

EZEKIEL

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR & DATE

The first chapter gives some insight into Ezekiel's life. **Ezekiel**, meaning "God strengthens" was the son of Buzi, most likely a member of the Zadokite priests (see Ezek. 44:15 and 1 Kgs 1:32-35). We also know that Ezekiel was an exile in Babylon (Chaldea) when his visions began (Ezek. 1:1, 3) and that he was married, instructed not to mourn her sudden death (Ezek. 24:16-24). Throughout the book, Ezekiel demonstrates his background as priest and prophet (similar to Jeremiah) through his concern about the temple, sacrifices, and God's manifested glory.

There is debate as to what the thirty years actually references in Ezekiel 1:1, as it may be a reference to Ezekiel's age at the time of the first vision or it may reference the 30th year following the discovery of the Book of the Law in Josiah's time. Ezekiel 1:2 may bring some clarity to the situation, for it references Ezekiel's call to prophetic ministry occurring in the 5th year of Ezekiel's exile. If Ezekiel was exiled during the second deportation in 597 B.C., then his prophetic calling occurred around 593 B.C., which also matches the thirtieth year of Josiah's reforms following the discovery of the law in the temple. However, it was also standard that men entered into service as priests at the age of 30. Regardless of which option you decide here, Ezekiel is a younger man called into a new role as prophet.

The book can be dated based on the date of Ezekiel's calling to prophetic ministry (593 B.C.) and the last specific dates he references (Ezek. 29:17, 40:1). With these dates we can assume Ezekiel prophesied for at least 20 years among the exiles living in Babylon. Therefore, the book was written during the period of **593-573 B.C.** or shortly after.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We're going to back up a bit and do a review so you have a better grasp on Ezekiel's situation.

- **622 B.C.** – Book of the Law discovered in the temple during King Josiah's reign. Convicted of heart regarding Judah's sin, Josiah began widespread reforms. Following Josiah's death, Judah returned to her ungodly ways (2 Kgs. 22:14-20, 23:31-32).
- **605 B.C.** – Daniel along with other young nobles and princes deported to Babylon. Judah's prophets continue to speak of peace, except for Jeremiah. The people continue in sin.
- **597 B.C.** – Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem during King Jehoiachin's reign (2 Kgs. 24:8-17). 10,000 exiled to Babylon, including Ezekiel.
- **593 B.C.** – Ezekiel has first vision and called into prophetic ministry in Babylon (Ezek. 1:1-3).
- **586 B.C.** – Jerusalem temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs. 25:8-21).

Sometimes called the “Charismatic of the Old Testament,” Ezekiel has powerful visions of the Lord and encounters with the Spirit. In particular, his first vision is significant. Why? First, keep in mind that the temple was the dwelling place of the Lord, and people believed in territorial power based on where the Ark of the Covenant was housed. Therefore, where the Lord was, there was blessing and victory, and this belief was part of the problem for Israel and Judah. They were living prosperous lives – an “obvious” sign of God’s favor, the Lord was housed in the temple, so all was well. This is part of the reason why prophecies of coming judgment were ignored. Secondly, nowhere is Ezekiel described as a high priest – the one who would be allowed into the Holy of Holies and experience God’s presence face to face. So, Ezekiel having an individual encounter with the Lord in this way was highly unusual, and in many ways emphasizes a key message of the book: Every individual is responsible for his/her own sin. But also, individuals can have powerful encounters with the Lord outside the “normal” setting. Hungry hearts for the Lord are met with His presence.

Ezekiel’s first vision is of the Lord in His glory outside of the temple and “on the move.” The imparts two thoughts: 1) The Lord has departed Jerusalem and is therefore a sign of judgment, and 2) The Lord can dwell outside His temple and meet with His people, a great relief for the exiles in Babylon. Think how powerful this must have been for Ezekiel, an exile in a foreign and unclean land! The Lord was not confined to His Holy Place. The Lord, powerful and glorious over the whole earth, was meeting Ezekiel where he was and speaking to him about the affairs of Judah, both immediate and future!

