

God's Route 66 in 2006

Ezekiel

“Prophets Needed”

6/18/2006

Key Texts

Eze 22:30-31 (30) And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. (31) Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD

Eze 33:7-11 (7) So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. (8) When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. (9) Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. (10) Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? (11) Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Introduction

Christian author A.W. Tozer wrote, “What goes through a person's mind when they are thinking of God is the most important thing about that person.”

French philosopher Montaigne stated, “Every man carries within himself the history of the world.” In each individual lies the problem with the entire world, a lack of trust in God. The Book of Ezekiel describes not only the predicament of the country of Israel, but the plight of the saved sinner.

Ezekiel was a priest, **Eze 1:3**, but he began his public ministry after the destruction of the temple. So God shifted his ministry from the priesthood to prophecy. Ezekiel was probably taken captive with King Jehoiachin and ten thousand of Judah's finest when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah the second time. He became a prophet to the captivity.

Statistics

- Author: Ezekiel
- Date: 595-570 B.C.
- Key Verses: 22:30-31, 33:7-11, 33:30-33
- Key Words: they shall know that I am the Lord - 70 times; son of man - 91 times; the word of the Lord came - 47 times
- 48 chapters, 1,273 verses, 39,407 words

I. Ezekiel's Called Ministry (Chapters 1-3)

A. By the river Chebar on route to Babylon Ezekiel had a vision of four creatures coming out of the whirlwind each with four faces and four wings. **Eze 1** Each creature is the king of its family on earth. The four faces describe Jesus Christ as portrayed in the gospels.

- Lion -King of Jews- Matthew
- Ox -Servant of Man- Mark
- Man -Son of Man- Luke
- Eagle -Divine Son of God- John

B. These amazing creatures rode on enveloping wheels and moved like flashes of lightning. Ezekiel didn't get to see the golden Cherubim in the temple, but he saw the real things in this vision. He also was granted a vision of God's throne. **Eze 1:26**

C. **Eze 2:1-4** Ezekiel was commissioned by the Holy Spirit to the children of Israel.

D. There are 8 key factors in a God-called ministry described in **Eze 2:5** through **3:15**

- Know the opposition
- Know your reward is in heaven
- No matter what, never be afraid
- Speak God's Word -- no substitutes
- Eat and digest God's Word -- even though it may cause some bitterness
- Realize your own people may be the most hard-headed
- Be hard-headed yourself
- Sit with the people, don't place yourself above them

E. Most importantly, be faithful in delivering God's word and warning those who turn from righteousness. **Eze 3:18-20** and **Eze 33:7-11**.

II. Ezekiel's Contending Ministry (Chapters 4-24)

A. Ezekiel was the first person to play a "war game". He physically acted out his messages **Eze 4:3-17, 5** and **6**. This "game" consisted of lying on his left side for 390 days and then lying on his right side for 40 days. Each day was symbolic representing the number of years of future suffering of Israel and Judah, respectively. His daily food was barley cakes mixed with cow dung and a small ration of water.

B. He was then to preach against their idolatry, especially in their inner sanctuary. **Eze 8:9-12** **Additionally**, women were weeping for Tammuz (a Babylonian nature deity corresponding to the Greek god Adonis) at the door of the Lord's House. **Eze 8:14** These and other even greater abominations Ezekiel preached against.

C. **Eze 10** Ezekiel is granted another vision of the Cherubim.

D. **Eze 11:16-23** Ezekiel sees hope in little sanctuaries of godliness and in the promise of a new heart. The Glory had left but would return in Jesus Christ. **John 1:14** *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

E. His ministry was discredited as not for the current times **Eze 12:27-28**. False prophets also tried to hinder him by

promising peace **Eze 8:9-12**. The people had sold themselves into spiritual prostitution **Eze 14-20, 23**. Therefore Ezekiel's prophetic ministry was not taken seriously. They accused him of speaking only in parables **Eze 20:45-49**.

F. But Ezekiel contended for Israel even though there was no hope. She must be scattered. Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were alive, they would only be able to save themselves **Eze 14:20, 23**. There was no one to fill the gap.

G. Ezekiel is again made a sign unto Israel through a personal sacrifice. The Lord took his wife, yet he was not to mourn but to continue to speak the Word of God **Eze 24:15-27**. What a faithful prophet!

III. Ezekiel's Combative Ministry (Chapter 25-39)

A. Ezekiel began to preach thunder and judgment against the Phoenician island nation of Tyre and her king **Eze 26** and **27**. This is one of the most detailed and accurate prophecies in the Bible. Although it was often unsuccessfully attacked throughout history and in Ezekiel's time, Tyre was only finally destroyed by Alexander the Great around 250 years later.

B. Satan and why he fell is delineated in **Eze 28:11-18**. Pride!

C. Egypt and Pharaoh likened to dragons in **Eze 29, 30, and 32**.

D. Assyria prophesied against and likened to a cedar that is about to be toppled. **Ez 31**

E. A true prophet is to be

- a Watchman **Eze 33:7-11**
- a Shepherd **Eze 34:1-6**
- an Ambassador **Eze 34:23, 24, and 31**
- an Encourager **Eze 36:8, 26**

F. **Eze 37** Israel's future Resurrection is shown in the vision of the valley of dry bones. God's plan to restore Israel is plainly declared. "**And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel;**" v22. The future Kingdom and the future King.

G. **Eze 38 and 39** God's future and final deliverance of Israel from the hostile northern nations. All Israel will be converted.

IV. Ezekiel's Consoling Ministry (Chapter 40-48)

A. These chapters were very encouraging to the captive Jews because they deal with the millennial temple. There will be

- 1) a restored priesthood
- 2) memorial animal sacrifices
- 3) the Messiah on the throne
- 4) a restored nation of Israel
- 5) and a healed land -- including the Dead Sea

B. The promise of these future blessings should also cause shame due to their current iniquities. **Ez 43:10-12**

C. What a glorious day when Jesus Christ is in Jerusalem. **Eze 48:35** *It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.*

The Book of Ezekiel follows the steps in the life of a Christian who succumbs to the world.

- God sends a preacher
- The preacher is rejected
- A series of tragedies occurs
- God defeats your enemies
- Christian joy restored
- Glory of God returns

We need prophets today, godly men to stand in the gap and speak God's Word. If we lose them, oh, what a loss!

Eze 33:30-33 *(30) Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. (31) And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. (32) And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. (33) And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.*