

## EZEKIEL/SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON, 2

Say-Welcome to Sabbath School class. Let's bow our heads as we ask God to be with us in our study today.

Say- Let's learn more about Ezekiel, a Hebrew prophet, from a priestly family whose name means, "God will Strengthen".

Say-Our study today will take us through Ezekiel, Chapter 3. We will learn about God's calling of Ezekiel, his first vision and how God commissioned him to be His prophet.

Say-Being called a Hebrew prophet meant Ezekiel was from one of the twelve tribes of Israel. It meant he had kept the language of his people and customs of the patriarchs like Abraham. Ezekiel, the prophet, was a spokesman or worker for God. A prophet speaks the actual words God gave him. That is what Ezekiel did.

Say-Ezekiel grew up in Judah which is the Southern Kingdom (show map) during the last years of the independence of the Hebrew nation. Ezekiel was a Jewish boy.

Say-Early in his life, he was taken captive and deported to Babylon along with the last King of Judah named Jehoiachin (in 597 B. C., II Chron. 36:9). King Jehoiachin's reign as king lasted only three months and he spent 37 years in captivity in Babylon

Say-Ezekiel was the youngest of two other prophets who lived at the same time, their names were Jeremiah and Daniel. Daniel was taken into captivity to Babylon 8 years before Ezekiel (605 B. C.). Jeremiah stayed back in Judah and preached to the Hebrews which stayed behind.

Say-In was the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Ezekiel's captivity in Babylon when God called him to be a prophet (Ez. 1:1-2). Ezekiel ministered to God's people for 22 years (Ez. 29:17, from 593-571) in captivity. Captivity means when one is under another's authority against ones own will.

Say-The story of the "Calling of Ezekiel" is an interesting one (Ez. 1-3). Now 30 years old, Ezekiel was preparing to become a priest in God's Temple just like his father, when the Babylonians attacked Judah for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time (597 B. C.) and took Ezekiel along with 10,000 other captives (2 Kings 24:10) some 500 miles from Judah to Babylon (show map). Remember Daniel was already in Babylon

working in the court of Nebuchadnezzar from the first siege on Judah.

Say-God called Ezekiel through a vision. A vision is a miraculous revealing from God. The vision Ezekiel saw was a vision of the Temple of God. Prior to this vision, Ezekiel only knew of God's Temple in Jerusalem where they worshipped each Sabbath.

Say-This Temple God showed Ezekiel in vision, was in the form of a whirlwind and was surrounded with fire and the fire was devouring the Temple. This vision symbolized the great armies of Babylon approaching Jerusalem where God's Temple stood.

Say-Out of the midst of the great whirlwind and fire was something extremely bright as a lamp and of a yellowish color like polished brass. Out of this came four Cherubim. Each Cherub had four faces, so 16 faces in all. The four faces on each Cherub resembled a man, a lion and ox and an eagle. Ezekiel immediately recognized them because he had seen them carved on the walls of Solomon's Temple, Ez. 1, I Kings 6:23-29.

Say-Out of each Cherub appeared a wheel with another wheel inside standing the opposite way. The wheel touched the earth in the vision and moved with the Cherubim wherever they moved. Each Cherub had four wings (except in the Holy of Holies over the Ark of the Covenant, which had two wings).

Say-A voice spoke and the Cherubim let their wings fall and they listened. The Cherubim were movable while the throne of God was firmly fixed. This was to show Ezekiel that while the Temple in Jerusalem may be destroyed, God's throne would never be destroyed.

Say-When this voice spoke, a bright light appeared and Ezekiel fell to his face. Before Ezekiel could enter into the work of God, he had to have the right attitude spiritually; one of humility and respect for God for this was the voice of God speaking!!

Say-When God saw his humble attitude; He filled Ezekiel with His spirit and commissioned him to go to the rebellious children of Israel in captivity. God said, "They may not listen to what I tell them but go anyway and do not be afraid of them", Ez. 2:1-6.

Say-Next God, in the vision, handed Ezekiel a scroll with writing on both sides. This scroll was filled with impending mourning, wailing and woes. What's more, God told Ezekiel to eat this scroll. What did God mean by that?

Say-God wanted Ezekiel to fill himself full with God's message and digest it in his mind spiritually. He was not to really eat the scroll as if it were food. God wanted every word he told Ezekiel to become a part of him. The words God spoke were to be so imbedded in his mind so he could vividly, as in this vision, show the stubborn people in captivity.

Say-Ezekiel found God's words to be sweet as honey and good for his soul but soon it was followed by bitterness. This bitterness meant the message was going to be painful for the people to hear of the calamities that were going to fall on Judah unless they repented and it is the same for us today, Ez. 2:9.

Say- Ezekiel obeyed God and went to the people in captivity and as he found them sitting there, he heard the noise of the cherubim wings and the wheels and a great rushing sound like wind and he sat among them seven days.

Say-Soon God came to him again and said, "Ezekiel, I have made you a watchman unto Judah. Give them warning from me continually, day and night; it is that urgent", Ez. 3:17! The sad news was that for most of God's people it was hopeless as they would not listen; only a few would be reclaimable in that they would repent and follow God.

Say-Does this sound familiar, many are not listening today even in God's church. God tells us, "For many are called, but few are chosen", (Matt 22:14). Why is that true, Because, "strait (difficult) is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it", (Matt. 7:14).

Say-God says His people are a small flock. Ezekiel had no choice but to obey God or he would lose his eternal life, Ez.3:19. From then on, Ezekiel spoke only what God spoke through him to the people of Judah; he was a true prophet of God.

## MEMORY VERSE

*I HAVE MADE THEE A WATCHMAN  
TO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.  
EZEKIEL 3:17.*

Go here for a map of the Babylonian Empire-Make sure there is one for each notebook. Also draw a line on the map from Jerusalem to Babylon and write on the map, "500 miles" indicating how far the captives traveled to captivity and how far they were away from their home in Jerusalem.

<http://www.seminolechurchofchrist.com/maps/mapbabylon.gif>

## EZEKIEL, A HEBREW PROPHET

EZEKIEL, A HEBREW PROPHET, HIS NAME MEANT  
"GOD WILL STRENGTHEN".

EZEKIEL, BY GOD WAS HUMBLD AND, FOR GOD,  
HAD GREAT RESPECT.

GOD MEANT WHAT HE SAID AND OFF TO BABYLON,  
HIS SERVANT HE SOON SENT.

"GO TELL MY REBELLIOUS PEOPLE, OF THEIR SINS  
THEY MUST REPENT"!

IN CAPTIVITY, 500 MILES FROM HOME, AS GOD'S  
"WATCHMAN", HE KNEW HE WAS NOT ALONE;  
FOR IN A VISION GOD SHOWED HIM HIS HOLY  
TEMPLE WITH CHERUBS AROUND HIS THRONE.

SOON IN THE VISION CAME A SCROLL WITH  
WRITING ON BOTH SIDES;  
GOD SAID, "IF MY PEOPLE WILL NOT OBEY, THEIR  
FATE I MUST DECIDE".

"I HAVE MADE THEE A WATCHMAN"

EZEKIEL 3:17

By B. Burnham