



EZEKIEL
THE GOD OF GLORY

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The Good Book Guide to Daniel
The Good Book Company

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why study Ezekiel?

Do not be afraid of what they say or be terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people. You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious.

But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious people; open your mouth and eat what I give you.

Ezekiel 2 v 6–8

Few books of the Bible seem scarier than Ezekiel—48 chapters of weird and wonderful visions, bizarre street performances and blood-curdling judgments. Perhaps you’ve wondered what it’s all about. But will you ever have the time to study such a large book? And does this stuff really have anything to say to you?

This Bible-study course will take you through the whole of Ezekiel in just six sessions! This whistle-stop tour gives a clear overview of all the main themes of Ezekiel’s prophecy—God’s glory, judgment, and hope—focusing on key passages that explain the surrounding chapters.

But more than that, you’ll discover how God’s word to His exiled people is truly fulfilled in the gospel of Jesus and the experience of Christians.

“They will know that I am the LORD” is the repeated message of Ezekiel. In a world of false hopes that will ultimately fail, this is a message for everyone.¹

¹ Chester, T. (2005). [*Ezekiel: The God of Glory*](#) (p. 5). The Good Book Company.

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THE GOD OF GLORY

Ezekiel 1–3

talkabout

1. What discourages you about the state of the church today? What gives you cause for hope?

investigate

At the beginning of the book of Ezekiel, the last remaining part of the nation of Israel (the southern kingdom of Judah) has been smashed by the Babylonians, the top nation of the day. The ruling class and all the promising young men have been taken off into exile in Babylon. A puppet regime has been set up in Jerusalem, under Babylonian control. Ezekiel is among those carried off into exile.

2. How do you think the exiles would have felt in Babylon?
3. What doubts about God would the exiles have had?

Read Ezekiel 1 v 1–28

4. Why is it significant that Ezekiel sees this vision of God in Babylon?
5. What details of Ezekiel's vision show the power and glory of God?
6. Why is it significant that God is on a throne with wheels?
7. How does Ezekiel respond to this vision?

In verse 28, Ezekiel says that what he saw was “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD”. He did not even see the real thing—only something that looked like God's glory! Ezekiel refers back to this vision on a number of occasions (see 3 v 12–15, 23, 10 v 15–22, 43 v 3). The book of Ezekiel has a phrase that is repeated more than 60 times: “Then they will know that I am the LORD”. God is at the center of Ezekiel's message and at the center of Ezekiel's view of the world.

apply

8. In what ways might our prayers, our evangelism, and our meetings be too human-centered? Think of one concrete change for each of these that would make them more God-centered.

- Why do you think we keep moving away from “God-centeredness”?
- What effect does human-centered “Christianity” have on people?

getting personal

What impression of God would someone pick up from watching the way in which you live out your Christian faith? Would that impression be anything like Ezekiel’s vision?

explore more

Look at verses 26–28. At the heart of Ezekiel’s vision is “a figure like that of a man”.

*What is the significance of this? For a clue, look at the parallels with **Revelation 1 v 12–18**.*

*How do we see the glory of God? See **John 1 v 14**.*

investigate

Read Ezekiel 2 v 1–3 v 15

9. How will the people respond to Ezekiel’s message?

10. According to 3 v 6–7, what is the reason why people reject God’s word?

explore more

Read Psalm 14 v 1

Why does the fool say there is no God?

Read Romans 1 v 18–25

Why do people not know God?

How do these references explain why Ezekiel’s message will be rejected?

11. How will Ezekiel cope with the rejection and opposition of people to his message?

apply

12. People do not reject God's word because it is too hard to understand, but because they do not want to obey it. What does this mean for our evangelism?
13. When people accept the message about Jesus, how much is their positive response due to our abilities to reason with and persuade them? See 1 Corinthians 2 v 1–5.
 - What part do Christians play in evangelism? See 2 Corinthians 4 v 1–6.
14. What encouragements are there in these chapters when we are discouraged by the state of church and society today?

getting personal

What do you truly think about evangelism? That it's pointless in today's cynical, pleasure-seeking society, with its philosophy of "believe whatever's right for you"? That it's a great thing for gifted Christians to do, but as you're not one of them you needn't get involved? How should the message of Ezekiel's vision and calling change you?

pray

Thank God ...

