

Welcome, and thank you for coming to the Ezekiel Bible Study. And thank you to Joye Schmiedt for asking me to do the study and for graciously hosting us in her home.

I don't know yet how many lessons we will have overall. Ezekiel is a long book, 48 chapters, but for some lessons I will be combining chapters. If I just took one chapter per week, the study would take almost a year.

My plan is to try and keep each lesson to an hour or less.

This is an interactive study. Please ask questions or comment at any time. I will do my best to answer, although I may have to defer an answer to a later lesson to give me time for research.

Because I was asked, I am audio recording the study for those who are unable to attend.

(next slide) *[slide quotation from Ezek 36:26]*

A vertical banner on the left side of the slide featuring the word "EZEKIEL" in white capital letters, with a glowing, fiery background.

OVERVIEW

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

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B. G. Hirsch - Ezekiel Introduction

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For our first lesson, I am going to introduce the Book of Ezekiel. When I start a book of the Bible I like to understand the background for the book. This helps to give context for the events that occur. It gives me an idea of God's purpose in including the book in the Bible. I like to try and place myself in the story to understand what I would see and how I would react. With the book of Ezekiel, this is especially important because some truly amazing things happen right at the start.

So, today we are going to look at the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How of Ezekiel.

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BUT FIRST...

- Requires effort
- Prophetical book
- Apocalyptic content
- Repetitive – chaps 1-24 fall of Judah and Jerusalem

“...He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Heb 11:6b

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But first, I need to give a disclaimer...

Ezekiel is one of the hardest books in the Bible to teach. And you may never have heard a bible study on Ezekiel before.

The Book of Ezekiel requires effort. The imagery and accounts are complex and vivid.

Ezekiel is a prophetic book. There are many prophecies about events that were soon to happen for the people and nations of that period. These prophecies have already come to pass. There are also prophecies that were for the future. Some of these prophecies have already occurred and some are still in the future.

Ezekiel has apocalyptic content. That is, it predicts imminent disaster and destruction. Some of the descriptions are unsettling.

Ezekiel is also a very repetitive book. Chapters 4 through 24 describe in many ways how Judah and Jerusalem will fall. Even so, there are many things to learn from these chapters.

Hebrews 11:6 says “But without faith it impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” So you can expect to be blessed as we diligently seek the Lord in this book.

One more thing. Don’t just take my word for things. Be a Berean. The Bereans were accounted more noble because after they had received the teaching, they searched the scriptures daily to see whether the things they were taught were true.

So, let’s get started... (Next slide)



Outline

- **Visions of God & Commission**
 - Chaps 1 -3
- **Coming Fall of Jerusalem**
 - Chaps 4 - 24
- **Judgements Against Foreign Nations**
 - Chaps 25 - 32
- **Looking to the Future**
 - Chaps 33 – 39
- **Vision of New Temple & Land**
 - Chaps 40 - 48

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Here is a high-level outline for the Book of Ezekiel:

- In chapters 1 to 3 Ezekiel is commissioned and he has dramatic visions of God
- In chapters 4 to 24 the LORD shows us just how displeased he is with Jerusalem and Judah as we get numerous predictions of the fall of Jerusalem and Judah.
- In chapters 25 to 32 God gives predictions about the judgement of other nations such as Moab, Edom, and Ammon.
- In chapters 33 to 39 we look into the future to see what the LORD has in store for Israel.
- And finally, in chapters 40 to 48, we will see the vision of the New Temple and land.

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- Ezekiel לֵאזִקְיָהּ – “God will strengthen”
- A priest – hence a Levite
- Son of Buzi – a descendent of Buz (disrespect)
- Married until wife’s death in chap 24
- 30 years old at start of ministry
- 52 years old as of last dated prophecy

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Who was Ezekiel, or לֵאזִקְיָהּ, (yekh-ez-kale’) in Hebrew? His name means “God will strengthen.” But, we actually know very little about him.

We know that Ezekiel was a priest. Therefore he was a Levite, as am I. Because Ezekiel was a priest, he would have known the five Books of Moses. He would also be familiar with the rituals for sacrifice, washing, clean and unclean behaviors, etc.

He is called the son of Buzi (boozee). This means he was a descendent of Buz (booz), which means “disrespect”. However, that is all we know about his ancestry.

Ezekiel is married until his wife’s death in Chapter 24. We will deal with that when we get there.

Based upon chapter one of the book, it appears that Ezekiel is 30 years old at the start of the book. Based upon the last dated prophecy, he was 52 years old at that time.

Ezekiel is one of the “major prophets”, along with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Daniel. This is because their books are longer and broader, not because they are somehow better or more important than the “minor prophets”.

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WHAT?

- Prophet to exiles in Babylon
 - Ezek 2:5
- What is a prophet (נָבִיא)?
 - Num 12:6
 - Deut 13:1-5, 18:20
 - Amos 3:7
- Given visions by God

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What is the Book of Ezekiel about?

Ezekiel is a prophet to the exiles (go-law') in Babylon. The LORD makes Ezekiel a prophet in Chapter 2 of the book. God willing, we will see this in our third lesson.

