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Five years after Jehoiachin was taken captive, Ezekiel states that he received the word of the Lord. The journal entries we just looked at cover about 20 years of time.

What do you notice about the Lord's timing of communicating with Ezekiel?

Does this have any impact on your understanding of the Lord's timing in speaking to you?

Congratulations! You have just traveled from the present back to 605 BC when the first Israelites (Daniel and friends) were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Then time marched on, although slowly and painfully for Ezekiel and the exiles. Ezekiel recorded his role as prophet, which spanned 20 years, but his visions spanned several millennia!

The circumstances in which Ezekiel found himself were heartbreaking. He had been preparing to serve the Lord as a priest in the temple which had been built by Solomon. As we will see in future studies, he was devoted to the Lord and had kept himself pure. Now he was a stranger in a pagan country. Exiled. Grieving. Waiting. But in the darkest period of Ezekiel's life, the Lord was going to come to him in all of His glory.

What are your circumstances today? Do you long to see the Lord? Close today's study with a prayer expressing your desire for Him.

Blessed are those who see the hand of God in the haphazard, inexplicable, and seemingly senseless circumstances of life.¹ ERWIN W. LUTZER (1941–)

LESSON TWO

The Vision of the Lord

EZEKIEL 1

Pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of your understanding would be enlightened, and that you would know the hope of His calling.

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Prepare to see the glory of the Lord as revealed to Ezekiel.

Slowly read Ezekiel Chapter 1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Just read the text, without consulting commentaries at this point.

What “came to pass” in verse 1?

What phrases in verse 3 indicate that Ezekiel experienced something outside of his ordinary routine?

The phrase “the word of the Lord” is used over 60 times throughout this book. Plan on marking, highlighting, or underlining it each time you see it. The Word of the Lord did not come to everyone in those days. The people wanted to hear from Him, but they didn’t always want to hear what He had to say to them. A time would come when the Lord would be silent – for four hundred years. And then, in the fullness of time, the Word of the Lord came again. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Please remember that you can always hear the Word of the Lord when you open your Bible. The Lord is there.

Using terms from Scripture, in order of appearance, describe what Ezekiel saw in verses 4-25.

What do the repeated terms “appearance” and “likeness” imply to you? Why do you think they were used over and over?

Look at the following Scriptures and compare Ezekiel’s vision with these other manifestations and visions of the Lord. Note the similarities, the symbolism or purpose if given, and the differences.

Jeremiah 23:18-20

Exodus 19:16-20

Psalm 18:6-14

Isaiah 6:1-8

Revelation 4:2-9

Jump ahead for a moment to Ezekiel 10, reading the chapter in its entirety, to see another description by Ezekiel about the living creatures. Note any further explanation, description or actions regarding the living creatures.

Let’s look at a few other Scriptures which mention cherub (singular) or cherubim (plural). Where do you find them? What are their purposes?

Genesis 3:24

Exodus 25:17-20

Exodus 26:31

Pause and reflect on the honor and obedience that these creatures give to the Lord. Did you know that angels “desire to look into” the gospel and they don’t receive salvation from Jesus Christ? Do you think that you have more for which to give honor and obedience and glory to the Lord than they do? Should the cherubim “out-praise” you?

While the images of the whirlwind, cherubim, and wheels are fascinating, they pale in comparison to Who Ezekiel saw above the chariot, above the “firmament.” List as many details as you can from Ezekiel 1:26-28.

“This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.” Ezekiel 1:28

Please look up the meaning for:

Glory: Strong’s #3519

Hebrew word:

Hebrew definition:

Who is this? Turn to Hebrews 1:1-4 to discover the answer; make sure you notice the word “glory.” Record what you learn.

There are so many people who want to see God. He has already shown Himself and is still able to be seen everyday! I mentioned yesterday that all you needed for this journey was a desire for the truth and an attitude willing to respond to the truth. The Scripture that we hold in our hands is the truth. What you read in black and white is reality.

Look at the following references to continue to see the Lord. Make notes of what you see.

Exodus 24:9-11

Joshua 5:13-15

Daniel 10:4-7

Luke 9:28-36

Revelation 1:12-18

The vision of the glory of the Lord was the preparation for Ezekiel to be the servant of the Lord. In this awesome, unexplainable encounter, Ezekiel saw the Lord for Who He is: Holy, Supernatural, Above All, a Consuming Fire.

What was Ezekiel's response?

Another man saw the Lord and responded in the same way. Look at the following passage, noting the similarities in the vision, and then note the instructions given.

Acts 26:12-18

Have you seen the glory of the Lord? Do you know Him? 2 Corinthians 4:6 says "For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." You will only be able to see God if you have seen Jesus. Ezekiel knew who God was and had been preparing to be His priest, but he had not personally experienced Him. The apostle Paul was a religious leader and knew who God was, but he had rejected Jesus. When these two men saw the Lord in His glory they were never the same again.

How do you respond to the vision of the glory of the Lord today?

Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you understanding of the call to be a servant.

EZEK

Today, we will see what happens after a man encounters the glorious Lord. Ezekiel's response will challenge and inspire us.

A Christian servant is one who perpetually looks into the face of God and then goes forth to talk to others. ² Oswald Chambers

I'm going to ask you to read Chapter 1 again, continuing through until Ezekiel 3:16. Throughout this study, I will ask you to reread passages and chapters so that the images and messages in this book will become more familiar. At your first readings, the signs, parables, and visions will be bizarre, outlandish, and extraordinary. As they become more familiar you will gain a better understanding of the Lord and His message, and of Ezekiel and his mission.

