

Monday, 3/1 – *Ezekiel 1:1-14*

The name Ezekiel means *God Strengthens* or *Strengthened by God*. As you read through the book, don't allow this to slip entirely from your mind; rather, observe how God accomplishes the strengthening of His prophet. Ezekiel lived in a day of intense wickedness and ungodliness. He needed God's strength in order to stand resolutely for the LORD. And so do we. In verse 4, Ezekiel's strengthening begins with an overwhelming vision (v. 3:15) of God's incomparable glory. This vision of God's glory is the longest and most detailed in Scripture (for others see: Exodus 3 (Burning Bush), Exodus 19 (Mount Sinai), Job 38 (Whirlwind), Isaiah 6 (The LORD in the Temple), and more). The vision has six elements: (1) a super-cell windstorm, (2) four living creatures, i.e. cherubim, (3) four whirling wheels, (4) an expanse or platform, (5) a throne encircled by a rainbow, and (6) the appearance of the Sovereign Lord GOD Himself. It is LORD's chariot throne, coming to Babylon with a message of judgment, repentance, and restoration.

 Tuesday, 3/2 – *Ezekiel 1:15-28*

By way of introduction, Ezekiel was both a Levitical priest and prophet. He was taken captive to Babylon during king Nebuchadnezzar's second deportation in 597 B.C., only eight years after Daniel was exiled to the same region in 605 B.C. The book of Ezekiel has been called “one of the Bible's most neglected books.” Yet it contains prophetic material found nowhere else in Scripture. Additionally, Ezekiel's messages stress some of the most important themes in God's Word. In today's reading, notice in particular the response of Ezekiel to the appearance of God's glory, “when I saw it, I fell on my face” (v. 28). Ezekiel's response to God's glory is not unique, rather it is a reflexive and natural response. For instance, compare the disciples' response to God's glory in Matthew 17:5-6; also, Paul's response to the glory of Christ in Acts 9:3-4; and the apostle John's response to his encounter with his glorified Savior in Rev. 1:12-17. What did God want Ezekiel to learn from such a display of glory? What does He want us to learn?

 Wednesday, 3/3 – *Ezekiel 2:1-10*

God continues to spiritually *strengthen* His prophet. In verse two Ezekiel is made to stand on his feet as he is filled by the Holy Spirit of God. Similarly, Jesus instructed His disciples to wait for power from on high before embarking on their mission to reach a lost world for the Lord Jesus. The Spirit that sporadically and temporarily came on God's saints in the Old Testament is the same Spirit of God that now resides in God's saints in the New Testament. In fact, it will be Ezekiel's prophetic word that announces the coming of a new day and a new covenant whereby the Spirit of God permanently indwells the people of God (Ezek. 36:26-28; 37:26). The strengthening that God supplied for Ezekiel is the strengthening that He has given to every believer in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9). Little do we realize and utilize the strengthening power of God that dwells within us. Let us appropriate this power by living a life of faith. Finally, mark each reference to the words *rebel* or *rebellion* in chapter two. Can a Christian exhibit such a heart? When?

 Thursday, 3/4 – *Ezekiel 3:1-15*

Remember the meaning of the name *Ezekiel*? (ref. day 3/1) Chapter three reveals another step in the strengthening process. Ezekiel is instructed to devour the Word of God in its fullness and entirety (cf. 2:10; the scroll written “on the front and on the back”). He is to be filled with it (v. 3) in his preparation for service. As Ezekiel chews on the God's message it was in his mouth “as sweet as honey.” This is a fitting description of feasting on God's Word. The more time we spend in God's Word and the greater understanding we have of it, the more we will confess with David, that it is “more to be desired than gold . . . sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb” (Psalm 19:10). Commit yourself to gaining a thorough understanding of this blessed prophetic book and your experience will be the same as Ezekiel's; God guarantees it (cf. Jeremiah 15:16).

 Friday, 3/5 – *Ezekiel 3:16-27*

Ezekiel is commissioned as a spiritual watchman for the Jews who are exiled in Babylon. As verses 16 - 27 indicate, the designation of a watchman is a weighty responsibility for God's prophets in the Old Testament (cf. Joel 2:1ff, Isaiah 58:1; Habakkuk 2:1). Also, with this designation comes great accountability (cf. 3:18, 20). According to Hebrews 13:17, New Testament pastors occupy a similar role as shepherds and watchmen over the flock of God (cf. Acts 20:28-32). What is involved in this serious pastoral responsibility? What does this involve on the part of the flock?