

#21 Ezekiel | July 15, 2018

A Little Background

- Like Jeremiah (#20), Ezekiel was a prophet immediately preceding the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah.
- Unlike Jeremiah, Ezekiel was taken captive and began life in exile in 597 BC.
 - Nebuchadnezzar began to reign and took the first captives in 605BC.
 - A group of 10,000 captives were taken in 597BC, including Ezekiel – 2 Kings 24:10-16.
 - The final destruction of the city took place in 587BC.
- All of Ezekiel's ministry takes place from Babylon. He was likely taken captive about the age of 25.

Importance Episodes in the Life of Ezekiel

- Ezekiel was instructed to give four unique pictures of the coming destruction of Jerusalem.
 - The Message of the Tile – Ezekiel 4:1-3
 - The Message on the Side – Ezekiel 4:4-8
 - The Message of the Awful Diet – Ezekiel 4:9-17
 - The Message of the Shaved Head – Ezekiel 5:1-17
- Ezekiel prophesied of a Shepherd who would be the rescuer of Judah and Israel – Ezekiel 34.
 - Evil shepherds (Kings, Priests, false prophets) had abused the people (vv. 1-10).
 - God will provide a Good Shepherd (vv. 11-31, compare John 10:11-12).
- Ezekiel's most well-known vision is also one of the most misused Scriptures in all the Bible – Ezekiel 36-37.
 - In Ezekiel 36, God gives Ezekiel a beautiful picture of the restored nation.
 - Ezekiel 36:8-11 are representative of the physical blessings on the land.
 - Ezekiel 36:24-28 are representative of the spiritual blessings on the people.

- In Ezekiel 37, God gives the manner by which the nation will be restored.
 - Ezekiel 37:1-10 expresses the step-by-step manner in which the chosen nation will be reborn. Many non-Israel supporting theologians deny that the modern nation of Israel is the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy because the modern nation is not "born again." For example, *Got Questions* says, "*The Israelites residing in the Holy Land today are not the fulfillment of this prophecy. It will be fulfilled when God re-gathers believing Israelites to the land.*"¹ However, the prophecy is clear that the nation will be reborn in stages, with the rebirth coming only at the end.
 - Ezekiel 37:15-22 expresses the unity of the nation, which had not experienced unity since the days of Solomon.
 - Ezekiel 37:11 gives the only Biblical use of the vision. All other "borrowing" the vision is driven by personal agenda and should be avoided.

- Ezekiel gives more insight into the Millennium than any other single prophet – Ezekiel 40-48.

- The Jewish people read these forward-looking verses each year in their "days of mourning" of the Jewish Temple.
- The full understanding of the "third Temple" will only come when Messiah establishes that Temple.

Things You May Not Know

- Jews teach that the book of Ezekiel was not written by Ezekiel, but compiled by 120 "Men of the Great Assembly," which included men like Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
- The Jewish people read Ezekiel 1-3 every year on Passover.
- Ezekiel was not allowed to mourn the death of his wife – Ezekiel 24:16-24.
- Ezekiel recorded the day of the siege of Jerusalem, a day which Jews today continue to observe on a day called Asarah B'Tevet (the 10th of Tevet) – Ezekiel 24:1-2.
- Immediately upon the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel's ministry goes from one of condemnation to one of consolation.
- A traditional grave of Ezekiel is said to have been constructed by Jehoichin, after his release, and stands today in Iraq.

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/valley-dry-bones.html>