

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 28

Ezekiel

This week we continue our survey of the Old Testament by taking a look at the book of Ezekiel. Called the "father of Judaism", Ezekiel was the prophet God called to serve as His prophet to the exiles living in Babylon. Ezekiel was one of two major prophets in Babylon, the other being Daniel. Ezekiel was called to be God's prophet to the very people who had so strongly resisted God's word before the exile. Their stubbornness would lead to the destruction of the Temple, and then to their eventual exile to Babylon.

For more information on Judaism as a religion today, you may want to explore the Judaism 101 web site.

While Ezekiel was God's prophet to the exiles of Israel, Daniel served as God's ambassador to the king's court of Israel's captors, the Babylonians. We will study more about Daniel in our next lesson.

We know that Ezekiel was approximately twenty-five years old when, during the second Babylonian attack on Jerusalem, he was taken to Babylon. We also know that he was raised as the son of a priest and would have been well-trained in the study of God and His Word. There were a total of three exiles conducted by the Babylonians; Daniel was taken in the first one in 605 BC (Daniel 1:1-7); Ezekiel was taken during the second one in 597 BC (2 Kings 24:10-16); and the collapse of Jerusalem occurred during the third exile in 586 BC. This means that by the time the exiles from the fall of Jerusalem arrived in Babylon, both Daniel and Ezekiel would have been well-known.

For our study this week, let's see what we can learn about Ezekiel, Judaism, and Ezekiel's message to the exiles. Specifically, let's explore what Ezekiel's role as the "father of Judaism" really means.

1. What does the word Judaism mean in terms of a religion?

2. When did Judaism have its earliest roots, and what was the effect of the exile to Babylon on Judaism?

3. What does it mean to be called a "Jew"? Where did that expression originate from? (For examples, see Jeremiah 32:12, Esther 2:5, and Nehemiah 1:2.)

4. What do the following terms mean, and how do they apply to the religion currently called Judaism?
 - a. Synagogue

 - b. What was the Jewish criterion for when a local Synagogue was to be established?

- c. What was a typical Sabbath synagogue service like? (see Luke 4:16-21 for an example.)

 - d. What body of people had the general oversight of the Synagogue?

 - e. Rabbi

 - f. What did the Jews of Jesus' day believe in?

 - g. Sadducees

 - h. Pharisees
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5. God made Ezekiel a specific way for a specific purpose. What was that? (see Ezek. 3:8-9)
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6. What often occurred at Ezekiel's home in Babylon during the exile? (see Ezek. 8:1, 14:1, and 20:1)
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7. Ezekiel's prophecy contains the phrase "They shall know that I am Lord" (or the equivalent) approximately seventy times. Yet the exiles still did not know God as they should have, but God would continue to speak to them through Ezekiel. He gave Ezekiel a three point prophecy. Can you describe it?

Ezekiel is an excellent example of a servant of God who was well-trained for the task God gave him. With a willing heart, he committed himself fully to that task. He stands as an example to us today, as we seek to know and do God's perfect will in our lives and in His kingdom. May He find us to be as faithful a servant as Ezekiel!

Thanks for studying with us, and have a great week everyone.

In Christ,

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