

Dr. Leslie Allen, Daniel, Session 2, Part 1 – Ezekiel’s Visionary Call (Ezek 1:1-3:15) Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Allen, Ezekiel, Session 2, Part 1 – Ezekiel’s Visionary Call (Ezek 1:1-3:15), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Leslie Allen's lecture focuses on Ezekiel's visionary call and commission, specifically Ezekiel 1:1-3:15. The lecture explores the autobiographical nature of this passage and its significance as evidence of Ezekiel's prophetic status. **Allen analyzes the chronology and setting of Ezekiel's vision, including his location among the exiles by the Kibar River.** A central theme is God's presence, particularly as revealed through theophany and judgment. **The lecture also breaks down the components of Ezekiel's vision, such as the storm imagery, living creatures, mobile throne, and the symbolic eating of the scroll, while connecting them to broader Old Testament themes and imagery.**

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Allen, Ezekiel, Session 2 – 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 → Major Prophets → Ezekiel).



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3. Briefing Document: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 2, Part 1 – Ezekiel's Visionary Call (Ezek 1:1-3:15)

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Leslie Allen's lecture on Ezekiel's visionary call and commission (Ezekiel 1:1-3:15):

Briefing Document: Ezekiel's Visionary Call and Commission (Ezekiel 1:1-3:15)

Main Themes:

- **Ezekiel's Prophetic Authority:** The lecture focuses on the initial vision and commission of Ezekiel, emphasizing how this experience validates his authority as a prophet, similar to Paul's vision in the New Testament and Isaiah's call in Isaiah 6. The autobiographical nature of the narrative is seen as an assurance to Ezekiel and a testimony to others regarding his prophetic status.
- **The Vision as a Theophany of Judgment:** Dr. Allen identifies Ezekiel's vision in chapter 1 as a theophany, specifically a "theophany of judgment." This means it is a manifestation of God's presence linked to his intention to bring judgment upon his people. This contrasts with theophanies of salvation, such as Moses' vision of the burning bush.
- **The Complex Doctrine of God's Presence:** The lecture emphasizes that the vision revolves around the presence of God, a complex doctrine in the Old Testament. God is present in heaven, in creation (omnipresence), in the Jerusalem temple (Holy of Holies), with his people, in judgment, and in theophany. Ezekiel's vision is a theophany occurring outside of Israel.
- **Ezekiel's Commission and its Challenges:** The lecture details Ezekiel's commission to prophesy to the "rebellious house" of Israel, highlighting the challenges and opposition he will face. Despite this, he is empowered and told to deliver God's message regardless of whether the people listen.
- **Symbolic Rite of Ordination: Eating the Scroll:** The act of Ezekiel eating the scroll is interpreted as a symbolic rite of ordination. The scroll, containing "words of lamentations, mourning, and woe," represents the grim message of judgment that Ezekiel is to proclaim. However, the scroll tasting "as sweet as honey" symbolizes Ezekiel's willing acceptance and satisfaction in fulfilling God's will.

