

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

1) 01 June	Ezekiel 01-07	When Your World Crumbles
2) 08 June	Ezekiel 08-14	When Idols Tug at your Heart
3) 15 June	Ezekiel 15-19	When You Want to Blame Others
4) 22 June	Ezekiel 20-24	When Tragedy Hits Home
5) 29 June	Ezekiel 25-32	When Pride Turns to Greed
6) 06 July	Ezekiel 33-35	Hope of New Freedom
7) 13 July	Ezekiel 36-39	Hope of New Life
8) 30 July	Ezekiel 40-48	Hope of New Worship
9) 27 July	Daniel 01	Draw the Line
10) 03 August	Daniel 02-03	Risk Everything for God
11) 10 August	Daniel 04-05	Tell it Like it is
12) 17 August	Daniel 06	Never Give Up on Prayer
13) 24 August	Daniel 07-08	Live to Win in the End
14) 31 August	Daniel 09-12	Be Ready for Tribulation

INTRODUCTION

- Ezekiel was a Priest & a Prophet to the dispersed Jews in Babylon
- Ezekiel's message conveyed near term judgment against Judah and hope for the future, such as the following:
 - God will gather and restore the fortunes of His scattered people
 - God will infuse a new heart and a new spirit into His people
 - God will restore the Davidic dynasty to rule His people
 - God will establish His permanent residence in His new Kingdom
- The book of Ezekiel has three major sections:
 - Ezek 01-24. God's judgment against Jerusalem
 - Ezek 25-32. God's judgment against Judah's enemies
 - Ezek 33-48. Prophetic description of the restored Jewish kingdom and temple complex
- Known historical timelines of Ezekiel's era:
 - 623 B.C. Ezekiel was born in Judah
 - 620 B.C. Daniel was born in Judah
 - 609 B.C. King Josiah dies in battle against the Egyptians at Megiddo (2Kings 23:29)
 - 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar defeats Egyptians at Carchemish and besieges Jerusalem. Daniel is taken captive
 - 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar conquers Jerusalem, and Ezekiel is taken into Babylonian captivity
 - 586 B.C. The Babylonian army demolishes Solomon's temple for Judah's rebellion
 - 539 B.C. The Persians under Cyrus captured Babylon
 - 538 B.C. Cyrus decreed that Jewish exiles could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1:1-4)

Judean King	Reign	Years	Character	Prophets
19. Josiah	640-608	31 years	Very Good	Jeremiah
20. Jehoahaz (*)	608	3 months	Bad	
21. Jehoiakim (*) (aka Eliakim)	608-597	11 years	Bad	Uriah Daniel Ezekiel Jeremiah
22. Jehoiachin (+) (aka Jeconiah, Coniah)	597	3 months	Bad	
23. Zedekiah (*) (Mattaniah)	597-586	11 years	Bad	

Note (*): Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah were brothers (all sons of Josiah)

Note (+): Jesus descended from Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim (2Kings 24:6; Mat 1:12)

BACKGROUND

- Jeremiah 44 gives a decent account of Judah's mindset of why the Jews, the ones who fled to Egypt when Babylon first besieged Jerusalem, would willingly and deliberately prefer to worship false gods over the one true God – They, like many today, want to have an experience-based religion instead of a faith-based belief system
 - Jeremiah 44:7.** *'Thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, "Why are you doing great harm to yourselves, so as to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, from among Judah, leaving yourselves without remnant,"'*

- Jeremiah 44:15-18.** *Then all the men who were aware that their wives were burning sacrifices to other gods, along with all the women who were standing by, responded to Jeremiah, saying, "As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you! But rather we will continue burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven...for then we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune. But since we stopped burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have met our end by the sword and by famine."*
- Ezekiel was dealing with the same mindset with the dispersed Jews in Babylon – They preferred to rely on the deceptive experiences received from Satanic idol worship than trust in Jehovah's promise to sustain them if they would obey His laws
- What more can God do except fulfill His word to almost totally annihilate His people, except for a remnant, for their depravity into child sacrifices, homosexuality, and even bestiality – for they became more wicked than the nations surrounding them.. Ezek 5:6

UNIQUE TRAITS OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

- "Son of Man."** Ezekiel is called the son of man 93 times. In Daniel 7:13 it is used of the Messiah. Jesus is called or addressed Himself frequently as the Son of Man (80x in the four Gospels)
- "They shall know that I am God."** This is a dominant theme of this book. This phrase occurs 62 times in 27 of the 48 chapters
- Visions.** Ezekiel had 6 significant visions:
 - Ezek 1:4-28. The "throne vision", in which Ezekiel sees God enthroned in the Temple among the heavenly host
 - Ezek 8:1-16. The first "temple vision", in which Ezekiel sees God leave the Temple because of the abominations being practiced there
 - Ezek 15-19. Images of Israel, in which Israel is seen as a harlot bride, among other things
 - Ezek 37:1-14. The valley of dry bones, in which the prophet sees the dead rise again
 - Ezek 38-39. The destruction of Gog and Magog, in which he sees Israel's enemies destroyed and a new age of peace established
 - Ezek 40-48. The final temple vision, in which Ezekiel is transported to Jerusalem and sees a new commonwealth centered around a new Temple where God's glory is seen
- Symbolic Actions.** Ezekiel often was used by God in some painful and humiliating situations to mirror Judah's troubles
 - He had to remain mute for a long period 3:26
 - Had to lie on his side in one position for over a year 4:5-6
 - Had to eat loathsome food cooked over dung 4:15
 - Had to shave his head and face with a sword 5:1
 - His beloved wife was suddenly taken 24:16-18
- End Results.** After the Babylonian captivity, the Jewish people can be accused of many things, but they never again dabbled with idolatry or committed polygamy

DOES GOD STILL GIVE PEOPLE PROPHETIC VISIONS TODAY?

