
History Makers

Part 2 - Ezekiel

Introduction

We're in a series looking at history makers from the scriptures

Today, we're going to step backwards in the Biblical history to the beginning of the exilic period of the nation of Israel.

We're going to take a look at Ezekiel, and some of what the Lord might have to say to us from the life of this enigmatic prophet.

The Prophet Ezekiel

Ezekiel 1:1-3

He's a priest, he's turning 30 and it's set on an exact date and at a specific place.

It's in the fifth year of the exile King Jehoiachin (see 2 Kings 24:8-17).

The temple is ransacked, and a puppet king, Jehoiachin's uncle, is set as ruler in Jerusalem, answerable to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar.

This is the first wave of exiles to go to Babylon. All the officials went, the mighty men of valour, the craftspeople and smiths, everyone but the poor people, Ezekiel included.

In Ezekiel's Shoes

He's a priest – His life was pointed at serving God in the Temple.

He was away from his home, in exile.

Ezekiel's Ministry

Ezekiel 1:26,28

kavod (glory) – the word used for the tangible, manifest presence of God (earlier used in the context of the Temple); literally the weightiness of God being right there with you.

It might feel like we're in exile – nothing is as it should be, nothing is right – life wasn't supposed to be like this, but God shows up! Right where everyone thought that He shouldn't be!

Is God showing up in His glory in your situation?

If not – is there a lie you're believing about your situation – that God doesn't want to show up right in your circumstance? If He could break the rules back then to show up in Babylon, how much more would He want to be with the one whom He has chosen to dwell with – you!?

Visions of the Future

One of the most remarkable parts of Ezekiel's ministry is what God shows him of what is to come.

Ezekiel 11:19-20

God's Future Promises

Ezekiel 37:1-10

Getting From Here to There

The challenge facing Ezekiel, and I think the challenge facing us, is moving between the promise of God and our present circumstance.

It's another 65 years before the exile ends, and the events of Ezra and Nehemiah take place.

It's another 600 years or so until Jesus comes and fulfils more of the promises.

Some of Ezekiel's visions and promises are still not fulfilled.

What do we do when the promise is made, but the circumstances are not yet changed?

Jeremiah 29:4-14

Response

Maybe, for some of us, we have lost sight, or maybe never heard, the promises of God over us, our families, our church or our city.

Maybe we have the promises, but we've become so enamoured with getting to the end that we have missed God in our circumstances.

Maybe we have become so fixed on our loss and lack that we can't see beyond it, that we have no expectation of God showing up in the midst of them.

Maybe you have cried out, but God hasn't shown up, hasn't responded to you like you think He should have.

Instead, maybe the vision is to keep us engaged with Him, so that He can get to work on our hearts, that eventually our heart's desire is not to have everything set right, but a deep and abiding desire for Him.

Reflection Questions

1. Take some time to read the first chapter of Ezekiel. It's confusing, unusual, and difficult to understand why it's significant. Imagine if God revealed Himself to you, and you didn't have the words to describe it. How would you feel?
2. Ezekiel experiences repeated visions of God that are so intense that he is, at times, knocked to the ground, or lifted up from it. God shows him many things, and at the same time asks Ezekiel to do unusual things to communicate God's message to the people. What does obedience look like in your life? Have you experienced a time where God asked you to do something unusual to communicate His reality to someone else? What would it take for God to call you to this level of obedience?

3. Ezekiel shows us that God is okay with showing up where we don't expect Him to – sometimes in the dirty, lost, dark or uncomfortable spaces in our lives or circumstances. How have you experienced that in the past? Where do you need Him to do that for you now? Where are you uncomfortable about Him showing up?

4. Ezekiel receives so many amazing promises of God's future restoration of His chosen people, including us. What promises from scripture, prophetic words, journaling or wise council do you hold on to? Where do you need to receive or be reminded of God's promises?

5. How are you going about stewarding the 'in-between' time – between the promises in the future and the present reality?

6. Read Jeremiah 29:4-14 again, and spend some time talking with the Lord in prayer about how this applies to your current circumstances and attitudes to life. Finish your prayer time with thanking the Lord that He is willing to be present with us each and every moment, in every circumstance, and then invite Him to do this for your week ahead.