- **The Reality of Exile:** Dr. Allen contextualizes Ezekiel's ministry within the reality of the Babylonian exile. He describes the labor camps where the exiles lived and worked, emphasizing the difficult circumstances and the Judeans' rebellion even in exile.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Chronology:** The lecture addresses the "awkwardness" of the initial chronological marker ("the 30th year") in Ezekiel 1:1 and suggests it likely refers to Ezekiel's age. However, the rest of the book dates events according to the exile of King Jehoiakim in 597 BCE, making the vision occur in July 593 BCE.
- **Ezekiel's Priestly Background:** Ezekiel's role as a priest is emphasized, noting that his priestly training influences his prophetic work, especially his teaching of Torah traditions. "Ezekiel very freely incorporates his priestly training into his prophetic work."
- **Description of the Vision:** The vision involves God appearing as a storm god (similar to Psalm 18), with a stormy wind, a great cloud, and fire. It includes four living creatures supporting a mobile throne chariot, with each creature having four faces (human, ox, eagle, lion), representing aspects of God's creation and power. The throne is mobile due to the Spirit animating it. The wheels had "eyes" representing God's omniscience. There is a platform representing the firmament of heaven.
- **The Importance of "Like":** Allen notes the prevalence of the word "like" in Ezekiel 1, signifying Ezekiel's struggle to describe the indescribable supernatural vision. "Perhaps the most common word in chapter 1 is the word like. It was like this, it was like that, it was like something else."
- **Recognition Formula:** The lecture highlights the frequent occurrence of a "recognition formula" in Ezekiel, such as "they shall know that there has been a prophet among them" (Ezekiel 2:5). Allen notes the formula appears 126 times in the book of Ezekiel.
- **Ezekiel's Empowerment:** Ezekiel is warned not to fear the people's opposition and is empowered to be "hard" against them, similar to the prophet Amos. He is assured that God will make him tough. "See, I've made your face hard against their faces and your forehead hard against their foreheads." (Ezekiel 3:8)

- **Tel Aviv:** Ezekiel was transported to Tel Aviv, which was located on the Chebar Canal, near Nippur, east of Babylon. The Chebar Canal was part of a network that transported river water, good and food and was used for irrigation purposes.

Quotes:

- "It was Ezekiel who saw the vision of glory which God showed him above the chariot of the cherubim." (Referencing Sirach's view of Ezekiel)
- "Perhaps the most common word in chapter 1 is the word like. It was like this, it was like that, it was like something else."
- "He rode on a cherub and flew...Thick darkness was under his feet." (Quoting Psalm 18 describing a theophany)
- "I am sending you to the people of Israel to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me." (Ezekiel 2:3, God's commission to Ezekiel)
- "Whether they hear or refuse to hear for they are rebellious house. They shall know that there has been a prophet among them." (Ezekiel 2:5, recognition formula)
- "See, I've made your face hard against their faces and your forehead hard against their foreheads." (Ezekiel 3:8, God's empowerment of Ezekiel)
- "I ate it and in my mouth, it was as sweet as honey." (Ezekiel 3:3, describing Ezekiel's acceptance of his commission)

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of the key themes and ideas presented in the provided lecture excerpts on Ezekiel's visionary call and commission.

4. Study Guide: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 2, Part 1 – Ezekiel's Visionary Call (Ezek 1:1-3:15)

Ezekiel's Visionary Call and Commission: A Study Guide

I. Key Concepts and Themes

- **Prophetic Authority:** How Ezekiel's visionary experience validates his prophetic role and message.
- **Theophany:** The manifestation of God's presence, particularly in the context of judgment. Distinguish between theophany of salvation and theophany of judgment.
- **God's Presence:** Understanding the complex doctrine of God's presence, including his presence in heaven, throughout creation, in the temple, with leaders, in judgment, and in theophany.
- **Visionary Language:** Recognize the use of simile and metaphor in Ezekiel's descriptions, acknowledging the limitations of language when describing the supernatural.
- **Mobile Throne/Chariot:** The significance of the mobile throne as a symbol of God's presence and mobility.
- **Rebellion:** Understanding the nature of the Israelites' rebellion against God and the implications for Ezekiel's ministry.
- **Commission:** The nature and difficulty of Ezekiel's commission to prophesy to a rebellious people.
- **Symbolic Actions:** The meaning and significance of Ezekiel's symbolic act of eating the scroll.

II. Key Figures

- **Ezekiel:** His background as a priest, his call to be a prophet, and his initial reaction to the vision and commission.
- **God:** His presence, power, and authority as revealed in the vision.
- **Jehoiachin:** The exiled king, whose exile serves as a chronological marker.
- **The Exiles:** The Judean community living in Babylonian labor camps.

