

Notes for Ezekiel

Class Discussion and reference

Introduction to the book of Ezekiel

This is a challenging book to read and to teach, especially in an expositional format. Personally I have never taught this book although I have studied it many times and used scripture references in my studies and presentations.

Ezekiel is a foundational book for the study of prophecy and is critical to understanding key elements of end time events.

Who is Ezekiel and when did this book get written? Ezekiel is one of the children of Israel who was captured in the Babylonian Exile and brought back to serve the Babylonian kings in what is now modern day Iraq. About all we know about Ezekiel comes from this book so let's begin to look at it.

First, Ezekiel is about 30 years old when this book is written in the 600BC timeframe. He is a contemporary of Daniel, and Jeremiah who wrote in the same general timeframe. Jeremiah is the early writer and Daniel references his writings in the book of Daniel. Daniel is next and Ezekiel is probably the youngest and may have known Daniel while they were in Jerusalem before the exile.

Second, Ezekiel is part of the priestly class and has trained for the priesthood studying the book of Leviticus and has become a priest to the exiles in a region south of Babylon. This is a noble and respected position with ministering responsibilities to the people even though there is no temple any longer. Ezekiel is actively ministering to the people when the book of Ezekiel opens and he receives a vision from the Lord, at which time he is called by God to be a Prophet of God. This is a very special call.

Priests and prophets are rare in the Bible, with only a few others being both...Daniel, Zechariah, and Jesus Christ (priest of order of Melchizedek). While being a priest was a revered calling respected and honored by the people, being a prophet was not the same. Since a prophet is called to speak for God, and to speak his words to the people they are generally warnings, renouncing of sin, or relaying God's pending judgment. People don't like having their faults, sins and disobedience pointed out to them. Most of God's prophets were killed, stoned, or run out of town. It is a lonely call that takes a special kind of person to do it. Ezekiel is that man. The name Ezekiel means "God strengthens" and is very appropriate for Ezekiel.

The purpose of the book is to both warn and restore Israel and the Jews.

Message of Retribution

- to Israel: Chapters 1-24
- to Neighbors: Chapters 25-32

Message of Restoration

- to Jewish People: Chapters 33-39
- of Jewish Practices: Chapters 40-48

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Most of the quotations used by pastors and teachers are in the “restoration of Israel” section of the text.

This is a long book and I will take some chapters quickly and cover several each week and others we will slow down and cover in depth. Read several chapters ahead if you can do it so we can use the time in class effectively.

Two other things you will need to prepare yourself for in reading and understanding Ezekiel. Other countries are mentioned and a review of the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 would be helpful. In the notes from Thessalonians I gave you a handout with the Genesis names for these countries and where they are located today. In addition we need to review a series of “threes” that are important in looking at prophecy in general and Ezekiel in specific.

There are 3 strands of the human family...not in redemptive terms where there are only saved and unsaved... but unrelated to race, origin, color of skin or language. These are:

Gentiles- Genesis 1-11 (Abraham and Isaac are both Gentiles and Jacob is first to be called a Jew)

Jews – Genesis 12- Acts 1: Out of the Gentiles God created a separate strand of people as His ‘chosen’ people... Not chosen for honor but for service. Jesus and all the people mentioned in the gospels are either Gentiles or Jews

Christians – Acts 2 (Pentecost) is the arrival of the Holy Spirit who came to indwell a new strand of humans. Those new creatures in Christ where the Holy Spirit indwells them and they have been born again are changed from either Gentiles (Timothy) or Jews (John, Peter, Mark, James, etc)

This is important because there are 3 major prophetic books that deal with the timelines of each strand:

Gentiles – Book of Daniel

Christians – Book of Revelation

Jews – Book of Ezekiel

There are also 3 major “pillars” to see in the remaining timeline of prophecy where Christ intervenes in history.

Rapture- Where the believers from Acts 2 through rapture date are snatched up to be with the Lord (see study on Thessalonians). Also called Rapture of the Church

Second Coming of Christ – where Christ returns as King of Kings and takes those unbelievers on earth in campaign of Armageddon for judgment

Great White Throne Judgment – Where Christ judges the wicked and casts them in the lake of Fire.