

Ezekiel

No Place to Hide

Ezekiel 2:1-7
January 18, 2020

Today

Ezekiel lived during a period of political unrest:

- 612 BC - Nineveh fell to the combined forces of the Babylonians and Medes
- 609 BC - Judah's King Josiah was killed in battle against the Egyptians. – His son Jehoahaz reigned for 3 months
- 609 BC - Jehoiakim became king = Evil
- 605 BC - Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah – 1st deportation
- 598 BC - Jehoiachin became king (3 months) = Evil
- 597 BC - Zedekiah became king = Evil – 2nd deportation
- 586 BC - Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed – 3rd deportation.

Jerusalem would lay in ruins until 537 BC.

Ezekiel was:

- A priest the son of Buzi.
- A part of the 2nd deportation in 597 BC
- A contemporary of Daniel and Jeremiah
- His ministry began in the 5th year of his exile {July 21, 592 BC} and last for at least 22 years with his last dated oracle coming in 570 BC.
- He was married – his wife died suddenly {24:16}
- He lived in his own house {3:24}

Ezekiel has been widely misunderstood, perhaps more than any other OT prophet. His odd behavior has led some to suggest that he was mentally ill. However, God was using Ezekiel in a final attempt to get the attention of the nation of Judah before it was too late. Ezekiel had a keen sense of the holiness of God and God used every means available, including visions and object lessons to bring His people to repentance.

Ezekiel contains 13 precise dates, more than any other OT prophetic book, and provides major content for the structure and flow of Revelation:

- Son of Man {Ez. 1 / Rev 1}
- 4 living creatures and the rainbow surrounding the Throne of God {Ez. 1 and 10 / Rev. 4}
- Eating of the sweet-tasting scroll {Ez. 3:1-3 / Rev. 10:9-10}
- Judgment by thirds {Ez. 5:1-4; 12 / Rev. 8 and 9}
- Mark on the forehead {Ez. 9:4 / Rev. 7:3; 13:16; 14:1}
- Call of the birds to the great supper {Ez. 39:17 / Rev. 19:17-18}
- Gog and Magog {Ez. 38:2 / Rev 20:8}
- Sanctuary/city as the dwelling place of God {Ez. 37:27 / Rev. 21:3}
- River of life flowing from the throne {Ez. 47:1 / Rev. 22 :1}
- Tree of Life with 12 kinds of fruit and leaves for the healing of the nation {Ez. 47:12 / Rev. 22:2}
- Gates with names of 12 tribes {Ez. 48:1-34 / Rev. 21:12}

3-Fold Structure:

- Oracles of judgment against Israel – Ch. 4-24
- Oracles of judgment against the Nations – Ch. 25-39
- Oracles of hope and restoration – Ch. 40-48

The Chiasitic Center of Ezekiel is Ch. 28:11-19 - God judges the fallen cherub

Despite 2 deportations – God’s people still believed that He would protect His Temple and never allow Jerusalem to be destroyed. Ezekiel’s task was, in part, to burst that bubble. Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed and the people would know exactly WHY God allowed it to happen.

Ezekiel was 30 years old, living on the banks of the Chebar Canal with other exiled Jews. He had been there for 5 years, having been taken into captivity in 597 BC. It was the 5th day of the 4th month {July 21, 592 BC}. Ezekiel was minding his own business, when suddenly the heavens opened and the hand of the Lord came upon him.

Ezekiel 1:4-5 - I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north-- an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, ⁵ and in the fire was what looked like Four Living Creatures....

- Each had a body like a man - their legs were straight, they had hands like a man and their feet looked like calves’ hooves – they gleamed like bronze {burning coals of fire}.
- Each had 4 faces {man, lion, ox and eagle} and 4 wings – 2 wings touched each other and 2 wings covered their bodies.
- They moved straight ahead – wherever the Spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went – they moved like flashes of lightning {at great speed}.
- A Fire moved among the creatures and lightning flashed from it.

Ezekiel 1:15 - As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a Wheel on the ground beside each creature ----- All 4 wheels:

- Sparkled like **Beryl/Chrysolite**



- Looked like a wheel within a wheel.
- Each moved in one of the 4 directions the 4 creatures faced – they were full of eyes.
 - When the Creatures moved – the Wheels moved.
 - When the Creatures stood up – the Wheels rose also.
 - When the Creatures stood still – the Wheels stood still.
 - Wherever the Spirit went, the Creatures and the Wheels would go too.

