

**2019 Through the Bible Reading: Bible Study Support**

The Book of Ezekiel	
<b>Background and Purpose</b>	Ezekiel prophesied during a time of great confusion following Israel's exile to Babylon in 597 B.C. A former Judean king was among the exiles (the eighteen-year-old Jehoiachin), and the Babylonians had appointed a puppet king to the throne in Jerusalem (Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah). In times of crisis, God sent prophets to bring his message to his people. Judah's exile was therefore a period of intense prophetic activity. (Jeremiah also served during this time.) Ezekiel's fellow exiles were his main audience, but his oracles also communicated to people who remained in Judah. Ezekiel spoke to a people forced from their home because they had broken faith with their God. As the spokesman for the Lord, Ezekiel spoke truths that defended his reputation as a holy God (see 36:32-33) The primary purpose of Ezekiel's message was to restore God's glory before Israel, who had rejected him in front of the watching nations.
<b>Key Themes</b>	<p>1.) As a priest, Ezekiel was deeply concerned with restoring God's people to holiness. His understanding of the depth of Israel's sin is clear in his version of Israel's history (chapter 20) Even the chapters about a restored Israel (chapters 40-48) include a way to deal with the people's sin so they can survive in the presence of a holy God. Ezekiel's concern with sin also accounts for the many places where the book echoes the laws given in the Pentateuch, as well as the similarities between Ezekiel's new temple (chapters 40-42) and the Exodus tabernacle.</p> <p>2.) Israel was subject to its national God. However, this God is no tribal deity. He is supreme over all nations. Therefore Nebuchadnezzar, king of mighty Babylon, was simply a tool in God's hand to accomplish God's purpose (21:19-23; 30:25). God's absolute supremacy is most clearly demonstrated in the battle against Gog, the final enemy (chapters 38-39), where God alone crushes Gog's vast hostile forces.</p> <p>3.) Ezekiel declares judgment on those clinging to false hope, but offers true hope to those who accept God's judgment (37:11). He linked God's judgment with the hope of a new heart and spirit (36:22-32).</p> <p>4.) The condemnation of Israel's "princes" (Ch. 19) finds its hopeful counterpart in the promise of a future "prince" who would rule with justice (34:23-24) and connect the people to God (46:1-18).</p>
<b>Memory Verses: Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NKJV)</b>	<i>"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."</i>
<b>Practical Application to memory verse</b>	A "new heart" and a "new spirit" mean renewed ones, renewed by the Spirit and grace of God in where a new perspective of life is placed, new light is placed in us, a new will, filled with new purposes and desires. It is in this newness is where we experience joy on new levels, as well as new sorrows and troubles with a new hope filled perspective the same that the New Testament calls the "new man," and the new creature. You have been made new! There are many opportunities to walk in this newness of life every day, as the Holy Spirit to help you see and respond according to the heart of God.
<b>Life Application from Biblical Themes in Ezekiel</b>	God loved Israel too much to let them stay where they were. As His followers, He loves us too much to let us stay where we are when we stray from Him. What has the Lord been asking you to surrender to Him, and what steps are you taking to do that? We serve the one true God, who reigns supreme over all, one day it will be made known to every person on this earth that Jesus Christ is Lord! We have the honor of sharing the

	amazing love that God has for mankind, and we get to partner is displaying that love in how we interact with others. Love God and Love People!
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