

Ezekiel (2)

Listed Scriptures

Ezek 34, 37, 47

Lesson Aim

- 1) To enable students to understand that God is a just God who will hold nations and individuals accountable for their deeds.
- 2) Students will learn that the restoration of Israel, the church and the individual are solely dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Students will learn about the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit to change their old natures.

Memory Verse

"Also He said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army." (Ezek 37:9-10)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Ezek 34, 37, 47

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D

Please see the Bible Background section in Lesson 9.





Give each student a blank piece of paper and a pencil.

Say to students: Let's try a little experiment. I am going to show you a picture for about 10 seconds. Copy it to the best of your ability. (Now show the group a drawing with different shapes. Give students a minute to recreate it on their own papers.)

I'm going to show you the picture again and you are going to compare your drawing to it. If you need to, fix your drawing so it looks just like the picture. (Repeat this several times).

Do you realize that the more times you look at the picture and the more closely you look, the better you are at replicating the picture? In the same way, when we focus our attention on God and through relying on the Holy Spirit and His words, we can be transformed to Christ's likeness.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

God's Judgment Upon the Nations

The book of Ezekiel can be divided into two sections.: The first section (Chapters 1-24) records the prophecies concerning the judgment of Judah. The second section (Chapters 25-48) records the prophecies concerning the restoration. In this latter section, the prophet speaks of the judgment on the gentile nations surrounding Judah. Upon witnessing the destruction of the holy city and the captivity of the people, these seven nations have derided God and taken advantage of His people. God gave these messages so that the people would know that He is the Lord.

**A. Judgment on Ammon (Ezek 25:1-7)**

When the land of Israel laid in ruins and the people were taken into captivity, the Ammonites "clapped their hands and stamped their feet and rejoiced with all the malice within them." The Ammonites sneered and applauded over the desecration of the temple. The bible also records the Ammonites' past offenses; during the time of king Jehoiachin, the Ammonites joined forces with the Babylonians to invade Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:2). And during the reign of king Zedekiah, the Ammonites along with the Moabites, the Edomites and other nations, supported Zedekiah in rebelling against the Babylonians, but when Israel was captured, the Ammonites looted the city (Jer 49:1-2). For these sins, the Lord will stretch out His hand against them (Ezek 25:6-7).

**B. Judgment on Moab (Ezek 25:8-11)**

The Moabites will face God's judgment because they said, "Behold the house of Judah is like all other nations." Moab derided God by saying that God is powerless in saving His own people. Because of their arrogance and rebellion the Moabites will be defeated by the people of the east and will be dissolved amongst the nations and will not be remembered (Ezek 25:10).

**C. Judgment on Edom (Ezek 25:12-14)**

The Edomites were blood brothers of the Jews, both nations being descended from Isaac (Gen 25:19-26). Edom shared its northern border with Israel; but the two nations were always at odds. When Jerusalem was captured, the Edomites helped the Babylonian armies kill the fugitives. They were filled with hatred (Ezek 35:5-6, 9; Ob 10, 14), they rejoiced at the desolation of Israel (35:15), and they took possession of the land (Ezek 35:10, 36:5). Out of all the nations, the Edomites hated the Israelites most and were considered Israel's leading enemy. Like its founding father Esau, Edom was bent on taking revenge against Israel. As a result, God will punish Edom through the hands of Israel. In the same way that Edom rejoiced over the desolation of Israel, God will make desolate the entire country of Edom.

**D. Judgment on Philistia (Ezek 25:15-17)**

The people of Philistia were the indigenous people of Canaan. During the time of Eli and Samuel, the Israelites and Philistines were constantly at war with each other (1 Sam 4-6). When Judah was destroyed, the Philistines sold the people as cap-

tives to the Edomites (Amos 1:6). Because Philistia took revenge against Israel, God was to destroy them and the entire sea coast.

