

**Ezekiel Part 1: Encouragement and Strength**  
**Introduction to Ezekiel - Ezekiel's Call to Judah and First Vision of God's Glory**

**Part 1, Week One: Ezekiel the Book, the Man, Jewish History and Contemporary Culture**

One of the main themes of the book of Ezekiel is encouragement or strengthening by God. Ezekiel's name means "God strengthens." Ezekiel was set amongst God's people at just the right time in their history to minister to them by strengthening those who had remained faithful to God and by encouraging those who had gone away from Him to return. This "encouragement" or this "strengthening of the *LORD*" will be the focus of this week's study. Also, this week, we will get an overview of the contemporary history and surrounding culture for the whole house of Israel, both those who were still in Jerusalem at the time of Ezekiel's writing and those who were already deported to Babylon. This is a very timely study for us to do because the God of the whole house of Israel is also using Ezekiel's words today to call His Remnant to return to the land and to return to Him, Many current events in our world point to the fulfillment of several of Ezekiel's prophecies in our day. For this initial week of study, you will need to use your Bibles to search out the verses below.

One other thing needs to be clarified for us to begin this study of Ezekiel: what or who is the Remnant?

The first time the *remnant* is mentioned in the Old Testament in Genesis 45:7. Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob or Israel (the son of Isaac who was the son of Abraham) has just revealed his identity to his brothers, the other sons of Israel. Many years before, Joseph's brothers had sold him to some Ishmaelites and they took him to Egypt. The brothers convinced their father, Israel (Jacob), to believe that the boy had been torn into pieces and devoured by an evil beast. Through God's sovereignty, Joseph arose to great power in Egypt. Joseph had rightly interpreted a dream for the Pharaoh of Egypt and his reward was to be placed as second in command to the Pharaoh. He was given charge of storing grain during seven good years of harvest and distributing that grain during seven bad years of famine. Thus, Joseph became the salvation of not only the Egyptians, but also his Israelite family as they came to take refuge in Egypt during the famine. Joseph could have been very upset with his brothers for what they had done to him back in their own land, but instead he recognized God's hand upon the situation so that the *remnant* of his family might be preserved.

The word in Genesis 45:7 for *remnant* is translated *posterity* in the KJV of the Bible. In the NIV, it is translated *remnant*. It is the Hebrew word *sherith* and means remainder, residue, survivors (especially after a slaughter), posterity, the final portion.<sup>i</sup>

<b>Old Testament:</b>	<b>New Testament:</b>
3498, 3499 yather, yether 7604, 7605 shaar, shear 6403, 6413 palat, peletah	3005, 5275 leimma, hupoleimma

Until the time of the captivity, the remnant of Israel was the preserved descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel). From the rumors of the captivity forward, the Remnant became the portion of the entire nation of Israel who survived death by pestilence, famine or the sword brought about by the conquering nations of Assyria and Babylon. Those who survived were deported to the conquering nations as slaves and later a portion of them returned to the land of Israel. Remnant actually means 1/10<sup>th</sup>. From this point in time forward, the remnant will only be a portion of the entire nation of Israel. They are the ones who will be the faithful to Jehovah God. The Bible reveals to us that a Remnant will always exist because there is a portion of the sons of Israel who will remain faithful to God.

### **Days 1-2 - Ezekiel, the Book – God’s Promises to the Whole House of Israel**

Within the 48 chapters of the book of Ezekiel, there are numerous references to the hope and the promises that God has given to the whole house of Israel. There are some of these promises that can also apply to the church in this dispensation of time. How very important these promises would become to those Israelites who were in captivity. They knew that they had failed God, and yet faithfully and tenderly He reached out to them, assuring them that He would make all things right, and encouraging them to stay true to Him. In this first week, we will not mention all of these promises found in Ezekiel, but the following are four that are most relevant and applicable to our continuing study of the Remnant that we began in the book of Isaiah.

#### **The Promise of the New Covenant – Ezekiel 36:24-32, 37:24-28**

According to Isaiah 11:11-16, when will God gather Israel from all places on the earth and return her to her land? Will this be the first or second time that God restores the land to Israel? Which return to the land is God referring to in Ezekiel 36:24?

When will God sprinkle clean water on the Israelites and what do you think this all means? See Numbers 19:17-22.

What kind of idols could Israel have at the present time that Ezekiel is referring to in verse 36:25?

