

# **Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 33, Prophets in Babylon Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## **1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 33, Prophets in Babylon, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Phillips' lecture on Ezekiel covers the prophet's life, messages, and symbolic actions. She highlights Ezekiel's role as a watchman and his visions, especially concerning the temple's destruction and restoration. The lecture explores Ezekiel's use of allegories, including the notable prophecy against the Prince of Tyre, potentially hinting at a deeper, spiritual conflict. Furthermore, the restoration chapters are emphasized, focusing on the promise of a renewed covenant and the return of God's spirit to the people. The lecture sets the stage for understanding Ezekiel's significance within the context of the Old Testament prophets, as well as its connections to New Testament themes.

**2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 33 – Double  
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the  
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link  
there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).**



**Phillips\_OTLit\_Sessi  
on33.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 33, Prophets in Babylon

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. Elaine Phillips' lecture on Ezekiel:

#### Briefing Document: Ezekiel (Old Testament Literature, Lecture 33)

##### Overview:

This lecture focuses on the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, specifically examining his role during the exile, his unique prophetic style (including visions, symbolic actions, and allegories), and the message of judgment and eventual restoration that he delivers. A key emphasis is placed on Ezekiel as a "watchman" and the responsibility this entails for both him and the community of believers.

##### Key Themes and Ideas:

#### 1. Historical Context: Exile and Waves of Deportation:

- Ezekiel prophesies from Babylon, having been exiled in 597 BC.
- Dr. Phillips emphasizes that the Babylonian exile was not a single event but occurred in waves (605 BC, 597 BC, 587 BC).
- Ezekiel is prophesying to a community already in exile, conveying messages about Jerusalem.
- Quote: "For Ezekiel, it means being exiled in 597. And therefore, as he's uttering these prophecies...he is speaking outside the land. He's prophesying about Jerusalem from Babylon."

#### 1. Apocalyptic Literature:

- Ezekiel is placed within the genre of apocalyptic literature, common during times of oppression.
- Apocalyptic literature *reveals* something and focuses on hope at the end.
- It features visionary experiences, dreams, and fantastic imagery.
- Quote: "Apocalyptic means that you're revealing something...it's going to be talking about a type of literature that is making us aware of something that we would otherwise not know just by rational observing and measuring."

- Quote: "...apocalyptic literature is a genre that's particularly evident when God's people are suffering...it looks forward to hope at the end."

#### 1. **Ezekiel's Identity and Call:**

- **Watchman:** A crucial concept. Ezekiel is called a watchman for the house of Israel, responsible for warning people of their wickedness and its consequences. Failure to warn leads to accountability for their "blood." This role is highlighted in Ezekiel 3 and 33.
- Quote: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. So, hear the word of the Lord, and give them warning from me."
- There is a "corporate responsibility" among God's people to call each other to account.
- **Son of Man:** This title, frequently used by God when addressing Ezekiel, emphasizes his humanity. It's important to distinguish this from Daniel's use of the same title, which has a different reference.
- Quote: "Over and over and over again, if you've read the text, you know that when God is addressing Ezekiel, he says, son of man, do this. Son of man, do that...basically, it's a way of saying respectfully, hey, you, pay attention, human being."
- **Priest:** Ezekiel's priestly background is significant because it highlights his deep pain and anguish over the defilement and removal of God's presence from the temple. This potentially explains the focus on temple restoration in the later chapters.

#### 1. **Visions and Symbolic Significance:**

- **Vision of God's Glory and the Cherubim:** Ezekiel's vision of God surrounded by cherubim is central. The cherubim are associated with guarding the divine throne room. The departure of God's glory from the temple, seen in the vision, is a key moment, signifying judgment.
- Quote: "These are huge creatures...And there's some suggestion that what we see as we read the descriptions of these cherubim in Ezekiel, and Revelation for that matter, there's some sense in which other cultures have this same idea of protecting the throne room of God."
- The cherubim are also associated with the movement of God's presence.

