

# Ezekiel: God's Strong Prophet



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- Ezekiel - Hebrew: **יְהֵזְקֵאל**, Y'hez'qel
- Ezekiel, the son of Buzzi, born into a priestly (Kohen) lineage.
- He was born around 622 BC, and received his first prophetic vision at the age of 30, about the time of Josiah's reforms.
- Ezekiel is believed to be a descendant of Joshua through one of his daughters that married into the tribe of Levi.
- His father's name is Buzi meaning "my contempt."
- Ezekiel and his wife lived on the bank of the Chebar River, in Tel Abib with other exiles from Judah. He had no children.

# Ezekiel: God's Strong Prophet

- Ezekiel was called to be a prophet by a great vision of God and four wheeled Cherubim. For the next five years in Jerusalem, he prophesied daily and acted out the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in spite of great opposition.
- Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and other prophets heard of the fulfillment of their prophecies of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians.
- Ezekiel was 52 years old when he had his final vision.
- The chief of the Jews in the land of the Chaldeans killed him, because he rebuked him for worshiping idols. He was buried in the grave of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah.

# Ezekiel: God's Strong Prophet

- Biblical and historical setting
  - 606 BC - First captivity, of which Daniel was a part
  - 597 BC - Second captivity, of which Ezekiel was a part
  - 586 BC - Destruction of Jerusalem
  - The captivity lasted 70 years from 606 to 536 BC.
- The book of Ezekiel covers a 22 year period, starting 6 years before the destruction of Jerusalem to 16 years thereafter.

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- Contemporaries: while several of the prophets overlapped, it is unlikely that they ever saw one another.
  - Jeremiah was in Jerusalem
  - Daniel was in Babylon and lived among the rulers
  - Ezekiel lived in Tel Abib (Ez. 3:15) by the river Chebar among the common captives.

# Ezekiel: God's Strong Prophet

- Methods of prophecy
  - Vivid apocalyptic visions and images that are representative, not literal
  - Ezekiel himself often became a living prophecy by engaging some strange activity

# Ezekiel: God's Strong Prophet

- Revelation borrows many images from Ezekiel
  - The cherubim (Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4)
  - Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 28 and Revelation 20)
  - Eating the book (Ezekiel 3 and Revelation 10)
  - The new Jerusalem (Ezekiel 40-48 and Revelation 21)
  - The river of the water of life (Ezekiel 47 and Revelation 22)
  - Ezekiel and Revelation have similar themes

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- Message

- “They shall know that I am God” appears 62 times in the book
- To inform Judah that the captivity will not be short
- To prove God's judgment of Judah, showing them why they were in captivity.
- To cause the people to repent of their sins and give them hope of an eventual restoration

# Ezekiel's Conceptualization

- Ez. 1:1-25, 26-28 - “And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. 27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.”

# Ezekiel's Conceptualization

- God is not bound to any one place, such as Jerusalem or the temple, but is present everywhere
- God is greater than any man can describe; Ezekiel had to resort to saying "it was like ..."
- God is awesome in power and glory, so much so that great beings of power humble themselves in His presence

# Ezekiel's Commission

- Ez. 2:1 - 3:15 - He was sent to a rebellious people
- They have always sinned
  - Jer. 3:25 - “We lie down in our shame, And our reproach covers us. For we have sinned against the LORD our God, We and our fathers, From our youth even to this day, And have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.”

# Ezekiel's Commission

- It was the reason for their exile
  - 2Kings 17:17-20 - “And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone. 19 Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. 20 And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight.”

# Ezekiel's Commission

- The goal was to warn, but they would not listen
  - Ez. 2:4-5, 7 - “For they are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD. 5 As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse-for they are a rebellious house-yet they will know that a prophet has been among them... 7 You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious.”

# Ezekiel's Commission

- Isa. 6:9-13 - "And He said, Go, and tell this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive. 10 Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed. 11 Then I said, Lord, how long? And He answered: Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate, 12 The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. 13 But yet a tenth will be in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump."

