

**EZEKIEL****GOD STATEMENT FOR EZEKIEL:  
THE GOD WHO IS \_\_\_\_\_ (a)**

The Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem took place in stages, and the Jewish people were taken captive in \_\_\_\_\_ (b) separate deportations. The first deportation took place in 605 BC and this was when \_\_\_\_\_ (c) and other Jewish young men of nobility were taken to Babylon for training (Dan 1:1-6). The second deportation happened in 597 BC and this is when \_\_\_\_\_ (d) and others were marched off to Babylon (2 Kings 24). And the third deportation happened when Nebuchadnezzar finally decided to destroy Jerusalem and took the last of the survivors back to Babylon (2 Kings 25:8-11).

So, Ezekiel had been living in exile in Babylon for about \_\_\_\_\_ (e) years before the fall of Jerusalem. While the prophet Jeremiah was prophesying in Jerusalem that the city would soon fall to the Babylonians, Ezekiel is saying the same thing to the Jews already living in exile. But, like the people still living in Jerusalem, the Jews living in Babylon simply did not believe that God would ever allow \_\_\_\_\_ (f) to be destroyed. After the news arrived in Babylon that Jerusalem had fallen, Ezekiel changed his messages to focus on future \_\_\_\_\_ (g) and the restoration of God's people.

Ezekiel isn't easy to read. It contains many strange images and can be very repetitive. One common mistake in interpreting the prophets—and perhaps especially Ezekiel—is to get bogged down in the minor details and try to “over-interpret” the text. When reading Ezekiel, try not to drown in the details or get too caught up in the complexities of the images. Let's break down the book in five sections.

**CALL OF EZEKIEL (Chaps 1-3)**

Like the call of other prophets—Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah—Ezekiel's call comes when he sees an unusual sign or vision. Ezekiel saw God on a “\_\_\_\_\_ (h) throne” (Ezek 1:15-21). Some call it a “throne-chariot.” Based on the description, it could travel in any direction. This symbolizes the fact that God is \_\_\_\_\_ (i); He is able to be anywhere and everywhere. He is a mobile God. This was important because the issue of God's presence was relevant to Israel.

A common worldview of the time was that gods were territorially bound. So, the people may have conceived that God was only the God of Judah, but not the God of Babylon. The rolling throne teaches that God is not restricted to Judah or the Temple. He is \_\_\_\_\_(j), \_\_\_\_\_(k), and \_\_\_\_\_(l). He doesn't just make Himself known in Judah, but He is even present in Babylon.

### JUDGMENT OF JERUSALEM (Chaps 4-24)

God's judgment on Jerusalem and the Jews is already underway with many Jewish people—including Ezekiel—already in Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel is appointed by God as a \_\_\_\_\_(m) to cry out a warning of the wrath to come, and to urge the people to turn from their wicked ways. To convey the bad news of Jerusalem's eventual collapse, Ezekiel is told by God to communicate not only verbally, but also \_\_\_\_\_(n) through a series of symbolic actions.

1. He was told to take a slab of clay, draw a picture of Jerusalem on it and lay siege to it with model battering rams and so forth. He did this in total silence. The crowds who would watch no doubt asked, "What's that old, crazy prophet doing?" (Ezek 4:1-3)
2. God then told Ezekiel to lie on his left side for \_\_\_\_\_(o) days and then to lie on his right side for another \_\_\_\_\_(p) days. Also, Ezekiel was to be tied up with a rope while he did this. The total number of days—430—parallels Israel's years of sojourn in Egypt (Ex 12:40). This might be intended as a ray of \_\_\_\_\_(q)—foreshadowing an eventual new exodus and entry into the Promised Land (Ezek 4:4-8)
3. Ezekiel also had to go on a meager diet to symbolize the shortage of food during the siege of Jerusalem. He was allowed to eat 8 oz. of bread and drink 2/3 quart of water per day, and he had to live on that diet for a long time. He was to cook his bread over a fire fueled by his own dried excrement (he actually protested to God and was allowed to use \_\_\_\_\_(r) \_\_\_\_\_(s) instead). This was meant to show that things would be desperate in Jerusalem during the siege (Ezek 4:9-17).
4. God told Ezekiel to shave his head and his beard with a sharp sword and then to put the hair in three piles. He was to burn the first pile when the siege of Jerusalem came to an end. The second pile was to be struck with a sword all around the model city, depicting slaughter. Then the third pile was to be thrown up into the

air so that it was scattered—which was to be the fate of the people of Jerusalem (Ezek 5:1-12).

