

Handout 1: Ezekiel Lesson 1

Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry covered a span of years from about 593-585/571 BC (see Ez 29:17 for the later date).

In this study, the Book of Ezekiel has been divided into four major sections that reflect different aspects of Ezekiel’s ministry:

Chapters 1-3 contain Ezekiel’s heavenly vision and divine call to ministry.

Chapters 4-24 contain judgment oracles against Israel/Judah.

Chapters 25-32 contain judgment oracles against seven Gentile nations.

Chapters 33-48 contain oracles of salvation promised to Israel.

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Biblical Period	# 8 THE EXILE			
Covenant	Sinai Covenant			
Focus	Ezekiel’s Call to a Prophetic Ministry	Judgment of the Covenant People	Judgment of the Nations	Oracles of Salvation and Promised Restoration
Scripture	1:1-----4:1-----25:1-----33:1-----48:35			
Division Of Text	Ezekiel’s first visions and divine call to service	Ezekiel’s mission -Signs -Visions -Parables	Judgment on 7 Gentile Nations	-Salvation for Israel (33:1-39:29) -The New Israel (40:1-48:35)
Topic	Before the siege of Jerusalem		During the siege of Jerusalem	After the destruction and fall of Jerusalem
Location	Babylon			
Time	593 BC – 587/6 BC		c. 587/6 BC	c. 585 BC – 571 BC

TIME LINE SUMMARY B.C. WORLD EMPIRES:

--ASSYRIA---BABYLON-----PERSIA-----

Divided Kingdom---Southern Kingdom

722	605	597	587	539	517
Assyria conquers Israel & exile of citizens	Babylon conquers Assyria 1 st Judahites deported to Babylon	2 nd deportation	Babylon destroys Jerusalem & Temple 3 rd deportation (the 70-year exile)	Persia conquers Babylon - Edict of Cyrus allows exiles’ return to Judah	Jerusalem Temple rebuilt

over →

The citizens of Judah believed Yahweh would never permit their defeat and deprived of the Promised Land or the holy Temple (Jer 26:7-11). They based their confidence on four pillars of belief concerning their relationship with Yahweh:

1. In the ratification of the Sinai Covenant, Yahweh chose Israel, out of all the other nations of the earth to become His personal possession and His holy covenant people.
2. God's covenant with Abraham promised his descendants the land of Canaan which they now occupied as the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
3. Yahweh's covenant with David promised a Davidic descendant an eternal kingdom.
4. Yahweh's dwelling place among His people was His holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel's mission was to urge the Judahites:

1. To accept God's judgment for their covenant failures and the penance of the seventy years of exile that was ahead of them, their children, and their children's children.
2. To encourage them, despite their suffering, to reject the false gods of the Babylonians in remaining loyal to Yahweh, the One and only God.
3. To assure them that Yahweh, their God, will never abandon them.

The reason for the exile, however, is the theme of the Book of Ezekiel. Yahweh tells the people through His prophet that it is so *You/they will know that I am Yahweh*. It is a statement repeated with slight variations seventy times.

Chapter 1 divides into five parts:

1. The introduction and historical background (verses 1-3)
2. The vision of Yahweh's chariot-throne and the four living creatures (verses 4-14)
3. The wheels of the chariot-throne (verses 15-21)
4. The platform of the chariot-throne (verses 22-25)
5. The glory of God (verses 26-28)

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Handout 2: Ezekiel Lesson 1

The Book of Ezekiel contains fifteen dates. The book begins with the initial date of his divine calling. The first series of seven dates in the Book of Ezekiel relate to major events in Ezekiel’s preaching ministry. The dates serve to show that the message he delivered was perfectly in line with God’s divine plan as it moved through judgment, disaster, and toward the promise of restoration. The second series of eight dates are associated with judgment oracles against foreign nations in Chapters 25-32. Ezekiel calculates all the dates from the year King Jehoiachin became king, which was the same year as his exile in 598 BC

Scripture	Date in Scripture (all dates beginning with Ez 1:2 are dated from King Jehoiachin’s exile)	Equivalent Dates BC (it is assumed that all dates are from the liturgical calendar)
Seven Dates Associated With Events in Ezekiel’s Ministry to the Exiles		
Ez 1:1	30 th year, 4 th month, 5 th day	July 593
Ez 1:2	5 th year, 4 th month?, 5 th day	July 593
Ez 3:16	5 th year, 4 th month? 7 th day (Sabbath?)	July 593
Ez 8:1	6 th year, 6 th month, 5 th day	August/September 592
Ez 20:1	7 th year, 5 th month, 10 th day	July/August 591
Ez 24:1	9 th year, 10 th month, 10 th day	December 589/January 588
Ez 26:1	11 th year, ? month, 1 st day*	587-586
Eight Dates Associated With Oracles Against Foreign Nations		
Ez 29:1	10 th year, 10 th month, 12 th day	December 588/January 587
Ez 29:17	27 th year, 1 st month, 1 st day	March/April 571
Ez 30:20	11 th year, 1 st month, 7 th day	March/April 587
Ez 31:1	11 th year, 3 rd month, 1 st day	May/June 587
Ez 32:1	12 th year, 12 th month, 1 st day	February/March 586
Ez 32:17	12 th year, 12 th month, 15 th day	February/March 586
Ez 33:21	12 th year, 10 th month, 5 th day	December 586/January 585
Ez 40:1	25 th year, 1 st month, 10 th day+	March/April 573
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*Septuagint Greek text reads “twelfth year and first month,” i.e. March/April 586 BC