Above the 4 Creatures spread a platform that looked like **Crystal** – sparkling like ice.



A voice came from the platform and the Creatures lowered their wings.

On the platform was a throne that looked like **Sapphire / Lapis Lazuli**



On the throne was a Figure that looked like a man {Jesus}. He looked like glowing metal and a brilliant light that looked like a rainbow surrounded Him. {see Revelation 1:13-15; 4:3; 10:1}

Ezekiel 1:28 - This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.... "Stand up, son of man {term used 93 times in Ezekiel}, I want to talk to you".

"I am sending you to Israel – that rebellious nation. They have rebelled against me, they and their fathers before them. They are obstinate and stubborn, but I want you to say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says'. Whether they listen or not {they are very rebellious}, they will know that a prophet has spoken to them. Don't be afraid of them or what they say even if they completely surround you. You must speak to them the words I give you – whether they listen or not – they are very rebellious".

"As for you, listen to what I say and don't rebel. Open your mouth and eat what I give you" {accept the message I am about to give you}.

Ezekiel 2:9-10 - Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll,¹⁰ which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. {see Revelation 10:2-10}

The scroll tasted sweet in my mouth....

Then He said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. I am not sending you to a foreign country whose language you don't understand --- I am sending you to your own people. They won't listen to you because they don't listen to me. They are stubborn and obstinate. Listen carefully and take to heart everything I am going to tell you then go to the exiles and speak to them --- whether they listen or not".

Then I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord in His place!" and I heard the sound of the wings of the 4 Creatures and the sound of the Wheels beside them --- the sound was deafening! {see Revelation 4:13-14}

Ezekiel was greatly disturbed {you would be too} by the task God had called him to undertake. He was so overcome that he went and sat down by the Chebar Canal for 7 days --- and the hand of God was heavy upon him! Ezekiel had to decide if He wanted the job. At the end of the 7 days, God spoke to him again:

Ezekiel 3:17-21 - "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. ¹⁸ When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. ¹⁹ But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself. ²⁰ "Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. ²¹ But if you do warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he will surely live because he took warning, and you will have saved yourself."

This section concludes with the 1st of the 12 "signs" or Object Lessons:

- Go into your house.
- You will be tied up with ropes – unable to move.
- Your tongue will stick to the roof of your mouth so that you cannot speak.
- When I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you will say, "Thus says the Lord, God" – in other words, Ezekiel would be mute / unable to speak unless he was given a message from God.
- Some people will listen. Some people won't --- they are a rebellious people!

Ezekiel's inability to speak – except when delivering God's messages – lasted for 7 years – until the announcement that Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed.

Take Aways

Judah is in serious trouble. God knows His people will not pay attention to Ezekiel, but He will still try to warn them and lead them back to repentance.

Ezekiel's call began with a spectacular view of Heaven. The vision he saw was incredible but it is not as complicated as it first appears to be.

4 Mighty Angels {4 Living Creatures} attend the Throne of God and have been tasked with carrying out the plans and purposes of God. They are directed by the Spirit of God.

The Throne can move in any **Direction** {Wheels}. It goes where it wants to go. Nothing can stop it = God is intimately involved in all the events of human history – including your history.

Not only is God involved in human history He also **Sees Everything** {Full of Eyes} - Nothing escapes His notice

- **Psalm 139:7-10** – Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Sitting on the Throne is **Jesus** {Looked Like a Man – same language used to describe Jesus in Revelation}. He is Sovereign God.

Ezekiel sees that God is in absolute control. Nothing gets by Him and He has at His disposal Mighty Angels who go where He tells them to go. Ezekiel can trust this God because even though things look grim and they are only going to get worse, God is still GOD.....

- The God of Ezekiel is the God of Revelation – what He WAS then He IS today – and we can trust Him with our lives as well as the final events of history.
- Ezekiel's vision reminds us that we are but puny humans compared with the might and glory and majesty and power of God and despite what is going on here on earth, God remains God and He will accomplish what He has promised.