ADDITIONAL HELPS

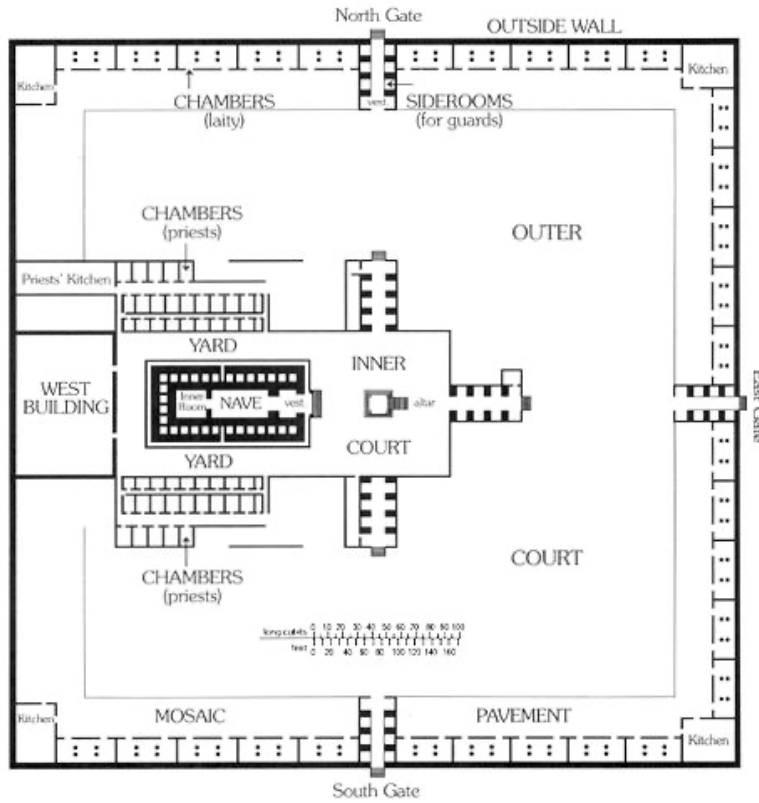


Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edom>

The Jewish Calendar			
Babylonian names (B) for the months are still used today for the Jewish calendar. Canaanite names (C) were used prior to the Babylonian captivity in 586 b.c. Four are mentioned in the Old Testament. Adar-Sheni is an intercalary month used every two to three years or seven times in 19 years.			
1st month	2nd month	3rd month	4th month
Nisan (B) Abib (C) March-April	Iyyar (B) Ziv (C) April-May	Sivan (B) May-June	Tammuz (B) June-July
7th month	8th month	9th month	10th month
5th month	6th month	7th month	8th month
Ab (B) July-August	Elul (B) August-September	Tishri (B) Ethaniam (C) September-October	Marcheshvan (B) Bul (C) October-November
11th month	12th month	1st month	2nd month
9th month	10th month	11th month	12th month
Chisleb (B) November-December	Tebeth (B) December-January	Shebat (B) January-February	Adar (B) February-March
3rd month	4th month	5th month	6th month
<i>Sacred calendar appears in black • Civil calendar appears in gray</i>			

Source: The International Inductive Study Bible

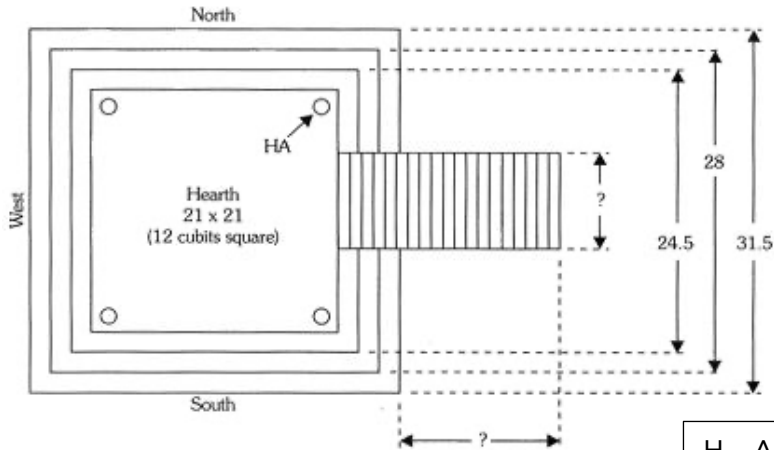
EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE, COURTS, WALLS, AND GATES



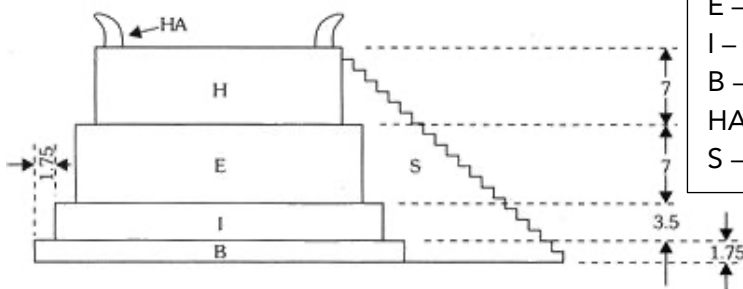
Source: "The Book of Ezekiel," *Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, William Hugh Brownlee

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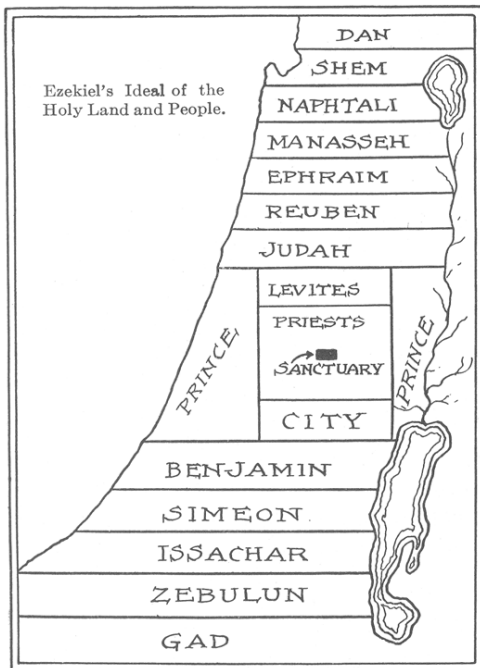
Ezekiel's Vision of the Temple (chapters 40-45)