5. For the fifth dramatized prophecy God told Ezekiel to put all his clothes in a \_\_\_\_\_(t), dig a hole in a \_\_\_\_\_(u), and then creep out through the wall at night. By doing this he was predicting what would happen when Jerusalem fell. And that’s exactly what happened—King Zedekiah had to leave the city just this way when Jerusalem fell (Ezek 12:3-14).
  
6. Maybe the hardest drama-prophecy that Ezekiel had to “perform” concerned the death of his wife. God told him that he wasn’t allowed to publicly \_\_\_\_\_(v) her death. He was not to manifest any traditional signs of grieving. This unusual behavior was to illustrate the reaction that the Jews would have when they heard the news that the Temple in Jerusalem was gone. They would be too \_\_\_\_\_(w) to grieve (Ezek 24:15-24).

### **JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS (Chaps 25-32)**

After pronouncing judgment upon Jerusalem, Ezekiel goes on to pronounce God’s retribution against several of the enemy \_\_\_\_\_(x) surrounding Israel. When Jerusalem fell, all these neighboring countries were thrilled. Many would try to take advantage of the Babylonian invasion by doing horrible things to the Jewish people who were left. God would pay them back for \_\_\_\_\_(y) the fall of His people.

Some of the predictions are incredibly detailed and show the power of predictive prophecy, like the prediction of \_\_\_\_\_(z) downfall. Ezekiel predicted that Tyre would one day be razed to the ground and the whole city would be thrown into the Mediterranean Sea (Ezek 26:12-14). And that’s exactly what Alexander the Great did about 250 years later. When the people of Tyre saw Alexander approaching, they withdrew to an island fortress offshore. They thought they were safe, but they were wrong. Alexander took every brick, stone, and piece of timber from the mainland city and literally threw them into the sea to make a causeway for his army to march out and defeat the people of Tyre who had taken refuge on their island fortress.

These judgments on Israel neighbors affirm God’s \_\_\_\_\_(aa). They affirm His power over all \_\_\_\_\_(bb) and \_\_\_\_\_(cc).

### **RESTORATION OF GOD’S PEOPLE (Chap 33-39)**

As I pointed out earlier, after the news reached Ezekiel and the other exiled Jews that Jerusalem had fallen, there was a complete change in Ezekiel's \_\_\_\_\_(dd).

Chapter 33 talks about \_\_\_\_\_(ee) who stand on the walls of a city, day and night, and warn the inhabitants of danger. If a sentry didn't warn the city of an approaching enemy, he was executed. God tells Ezekiel that he's God's watchman. If he doesn't warn the people, their blood is on his hands. But if he does warn them and they don't respond, then he's not responsible for what happens to them.

Perhaps the most familiar chapter in Ezekiel is Chapter 37—the valley of dry \_\_\_\_\_(ff). Ezekiel is transported into the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death. The sight is one of total desolation, and it represented the Israelites in Babylonian captivity. God's people have been totally destroyed because of their sin. The covenant curses have been executed, and the story looks like it's \_\_\_\_\_(gg). But then God questioned Ezekiel and asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" (Ezek 37:3). Ezekiel turns it back to God and said, in effect, "They can live if you want them to live. You have the power to bring them back to life."

God then commanded Ezekiel to \_\_\_\_\_(hh) to the bones and say, "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life" (Ezek 37:4-5). Ezekiel obediently spoke those words to the bones and he saw the \_\_\_\_\_(ii) of God instantly unleashed. Suddenly, the valley was no longer full of decomposing, bleached bones. Instead, standing before Ezekiel was a vast, living \_\_\_\_\_(jj) (Ezek 37:9-10).

In bringing those bones back to life God was showing what He was planning to do for the house of \_\_\_\_\_(kk). They were completely hopeless and helpless, cut off from God's life-giving presence. But God would bring them "back to life" and they would return to their \_\_\_\_\_(ll).

### **RESTORATION OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (Chaps 40-48)**

Chapter 40 starts the climactic end for the book. The first section (Ezek 40:5-43:11) describes the new \_\_\_\_\_(mm). This is a hard section to read because its full of mind-numbing architectural details. The size of this new temple is overwhelming, as are the details.

