

## Series "Route 66" "Ezekiel" Book-26

Ezekiel is one of the most colorful of all characters in the Bible. He acted out his teachings and lessons to the captives of Israel. He would lie on his side, he would crawl thru a wall, make a replica of the city Jerusalem. All of this was an attempt to reach a people with a hard heart.

**Ezekiel** – Ezekiel ministered to the exiles in Babylon while Jeremiah ministered to the people in Judah. His name means "God strengthens" or "Strengthened by God"

In poetry and in prose rich in allegory, parable, proverb, and prophetic vision, Ezekiel echoed Jeremiah's call for submission to Babylon.

In the first half of the book the theme of Ezekiel's messages is seen in his review of the moral and religious history of Israel.

In the second the theme of hope is expressed in visions of Israel's restoration and future worship.

**The Author** – Ezekiel

**Ezekiel 1:1-3**

**Verse 1** Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

**Verse 2** (On the fifth of the month in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile,

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

Ezekiel was taken to Babylon in the second deportation and he was there 5 years when he received his call to the ministry. He was a priest like Jeremiah. He preached action sermons that got peoples attention.

**When was it written:** The Prophet Ezekiel ministered to the exiles in Babylon. His carefully dated prophecies fall between 592 B.C. and 570 B.C. He ministered for 22 years. He overlapped the end of Jeremiah's ministry and the beginning of Daniel's ministry.

Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 3 stages:

Stage – 1# In 605 B.C. he overcame Jehoiakim and carried off key hostages including Daniel and his friends.

Stage – 2# In 597 B.C. the rebellion of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin brought further punishment. Nebuchadnezzar made Jerusalem submit a 2nd time. He carried off 10,000 hostages including Jehoiachin and Ezekiel.

Stage – 3# In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city after a long siege.

**Where it was written:** Babylon: Ezekiel was 25 years old when he was taken to Babylon. He was 30 years old when he received his call.

**Purpose:** Serving as a watchman, called to give warning of impending danger, the prophet uttered a series of dark predictions concerning Jerusalem's sin and fall. These ceased when that city fell in 586 B.C. and were replaced by promises of hope for the future.

**Theme:** "The Glory Of God"

Three additional themes with particular relevance to today are also woven throughout Ezekiel.

1. These themes are the nature of God.
2. The purpose of divine judgment.
3. Each individual's personal responsibility for his or her own actions.

**Key Words:** "I am the Lord" occurs 70 times in Ezekiel's messages speaking of the glory of God and honoring His name. The phrase "The Word of the Lord came" is used nearly 50 times in this book.

**Key Chapter:** **Ezekiel 37** The restoration of Israel. This is illustrated thru vision of the valley of dry bones. This chapter gives the outline of Israel's future.

**Key Passage:** **Ezekiel 6:7** "And the slain will fall among you, and you will know that I am the LORD." (This statement is found seventy times in the book)

# Outline

1. **Ezekiel 1-3** The Prophet's Call:
2. **Ezekiel 4-24** The Fall of Jerusalem:
3. **Ezekiel 25-32** The Nations Judged:
4. **Ezekiel 33-48** The Glorious Future of Israel:

## 1. Ezekiel 1-3 The Prophet's Call:

### **Ezekiel 1** Seeing God's glory:

Ezekiel was a priest in captivity (1:1), and was thus unable to exercise his ministry since he was away from the temple and the sacred altar. But God opened the heavens to him and called him to be a prophet.

Jeremiah had told them to settle down in Babylon for seventy years, but the false prophets told the people that God would destroy Babylon and set the captives free (**Jeremiah 28-29**). It was Ezekiel's task to tell the people that God would destroy Jerusalem, not Babylon, but that there would one day be a glorious restoration of the people and a rebuilding of the temple.

A Fiery Whirlwind: **Ezekiel 1:4** And as I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire.

This symbolized God's judgment on Jerusalem, Babylon coming out of the north. The storm cloud with its fiery lightning meant destruction for Jerusalem.