III. Key Passages

- **Ezekiel 1:1-3:** The introduction and dating of the vision.
- **Ezekiel 1:4-28:** The description of the vision of God's glory, including the storm, the living creatures, the wheels, the firmament, and the throne.
- **Ezekiel 2:1-7:** God's commission to Ezekiel as a prophet of judgment.
- **Ezekiel 2:8-3:3:** The symbolic act of eating the scroll.
- **Ezekiel 3:4-15:** The confirmation of Ezekiel's commission and his reaction.

IV. Quiz (Short Answer)

1. What are the two chronologies mentioned in Ezekiel 1, and how do they relate to each other?
2. What is the significance of Ezekiel being called a priest, even before his prophetic call?
3. Describe two different types of theophany mentioned in the lecture.
4. What elements of Ezekiel's vision connect God to the imagery of a storm god?
5. Describe the four faces of the living creatures and what they represent.
6. Explain the possible meaning of the "wheel within a wheel" imagery.
7. What auditory elements are introduced into the vision in Ezekiel 1:22-28?
8. What does God call Ezekiel in chapter 2, and what is the significance of this title?
9. What is the meaning of Ezekiel eating the scroll, and what does it taste like?
10. What are some of the difficulties Ezekiel faces as God sends him to his own people?

V. Quiz Answer Key

1. The first chronology is "the thirtieth year," which is possibly Ezekiel's age. The second chronology is linked to the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile, which is 597 BC. The editorial note acknowledges the ambiguity of the first date and clarifies its meaning in relation to the standard dating system used throughout the rest of the book.
2. Ezekiel's priestly background meant he was trained to teach the Torah and religious traditions, which greatly influenced his future ministry. His prior training

was crucial to how he understood his prophetic work and its importance. By including this title, the author alludes to the impact the priesthood had on his future as a prophet.

3. Two types of theophany are theophany of salvation, exemplified by Moses and the burning bush, and theophany of judgment, which characterizes Ezekiel's vision and commission. The first is meant to grant peace and show assurance, and the second was hostile. In either case, theophany shows the appearance of God.
4. The vision includes a stormy wind from the north, a great cloud, flashing fire, and the imagery of a rainbow, all of which evoke the power and destructive force associated with storms. These elements align with the portrayal of God as a storm god and the storm language used throughout the lecture. The elements create a threatening presence.
5. The four faces are those of a human, an ox, a lion, and an eagle. Each face represents a powerful aspect of God's creation, contributing to his glory. The implication of the vision was that God's creation can have a terrifying power.
6. One suggestion is that the wheels were constructed as a sphere or globe with wheels on top, which would allow the throne to move in any direction. The sphere would move, and at the edges, the proper wheel would come into operation and take it in a certain direction. The imagery points to the mobile throne's means of travel.
7. The auditory elements include the sound of the wings of the living creatures, described as being like mighty waters or the thunder of the Almighty, and the voice of God speaking to Ezekiel. With the introduction of these elements, the lecture demonstrates that the vision isn't strictly visual. The new auditory elements signal a preparation for what is to come.
8. God calls Ezekiel "mortal," or "son of man," emphasizing his humanity in contrast to the supernatural beings in the vision. By reminding Ezekiel he is but a man, God emphasizes his purpose and will. It emphasizes the gulf between God and man.
9. Eating the scroll represents Ezekiel internalizing God's message and making it his own before delivering it to the people. Although the scroll contains words of lamentation, mourning, and woe, it tastes as sweet as honey to Ezekiel, symbolizing his willing acceptance of God's will. It symbolizes his own acceptance and satisfaction.

10. Ezekiel faces the difficulty of prophesying to his own people, the exiles, who are rebellious and unwilling to listen. He is warned not to fear their words or looks, despite the opposition he will face because the Judeans are turning against their own God. As a Judean himself, it is difficult to turn on his own people.

