

A study in Ezekiel, Week 1, “*The Faceplant*”

A picturesque sunset, a snow capped mountain range in the distance, the roar of the ocean; all things that might stop us with awe. So too with Ezekiel, falling down as he sees the glory of God Himself. So too with each of us as we see God for who He truly is.

Read the passage: Ezekiel 1:1-28

Respond to the following questions:

What are 2-3 images from the vision that most impress you or would be something you would like to see in person?

What does it mean when Ezekiel saw the appearance of the glory of God (vs. 28) that he ‘fell facedown’?

For our actions to be right, we first must have an accurate picture of who God is. How does this picture of what Ezekiel saw inform your view of God?

What does it look like (or could it look like) for you to ‘fall facedown’ before the Lord?

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, while I was among the exiles by the Chebar Canal, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

2 On the fifth day of the month — it was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile — 3 the word of the Lord came directly to the priest Ezekiel son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar Canal. The Lord's hand was on him there.

4 I looked, and there was a whirlwind coming from the north, a huge cloud with fire flashing back and forth and brilliant light all around it. In the center of the fire, there was a gleam like amber. 5 The likeness of four living creatures came from it, and this was their appearance: They looked something like a human, 6 but each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the hooves of a calf, sparkling like the gleam of polished bronze. 8 They had human hands under their wings on their four sides. All four of them had faces and wings. 9 Their wings were touching. The creatures did not turn as they moved; each one went straight ahead. 10 Their faces looked something like the face of a human, and each of the four had the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left, and the face of an eagle. 11 That is what their faces were like. Their wings were spread upward; each had two wings touching that of another and two wings covering its body. 12 Each creature went straight ahead. Wherever the Spirit wanted to go, they went without turning as they moved.

13 The likeness of the living creatures was like the appearance of blazing coals of fire or like torches. Fire was moving back and forth between the living creatures; it was bright, with lightning coming out of it. 14 The creatures were darting back and forth like flashes of lightning.

15 When I looked at the living creatures, there was one wheel on the ground beside each of the four-faced creatures. 16 The appearance of the wheels and their craftsmanship was like the gleam of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. Their appearance and craftsmanship was like a wheel

within a wheel. 17 When they moved, they went in any of the four directions, without turning as they moved. 18 Their four rims were tall and awe-inspiring, completely covered with eyes. 19 When the living creatures moved, the living creatures moved, the wheels moved beside them, and when the creatures rose from the earth, the wheels also rose. 20 Wherever the Spirit wanted to go, the creatures went in the direction the Spirit was moving. The wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. 21 When the creatures moved, the wheels moved; when the creatures stopped, the wheels stopped; and when the creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

22 Over the heads of the living creatures the likeness of an expanse was spread out. It gleamed like awe-inspiring crystal, 23 and under the expanse their wings extended one toward another. They each also had two wings covering their bodies. 24 When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings like the roar of a huge torrent, like the voice of the Almighty, and a sound of tumult like the noise of an army. When they stopped, they lowered their wings.

25 A voice came from above the expanse over their heads; when they stopped, they lowered their wings. 26 Something like a throne with the appearance of lapis lazuli was above the expanse over their heads. On the throne, high above, was someone who looked like a human. 27 From what seemed to be his waist up, I saw a gleam like amber, with what looked like fire enclosing it all around. From what seemed to be his waist down, I also saw what looked like fire. There was a brilliant light all around him. 28 The appearance of the brilliant light all around was like that of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day. This was the appearance of the likeness of the Lord's glory. When I saw it, I fell facedown and heard a voice speaking. -- Ezekiel 1:1-28 (CSB)

A Study in Ezekiel, Week 2, “Speaking & Listening”

If your teacher sends you to a neighboring classroom with some information, you must go, and you must not make up your own message. We have an obligation and a message that is from the Lord Himself.

Read the passage: Ezekiel 2:1-3:5

Respond to the following questions:

How would you describe the people to whom Ezekiel is to go and proclaim the message?

What does it mean that Ezekiel was told “don’t be afraid...” (vs. 6) with reference to Israel?

If God sends us, we have an obligation to go. How would you describe the obligation that God has given you to those you know?

What is more difficult for you: responding to the obligation to go? Or the discouragement of those who don’t respond rightly? Why?

He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak with you.”

