

The Times of Ezekiel

Commentary for November 1, 2010 — A Confluence of Events and Personalities

Ezekiel was a younger contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, yet his prophetic ministry as a prophet of God was different than that of Jeremiah's. Ezekiel was also a bit older than another contemporary, Daniel. This month's article is "Introduction to Ezekiel." Begin by reading the short [November 2010 Newsletter](#).

Ezekiel was taken with the exiles. Jeremiah largely remained in Judah. Remember that Daniel's book was not considered one of the prophetic writings, although it contains prophecies.¹ Daniel studied Jeremiah's prophecies regarding the 70 weeks, as is shown in Daniel chapter 9, especially verse 2. It is almost certain Ezekiel knew Jeremiah's prophecies, considering Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry decades before when King Josiah of Judah began to reign. Jeremiah wrote the Book of Lamentations upon Josiah's death. In fact, Jeremiah wrote at least one letter to the exiles in Jeremiah chapter 29 that was very controversial, warning them against false prophets and teachers.

So there is a detailed interplay of the history and prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, with the histories of Second Kings and Chronicles, and the Minor Prophets Joel, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. All this was orchestrated by God.

After his wife died during the siege of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 24:15-18), Ezekiel was taken to Babylon in the second exile with thousands of others. (Daniel was in the first exile.) All were brought to the kingdom of Babylon to serve its empire (Ezekiel 1:1-2). All of Ezekiel's prophecies and visions were given there. Ezekiel mentions a "Daniel."²

"Ezekiel's references to Daniel must be considered one of the strongest arguments for a sixth-century date. No satisfactory explanation exists for the use of the name Daniel by the prophet Ezekiel other than that he and Daniel were contemporaries and that Daniel had already gained notoriety throughout the Babylonian Empire by the time of Ezekiel's ministry."

• **Stephen R. Miller, Daniel**³

For Ezekiel the major cause for YHWH's punishment of Judah was idolatry. He constantly condemned this great evil throughout his prophecies and presented a particularly cutting rebuke against idolatry in 14:1-13 directed to the elders of Judah in exile. In Ezekiel 14:14,

¹ Daniel was grouped with the Writings or the "Royal" section of the Old Testament. See "Diagram: the Symmetry of the Bible" and Dr. Ernest Martin's book *Restoring the Original Bible* that explains why Daniel was so placed.

² Some scholars dispute that all of Ezekiel's visions were received in the land of Babylon. Scholars also dispute whether the Daniel mentioned in Ezekiel was the same as the author of Daniel.

³ *Daniel*, vol. 18, electronic ed., Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary*, pp. 42-43 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001).

20 Ezekiel mentions Daniel as an example of righteousness along with Noah and Job, contrasting them favorably to the people and elders of Judah. In Ezekiel 28:3 Daniel's wisdom is compared favorably with that of the human ruler of Tyre.

Remember also that King Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah) who became king of Judah at age 18 (2 Kings 24:8; 2 Chronicles 36:9 says he was 8 years old) remained in Babylon for 37 years as a captive along with his family. He resided there with the King of Babylon. The Babylonian king Evilmerodach released Jehoiachin and he lived in comfort until he died (Jeremiah 52:31–34). He must have been a source of false hope for the exiles of Judah that the kingship and promised land might be restored quickly. They were wrong. It never happened. They misunderstood one passage in Ezekiel. None of the legitimate prophets of God predicted it, not Jeremiah, not Ezekiel, not Daniel. Yet good things shall come.

The Prophecy of the Two Sticks

Ezekiel's prophecy of the two sticks merging into one is a future prophecy for us.

“And say unto them, Thus says the Lord YHWH; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: ...

And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever [*olam*, for the age]: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever [*olam*].

Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore [*olam*, for the age]. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And the heathen [*goyim*, the Gentiles] shall know that I YHWH do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore [*olam*].”

• **Ezekiel 37:21–22, 24–28**

Your Future

As you read and study Ezekiel's prophecies keep in mind that many of the passages are future to us today, and you will experience their fulfillment. The passage in Ezekiel chapter 37 above is one example. When you get to Ezekiel chapters 40–48 you will read what you shall see with your own eyes if you are in the first resurrection. Think of those chapters of Ezekiel as a preview of what you shall see and live through as a human resurrected to spirit flesh and bone. It will be your reality.

Dr. Martin's presentation is just an introduction. More later.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com