

THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

11/12 – Ezek 1-3, Heb 9
11/13 – Ezek 4-6, Heb 10:1-23
11/14 – Ezek 7-9, Heb 10:24-39
11/15 – Ezek 10-12, Heb 11:1-19

11/16 – Ezek 13-15, Heb 11:20-40
11/17 – Ezek 16, Heb 12
11/18 – Ezek 17-19, Heb 13
11/19 – Ezek 20-21, Jas 1

** Summaries/outlines from The Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version, ©1995 by the American Bible Society.

EZEKIEL

Ezekiel was a priest and a prophet. He had been taken away as a prisoner to Babylonia, where he lived among the other exiles from Judah. The Lord chose Ezekiel to be his prophet and to preach his message, not only to the exiles in Babylonia, but also to the people still living in Jerusalem. Ezekiel's ministry probably began around 593 BC, during the last years of the kingdom of Judah, and it ended sometime around 570 BC, several years after the fall of Jerusalem. Ezekiel preached before and after this horrible disaster, and so some of his messages threatened judgment and others offered hope.

The book of Ezekiel can be divided into five main parts. The first part describes Ezekiel's vision of the Lord's glory and tells how the Lord appointed Ezekiel to be his prophet. The second part includes several messages warning people of Judah that they will soon be punished for turning away from the Lord. Ezekiel acted out many of these warnings. And the third part of the book includes the Lord's judgments on nearby nations.

The fourth part of the book is made up of Ezekiel's messages after he heard that Jerusalem had been captured. These are messages of hope. The Lord promises he will forgive his people and bring them back to Judah and Jerusalem. Finally, the fifth part of the book is Ezekiel's vision of the new temple in Jerusalem, its regulations for proper worship, and how the restored land of Israel will be divided among the tribes.

When the Lord speaks to Ezekiel, he calls him "son of man." Although this expression shows that Ezekiel is a mere human, it also shows that he has been appointed to preach the Lord's message to the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

One of the most familiar passages in the book is Ezekiel's vision of the valley full of dried-out bones. Ezekiel watches the Lord's Spirit blow life into the dead bodies, and he sees them come back to life.

OUTLINE

- I. Ezekiel Sees the Lord's Glory and is Chosen to be His Prophet (1:1-3:27)
- II. Ezekiel Acts Out the Coming Destruction of Judah and Jerusalem (4:1-5:17)
- III. Disaster is Near (6:1-7:27)
- IV. The Lord's Glory Leaves Sinful Jerusalem (8:1-11:25)
- V. Messages of Doom for Judah and Jerusalem (12:1-24:27)
- VI. Judgment on Foreign Nations (25:1-32:32)
- VII. Ezekiel Must Warn the People to Turn from Their Sinful Ways (33:1-20)
- VIII. The News of Jerusalem's Fall (33:21-22)
- IX. The Lord Promises to Bring the People Home and to Restore Judah (34:1-37:28)
- X. Gog Will be Defeated and Israel Will be Restored (38:1-39:29)
- XI. Ezekiel Sees the Future Temple in Jerusalem (40:1-46:24)
- XII. The Stream Flowing from the Temple (47:1-12)
- XIII. The Borders of the Restored Land and Its Division Among the Tribes (47:13-48:35)

BIBLE BLURB (from @biblesummary)

Ezk1: I saw visions of God. Out of a storm came four creatures. I saw wheels within wheels. Above them was a throne and the figure of a man.

Ezk2: He said to me: "Son of man, stand up." The Spirit entered me. He said: "I send you to rebel Israel." Before me was a scroll of woe.

Ezk3: He said to me: "Israel will not listen." I came to the exiles. The LORD said: "I have made you a watchman. I will open your mouth."

Ezk4: "Son of man, take clay and draw Jerusalem. Then lie on your side. You shall bear the punishment of Israel. Cook your bread over dung."

Ezk5: "Son of man, shave your head. Jerusalem has rebelled. A third shall die of famine, a third by the sword and a third I will scatter."

Ezk6: "Son of man, prophesy against the mountains of Jerusalem. The slain shall lie among their idols. They will know that I am the LORD."

Ezk7: "The end has come! I will punish you for all your abominations. Silver and gold cannot deliver. The people of the land will tremble."

Ezk8: The Spirit lifted me up. "Son of man, see what they do. Elders burn incense to idols. Women weep for Tammuz. Men worship the sun."

Ezk9: He cried, "Bring the executioners." Six men came. "Kill old and young, but do not touch those with the mark. I will not have pity."

Ezk10: He told the man in linen: "Take fire from between the wheels." Each wheel had four faces. The glory of the LORD left the temple.

Ezk11: The Spirit said: "These men plot evil." I said: "Will you destroy the remnant?" The LORD said: "I will put a new spirit within them."

Ezk12: "Son of man, they are a rebellious house. Bring out your baggage like an exile. I will disperse them. My word will not be delayed."

Ezk13: "Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit. I will send a storm in my wrath. Woe to the women who sew magic charms."

Ezk14: The elders came to me. The LORD said: "They have set up idols in their hearts. Even Noah, Daniel and Job would only save themselves."

Ezk15: "Son of man, is wood taken from the vine to make anything? I have given it to the fire for fuel. So I have given up Jerusalem."

Ezk16: "Jerusalem, I made you flourish. But you played the whore. I will gather your lovers against you. Yet I will remember my covenant."

Ezk17: "An eagle planted a vine but it grew towards another eagle. Israel rebelled against Babylon with Egypt. I myself will plant a cedar."

Ezk18: "If a man is righteous, he shall live. If a son is violent, he shall die. I will judge each according to his ways. Repent and live!"