### **Ezekiel 1:5-14** The Cherubim:

(**Revelation 4:6-9**) Four living creatures - symbolizing God's Creation - Cherubim -

**Ezekiel 1:4-28** wheels - movement

**Ezekiel 10:1-22** going here and there

These creatures symbolize the glory and power of God. They could see in all directions and move in all directions without turning. The four faces speak of their characteristics: the intelligence of man; the strength and boldness of the lion; the

faithfulness and service of the ox; and the heavenliness of the eagle. Some see in these faces the four Gospels:

Lion - Jews - Matthew's Gospel - Majesty - Authority - King

Calf - Romans - Mark's Gospel - Strength & Service - Servant

Man's face - Gentiles - Luke's Gospel - Son of Man - Perfect man

Eagle - might be saved, John's Gospel - The creatures could move quickly to accomplish the will of God. **Revelation 4:6-9**

A Rainbow in The Storm: **Ezekiel 1:28** As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking. There was a rainbow in the storm. Certainly this told Ezekiel that God's mercy and God's covenant would not fail His people. **Genesis 9:11-17**, where the rainbow was appointed as a sign of mercy and also **Revelation 4:3** and **10:1**.

Noah saw the rainbow after the storm:

The Apostle John saw it before the storm:

Ezekiel saw it within the storm:

Ezekiel not only proclaimed God's message to the people, but he had to live the message before them. God commanded him to do a number of symbolic acts in order to get the attention of the people: shave his hair and beard (5: 1-4); act like someone fleeing from war (12: 1-16); sit and sigh (21: 1-7); and, the most difficult of all, have his wife die (24: 15-27). It was not easy to be a prophet.

### **Ezekiel 2 Hearing God's Word:**

**Ezekiel 2:7** "But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.

8 "Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you."

Ezekiel's call reminds us that any person who realizes who God is is obligated by that knowledge to communicate His Word—whether others choose to listen or not.

**Ezekiel 3** Becoming God's Watchman: Then 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 fed me this scroll.

3 And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach, and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

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

We are not people of permanence until we have personally eaten the Word and the Word has become part of us. We become walking and taking Bibles. We must take in a practice the very word that we give out.

**Ezekiel 3:18** All Called to be Watchmen on the Wall: **Ezekiel 3:18** "When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die'; and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. Today it's helpful if we think of each Christian's "job description" in the same way. It takes no special qualification to serve our neighbors as a watchman. No seminary degree is required. Not even mastery of Scripture, or great spiritual depth. All that's called for is awareness that friends without Christ are in terrible peril—and a voice to lift to give them warning.

We can't guarantee that any individual will respond. But if we remain silent, we carry some responsibility for that other's fate.

Personal Application: A word of warning to another clears us of guilt, and may lead him or her to eternal life.

## 2. **Ezekiel 4-24 The Fall of Jerusalem:**

**Ezekiel 4:1-17 Play at War:** Ezekiel 4:1 "Now you son of man, get yourself a brick, place it before you, and inscribe a city on it, Jerusalem.

2 "Then lay siege against it, build a siege wall, raise up a ramp, pitch camps, and place battering rams against it all around.

3 "Then get yourself an iron plate and set it up as an iron wall between you and the city, and set your face toward it so that it is under siege, and besiege it. This is a sign to the house of Israel. Ezekiel publicly acted out the siege of Jerusalem (4: 1–17)

For some 400 days Ezekiel laid bound, first on one side and then the other before a model of Jerusalem under siege. Each of the 400 days represented a year during which Israel and Judah were to "bear their sin." If we calculate ahead from the dating Ezekiel uses, the first year of Jehoiachin's exile, the 400 years ended in 167 B.C.—the initial year of the Maccabean revolt, which won Judah limited independence from foreign powers.

**Ezekiel 5:1-17** Shaved his head and beard to symbolize the city's fate (5: 1–17). He demonstrated humiliation and mourning.

**Ezekiel 5:9** 'And because of all your abominations, I will do among you what I have not done, and the like of which I will never do again.

There are times when the most severe of judgments is absolutely necessary. It was so in Ezekiel's day. As God's watchman, the prophet began his ministry by uttering dark and terrible words.

**Ezekiel 6:1-14** He prophesied against the mountains of Israel: They were pagan worship services were performed.

This is something to consider when we think about our own homes. The mountains of Judah were associated with paganism and immorality. Do we guard our activities at home—and control our TV sets—so that in the minds of family members the place we live is associated forever with love, caring, hospitality, ministry, and righteousness?

For over a year Ezekiel lay before a rough model of Jerusalem under siege, portraying the final Babylonian attack on the Holy City. It was unnecessary for Ezekiel to explain what his actions meant: the terrible meaning was plain to every observer.

