

WORKBOOK

EXPLORING

EZEKIEL

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THE NEXT BIG WAR, EARTH'S FINAL DAYS,
AND YOUR ETERNAL DESTINATION

AMIR TSARFATI
& DR. RICK YOHN

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Italicized words in Scripture passages indicate authors’ emphasis.


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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

What should you look for when you open your Bible? How do you draw out the meaning from what you are reading? And how do you make it work in your life?

Over the years of teaching people how to study the Scriptures, we have refined the process and will be using the following fourfold approach to the book of Ezekiel as spelled out in this chart.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE YOURSELF

1. CAPTURE THE SCENE (What do I see?)
2. ANALYZE THE MESSAGE (What does it mean?)
3. COMPARE THIS CHAPTER WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE (How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?)
4. EXECUTE (How does this affect my life?)

CAPTURE THE SCENE (What do I see?)

This is the observation stage. As you read the Scriptures, you want to examine the passage with a series of questions, including, What am I seeing? What am I feeling? Who is speaking? Who are the main characters in the passage? What is he (or are they) saying? Why is he saying what he is saying? When is this situation taking place? Where is it occurring?

ANALYZE THE MESSAGE (What does it mean?)

At this stage, you want to dig a bit deeper and see what you can learn from the passage. What teaching is present here? What instructions am I being given? What is the intent of this passage?

**COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE
(How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?)**

Our understanding of God's Word is always enhanced when we look to the surrounding context or parallel passages. There is much to gain when we examine comparable stories or teachings in Scripture.

EXECUTE (How does this affect my life?)

This is the application stage. Once we let the passage speak for itself and understand it, we're ready to search for any life lessons that might be present in it. At this point, we ask, What can I learn about God or Christ? What doctrine or principle is taught here? And how can I take these lessons to heart so they influence how I think and live?

With these guidelines in place, let us now begin our study of Ezekiel!

LESSON 1

EXPERIENCING GOD'S OTHERNESS

EZEKIEL 1-3

The people of Israel had fallen far. They had turned their backs to God, and they had done so with reckless abandon. As they shamelessly pursued other gods and the desires of the flesh, God grieved.

This wasn't anything new. Centuries earlier, during the era of the judges, the people went through cycles of rebellion and restoration—repeatedly. Tragically, they simply would not learn from the error of their ways. Each time they came back to God in repentance, it didn't take long for them to wander off again.

When the Hebrews were still relatively new to the Promised Land, the great military commander Joshua had admonished them, “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

But it didn't take long for the people to forget Joshua's words. With each successive generation, they descended deeper into idolatry and immorality. Instead of being characterized as a nation who served the Lord, “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Rejecting God and His ways, they made poor choices that led to unspeakable depravity and wickedness.

The people of Israel embraced sin so enthusiastically that there was no longer any difference between them and their pagan neighbors. Those whom God had chosen to be distinct—to be a witness to the other nations—had lost all their distinctiveness. The spiritual darkness was great, and so was God’s anger.

This is the setting in which God called the prophet Ezekiel. While it was an honor to be chosen as a spokesman for God, the job assigned to Ezekiel was daunting. God warned Ezekiel what he would be up against, saying, “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 3:7).

Not only had the people spurned God, but they had also forgotten about one of His most fearsome warnings made centuries earlier through Moses. Before they entered the Promised Land, the Lord told them, “If your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess” (Deuteronomy 30:17-18).

If your heart turns away, you shall surely perish.

Because God keeps His promises—including those that have to do with judgment—He had to follow through. God had waited patiently on the people of Israel, to no avail. Punishment was necessary—and imminent.

CAPTURE THE SCENE (What do I see?)

Using your Bible, answer the following questions.

1. Where was Ezekiel when we first meet him at the beginning of the book named after him, and who was he with (Ezekiel 1:1)?

2. What suddenly opened, and what did Ezekiel see (verse 1)?

3. What was Ezekiel's occupation, and whose hand was upon him, according to verse 3?

4. As the vision unfolded before Ezekiel, what basic description did he give of the four living creatures (verses 5-6)?

5. What clue in Ezekiel 10:15 helps us to identify who the living creatures were (see also page 25 in your copy of the book *Exploring Ezekiel*)?

6. According to verse 15, what did Ezekiel see next to each of the living creatures, and what additional detail does verse 18 reveal?

7. Does the rest of Ezekiel chapter 1 ever identify the wheels in verses 15-21? Why is it best to not speculate as to their exact identity and meaning?