Just what is a prophet, or Nav-ee', anyway? A prophet is a person that is divinely commissioned by God to speak forth His word. In some cases, the prophet is foretelling events to come. In other cases, the prophet is forth-telling. That is, the prophet is speaking forth the word as God directs. We will see in Chapter 3 that in Ezekiel's case this was under the LORD's absolute control.

Num 12:6

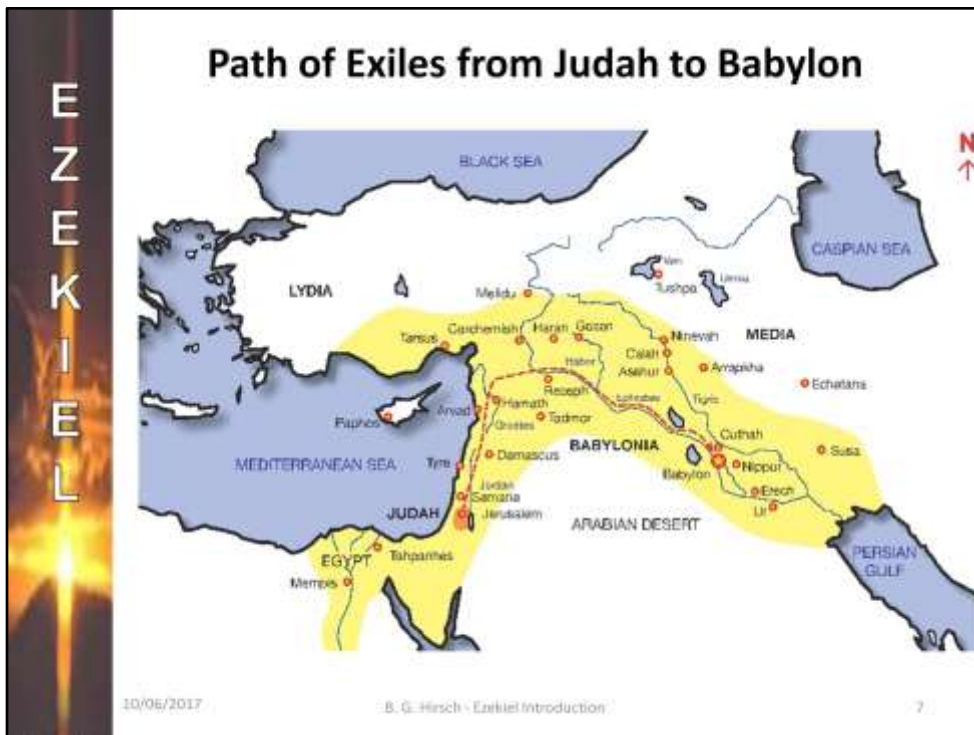
And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

Amos 3:7

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

We will see that God "speaks" to Ezekiel in visions, which are waking dreams, as well as with direct messages to inform the children of Israel, that are in exile, what God has planned for the nation of Israel at that time and in the future.

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In this picture you can see the supposed route used by the Babylonians to move the exiles from Jerusalem to Babylon.

The distance from Jerusalem to Babylon is approximately 500 miles as the crow flies. However, the route that would have been traveled is more like 900 miles. In the book of Ezra, it took Ezra's group 5 months to go from Babylon back to Jerusalem.

Notice Media to the right. Today that is known as Iran.

Lydia at the top today is known as Turkey.

The Arabian Desert to the right today includes Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Oman among others.

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A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide. It features the name 'EZEKIEL' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, stacked vertically. The background of the bar is dark with a bright, glowing yellow and orange light source at the bottom, creating a lens flare effect.

WHERE?

- In Babylon
- “by the river of Chebar”
 - a river of Mesopotamia
 - actually an irrigation canal
 - in the city of Tel-Aviv or Tel-Abib

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Where does all of this take place?

As I just mentioned, Ezekiel is a prophet to the exiles in Babylon. Babylon is in modern day Iraq. The Babylonian Empire was ruled at that time by Nebuchadnezzar.

According to the text of Chapter 1, the events begin “by the river Chebar (keb-awr’). This is actually an irrigation canal in Mesopotamia (an ancient region in W Asia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers).

Ezekiel is in the city of Tel-Aviv, not Tel Aviv in Israel. A tel is a mound that typically covers some more ancient structures or a prior city.