**Ezekiel 7:1-27** Announced Plainly that judgment day was here: Doom had burst forth. **Ezekiel 7:1** Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me saying,

2 "And you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel, 'An end! The end is coming on the four corners of the land.

3 'Now the end is upon you, and I shall send My anger against you; I shall judge you according to your ways, and I shall bring all your abominations upon you.

4 'For My eye will have no pity on you, nor shall I spare you, but I shall bring your ways upon you, and your abominations will be among you; then you will know that I am the LORD!'

### **Ezekiel 8-11 God's Glory Departs:**

**Ezekiel 10:18** Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim.

The glory - The Hebrew word translated "glory" means "heavy" or "weighty." Figuratively it suggests impressiveness: the social weight of a rich man or the symbols of a ruler's majesty, are both identified as "glory."

When the Old Testament speaks of the "glory of God" the term is typically linked with powerful images. God is seen in blazing splendor. Raw power and burning holiness are impressed on those permitted to glimpse His revelations of His essential nature.

No church building, however spectacular, has any value at all unless God's presence is there. Churches, like Judah's temple, are vacant unless the Lord is honored, and His presence felt there.

**Ezekiel 11:22-23** the glory moved out of the temple to the top of the Mount of Olives: "Ichabod—the glory has departed" (1 Samuel 4:21).

Why was the glory removed? The glory was removed because God cannot share His glory with another. The idols and the sins of the people had driven Him away. Their sins may have been hidden from the people, but God saw them, and God judged them. So today God will remove His glory and His blessing from our lives unless we serve Him faithfully with honest and pure hearts.

There is a tragic significance in Ezekiel's vision of the glory of God leaving the temple. Those who had looked to that consecrated building for protection would from now on depend on what was merely an empty shell. With the glory of God withdrawn, the temple was nothing more than gilded stone, stripped of meaning and power.

### **Ezekiel 12-17 Godless Leaders Exposed:**

**Ezekiel 12:1-16 Act like Someone Fleeing from War:** Sit and sigh.

But Ezekiel's actions had a more direct reference to the "prince among them." This is Zedekiah, called a prince because Judah's rightful king, Jehoiachin, was alive in Babylon. Zedekiah was to leave through a hole in the wall, his head covered (indicating a disguise), only to be snared by the Babylonians and brought to the land of the enemy, though "he will not see it."

**Ezekiel 13 False Prophets Condemned:** Ezekiel 13:6 "They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, 'The LORD declares,' when the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word.

Sincerity without truth is as useless as a map of Kentucky when you're traveling through Texas. A good many people, totally sincere in what they believe, are on the highway to hell, and all too many totally sincere preachers are busy erecting signs along the roadway.

**Ezekiel 15:1-7 Judah like a Useless Vine:** Ezekiel 15:1 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,  
2 "Son of man how is the wood of the vine better than any wood of a branch which is among the trees of the forest?  
3 "Can wood be taken from it to make anything, or can men take a peg from it on which to hang any vessel?

But the vine was prized only for its fruit. The wood is stringy and twisted, and has no use in construction or value for fashioning furnishings. All a fruitless vine is good for is to be burned. Fruitless Judah, already charred by the flames of God's judgment, was totally worthless, and destined to be consumed.

### **Ezekiel 18-21 God's Justice Defended:**



**Ezekiel 18:1–32** “The Soul Who Sins... Will Die” In reading this chapter it’s important to understand that “soul” is used in the common Hebrew sense of “person” or “individual.” Also, death in this chapter is physical rather than spiritual.

Ezekiel’s message is that those who obey God will be spared in the coming devastation of Jerusalem, while God will use the Babylonian invasion to take the life of the wicked. Thus each individual’s choices will determine his own fate.

**Ezekiel 18:1** Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,  
2 “What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel saying, ‘the fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children’s teeth are set on edge’?  
3 “As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore.

The argument that society is at fault when a person acts in a criminal way isn’t new. Even back in Ezekiel’s time, people were saying that if judgment came, it would be their father’s fault, not theirs (vv. 1–2). That’s what “my teeth are crooked ‘cause dad ate sour grapes” means. What happens to me, what I do, isn’t my responsibility. My acts are determined by what others have done to me.

The freedom to choose is one of the many gifts that God has given to you and me.

### **Ezekiel 22-24 The End of the City:**

**Ezekiel 23:1–49** “You will drink your sister’s cup” In an extended allegory Israel and Judah were likened to two adulterous sisters. Judah had not learned from the punishment of Israel, and so would suffer the same terrible fate.

