

~EZEKIEL (479)

(E-ze'ki-el) [God Strengthens]

- Where Yehowah's Prophets Resided Before Jerusalem's Destruction
- Prophesied To An Obstinate People
- Death Of His Wife
- A Watchman To The House Of Israel
- Tableaux And Illustrations
- Similarities To The Work Of Jesus Christ
- Ezekiel's Hope

• The son of Buzi, a priest. He was among the captives taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar along with Jehoiachin in **617 B.C.E.** His first visions of God came to him in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, in the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin.

• He prophesied to the Jews living by the river Chebar, which some modern scholars believe to be one of the great Babylonian canals. The thirtieth year seems to have reference to **Ezekiel's** age. He began his duties as a prophet at this time.

• Now it came about in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, while I was in the midst of the exiled people by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I began to see visions of God. (**Ezekiel 1:1**)

• On the fifth day of the month, that is, in the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin. (**Ezekiel 1:2**)

• The word of Yehowah occurred specifically to **Ezekiel** the son of Buzi the priest in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar, and upon him in that place the hand of Yehowah came to be. (**Ezekiel 1:3**)

• Being of a priestly family, he was undoubtedly well acquainted with the temple, its arrangement, and all the activities carried out therein, and was well versed in the Law.

• Likely **Ezekiel** was also well acquainted with Jeremiah and his prophecies, because Jeremiah was a prophet in Jerusalem during Ezekiel's youth.

- Then, too, Ezekiel had enjoyed the advantage of living in Judah during part of the reign of righteous King Josiah, who destroyed the Baal altars and the graven images, set about to repair the temple, and intensified his reformation in behalf of pure worship in Judah when the book of the Law, apparently an original written by Moses, was found in the temple. (2 Chronicles Chapter 34)

· Where Yehowah's Prophets Resided Before Jerusalem's Destruction

- **Ezekiel's** prophetic life was contemporaneous with Jeremiah and Daniel. Jeremiah served as God's prophet to the Jews in Jerusalem and Judah, coming in contact with the corrupt Judean kings.

- Daniel, who was in the court of Babylon and later of Medo-Persia, was given prophecies concerning the succession of world powers and their defeat at the hands of the Kingdom of God. **Ezekiel** served among the Jewish people and their headmen in Babylonia and continued the work of the prophets there.

- So, while the Jews in Jerusalem had the benefit of the temple with its High Priest and the priestly prophet Jeremiah, those in Babylon were not forsaken by Yehowah. **Ezekiel** was God's prophet to them, and while not performing sacrificial services, he was there as a counselor and instructor in God's Law.

- There was also a close relationship between the prophetic work of Jeremiah and **Ezekiel**, both of them refuting and striving to dispel from the minds of the Jews in Jerusalem and in Babylonia the idea that God was going to bring an early end to Babylonian domination and that Jerusalem would not fall.

- Jeremiah actually sent a letter to the captives in the land of Babylonia, telling them to settle down and be at peace in Babylon because a 70-year period must pass before they would be delivered. Doubtless **Ezekiel** got to hear the words of this letter.

- Also, he may have heard the reading of the book that Jeremiah later sent foretelling the downfall of Babylon. (Jeremiah Chapter 29)

- The word that Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah the son of Mahseiah when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his being king, and Seraiah was the quartermaster. (Jeremiah 51:59)

- And Jeremiah proceeded to write in one book all the calamity that would come upon Babylon, even all these words written against Babylon. (**Jeremiah 51:60**)
- Furthermore, Jeremiah said to Seraiah; As soon as you come to Babylon and actually see her, you must also read aloud all these words. (**Jeremiah 51:61**)
- And you must say; O Yehowah, you yourself have spoken against this place, in order to cut it off so that there may come to be in it no inhabitant, either man or even domestic animal, but that she may become mere desolate wastes to time indefinite. (**Jeremiah 51:62**)
- And it must occur that when you will have completed reading this book, you will tie to it a stone, and you must pitch it into the midst of the Euphrates. (**Jeremiah 51:63**)
- And you must say; This is how Babylon will sink down and never rise up because of the calamity that I am bringing in upon her, and they will certainly tire themselves out. Down to this point are the words of Jeremiah. (**Jeremiah 51:64**)