2 As he spoke to me, the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and I listened to the one who was speaking to me. 3 He said to me, “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebellious pagans who have rebelled against me. The Israelites and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this day. 4 The descendants are obstinate and hardhearted. I am sending you to them, and you must say to them, ‘This is what the Lord God says.’ 5 Whether they listen or refuse to listen — for they are a rebellious house — they will know that a prophet has been among them.

6 “But you, son of man, do not be afraid of them and do not be afraid of their words, even though briars and thorns are beside you and you live among scorpions. Don’t be afraid of their words or discouraged by the look on their faces, for they are a rebellious house. 7 Speak my words to them whether they listen or refuse to listen, for they are rebellious.

8 “And you, son of man, listen to what I tell you: Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.” 9 So I looked and saw a hand reaching out to me, and there was a written scroll in it. 10 When he unrolled it before me, it was written on the front and back; words of lamentation, mourning, and woe were written on it.

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He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find here. Eat this scroll, then go and speak to the house of Israel.”

2 So I opened my mouth, and he fed me the scroll. 3 “Son of man,” he said to me, “feed your stomach and fill your belly with this scroll I am giving you.” So I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth.

4 Then he said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. 5 For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or a difficult language but to the house of Israel — -- Ezekiel 2:1-3:5 (CSB)

A Study in Ezekiel, Week 3, “*Commissioned Clarity*”

Just like a weather forecaster who knows it is going to freeze and therefore gives a warning, so too must we give a warning of God’s activity. Just like a gardener who stands to lose, so too must we heed the warnings given.

Read the passage: Ezekiel 3:16-27

Respond to the following questions:

What do you think Ezekiel would have been feeling as he was told of his responsibility and the consequences of being a Watchman for Israel?

What is God’s purpose for binding Ezekiel with ropes and making him mute?

What settings (relationships, work, school, etc.) in your life have a need of gospel clarity, whether in your words or in your actions?

How will you know when it is God’s timing to speak up? How will you know when it is God’s timing to continue listening to Him?

16 Now at the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me: 17 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman over the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, give them a warning from me. 18 If I say to the wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ but you do not warn him — you don’t speak out to warn him about his wicked way in order to save his life — that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood. 19 But if you warn a wicked person and he does not turn from his wickedness or his wicked way, he will die for his iniquity, but you will have rescued yourself. 20 Now if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and acts unjustly, and I put a stumbling block in front of him, he will die. If you did not warn him, he will die because of his sin, and the righteous acts he did will not be remembered. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood. 21 But if you warn the righteous person that he should not sin, and he does not sin, he will indeed live because he listened to your warning, and you will have rescued yourself.”

22 The hand of the Lord was on me there, and he said to me, “Get up, go out to the plain, and I will speak with you there.” 23 So I got up and went out to the plain. The Lord’s glory was present there, like the glory I had seen by the Chebar Canal, and I fell facedown. 24 The Spirit entered me and set me on my feet. He spoke with me and said, “Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25 As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and bind you with them so you cannot go out among them. 26 I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth, and you will be mute and unable to be a mediator for them, for they are a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you will say to them, ‘This is what the Lord God says.’ Let the one who listens, listen, and let the one who refuses, refuse — for they are a rebellious house. -- Ezekiel 3:16-27 (CSB)

A Study in Ezekiel, Week 4, “Detestable”

Statues are often set up to recognize and celebrate a person, thing, or event. But what if it is no longer meaningful? What if it is in fact detestable? What are we to do with things detestable to God?

Read the passage: Ezekiel 8:1-18

Respond to the following questions:

What do you think Ezekiel would have felt as he saw the detestable things being done? How would you describe how God felt?

What is the relationship between God’s wrath and the actions of the people (vs. 18)?

When have you done something and, looking back, realized that you had the attitude of the elders in vs. 12 (the Lord does not see)?

What things in your life are an obstacle to the Lord hearing and listening to you?

In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting in front of me, and there the hand of the Lord God came down on me.

2 I looked, and there was someone who looked like a man. From what seemed to be his waist down was fire, and from his waist up was something that looked bright, like the gleam of amber. 3 He stretched out what appeared to be a hand and took me by the hair of my head. Then the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and carried me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the inner gate that faces north, where the offensive statue that provokes jealousy was located. 4 I saw the glory of the God of Israel there, like the vision I had seen in the plain.

5 The Lord said to me, “Son of man, look toward the north.” I looked to the north, and there was this offensive statue north of the Altar Gate, at the entrance. 6 He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing here — more detestable acts that the house of Israel is committing — so that I must depart from my sanctuary? You will see even more detestable acts.”

