1:15-16).
- B. Ezekiel hears the voice of the living God (Ezek. 2-3, 33).
1. He is to become a watchman for God (2:1-3; 3:17-21).
 2. He is anointed by the Spirit of God (3:12, 14).
 3. He is to feed upon the Word of God (3:1-3).
 4. He is allowed to see the glory of God (3:23).
 5. For awhile he would be unable to speak the message of God (3:26; 24:26-27; 33:22).

II. THE DESOLATION OF THE CITY OF GOD--JERUSALEM (EZEKIEL 4-24).

There were three distinct phases in the Babylonian captivity and the siege of Jerusalem.

In 605 B.C. At this time Daniel and other individuals of noble birth were carried away (Dan. 1:3-4; 2 Chron. 36:6-7).

In 597 B.C. During this phase both King Jehoiachin and Ezekiel, along with many others, were taken into Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-16).

In 586 B.C. At this final time Judah's last king, Zedekiah, was carried away, the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed, and both the Temple and city were burned (2 Ki. 25:1-7).

The events recorded here in Ezekiel 4-24 took place between the second and third phase. Apparently there were false prophets, both in Jerusalem and in Babylon, who brazenly assured the Jews that God would not dare destroy his own city, even though it had already suffered two bitter sieges. But Ezekiel knew otherwise and he attempted through symbolism, parables, visions, and messages to warn all that the Holy City would indeed suffer desolation and destruction.

A. Ezekiel's thirteen symbolic acts.

1. He drew a map of Jerusalem on a large flat tablet of soft clay, portraying the enemy camps around it, and the placement of the battering rams. He finally placed an iron plate between the map and himself. This was to indicate the impenetrable wall of the Babylonian army, and also to show the impossibility of escape (4:1-3).
2. He lay on his left side a few hours each day for 390 days, to symbolize the iniquity of the northern kingdom. Each day was to represent a year (4:4-5).
3. He then lay on his right side a few hours each day for forty days, to depict the iniquity of Judah, the southern kingdom. Again, each day was to represent a year (4:6).
4. He prepared bread made with mixed grains and baked it over dried cow dung which had been set afire. This was to indicate the scarcity of food in Jerusalem (4:9-17).
5. He shaved his head and beard with a sharp sword, and then divided the hair into three equal parts (5:1-4).
 - a. One third he burned.
 - b. One third he cut up with the sword.
 - c. One third he scattered to the wind.All this was to indicate what was in store for Judah and Jerusalem. One third of her citizens would die by fire in the Jerusalem siege. One third of her citizens would fall by the sword, and the remaining third would be scattered to the wind.
6. He was to stamp his feet and clap his hands to get their attention (6:11).
7. He set some light baggage outside his home. Then in the evening he dug an entrance through the city wall. As he went through it carrying the baggage, he also covered his face. This was to vividly symbolize the following (12:1-16):
 - a. The few articles of baggage represented the exiles hurriedly departing their homes (12:3-4).
 - b. The entrance in the wall symbolized their desperation to leave the doomed city of Jerusalem (12:5).