- **Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37):** A powerful vision symbolizing the restoration of Israel. Even when hope seems lost, God can bring new life.
- Quote: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say our bones are dried up, and our hope is gone, and we're cut off."
- **New Temple (Ezekiel 40-48):** Ezekiel sees a vision of a new temple with detailed measurements and sacrifices. This raises questions about its interpretation, particularly in light of the New Testament's teachings on Christ's sacrifice. Dr. Phillips suggests it might be a symbolic representation of the return of God's glory and presence in terms familiar to Ezekiel as a priest.
- Quote: "The glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east... the glory of the Lord filled the temple."
- A river flows from the temple, bringing life and healing, echoing imagery found in Revelation.

#### 1. **Symbolic Actions:**

- Ezekiel performs a series of symbolic actions to convey God's message:
- Eating the scroll (representing internalizing God's word).
- Building a model of Jerusalem under siege.
- Eating limited rations (simulating famine during the siege).
- Shaving his beard and dividing the hair (symbolizing the fate of the people).
- Packing his belongings for exile.
- The death of his wife, which he is forbidden to mourn, symbolizing the loss of the temple.
- These actions were intended to catch the attention of the people.

#### 1. **Allegories:**

- Ezekiel uses allegories to illustrate various aspects of Israel's relationship with God:
- Jerusalem as an abandoned child who becomes a prostitute (Ezekiel 16).
- Eagles representing Babylon and Egypt taking away parts of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 17).

- Israel and Judah as adulterous sisters (Ezekiel 23).
- **The Prince of Tyre (Ezekiel 28):** This allegory describes the arrogance and pride of the ruler of Tyre, but Dr. Phillips suggests there may be a deeper, underlying reference to a malevolent spiritual force (potentially Satan) behind earthly evil. It also has parallels with Isaiah 14 regarding the King of Babylon.
- Quote: "You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you...You were on the holy mount of God among the fiery stones. You were blameless in all your ways till wickedness was found in you."

#### 1. **Promise of Restoration:**

- Despite the judgment, Ezekiel's message includes a strong promise of restoration:
- Renewal of the Davidic line.
- Gathering of the exiles.
- Cleansing and spiritual renewal (a new heart and a new spirit).
- Living in the promised land and being God's people.
- Quote: "I'll sprinkle clean water on you, and you're going to be clean...I'll give you a new heart, I'll put a new spirit in you."

#### **Important Considerations:**

- The lecture emphasizes the *relevance* of Ezekiel's message for contemporary believers.
- There is a call to faithfulness and discernment.
- There is a call to corporate responsibility within the Christian community.
- The speaker stresses the need to study the Bible thoroughly in order to have a true prophetic voice.

#### **Further Discussion Points:**

- The interpretation of the new temple vision and its significance in light of New Testament theology.
- The connection between Ezekiel's prophecies and the book of Revelation.
- The application of the "watchman" principle in modern contexts.

## **4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 33, Prophets in Babylon**

### **Ezekiel: Prophet of Exile and Restoration**

#### **Study Guide Contents**

1. Quiz (Short Answer)
2. Answer Key (Quiz)
3. Essay Questions
4. Glossary of Key Terms

#### **1. Quiz (Short Answer)**

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What significant event happens to Ezekiel, and how does God instruct him to respond? What is the symbolic meaning behind this event?
2. Why is Ezekiel called a "watchman," and what responsibility does this title entail?
3. What is the significance of Ezekiel being addressed as "son of man" by God?
4. Describe the key characteristics of apocalyptic literature, and explain why this genre was particularly evident during times of suffering for God's people.
5. Briefly describe Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim in chapter 1. What are some possible parallels to this vision in ancient Near Eastern culture?
6. According to the lecture, what is the central focus of Ezekiel chapters 1-24? How does the death of Ezekiel's wife relate to this focus?
7. Summarize Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (chapter 37). What does this vision symbolize for the house of Israel?
8. Describe Ezekiel's vision of the new temple in chapters 40-48. What issues does this vision raise, particularly regarding sacrifices, and what interpretation is offered in the lecture?
9. Give two examples of symbolic actions that Ezekiel performs, and explain the significance of each action.