7 Then he brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked there was a hole in the wall. 8 He said to me, “Son of man, dig through the wall.” So I dug through the wall and discovered a doorway. 9 He said to me, “Go in and see the detestable, wicked acts they are committing here.”

10 I went in and looked, and there engraved all around the wall was every kind of abhorrent thing — crawling creatures and beasts — as well as all the idols of the house of Israel. 11 Seventy elders from the house of Israel were standing before them, with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had a firepan in his hand, and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising up. 12 He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his idol? For they are saying, ‘The Lord does not see us. The Lord has abandoned the land.’ ” 13 Again he said to me, “You will see even more detestable acts that they are committing.”

14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the Lord's house, and I saw women sitting there weeping for Tammuz. 15 And he said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? You will see even more detestable acts than these."

16 So he brought me to the inner court of the Lord's house, and there were about twenty-five men at the entrance of the Lord's temple, between the portico and the altar, with their backs to the Lord's temple and their faces turned to the east. They were bowing to the east in worship of the sun. 17 And he said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? Is it not enough for the house of Judah to commit the detestable acts they are doing here, that they must also fill the land with violence and repeatedly anger me, even putting the branch to their nose? 18 Therefore I will respond with wrath. I will not show pity or spare them. Though they call loudly in my hearing, I will not listen to them." -- Ezekiel 8:1-18 (CSB)

A Study in Ezekiel, Week 5, “I Need a Hero”

“I need a hero” is what we often think in a culture that celebrates the ability of heroes. But sometimes a hero isn’t enough. Sometimes we need to live and act right even if there is no hero.

Read the passage: Ezekiel 14:12-23

Respond to the following questions:

What stories do you remember about the three biblical heroes listed: Noah, Daniel, and Job?

What does it mean that (speaking of the three in relation to the judgments predicted) that “they alone would be rescued”?

When have you relied on someone else to help you get past something difficult in your life instead of tackling it yourself?

How does Jesus differ from the three men listed? How does one rely on the righteousness of Jesus rather than that of self or others (see 2 Corinthians 5:21)?

12 The word of the Lord came to me: 13 “Son of man, suppose a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its supply of bread, to send famine through it, and to wipe out both people and animals from it. 14 Even if these three men — Noah, Daniel, and Job — were in it, they would rescue only themselves by their righteousness.” This is the declaration of the Lord God.

15 “Suppose I allow dangerous animals to pass through the land and depopulate it so that it becomes desolate, with no one passing through it for fear of the animals. 16 Even if these three men were in it, as I live” — the declaration of the Lord God — “they could not rescue their sons or daughters. They alone would be rescued, but the land would be desolate.

17 “Or suppose I bring a sword against that land and say, ‘Let a sword pass through it,’ so that I wipe out both people and animals from it. 18 Even if these three men were in it, as I live” — the declaration of the Lord God — “they could not rescue their sons or daughters, but they alone would be rescued.

19 “Or suppose I send a plague into that land and pour out my wrath on it with bloodshed to wipe out both people and animals from it. 20 Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live” — the declaration of the Lord God — “they could not rescue their son or daughter. They would rescue only themselves by their righteousness.

21 “For this is what the Lord God says: How much worse will it be when I send my four devastating judgments against Jerusalem — sword, famine, dangerous animals, and plague — in order to wipe out both people and animals from it! 22 Even so, there will be survivors left in it, sons and daughters who will be brought out. Indeed, they will come out to you, and you will observe their conduct and actions. Then you will be consoled about the devastation I have brought on Jerusalem, about all I have brought on it. 23 They will bring you consolation when you see their conduct and actions, and you will know that it was not without cause that I have done what I did to it.” This is the declaration of the Lord God. -- Ezekiel 14:12-23 (CSB)

A Study in Ezekiel, Week 6, “Most Cherished”

The dearest thing to us may be a person or an object or perhaps a memory. The loss of that dearest thing puts everything else into perspective. It helps us to see what is, or ought to be, most cherished.

Read the passage: Ezekiel 24:15-27

Respond to the following questions:

How would you describe the difficulty with which Ezekiel carried out the directive of the Lord at the death of his wife?

What is the message for Israel that Ezekiel is communicating?

What is the dearest thing to which you have had to say goodbye?

What is most cherished in your life that needs to take a secondary place in relation to cherishing the Lord your God?