E. Tyre (Ezek 26-28:19)

Ezekiel 26-28 records the prophecies concerning the city of Tyre. The meaning of Tyre is “rock.” Tyre was a neighboring city of Canaan, located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel. Part of the city was on the mainland and the other an island. Tyre was a thriving and prosperous city, making its wealth through trade (Ezek 27:1-25). When Israel fell, Tyre was delighted and took advantage of Israel’s suffering. They jeered and laughed saying, “Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken, it has swung open to me; I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste” (Ezek 26:2). Tyre was also guilty of great pride and arrogance. The King of Tyre believed he was a god saying, “I am perfect in beauty.” The main cause of Tyre’s pride was its sea trade and prosperity. Ezekiel 27 compares the pride and splendor of the city of Tyre to a ship. These ships, built with the finest materials, were secure, and carried many precious cargo.

However, this gloating did not last long because God was to destroy the pride of Tyre and make this joyous city into a pitiful wasteland (Ezek 26:12, 14). In 585 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar attacked the city of Tyre. It took him 13 years to capture the mainland because the backside of the city was an island and fresh supplies could be shipped in daily. The rest of this prophecy was only fulfilled during the reign of Alexander the Great. When Alexander besieged the island city of Tyre, Tyre refused to surrender and so Alexander threw the rubble of the mainland city into the water forming a bridge to the island. This fulfilled what the prophet had said, “They will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water.” Today, the island city is still a pile of rubble, “a place for fishermen to spread their nets” and a testimony to God’s judgment.

F. Sidon (Ezek 28:20-26)

Sidon was another famous seaport, located a few miles north of Tyre. God charged this city with contempt for His people. Sidon had been a thorn that hurt the people of God. God prophesied that pestilence will enter into Sidon and will cause bloodshed in the streets.

G. Egypt (Ezek 29-32)

The Nile was Egypt’s pride and joy, a life-giving river cutting through the middle

of the desert. But rather than attributing glory to God, Egypt’s king declared, “My Nile is my own; I made it.” Because of his pride, God was to treat him as a fish in the sea, which will be drawn out and cast into the open field where he will be as food for the animals. Furthermore, Egypt’s wealth and power made her seem like a good ally. Egypt offered to help Judah only because of the benefits she hoped to receive from such an alliance. When the Egyptians didn’t get what they hoped for, they bailed out of their agreement. God condemns Egypt as being a staff of reed to the Israelites. When the Israelites grasped hold of her, Egypt broke away causing Israel “to tear their shoulders and their backs to quiver” (Ezek 29:6-7; Jer 2:36,37; 37:5-7). Consequently, God will hand them over to the Babylonians. God will cause them to be dispersed among the nations. Egypt will lie desolate for 40 years and will once again revive, a humbled country. God will punish those who treat others unjustly and unmercifully.

Teaching Tips

Have students read the related bible verses. Then write down the sins of each nation and the judgment that God pronounced for each nation.

Bible Verse	Nation	Pronounced Judgment
Ezek 25:1-7		
Ezek 25:8-11		
Ezek 25:12-14		
Ezek 25:15-17		
Ezek 26-28:19		
Ezek 28:10-26		
Ezek 29-32		



Part 2

The Prophecies Concerning the Restoration of Israel

Chapter 33 onwards sets forth new direction for Ezekiel’s prophecies. Up to this point, Ezekiel has pronounced judgment upon Judah (chapter 1-24) and the surrounding evil nations (chapters 25-32) for their sins. Now that Jerusalem

has fallen, he turns from messages of doom and judgment to messages of comfort, hope and future restoration for God's people. God previously appointed Ezekiel to be a watchman warning the nations of pending judgment (3:17-21). Here God appoints him to be a watchman again, but this time to preach a message of hope, restoration, and renewal.

