

Small Group Study in the Book of Ezekiel
January 19, 2025

A suggested format for your group time

15 min – Fellowship

15 min – Prayer (using the different quadrants of the SG prayer sheet)

45 min – Study (see below)

The purpose of this study is to see the grace and glory of God through the eyes and the ministry of the prophet Ezekiel. Continuous idolatry caused Israel to be carried into Babylonian exile. The glory of God departs from the Temple and the holy city of Jerusalem is destroyed. Ezekiel depicts the justice of God through a series of living illustrations describing the judgment on Israel, as well as on the nations. Where is God? Is there hope? The prophet receives a series of visions and divine messages that proclaim God's plan in creating for Himself a new people by giving them a new spirit and a new heart. There is the promise of the arrival of the true Shepherd and coming King. The final scene of the book pictures the return of God's glory, Eden restored, and His people in worship and fellowship with their Creator.

Ezekiel 1:1-28

Passage Summary

The priest Ezekiel is among the Hebrew captives living in Babylonian exile. It is during this dark and desperate time that God reveals His glory and power through a series of visions. Out of a whirlwind from the north comes a heavenly chariot driven by four-faced angels whose loud fluttering wings carried the chariot in whichever direction they were commanded. Ezekiel describes the One in the chariot as a man adorned with a jeweled crown and royal robes. His appearance was like the glory of the Lord.

Jumpstart Questions

- Can you recall a time in your life when the future looked dark and your heart had lost its hope? In what way did you question your faith? How did those days affect what you believed or thought about God?
- How would you counsel a friend who confided in you that they were battling depression, doubt, hopelessness, or even contemplated suicide? What kind of counsel do you think the world would give to them?

Ezekiel 1:1-3

- What are some things we initially learn about Ezekiel in this passage? What caused him, and the nation of Israel, to be in captivity?

(After living in rebellion while in the promised land for 400 years, Israel ignored the warning of the prophets to repent and were subsequently conquered and carried away to Babylon. Ezekiel is among the first wave of captives)

- How do you think Ezekiel tried to process what had happened to him and to the chosen people of God? Why is it hard to make sense of life and of our faith when tragedy strikes?
- What would give Ezekiel hope according to verse 3? (*The hand of the Lord was upon him*). How does God's presence give us peace and hope?

Ezekiel 1:4-25

- Try to describe what Ezekiel saw in these verses. (*Some have argued that Ezekiel saw a UFO, but in actuality, he is describing a heavenly chariot*).
- Why do you think the description was so hard to communicate? Was this a literal description or symbolic? If the vision was symbolic, what was being communicated through the symbolism? What words would describe what Ezekiel saw? (*Power, authority, majesty, mobility*).

Ezekiel 1:26-28

- How did Ezekiel describe the person in the chariot? What words in this passage suggest the type of characteristics of the charioteer? Who did Ezekiel say He was?
- Read Revelation 1:12-17. How does the passage in Revelation compare with the vision of Ezekiel in chapter 1? What does the similarity say about the character of Jesus?
- How does a clear understanding of the identity and authority of Jesus enable us to face dark and uncertain days as a nation or as an individual?

Practical suggestions:

1. Please feel free to modify any question and include other text-based questions that you might find helpful for your group to help them think through the passage - specifically questions that lead participants to make comments *based on the text* (not just to give opinions).
2. Invite group members to make other observations they see in the passage. Have them to identify the specific verse where that observation is made.
3. Ask what application can be made out of these verses that will help a person to put into practice the truths in the passage?
4. Ask for volunteers to read the various sections. **Make sure you know the person you are asking to read is comfortable doing so. Please don't just assume and put someone on the spot.*
5. Be intentional about including everyone into the conversation. Asking an 'open' question directed to a specific person who remains fairly quiet is one simple way of inclusion (in other words, a question that may not have a specific right or wrong answer). An example of an 'open' question is: *What's your favorite part of this passage? Why?*
6. Remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and make both ministry and teaching a priority of your group time together.