15 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 16 “Son of man, I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you with a fatal blow. But you must not lament or weep or let your tears flow. 17 Groan quietly; do not observe mourning rites for the dead. Put on your turban and strap your sandals on your feet; do not cover your mustache or eat the bread of mourners.”

18 I spoke to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening. The next morning I did just as I was commanded. 19 Then the people asked me, “Won’t you tell us what these things you are doing mean for us?”

20 So I answered them, “The word of the Lord came to me: 21 Say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord God says: I am about to desecrate my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and the desire of your heart. Also, the sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword. 22 Then you will do just as I have done: You will not cover your mustache or eat the bread of mourners. 23 Your turbans will remain on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not lament or weep but will waste away because of your iniquities and will groan to one another. 24 Now Ezekiel will be a sign for you. You will do everything that he has done. When this happens, you will know that I am the Lord God.’

25 “As for you, son of man, know that on that day I will take from them their stronghold — their pride and joy, the delight of their eyes, and the longing of their hearts — as well as their sons and daughters. 26 On that day a fugitive will come to you and report the news. 27 On that day your mouth will be opened to talk with him; you will speak and no longer be mute. So you will be a sign for them, and they will know that I am the Lord.” -- Ezekiel 24:15-27 (CSB)

A Study in Ezekiel, Week 7, “*Only You Know*”

Seeds have been planted. We have prepared the soil, placed the seeds and now we wait. What will become of them? We have hopes, but we can't say that we know but rather trust that humble beginnings will turn into something magical.

Read the passage: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Respond to the following questions:

How would you describe the appearance of this valley that is full of very dry bones?

What is the message of hope being given by having these dry bones come back to life?

What in your life is like what Israel had experienced; something for which you would say like Israel that my “hope has perished” (vs. 11)?

What will you need to do in order to trust that God's future in your life and in the life of His people is something that He will bring about?

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by his Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones.

2 He led me all around them. There were a great many of them on the surface of the valley, and they were very dry. 3 Then he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live? "

I replied, "Lord God, only you know."

4 He said to me, "Prophecy concerning these bones and say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 This is what the Lord God says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. 6 I will put tendons on you, make flesh grow on you, and cover you with skin. I will put breath in you so that you come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 As I looked, tendons appeared on them, flesh grew, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. 9 He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man. Say to it: This is what the Lord God says: Breath, come from the four winds and breathe into these slain so that they may live! " 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me; the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, a vast army.

11 Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Look how they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished; we are cut off.' 12 Therefore, prophesy and say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them, my people, and lead you into the land of Israel. 13 You will know that I am the Lord, my people, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14 I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I have spoken, and I will do it. This is the declaration of the Lord.' " -- Ezekiel 37:1-14 (CSB)

A Study in Ezekiel, Week 8, “*Filled with Glory*”

Fire alarms may warn of a house quickly filling with smoke. It cannot prevent, however, the smoke from filling every spot within the house. God’s glory can likewise be identified and there is no stopping Him from filling His Kingdom.

Read the passage: Ezekiel 43:1-12

Respond to the following questions:

What are the sights and sounds that Ezekiel experienced in this vision?

What is the meaning of this vision of the return of God’s glory to a newly rebuilt temple?

When have you seen God such that it caused you to “fall facedown” (vs. 3)?

God desires to dwell among us (vs. 9). What will you remove in your life in order that God’s glory may be a present and near reality?

He led me to the gate, the one that faces east,
2 and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice sounded like the roar of a huge torrent, and the earth shone with his glory.
3 The vision I saw was like the one I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the ones I had seen by the Chebar Canal. I fell facedown.
4 The glory of the Lord entered the temple by way of the gate that faced east. 5 Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the inner court, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

6 While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from the temple. 7 He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the Israelites forever. The house of Israel and their kings will no longer defile my holy name by their religious prostitution and by the corpses of their kings at their high places. 8 Whenever they placed their threshold next to my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them, they were defiling my holy name by the detestable acts they committed. So I destroyed them in my anger. 9 Now let them remove their prostitution and the corpses of their kings far from me, and I will dwell among them forever.

10 "As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, so that they may be ashamed of their iniquities. Let them measure its pattern, 11 and they will be ashamed of all that they have done. Reveal the design of the temple to them — its layout with its exits and entrances — its complete design along with all its statutes, design specifications, and laws. Write it down in their sight so that they may observe its complete design and all its statutes and may carry them out. 12 This is the law of the temple: All its surrounding territory on top of the mountain will be especially holy. Yes, this is the law of the temple. -- Ezekiel 43:1-12 (CSB)