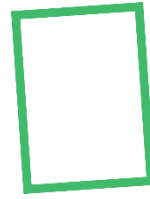


# Ezekiel 1–7

Session 2



## BIBLE TRAINING YORKSHIRE

### Ways in to Ezekiel 1–7

#### The big picture

A reminder of the geopolitical setting



There were Jewish settlements in Judah, Egypt and near Babylon itself. Sidon was just up the coast from Tyre.

One sentence summary message:

**You in exile in Babylon (and later generations looking back): through the prophet Ezekiel, overhear what I am saying to the rebellious idolaters of Judah and Jerusalem as I sentence them to utter destruction, and be warned that I will always act to restore the recognition of my name.**

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 1:1–3:15 | Opening vision: the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God   |
| 3:16–27  | Ezekiel commissioned as a watchman for the house of Israel and symbolically prepared as a true prophet of the LORD |
| 4:1–5:17 | Sign acts concerning Jerusalem, concluded by an oracle against Jerusalem   |
| 6:1–14   | An oracle addressed to the mountains of Israel   |
| 7:1–27   | An oracle addressed to the land of Israel  |

### GROUP WORK

In what ways might we find ourselves, like the exiles

- Drifting
- Lacking vision
- Discourages
- Slow to listen and in need of a wake-up call?

## Headlines

- The glorious presence of the LORD is mobile, not fixed in Jerusalem
- Ezekiel is established as a true prophet, a suffering messenger
- What Ezekiel sees, does and says is vivid and provocative, leaving no excuse to ignore him
- The oracle against Jerusalem in 5:5–17 summarises the basic message of Ezekiel 1–24. Jerusalem was placed in the centre of the nations, but has fallen below their level. The LORD therefore says he will act in punishment against them.
- The exiles should not yearn for the mountains and land of Israel as things stand.
- The purpose of acting in punishment is recognition (5:13; 6:13, 14; 7:27).

## Arrangement and narrative structure

1:1–3:15 Opening vision: the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God



From a German Bible, 1702

1:1-3 Introduction

1:4-28 The main *vision*:

(4) Introduction

(5–14) Living creatures

(15–21) Wheels

(22–27) Platform and throne

(28) Conclusion and response

2:1–3:15 *Speech*: Ezekiel sent to the obstinate house of Israel

- The storm imagery – the devastating impact of coming judgment
- The throne imagery – the justice of the one delivering judgment
- The cherubim chariot under the throne breaks the link between the cherubim in the Temple and the divine throne.

- The LORD is portrayed as mobile – certainly not tied to Jerusalem
- The cherubim chariot may represent the world, the creatures of the world, perhaps even the whole cosmos (subverting the some of the idolatrous images that the exiles would have seen in Babylon). Compare 1 Kings 8:27, ‘But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!’
- Ezekiel’s models the correct response to the glory of the LORD (1:28b). The vision establishes the LORD as the central focus of the book and the response establishes the kind of response Ezekiel want from those reading the book.
- This contrasts with the response Ezekiel is told to expect from the hardened and obstinate ‘house of Israel’ in exile.

### Group work

How would you go about teaching this!? What would be a faithful purpose statement? Following the structure, how would you break it up into a (simple!) purpose chain?

3:16–27 Ezekiel commissioned as a watchman for the house of Israel and symbolically prepared as a true prophet of the LORD

3:16–21 Ezekiel commissioned as a ‘watchman for the house of Israel’

3:22–27 Ezekiel initiated as a true prophet

- Watchman: (1) Seeing the coming ‘enemy’ of Jerusalem, who is the LORD himself, (2) Warning the exilic community of the destruction that comes from following Jerusalem’s example.
- Ezekiel is silent apart from the LORD speaking – when he speaks it is the LORD speaking. The initial silence may also correspond to the stubbornness of the house of Israel.

4:1–5:17 Sign acts concerning Jerusalem, concluded by an oracle against Jerusalem

4:1–17 The siege of Jerusalem dramatized

- a map drawn on a brick – Jerusalem
- an iron barrier – between the LORD (represented by Ezekiel) and Jerusalem

- lying on his left side for 390 days – (probably) bearing the iniquity of Israel as a whole for the 390 years for apostasy since Solomon
- lying on his right side for 40 days – (probably) bearing the punishment of Judah in exile for 40 years (like the wilderness generation).
- eating very little – or defiled food among the nations

5:1–4 The destruction of Jerusalem dramatized

- A third of Ezekiel's hair burned – death in Jerusalem
- A third of Ezekiel's hair cut to pieces – death for those trying to escape
- A third of Ezekiel's hair scattered, some of which is burned – exile and death for the rest

5:5–17 The destruction of Jerusalem verbalised

The LORD explains why he is acting in judgment against Jerusalem

- Because of the iniquity which is worse than the nations
- To restore the recognition of his authority as the LORD who speaks with authority expressed in judgment. 5:13 is the first of many *recognition formulae* in the book.

6:1–14 An oracle addressed to the mountains of Israel  
Briefly, no point in yearning for the mountains of Israel!

(Note again the recognition formulae at 6:13 and 6:14.)

7:1–27 An oracle addressed to the land of Israel  
Briefly, no point in yearning for the land of Israel!

(Note again the recognition formulae at 7:3 and 7:27.)

## Moving from Babylonia to Fulwood (via the death and resurrection of Jesus)

The LORD will *always* act to restore the recognition of his name – through judgment.

This happens either in Jesus or (terribly) apart from Jesus in future judgment.

All are equal in sin apart from him.

There is no refuge in corrupt structures.

There is only refuge in him – in Jesus.