Ezekiel’s Twelve Object Lessons/Symbolic Acts	
Object Lesson/Symbolic Act	Scripture
1. Shut up in his house and bound with cords, he is forbidden to speak unless God orders him to speak.	Ez 3:22-26
2. He inscribes a plan of the city on a clay tablet and models a siege, using an iron skillet.	Ez 4:1-3
3. He lays on his left side for 390 days and on his right side for 40 days	Ez 4:4-8

4. He eats a meager diet and restricts his intake of water reflecting the diet of the people of a besieged city.	Ez 4:9-11
5. He bakes bread and is told to use human excrement for fuel, but God allows cow dung.	Ex 4:12-14
6. He shaves his beard and head, divides the hair into three equal parts and then cuts, burns, and scatters the hair.	Ex 5:1-3
7. He digs through the wall of his house and carries clothes as an exile but not looking at the ground.	Ez 12:1-16
8. He is commanded to eat his bread trembling and drink his water shaking.	Ex 12:17-18
9. He is to recite a proverb to the exiles.	Ex 17:1-8
10. He is to raise a lamentation over the prince of Israel.	Ez 19:1-14
11. He is to turn in the direction of Jerusalem and groan.	Ex 21:6, 11-12
12. He is ordered not to mourn the death of his wife.	Ez 24:15-18
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Ezekiel's Parables		
Parable	Scripture reference	Message
1. The Wood of the Vine	Ez 15:1-8	Symbolized the way in which Judah became useless to God and now served no other purpose than to be burned up in divine judgment.
2. The Foundling	Ez Chapter 16	Illustrated the covenant people's betrayal of God's love and compassion.
3. The Eagles and the Cedar Tree	Ez Chapter 17	Presented the foolishness of King Zedekiah rebellion against the Babylonians that would bring King Nebuchadnezzar's army to destroy Jerusalem.
4. The Fiery Furnace	Ez 22:17-22	Explained God's plan to purify His people through the fires of the siege of Jerusalem.
5. The Two Sister Harlots	Ez Chapter 23	Symbolized the spiritual adultery of covenant people of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
6. The Cooking Pot	Ez 24:1-14	Illustrated the way God was going to apply the "heat" to

		Jerusalem to cleanse it of its impurities.
7. The Shipwreck	Ez Chapter 27	Symbolized the divine judgment on the city of Tyre.
8. The Fallen Tree	Ez Chapter 31	Egypt's Pharaoh is like a fallen tree.
9. The Failed Shepherds	Ez Chapter 34	Signified the failure of Judah's civil and religious leadership and God's plan to deal with them.
10. The Dry Bones	Ez Chapter 37	Symbolized the promised spiritual renewal of the covenant people.
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Parallels Between the Visions of the Prophet Ezekiel and the Visions of St. John in the Book of Revelation		
Vision	Book of Ezekiel	Book of Revelation
1. The throne vision	Chapter 1	Chapter 4
2. Opening the scroll	Chapters 2-3	Chapter 5
3. The four plagues	Chapter 5	Chapter 6:1-8
4. Those slain under the altar	Chapter 6	Chapter 6:9-11
5. The wrath of God	Chapter 7	Chapter 6:12-17
6. The seal on the Saint's foreheads	Chapter 9	Chapter 7
7. The coals from the altar	Chapter 10	Chapter 8
8. The 1/3 destruction	Chapter 5:1-4 & 12	Chapter 8:6-12
9. No more delay	Chapter 12	Chapter 10:1-7
10. The eating of the book	Chapter 2	Chapter 10:8-11
11. Prophecy against the nations	Chapters 25-32	Chapter 10:11
12. Measuring the Temple	Chapters 40-43	Chapter 11:1-2
13. Comparing Jerusalem to Sodom	Chapter 16	Chapter 11:8
14. The cup of wrath	Chapter 23	Chapter 14
15. The vine of the land	Chapter 15	Chapter 14:18-20
16. The great harlot	Chapters 16, 23	Chapters 17-18
17. The lament sung over the city	Chapter 27	Chapter 18
18. The scavenger's feast	Chapter 39	Chapter 19
19. The first resurrection	Chapter 37	Chapter 20:4-6
20. The Battle of Gog and Magog	Chapter 38-39	Chapter 20:7-9
21. The New Jerusalem	Chapters 40-48	Chapter 21
22. The River of Life	Chapter 47	Chapter 22
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In addition to these visions, Ezekiel has two Temple visions. The first is on September 18, 592 (Ez 8:1) and the second is on April 28, 573 (Ez 40:1).