

Points of interest: Ezekiel

21 September 2003

1. Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (chs. 1–24)

1.1–2 Ezekiel's first vision was in 593 BC, and he prophesied until 571 BC. The Kebar River is in Babylon: this was four years after Babylon conquered Jerusalem and took captives, including Ezekiel, back to Babylon, but before the Temple was destroyed (587 BC; Ezek 33.21–22).

1.4–28 The first vision. I read somewhere that there were two passages in the Bible that were considered so mysterious that rabbis did not discuss them with their students: Gen 1 and Ezek 1. The vision certainly is mysterious. It is instructive to compare this vision with that of Rev 4, which in turn has much in common with that of Isa 6. The creatures are cherubim (see 10.1).

9.4 *a mark*: the letter *tav*, which in the old Hebrew alphabet looked like an *X*. Some Christian interpreters saw this as a foreshadowing of the cross. Cf. Rev 7.4.

10.1–2 The second vision. In this vision the glory of the LORD departs from the Temple (v. 10.18). Recall that it had descended on the Temple in 1 Kgs 8.10–11. Where does it go? It goes east (10.19; 11.23), and since God promises in the midst of this vision to be with the exiles (11.16), perhaps the glory goes to Babylon, or perhaps not. In any case, the departure is clearly a sign of judgment on Jerusalem.

2. Oracles against other nations (chs. 25–32)

26–27 Rev 18 echoes much of the language in these chapters.

3. Prophecies of future restoration (chs. 33–39)

33.11 Sometimes used as a proof-text against capital punishment.

33.21–22 The fall of Jerusalem. The rest of the book contains mostly promises of restoration.

36.25–27 A wonderful description of regeneration in the new covenant. Verse 25 is used by some as a proof-text for baptism by sprinkling.

36.28; 37.23, 27 *You will be my people, and I will be your God*. A promise repeated over and over throughout the Bible.

38.2 Who is Gog of Magog, prince of Meshech and Tubal? Gog might refer to a historical figure (Gyges, king of Lydia, 7th c. BC). See Gen 10.2, Rev 20.18–20. Some people say this refers to Russia.

4. The new temple and land (Chs. 40–48)

40.46 The family of Zadok is singled out because Zadok supported Solomon during Adonijah's revolt (1 Kgs 1.7–8).

43.2 The restoration of Israel is represented by the return of the glory of the LORD.

48.1–29 This division of the land is not the same as the historical division. See map at right [Map removed].