

Hope in a Hopeless Time

Session 3: November 3, 2019 (Ezekiel)

1. Criticism

a. Author

- i. Ezekiel = "God will strengthen"
- ii. Priest lineage (spent ministry as a prophet in exile)
- iii. In Babylonian captivity early, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem
 1. 597 BCE: Ezekiel is taken to Babylon
 2. 586 BCE: Destruction to the Temple
- iv. Usually deemed the sole author
 1. Chronological presentation of visions and oracles, with exact timestamping (age 30 to 50)
 2. (Dry) Repetition of phrasing (stylometry)
 - a. "Thus says the LORD": Ezekiel uses this phrase 126 times, compared to Jeremiah (150) and Isaiah (36).
 - b. "As I live" (God's swear): Ezekiel uses this phrase 17 times, compared to Jeremiah (2) and Isaiah (1).
 - c. "You will know that I am the LORD": Ezekiel uses this phrase 72 times, compared to Jeremiah (1) and Isaiah (2).
 - i. This phrase appears nine times in the book of Exodus (Exod. 6:7, 7:5, 7:17, 8:22, 10:2, 14:4, 14:8, 16:12, and 29:46), which is also about enslavement and deliverance.
 - ii. Ezekiel calls his audience back to the promises God made to the Israelites in the wilderness after the Egyptian enslavement.

b. Audience

- i. Unrepentant citizens of Judah
- ii. The faithful in Babylonian exile

c. Style

- i. Oracles → dramatic visions
- ii. Symbolism and metaphor

d. Messages

- i. God will destroy the wicked.
- ii. God will rebuild and restore the righteous.

e. Interpretive Frameworks

- i. Literal: The text describes the historical situation of the author, with an expression of hope about the immanent future pertaining to that situation.
- ii. (Christian) Symbolic: OT prophecy foretells of Jesus the Messiah.
- iii. Dispensationalist: The text blends both the Literal and Symbolic framework.
- iv. Apocalyptic: The text describes the end of the world, freed from the concrete historical particulars within which the text is written.

2. Outline of the Book of Ezekiel

(<http://m.biblestudguide.org/ebooks/dillinger/ezekiel.pdf>)

a. Prophecies of Jerusalem's Destruction [1-24]

- i. Ezekiel's Vision and Call (1-3)
- ii. Four Symbolic Performances of Jerusalem's Fall (4-5)
 1. Model City Besieged (4:1-3)
 2. Public Sleeping on Different Sides (4:4-8)
 3. Eating "Polluted" Bread (4:9-17)
 4. Getting a Haircut and a Shave (5:1-4)
- iii. Devastation and Desolation of the Land (6-7)
 1. Social
 2. Military
 3. Economic
 4. Political
- iv. God's Glory Leaves the Idolatrous Nation (8-11)
- v. Destruction Will Come to the Sinful Nation (12-19)
- vi. Jerusalem Will Be Destroyed (20-24)
 - * As a symbol of the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel's wife dies.
 - * Ezekiel foregoes the traditional acts of mourning since this is a prophetic sign.

b. Judgment against Other Nations [25-32]

- i. Especially Babylon, the current captor
- ii. ... and, of course, Egypt, the first captor.

c. Announcement of Restoration and Salvation [33-48]

- i. The Role of the Prophet (33)
- ii. The Restoration of Israel (34-39)
 1. A New Shepherd (34)
 2. Israel Restored (36)
 3. The Valley of Dry Bones (37)
- iii. The New Kingdom of God (40-48)
 1. New Temple (40-43)
 2. New Worship (44-46)
 3. New Land (47-48)

3. Today's Recommended Chapters

- a. Chapter 32: The Judgment on Egypt
- b. Chapter 34: A New Shepherd
- c. Chapter 36: The Restoration of the People of Israel
- d. Chapter 37: The Valley of Dry Bones
 - i. Prophecy and Resurrection
 - ii. Prophecy and Insurrection
 - iii. Creating Life in a Lifeless Valley
 - iv. Creating Hope in a Hopeless Time

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT TIME: Daniel 2,3,7, and 12