

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | DECEMBER 22, 2019



Class 1 – Introduction

PURPOSE: To relate to the early Jews in Exile -leaving their glory days, entering into hostile territory, always looking ahead to the Kingdom of Redemption.

What if God was on Twitter?

- *Twitter* – sends a short electronic message to a large online audience to update them as to what is happening real-time, moment by moment. Used to the extreme by the POTUS in the election and in politics. Twitter also allows you to understand what a person’s first hand gut reaction is to something (good or bad). It has been used to elevate the ‘virtuous’ and cancel out those seen as ‘vile’; has given birth to “the cancel culture.”
- *God* – sees all, knows all, judges all. Unlike Twitter users, God actually knows the inward parts of every participating individual. This is the very thing that escaped the religious nation of Israel. In 722 B.C. the northern half of Israel was carried off to captivity by the Assyrians. God wasn’t being mean. God gave his people repeat warning that if they didn’t stop their mixing idolatry with his stipulations for true worship, they would suffer the consequences. You would think that after the north was carried off, the southern half would be “woke” to the fact that God is serious. Sadly, in 586 B.C. the Babylonian army toppled a vile Jerusalem. The faithful priest Ezekiel went out with the captives.
- *The Trellis and the Vine* – this is the very practical, engaging book we left off with from the previous Equipping Hour series. Are we done with it? “Moving on?” Not at all. Every book of the Bible relates to the priorities of TTATV. Likewise the book of Ezekiel will point us to the doctrinal *convictions* and Christian *character* we should have if we expect to be used as *trainers* for the future of *gospel growth* in and through GBC (keywords found in TTATV here *italicized*).

I. **#OuttaHere** (Chapters 1–24)

A. The Human Version of #OuttaHere

The three strikes law. Never-say-“no”-to-me. Boredom. These are manmade justifiers to “end it”, cut ties, close shop, defriend, or make that difficult phone call (or email).

B. The Divine Version of #OuttaHere

Thankfully God doesn't drop people so quickly. Before the Flood he gave the world of men several generations to repent from their violent acts. Before Judah's downfall in the sixth century B.C., God allowed the ruling kings three-plus centuries to rightly shepherd his chosen people. But the kingdom mostly denied God and persecuted the warning prophets sent to them. God is slow to anger (Exod. 34:6); but when his righteous anger erupts it's memorable for generations (Exod. 34:7). God leaving the Temple meant the Holy Land was no longer under his protection. Judah was ripe for the picking.

II. **#ToMyEnemyNations** (Chapters 25-32)

A. Rethinking: Globalization = Peace & Progress (?)

In the secular materialist utopian worldview, nations coming together can only bring about good. But ancient and modern world history testify otherwise. Kings cannot resist elevating themselves as gods (Ezek. 28:2); in the end they band together to resist God's law and his Anointed (Ps. 2:1-3; see also Eph. 6:12 and Rev. 20:7-9).

B. Cause for Revisiting Global Wrath in Romans Chp. 1

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

(Romans 1:18)

III. #MillennialKingdom (Chapters 33-48)

A. Two Cautions About the Qualifier “Millennial”

1. “Millennial” in Christian theology is not referring to young adults starting out at the beginning of the recent turn of the millennium. It’s actually referring to the 1,000 years of Christ’s futuristic kingdom detailed in Revelation 20. Various Old Testament eschatological passages (e.g., Ezekiel) can easily be harmonized with Revelation 20. So, formally this is about something rooted in the old (testament), not the new (generation). But not so fast! We don’t know the exact timing of Christ’s return (see Mt. 24:36) in his ushering in a full one thousand years of glorious world transformation. Nor can we write off our millennial brothers and sisters who could very well be part of the final horizon of the extensive church age.
2. Being true to the Book of Ezekiel, the prophetic writing never explicitly makes reference to a 1,000 year period of any kind.

B. Seeing the Forest Before the Trees

It’s easy to get wrapped up in the profound details at the end of Ezekiel’s prophecy: who is the “Prince” and “Levites”? Resurrected OT saints? What about the reconstruction of the Jewish sacrificial system (which Hebrews 10:4 says we’re done with)? What about the massive land divisions?

While those crucial questions deserve to be answered, the overall spirit of the text mustn’t be missed. For all of God’s fury and wrath poured upon Israel’s disobedience, his restoration of the people sings of a “grace that is greater than all my sin.” God’s redeeming Israel is *thorough* -from the inside out (36:26) and bound by four even sides (48:16).

The Book of Ezekiel Course Outline:

- Ezekiel's Close Encounter (1:1-28)
- Ezekiel's Strange Commissioning (2:1-3:27)
- Four Signs of Coming Judgment (4:1-5:17)
- Two Messages of Coming Judgment (6:1-7:27)
- Idolatry in the House (8:1-18)
- God's Glory Departs (9:1-11:23)
- Straight Talk to the Covenant People (12:1-19:14)
- Defective Leadership (20:1-23:49)
- The Purge (24:1-27)
- Foreign Raiders Not Exempt (25:1-33:20)
- Reentering the Land on God's Terms (33:21-39:29)
- Restoration of Temple Worship (40:1-46:24)
- Restoration of the Land (47:1-48:35)