- c. The covered face depicted Zedekiah, Judah's last king, who was blinded by Nebuchadnezzar because of his rebellion, and led captive into Babylon (12:6; 2 Ki. 24:1-7).
- 8. He was to tremble as he ate his food and to ration out his water as though it were his last (12:17-20).
- 9. He was to sigh and groan with grief in public (21:1-7).
- 10. He was to slash about in the air a gleaming sword, and with sobbings, beat upon his thigh (21:9-17).
- 11. He drew a map of the Middle East and traced two routes for the King of Babylon to follow. One led to Jerusalem, and the other to Rabbath-Ammon. Both cities had rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar in 593 B.C. Ezekiel pictured the king here at the crossroads (21:19-24).
- 12. He filled a pot of boiling water with the choicest meats and cooked it until the flesh fell off the bones. He then threw it all out and allowed the pot to bake itself dry to eliminate the scum and rust (24:1-14). Here, of course, the symbolism is clear. The judgment fire of God would utterly consume even the rich and noble of Jerusalem.
- 13. He was forbidden to express any outward sorrow over the sudden death of his beloved wife (24:15-18). This was to emphasize that the Lord would not mourn over Jerusalem's death. It is especially significant to observe that she died the very day that Nebuchadnezzar began his third and final assault upon Jerusalem (24:2).
- B. Ezekiel's twelve judgment messages.
 - 1. God had often held back his divine wrath in spite of Israel's brazen disobedience (20:7-10, 14, 21-22).
 - 2. God took no joy in judging his people even at this desperate stage and again called for Judah's repentance (18:31-32).
 - 3. But Judah would not listen and her hour of doom was now at hand (7:6, 12).
 - 3. Judah would then be destroyed, not because of the sins of their fathers, but because of their own vile wickedness (18:1-4, 20).
 - 5. Even the presence of such godly men as Noah, Daniel, and Job could not spare the city of Jerusalem (14:14, 20).
 - 6. Her armies would be absolutely helpless in defending her (7:14).
 - 7. Her wealth could not purchase one additional minute of freedom (7:19).
 - 8. The Holy City of God had now become the harlot city of Satan (16:15).
 - 9. God would therefore bring into Jerusalem the worst of nations and people to occupy their lands and homes (7:24).
 - 10. Judah's cities would be burned and her idols smashed (6:4, 6).
 - 11. Four great punishments would fall upon her citizens, that of war, famine, ferocious beasts, and plagues (14:21).
 - 12. A remnant would survive to testify of God's holiness and hatred for sin (6:8-10; 12:16; 14:22-23).
- C. Ezekiel's six parables.
 - 1. A fruitless vine (15:1-8).
 - 2. The adopted girl who became a harlot (16:1-63).
 - 3. The two eagles (17:1-21).
 - 4. The tender twig (17:22-24).
 - 5. The mother lioness and her cubs (19:1-9).
 - 6. Two harlot sisters (23:1-49).
- D. Ezekiel's extended Temple vision (8:1--11:25).
 - 1. The departure of Judah from the glory of God.
 - a. Ezekiel is caught away in a vision and transported from Babylon to Jerusalem (8:1-6).
 - b. He sees seventy Israelite elders worshiping satanic images in the Temple (8:7-12).
 - c. He sees Jewish women weeping for the false Babylonian god Tammuz (8:13-14).
 - d. He sees twenty-five men with their backs to the Temple, facing east and worshiping the sun (8:16-18).
 - e. He sees six angels with swords to slay those Jews not having a mark on their foreheads (indicating grief over Judah's sin) (9:1-11).
 - 2. The departure of the glory of God from Judah.
 - a. Ezekiel views the glory cloud over the mercy seat (9:3).
 - b. It then stood over the door of the Temple (10:4).
 - c. From there it moved to the east gate (10:18-19).
 - d. Finally it hovered over the Mount of Olives and disappeared (11:23).

III. THE CONDEMNATION OF THE ENEMIES OF GOD (EZEKIEL 25:1--32:32; 35:1-15).

- A. Ammon (25:1-7). Ammon's chief sin was the devilish glee it openly displayed over the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the slaughter of Judah's citizens (Lam. 2:15).
- B. Moab (25:8-11). Their main sin was in degrading Judah's Jehovah as just another national and tribal god.
- C. Edom (25:12-14; 35:1-15). They had butchered helpless Jews during the Babylonian invasion (35:5).
- D. Philistia (25:15-17).

