

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 1: The Glory of the Lord and the Call of Ezekiel -- Ezekiel 1:1-3:27

Imagine sitting beside a muddy canal in a foreign land, far from home, with the smoke of Jerusalem still in your memory and the chains of exile still in your soul. You are a priest, trained for the temple, but there is no temple here. There is only the flat, gray landscape of Babylon and a people who have been dragged a thousand miles from everything they loved. Then the sky tears open. Out of the north comes a storm wind, a great cloud, fire flashing and folding in on itself, and a brightness too bright to name. This is where the book of Ezekiel begins, not with a sermon, but with a sight that drops a grown man flat on his face in the dirt.

The exiles by the river Chebar had convinced themselves that God was back in Jerusalem, tied to the temple, tied to the land, and that distance from Zion meant distance from Him. Ezekiel's vision shatters that comfortable lie. The glory of the Lord does not stay behind in Judah. It comes rolling into Babylon on wheels within wheels, riding above the heads of strange living creatures, moving wherever the Spirit moves. The God these exiles thought they had left behind has followed them into captivity. He is not a local deity confined to one hill. He is the Almighty, and the whole earth is His.

Notice what the vision does to Ezekiel. He does not analyze it. He does not take notes with cool detachment. He falls on his face. When a man truly sees the holiness and majesty of God, the first thing that collapses is his own self-importance. And it is precisely there, with Ezekiel face down in the dust, that God speaks: "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee." The same glory that flattens him is the glory that lifts him up and sends him out. God does not crush Ezekiel to leave him crushed. He humbles him in order to commission him.

What follows is one of the hardest callings in all of Scripture. God sends Ezekiel to a rebellious house, a people with hard foreheads and stubborn hearts, and warns him plainly that most of them will not listen. He makes Ezekiel a watchman, responsible to sound the alarm whether or not anyone heeds it. And He hands Ezekiel a scroll filled with mourning and woe, telling him to eat it, to take the message all the way down into himself before he ever speaks a word of it. This is where we begin: with a God whose glory fills the whole earth, who pursues His people even into exile, and who still calls ordinary men to carry His word to a world that does not want to hear it.

Group Discussion: Ezekiel discovered that the glory of the Lord was not trapped back in Jerusalem but had come to him in Babylon. In what ways do people today wrongly assume that God is distant, tied to a particular place or season of life, and how does this vision correct that assumption?

Personal Reflection: When Ezekiel truly saw the glory of God, he fell on his face. When was the last time the holiness and majesty of God genuinely humbled you? What in your life right now needs to be brought low before the One who fills the whole earth with His glory?

Read Ezekiel 1:1–3:27

Study Questions

1. The opening vision reveals a God of overwhelming holiness, power, and glory who is not confined to one place. What does this vision teach us about the true character and majesty of God, and how does it confront a small or sentimental view of Him?
2. Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord and immediately fell on his face. What does genuine reverence look like in your own life, and where might familiarity have dulled your sense of awe before God?
3. The exiles believed God had stayed behind in Jerusalem, yet His glory came to them in Babylon. What does this reveal about God's presence with His people even in the hardest and most God-forsaken-feeling circumstances?
4. God lifted Ezekiel from the ground and set him on his feet to give him a task. How have you experienced God meeting you in a low moment not to leave you there, but to humble you and then send you forward?
5. God called Ezekiel to be a watchman, responsible to warn the people whether they listened or not. What does the watchman's charge teach us about our own responsibility to faithfully warn and proclaim God's word, regardless of the response?

6. Ezekiel was sent to people God described as a rebellious house with hard hearts who likely would not listen. How do you keep speaking truth and living faithfully when those around you resist or reject the message?
7. God told Ezekiel that his accountability depended on his faithfulness to warn, not on whether the people repented. How does this reshape the way we measure success in serving God and sharing His truth?
8. Before Ezekiel ever spoke, God told him to eat the scroll so the word would be inside him. What would it look like this week for God's word to move from your head into the depths of who you are?
9. The glory of the Lord that filled this vision, the One enthroned above the living creatures, ultimately points us to the One who shares that glory, Jesus Christ, who now reigns at God's right hand. How does seeing God's enthroned glory in Ezekiel deepen your understanding of Christ's present reign over His church?
10. Looking back across this entire vision and call, name one specific way the Lord is using this passage to make you more like Jesus, whether in deeper reverence, in trusting His presence in hard places, or in faithful witness to a resistant world.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Reflect on these passages: Isaiah 6:1–8, Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up, is undone by His holiness, and is sent; Revelation 4:1–11, John’s vision of the throne with living creatures echoing Ezekiel’s vision; Revelation 1:12–17, John falls as dead before the glorified Christ; Ezekiel 33:1–9, the watchman’s charge restated and his accountability defined; Hebrews 1:1–3, the Son is the brightness of God’s glory now reigning at His right hand.

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