

Why study Ezekiel?

Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house. You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious.

But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.

Ezekiel 2 v 6-8

Few books of the Bible seem scarier than Ezekiel—48 chapters of weird and wonderful visions, bizarre street performances and blood-curdling judgments. Perhaps you've wondered what it's all about. But, will you ever have the time to study such a large book? And does this stuff really have anything to say to you?

This Bible-study course will take you through the whole of Ezekiel in just six sessions! This whistle-stop tour gives a clear overview of all the main themes of Ezekiel's prophecy—God's glory, judgment, and hope—focusing on key passages that explain the surrounding chapters.

But more than that, you'll discover how God's Word to His exiled people is truly fulfilled in the gospel of Jesus and the experience of Christians.

'Then they will know that I am the Lord' is the repeated message of Ezekiel. In a world of false hopes that will ultimately fail, this is a message for everyone.



Ezekiel 1-3:

THE GOD OF GLORY

talkabout

1. What discourages you about the state of the church today? What gives you cause for hope?

investigate

At the beginning of the book of Ezekiel, the nation of Israel has been smashed by the Babylonians, the top nation of the day. The ruling class and all the promising young men have all been taken off into exile in Babylon. A puppet regime has been set up in Jerusalem, under Babylonian control. Ezekiel was among those carried off into exile.

2. How do you think the exiles would have felt in Babylon?

3. What doubts about God would the exiles have had?

 **Read Ezekiel 1 v 1-28**



4. Why is it significant that Ezekiel sees this vision of God in Babylon?

5. What details of Ezekiel's vision show the power and glory of God?

6. Why is it significant that God is on a throne with wheels?

7. How does Ezekiel respond to this vision?

In verse 28, Ezekiel says that what he saw was 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord'. He did not even see the real thing—only something that *looked liked* God's glory! Ezekiel refers back to this vision on a number of occasions (see 3 v 12-15, 23; 10 v 15-22; 43 v 3). The book of Ezekiel has a phrase that is repeated more than 60 times: **'then they will know that I am the Lord'**. God is at the centre of Ezekiel's message and at the centre of Ezekiel's view of the world.

apply

8. Ezekiel's vision of the world is thoroughly God-centred. What would it mean for us to be more God-centred in our...

- ...praying?...evangelism?...meetings?
Think of one concrete change that would be made in each
- Why do you think we keep moving away from 'God-centredness'?

- What effect does human-centred 'Christianity' have on people?



getting personal

What impression of God would someone pick up from watching the way in which you live out your Christian faith? Would that impression be anything like Ezekiel's vision?



explore more

Look at verses 26-28. At the heart of Ezekiel's vision is 'a figure like that of a man'. What is the significance of this? For a clue, look at the parallels with Revelation 1 v 12-18. How do we see the glory of God? See John 1 v 14.

▶ Read Ezekiel 2 v 1 – 3 v 15

9. How will the people respond to Ezekiel's message?

10. What does 3 v 6 say is the reason that people reject God's Word ?





explore more

Look at Psalm 14 v 1. Why does the fool say there is no God?

Look at Romans 1 v 18-25. Why do people not know God? How do these references explain why Ezekiel's message will be rejected?

11. How will Ezekiel cope with the rejection and opposition of people to his message?



apply

12. People do not reject God's Word because it is too hard to understand, but because they do not want to obey it. What does this mean for our evangelism?
- When people accept the message about Jesus, how much is their positive response due to our abilities to reason with and persuade them? See 1 Corinthians 2 v 1-5.

- What part do Christians play in evangelism? See 2 Corinthians 4 v 1-6.
