

Study 1: God's Glory (Ezk 1)

Big Idea: The Glory of God shows up in Babylon. The key in this study is to make sure everyone knows the wider context to Ezekiel and why being in Exile is such a bad thing; It seems to be the total undoing of God's ppl: God's covenant with David seems to have failed - the temple is destroyed (God's presence with his people), God's people are outside the land (a sign of blessing and marker for being God's people), God's covenant with Israel seems to have failed. And yet God shows up in Babylon- he's not limited to a place, he's not defeated, he has a plan. This chapter also directs us right from the get go that Ezekiel is first and foremost about God and seeing him properly in all his glory before it's about God's people and their salvation.

Getting Started:

1. If you feel comfortable share a time in your life where something has caused you to ask: "Where is God in all this?"

Investigate:

Read 1:1-3

1. What do we learn about Ezekiel and his context from 1:1-3?
 - History: 31st July 593 BC. Babylon takes Jerusalem in 605 BC and takes 8000 of the ruling class and promising young men into exile (Babylon) including Ezekiel. Ezekiel happens around the same time as Jeremiah and Daniel
 - Ezekiel: 30yrs old, a priest, name means: "May God strengthen/toughen"
 - Exiles: God's ppl in exile: Big Q: are they still God's ppl when they are away from his land, temple, promises
2. To get a bigger picture go back and read: Deut 28:58-65 & 2 Kgs 24:8-17

The exile was promised if God's people didn't obey God, God warned them again and again and again for 100's of years and yet even when the northern kingdom Israel was captured by Assyria in 722 BC and God saved the southern kingdom Judah (see Isa 36:37) they failed to live God's way and God finally sent them into exile.

3. How do you think God's people felt in Babylon?

They probably felt: afraid, angry, confused

Read: 1:4-28

4. What are your initial impressions?

5. What are the things in this vision that show God's glory and power?

6. What are the 4 animals in 5-14?

Lion: renowned for strength, ferocity, and courage and served as a symbol for royalty

Eagle: swiftest and most stately of birds

Ox: not only the most valuable domestic animal, but also functioned as a symbol of both fertility and divinity

Human: created in image of God and invested with divine majesty

From Block: "together they expressed the transcendent divine attributes of omnipotence and omniscience, they declare Yahweh has the strength and power of the lion, swiftness and mobility of the eagle, the procreative power of the bull and the wisdom and reason of humankind"

7. What's the deal with the wheels in 15-21?

Basically, they form a moveable platform for the throne in vv22-27

The four intersecting wheels speak of their absolute ability to move everywhere, in all directions- God's throne can move everywhere! It's magnificent and awesome, the eyes probably mean "eye-shaped jewels" rather than literal eyes- thus it's a sparkly throne base

8. What's the throne and the person on the throne like in 22-27?

A radiant figure on an awesome throne. The noises and images convey the idea of God's presence see Ex 19:16ff; Ps 18:7-15

If your group is interested it might also be worth looking up Rev 4:2-8 to compare the two throne scenes

For the "figure like that of a man" see Rev 1:12-18; Jn 1:14

9. What's Ezekiel's response in v28?

Terrified! See also Ex 33:20; Isa 6:1-5

Living it Out

10. How does your picture/understanding of God need to change based on Ezk 1?

11. How will this new/deeper understanding of God change how you: Pray to God/Live for him/Share Jesus?

Pray Together