What will God have to do in order to give Israel a new heart and put a new spirit within her? See Ezekiel 36:26.

How is this new heart described in Ezekiel 36:26?

How will God's Spirit be manifested in the Israelites? What will be the proof that He has actually taken up residency in them? See Ezekiel 36:27.

How is the promise of the New Covenant "good news" to those who have been caretakers of God's Law?

How is the promise of the New Covenant "good news" to the Gentiles?

Individual Israelites (or individual Gentiles) could never ever please God with their works. God sees all works done in the flesh as substandard (and missing the mark) compared to His one magnificent work. What is this "one magnificent work" and how can He possibly make all of the Israelites' (and our) works truly acceptable to Him? Can you get a glimpse of how freeing this can be for both Jew and Gentile? See New Testament Romans 5:8-10.

He does the work through His Spirit who indwells us.

**The Promise of the Kingdom/ Resurrection - the Nation, Messiah, Land, Temple – Ezekiel 37:1-28, Ezekiel 40-48**

**The Bones – Ezekiel 37:1-14**

How is Israel described in 37:1-6? Is she dead or alive?

How can dead Israel come to life again? See Ezekiel 37:7-10.

How does Ezekiel describe the great number of resurrected Israelites in Ezekiel 37:10, 14?

How will the Israelites know that He is the LORD who has spoken and done all this according to Ezekiel 37:13-14?

**The Two Sticks - Ezekiel 37:15-23**

Israel has been two separate houses in the past, the House of Israel and the House of Judah. How will these two houses become the whole house of Israel (one nation) future to Ezekiel's day? See Ezekiel 37:19-22.

How many kings will be over them when they are reunited? See Ezekiel 37:22.

Who will this king be? See Ezekiel 37:24-25.

What kind of covenant will God make with “the whole house of Israel” according to Ezekiel 37:26-28?

When will “all” of this take place?

Read all of Ezekiel 40-48 in one sitting. What are these chapters about? Which temple is Ezekiel referring to here? Does this temple exist in our day? Will there be more than one temple built yet future to our time? See chart in Appendix titled Future Times for Nation of Israel (future to Isaiah’s Day).

### **The Promise of Supernatural Protection – Ezekiel 38-39**

In today’s geography, who are the players “Gog,” “Magog,” “Rosh,” “Meshech,” “Tubal?” You may use Bible dictionaries, the notes from study Bibles, or any other references that you have access to in order to find out who these players might be.

Who are Persia, Ethiopia, and Put in today’s geography? Who are Gomer and Beth-togarmah?

What will happen with all of these nations “in the latter years?” Who will summon them? Where will they be summoned and for what purpose? See Ezekiel 38-39.

How will these nations come up against Israel according to 38:9? What kind of plans will these nations have for Israel?

How is Israel described in Ezekiel 38:11?

Who are Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish?

How will all of these nations come to the land of Israel according to Ezekiel 38:15?

How will God protect Israel against all these nations “on that day?” See Ezekiel 38:17 through chapter 39.

What is God's ultimate purpose in protecting Israel in this fashion? See Ezekiel 38:23, 39:6, 7, 22, 28.

**The Promise of His Presence Forever – Jehovah Shammah – Ezekiel 37:21-28, 48:35**

Who will be King over the Israelites in this special day? Who will be the Servant to the Israelites in this special day? Who will be the One Shepherd in this special day? Who will be Prince forever in this special day?

How is the covenant described which will be in force in this special day? See Ezekiel 37:26.

What will be in the midst of the Israelites forever? See Ezekiel 37:26-28.

Who will be in their midst forever? See Ezekiel 48:35.

How are the "What" and the "Who" connected?

**Day 3 - Ezekiel, the Man – Ezekiel 1-2, 24:18**

How did Ezekiel describe himself in Ezekiel 1:1-3?

How old was Ezekiel when he started his ministry? How do you know? See Ezekiel 1:1.

To whom did Ezekiel prophesy? Where was Ezekiel when he first saw the "storm" cloud coming? See Ezekiel 1:1-4.

Would or did his prophesying do any good? Did the people hear/listen to him? Why or why not?

When in Babylonian history did Ezekiel prophesy? When in Jewish history did Ezekiel prophesy?

Was Ezekiel married? See Ezekiel 24:18. Why was Ezekiel not allowed to mourn his own wife when she died?

By what name did God call Ezekiel in chapter 2 and throughout the book? Why would God call him by this name?

There were three sieges on Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Which siege took Ezekiel and 10,000 others to Babylon? See the notes and/or charts in your Bibles. Also, see page 12 timeline at the end of Ezekiel Part 1 Lesson 2, to see when in the Israelites' history, the deportment to Babylon occurred.

Who were Ezekiel's contemporary prophets and from where did they prophesy? Also see page 12.

#### **Day 4 - Contemporary Culture and Historical Setting**

In Ezekiel's day, Jeremiah had been preaching to the Jews in the land for 34 years when Ezekiel was carted off to Babylon. Jeremiah told the Jews that because of their idolatry, God would cause many of them to die and others to be taken into Babylonian captivity for 70 years. False prophets had also been speaking to the people at this same time and giving them false hope concerning captivity. These false prophets also encouraged the people to continue in their ways and told them that those who had already been taken into Babylonian captivity would soon be coming home. In addition to this, the false prophets told the Israelites that Egypt would soon deliver the Southern Kingdom from the Babylonians.

Which of the following kings were in power during Ezekiel's day before he went into captivity? See below.

Please read and answer the following questions concerning the different kings of Judah.

#### Josiah

When does Josiah first come on the scene of the kings of Judah? See 2 Kings 21:24.

Read about Josiah's reign in 2 Kings 22:1-23:25 and 2 Chronicles 33:25-35:27.

How old was Josiah when he became king? See 2 Chronicles 34:1.

How long did Josiah reign? 2 Chronicles 34:1 How was his reign described? 2 Chronicles 34:2

What did Josiah do during his reign that pleased the Lord? See 2 Chronicles 34:3-7.  
What was the significant find during the reign of King Josiah? See 2 Chronicles 34:14-15.

What did the King do once he had heard the words of the Law? See 2 Chronicles: 34:19.

What did God postpone until King Josiah's death according to 2 Chronicles 34:27-28?

Interestingly, there was a small revival and return to the Lord in the Southern Kingdom before the storm of judgment came blowing in on all those who practiced idolatry. Daniel was a young man during this time of revival and Ezekiel was probably about the same age as Daniel and grew up at about the same time.

### Jehoahaz

Read about Jehoahaz's reign in 2 Kings 23:30-34 and 2 Chronicles 36:1.

How long was Jehoahaz's reign? See 2 Chronicles 36:2

What happened to Jehoahaz? See 2 Chronicles 36:3-4.

How was his short reign described? See 2 Kings 23:32.

### Jehoiakim (Eliakim)

Read about Jehoiakim's reign in 2 Kings 23:34-24:6 and 2 Chronicles 36:4-8.

How was Jehoiakim's reign described? See 2 Chronicles 36:5.

What happened to Jehoiakim? See 2 Chronicles 36:6.

### Jehoiachin

Read about Jehoiachin's reign in 2 Kings 24:8-17 and 2 Chronicles 36:9-10.

How was Jehoiachin's reign described? See 2 Chronicles 36:9.

What happened to Jehoiachin and why did he end up going into captivity at the same time as Ezekiel? See 2 Chronicles 36:19 and 2 Kings 24:8-17.

How long was Jehoiachin's reign according to 2 Kings 24: 8?  
Zedekiah (Mattaniah)

What king was placed on the throne of Judah after Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon? See 2 Kings 24:17-18.

What were the significant events that occurred during Zedekiah's reign and shortly thereafter? See 2 Kings 25:1-2, 8-12.

What happened to Zedekiah according to 2 Kings 25:3-7?

Which kings were in power in the Northern kingdom during Ezekiel's day? Trick question. Hopefully you can draw upon some of your knowledge from other studies.

The first three kings of Israel were Saul, David, and then David's son, Solomon. After Solomon's reign, the kingdom split between Jeroboam of Nebat, who was king over the ten northern-most tribes, and Rehoboam, Solomon's son, who was king over the two southern-most tribes, Judah and Benjamin. The northern kingdom went into Assyrian captivity about 100 years before the southern kingdom was conquered by the Babylonians and deported to Babylon in three sieges. God allowed both houses to go into captivity because of their worship of idols. The prophet Daniel was deported in the first Babylonian siege of Jerusalem and had been in Babylon for 12 years before Ezekiel arrived. By the time Ezekiel arrived, Daniel had been appointed second in command in the Babylonian kingdom under King Nebuchadnezzar's reign. See Daniel 1-4.