- H – Altar hearth (43:15-16)
- E – Enclosure, supporting higher ledge (43:14, 17)
- I – Interior, supporting lower ledge (43:14)
- B – Base (43:13)
- HA – Horns of the altar (43:15,20)
- S – Steps (43:17b; see also 40:47b)

Dimensions are in feet. 1.75 feet = 1 long cubit.

Source: Adapted from Frank E. Gabelin, ed., *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 6



Tribal Allotments According to Ezekiel (Ezek. 45:1-8; 47:13-48:29)

Source: Logos Bible Software, *Images from A Standard Bible Dictionary*, Richard Meyers

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LITERARY STRUCTURE

- Part 1: Ezekiel's Background and Calling (1:1-3:27)
- Part 2: Prophecies About Judah and Jerusalem (4:1-24:27)
- A. 4 Signs of Coming Judgment (4:1-5:17)
 - * Clay Tablet
 - * Lying on Side
 - * Defiled Bread
 - * Razor and Hair
 - B. 2 Messages of Coming Judgment (6:1-7:27)
 - * Destruction for Idolatry
 - * Babylonian Conquest Described
 - C. Vision of Coming Judgment (8:1-11:25)
 - * Glory of God
 - * Abominations in Temple & Slayings in Jerusalem
 - * Departure of Glory to Threshold, Wheels & Cherubim
 - * 25 Wicked Rulers & Promise of Restoration
 - D. Signs, Parables, & Messages of Judgment (12:1-24:27)
 - * Sign of Captivity and Trembling
 - * Message Against False Prophets & Elders
 - * Parables of Vine, Israel's Marriage, 2 Eagles
 - * Message of Judgment on Jerusalem
- Part 3: Prophecies About the Nations (25:1-32:32)
- Part 4: Israel's Restoration of Land & Worship (33:1-48:35)
- A. Return to the Land (33:1-39:29)
 - B. New Temple, Worship, and Land

OBSERVATION WORDS

PUT YOURSELF IN THE STORY

Keep in mind that Ezekiel is living in Babylon as an exile with other Jewish exiles. Put yourself in the story. As you read, pretend you're also an exile.

- What do the Lord's words and Ezekiel's actions teach about your current and future situation?
- How would you be feeling?
- If you had opportunity to communicate with family and friends still in Jerusalem, what would you say?

CHAPTERS 4-24 – PROPHECIES ABOUT JUDAH AND JERUSALEM

- What is the purpose of Ezekiel living out these examples amidst the exiles?

- What are the sins of Jerusalem/Judah? Why should this matter to the exiles?

- What is significant about Ezekiel's mouth being shut and then opened? Why is this important?

- What are your thoughts about Ezekiel not being able to mourn his wife's death? Was this demonstration necessary in your opinion? Why or why not?

- What do you learn about God through these chapters? What character traits do you see displayed of God? What are His thoughts about sin, intercession, prophecy, etc.?

- How is the tone of Ezekiel different from Isaiah and Jeremiah?

CHAPTERS 25-32 – PROPHECIES ABOUT THE NATIONS

- What are the sins of the nations featured?
- What do you learn about God and His dealings with nations – especially those He uses for judgment?
- In what ways do you in your heart, mind, and/or mouth act like the nations toward God's people? What do these chapters teach you about such attitudes and statements?
- What do you notice about nations which are promised restorations?

CHAPTERS 33-48 – ISRAEL'S RESTORATION OF LAND & WORSHIP

- What do you learn about Israel's restoration?
- Put yourself in the place of the exiles. What do these chapters speak to their hearts? What does it speak to your heart?

- How does Ezekiel's description of the new temple and city compare with John's description in Revelation 21-22?

- What is the name of the new city (Ezek. 48:35) and why is this important?

OVERALL SUMMARY

- What is the biggest lesson you learned from this book? How will you apply that lesson in your own life?

- What major differences do you notice between Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel in their prophecies and tone?

- When you look at our world today, what similarities and differences do you see between our world and Judah? What is your response to this?

- Review ch. 18 again. In your own words, describe the heart of God. How does this line up with the rest of Ezekiel and other prophecies regarding judgment?

- What Messianic prophecies did you see in Ezekiel? What other ways did you see Jesus represented in the book? What do you learn about Jesus?

- How did you see the Holy Spirit in this book? What did you learn about Him?

KEY WORD:

KEY VERSE:

KEY CHAPTER: