

# EZEKIEL

## Making the Bible Come Alive

### The artist

#### WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

- Ezekiel was a prophet and the author of the book of Ezekiel.
- The name Ezekiel means "God gives strength".
- Ezekiel grew up in the city of Jerusalem.
- Ezekiel was trained as a priest in the Temple.
- Ezekiel was a priest who was among the captives taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:14-16).
- Ezekiel was the son of Buzi the priest and lived in the land of the Chaldeans (Ezekiel 1:3).
- Ezekiel delivered the words of the Lord to the Jewish exiles in Babylon at about the same time that Jeremiah was prophesying in Judea and Daniel was prophesying in the Babylonian court.
- Ezekiel was married (Ezekiel 24:18).

#### WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- Ezekiel saw the Lord and his glory. He was called as a watchman over the house of Israel to warn them, rebuke them and bring them to repentance (Ezekiel 1-3).
- He ate a scroll that was sweet as honey (Ezekiel 3:2-3).
- God instructed Ezekiel to use symbols to represent the wickedness of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel prophesied God's judgments on Jerusalem and explained why famine, desolation, war and pestilence would sweep through the land of Israel (Ezekiel 4-24).
- Ezekiel's grief was compounded by the death of his wife (Ezekiel 24), an event over which God forbade him to weep. God used the death of Ezekiel's wife as a sign to the people of Judah.
- The Lord commanded Ezekiel to declare the wickedness of the nations surrounding Israel and to prophesy their destruction (Ezekiel 25-32).
- God rebuked Israel's leaders for being bad shepherds to his people. Now the Lord would be the true shepherd of Israel. Ezekiel described his vision for the restoration of Israel after the exile and in the last days. God promises to gather the Israelites from captivity, return them to their promised land, renew his covenant with them, and reunite the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (Ezekiel 33-48).





- God had appointed him as a watchman over the house of Israel. "Now, son of man, I am making you a watchman for the people of Israel. Therefore, listen to what I say and warn them for me." (Ezekiel 33:7).
- His vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) represents new life breathed into the nation. This prophecy will ultimately be fulfilled during Christ's millennial reign on earth.
- Ezekiel's first vision was of God's throne and included a description of four living creatures and wheels. Ezekiel also had detailed visions of a new temple (Ezekiel 40-43), a restored Jerusalem (Ezekiel 48:30-35), the millennium (chapter 44), and the land in which God's people will dwell (Ezekiel 47:13-23). Israel and Judah will again be restored to unity from the ends of the earth, for the glory of God is also returning and God is dwelling among his people. These magnificent visions of Ezekiel concern both the immediate and long-term plans of God.

### WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **Ezekiel showed that we must be obedient to God's call on our lives.** God told Ezekiel to groan with a broken heart. He had a bitter grief for the coming judgment. By the way, the final judgment is coming! It will happen for sure, God declares. We can, like Ezekiel, warn others and we can also share with them the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.
- **God is sovereign.** The fact that God appeared to Ezekiel in Babylon and spoke against the other nations and leaders (Ezekiel 26 - 32) shows that God is sovereign over the whole world. Even the greatest superpower is under his control. The same is true in our lives. Sometimes when we see the world and its condition, we think that God is not there and is not listening to us, but that is not the case. We see that God's plan is going to be fulfilled until the last prophecy.
- **God equips us for the call.** God equips us for the most difficult responsibilities and circumstances. He told Ezekiel, "I have made your forehead as hard as the hardest rock!" so that he could speak to his people knowing they would not listen (Ezekiel 3:7-9). Ezekiel was called to a hopeless mission. When we are called by God, he gives us everything we need to carry out that call.

- **God is willing to forgive.** Ezekiel teaches us that God is willing to forgive those who repent. God is not eager to punish wrongdoers. Instead, he gives them every opportunity to repent. God appeals to the Israelites in (Ezekiel 18:31-32). Beyond the judgment and exile that God's unfaithful people were suffering at the time Ezekiel was written, God provided hope through his prophet (Ezekiel 36:24-26).
- **We may not always like what God asks us to do.** After the vision and the call, the Spirit takes Ezekiel back to the Chebar Canal. We might expect to see Ezekiel in the midst of "spiritual euphoria". However, we see that he is overwhelmed! God can call us to do things we don't like at first. Pray that he will change our hearts and desires, but in the meantime, we must obey him. God may ask us to help family members or people we don't like to talk to. Whether we like it or not, we must obey.

### LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

**Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.**

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

### MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter if IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!