- that He is still the same God that Ezekiel saw in his vision.
- that we too have seen the glory of God—His grace and truth, in Jesus.
- that despite the rebellion of humanity and the weakness of His people, God has, and always will, preserve His people and His gospel.

Ask God ...

- to give you a vision of His glory in Jesus Christ ...
 - ... that will keep you going when people reject His word.
 - ... that will enable you to live a God-centered life, becoming a demonstration of the Spirit's power to those around you.
- to give this vision of Jesus to His suffering and persecuted people throughout the world.

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2

THE GOD OF JUDGMENT

Ezekiel 4–24

The Story So Far

Ezekiel's vision to the Jews in exile reminds and encourages them that God is at the center of history, and should be at the center of their, and our, lives.

talkabout

1. What kind of things do people hope for the future?

investigate

Read Ezekiel 4 v 1–3 and 5 v 1–13

2. Why did Ezekiel get a haircut? What did it mean?
3. What was Jerusalem's relationship to the nations supposed to be (5 v 5)? See Deuteronomy 4 v 5–8.
4. What was Jerusalem's relationship to the nations in reality?

apply

5. God set Jerusalem in the center of the nations (5 v 5) to be a light to them. Discuss where God has placed your group and the individuals within it. What opportunities do you have to be a light to those around you?
 - How should Christians go about being a light to people like this (see, for example, Titus 2 v 1–10)?
 - Think of examples of what it means to go beyond the standards of those around us.
 - What should be the effect of this way of life (see Titus 2 v 5, 8 and 10)?

getting personal

What reaction to the gospel could your way of life provoke in those around you? Understanding of God's wisdom and righteousness, or rejection and slander of the gospel? Think about all the areas of your life where you meet non-Christians. Are you failing even to live up to the standards of those around you?

investigate

In chapter 10 Ezekiel sees the glory of God leave the temple (see especially verses 18–19). God is no longer with His people. He is no longer for them. But in 5 v 8 Ezekiel describes something even worse—God is against His people.

Read Ezekiel 12 v 21–13 v 12

6. What hopes did the people have? How were these hopes strengthened (see 13 v 10)?
7. What was Ezekiel's response to their hopes?

explore more

Read Ezekiel 18 v 1–4, 19–32

What is the people's complaint? What is God's response?

If God judges a person according to their actions, what hope is there for any of us?

What evidence for verse 32 can be found in God's word?

Read Ezekiel 24 v 15–27

8. Who was the delight of Ezekiel's eyes, and what was the delight of the people of Israel? Were these good things to delight in?
9. What would God do about the things His people loved?
 - What is shocking about God's response (see v 21) and what was the reason for it?
10. What effect would God's action have on the people (see v 23)? And what would be the final outcome (v 24)?

apply

11. Ezekiel destroys the false hopes of the people. What are the popular false hopes that Christians need to knock down today? Try to come up with one for each area:

- religion
 - consumerism
 - humanism
 - in our churches
-
- How can we identify today's false prophets (see 2 Timothy 4 v 1–5)?
 - How should Christians go about destroying these false hopes?

getting personal

Think of the people around you. On what false hopes are they relying? How should you be praying for them? What can you do to expose the uselessness of these hopes?

12. How has this study of Ezekiel's message changed your view of God?

- In what way have we learned that "God will be God"?
- What does this mean for us as Christians, the present-day people of God (see 2 Corinthians 11 v 2–4)?
- Where can hope be found?

getting personal

The delight and pride of the people of Israel was the LORD's sanctuary—not the LORD!

Is there something in your Christian faith that has become a substitute for delight and pride in the Lord? Your knowledge, your theology, your ministry, your relationships, your denomination, your experiences?

What is the message of this study to you?

pray

From the passage write down three things to thank and praise God for, and three things to ask for.

Thank God ...

-

-

-

Ask God ...

-

-

-

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3

THE GOD OF THE NATIONS

Ezekiel 25–32

The Story So Far

Ezekiel's vision to the Jews in exile reminds and encourages them that God is at the center of history, and should be at the center of their, and our, lives.