# Ezekiel's Commission

- Rejection makes their sin firm
  - John 15:22 - “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.”
  - Acts 13:46 - “Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.”

# Ezekiel's Commission

- He was instructed to not be afraid of them
  - Isa. 51:12 - “I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid Of a man who will die, And of the son of a man who will be made like grass?”
  - Micah 3:8 - “But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, And of justice and might, To declare to Jacob his transgression And to Israel his sin.”

# Ezekiel's Construction

- He must listen carefully
  - Ez. 2:8 - “But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.”
  - Ez. 3:10 - “Moreover He said to me: Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears.”

# Ezekiel's Construction

- Being given a scroll to eat is a common Bible symbol of preparing a prophet
  - Ez. 2:9 - 3:3
  - Jer. 1:9, 15:16
  - Rev. 10:8-11
  - Job 32:18-19

# Ezekiel's Character

- Ezekiel's duty is to speak God's words to Judah
  - Ez. 3:4 - "Then He said to me: Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them."
- The difficulty will not be in getting them to understand what Ezekiel is saying, but in their willingness to listen
  - Ez. 3:5-7 - "For you are not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, but to the house of Israel, 6 not to many people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, had I sent you to them, they would have listened to you. 7 But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted."

# Ezekiel's Character

- Ezekiel must be more stubborn than the people
  - Ez. 3:8-9 - “Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. 9 Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.”
  - Isa. 48:4 - “Because I knew that you were obstinate, And your neck was an iron sinew, And your brow bronze”
  - Jer. 5:3 - “O LORD, are not Your eyes on the truth? You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return.”

# Ezekiel's Character

- Ezekiel is brought by the cherubim to Tel Abib
  - Ez. 3:13-15 - “I also heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, and a great thunderous noise. 14 So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me. 15 Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.”

# Ezekiel's Character

- Though incensed, Ezekiel sits silently among the exiles; seven days is the typical period of mourning
  - Gen. 50:10; Job 2:13
- God's word fills him, but he is not allowed to speak yet
  - Jer. 20:7-9

# Ezekiel's Character

- He is angry with his fellow countrymen, but at the same time is sorrowful about the message he must deliver
  - Rom. 9:1-3
  - Psalm 119:136 - “Rivers of water run down from my eyes, Because men do not keep Your law.”
  - Psalm 137:1 - “By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept When we remembered Zion.”

# Ezekiel's Custodianship

- His purpose is to bring warning
  - Ez. 3:17-19 - “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: 18 When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”
  - Isa. 62:6 - “I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent”

# Ezekiel's Charge

- He is to shut himself up in his home
  - Ez. 3:24 - “Then the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and spoke with me and said to me: Go, shut yourself inside your house.”
- The people will bind him with ropes
  - Ez. 3:25 - “And you, O son of man, surely they will put ropes on you and bind you with them, so that you cannot go out among them.”
- Ezekiel will not be allowed to protest
  - Ez. 3:26 - “I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and not be one to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious house.”

# Ezekiel's Charge

- But he will speak God's words
  - Ez. 3:27 - "But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house."
- The sign signifies the siege of Jerusalem
  - Ez. 4:8 - "And surely I will restrain you so that you cannot turn from one side to another till you have ended the days of your siege."

# Ezekiel's Charge

- In many of these things, Ezekiel foreshadowed the ministry of Jesus
- He had many vivid messages and unusual methods of delivering them:
  - Lying on his side in public and fasting, and then eating food prepared in an unclean manner - Ez. 4
  - Multi-headed beings of power with wings and wheels - Ez. 1
  - Shaving in public and scattering or burning his hair - Ez. 5
  - The vision of the valley of dry bones coming back to life - Ez. 37

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- Ez. 37:21-23 - "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.'"

# Ezekiel: God's Strong Prophet

- Ez. 37:24-27 - “David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. 26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

# Ezekiel: God's Strong Prophet

- Ez. 39:23-26 - "The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. 24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them. 25 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name- 26 after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid."

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- Ez. 39:27-29 - “When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, 28 then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. 29 And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord GOD.”