

Ezekiel

God's Glory & Greatness
Israel's Renewal & Return

Introduction

- Prophet: יְחִזְקֵאל, May God strengthen, *priest*
- Date: 592-572 B.C. (1:3, 40:1; 2nd exile 597)
- Setting: Last days of Judah (*from Babylon*)
- Theme: Glory Departs, Greatness Demonstrated
Renew and Return
- Message: Because of Zion's sin, God's removes His glory. God's coming judgment will purify remnant, punish Israel's enemies & proclaim His greatness. **In the future, God will renew His people, His covenant, return His temple, glory!**

Transition: Responsibility (33)

- Ezekiel: ‘I will require it at your hand’ (1-9)
 - *Watchman*: responsible to warn wicked! (cf. 3:16-21)
- Exiles: ‘I’ll judge according to his ways’ (11-20)
 - *Ways*: individual responsibility (7:1-9, 18:21f);
God is just, seeks repentance leading to righteousness
- End: ‘because of all their abominations’ (21-30)
 - *Waste*: YHWH held Judah responsible for violations;
exiles responsible as well (*vindication*)!

Renew (34-39)

- Re-gather: ‘I will seek out/rescue my sheep’ (34)
 - *Rebuke*: (1-10) For neglecting the flock out of self-interest, God vows to remove shepherds, deliver sheep
 - *Rescue*: (11-22) God promises to rescue His sheep, re-gather from nations, rule (*shepherd*), reverse plight
 - *Renew*: (23-31) God will (1) appoint under-shepherd, ideal David (2) make a covenant of peace, promising security from enemies: animal, land, man (2x)
(3) renew His covenant relationship (cf. Hos. 2:18f).

Renew (34-39)

- Repay: ‘I will cut off all who come & go’ (35-36:7)
 - *Reviled*: Due to Edom’s enmity at Jerusalem’s fall, God promises retribution: bloodshed, all come & go (cf. *Obad. 14*); desolation – rejoiced over desolate; reproach – reproached by the nations
- Renown: ‘It is not for your sake . . .’ (36:8-38)
 - *Renew*: God promises to restore, remove reproach, defend His name (*Israel’s impurity, God’s renown: willingly abandoned or incapable of defending*), so people must be returned & renewed (*cleansed by water/Spirit, cf. Jn. 3*), not for you but for My glory!

Renew (34-39)

- Resurrect: ‘I will cause breath to enter you’ (37)
 - *Resuscitate*: (1-14) With Ezekiel’s vision of dry bones coming to life, God shows He can resurrect scattered Israel, those seemingly dead & without hope!
 - *Reunited*: (15-28) With the joining of two sticks, God promises that He will re-gather & reunite Israel & Judah under the ideal Davidic ruler. After cleansing them, He will make an everlasting covenant of peace, restoring His presence among them!

Renew (34-39)

- Resist: ‘I will bring you against my land’ (38-39)
 - *Rescue*: (38-39:24) After Israel’s restoration, a world-wide coalition (NSE) will see their security as vulnerability, seek to conquer. YHWH will direct, defeat Gog to magnify His holiness among nations
 - *Restore*: (25-29) God promises to bring His people back from exile, show them mercy, and pour His Spirit on them. Then they will turn away from all their sin and recognize God’s sovereignty!

Return (40-48)

- Reveal: ‘Declare all that you see . . .’ (40-48)
In 573 B.C., Ezekiel is ‘transported’ to land of Israel (Jerusalem), to record content of his visions (40:1-4).
 - *Rebuilt*: (40:5-42:20) Ezekiel includes details on the structure & measurements: courts, gates, windows walls, chambers, vestibule, nave, inner room. Why?
From a priestly line, Ezekiel is very concerned with temple structure & rules. More importantly, such detail is included for rebuilding! (cf. 43:10-11)

Return (40-48)

- Reveal: ‘Declare all that you see . . .’ (40-48)
 - *Return*: (43:1-9) Greater than the temple is the return of YHWH’s glory. Ezekiel likens this vision to earlier ones (ch. 1, 10-11), responds with humility.

“The prophet’s physical response, falling down on his face, indicates that neither years of reflection nor decades of service have dulled his sense of awe and terror at the sight of the glory of God.”

Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 579

Return (40-48)

- Reveal: ‘Declare all that you see to Israel’ (40-48)
 - *Return*: (43:1-9) Greater than the temple is the return of YHWH’s glory. Ezekiel likens this vision to earlier ones (1, 10-11), responds with humility. He will establish his throne, be forever among a pure people.
 - *Ruler*: (44-46) The east gate will be closed until the ‘prince’ comes, the ideal Davidic ruler (34:24, 37:25) who will rule with justice (45:7-12, 46:18) and facilitate national worship (45:17, 46:10)

Return (40-48)

- Reveal: ‘Declare all that you see to Israel’ (40-48)
 - *River*: (47) From God’s temple flows a river, filled with fish & lined with fruit trees. Thus, God’s temple is the source of life, healing & renewed blessing.
 - *Reside*: (47-48) The land will again be divided among the tribes. But the most important thing about this land is not the structures or its servants but God’s abiding presence, “And the name of that city from that time on shall be, ‘YHWH is There.’”

“The description in these nine chapters of a temple, the filling of that temple with God’s glory, a sacrificial system for worship in that temple, priestly functions, and the tribal and priestly allotment of land is rather evident and clear to the reader. The question that has puzzled interpreters is, what does it all mean? *Should these chapters be interpreted literally or figuratively? Does this section refer to a historical situation (past, present) or to the future? If to the future, does it concern the millennium or the eternal state? Is there not a retrogression to OT modes of worship; and if so, how does this fit with the NT teaching of the finished and complete worship of Christ?* Surely this portion of the book contains some very puzzling and difficult concepts that cannot be ignored.”

Alexander, *Ezekiel*, EBC vol. 6, 942

Return (40-48)

○ Interpretations: (when & how?)

- (1) Zerubbabel (516): lesser due to lack of faith (cf. Jer. 18)
[different measurements; after restored, battle 38-39]
- (2) Church: spiritually fulfilled, Israel=Church (Gal. 3:29)
[subjective, too detailed for non-literal hermeneutic]
- (3) Millennium: physically fulfilled, Israel (cf. Rev. 22:1)
[sacrifice for atonement ≠ Hebrews; memorial, Isa 56?]
- (4) Cultural: expressing apocalyptic ideas in ways readers would understand, expected restoration include return/reunification, Davidic rule, temple, sacrifice; essential fulfillment: literal temple but no sacrifice (prince, 45:22)

Summary

After God's judgment of Judah (1-24) and the nations (25-32), He promises to re-gather His people scattered among the nations, and renew His covenant with them, for the sake of His glory (33-39). In the future, a magnificent temple will be rebuilt, where God's glory will return once again to dwell among His people.