Nebuchadnezzar

Who was Nebuchadnezzar? See Daniel 4:1. How long did he reign in Babylon? See charts in your Bible. How long did he reign over the Israelites who were in captivity in his land?

What was it like for Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abed-nego in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon? See Daniel 1-3. What must it have been like for the other Jewish exiles in Babylon?

Who reigned over Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar died? See Daniel 5:1, 30-31, 9:1, 10:1. These passages do not include all of the kings.

### **Day 5 - Personal Application**

How do these passages of Scripture speak to you in regards to your relationship with the Lord?



What does God ask of you in your relationship with Him?  
How do you know that you are or are not walking in God's will?

What kind of life does He promise you if you will surrender yourself to Him and are obedient to Him? Support your answers with Scripture if you can.

What can you expect from God if you are intentionally disobedient?  
What is sin and why is sin so hideous to God?

What is true repentance?

What can you expect from God if you are truly repentant over your sins?

In this dispensation of time, is the expectation from God for true repentance any different than that of Israel before the time of Christ? What is the difference? How do you know this?

What do you have now that the Israelites did not have at their time in history? See Romans 8:1.

This is the background by which Ezekiel, the priest, the son of man, was commissioned by God to prophesy to all still in Jerusalem and all who were with him in captivity in Babylon. God told Ezekiel that those he sent to preach to should have listened to him, but they would not listen to him. However, he was to speak to them anyway. How many of us could keep on preaching to a deaf ear just because God told us to? God made Ezekiel's head as stubborn and as hard or harder than those rebellious Jews to whom he was sent to minister and speak. Next week, our study will begin with the first vision given to Ezekiel and will end with his commissioning as a prophet.

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<sup>i</sup> Spiro T. Zodiatas, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*, Nashville, TN, AMG Publishers, 1994, p. 2365.

**Ezekiel's Message to the Remnant & the Idolators**

The Obedient Remnant - those who will be saved from death	The Disobedient Idolators - those who will die
<p>-For these people Ezekiel's name meant "God strengthens" - at just the right time in history, God set Ezekiel amongst the Remnant of the Israelites to encourage them because of their obedience and faithfulness to God</p> <p>-Ezekiel's message to these people was, you are going to go into captivity in Babylon, where there, God will purge the Israelites of their idolatry</p> <p>-Jeremiah's message to these people: you are going to be captives for 70 years in Babylon and then you will return to the land</p> <p>-This group of people made up the Remnant, those who had remained constant in their devotion to God and did not worship idols and those whom God knew would repent and turn back to Him in their captivity</p> <p>-God also raised up Babylonians to protect His people in exile until their return to the land</p> <p>The hope and promises to the Remnant found in Ezekiel:</p> <p>1. Promise of the New Covenant with Israelites</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">God will gather Israel from all places to her land</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">God will sprinkle clean water on the Israelites</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">God will take out the old heart of stone and replace it with a new heart of flesh</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">God will cause them to walk in His ways</p> <p>-What about us, the Gentile Christian?</p> <p>2. Promise of the Kingdom/Resurrection - the Nation, Messiah, Land, Temple - Ezek. 37:1-28, Ezek. 40-48</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Israel will take center stage on world stage and come alive again</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Jesus Christ the only King and Shepherd over one nation of Israel</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Temple will be built-Jehovah Shammah - Lord will be with them forever</p> <p>Millennial Kingdom - Jesus Christ will right all things wrong</p>	<p>-For these people Ezekiel's name meant "God hardens" - God made Ezekiel's head to be as hard as the stubborn, hard-headed Israelites who would not listen, repent, nor turn back to God</p> <p>-Ezekiel's message to these people was, you are going to die by the Babylonian's sword, by famine, or by disease</p> <p>-Jeremiah's message to these people: you are going to die</p> <p>-This group of people made up the idolators, those who worshiped other gods and burned incense to other gods on the high places and under every green tree and those who offered up their children to be sacrificed</p> <p>-God raised up the Babylonians to punish this group of Jews - Neb ruled for 43 years</p> <p>-The kings of this group of people were also corrupt</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Josiah - good king; brought the Word of God back to people - revival</li> <li>2. Jehoahaz (Josiah's son) - did evil, King of Egypt deposed him</li> <li>3. Jehoiakim - did evil, Neb took him bound with bronze chains to Babylon</li> <li>4. Jehoiachin - did evil, Neb took him into captivity to Babylon</li> <li>5. Zedekiah - did evil, he ran away from Jerusalem after 2 year siege; Neb caught him and killed both sons before Zed's eyes &amp; then blinded Zed</li> </ol> <p>- in week 3, we see this group explained this way:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the wicked who commits wickedness and will not turn to God</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the righteous who turns away from his righteousness and commits wickedness and does not return to God</p> <p>- in week 4, we will see this group divided into thirds:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1/3 will die from the sword - in the city</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1/3 will die from plague or be consumed by famine - outside the city</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1/3 will go into captivity to break them of idolatry (this includes the Remnant (remnant means 1/10th))</p>

