



EZEKIEL

a fresh start

A Fresh Start

Ezekiel is full of weird and wonderful visions, bizarre and confronting street theatre, and nightmarish judgements. But **at its heart, it's the story of a fresh start.** It's God showing Ezekiel that he will give his people a whole new life.

Ezekiel begins during a very dark time in Israel's history, full of despair and hopelessness. And to begin with it gets worse, as Israel experience the just consequences of their sin.

But when things hit rock bottom, **God steps in and promises a fresh start.** In fact God promises to bring a bright future, full of joy and life and hope and fulfilment.

By the time Ezekiel ends, God's people are anticipating a future beyond their wildest imagination.

And the fresh start Ezekiel promises is found in Jesus.

And the name of the city from that time on shall be, *Yahweh Is There.*

Ezekiel 48.35 (ESV)

The Shape of the Book of Ezekiel

Each week, when you finish the study, come back to this diagram. Trace the journey so far and identify where you are up to in the story. Take a sneak peek at what comes next.

The exile begins, and God appears to Ezekiel (chapters 1-3)



The exile is God's judgement on Israel (3-23)

As good as it gets! 🎉👁️

A new promised land (48) 🌍

A new garden (47) 🌾

A new temple (40-46) 🏠

New security (38-39) 🛡️

New unity (37) 🤝

New life (37) 🧬

A new shepherd (33-36) 🐑

Judgement on all the nations (24-32)



Jerusalem is surrounded



Jerusalem falls



Ezekiel 1-3

Ezekiel is chock full of weird and wonderful visions, bizarre street theatre, and nightmarish judgements. And it starts on the very first page...

Read Ezekiel 1^{1*}

1. Where and when are these events happening (Ezekiel 1.1-3)? Why is this significant for the nation of Israel?

2. How does Ezekiel summarise what he sees in his vision (Ezekiel 1.28)?

3. What might some of the details – such as the omnidirectional wheels, the four faces, the eyes, the creatures carrying the throne, the fire and lightning – be telling us about God?

Read Ezekiel 2.1-3.7

4. Who does God send Ezekiel to?

5. What does God give Ezekiel to take to the people?

6. How will the people respond?

Read Ezekiel 3.15 & 22-23

7. Ezekiel has the same incredible experience all over again. And again, just like in chapter 1, the location is mentioned twice. What is surprising about 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh' being in this location?

¹ For a shorter option, read Ezekiel 1.1-6, 15-21, & 26 -28.

8. Why are the events of these chapters both terrifying and comforting for Ezekiel?

Read Hebrews 4.12-16

9. How does verse 13 echo Ezekiel 1? How does this make you feel?

10. Read separately, verse 13 and verse 16 seem incompatible. How does the author of Hebrews move from one to the other?

11. How does Ezekiel dramatically emphasise the comfort of these verses in Hebrews?

Think it over

How does this help you appreciate Jesus?

What would be a right response to God's words to you?

What might you need to confess or change?

What ought you to give thanks for?

Prayer ideas

Praise God for his authority and glory as the God who knows and sees everything.
Give thanks that all our sins are dealt with by Christ.

² Next week's study covers a big section of Ezekiel. But it's full of fascinating and intriguing events! Be sure to read Ezekiel 4-23 before Small Group next week.



Read Ezekiel 8

1. Where does God take Ezekiel (verse 3, verse 16)?

2. What does God show Ezekiel on this tour?

3. How does God feel about what he is showing Ezekiel? What does God say he will do?

Read Ezekiel 10.1-5, 18-19, & 11.22-23

4. Where is 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh' in chapter 10?

5. Where does God go in chapter 11?

6. How has God brought judgement on his people? Why is this so tragic and awful?

Read Ezekiel 12.26-27 & 18.1-4

7. How seriously does God take sin, according to the people of Israel?

8. What does God's response show us about how seriously he actually takes sin?

Read Ezekiel 18.23 & 30-32

9. How would you describe God's heart as he deals with Israel here?

Read the following parts of the New Testament and answer the questions.

