

EZEKIEL

The God Who Is Present

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Ezekiel at a Glance

I. The Message of Doom	1:1–33:33
II. The Message of Hope	34:1–48:35

The Message of Doom (1–33)

◆ The Call of Ezekiel to Prophetic Ministry (1:1–3:27)

- ❖ Yahweh is sovereign over all things (1:26–28).
- ❖ God calls Ezekiel to minister to a hard-hearted people (2:3; 3:7).

◆ Signs and Visions of Woe for Judah (4:1–11:25)

- ❖ God promises that he will destroy Judah (5:7–8, 11).
- ❖ God intends that his punishment help Judah and the nations know him (5:13; 7:9).
- ❖ Ezekiel sees Yahweh's presence depart from Jerusalem's temple in light of Judah's great abominations.
 - ❖ 8:3–4
 - ❖ 8:18; 9:4
 - ❖ 10:4, 18–19
 - ❖ 11:16–20
 - ❖ 11:22–23

- ◆ **Judgment Oracles against Judah (12:1–24:27)**
 - ❖ 16:59–63
- ◆ **Judgement Oracles against the nations (25:1–32:32)**
- ◆ **The End of an Era: The Destruction of Jerusalem (33:1–33)**

The Message of Hope (34–48)

◆ Restoration Proclaimed (34:1–39:29)

- ❖ Yahweh will raise up a new David to shepherd his people in a covenant of peace (34:15–16, 22–25).

- ❖ For the sake of his name, he will transform his people by his Spirit (36:22–32).
- ❖ The structure:
 - ❖ The makeup of God’s name-consecrating act (vv. 22–23)
 - ❖ The process of God’s name-consecrating act (vv. 24–31)
 - ❖ Stage 1: Restore and purify (36:24–25)
 - ❖ Stage 2: Reorient and empower (36:26–28)
 - ❖ Stage 3: Rescue and provide (36:29–31)
 - ❖ The present implications of God’s name-consecrating act (v. 32)

- ❖ For the sake of his name, he will transform his people by his Spirit (36:22–32).
- ❖ The structure
- ❖ The fulfillment in the church:
 - ❖ Our prayer (Matt 6:9)
 - ❖ A true Jew's inner-transformation (Rom 2:29)
 - ❖ Christ's promise (Acts 1:8)

- ❖ Yahweh will reunite Israel under a new king and dwell in their midst forever.
 - ❖ 37:22–28
 - ❖ 2 Cor 6:16
- ❖ Yahweh will overcome all his enemies (chs. 38–39)
 - ❖ 38:16–17
 - ❖ Rev 20:7–10

◆ Restoration Envisioned (40:1–48:35)

❖ The structure:

1. Preamble (40:1–4): “visions of God” (v. 2); “a very high mountain” (v. 2); “a structure like a city” (v. 2); “see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all” (v. 4)
2. Yahweh establishes his residence in the temple (40:3–43:27)
3. Israel responds to his presence in the midst (44:1–46:24)
4. Yahweh appoints the healed land to the twelve tribes (47:1–48:35)

- ❖ Elements that suggest Ezekiel’s vision represents something other than a future physical temple (Adapted from Block, “Envisioning the Good News,” 167).
- ❖ Before the visions, Ezekiel already proclaimed that God’s people would be the one’s in whom God would dwell (36:27; 37:14, 27–28).
- ❖ Ezekiel has already spoken of an eschatological “high mountain” associated with God’s new covenant work (17:22; 20:40–41; cf. 36:23; Isa 2:2; Mic 4:1).
- ❖ Ezekiel portrays the growing river that flows from the sanctuary in Edenic and messianic terms (47:1–12; cf. Gen 2:10–14; Ps 1:3), and John draws on this imagery, emphasizing how the tree of life has fruit for food and leaves for healing (Rev 22:2).

- ❖ The city seems idealized as a perfect square with three gates on each side, one associated with each of Israel's tribes (Ezek 48:30–34), and John again draws on this imagery (Rev 21:12–13).
- ❖ The apportionment of the land significantly disregards topographical and historical realities.
- ❖ The city and temple dimensions are dominated by multiples of five (with 25 dominating). The measuring rod is only used for horizontal measurements, thus cutting against the idea of reconstruction yet highlighting the greatness of Yahweh's holiness (Ezek 40:3–14). John repurposes this as well (Rev 21:15).

- ❖ Some Parallels with Rev 21–22
 - ❖ A visionary transport of the prophet to a high mountain (21:10).
 - ❖ The sight of a new world with Jerusalem at the center (21:1–2, 10).
 - ❖ The dwelling of God in the midst of the people, which produces a state of perfect well-being (21:3–4).
 - ❖ The presence of God’s glory in the city (21:11).
 - ❖ A heavenly interpreter with a measuring rod to measure the city (21:1–15).
 - ❖ A symmetrical plan of the city complete with high walls and twelve gates, one for each of the tribes (Ezek 48:30; cf. Rev 21:11–21).
 - ❖ An emphasis on the purity and holiness of those within (21:27).
 - ❖ The presence of the river of life (22:1).

The Holy City in Ezekiel and Revelation

Element	Ezekiel	Revelation
The holy city's identity	Unnamed in 40:2; renamed "Yahweh is there" (48:35)	The new Jerusalem (21:2)
The city's nature	Square	Cubical (21:16)
Construction material	Apparently ordinary stones	Precious stones and metals
The temple's role	At the center of everything	It is not a distinct element (21:22) but is everything
Role of sacrifice	At the heart of the ritual	The sacrificial yet victorious Lamb lives among his people
Nature of the residents	Continuing need to distinguish pure and impure	Absolute purity of all (21:26–27)
Scope of the vision	Israelite	Universal (21:24–27)

Adapted from Block, "Envisioning the Good News," 169.

Ezekiel's Message

- ◆ **Despite Yahweh's enduring grace, Israel has failed to keep the old covenant law that would have led to life.**
 - ❖ Lev 18:5
 - ❖ Ezek 20:8–11, 13–14, 21
- ◆ **The result was Israel's death—like a valley of dry bones.**
 - ❖ Ezek 37:1–2

◆ **God would perform a resurrection (37:3–13), making the people of a moveable temple (37:14, 27–28) that heeds his voice (37:23) and that is ruled by the new David (37:22, 24) in a restored Edenic paradise (37:25–26; cf. 36:35).**

Ezekiel's Eschatological Restoration

- ◆ **A reunited Israel under the Davidic King and including some from the nations (16:62; 37:15–28)**
- ◆ **God's people feeling remorse over previous sins (16:61; 20:43; 36:31)**
- ◆ **The Spirit bringing life resulting in covenant keeping (11:19–20; 18:9; 36:27; 37:14)**
- ◆ **God cleansing his people from all their evil desire and sin (14:4; 20:39; 36:25; 37:23)**

- ◆ **God being with his people/temple forever (37:26–27; 48:35)**
- ◆ **A new Eden-like creation (36:33–36; 47:6–12)**
- ◆ **God's overcoming enemies and protecting his people during the Messiah's reign (chs. 38–39)**

Summary

After Judah's rebellion results in Babylon destroying Yahweh's temple-throne in the earthly Jerusalem, the sovereign God will reestablish his reign through the new David (1) by returning Israel to its homeland, (2) by indwelling his people by his Spirit resulting in them being a temple that displays his holiness, and (3) by defeating all the enemies so that the world will know that Yahweh is the true God.