10. Explain the two possible interpretations of the allegory of the Prince of Tyre (Ezekiel 28).

## 2. Answer Key (Quiz)

1. Ezekiel's wife dies, and God instructs him not to mourn or show outward signs of grief. This is symbolic of the removal of God's glory from the temple due to the idolatry of the people, for which they cannot publicly mourn.
2. Ezekiel is called a watchman because he is responsible for warning the wicked to turn from their evil ways, and for warning the righteous to avoid temptation to sin. If he fails to warn them, he will be held accountable for their deaths.
3. The title "son of man" refers to Ezekiel's humanity as a prophet. It's God's way of addressing him as a human being, emphasizing that he is to pay attention and deliver God's message.
4. Apocalyptic literature reveals hidden truths, often concerning end times, through visions and symbolic language and offers hope in times of oppression. This genre arises when God's people are suffering, seeking reassurance that good will ultimately triumph over evil.
5. Ezekiel's vision includes four creatures, each with four faces (lion, eagle, ox, and man), four wings, and wheels within wheels covered with eyes. These images are thought to have parallels to guardian figures guarding the king's throne room in ancient Assyria, possibly protecting the divine throne room.
6. The focus of chapters 1-24 is the judgment and impending doom of Jerusalem, particularly the desecration of the temple. The death of Ezekiel's wife symbolizes the removal of God's glory from the temple due to the idolatry within.
7. Ezekiel sees a valley filled with dry bones that, through his prophesying, come to life, symbolizing the restoration of Israel after exile. It represents the hope of resurrection and the revival of God's people.
8. Ezekiel envisions a new temple with detailed measurements, rooms for priests, and sacrifices. This raises questions about why sacrifices would be necessary if Christ is the ultimate sacrifice, but is interpreted to represent Ezekiel's understanding of God's return with them.
9. **Example 1:** Ezekiel builds a model of Jerusalem on a clay tablet and lies around it for 390 days on one side and 40 days on the other. This symbolizes the siege of Jerusalem. **Example 2:** Ezekiel shaves his beard and divides the hair into three

parts, each representing the fate of the people of Jerusalem--burned with fire, struck with the sword, and scattered to the wind.

10. The Prince of Tyre allegory can be interpreted on two levels. First, it is a poetic description of the arrogance and pride of the King of Tyre. But second, it may be an allusion to the malevolent force of Satan behind evil powers in the world.

### **3. Essay Questions**

1. Discuss the significance of Ezekiel as both a model for faithful living and a model for faithfully speaking in the context of his prophecies and personal experiences.
2. Analyze the symbolic actions performed by Ezekiel. How do these actions function as a means of communicating God's message to the exiles and to Jerusalem?
3. Explore the role and interpretation of visionary experiences in the book of Ezekiel. How do these visions contribute to the overall message of judgment and hope?
4. Compare and contrast Ezekiel's prophecies of judgment against Judah/Jerusalem with his prophecies of restoration. How do these contrasting themes contribute to the book's overarching message?
5. Examine the theme of God's presence (or absence) in the book of Ezekiel, particularly focusing on the departure of God's glory from the temple and the vision of the new temple. What implications does this theme have for understanding God's relationship with his people?



## 4. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apocalyptic Literature:** A genre of literature that reveals hidden truths, often concerning end times, through visions, symbols, and allegories, typically arising during times of persecution or crisis.
- **Boker Tov:** A Hebrew greeting meaning "Good Morning."
- **Cherubim (Singular: Cherub):** Mythical creatures, often depicted with wings and multiple faces, that guard sacred spaces or thrones; in Ezekiel, associated with the presence and glory of God.
- **Exile (Babylonian Exile):** The period in Jewish history (605-539 BCE) when many Israelites were forcibly removed from their homeland and taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.
- **Gog and Magog:** Figures or nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39 and Revelation 20, representing the forces of evil that will oppose God's people in the end times.
- **Phoenicia:** An ancient civilization located in modern-day Lebanon, known for its maritime trade and influence, but also for its idolatrous religious practices.
- **Prince of Tyre:** A figure in Ezekiel 28, representing the arrogant ruler of Tyre, but also possibly alluding to the malevolent influence of Satan.
- **Pseudepigrapha:** Writings falsely attributed to well-known figures from the past.
- **Son of Man:** A title used by God to address Ezekiel, emphasizing his humanity and role as a prophet.
- **Tyre:** An ancient Phoenician port city, known for its wealth and trade, but also condemned in Ezekiel for its pride and wickedness.
- **Watchman:** A term used to describe Ezekiel's role as a prophet, responsible for warning the people of their sins and the consequences of disobedience.
- **Yehazak El/Yehazakel:** The Hebrew name for Ezekiel, meaning "God strengthens" or "God will strengthen."