You and I can learn from both nations. They **Ezekiel 23:35** “Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, bear now the punishment of your lewdness and your harlotries.’” We remember the Lord daily, and keep Him and His Word always before us.

**Ezekiel 24:15-27 Ezekiel’s Wife Dies:** It was not easy to be a prophet.

**Ezekiel 24:15** And the word of the LORD came to me saying,  
16 "Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you the desire  
of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not mourn, and you shall  
not weep, and your tears shall not come.  
17 "Groan silently; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your  
turban, and put your shoes on your feet, and do not cover your  
mustache, and do not eat the bread of men."  
18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening  
my wife died. And in the morning I did as I was commanded.

Why should Ezekiel have to suffer the death of his wife? The best answer probably is, "Why not?" God's dearest saint is not immune from the anguish that is common to all men. God's most intimate friends often experience the darkest trials. During such times we sense our identity with the rest of humankind, and out of shared suffering often grows the most effective ministry. In our trials we, like Ezekiel, are often God's sign to others, pointing the way to comfort, and to Him.

### **3. Ezekiel 25-32 The Nations Judged:**

Ezekiel 25: 1-7 Ammon:

Ezekiel 25: 8-11 Moab:

Ezekiel 25: 12-14 Edom:

Ezekiel 25: 15-17 Philistia:

Ezekiel 26: 1-28: 19 Tyre:

Ezekiel 28: 20-24 Sidon:

Ezekiel 29-32 Egypt:

This series of predictions against foreign nations was apparently given while the exiles in Babylon awaited word of Jerusalem's fate. Ezekiel had announced the commencement of that city's siege: Now all the Jewish captives in Babylon could do was anxiously await word of what was happening in their homeland, some 700 miles away.

During that interim Ezekiel raised his voice against other nations who would become victims of Babylon. The implication for the Jewish captives was twofold.

1. The God of Israel is the God of the whole earth. He was not powerless against the nations that had historically troubled Judah, as Israel's and Judah's present subjection might imply.
2. God is the Judge of the whole earth. National sins of aggression and atrocity, of treaty-breaking and arrogance, would be punished wherever they might be found! Judah and Jerusalem, about to fall to Babylon, were not being treated unfairly, but were being held accountable to a standard of righteousness that God requires of all humankind.

These chapters on the judgment of nations millenniums ago remind us, as they did the Jewish captives then, that countries are morally responsible to God for their international behavior. Nations that support terrorism, that break treaty commitments, that adopt policies of repression, and rely on force to coerce neighbors bring themselves inexorably under the judgment of a God who does act in history, and who will repay.

#### **4. Ezekiel 33-48 The Glorious Future of Israel:**

The city of Jerusalem restored—33–34

**Ezekiel 33:1–11** "I have made you a watchman" **Ezekiel 33:7** "Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

8 "When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand.

Ezekiel was a watchman for Israel. This was established in Ezekiel 3, and the charge is repeated here. Ezekiel was faithful in warning the people of Judah before the city fell: He must continue to warn.

Ezekiel was required to be alert, to warn his people of spiritual dangers. The responsibility was heavy: Ezekiel would often be alone, standing apart from the crowd. But the very lives of his fellow Jews depended on his faithfulness.

Are we ready to pay the cost of being watchmen for our friends and neighbors? Are we prepared to share Jesus, warning others of the eternal cost of rejection, inviting them to accept the forgiveness and renewal Christ died to provide?

**Ezekiel 34:11–23** "I Myself will tend My sheep and have them lie down" When the promised Descendant of David appeared, God's flock would at last have a Leader whose sole concern was their well-being.

How beautifully this thought is picked up by Jesus, who identified Himself as the Good Shepherd in **John 10**.

### **Ezekiel 35-36 The Land of Israel Renewed:**

**Ezekiel 36:26-27** God's Holy Name: **Ezekiel 36:26** "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. And the glory of God's holiness was revealed in their transformation.

Transformed sinners still bear witness to the holiness of God. And sinning saints remain a blot on His holy name.

### **Ezekiel 37-39 The Nation of Israel Resurrected and Reunited:**

**Ezekiel 37:1–14** The vision of a valley of dry bones: Emphasized God's power to revitalize and restore Israel and Judah.

**Ezekiel 38:1–17** "Set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog" Now Ezekiel described an invasion force assembled from many nations about to strike a peaceful and unsuspecting Israel.

