



Ezekiel



Reading the Bible Together

March 2015

What is 'In Sync' Bible Reading?

'In Sync' encourages us to read together through the Bible, and then reflect together on what we have read from God's Word. We consider the main message and the key themes of a whole book (or books) of the Bible, and then we can share with others what we have learnt through our Bible reading.

'I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.' (Psalm 119:16)

Questions to consider

Reading the Bible does not have to be an intellectual study. Anyone can read the Bible and by God's grace understand it. The main thing is that we pray for God's help as we read.

Here are some questions to help you think through what you are reading:

1. What have I learnt about God and about Jesus?
2. What does this teach me about humanity and myself?
3. What has most encouraged me from this book?
4. How does this teach me to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul and mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
5. How does this teach me to love my neighbour as myself? (Matt 22:37-40)
6. Is there anything else I should learn here to be 'equipped for every good work' (2 Tim 3:17)

Ezekiel : What can we expect?

Ezekiel was a priest who was called by God to be a prophet – a ministry which he exercised for at least 22 years, amongst the exiles in Babylon. Ezekiel's prophetic calling was to announce judgment but he also spoke of future restoration and blessing.

The book of Ezekiel begins in 592BC with an incredible vision of the power and presence of God, in response to which Ezekiel falls facedown. God then calls Ezekiel to minister to God's rebellious people. Ezekiel is charged to speak the word of God to them faithfully and fearlessly, even though the people will not listen. Ezekiel also delivers oracles against the surrounding nations (Chpts 25-32).

6 years on from Ezekiel's calling, Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Babylonians. The fall of Jerusalem is anticipated in Ezekiel 24 and then announced in Ezekiel 33. Only after the fall of Jerusalem, is Ezekiel's preaching ministry dominated by themes of hope, restoration, mercy, and grace for Israel.

Ezekiel's ministry is at times strange and intense. He lies motionless for protracted periods, remains silent, experiences visions, and enacts messages from God e.g. with hair shaved from his head and beard (5:1-4), digging through a wall (12:1-7). The book of Ezekiel is very personal – it is the only prophetic book written entirely in the first person.

There are memorable passages in Ezekiel – the promise of God coming to shepherd his people (Chpt 34), the valley of dry bones (Chpt 37), the vision of a new temple (Chpts 40-44), and a life-giving river (Chpt 47).

How to read?

Ezekiel 48 chapters, so could be completed within a month by reading 2 chapters a day, or 12 chapters a week.

In-Sync for April : Job