Ezk19: "Lament for the princes of Israel: A lioness had cubs. One was taken to Egypt, another to Babylon. A vine was stripped of its fruit."

Ezk20: "I led Israel out of Egypt. They did not walk in my law. I withheld my hand for my name's sake. You will know that I am the LORD."

Ezk21: "Son of man, prophesy against Israel. A sword is sharpened! Mark the way for the king of Babylon. A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it."

HEBREWS

Many religious people in the first century after Jesus' birth, both Jews and Gentiles, had questions about the religion of the early Christians. They were looking for evidence that this new faith was genuine. Jews had the miracle of crossing the Red Sea and the agreement made with God at Mount Sinai to support their faith. But what miracles did Christians have? Jews had beautiful worship ceremonies and a high priest who offered sacrifices in the temple so that the people would be forgiven. But what did Christians have? How could this new Christian faith, centered in Jesus, offer forgiveness of sins and friendship with God?

The letter to the Hebrews was written to answer exactly these kinds of questions. In it the author tells the readers how important Jesus really is. He is greater than any of God's angels, greater than any prophet, and greater even than Moses and Joshua. Jesus is the perfect high priest because he never sinned, and by offering his own life he has made the perfect sacrifice for sin once for all time. By his death and return from death he has opened the way for all people to come to God.

This letter has much to say about the importance of faith. The writer points out that what Jesus offers comes only by faith. And this faith makes his followers sure of what they hope for and gives them proof of things that cannot be seen. The writer praises God's faithful people of the past and encourages those who follow Jesus now to keep their eyes on him as they run the race.

OUTLINE

- I. The Greatness of God's Son (1:1-4)
- II. Jesus is Greater than Angels (1:5-2:18)
- III. Jesus is Greater than Moses and Joshua (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Jesus is the Great High Priest (4:14-7:28)
- V. Jesus Brings a Better Agreement (8:1-9:22)
- VI. Jesus' Sacrifice is Once and for All (9:23-10:31)
- VII. Some of God's People Who Had Great Faith (11:1-40)
- VIII. Follow the Example of Jesus (12:1-13:19)
- IX. Final Prayers and Greetings (13:20-25)

BIBLE BLURB (from @biblesummary)

Heb9: The high priest enters the Most Holy Place once a year with blood. Christ entered the true holy place once for all by his own blood.

Heb10: The law is but a shadow. Animal blood cannot take away sins. Christ offered one sacrifice forever. So let us hold fast to our hope.

Heb11: Faith is the proof of hope. By faith the world was made. By faith Abraham obeyed. By faith Moses left Egypt. In faith some suffered.

Heb12: Let us run the race, looking to Jesus. God is disciplining you as sons. See that no one falls short of grace. Let us worship in awe.

Heb13: Let love continue. Marriage should be honoured. Let us bear the reproach Christ endured. Submit to your leaders. Grace be with you.

JAMES

This is a good example of a general letter, because it is addressed to Christians scattered throughout the Roman empire. Though written as a letter, it is more like a short book of instructions for daily living.

For James faith means action! In fact, the entire book is a series of examples that show faith in action in wise and practical ways.

His advice was clear and to the point: If you are poor, don't despair! Don't give up when your faith is being tested. Don't get angry quickly. Don't favor the rich over the poor. Do good things for others. Control your tongue and desires. Surrender to God and rely on his wisdom. Resist the devil. Don't brag about what you are going to do. If you are rich, use your money to help the poor. Be patient and kind, and pray for those who need God's help.

OUTLINE

- I. Greetings (1:1)
- II. A Life of Faith and Wisdom (1:2-18)
- III. Hearing and Obeying God's Message (1:19-27)
- IV. Don't Favor the Rich and Powerful (2:1-13)
- V. Faith and Works (2:14-26)
- VI. Wisdom and Words (3:1-18)
- VII. Warning Against Friendship with the World (4:1-5:6)
- VIII. Patience, Kindness, and Prayer (5:7-20)

BIBLE BLURB (from @biblesummary)

Jas1: James, to the tribes. Many trials produce perseverance. Riches will fade. Every good gift comes from the Father. Be doers of the word.

Getting to Know God Through His Book - 4 Questions - Ask...

Insight—what does the passage say? Paraphrase the main point(s) and the commands to follow, promises to claim, examples to follow (or avoid), etc.

Question—what don't I understand? Need to know more about? How does this passage make me feel?

Praise—what does this passage teach me about God? Turn what the passage says into praise for the Lord's goodness, power, holiness, wisdom, etc.

Apply—what is God saying to me from this passage? Confess how you have not followed it. Pray, asking God to help you obey. Get quiet and ask God to speak to you.

Journal—write out your prayers, thoughts, responses to God and His Word

HOW TO PRAY

Scripture is God speaking to us. Prayer is us speaking to and listening to God. Jesus gave us the model in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6). Keep your relationship fresh with the Lord by both reading and praying - two way communication. Remember to look up like Jesus did when He prayed.

1. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name – focus on God, adore, praise, thank Him – long to see His glory and honor.
2. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done – ask for what you know will please Him, pray back the Scripture – that is His will.
3. Give us this day our daily bread – ask for your needs and others to be met.
4. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us – ask for forgiveness, from God, and from others you may have hurt. Ask God to help you forgive and restore others too. Ask Him to get rid of bitterness and have love & compassion for those who have hurt you.
5. And lead us not into temptation – ask God to take over your day, protect you and others from evil.
6. For thine is the kingdom, power & glory – end by re-focusing on God, His kingdom, power, and glory!
7. Listen – ask God to speak to you by His Spirit – always test what you hear by His Word.
8. Pray the Blind Bartimaeus Prayer (Mark 10) – Tell God what you feel, what you want, and ask God what you should do to get what you want (if what you want is right).