

# EZEKIEL - A STUDY GUIDE

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## THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

### What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
  - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. When someone mentions the book of Ezekiel, what comes to your mind? Sometimes its name is used to refer to things which are very mysterious. Did you find it complicated? What was Ezekiel doing and where was he when he wrote this book? What is the main message of the book? What about the "wheels within the wheels?" (Ezekiel 1:15-21; 10:6-13) Was it inspiring? Did you learn anything new in this book?
2. What do you think was the general conception of the Old Testament God, Yahweh, in Ezekiel's time? Was the picture different in Jerusalem (where Jeremiah was) than it was beside the Chebar (Kebar) River (in captivity) where Ezekiel was; in Babylon (where Daniel was); throughout the universe? (among the angels) Do you think these visions were calculated to inspire reverence and respect? (especially Eze. 1)
3. Why would Ezekiel have to use words like "such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord?" (Ezekiel 1:28, *KJV, RSV, NIV*) Is not this the way John spoke in trying to describe his visions in Revelation? Did New Testament writers ever use such words, or was this just a problem for ancient prophets with a limited vocabulary?
4. Do you understand every detail in the vision of Ezekiel 1:4-28? (see also 8:2-4; 10:1-22) What effect did it have on Ezekiel? Do you think he understood it all? What do you think he actually saw? Would it help us, in this modern age, if the Lord would appear and give us some glimpse of His infinite power and majesty? How would we walk into church and how would we worship if the "appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" was up at the front of the sanctuary? Were the Jews accustomed to having revelations of God's power? How could the pillar of fire (the Shekinah) become commonplace to the Jews? (See Exodus 13:21,22) How could they complain about the manna, and the water while God's power was so apparent nearby? (Exodus 16:1-36; Numbers 11:4-34; Numbers 21:4-9) Would you dare to build a golden calf at the foot of the mountain with God's power still visible at the top? (Exodus 32:1-35; Deuteronomy 9:6-29) Would not this vision give the prophet a feeling that God was with him, when he had to deliver an often unpopular message? Was this God the Father or God the Son, whom Ezekiel saw? (see Exodus 24:17; 1 Corinthians 10:4) What of the garden of Eden before the flood? (Patriarchs and Prophets 62.2; 83.2; AH 539.1; AG 360.2; Mar 354.1) Did seeing it impress the antediluvians?
5. What is Ezekiel (and God) trying to say to us in Ezekiel 20? What about Ezekiel 36? Do you have a simple explanation for Ezekiel 20:25,26; compare Isaiah 45:7? Or does it require an approach developed by working your way through many such passages? Does reading the rest of the chapter help?
6. What do you think is implied by the following commonly used expressions in Ezekiel:
  - a. Son of man - 93 occurrences
  - b. Rebellious house (people) - 21 times (see especially Ezekiel 2,12,20)
  - c. Then they will know that I am the Lord - more than 70 times (Ezekiel 20:12,20,44; 36:11,23,36; 39:7,22,28)
  - d. For my own name's sake - Ezekiel 20:9,14,22,44; 36:20-23,31,32,36,38; 39:6,7; 25-29; 43:5-9; compare Isaiah 48:11
  - e. Wrath and anger - Ezekiel 5, 7, 8, 13, 22, 36
  - f. "The LORD God" - Ezekiel 2:4 - occurs 217 times

7. Why were some prophets given views of both God and Lucifer/Satan? Is there anything special about these messages and the messengers or the times in which they lived that might explain why? Which prophets actually received such messages? Can you think of examples from Moses? Isaiah? Jeremiah? Daniel? Zechariah? John?
8. Does Ezekiel give us any new insights into the meaning of the Sabbath? (Ezekiel 20:12,20; compare Hebrews 4:9-11; Isaiah 66:23) What did Ezekiel say was the purpose of the Sabbath? Is it primarily a reminder of an event(s)? Or of a relationship? What kind of a relationship would you have with God if you knew that He had said "either obey Me, or I will torture you to death" (even forever, as some believe)? Did the Jews get Ezekiel's message about the Sabbath? In Jesus' day were they keeping it for all the right reasons?
9. What is the purpose of the terrible pictures of idolatry and immorality in Ezekiel 16 and 23? Compare this language with the language of Hosea. Contrast it with the way God felt about them (Ezekiel 18:1-4,8,23,31,32; 33:11). Compare Jeremiah 31:29-34.
10. Why did God cut off the righteous with the wicked? (Ezekiel 21:3,4) What about this? Did the invading armies of Nebuchadnezzar carefully distinguish between saints and sinners? Is this fair? How was Jeremiah treated? What about Ezekiel and Daniel? (Compare Ezekiel 20:47)
11. Why is idolatry so bad? Does it represent a definitive decision against God in the great controversy? Why would the adversary love to have us worship anything or anybody, other than our intelligent, gracious God? Why would anybody choose to worship and idol?
12. Are you quite certain that Ezekiel 28 is talking about Lucifer/Satan? What about Isaiah 14? Would you dare to use these passages when discussing the subject with someone who didn't believe in Satan? What else could these passages be talking about?
13. Where does the fire come from that finally consumes the Devil? (Ezekiel 28:18, *NIV, RSV*) Does this suggest that the fire that will consume the wicked at the end will come forth from within them? What kind of fire could this be?
14. Compare Lucifer/Satan's statements in Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28 and Matthew 4:8,9, with Christ's attitude in Philippians 2:5-8. Who would you rather spend eternity with?
15. How does God propose to deal with the sin problem that seems to be afflicting the Jews? (Ezekiel 11:18-20; 18:30-32; 36:24-29; compare Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalms 51:10; Zephaniah 3:7-13, *GNB*) Can God do this? How does He go about doing it? Do we have to cooperate?
16. Is there any sense in which God's people could be considered even worse than the heathen nations around them? (Ezekiel 5:6) Compare Isaiah 52:5; Jeremiah 2:33; Ezekiel 36:22; Romans 2:17.
17. Considering all that God has said about them why does God finally restore Judah? (Ezekiel 36:22-38)
18. Is it true that God took them by stages into captivity in hopes that the remnant might repent and not have to go? Much of the trouble they got into was because of the priests, rulers and even prophets (Jeremiah 23:1-4; 16; 21). How do you think the people were supposed to distinguish between these false prophets and Jeremiah the true prophet? Compare Jeremiah 23:25-40. Do we hear such claims today?
19. If God gave an examination over the most important key ideas of the Old Testament, would you pass?

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