God is against humanity because of our rebellion, and our only hope is in God Himself.

talkabout

1. What contacts do you have with those of other faiths and cultures? How do you feel about telling them the Christian message?

investigate

Read Ezekiel 25

2. What were the sins of the nations around Israel?

Read Ezekiel 28 v 11–19, 24

3. What were the sins of Tyre?

explore more

Compare what Ezekiel says about Tyre with **Revelation 18**.

What is John's message to the Christians under Roman rule (Rome is depicted as Babylon)?

What is the message to us (v 4)?

Read Ezekiel 29 v 1–9

4. Why is Egypt singled out for special treatment (see also verse 16)?

apply

5. **Look at 29 v 16.** To what or whom might we turn for help as a substitute for trust in God ...

- for our own personal security (see Matthew 6 v 19–21)?
- for a solution to the problems of our society or threats to our way of life (see Isaiah 31 v 1)?
- for a solution to the weakness and insignificance of the church (see 1 Corinthians 1 v 20–25)?
- What was the result for Israel of trusting in Egypt? For us, what is the result of trusting in substitutes for God?

getting personal

Think about the substitutes for God's help that you have discussed. Are there any that you fear giving up, or can't imagine doing without in your life or ministry? If you are relying on these more than on God, what is the message of Ezekiel 29 v 1–7 for you?

investigate

Israel had been defeated by the Babylonians. Some of the nations were saying: *Great! This is our opportunity!* (25 v 6). But the nations should not delight in Israel's downfall. Others were saying: *Israel's God is no better than our gods* (25 v 8). But the nations should not misunderstand Israel's downfall.

6. **Look at 5 v 8.** What was Ezekiel's message to Israel?
7. **Look at 26 v 3.** What was Ezekiel's message to the nations?
8. **Look at 6 v 10, 13–14.** What was Ezekiel's message to Israel?
9. **Look at 25 v 7, 11, 17.** What was Ezekiel's message to the nations?
10. What should people from other nations think about Israel's defeat?
11. What should people from other nations think about Israel's God?

We might be tempted to think that Ezekiel's message to Israel has little to do with us, concluding that it is just a particular word to a particular people at a particular time. But

chapters 25–32 show that God’s judgment against Israel is a picture of His judgment against all humanity.

- Israel’s God is the God of all humanity—God says to the nations what He said to Israel: “You will know that I am the LORD”.
- Israel’s fate is the fate of all humanity—God says to the nations what He said to Israel: “I am against you”.

apply

12. Ezekiel shows that God is the God of all nations. What happens to people when they believe that the God of the Bible is only the God of Israel, or of Christians?

- How might these chapters help us respond to someone who believes that all religions lead to God?
- How should the truth that God is the God of all nations affect ... our prayers, our evangelism, our meetings, our friendships, and our involvement in international mission?

getting personal

How could you be more involved in bringing God’s word to the nations?

How do you score in your knowledge of Christian brothers and sisters in other countries, your prayer for gospel work abroad, and your support of gospel workers far from home?

Are there any internationals in your community to whom you could reach out?

pray

Thank God ...

- for opening your eyes to know that He is the LORD.
- that He has spoken His word—not only of judgment, but also of salvation—to all the nations, including you.
- that He is never a “splintered staff”, but His faithfulness endures.

Ask God ...

- to help you live a life that shows He is the LORD.
- to help Christians, churches and missionaries that you know in other countries, as they bring God’s word to the nations.
- to show you how to be involved in bringing His word to the nations.

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4

THE GOD OF HOPE

Ezekiel 33–36

The Story So Far

Ezekiel's vision to the Jews in exile reminds and encourages them that God is at the center of history, and should be at the center of their, and our, lives.

God is against humanity because of our rebellion, and our only hope is in God Himself. Israel had rejected God, and so had been judged.