	2 Peter 3.9	Romans 6.23	2 Corinthians 5.21
How would you describe God's heart as he deals with us?			
How does this show us even more clearly than Ezekiel does that God takes sin seriously?			

Think it over

Do you realise the terribleness of sin, and what it does to God our Father?

What do you think are the consequences of being flippant and casual about sin when God takes it so seriously?

How has God's attitude to sin ended up being especially good news for the world? What does this mean for how we relate to our non-Christian friends, family, and neighbours?

What might it look like for us to get serious about sin?

Prayer ideas

Thank God for Jesus, who takes away our sin by his death on the cross in our place.

Ask God to help us take sin seriously, by going to Christ Jesus for forgiveness and rescue.

Ask God to help us take every opportunity to invite people to discover forgiveness in Jesus.

³ Next week's study once again covers a big section of Ezekiel. This time it's one long and sobering monologue from God himself. Be sure to read Ezekiel 24-33 before Small Group next week.



study 3
Ezekiel 24-33

As chapter 24 opens, the events of Ezekiel reach their lowest point.

Read Ezekiel 24.1-2

1. What events do these short verses describe?

2. God now quickly turns his attention away from his people, to seven other nations around Israel. Scan over chapters 25 to 32 and identify the seven nations.

Let's zoom in on just one of those nations, the nation of Egypt, as an example of God's justice toward the nations.

Read Ezekiel 29.1-16 & 32.1-8

3. What does God picture Egypt as (29.3, 32.2)?

4. What will God do to Egypt?

5. Why will God do this (29.6-10)?

6. What will be the effect of God's justice (29.6, 16)?

Read Ezekiel 33.21-33

7. What will God do to Israel?

8. Why will God do this?

9. What will be the effect of God's justice?

10. In Ezekiel 24-33 who escapes God's justice?

Read 2 Corinthians 5.10-15

11. In 2 Corinthians 5, who escapes God's judgement?

12. So for whom did Christ die (verses 14-15)?

13. Knowing this, what effect should have on the way we treat others (verse 11)? What effect should have on us personally (verse 11)?

Think it over

Think over all the people you will meet this week—family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, teammates, your barista, your hairdresser... Will any of them escape God's justice? Do any of them escape the need for Jesus? Who else can you add to the list?

Since we know no one escapes the need for Jesus, how should we treat these people?

Since we know we won't escape God's justice, how should we respond to Jesus?

Prayer ideas

Praise God that he is just, and he does not allow sin and evil to go on without consequence.

Thank God that his just judgement fell on his son, and through Jesus we have been spared, so as to now live for him.

Ask God to help us see that everyone needs Jesus.



Read Ezekiel 34.1-10

1. How have Israel's leaders treated God's people?

2. What is God going to do about it?

Read Ezekiel 34.11-16

3. How is God going to rescue his sheep?

Read Ezekiel 34.17-24

4. Who will be the new and better shepherd of God's people?

Read Ezekiel 34.25-31

5. What will Israel's future look like under this new shepherd?

Read John 10.10-18

6. Who does Jesus claim to be? Why do you think he uses this language to describe himself?

7. What evidence does Jesus give for his claim about who he is?

8. What does Jesus mean by what he says in verse 16? How does this help us see how Ezekiel 34 applies to us?

9. Ezekiel 34.11 and 34.23 seem to contradict one another. How does John 10 clarify this apparent contradiction?

Think it over

How does this help us appreciate Jesus?

In what ways do these parts of the bible make it easy for us to talk about Jesus with non-Christian friends, family, and neighbours?

How should we respond to Jesus' authority over us, and his sacrificial care for us?

How does God's complaint against the leaders of Israel in Ezekiel 34 challenge us about how we treat one another?