The focus of God's \_\_\_\_\_(nn) with Israel had always been focused on the \_\_\_\_\_(oo). 1 Kings 8:27-53 makes it clear that God doesn't actually live in the Temple as if He were a finite being. The Temple was a \_\_\_\_\_(pp) symbol that God dwelt among His people. And the care of the new temple was to give Israel an overwhelming sense of the degree to which God was willing to go to reestablish their relationship.

This Temple, of course, represented \_\_\_\_\_(qq) (John 2:19) because it would be through Him that mankind and God would have their relationship reestablished. In Christ we have the coming of the glory that Ezekiel looked for.

### THE LESSONS OF EZEKIEL

- Don't forget the severity of God's \_\_\_\_\_(rr). Ezekiel shows a side of God's character that few find appealing. God must judge. Most people focus on God's love and goodness, instead of His holiness and judgment. Focus on both.
- Each person is \_\_\_\_\_(ss) for his or her own sin (Ezek 18:4-20). The basic principle of divine justice is "all souls are mine" (Ezek 18:4). That is, each person is a separate entity before God; each person is accountable for his or her own life. We cannot borrow the righteousness of others.
- God is \_\_\_\_\_(tt) and \_\_\_\_\_(uu). Ezekiel's vision of God's throne with wheels that go in every direction (Ezek 1:15-17) and whose rims are full of eyes (Ezek 1:18) symbolize that God is present everywhere and sees everything. This is a great comfort to God's people who faithfully serve Him, but a great terror to those who don't.
- \_\_\_\_\_(vv) have a huge responsibility for the state of God's people. Interestingly, the Bible never blames the sheep for the state of the flock. The shepherds are responsible for the shape of the flock, not the sheep (Ezek 34:1-16).
- God gets all the \_\_\_\_\_(ww) for saving His people. As God talks about the future restoration of His people in Chapters 33-39, "I will" is a constant refrain. It occurs 77 times. "I will be your God." "I will bring you home." "I will give you good shepherds." I will, I will, I will—that is, GOD WILL.
- Rejoice over God's \_\_\_\_\_(xx). When God called Ezekiel,

He gave him the scroll with His Word on it and told Ezekiel to “eat it.” Ezekiel did so and said, “it tasted as sweet as honey” (Ezek 3:1-3). He loved God’s Word. We should equally love God’s Word because in it we have life.

- We must speak only God’s \_\_\_\_\_(yy). Ezekiel is told by God to “speak My words” to the people (Ezek 2:7; 3:4). Ezekiel’s words weren’t his impulses. Our message must come from God’s word. We must be people of the book. We are not free to be creative in the content of the message we deliver.
- \_\_\_\_\_(zz) is ugly. Ezekiel exposes the full ugliness of sin. Chapter 16 pulls off kid gloves and exposes this full ugliness in graphic ways. This passage is not found in Children’s Bibles. Sin is ugly and offensive and depraved, and people need to hear this side of God’s message. What could justify the ugliness of the cross? It’s the ugliness of sin.

#### KEY PASSAGES IN EZEKIEL

- Ezekiel 3:17-19
- Ezekiel 33:11
- Ezekiel 34:23-31
- Ezekiel 36:26-27
- Ezekiel 37:3-5

#### FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY:

[a] PRESENT	[q] hope	[gg] over	[ww] credit
[b] three	[r] cow	[hh] prophesy	[xx] revelation
[c] Daniel	[s] dung	[ii] power	[yy] Word
[d] Ezekiel	[t] bag	[jj] army	[zz] Sin
[e] 10	[u] wall	[kk] Israel	
[f] Jerusalem	[v] mourn	[ll] homeland	
[g] hope	[w] shock	[mm] temple	
[h] rolling	[x] nations	[nn] relationship	
[i] omnipresent	[y] exploiting	[oo] Temple	
[j] living	[z] Tyre’s	[pp] visible	
[k] active	[aa] sovereignty	[qq] Jesus	
[l] moving	[bb] kings	[rr] judgement	
[m] watchman	[cc] nations	[ss] responsible	
[n] visually	[dd] preaching	[tt] omnipresent	
[o] 390	[ee] watchmen	[uu] omniscient	
[p] 40	[ff] bones	[vv] leaders	