God is the God of all people and He is against us because of our rebellion. Israel's fate was, Ezekiel prophesied, to be the fate of all the other nations.

talkabout

1. Have you ever wished you could have a fresh start at something? When, and why?

investigate

Read Ezekiel 33 v 21–29

Chapters 4–24 have destroyed the false hope of Israel. Their capital city, Jerusalem, will be destroyed. Now the news comes: Jerusalem has indeed fallen. Now Ezekiel can speak of true hope—hope in God and His promises. Except that the people still cling to false hope.

2. Why are they still hopeful? But why are these false hopes?

explore more

Read Ezekiel 33 v 30–33

In verse 30, it looks as if the people have a right attitude to God's word.

But what is the reality? Why do the people like listening to Ezekiel?

What makes a talk or Bible study worth listening to? How important is it that a talk is entertaining?

Read Ezekiel 34 v 1–10

3. What is God's complaint against the leaders of Israel?

Read Ezekiel 34 v 11–29

4. What will be God's response?
5. Through whom will God shepherd His people?

explore more

Compare 34 v 11 and v 23. Will God Himself rescue His people or will God's King do it?

How is this solved by the identity of the good shepherd in John 10 v 11–16 and 27–28?

What further information do these verses give us about how God will shepherd His people?

apply

6. What does it mean to live under the care of Jesus, as our Shepherd-King? (See Psalm 23.)
 - **See 1 Peter 5 v 1–4.** How does Peter use the example of Jesus our Shepherd to teach leaders in the church?
 - How should we respond to Jesus' powerful and sacrificial care of us?

investigate

Read Ezekiel 34 v 25–31

7. How does Ezekiel describe the reign of God's coming King?

Way back, God had promised Abraham (the father of Israel) a new people in a new land. Ezekiel has said that God Himself will gather His people and care for them. Now He promises to restore the land for them. In 36 v 35 Ezekiel describes it as a new Eden (the garden where Adam and Eve first lived).

The nation of Edom (Israel's neighbour) thought they could take advantage of Israel's defeat and seize the land (35 v 12). So Ezekiel compares the mountains of Edom (Mount Seir) and the mountains of Israel. God is against Mount Seir (35 v 2–4), but the mountains of Israel will be repopulated by God's people (36 v 8–12).

explore more

Read Hebrews 11 v 8–16, 39–40

What does this tell us about God's promise of a land for Abraham's descendants? How was it understood by the faithful descendants of Abraham?

Read Romans 8 v 19–21, Revelation 21 v 1

How will God's promise to restore the land ultimately be fulfilled?

Read Matthew 5 v 5 to see who will benefit from that fulfilment.

Read Ezekiel 36 v 16–23

8. Why will God save His people?
9. How was God's name honoured by Israel's judgment?
10. How will God's name be honoured by Israel's salvation?
11. Similarly, how does God glorify His name today?

Read Ezekiel 36 v 24–32

12. God is going to give His people a fresh start, but much more than a fresh start. How will He do this?

apply

13. Now that this promise has been fulfilled in the gospel of Jesus, what changes should we expect to see in the life of someone who claims to have become a Christian? Eg: What new attitude to sin (see 1 John 1 v 8–9); what new attitude to God's word (see John 10 v 27)?

-

What should our attitude be to those who claim to be Christians but show no evidence of these changes?

getting personal

If you are a Christian, how has Ezekiel 36 v 26–27 been fulfilled in your life?

Do you only focus on the unfinished work and get down-hearted? Or can you thank God for how He has already changed you?

pray

Thank God ...

- that Jesus is God's promised Shepherd-King, utterly able to protect us from all enemies and provide everything we need.
- for the "better heavenly land" that we will one day enter through Jesus.
- that the promise of a new, clean heart and spirit has finally been fulfilled in the gospel of Jesus, and is available to you.

Ask God ...

- to help you put total trust and confidence in Jesus.
- to use you to help the helpless, harassed crowds of people in this world, who don't know Jesus as their Shepherd-King.
- to glorify His name in the message of judgment and salvation that comes through Christians preaching the gospel.

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5

THE GOD OF LIFE

Ezekiel 37–39

The Story So Far

God is against humanity because of our rebellion, and our only hope is in God Himself. Israel had rejected God, and so had been judged.