•• **Prophesied to an Obstinate People**

- The captives in Babylonia were in a better position before Yehowah than the Jews remaining in Judah, as illustrated by the baskets of good and bad figs that Jeremiah saw. (**Jeremiah Chapter 24**)
- But even so, **Ezekiel** had no easy task set before him, because the captive Israelites were also a part of the rebellious house. As **Ezekiel** was told, it was among obstinate ones and things pricking you and it is among scorpions that you are dwelling.
- And you, O son of man, do not be afraid of them, and of their words do not be afraid, because there are obstinate ones and things pricking you and it is among scorpions that you are dwelling. Of their words do not you be afraid, and at their faces do not you be struck with terror, for they are a rebellious house. (**Ezekiel 2:6**)
- At Yehowah's command he took up dwelling among the exiles at Tel-abib by the river Chebar.

- And he continued saying to me; Son of man, go, enter in among the house of Israel, and you must speak with my words to them. (**Ezekiel 3:4**)
- So I entered in among the exiled people at Tel-abib, who were dwelling by the river Chebar, and I began to dwell where they were dwelling, and I kept dwelling there for seven days, stunned in the midst of them. (**Ezekiel 3:15**)
- Although the Jews were exiles, they were living in their own houses.
- Build houses and inhabit them, and plant gardens and eat their fruitage. (**Jeremiah 29:5**)
- They were able to continue organized, at least to an extent, religiously. The older men of Judah were able to visit **Ezekiel** several times.
- And it came about in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, that I was sitting in my house and the older men of Judah were sitting before me, when the hand of the Sovereign Lord Yehowah fell upon me there. (**Ezekiel 8:1**)
- And men from the elderly ones of Israel proceeded to come to me and sit down before me. (**Ezekiel 14:1**)
- Now it came about in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, that men from the elderly ones of Israel came in to inquire of Yehowah, and they proceeded to sit down before me. (**Ezekiel 20:1**)
- Even when the time came for the restoration at the end of the 70 years, many of these Jews did not want to leave Babylon.
- One of the reasons for the lack of desire to return on the part of at least some of the Jews in Babylon may have been materialism. The archives of a great business house, Murashu and Sons, were uncovered by an American expedition at the site of a Euphrates canal near Nippur, which some scholars believe was near Chebar.
- Inscriptions found there contain a number of Jewish names, which indicates that the Israelites had become quite well established

and that a good many of them had become involved in the commercial activities of Babylon.

·· Death Of His Wife

- **Ezekiel** says that he received his commission by the river Chebar in the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin or in 613 B.C.E. He prophesied for at least 22 years to about 591 B.C.E, his last dated prophecy being in the 27th year of the exile.
- Now it came about in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, that the word of Yehowah occurred to me, saying; (**Ezekiel 29:17**)
- **Ezekiel** was apparently happily married. Then Yehowah told him: Son of man, here I am taking away from you the thing desirable to your eyes by a blow.
- Son of man, here I am taking away from you the thing desirable to your eyes by a blow, and you should not beat your breast, neither should you weep nor should your tears come on. (**Ezekiel 24:16**)
- His wife may have been unfaithful to him or to Yehowah, but whatever the reason for her death, **Ezekiel** was commanded not to weep, but to sigh without words.
- Ezekiel was told to wear his headdress and not to adopt any signs or evidences of mourning. This was all really for the purpose of a sign to the Israelites there in Babylonian captivity that Yehowah would profane his sanctuary in which the Israelites took such pride, and that, contrary to their hopes, Jerusalem would be destroyed.
- Sigh without words. For the dead ones no mourning should you make. Your headdress bind on yourself, and your sandals you should put upon your feet. And you should not cover over the mustache, and the bread of men you should not eat. (**Ezekiel 24:17**)
- And I proceeded to speak to the people in the morning, and my wife gradually died in the evening. So I did in the morning just as I had been commanded. (**Ezekiel 24:18**)
- And the people kept saying to me; Will you not tell us what

these things have to do with us, that you are doing? (**Ezekiel 24:19**)