Please read Ezekiel 1:1 - 3:16.

In the previous lesson, we observed that Ezekiel's immediate reaction to seeing the glory of the Lord was to fall on his face. He humbled himself before his awesome and holy God. What happened next? Look for who, what, and how in Ezekiel 1:28 — 2:2. Record what you learn.

*Ezekiel's initial encounter with the Lord was primarily visual as he **saw** the glory of the Lord. This prepared him to **hear** the Lord and receive his commission from the Lord. For the next 20 years the word of the Lord will be spoken to Ezekiel. He will hear it and speak what he hears.*

Study Ezekiel 2:1 — 3:11 and list on the chart on the next page each of the instructions given to Ezekiel (even those repeated) and then list the description of Israel (include all repetitions).

Instructions to Ezekiel	Descriptions of Israel

What are your first impressions of the Lord's commission to Ezekiel?

What do you think about the way the Lord described His chosen people, the nation of Israel?

Do you personally relate to anything we've observed so far? Do you have clear instructions from the Lord regarding some service to Him? Do you have a call that seems that it will be extremely difficult? Are you being led to live as an obedient servant of the Lord among rebellious, stubborn, or hard-hearted people? Are you perhaps a rebellious child, not listening to what the Lord is saying to you?

Spend a few moments responding to the Lord in whatever way is personally appropriate for you at this time.

The commission of Ezekiel did not come without a commitment from the Lord. Read the following verses and note how Ezekiel was enabled to obey.

Ezekiel 2:2

Ezekiel 2:9-3:3

Ezekiel 3:8-10

Ezekiel 3:12-14

Please look up the meaning for the following word:

Adamant: Strong's #8068

Hebrew word:

Hebrew definition:

Even though the house of Israel was rebellious and hard-hearted, Ezekiel was given hard-headedness! There is diamond-like beauty in being adamant about the truth of the Lord.

There are a few more words and phrases whose meanings will add to our understanding of Ezekiel's commission and the Lord's commitment to him.

Please look up the meaning for:

Bitterness: Strong's #4751

Hebrew word:

Hebrew definition:

Heat: Strong's #2534

Hebrew word:

Hebrew definition:

Astonished: Strong's #8074

Hebrew word:

Hebrew definition:

Now read Ezekiel 3:15 and note where Ezekiel was placed, who he was with, and what he did.

Based on the definition of the words you looked up, look again at Ezekiel 3:14,15 and describe in your own words Ezekiel's reaction to his new assignment.

“But the hand of the Lord was strong upon me. . .” Despite the extreme grief from being in captivity, despite the overwhelming responsibility to announce the coming judgment of God, despite the personal anguish which Ezekiel felt, the hand of the Lord was strong enough to sustain him and empower him to obey. He would experience this strength throughout the duration of his ministry.

Look at the following verses and note the circumstance in which Ezekiel finds himself and what happens when the hand of the Lord comes upon him.

Ezekiel 3:14

Ezekiel 3:22

Ezekiel 8:1

Ezekiel 33:22, 23

Ezekiel 37:1

Equal in importance to the hand of the Lord was the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Look at the following verses and note what the Spirit does.

Ezekiel 2:2

Ezekiel 3:12, 14

Ezekiel 3:23, 24

Ezekiel 8:3

Ezekiel 11:1, 5, 24

Ezekiel 43:5

In the Old Testament, God selectively empowered those whom He chose for service to Him. The Scriptures record the times that the Spirit of the Lord came upon men such as Gideon, Samson, Saul and David. The Lord isn't looking for a few good men. He is looking for one receptive man or woman. The men just listed are examples of weakness, timidity, lustfulness, pride, and youth. The Lord has His reasons for choosing common, pathetic people!

Look at the following references and note the Lord's desire.

Zechariah 4:6

2 Corinthians 4:7

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

As we close this lesson today, consider again the instructions given to Ezekiel. Perhaps you found yourself identifying with him because of some situation which you are facing, whether it be a trial or an opportunity for ministry. If you have seen Jesus face-to-face and accepted Him

as your Savior, then the Holy Spirit has already come upon you, as He came upon Ezekiel, to strengthen you and equip you to follow the Lord. Jesus spoke His final promise from the Mount of Olives before ascending into heaven. He prepared the disciples for their new assignment, and His words to them are for you as well.

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

What are you doing in the power of the Spirit? How is the hand of the Lord strengthening you today?

LESSON FOUR

The Requirement of the Lord

EZEKIEL 3

Pray that as we study we will heed the warnings and understand the signs.

אָרְבֵּי

Please begin your study today by starting your reading at Ezekiel 2 and continuing through the end of Chapter 3. You will see Ezekiel as a watchman with a warning, as a shut-in at home, and as a servant made silent. After reading Ezekiel 2 – 3 please look up the following words:

Watchman: Strong’s #6822

Hebrew word:

Hebrew definition:

Warning: Strong’s #2094

Hebrew word:

Hebrew definition:

If you have a watchdog at home, then you can easily imagine the role of a watchman on the walls of the ancient cities. When something out of the ordinary is approaching, doesn’t a watchdog sound his alarm, with excited barking? That was the basic idea for the watchmen way back then. If the watchman did not sound an alarm, and the city was attacked, the watchman would be held accountable. If people within the city were killed, then the watchman would be the one guilty of their death.