God is the God of all people and He is against us because of our rebellion. Israel's fate was, Ezekiel prophesied, to be the fate of all the other nations.

Israel needed more than a fresh start (so do we). They needed God to rescue them, cleanse them and give them new hearts with His Spirit within them.

talkabout

1. Have you ever been in a situation that you thought was hopeless?

investigate

Read Ezekiel 37 v 1–14

2. What do the dry bones represent?

In verse 11 the people say: “Our hope is gone”—and the message of Ezekiel 4–24 was that the hopes of the people were false. Where do you find hope when hope is gone? The answer is ... in God.

3. How does God bring new life to His people?

apply

4. What are the lessons that we can learn, for ourselves and our churches, from the story of the dry bones?
 - God gives His people new life through His word and His Spirit working together. What should this say to Christians or churches who emphasize only one of these two things? Is it a question of getting the right balance between two extremes? See Ephesians 6 v 17.

- What is your reaction to this story? Can you imagine the sight and sound of it? How should we respond to God, right now and in our daily lives?

getting personal

Do you have a story of new life from God? What difference does a change like this make to the way you think about ...

- your pre-Christian life?
- non-Christians around you?
- gospel ministry?
- your prayers?

investigate

King Rehoboam, the son of Israel's most prosperous king, Solomon, ruled over the people of Israel harshly. As a result they rebelled against him. In 930 BC the kingdom of Israel split into two.

The God of glory formed a new nation from the northern tribes under the leadership of Jeroboam. This nation took the name Israel, but it was also called Ephraim. Two hundred years later in 722 BC, it was defeated by the Assyrians and most of the people were taken away into exile.

The southern kingdom, known as Judah, continued until 587 BC. Finally, they were defeated by the Babylonians and some of them—including Ezekiel—were exiled in Babylon.

Read Ezekiel 37 v 15–28

5. What does Ezekiel's trick with the stick mean?
6. How does Ezekiel describe the reign of God's coming King?

explore more

The promise: "They will be my people, and I will be their God" (37 v 23 and 27) occurs throughout the Bible.

Read Exodus 6 v 7

How is this promise fulfilled in the church (see 2 Corinthians 6 v 16)?

How will it be fulfilled in the new creation (see Revelation 21 v 3)?

apply

7. Ezekiel promised a united Israel, but in the New Testament, the apostle Paul says God had an even bigger plan in mind. **See Ephesians 3 v 4–6, 10, 4 v 1–3.** What is that plan and what does it mean for us?

investigate

Read Ezekiel 38 v 1–23

8. What is the threat facing God's people?
9. What hope for God's people is mentioned in these verses? See also 39 v 21–29.
10. What is God's purpose in allowing the threat and then destroying it?

Gog and Magog were not around at the time when Ezekiel was writing. These, and other names mentioned in these verses, come from Israel's ancient history (see Genesis 10 v 1–3). Ezekiel uses them symbolically. They represent all those throughout history who have opposed God and His people. The apostle John also uses the symbolism of Gog and Magog to suggest that this rebellion against God will come to a climax at the end of history (see Revelation 20 v 7–10). But God will defend His people. Ezekiel 39 describes God's total victory over those who oppose Him.

apply

11. How are God's people similarly threatened today?
 - Why is it that God seemingly fails to rescue His people right now from these threats?
 - How can these experiences make us stronger?
 - What truth will help God's people to stand firm in these times?

getting personal

What threats do you face from powers hostile to God and His work? What encourages you to keep going? What discourages you? What can you do to make sure you keep on receiving encouragement? And get rid of discouragement?

pray

Thank God ...

- for His Spirit and His word, which create such miraculous new life.
- that one day all God's creation will know that He is the Lord.

Think of your own reason for thanksgiving from Ezekiel 37–39.

Ask God ...

- to help persecuted Christians around the world have confidence in the hope of Ezekiel 39 v 25–29.
- to encourage those within the group facing pressure not to follow Christ.

Think of your own request for help that has come out of this session.

[illegible]

6

THE GOD OF THE FUTURE

Ezekiel 40–48

The Story So Far

God is the God of all people and He is against us because of our rebellion. Israel's fate was, Ezekiel prophesied, to be the fate of all the other nations.