**Ezekiel's Message to the Remnant & the Idolators (cont.)**

The Obedient Remnant - those who will be saved from death	The Disobedient Idolators - those who will die
<p>3. Promise of Supernatural Protection - Ezekiel 38-39  8 nations will come up against Israel  Israel will be under treaty with Antichrist  After Antichrist has destroyed armies of Ezekiel 38, he will break his treaty with Israel and invade her himself  God will supernaturally protect Israel and then will judge and destroy the nations</p> <p>4. Promise of His Presence Forever - Jehovah Shammah - Ezekiel 37:21-28, 48:35</p> <p>- in week 3, we see these groups included:  the righteous man commits iniquity, but repents and comes back to God  the wicked man who turns to God</p> <p>- in week 4, we see this group divided into thirds:  1/3 will go into captivity to break the Jews of idolatry - includes the Remnant</p>	<p>Are we, as a nation guilty of idolatry?  What about in our individual daily lives? are we individually guilty of idolatry?  What does idolatry look like in our day? i.e., See Puritan Ethic - Internet  Where is and what is that line that we cross into idolatry?  Is anything that is more important to us than our relationship with Christ, idolatry?  What do we substitute for our relationship with Christ?  Is greed idolatry? i.e., See Paul's remarks  What will the punishment be for us as a nation for our idolatrous ways?</p>

**PROGRESSION OF ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS INTO IDOLATRY**  
 (from worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob to worshiping idols)

History	Scriptural References
God calls Abram out of the land of the Chaldees - Abram came from pagan background/ he probably worshiped idols	Genesis 12:1-8
God makes covenant with Abram	Genesis 15:1-16
God of Abraham confirms covenant with Isaac	Genesis 26:24
God of Abraham and Isaac confirms covenant with Jacob	Genesis 28:10-22
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob provides for the sons of Jacob (Israel) while in Egypt x 400 years	
Israelites grow in numbers/ exposed to Egyptian gods	
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob hears cries of the oppressed Israelites under the Egyptians	
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob calls Moses to deliver Israelites out of Egypt	
Moses gives the people God's message; the Israelites agree	Exodus:19:7-8
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob gives Moses 10 commandments on Mt. Sinai - 1st commandment - no other gods	Exodus 20:1-6
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob calls Moses back up Mt. Sinai	Exodus 24
Israelites sin by building golden calf (Egyptian) and worshiping it (when Moses is on Mt. Sinai 2nd time)	Exodus 32:7-8
Israelites sin by playing the harlot with the daughters of Moab (during 40 yrs. in wilderness on way to Promised Land)	Numbers 25:1-9
Moses restates Lord's commandment to Israelites (new generation); Israelites agree	Deut. 4:15-20, 23-31; 28:36, 47-49; 29:10-12
Joshua and the Israelites (new generation) when in land not to worship idols, destroy every man, woman, child who are in their land - so that they will not intermarry, & worship their gods	Joshua
After Joshua, in time of the Judges; tribe of Dan re-introduces idolatry to the Israelites	Judges 17-18 (background); Judges 18:30-31
After Judges, in time of the Kings; Israelites split into northern (worship idols) & southern (worships Jehovah) kingdoms; Jeroboam king of Northern Kingdom and this is what he did	1 Kings 12:25-33
Moses predicts in Deut., before Israelites (new generation) enters land, what the other nations will say when the future enemy takes them away from their land	Deuteronomy 29:24-26
N. Kingdom taken into captivity for idolatry by the Assyrians	
S. Kingdom taken into captivity for idolatry by the Babylonians	