8. What did Ezekiel then see in verses 26 and 27, and what did he say this was, according to verse 28?

9. In verse 28, what was Ezekiel's reaction when he saw who sat on the throne?

10. What assignment did God give to Ezekiel in Ezekiel 2:3?

11. How did God describe the people of Israel in verses 3-5?

12. What did the prophet then see in Ezekiel 2:9-10, and what command was he given in Ezekiel 3:1?

13. After Ezekiel ate the object given to him, what effect did it have on him (Ezekiel 3:3)?

14. What did God tell Ezekiel about his assignment in verses 5-7?

15. How did the vision end, according to verses 12-15?

ANALYZE THE MESSAGE (What does it say and mean?)

Using both your Bible and your copy of *Exploring Ezekiel*, answer the following questions.

1. Ezekiel has one of the more dramatic calls in Scripture. It begins with a vision in which he sees angels and other supernatural things he is unable to describe. Ultimately, he ends up before God's throne. What impression do you imagine the vision left on Ezekiel?
2. In light of the fact Ezekiel fell prostrate before God's throne, what kind of accountability do you think he felt for fulfilling his commission?

3. Ezekiel's task was difficult: Alert the rebellious people of Israel and tell them judgment was coming. In Ezekiel 2:5, God said, "As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse...yet they will know that a prophet has been among them." Why do you think God wanted His defiant people to recognize they were hearing from a true prophet of the Lord? (For helpful insight on this, see how Romans 1:20 ends.)

4. In Ezekiel 3:7, God told the prophet, "The house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me." Even though the people wanted nothing to do with God, the Lord chose to send Ezekiel to alert them about the consequences of their sin. What does this tell you about the character of God?

5. In Ezekiel 3:17, God said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel." According to Ezekiel 33:6-9, what was Ezekiel's responsibility as a watchman, and in what way would God hold him accountable?

COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE
(How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?)

1. The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel and the apostle John all had visions of God's throne room. Read Isaiah 6:1-2; Ezekiel 1:13-14, 26-28; and Revelation 4:2-8. What similarities do you find in these three descriptions?
2. What parallels can you find in Ezekiel 3:1-4, Jeremiah 15:16, and Revelation 10:9-11? Why do you think it was important for all three men to internalize God's Word?
3. What did Ezekiel do when he was brought before the Lord (Ezekiel 1:28)? When the prophet Isaiah "saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne" (Isaiah 6:1), how did he respond (verse 5)?

4. Both Ezekiel and Isaiah were prophets who loved God and were loyal to Him. Why, then, do you think they trembled so greatly in the Lord's presence?

EXECUTE (How does this affect my life?)

1. Every believer has a unique calling from God. Though yours won't be as dramatic as Ezekiel's, it is still important because God Himself has chosen exactly where He wants to place you for His purposes. For each of the verses below, write what you learn about God's involvement and calling in your life.
 - a. Psalm 139:13-16—

 - b. Romans 12:1-2—

 - c. 1 Corinthians 7:17—

d. Ephesians 1:4-6—

e. Ephesians 2:10—

f. 1 Peter 2:9—

2. Every person whom God calls has a unique place in the body of Christ. Based on where God has put you, how do you think He wants to use you?

3. First Corinthians 12:7 says, “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.” Every one of us is spiritually gifted in ways that benefit fellow believers. With that in mind, answer the following:
 - a. How have you been helped by the spiritual giftedness of others in your life?

- b. How have you helped others through your spiritual giftedness?
4. God called Ezekiel to urge the Israelites to turn from their rebellious ways. Likewise, there are times when God will use us as vessels to speak to fellow believers who are struggling with sin. When it comes to admonishing a brother or sister in Christ, what does Ephesians 4:15 say we should do?
5. What insights do you gain from Galatians 6:1-4 about coming alongside a fellow believer who has been “overtaken in any trespass”?
6. Ezekiel’s calling as a prophet required him to be a watchman to the people of Israel. According to the following verses, in what ways can we, as believers, equip ourselves to be spiritual watchmen to those around us?
- a. Acts 17:11—

b. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22—

c. 2 Timothy 2:15—

7. While we should not expect to be given a vision of God in His throne room, what are some ways we experience God's glory today?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

On page 33 of *Exploring Ezekiel*, we read this about Ezekiel and Jeremiah feeding upon God's words:

This eating of the word of God is a poignant activity. It emphasizes to the prophets that the message they were carrying to the masses was from Him. It was a tactile experience to point out what they already knew mentally. For each of them, when the pushback may have been at its greatest, they had that scroll-swallowing moment

to remind themselves that these difficult words they were speaking were from God and were 100 percent accurate.

In this way, the prophets were emboldened so they could persevere in the face of opposition.

We, too, can expect to get a hostile response when we let Scripture direct how we speak and live before unbelievers. John 3:20 describes the natural response of those who love darkness: “Everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”

While we prefer to be liked rather than disliked, we know that as believers, our goal should be to please God, not people. And as Matthew 5:11-12 says, not only are we promised reward for any rejection we face, but we will find ourselves in good company with the likes of Jeremiah and Ezekiel:

Blessed are you when [people] revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.