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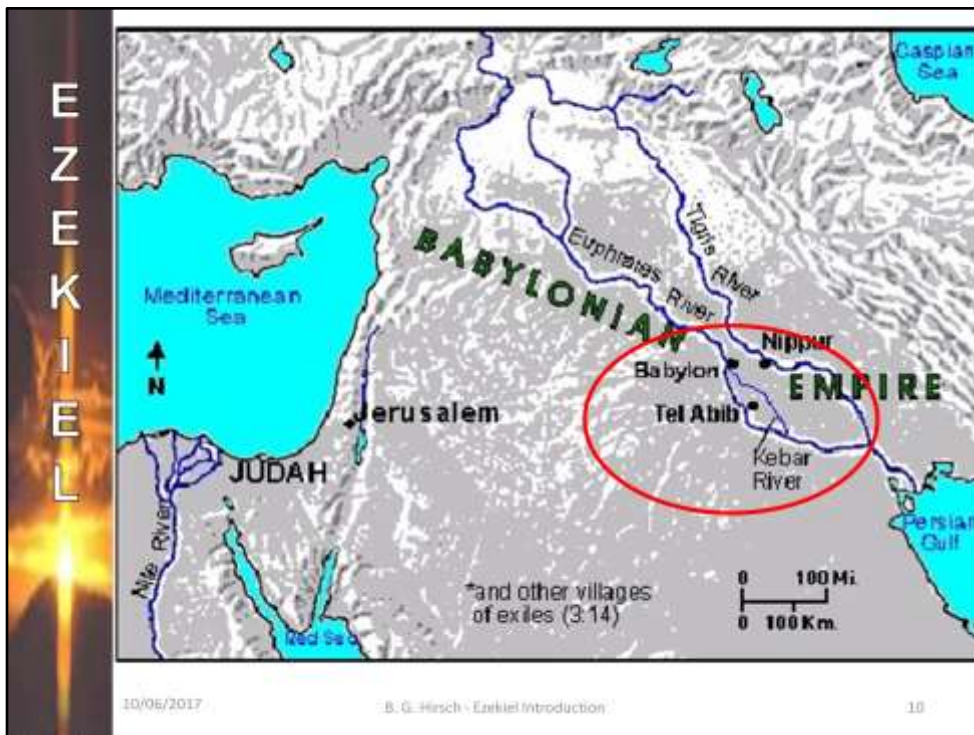
This map shows the Babylonian Empire along with the movement of the Jewish people

The taking of the northern tribes by Assyria occurred from 734 B.C. to 722 B.C. Here it is depicted in the light yellow color in the area of modern day Turkey.

You can also see Media to the right, which later became the Persian Empire that overthrew Babylon.

In the low-center you see the city of Babylon where Ezekiel and the exiles were resettled. Resettling people is an old technique used by conquerors to prevent rebellion. When people are removed from their known environment and language to a foreign environment, it is demoralizing. It is difficult to imagine traveling back home, and it is harder to organize.

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This picture shows the Kebar river and the city of Tel-Avib. I know it says Tel-Abib on the picture and probably in your Bible. However the Hebrew would be pronounced Tel-Avib.

This is where Eekiel will have his first vision.

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- Taken in 2nd exile – 598 B.C.
- In reign of Jehoiachin (reigned 3 mos)
- First vision 593 B.C.
(5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity)
- Last dated vision 571 B.C.
- Contemporary with Jeremiah who was in Judah

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When does all of this take place?

There were three conquests of Jerusalem by Babylon: 605 B.C., 598 B.C., and 586 B.C. Each of these conquests resulted in the taking of captives to Babylon. Ezekiel was in the second group of exiles that were taken in 598 B.C., which is when King Jehoiachin יְחִיָּזְכִּי (yo-yaw-kheen') was taken after reigning 3 months.

Ezekiel tell us in chapter 1, that the events are occurring in the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Hence, the Book of Ezekiel starts in 593 B.C.

The book of Ezekiel is one of the best dated books in the Bible. The information given in many of the prophecies allows us to date them. The last dated vision occurs in 571 B.C. So many years pass in the Book of Ezekiel, approximately 22 years.

Ezekiel is a contemporary of Jeremiah. While Ezekiel is in Babylon, Jeremiah was in Jerusalem. Jeremiah became a prophet in 627 B.C. Both prophesied the fall and destruction of Jerusalem and Judah.

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To give God's divine message to the rebellious house of Israel and to us regarding:

- God's majesty
- God's plans for Israel, other nations, and the future

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Why was the Book of Ezekiel written?

Despite Israel being a “rebellious house”, God commissions Ezekiel to let God’s people in exile know God’s plans for Israel and other nations at that time and for the future.

Ezekiel is a witness to God’s majesty. And we will try in the next lesson to get a glimpse of the visions that Ezekiel experienced.

The Book of Ezekiel is chock full of prophecies. We will see the mighty power of God on display in awesome spectacle and in subtle tableaux. The LORD will show by irrefutable example that He alone is God both at that time and today. And we will see His Word is as active today as it was in Ezekiel’s day.

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- Visions from God related by Ezekiel to the people, prophets, and elders
- Symbolic enactments done by Ezekiel before the people
- God's actions

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How will God do all these things in the Book of Ezekiel?

God gave Ezekiel visions of God Himself and various subjects, which Ezekiel related to the exiles, to other false prophets, and to the various elders and rulers.

God also had Ezekiel conduct symbolic enactments to illustrate for the people what God was planning to do. We will see some of these in the fourth lesson.

There are also specific actions that God takes with Ezekiel and in fulfilling His words that will verify that what Ezekiel has told them is true. We will see some of these in the third lesson.

So, now you have had the introduction to Ezekiel. In the next lesson we will cover Chapter 1 including the first incredible vision that God gives to Ezekiel, and we will learn about cherubim, wheels, and the throne of God. So read chapter 1 of Ezekiel for next time.

Do you have any questions?