

EZEKIEL

General Observations

1. The man:

A. Name: "God is strong" or "God strengthens".

B. Home: Probably Jerusalem, for he was taken from Jerusalem to Babylon with the group carried away in 597 B.C. He was a priest, the son of Buzi (1:3); probably twenty-five years of age when carried away, and thirty when he began to prophesy (1-3).

C. Characterization: A man of deep sympathy for his people; but one who could be blunt and harsh when necessary. His style was dramatic, his imagery vivid, and his illustrations colorful. He was a man wholly and completely subject to the will of God. He saw clearly what his task was, and gave himself whole-heartedly to the accomplishing of that task.

2. Date: Carried into Babylon in 597. Began prophesying 593, the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity. Continued to the 25th year, 573 (40:1); or 27th year (29:17). A span of 20 or 22 years.

3. Background:

A. Babylonian. See introduction to Jeremiah. Ezekiel was carried into Babylon in the second invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, 597 B.C. Many of the most pious of Jerusalem were carried away in this captivity (see Jer. 24). It was Ezekiel's task to keep these captives faithful to the Lord in a land of idolatry. During the captivity he lived at Tel-Abib, "Hill of an ear of corn," Or Tel-Abub, "Hill produced by the action of storms" (Eiselen). Probably located on a canal of the Euphrates, near Nippur (ISBE), down the river south-east from Babylon.

B. Judaeen. See introduction to Jeremiah.

4. Peculiarities of Ezekiel:

A. The use of visions, symbolical actions, allegories, and parables in revealing to the prophet and through him to the people the message of Jehovah.

B. His emphasis on the individual. This emphasis attained a place not before realized in the teaching of the prophets.

C. Ezekiel's use of certain expressions which suggest fundamental ideas of the prophet: (1) The "glory of Jehovah", emphasizing His glorious majesty and power. (2) The "Name of Jehovah", indicating the nature and character of the Lord: the sum of His revealed attributes. (3) By certain acts God would "sanctify" Himself, show Himself "holy", emphasizing the moral aspect of the divine holiness.

5. The Message and Teaching of the Book:

A. Doom -- Jerusalem will fall; the people will come to Babylon.

(1) Chapters 1-24, judgment as a punishment for sin is stressed.

(2) Chapters 25-39, foreign nations must be destroyed before Israel can be restored. Both Jerusalem must be destroyed (1-24) and the nations judged (25-39).

B. Hope -- God's people will be "raised" and restored to their land; and ultimately made one under David; all the enemies destroyed (25-39); and a glorious Jerusalem will be built on the ruins of the old. (40-48)

Outline

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- I. The call and consecration of Ezekiel to the office of prophet, 1:1-3:21.
 - A. The appearance of the glory of the Lord, ch. 1.
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 2. The theophany and vision of the four cherubim, 4-14.
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 - B. The call of Ezekiel to the prophetic office, 2:1-3:3.
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 2. The second symbolical act: the destiny of the city besieged, 4-8.
 3. The third symbolical act: famine, privations and exile, 9-17.
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- III. Three discourses of condemnation, 5:5-7:27.
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 - b. The rod is prepared, nothing will be left of the ungodly, 10-13.
 - c. Irrestible destruction, gold and silver will not save them, 14-22.
 - d. Captivity and overthrow of the people is coming, 23-27.
- IV. Jehovah's withdrawal from the doomed city, chs. 8-11.
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3. Second abomination: worship of beasts, 7-13.
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- C. Burning of Jerusalem, and withdrawal of the glory of Jehovah from the Sanctuary, ch. 10.
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- 2. The sword of the Lord, 21:1-23.
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PART II

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