A. To remove a heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh

God showed the prophet Ezekiel (after the captivity) how He will gather His people from the lands and give them one heart (Ezek 11:17-20). He will remove the unbelieving heart of stone and will put in a heart of flesh. God uses a "heart of stone" to describe the wickedness and stubbornness of His people. God will put in its place a heart of flesh; a humane heart that is sensitive to sin. God will write His commands on their hearts so that they can walk in His statutes and obey His commandments (Jer 24:7; 31:33; 36:26-27). This prophecy refers to the last days when the spiritual nation of Israel, the true church, will be revived and the Lord will gather His chosen people to Him. God will pour down His Spirit and cause the believers to be united as one. Unlike the Israelites who refused to turn back to God despite many warnings, God's Spirit will soften our hearts to be sensitive to sin and to obey His commands (1 Cor 12:3; 2 Thess 2:13).

B. The resurrection of the dry bones

Ezekiel was brought into the wilderness of Babylon, where he was shown a vision of a valley full of dry bones that were without hope of life. When God's breath entered these bones, they resurrected and became a vast army (Ezek 37:1-14). This vision can be applied to 3 levels:

- a. The dry bones are a picture of the Jews in captivity – scattered and dead with absolutely no hope. But through the vision, the prophet encouraged the captives that there is still hope in God. Their captivity is not forever. God will save them and cause them to return to their homeland just as how He brought these dry bones back to life. The vision of the dry bones demonstrates God's incredible power to accomplish what is deemed impossible in the eyes of men. This prophesy was fulfilled in 538 B.C. when Cyrus king of Persia decreed that the Israelites return to their land and rebuild their temple (Ezra 1:1-4). Those Israelites returned home fully believing that God's hands made this possible.

- b. The heap of dry bones represents the spiritual condition of those who are not in Christ. Although they are physically living, they are in fact spiritually dead (Lk 9:60). But through the baptism of water and the Holy Spirit those who are spiritually dead can resurrect and become a new and living person (Rom 6:4,9,11).
- c. The dry bones can also be used to describe the condition of our own individual faith or the condition of the church. Sometimes the church may seem like a heap of dried-up bones, with no hope of vitality. But just as God promised to restore His nation, He can restore the church or our individual faith, no matter how dry or dead it may seem. We need to pray for God to pour down His Spirit on us, so that we can live a full and abundant life in Christ.

C. The restoration of the temple

Chapters 40-48 depict the vision that Ezekiel saw regarding the building of the holy city. In the vision, Ezekiel was carried by the Holy Spirit to a very high mountain where he saw the structure of a city. Ezekiel's experience corresponds to elder John's experience recorded in Revelation 21:9. In the vision, Ezekiel describes how the temple is built according to the exact measurements and instructions prescribed by God. The structure of the temple, the laws of the sanctuary, the rules concerning sacrifices are described in great detail and specificity. In chapter 43 the glory of God returned to the temple. From our previous lesson we learned that the glory of the Lord had departed from the temple because it was filled with idol-worshipping and all kinds of unrighteousness. In this vision, the glory of God returns and fills the temple because it is built according to God's standards. The holy temple witnessed by Ezekiel depicts the spiritual city, the true church of the last days. To have God's presence the church needs to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:20).

D. Water from the temple

Ezekiel sees water issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (Ezek 47:1-12). Wherever the river flows, many wonderful things happen. The water represents the living water, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will bring about rich blessings and salvation to the people of the world. The characteristics of the river are:

- a. The angel of God measures the river

In this vision, the angel of God measures the river three times. Each time, the river rises higher and higher. First it is only ankle-deep. It rises to knee level, then waist high until eventually it becomes a river that no one can cross. This is in fact a beautiful description of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. When a person is not filled with the Holy Spirit, his movements are not restricted and he has the freedom to do and speak as he pleases. This is likened to a person who walks in water that is only ankle-deep. Contrastingly, when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, he has given up his own will and desires and has allowed himself to be “carried along” by the great river.

