

## **SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: EZEKIEL**

*Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. On the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there. (Ezekiel 1:1-3)*

### **The Man Ezekiel**

*The name 'Ezekiel' means 'God strengthens'. He was born in the days of king Josiah. When he was 13 years old, Josiah died. When he was 17 years old, he saw Nebuchadnezzar come to Judah and took Daniel and his friends away to Babylon. When he was 25 years old, Nebuchadnezzar came again and this time, he (Ezekiel) was taken, together with king Jehoiachin and other leading citizens, into captivity. At the age of 30, he was supposed to become a full-fledged priest, but God called him to be a prophet instead. 4 years later, his wife died and at the age of 37, Jerusalem was sacked and burnt to the ground by the Babylonians, in 586BC. He was still preaching at the age of 52 years old. Assuming that Ezekiel died not long after that, the prophet would have ministered for close to 27 years, all 27 years in captivity in Babylon.*

(Read Ezekiel 1:1-3; 24:1,15-18; 33:21; 29:17 as well as Numbers 8:24; 4:3 to help you work out the storyline above)

For more glimpses into Ezekiel and his 'unique' ministry, read Ezekiel 3:24, 3:25, 3:26-27, 4:1-3, 4:4-8, 4:9-17, 5:1-17

## **The Book Ezekiel**

Chapter 1-24 ~ Prophecies preached *before* the siege of Jerusalem

*The main message is that Judah will cease to exist. This is emphasized because the general mood of the Jews then was that things would turn for the better soon. Ezekiel has to crush that false hope! Judah will fall because the glory has left:*

10:4 ~ *glory moved from Temple centre to threshold*

10:18 ~ *glory moved from threshold to . . .*

10:19 ~ *. . . to the gate of the Temple*

11:22-23 ~ *glory moved from the gate of Temple to Mount Olives*

*“Son of man, write down the name of the day, this very day – the king of Babylon has started his siege against Jerusalem this very day.”*

Ezekiel 24:2

Chapter 25-33 ~ Prophecies preached *during* the siege of Jerusalem

*As Jerusalem is under siege, the message goes out to Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre and Sidon as well as Egypt, that judgment will come upon them as well. God is against sin, everywhere and every time. In Chapter 33, Ezekiel is the watchman with the task to warn the people of God’ coming judgement.*

*And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, that one who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, “The city has been captured!”*

Ezekiel 33:21

Chapter 34-48 ~ Prophecies preached *after* the fall of Jerusalem

*The tone is now markedly different. God through Ezekiel promised that the Exile will end and the future of Israel will be glorious. Israel’s enemies will be punished, Israel will be restored together with Judah, under David the shepherd, the Temple will be rebuilt and God’s glory will return and reside in their midst!*

*“Thus says the Lord GOD: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it.”*

**Ezekiel 36:33-36**