If you have the joy and responsibility of leading others in a formal role (such as a Small Group leader, Kids4Jesus teacher, BxYOUTH leader), how does Jesus' shepherd leadership challenge you?

How has the tone of the book of Ezekiel changed in chapter 34? What do you think has brought about this change? Where do you think the book might go from here?

Prayer ideas

Thank God for his proactive rescue and care for us.

Thank God for king Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who came that we might have life to the full.

Ask that we would care for one another the way Jesus cares for us.

Ask God to help us to make the most of every opportunity to invite people to know Jesus the shepherd king.



Ezekiel 37-39

Read Ezekiel 37.1-14

1. God shows Ezekiel another vision. What do the bones represent?

2. What is God's message for his people, and how does the vision dramatically illustrate it?

Read Ezekiel 37.15-23

3. God puts on a street performance with Ezekiel. What do the sticks represent?

4. What is God going to do for his people, and how does the trick with the sticks dramatically illustrate it?

Read Ezekiel 37.24-38.6

5. How does God describe the king he will set over his people?

Read Ephesians 2.4-7

8. How has God brought us from death to life?

9. How is what God has done for us even better than what he promised to do for Israel?

Read Ephesians 2.13-22

10. How has God brought us from disunity to unity?

11. How is what God has done for us even better than what he promised to do for Israel?

Read Ephesians 3.8-21

12. What kind of king is Christ?

6. What will life be like for God's people under this king?

13. Where does our safety, security, and confidence come from?

7. What will happen to those who are enemies of God's king?

14. How is what God has done for us even better than what he promised to do for Israel?

Think it over

Where would you be without Jesus?

To what extent has Jesus reversed your fortunes, given you a fresh start, and reshaped your life?

How might you tell the story of the dramatic changes Jesus has made in your life to your friends, or family, or neighbours?

Prayer ideas

Thank God that when all hope was lost, Jesus came to reverse our fortunes and restore us to God. Ask that we would keep Jesus central in our lives.

⁴ Next week is the final stretch of Ezekiel. It's another long passage, but what it describes is truly breath-taking! Make sure you read Ezekiel 40-48 before Small Group next week.



Ezekiel 40-48

Read Ezekiel 40.1-5

1. God shows Ezekiel a vision of the future. Where does God take Ezekiel, and what does he see?

Read Ezekiel 43.1-5

2. After describing the temple in great detail, what does Ezekiel see when he arrives at the final gate?

3. Why do you think Ezekiel mentions that this vision is similar to his first vision (remember Ezekiel 11.1 & 11.22-23)?

4. What is distinctly different this time?

Read Ezekiel 47

5. What effect does the temple have on the surrounding land (verses 1-12)?

6. In what ways is this description of the land similar to the Garden of Eden?

7. Why would the description of the allocation of the land (verses 13-23) have been so joyful for the Israelites?

Read Ezekiel 48.30-35

8. Ezekiel ends on a real high note. It's hard to imagine how it could get any better for Israel. In what sense are the very last words of the book a 'fairy-tale ending' for God's people?

9. How would you describe the relationship between God and his people that God is promising?

Read Ephesians 1.3-14

10. How would you describe the relationship between God and us who belong to Jesus? Can it get any better?

Read Revelation 21.1-4, & 21.10-22.5

11. In what ways is this description of the new creation similar to what we have read in Ezekiel?

12. How does this description of the new creation even exceed Ezekiel's vision?

Think it over

In what way do we already experienced the fairy-tale ending Ezekiel anticipates?

In what ways are we still looking forward to the fairy-tale ending Ezekiel anticipates?

How does this part of Ezekiel help us appreciate Jesus?

How does a close, loving, uninteruptible friendship with God play out in your life?

Prayer ideas

Thank God that we have a close and uninteruptible relationship with him through Jesus.

Thank God that in Christ we have every Spiritual blessing, and all God's promises are ours in Christ.

Thank God for the book of Ezekiel.