Israel needed more than a fresh start (so do we). They needed God to rescue them, cleanse them and give them new hearts with His Spirit within them.

Israel could have hope (and so can we) because God provides life, unity and protection to His people.

talkabout

1. What do you imagine heaven will be like?

investigate

Read Ezekiel 40 v 1–9

2. How does Ezekiel picture God's promised future?

The temple was the symbol of God's presence with His people. But in chapter 33 Ezekiel learns that the city and temple have been destroyed by the Babylonians (33 v 21). God has abandoned His people because of their sin.

Read Ezekiel 43 v 1–12

3. Compare these verses with **Ezekiel 8 v 1–5 and 10 v 18–22**. What are the similarities?
4. What is the great difference?
5. What behavior does God expect in response to this vision of a new temple?

In chapters 8–10 Ezekiel sees the corrupt, idolatrous worship of the temple in Jerusalem and its ultimate consequence, when God abandons His temple in judgment, leaving it to be destroyed by the Babylonians. In chapters 40–46, Ezekiel sees a new temple with renewed worship within it. God returns to His temple. Once again, God will be with His people.

6. How is Ezekiel's vision of a new temple fulfilled? See John 1 v 14 and 2 v 18–22.

The temple of Ezekiel’s vision was never built. When the people returned from exile, under the leadership of Ezra, they built a new temple. But it was nothing like the old one that Solomon had built, nor was it like Ezekiel’s vision. Ezekiel’s vision points to something better. The temple was only a symbol of God’s presence with His people. The reality is Jesus. Jesus is “Immanuel”—God with us.

apply

7. Ezekiel’s vision of the new temple was to lead to new behavior, by reminding the people of their sin (v 10) and of God’s mercy (v 9). This is even more true of the cross, where we see most clearly the extent of our sin and of the amazing mercy of God. When we understand the true significance of the cross, what behavior should this lead to? Discuss specific areas.
 - How can Christians help one another to maintain this kind of “cross-shaped” life?
 - What happens when Christians start to forget about the cross?

getting personal

How central is the cross of Jesus Christ to the way you live your life? Is it just the means by which you were saved in the past? Or is every aspect of your life now shaped by the cross? What needs to change?

explore more

Read Mark 15 v 29–38

In verse 29, those who pass by mock Jesus’ claim to be the true temple. How do these verses show the similarities, and also the difference, between the temple built by Solomon, and Jesus?

Solomon’s temple	Jesus
Abandoned by God	v 34
Destroyed by God’s judgment	v 37
Keeping people from God (see Ezekiel 42 v 20)	v 38

investigate

Read Ezekiel 47 v 1–12

8. Where does this river flow from?

God will not only cleanse the land, He will purify a third of the people. These are the people who have remained faithful to God.

9. What effect does the river have?

10. Compare these verses with **Revelation 22 v 1–3**. What are the similarities? And the differences?

Ezekiel 47 v 13–48 v 35 describes how the land is to be distributed among the people of Israel. These instructions may seem dull to us, but to the Israelites land meant everything. Land was their livelihood and their identity. It was the assurance that they belonged. Ezekiel ends by revealing the name of the city: “THE LORD IS THERE” (48 v 35).

11. Read **Ephesians 1 v 13–14** and **1 Peter 1 v 3–5**. How can we know that we have a share in God’s new world?

Ezekiel has demolished our false hopes. There can be no hope when God is against us. But in Jesus, God is for us. Ezekiel shows that there is hope in God and His promises. And Ezekiel shows us what God promises—a new people in a new world enjoying the presence of God.

apply

12. How should this hope affect the way we live now? See 1 Peter 3 v 8–15.

- How can Christians help one another to maintain this kind of hope-filled life?
- What happens when Christians start to doubt the hope of the new heaven and earth?

getting personal

What impression of your future would someone pick up from watching the way in which you live out your Christian faith? Would that impression be anything like Ezekiel’s vision for God’s people?

pray

Use Ezekiel chapters 40–48 as a basis for your prayer time. Don't forget to include points for thanksgiving as well as requests.

Thank God ...

Ask God ...

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