

Ezekiel

1. *Authorship:*

Ezekiel was the author of this book in our Bible. He is the only person by this name in the Bible. His name only appears twice in this book (1:3; 24:24). Ezekiel's father was a priest named Buzi. Ezekiel was a married man. In fact the death of his wife occurred about the mid-point of his ministry. Ezekiel means "God strengthens" or "God is strong."

2. *Background:*

After his father Josiah was killed in battle, King Jehoiakim was placed on the throne in Jerusalem by Pharaoh Neco. When this Pharaoh was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC, Jehoiakim hastily switched allegiance to the Babylonians. He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, however, after serving him for three years. By the time the Babylonian army arrived to punish him, Jehoiakim had died. His son, Jehoiachin, tried to rule, but lasted only three months. In March 597 BC the eighteen year old king surrendered Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiachin and 10,000 captives were taken to Babylon. Among them was Ezekiel. This was eleven years before Jerusalem was destroyed. Daniel had been in Babylon nine years already, and had achieved fame as adviser to Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah was still in Jerusalem, warning against the coming destruction. Ezekiel's prophetic ministry covered some twenty years in which he spoke to the Jewish people in captivity. For eleven years he prophesied the fall of Jerusalem as the necessary punishment from the holy God for the sins of the people (chapters 1-24). During the sixteen months of the final siege of Jerusalem, Ezekiel prophesied the later destruction of Israel's enemies (chapters 25-32) as God's punishment for their sin, pride, and arrogance. These predictions came true during the next fifteen years, as Nebuchadnezzar continued his victorious march westward. After Jerusalem fell Ezekiel prophesied the return from captivity, the reestablishment of the Temple, and the coming kingdom of the Messiah (chapters 33-48).

3. *Special Features:*

- Jesus' self-designation "son of man" may have been borrowed partly from the book of Ezekiel.
- The name "Ezekiel" occurs nowhere else in the Bible.
- More visions and parables are used in this book than in any other Old Testament book.
- Ezekiel made two visionary flights to Jerusalem from Babylon. In the first he witnessed firsthand the appalling sins being committed secretly and in public by the nation's leaders (chapters 8-10). In the second (chapters 40-48) he saw a glorious future temple.

4. December Reading Guide

Week of Nov 27-Dec 3	Ezekiel 1-10
Week of Dec 4-10	Ezekiel 11-20
Week of Dec 11-17	Ezekiel 21-30
Week of Dec 18-24	Ezekiel 31-39
Week of Dec 25-31	Ezekiel 40-48