- E. Tyre (26:1--28:19).
1. The ruler of Tyre. The ruler at this time was Ithbaal II, who boasted he was as strong as a god and wiser than Daniel (28:2-3).
 2. The sin of Tyre
 - a. Tyre had rejoiced over the fall of Judah (26:2).
 - b. The city was totally corrupted with gross materialism (27:4-25).
 3. The punishment of Tyre. Perhaps here it should be noted that Tyre was actually two cities, one on the coastline, some sixty miles northwest from Jerusalem, and the other on an island, a half mile out in the Mediterranean Sea. At the time of Ezekiel's prophecy, the Tyrians were in open revolt against Babylon.
 - a. Various nations were to come up against Tyre like ocean waves (26:3).
 - b. In spite of this strong watery protection, Ezekiel predicted her walls would be torn down, her very soil would be scraped, making her as bare as a rock, and both cities would become a place for the spreading of fishing nets (26:4-5).
 - c. The city would never again be inhabited (26:20-21).
 4. The sinister force behind Tyre (28:11-19).
 - a. The identity of this force. The prophet now moves beyond the earthly scene and describes for us the creation and fall of a vile and vicious angelic creature. This fearful being is Satan himself, the real force behind the wickedness of Tyre (28:11-19).
 - b. The characteristics of this force.
 - (1) He was the sum total of wisdom and beauty (28:12).
 - (2) He was the anointed cherub (28:13).
 - (3) He had been in Eden (28:13).
 - (4) He was covered with precious stones (28:13).
 - (5) He was equipped with musical instruments (28:14).
 - (6) He fell through pride (28:17).
- F. Sidon (28:20-24).
1. Because of her horrible influence, Sidon was likened to a pricking brier and a hurting thorn to the house of Israel (28:24).
 2. God would thus punish Sidon by sending an epidemic of disease and an army to destroy her. This occurred in 351 B.C., at which time the city was put to the torch by the Persians (28:23).
- G. Egypt (29:1--32:32).
1. Her historical punishment (by Nebuchadnezzar).
 - a. Egypt's sin, like that of so many other nations, was pride (29:3).
 - b. Ezekiel, therefore, pronounces doom upon Pharaoh, people, and even the animals (29:8-12).
 - c. In chapter 31 Egypt is described as a mighty cedar of Lebanon, towering above all other trees. The birds rested in its branches, and animals gave birth under its shade. But soon the tree was corrupted by pride and God ordered the Babylonian wood choppers to hew it down (31:1-14).
 - d. Ezekiel informs us that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt for its wealth in order to pay his soldiers after their long siege of Tyre (29:17-21).
 - e. Egypt was to be desolate for forty years (29:9, 11).
 - f. After the forty-year punishment period, Egypt would be restored somewhat, but would forever remain a minor kingdom (29:13-15).
 - g. Israel would never again depend upon Egypt (29:16).
 2. Her future punishment (30:1-19).
 - a. Although the name Nebuchadnezzar appears once in this passage (29:10), it is thought that the final fulfillment of the judgments mentioned here would transpire during the tribulation.
 - b. According to Daniel 11:40-43, Egypt will indeed be destroyed during the tribulation.

IV. THE PRESENTATION OF THE SHEPHERD OF GOD--JESUS CHRIST (EZEKIEL 34).

- A. The many false shepherds.
1. They fed themselves instead of the flock (34:1-3).
 2. They had not taken care of the weak, nor tended the sick, nor bound up the broken bones, nor sought the lost (34:4).
 3. The sheep were then scattered, having no shepherd (34:5).
 4. They had become prey to the wild animals (34:5).
 5. Therefore, the shepherds would be punished (34:9-10, 16).
- B. The only true Shepherd. (See Ps. 23; Jn. 10:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4.)
1. He would search out the lost sheep (34:11).
 2. He would deliver them from their enemies (34:12).
 3. He would gather them from all nations (34:13).
 4. He would feed them upon the mountains of Israel (34:14).
 5. He would give them rest in green pastures (34:15).

6. He would put splints and bandages upon their broken limbs (34:16).
7. He would heal their sick (34:16).
8. He would establish David as his trusted under shepherd (34:23; 37:24; Jer. 30:9; Hos. 3:5).
9. He would make an eternal pack with them (34:25).
10. He would guarantee their safety and place them in a perfect paradise (34:25-28).

V. THE RESTORATION OF THE NATION OF GOD--ISRAEL (EZEKIEL 36, 37).

- A. The necessity of this restoration. Israel had previously been driven from Palestine because of her sin (36:17-19).
- B. The reasons for this restoration.
 1. To shame those Gentile nations which had sneered at Israel's tragedy (36:1-7).
 2. To exonerate the great name of God (36:20-23, 32). The rumor was being spread around that the God of Israel was unable (or unwilling) to protect and purify his own people.
- C. The vision of this restoration (37:1-14).
 1. Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy over a valley filled with old dry human bones, scattered everywhere (37:1-6).
 2. Suddenly there was a rattling noise from all across the valley and the bones of each body came together and attached to the other as they had once been (37:7).
 3. After this, the muscles and flesh formed over the bones, and skin covered them (37:8).
 4. But the completed bodies had no breath. Ezekiel was then commanded to prophesy over them (37:9-10).
- D. The symbol of this restoration (37:15-22).
 1. Ezekiel was to carve the following words on two wooden sticks (37:15-16).
 - a. The first stick read: "For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions."
 - b. The second stick read: "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions."
 2. Ezekiel was then to hold both sticks together in one hand, indicating that God intended to reunite once again the divided kingdoms of Israel (37:17-20).
- E. The results of this restoration.
 1. To once again become God's people (36:28; 37:27).
 2. To be sprinkled by clear water (36:25, 29, 33). This, of course, is an allusion to the Mosaic rite of purification. (See Num. 19:17-19.)
 3. To possess the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit (36:27; 37:14).
 4. To be given new hearts and right desires (36:26).
 5. To enjoy the blessings of the new Temple (37:26, 28).
 6. To be ruled over by David (37:24).
 7. To be justified among the nations (36:30).
 8. To have abundant crops (36:29-30, 34-35). (See also Isa. 35:1-2; 55:13; Zech. 8:12.)
 9. To repopulate the cities of Israel, especially Jerusalem (36:38).
 10. To occupy the Holy Land forever (37:25).