b. The stagnant waters will become fresh

When the river flows into stagnant waters, the waters will become fresh. This symbolizes the transformation that occurs after we know Christ. Our lives, formerly bitter, hopeless, and lifeless are filled with joy, peace and satisfaction when Christ enters.

c. The waters will teem with living creatures and many fish

Wherever the river flows, it brings with it life and vitality. Places where there was no sign of life is now filled with living creatures and teeming with fish. Similarly, the Holy Spirit brings life and vitality. Our lives which used to be filled with discontent, jealousy, rivalry, envy, selfishness are transformed to a life of zeal and fervor for God and men.

d. Many trees grow on the banks of the river

The river will cause trees to flourish on both banks and fruits will grow every month. A person who is filled with the Holy Spirit is like a tree planted beside waters and bears fruit in abundance. Such people will reflect the image of Christ in their lives and they will continually grow in the grace and truth of the Lord. Not only do they enrich themselves but will also enrich the lives of others.

e. The swamps and marshes will remain unchanged

When the river flows into swamps and marshes, such areas will remain stagnant and unchanged. Swamps and marshes refer to men whose hearts are darkened, hardened and unrepentant. Although the gospel has been preached for 2,000 years, there are still many hearts that remain unaffected. Such hearts are places where sin and wickedness continue to dwell and where Satan rules.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



There are no Check For Understanding questions for this lesson.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



The Transforming Power of the Holy Spirit

Have you ever beheld the beauty and freedom of a butterfly? But did you realize that its origins are extremely humble. The butterfly's lifecycle goes through four different stages. It starts off being an egg, which changes into a caterpillar. When a caterpillar reaches its full size, it prepares to make the radical change in body form that turns it from a caterpillar into a butterfly. This process takes place in the pupae, or chrysalis, a hard, sometimes thorny oval structure. After about two weeks, it undergoes a great struggle to break free from its shell, but once free; it emerges and transforms into a butterfly. This complete process is called metamorphosis.

(see cartoon in Student Workbook)

Box 1: God has chosen me, I'm baptized...

Box 2: I have the Holy Spirit

Box 3: I'm confident that I will be saved, what more is there?

The cartoon illustrates a common belief amongst many believers today: "I'm baptized, I have the Holy Spirit, I am saved." But in actuality, we are not quite there yet. Like the butterfly, we need to break out of our shell – go through a spiritual metamorphosis, as it were. The Bible calls this process, sanctification.

My understanding of sanctification is...

To be sanctified means to be separate from the rest of mankind. The thoughts, ways and attitudes of a Christian need to be different from that of the world. We need to develop a new set of goals and attitudes. Greed, selfishness, hatred, jealousy must give way to love, compassion, generosity and humility. Bringing glory to God, serving our fellow human beings, growing in knowledge of the Word, and in effectiveness in prayer must now receive priority. The Bible speaks of this as putting off the old nature and putting on Christ (Gal 3:27).

Why do I need to be sanctified?

1. It is the will of God (1 Thess 4:3-7; 1 Pet 1:14-16).
2. Being holy is the duty of believers. God has chosen us to be His children and we have to live a life worthy of His calling.
3. We need to be sanctified to obtain salvation (Rom 6:22; Ac 20:32; 2 Thess 2:13; Heb 12:14).

How can I pursue sanctification?

1. We can't become holy on our own. God gives us His Holy Spirit to help us (Rom 15:16; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2).
2. By doing daily spiritual cultivation (reading and meditating upon the Bible and praying in the Spirit).
3. We can put to death our fleshly nature by fully submitting to the Holy Spirit and walking according to His direction.

What are some of the obstacles that I have faced in my pursuit to be more holy?