Several Hebrew phrases woven into the message fix the time. What Ezekiel foresaw will happen "after many days" (v. 8), "in future years" (v. 8). Another phrase, translated "in days to come" (v. 16) helps locate the prophecy in the end times, near history's end. Some see this as an attack to come just before the establishment of a Millennium of peace at Christ's return; others place it after the Millennium and identify it with a Satan-stimulated, final rebellion of humanity against God (**Revelation 19:17–21**).

“Gog” and “Magog” many students of prophecy teach that these represent Russia. Of more significance is the fact that the enemy forces are drawn from nations at every point of the compass: the east (Persia), the southwest (Cush: Ethiopia), the west (Put: Libya, and the “islands of the sea”), the north (Gomer: Cimmerians?).

**Ezekiel 38:17–39:24** “In My Zeal and Fiery Wrath” In a series of announcements (38:17–23; 39:1–16, 17–24) God told what He would do to the invading forces. He Himself would intervene and, with miracles that recall His acts for the Exodus generation, would utterly destroy the enemy. These acts will forever establish the Lord as God in the sight of both Israel and the nations (39:22).

**Ezekiel 40-48** The Temple and the Priesthood Reestablished: The last chapters of Ezekiel describe the worship of a restored Israel, and a return of the glory of God. Here, Ezekiel looked ahead and assured the exiles, God’s glory will return.

A Puzzling Prophecy. This is one of the most difficult of all Old Testament prophecies. For those who spiritualize biblical prophecy, the problem lies in the multitude of details provided concerning the construction of the new temple. It’s not just a question of what each detail might mean, the careful verbal blueprint reminds us of the instructions Moses was given for constructing the tabernacle—and those were intended to be literally carried out.

**Ezekiel 40:1–42:20** Ezekiel’s Details of a new Temple to be constructed in Jerusalem:

**Ezekiel 43:1–12** God’s Glory Will Fill That Structure: In **Ezekiel 8–11** we have a report of Ezekiel’s vision of the departure of God’s glory. Now the prophet described a return. Once again the living, vital presence of the Lord Almighty would reside among His Old Testament people.

**Ezekiel 43:13-27** Commemorative Sacrifices Will be Offered on Its Altar: The sacrifices of the Mosaic era were intended to simply portray redemption. Apparently the sacrifices of Ezekiel’s temple also serve as reminders of Christ’s work. Since several of the feasts of the Old Testament era are not mentioned in Ezekiel, it seems that he describes a whole new system of worship, to be conducted in the very presence of the Messiah.

**Ezekiel 44:1-31** Priests and Levites will again serve God:

**Ezekiel 44:4** Then He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the house; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD, and I fell on my face.

You and I may be impressed by the beauty of our churches. We may look in wonder at the crowds gathered there. We may be impressed by the qualifications of our ministers. But all such things are external; just the facade. What we need to do is figuratively come around to the front. We need to forget what we see looking at our faith from the back and side, and peer in the front door. When we do, everything else seems to disappear, for there, in the heart of the sanctuary; we too are able to see the glory of the Lord.

**Ezekiel 45:1-12** Sacred Precincts:

**Ezekiel 46:1-24** Israel will Celebrate God's Festivals:

**Ezekiel 47:1-12** A River Flowing From The Sanctuary Waters the Land:

**Ezekiel 47:13-48:35** Boundaries and Division of the Land: Once again has been allotted to Israel's tribes.

**Ezekiel 47:14** "And you shall divide it for an inheritance, each one equally with the other; for I swore to give it to your forefathers, and this land shall fall to you as an inheritance. The prophecy of Ezekiel ends with God's people back in their land. There is an equal place set aside for each tribal group.

In the time of Joshua the territories allotted the tribes were unequal. Some clans were larger than others, and had need for more space. But now, at history's end, all such distinctions will be lost. None is greater, none smaller. And each has an equal place in the glorious kingdom of God.

There are many distinctions that people make between themselves and others now, distinctions of wealth, education, position or prestige. We even make such distinctions in our churches, mentally ranking our fellow believers as up or down the spiritual ladder. That is a mistake that will never be repeated in eternity. There too God's grace will be

divided equally, for each of us will gladly stake a claim to fame on one thing, and one alone. We are sinners saved by grace.

**Application:**

1. The God of Israel is the God of the whole earth.
2. God is the Judge of the whole earth.
3. We need to be watchmen that warn the world of the coming judgment.