







About the Author

The book is ascribed to Ezekiel. Although he may not have written the visions and prophecies down in the form we now have them, they are very likely to be traced back to him.

What do we know about him?

Ezekiel is described as a priest and it is clear, in this book, that he also became a prophet due to the visions he had from God. In 1.1-2 he claims

that the visions began in the 30th year, since that cannot refer to a King's reign at this point it probably means that he was 30 when he began to be a prophet. The visions, he says, came to him on the banks of the river Chebar in Babylon. This means that he was in the first wave of exiles that were taken into captivity by the Babylonians in 597 bc., suggesting that he was someone of importance in the land as the most important were taken into exile in this first wave.





Look out for...

Ezekiel has many episodes of what are often called 'one-man dramas'; look out for these and see what you think about their effectiveness.

Look out for the visions of all kinds in the book. Notice that sometimes they involve Ezekiel seeing himself back in Judah (and no longer in Babylon). There are a wide range of visions from the surreal to the mundane, look out for the different kinds.

Although the book is gloomy there are strands of hope, look out for these as you read.

Extra note

One of the oddest messages of hope in the book is connected to the vision of God's chariot (in chapters 1, 10 and 11). The effect of the message in these chapters was that God had left the Temple (and hence his people). The message of hope that this brought was that it meant that when the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, God was not destroyed as he had already left – and therefore could also return. It is an odd message of hope but an important one – God has not been destroyed he has abandoned you (but will return).



What could this mean for me?

Ezekiel's peculiar brand of encouragement is the encouragement of people not to shy away from how awful the situation really was. The implication is that people were rapidly saying 'it's not that bad'. Reflect on whether there is anything for us to learn today about engaging in the world by being clear sighted about how terrible a state we are in.



Discussion group questions

Were there any parts of the book that you particularly liked or which inspired you?

Were there any parts of the book that you disliked or which troubled you?

What did *you* think the book was about?

What did you think of Ezekiel's visions? Did they enhance or detract from what he was saying?

Ezekiel's peculiar message of hope is one that relies on people recognizing quite how bad things really were before looking to the future. Is there anything in this do you think?

The cherubim in Ezekiel (see chapter 10) look dramatically different from our popular mental image of cherubs (e.g. chubby toddlers), how do you think we got from one to the other?

Did you read anything in the book that touched you, expanded your faith or made you think more deeply about your life and how you live it?



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