1. Sometimes we fail to grow because we do not realize that we need any change. To see where our blind spots and weaknesses are, we need to read the Bible and wash ourselves with the truth continuously (Jn 17:17; Eph 5:26). Colossians 3:9-10 tells us that our new nature is being renewed through knowledge of the Lord. The more we know of Christ, His work, and His word, the more we are being changed to be like Him.
2. We need to set our hearts on things above. This means that we have to strive to put heaven's priorities into daily practice. We need to concentrate on the eternal rather than the temporal. Thoughts can influence actions, so if we place our thoughts on things above and not of the earth or our desires, then the choices we make will lead us to do what is right and holy in God's sight.
3. Sanctification requires great effort and determination. In Matthew 11:12, the Lord reminds us that the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force. This reminds us that the kingdom of God requires new attitudes and actions and that only those who are willing to undergo drastic changes are able to receive eternal life. To cut off sin and the old self is an ongoing battle. It takes practice, conscious daily decision, patience, and concentration to keep ourselves in line with God's will.

How Do I Measure?

1. You have planned something with your friends that evening, but unexpectedly, your parents tell you that you have to cancel your plans because they have an important engagement. What would your immediate reaction to this be? I would...

2. You're hanging out with your friends and the topic turns to dirty jokes. What do you do? I would...
3. It the big sale, and you've been lining up to pay for an item for about ten minutes. Someone has cut into the line in front of you. You tell them that they should get in line, but they don't get the message and continue to stand in front of you. How do you react? I would...
4. You have a close friend in church whom you do everything with. It seems however that s/he gets noticed and praised more than you do even though you both do more-or-less the same things. How do you feel?
5. Your friend has invited you over for dinner with his/her family. His/her mom has cooked a meal that is not to your liking. They ask you how you like it. How would you answer them? I would...
6. Your membership at the wholesale computer store has expired, but you discover that they have a sale on some items that you've been eyeing for some-time. You don't want to renew your membership because it's too costly, but the items would be a real buy. What would you do? I would...
7. You hear a very ugly rumor about a person you don't like very much. How do you feel and respond? I would...
8. You have grown up believing that people of a certain race are basically inferior to yours. When a person of that race enters the church, what would you do? I would...
9. Your friends have stopped by the store and picked up a couple of lottery tickets. They say, "It's okay. You could win. But even if you lose, a portion of your dollar goes to fund education and cancer research. It is for a good cause." What would you do? I would...

Taking Action:

1. From the exercise above, make a short list of some the things that you find you have to improve upon.
2. Find some Bible verses or stories that point to the area you picked, then study what the Bible teaches in those verses/stories.
3. Write out the verses, or the stories in outline form.

4. If possible commit the verses/stories to memory.
5. The most important thing is to remember the teachings found in the verses/stories.
6. Over a period of time, evaluate yourself on whether you have improved. Whenever you encounter a challenging situation that calls for application in defeating your weakness, try to mentally run through all ten or so verses and to ask God to give us the strength to overcome our weaknesses.

Weakness to improve upon	Bible verses	How I can deal with it

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



O Lord, there is nothing we want more than to be like You. Help us to remove our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh. Help us to no longer be slaves to sin. Create in us a clean heart so that we can succeed in our battle with the old self and proceed to a brighter and better transformation with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson 11

Daniel

Listed Scriptures

Dan 1-7

Lesson Aim

- 1) Students can understand the sovereignty of God in human history.
- 2) To imitate Daniel's commitment to holiness in an ungodly world.
- 3) Students will establish better understanding and rapport with each other.

Memory Verse

"This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men." (Dan 4:17)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Dan 1-7

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The Babylonian policy for taking captives was different from that of the Assyrians, who moved most of the people out and resettled the land with foreigners. The Babylonians took only the strong and skilled, leaving the poor and weak to rule the land, thus elevating them to positions of authority and winning their loyalty. The leaders were taken to Babylonian cities, but they were permitted to live together, find jobs and become an important part of the society. Many of the Jews like Daniel, Mordecai and Esther rose to prominent positions within the nation of the ruling empire. This policy kept the Jews united and faithful to God throughout the captivity and made it possible for their return in the days of Zerubbabel and Ezra as recorded in the book of Ezra.