- Simple answer – NO.** We won't see God-invoked supernatural events, miracles, and prophecies again until the 2 witnesses identified in Revelation 11 come onto the world scene.
- Only four people have had Heavenly visions that God allowed to be revealed to the rest of us: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, and John.
- What about those who claim to have seen and talked with Jesus, or had visions of Heaven, or received revelations from God? No doubt, many had such experiences, but they are not of God. See <https://answersingenesis.org/reviews/books/are-visits-to-heaven-for-real/>

Passage	Comments
Ezekiel 1:1-28	<p>God's Glory or God's Spaceship?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv1-3. "Of my 30th year" – possibly alludes to Ezekiel being 30 years of age, which was the age for a Priest to begin his ministry • vv4-21. "Four living beings," each with 4 faces and 4 wings, empowered by the "spirit," moving "like flashes of lightning," and moving in tandem with "wheels" with one wheel within another (4 gyroscopes?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ezekiel employed such words and phrases such as "like," "as if," and "awesome" suggesting Ezekiel was struggling to describe an indescribable scene ♦ The living beings are later identified as cherubim (10:1-22), which are the highest of angelic beings • vv22-28. Above the living beings and the wheels was a vast, crystal-like "expanse" (Gen 1:6-8) separating the creatures from the glory of the Lord, and from above the expanse came a sound "like the shouting of a mighty army" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ezekiel recognized the appearance of someone to be the Lord, Himself (possible Christophany) • What can we take away from this description of God's glory? About the living beings? From the loud shout? • Remember, God is trying to convey His uniqueness and awesomeness to a people who prefer to worship idols which cannot hear, see, touch, or speak
Basics of Hermeneutics (principles of interpretation)	<p>We know what the Bible says, but what does it mean? Because of our sometimes erroneous assumptions and biases the Bible can be used to develop any conceivable doctrine imaginable from Limbo to space aliens, from Calvinism to Arminianism, and from Catholicism to Pentecostalism. We must consider the context, the culture, the grammatical structure, the type of prose, and the whole counsel of God to determine the author's intended meaning and possible applications.</p> <p>More often than not, one's assumptions and biases are the old wineskins, or the strongholds and fortresses which have to be demolished and rebuilt before someone converts from false doctrine to sound doctrine.</p>
2:1-10	<p>Convincing Hardheaded People of the Truth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v2. "The Spirit entered me..." – Though the Holy Spirit did not indwell in OT believers, God did grant special visitations of His Spirit to a specific few (Ex 31:3; Num 11:17,25; Jud 6:34; 14:6; 1Sam 10:6; 16:13; Neh 9:20; Is 61:1; Ez 2:2; Mic 3:8) • vv3-5. Ezekiel's mission was to preach the truth whether it was accepted or not <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Do we have the same mission today? • v8. "Open your mouth and eat the words I am giving you" – IOW, Ezekiel was to fully digest God's commands and instructions, and take them as his own • v10. The scroll was written on the front and back. Typically, scrolls were only written on one side. The implication here is that the scroll was thoroughly saturated with words of divine judgment and woe • How saturated should we be with God's word? Is studying the Bible a joy or a chore for us?
3:1-27	<p>Promise of Destruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v1. Ezekiel's first assignment – Eat this scroll • vv7,11. Israel will not be willing to listen to you since they are not willing to listen to me – but tell them whether they listen or not. • vv16-21. Like Ezekiel, we are to be watchmen who warn the wicked, and we are accountable. Yet, the wicked will have no excuse to ending up in Hell if we fail to witness to them. We lose heavenly rewards • vv26-27. Yet, in this passage, God makes Ezekiel a mute and unable to witness. WHY? Presumably for impact. When he does speak again it is with a message of hope. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ He who has ears to hear, let him hearMat 11:15

Passage	Comments
4:1-17	<p>Promise of Dire Circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv4-5. Lie down on your left side for 390 days (representative of the sins of the northern kingdom of Israel) • v6. Then lie down on your right side for 40 more days (representative of Judah's sins of rebellion) • v8. And God will tie him up with ropes to ensure he doesn't roll over in bed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ This object lesson to the Jews was to reflect no escape from their impending judgment • vv9-17. Meager bread made with dung – famine would grip the land like never before – WAKE UP ISRAEL
5:1-17	<p>Death by Famine, Disease, and War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v6. Israel's sins were worse than surrounding nations, to include child sacrifice, homosexuality, bestiality on a national scale – Seems like America today (abortion, gay marriage rights). Bestiality is next on the agenda • vv9-11. "My eye will have no pity, and I will not spare" – God was going to allow his people to suffer the worst of fates, where starving families will physically eat their loved ones • v13. "Then they will know that I, the Lord, have spoken"
6:1-14	<p>Israel Will "Know that I am the Lord"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v7. "The slain will fall among you, and YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD" – It is a shame many don't turn to the Lord till disaster strikes Jeremiah 36:3
7:1-27	<p>Bad News Only Gets Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v9. "My eye will show no pity, nor will I spare" – God's wrath is at its peak, yet, the Jews still would not repent, and the innocent would perish along with the wicked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ History confirms the biblical prophecies that infants were held by their feet and bashed against stone, and pregnant women were ripped open during Jerusalem's final siege

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- What more can God do to wake His people up to the truth? Let us walk in God's steps to preserve us and those who hear us.

NEXT WEEK: Ezekiel 8-14. Three visions of despair are given to Ezekiel along with the promise of restoration and the condemnation of false prophets and idolatrous leaders