- Then I said to them; The very word of Yehowah has occurred to me, saying; (**Ezekiel 24:20**)
- Say to the house of Israel; This is what the Sovereign Lord Yehowah has said; Here I am profaning my sanctuary, the pride of your strength, the thing desirable to your eyes and the object of your souls compassion, and your sons and your daughters whom you people have left behind, by the sword they will fall. (**Ezekiel 24:21**)
- And you will have to do just as I have done. Mustaches you will not cover over, and the bread of men you will not eat. (**Ezekiel 24:22**)
- And your headdress will be on your heads, and your sandals be upon your feet. You will not beat yourselves nor will you weep, and you will have to rot away in your errors, and you will actually groan over one another. (**Ezekiel 24:23**)
- And **Ezekiel** has become for you a portent. In accord with all that he has done, you will do. When it comes, you will also have to know that I am the Sovereign Lord Yehowah. (**Ezekiel 24:24**)
- And as for you, O son of man, will it not be in the day of my taking away from them their fortress, the beautiful object of their exultation, the thing desirable to their eyes and the longing of their soul, their sons and their daughters, that (**Ezekiel 24:25**)
- In that day there will come to you the escaped one for making the ears hear? (**Ezekiel 24:26**)
- In that day your mouth will be opened to the escaped one, and you will speak and be mute no longer, and you will certainly become to them a portent, and they will have to know that I am Yehowah. (**Ezekiel 24:27**)

•• A Watchman To The House Of Israel

- In a manner similar to that of Isaiah, **Ezekiel** received his commission to prophesy. He was given an awe-inspiring vision of Yehowah on his throne attended by living creatures having four faces

and wings, accompanied by wheels within wheels, which moved along with the living creatures.

- Yehowah then spoke, addressing **Ezekiel** as a son of man, to remind the prophet that he was but an earthling man. (**Ezekiel Chapters 1,2**)(**Isaiah Chapter 6**)
- He was sent as a watchman to the house of Israel to warn them of their wicked way. Though they would be very hardhearted, nonetheless the warning was necessary so that they would know that Yehowah had had a prophet in the midst of them.
- Even though they would refuse to listen, if he failed to warn them with the words Yehowah gave him, he would be held responsible for their lives he would be bloodguilty.
- But as for the house of Israel, they will not want to listen to you, for they are not wanting to listen to me, because all those of the house of Israel are hardheaded and hardhearted. (**Ezekiel 3:7**)
- Son of man, a watchman is what I have made you to the house of Israel, and you must hear from my mouth speech and you must warn them from me. (**Ezekiel 3:17**)
- When I say to someone wicked; You will positively die, and you do not actually warn him and speak in order to warn the wicked one from his wicked way to preserve him alive, he being wicked, in his error he will die, but his blood I shall ask back from your own hand. (**Ezekiel 3:18**)
- And the sons insolent of face and hard of heart, I am sending you to them, and you must say to them; This is what the Sovereign Lord Yehowah has said. (**Ezekiel 2:4**)
- And as for them, whether they will hear or will refrain, for they are a rebellious house, they will certainly know also that a prophet himself happened to be in the midst of them. (**Ezekiel 2:5**)
- Son of man, speak to the sons of your people, and you must say to them; As regards a land, in case I bring upon it a sword and the people of the land, one and all, actually take a man and set him as their watchman. (**Ezekiel 33:2**)

- And he really sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the horn and warns the people. (**Ezekiel 33:3**)
- And the hearer actually hears the sound of the horn but he takes no warning at all, and a sword comes and takes him away, his own blood will come to be upon his own head. (**Ezekiel 33:4**)
- The sound of the horn he heard, but he took no warning. His own blood will come to be upon his own self. And had he himself taken warning, his own soul would have escaped. (**Ezekiel 33:5**)
- Now as regards the watchman, in case he sees the sword coming and he actually does not blow the horn and the people itself gets no warning at all and a sword comes and takes away from them soul, for its own error it itself must be taken away, but its blood I shall ask back from the hand of the watchman himself. (**Ezekiel 33:6**)
- Now as regards you, O son of man, a watchman is what I have made you to the house of Israel, and at my mouth you must hear the word and give them warning from me. (**Ezekiel 33:7**)
- When I say to someone wicked, O wicked one, you will positively die! but you actually do not speak out to warn the wicked one from his way, he himself as a wicked one will die in his own error, but his blood I shall ask back at your own hand. (**Ezekiel 33:8**)
- But as regards you, in case you actually warn someone wicked from his way for him to turn back from it but he actually does not turn back from his way, he himself will die in his own error, whereas you yourself will certainly deliver your own soul. (**Ezekiel 33:9**)

•• Tableaux And Illustrations

- **Ezekiel** frequently prophesied by means of tableaux, performance of symbolic actions, as well as by visions, allegories, or parables. A most outstanding tableau was the 390 and 40 day picture of the siege of Jerusalem, which contains an important time prophecy.
- It required obedience, patience, and much faith to carry out this pictorial warning to a faithless, ridiculing people. During the siege of Jerusalem, **Ezekiel** turned prophetic attention to the pagan nations that

hated Israel and would take part in and rejoice in Israel's downfall, he described the punishment Yehowah would bring upon them.

- Subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem the tone of **Ezekiel's** prophesying was changed. After a strong condemnation of Israel's greedy shepherds and of Seir, he directed his prophetic activities toward building faith in the promise of God that Israel would be revived, regathered, and united, and that the glorious shepherdship of Yehowah's servant David would bless them to time indefinite under a covenant of peace. (**Ezekiel Chapter 37**)

- **Ezekiel** then gives a detailed description of the rebuilt temple, blueprinted for him by Yehowah. This visionary temple was prophetic of something in the far-distant future, for no such temple was ever actually constructed. (**Ezekiel Chapters 40-48**)

•• Similarities To The Work Of Jesus Christ

- There are similarities in the work done by **Ezekiel** and by Jesus. Both **Ezekiel** and Jesus had to go up against an indifferent, hardhearted people with a message of condemnation, which included a message of hope for those who would turn from their wicked course. **Ezekiel** was told that people would come and hear his words, but their hearts would not respond.

- And as for you, O son of man, the sons of your people are speaking with one another about you beside the walls and in the entrances of the houses, and the one has spoken with the other, each one with his brother, saying; Come, please, and hear what the word is that is going forth from Yehowah. (**Ezekiel 33:30**)

- And they will come in to you, like the coming in of people, and sit before you as my people, and they will certainly hear your words but these they will not do, for with their mouth they are expressing lustful desires and after their unjust gain is where their heart is going. (**Ezekiel 33:31**)

- And, look! You are to them like a song of sensuous loves, like one with a pretty voice and playing a stringed instrument well. And they will certainly hear your words, but there are none doing them. (**Ezekiel 33:32**)

- Likewise, many crowds came out to hear Jesus talk, but few responded appreciatively to his teachings. **Ezekiel** preached to

captives in Babylonia. Jesus stated his commission to preach release to the captives.

- **Yehowah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare Good News to the poor, he sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release. (Luke 4:18)**
- **He plainly explained to the Jews that they were in spiritual bondage and needed release, which he was sent to provide.**
- **And so Jesus went on to say to the Jews that had believed him; If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples. (John 8:31)**
- **And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:32)**
- **They replied to him; We are Abraham's offspring and never have we been slaves to anybody. How is it you say; You will become free? (John 8:33)**
- **Jesus answered them; Most truly I say to you, every doer of sin is a slave of sin. (John 8:34)**
- **Moreover, the slave does not remain in the household forever, the son remains forever. (John 8:35)**
- **Therefore if the Son sets you free, you will be actually free. (John 8:36)**
- **Like **Ezekiel**, he never acted as a reprover of the Jews with his own words, but he spoke what Yehowah told him to say.**
- **Therefore, in answer, Jesus went on to say to them; Most truly I say to you, the Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing. For whatever things that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner. (John 5:19)**
- **I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative, just as I hear, I judge, and the judgment that I render is righteous, because I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me. (John 5:30)**

·· Ezekiel's Hope

- **Ezekiel** was faithful to God, carrying out every command given, even though his job was difficult. He is among those of the prophets who endured through faith and who were reaching out for a better place, that is, one belonging to heaven.
- But now they are reaching out for a better place, that is, one belonging to heaven. Hence God is not ashamed of them, to be called upon as their God, for he has made a city ready for them. ([Hebrews 11:16](#))
- While not of the class that makes up the Kingdom of heaven.
- Truly I say to you people, Among those born of women there has not been raised up a greater than John the Baptist, but a person that is a lesser one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he is. ([Matthew 11:11](#))
- **Ezekiel** looked forward to the time of the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom and will in due time receive, by resurrection, fulfillment of the promise of God and the blessing of Messianic rule.
- And yet all these, although they had witness borne to them through their faith, did not get the fulfillment of the promise. ([Hebrews 11:39](#))
- As God foresaw something better for us, in order, that they might not be made perfect apart from us. ([Hebrews 11:40](#))
- **Ezekiel** was outstanding in energy, courage, obedience, and zeal for the worship of God.