## 5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 33, Prophets in Babylon, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Ezekiel FAQ

- **What is Ezekiel best known for?**
- Ezekiel is remembered for a few key elements: his unique and sometimes bizarre prophetic actions (like not mourning his wife's death), the famous vision of the valley of dry bones, and his role as a "watchman" for Israel. He's also known for the detailed and complex visions he experiences, particularly the vision of God's chariot throne and the elaborate descriptions of a restored temple in the later chapters of the book.
- **Why is Ezekiel called a "watchman"?**
- Ezekiel's role as a "watchman" (emphasized in Ezekiel 3 and 33) signifies his responsibility to warn the people of Israel about their wickedness and the impending judgment of God. If Ezekiel fails to warn the wicked, he will be held accountable for their deaths. Conversely, if he warns them and they do not repent, he has fulfilled his duty and saved himself. This highlights a corporate responsibility among God's people to look out for one another's spiritual well-being.
- **What is the significance of Ezekiel being repeatedly addressed as "son of man"?**
- When God addresses Ezekiel as "son of man," it is primarily a way of emphasizing his humanity. It's a respectful way to get his attention and remind him that he is a human being speaking on behalf of God. The lecture states it is important to have this understanding handy because in Daniel, the "son of man" title has a "remarkably different reference point" and Dr. Phillips suggests that it will be important to "put these two together."
- **What is apocalyptic literature, and how does it relate to Ezekiel?**
- Apocalyptic literature is a genre that reveals something hidden, often pertaining to events at the end of times or things not normally seen. It frequently emerges when God's people are suffering oppression. Ezekiel contains elements of apocalyptic literature, including visionary experiences, symbolic imagery, and a focus on the hope of ultimate triumph of good over evil, particularly relevant during the Babylonian exile when the Israelites were questioning God's promises.

- **What is the overall structure of the book of Ezekiel?**
- The book of Ezekiel is generally divided into three main sections:
  1. Chapters 1-24: Prophecies of judgment and doom against Jerusalem and its temple.
  2. Chapters 25-32: Prophecies against foreign nations surrounding Israel.
  3. Chapters 33-48: Prophecies of restoration and hope for Israel, including visions of a restored temple and the return of God's presence.
- **What is the meaning of Ezekiel's vision of the departure of God's glory from the temple?**
- Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim departing from the temple (Ezekiel 8-11) symbolizes the removal of God's presence from the temple due to the rampant idolatry and wickedness of the people. This departure foreshadows the destruction of the temple. However, the fact that God's presence pauses at the gate and on the mountain before finally leaving suggests a sense of divine sorrow and reluctance.
- **How should we interpret Ezekiel's vision of the restored temple with its sacrificial system?**
- The vision of the restored temple in Ezekiel 40-48, with its detailed descriptions of sacrifices, raises interpretive challenges, especially in light of the New Testament teachings on Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. One interpretation suggests that the temple and sacrificial system are symbolic representations of the restored presence and glory of God among His people. The details are presented in terms that Ezekiel, as a priest, could understand, but they may not necessarily be meant to be taken literally.

- **What are some of the symbolic actions performed by Ezekiel, and what do they represent?**
- Ezekiel performs several symbolic actions to communicate God's message, including:
  - Eating a scroll: Representing the ingestion and internalization of God's word.
  - Building a model of Jerusalem under siege: Illustrating the coming siege and destruction of the city.
  - Eating limited rations: Depicting the famine conditions during the siege.
  - Shaving his head and beard: Symbolizing the judgment and scattering of the people.
  - Packing his belongings for exile: Actively representing the exile that was about to occur.
  - Not mourning his wife's death: Paralleling God's removal of His presence from the temple and the people's lack of mourning over it.