VI. THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE WRATH OF GOD--RUSSIA (EZEKIEL 38, 39).

In these two remarkable chapters, Ezekiel describes for us an invasion into Palestine by a wicked nation north of Israel in the latter days.

- A. The identity of the invaders. It seems almost certain that these verses in Ezekiel refer to none other than Russia (38:2).
- B. The allies in the invasion: Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Togarmah (38:5-6).
- C. The reason for the invasion. To cash in on the riches of Palestine (38:11-12). To control the Middle East.
- D. The destruction of the invaders. Upon her return, Russia is soundly defeated upon the mountains of Israel. This smashing defeat is effected by the following events, caused by God himself:
 1. A mighty earthquake (38:17-20).
 2. Mutiny among the Russian troops (38:21).
 3. A plague among the troops (38:22).
 4. Floods, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone (38:22; 39:6).
- E. The results of the invasion.
 1. Five-sixths (83 percent) of the Russian soldiers are destroyed (39:2).
 2. The first grisly feast of God begins (39:4, 17-20). A similar feast would seem to take place later, after the battle of Armageddon (Rev 19:17-18; Mt. 24:28).
 3. Seven months will be spent in burying the dead (39:11-15).
 4. Seven years will be spent in burning the weapons of war (39:9-10).

VII. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY OF GOD--THE TEMPLE (EZEKIEL 40-48).

- A. Its dimensions (40:1--42:20; 46:21-24).
- B. Its purpose:

1. To provide a dwelling place for the cloud of glory (43:1-6; 44:4).
 2. To provide a center for the King of glory (43:7).
- C. Its priesthood (44:5-31). The sons of Zadok will be assigned the priestly duties (40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11).
- D. Its prince (44:1-3; 45:7-8, 17; 46:1-20). In his description of the temple, Ezekiel refers to a mysterious "prince" some seventeen times. Whoever he is, he occupies a very important role in the temple itself, apparently holding an intermediary place between the people and the priesthood. We are sure that he is not Christ, since he prepares a sin offering for himself (45:22), and is married and has sons (46:16). Some suggest that the prince is from the seed of King David, and that he will be to David what the false prophet was to the antichrist.
- E. Its unique features. Several articles and objects present in the temples of Moses, Solomon, and Herod will be absent from the millennial temple.
1. There will be no veil.
 2. There will be no table of shewbread.
 3. There will be no lampstands.
 4. There will be no Ark of the Covenant.
 5. The east gate will be closed.
- F. Its sacrifices. As we have already seen, several pieces of furniture in the Old Testament Temple will be missing in the millennial edifice. However, the brazen altar of sacrifice will again be present. There are at least four Old Testament prophecies which speak of animal sacrifices in the millennial temple: (Isa. 56:6-7; 60:7; Zech. 14:16-21; Jer. 33:18). These sacrifices will function as: (46:1-8, 9-15).
1. A reminder to all of the necessity of the new birth.
 2. An object lesson of the costliness of salvation.
 3. An example of the awfulness of sin.
 4. An illustration of the holiness of God.
- G. Its river (47:1-12).
1. The source of the river--proceeding from beneath the temple (47:1).
 2. The course of the river--flowing eastward and then south through the desert, to the Jordan River and to the Dead Sea where its sweet waters will purify that lifeless body of polluted water (47:6-8, 12).
 3. The force of the river--at first it reached Ezekiel's ankles, then his knees, after this his waist, and finally he swam across its unknown depths (47:3-5).
- H. Its glory cloud (43:1-5).
- I. Its city.
1. Jerusalem will become the worship center of the world and will occupy an elevated site (Zech. 14:9-11; Isa. 2:2-3).
 2. The city will be six miles in circumference (48:35). In the time of Christ the city was about four miles.
 3. The city will be named "Jehovah-Shammah," meaning "The Lord is there" (48:35).