

# Ezekiel

**Authorship:** The book claims Ezekiel as its author (1:1-3). It is written from a priestly point of view, which fits Ezekiel. Nearly 90 times in the book, the Lord addresses Ezekiel as “son of man.”

**Date and Location:** Ezekiel apparently lived in his own private dwelling among the exiles in a place called Tel-abib, by the Kebar River, about 50 miles south of Babylon (1:1; 3:15, 24).

**Background:** Ezekiel, a priest, was among the 10,000 Jews taken captive to Babylon along with King Jehoiachin in 597 B.C. An earlier exile, which included Daniel, had occurred in 605, and another group would be exiled 586, when Jerusalem fell. In about 592 B.C., the “fifth year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity” (1:2) and six years before Jerusalem’s final doom, the Lord called Ezekiel to prophesy to the still rebellious exiles in Babylon (3:1-7). Ezekiel’s ministry in Babylon overlapped the latter part of Jeremiah’s ministry in Jerusalem; Ezekiel probably began his ministry soon after Jeremiah’s letter to the captives arrived in 593 B.C. Ezekiel’s ministry covered at least 22 years, from 592 B.C. to 570 B.C.. His recorded prophecies come from two distinct periods of his ministry:

(1) From 592 B.C. till about 585 B.C., shortly after Jerusalem’s fall, he prophesied concerning that event (1-24), God’s judgment on other nations (25-32), and God’s future plans for Israel (33-39);

(2) Then after several years of silence, he again prophesied concerning God’s plans for Israel (40-48). While Ezekiel, like Isaiah, had in view both the restoration of 538 B.C. and the final great return during the Millennium, he focused primarily on the Millennium.

**Message:** Priestly warning of judgment and promise of future restoration. Ezekiel reminds the exiles that their sins had produced the devastating judgment they are experiencing. Yet within that judgment message is a ray of hope: the promised vengeance on enemies, the restoration of the nation in the land, and the revival of righteousness sacrificial worship in a new temple.

**Purpose:** To explain to the captive Jews in Babylon:

(1) That their captivity and the destruction of their homeland had resulted from their rebellion against God and their lack of true holiness;

(2) That God, in His mercy, intended to restore them to true holiness; they would be a new and holy people, living in a new and holy city and worshiping in a new and holy Temple.

## Six Parables in Ezekiel

1. A fruitless vine (15:1-8);
2. The adopted girl who became a harlot (16:1-63);
3. The two eagles (17:1-21);
4. The tender twig (17:22-24);
5. The lioness and her cubs (19:1-9)
6. The two harlot sisters (23:1-49).

## Key Verse

“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26.ESV).

## Key Term: “Visions”

This book is built around three “visions of God” (1:1; 8:3; 40:2) that Ezekiel received. The first vision revealed God’s glory (1-3); the second God’s judgment (8-11); the third God’s people.

## Facts on the Millennial Temple – Ezekiel 40-48

### 1. Its Biblical Order:

- a. The Tabernacle of Moses (Exodus 40). Dates: 1444-1100 B.C
- b. The Temple of Solomon (1 Kings 6). Dates: 959-586 B.C.
- c. The Temple of Zerubbabel (Ezra 5). Note: This was later greatly enlarged by Herod (see John 2). Dates: 516-70 A.D.
- d. The temple of Christ’s body (John 2). Dates: 4 B.C. - 30 A.D.
- e. The spiritual temple, the church (Acts 2). Dates: Pentecost – Rapture.
- f. The tribulational temple (Revelation 11). Dates: Rapture-Armageddon.
- g. The millennial Temple (Ezekiel 40-48).

### 2. Its Purpose:

- a. To provide a place for the glory cloud of God (44:4);
- b. To provide a center for the King of Glory (43:7).

### 3. Its Prince:

- a. Not Christ (45:22; 46:16);
- b. Perhaps someone from the line of David.

### 4. Its Unique Features:

- a. No veil;
  - b. No table of holy bread;
  - c. No lampstands;
  - d. No Ark of the Covenant;
  - e. No gate to be closed (44:2).
5. Its Sacrifices (Isaiah 56:7; 60:7; Jeremiah 33:18; Zechariah 14:16-21)
- a. A reminder to all of the necessity of the new birth;
  - b. An object lesson of the costliness of salvation;
  - c. An example of the awfulness of sin;
  - d. An illustration of the holiness of God.

### 6. Its River (47:1-12):

- a. The source: Proceeding from beneath the Temple;
- b. The course: Flows to the Dead Sea and Mediterranean Sea;
- c. The force: Waters deep enough to swim in.

### 7. Its Glory Cloud: It came through the eastern gate into the Temple (43:1-5)

8. Its City: Circumference = Six miles and the Millennial Temple will be named: “Yahweh Shammah” meaning “The LORD is there” (48:35).

**Outline:**

**I. Call of Ezekiel the Prophet (1-3)**

**II. Prophecies of Judgment against Judah (4-24)**

A. Four Symbols of Coming Judgment (4-5)

1. Jerusalem siege on tablet (4:1-3)
2. Lying on sides for sins of Israel and Judah (4:4-8)
3. Stored food for siege (4:9-17)
4. Shaved hair for judgment (5:1-4)
5. Explanation of the four symbols (5:5-17)

B. Reasons for Judgment (6)

C. Description of Judgment (7)

D. Visions of the temple (8-11)

E. Messages of judgment (12-19)

F. Judgment predictions for Judah (20-24)

**III. Prophecies against the Nations (25-32)**

A. Against Ammon (25:1-7)

B. Against Moab (25:8-11)

C. Against Edom (25:12-14)

D. Against Philistia (25:15-17)

E. Against Tyre (26:1-28:19)

F. Against Sidon (28:20-26)

G. Against Egypt (29-32)

**IV. Prophecies of Israel's Restoration (33-48)**

A. Ezekiel's appointment as watchman (33)

B. Shepherds of Israel (34)

C. Judgment on Israel's enemies (35)

1. Pronouncement of judgment (35:1-4)
2. Judgment because of hostility (35:5-9)
3. Judgment because of pride (35:10-15)

D. Cleansing of Israel (36)

E. Vision of dry bones: Reviving of Israel (37:1-14)

F. Vision of two sticks: Reuniting of Israel (37:15-28)

G. Prophecies of Gog and Magog (38-39)

H. Vision of restored temple (40-42)

I. Return of the Lord's glory (43:1-12)

J. Worship ordinances for the temple (43:13-46:24)

K. Division of the land (47-48)

**Meaning of Name**

Ezekiel, the sixth century Israelite prophet exiled to Babylon, has given his name to this book as its composer.  
In Hebrew, his name means "God Strengthens."

**Sources:**

Easley, Kendall H. *Holman QuickSource: Guide to Understanding the Bible*, Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2002.

*Holman Study Bible NKJV*, Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2015.

*Journeying with God: A Survey of the Old Testament*, Purposeful Design Publications.

Wilmington, Harold L. *Wilmington's Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale, 1997.