VI. Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the theophany in Ezekiel 1 as a theophany of judgment. How does this vision prepare Ezekiel for his role as a prophet to a rebellious people?
2. Discuss the symbolism of the mobile throne/chariot in Ezekiel 1. What does it represent about God's presence and power in the world?
3. Explore the contrasts and tensions within Ezekiel's commission, particularly the tension between his role as a prophet of judgment and his connection to his own people, the exiles.
4. Examine the use of visionary language in Ezekiel 1. How does Ezekiel attempt to describe the indescribable, and what are the limitations of his language?
5. Compare and contrast Ezekiel's call and commission with that of another Old Testament prophet, such as Isaiah. What similarities and differences exist in their experiences and messages?

VII. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Autobiographical Narrative:** A narrative written from the perspective of the author about their own life and experiences.
- **Theophany:** A visible manifestation of God to humankind.
- **Glory:** The radiant and powerful presence of God.
- **Exiles:** People forced to leave their native country, especially for political reasons.
- **Kibar Canal:** A canal near Nippur in Babylonia where Ezekiel had his vision.
- **Firmament:** The expanse of the heavens, conceived as a solid dome.
- **Prophetic Commission:** The act of being given a divine task or purpose as a prophet.
- **Mobile Throne/Chariot:** A symbolic representation of God's presence and mobility.
- **Recognition Formula:** A phrase or statement that identifies a person or event as being divinely appointed or significant.
- **Rebellious House:** A term used to describe the Israelites due to their repeated disobedience and rejection of God's commands.

5. FAQs on Allen, Ezekiel, Session 2, Part 1 – Ezekiel’s Visionary Call (Ezek 1:1-3:15), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Ezekiel's Visionary Call and Commission: An FAQ

1. What is the significance of Ezekiel's visionary call and commission in Ezekiel 1:1-3:15?

This section of Ezekiel introduces the prophet and establishes his authority. It serves as a testimony to his prophetic status, similar to Paul's vision of Christ in the New Testament or Isaiah's call in Isaiah 6. It describes Ezekiel's encounter with God's special presence, his actual call and commission, and God's warning about the exiles' reaction. It also details Ezekiel's own reaction to this profound experience. The vision establishes Ezekiel as a prophet of judgment.

2. How does the chronology of the book of Ezekiel begin, and what makes it unusual?

Ezekiel 1:1 starts with a specific but ambiguous date, "the 30th year, the 4th month, the 5th day," without specifying which event it refers to. The most accepted interpretation is that it refers to Ezekiel's age. Verses 2 and 3 offer a second chronology, dating Ezekiel's work based on the exile of King Jehoiakim in 597 BC, which becomes the standard dating method throughout the rest of the book. This editorial note acknowledges the initial awkwardness.

3. What is the importance of Ezekiel being identified as a priest, and how does it influence his prophetic ministry?

Ezekiel's priestly background is significant because priests were responsible for teaching the Torah traditions, including moral and religious principles. Ezekiel integrates his priestly training into his prophetic work. This background informs his understanding of God's presence and judgment, shaping his messages to the people.

4. How does the vision in Ezekiel chapter 1 portray the presence of God?

The vision depicts God's presence as complex and multi-faceted. While God's fullest presence is in heaven, he can also reveal himself on earth. This revelation is considered a theophany. In Ezekiel's case, it's a theophany of judgment, indicating God's intervention in the world to exercise judgment. The vision showcases God's mobile throne chariot supported by living creatures, a powerful image signifying his presence and authority outside of the Jerusalem temple.

5. What are the key elements of the storm imagery in Ezekiel 1, and what do they represent?

The vision in Ezekiel 1 depicts God as a storm god, drawing parallels to Psalm 18. The imagery includes a stormy wind from the north, a great cloud with brightness, and fire flashing continually. This storm imagery represents God's power and his coming to earth, bringing both judgment and revelation.

6. What is the significance of the "living creatures" and the "wheels" in Ezekiel's vision?

The four living creatures with their four different faces (human, ox, eagle, and lion) represent aspects of power within God's creation, each contributing to God's glory. They support the mobile throne of God. The wheels, described as a "wheel within a wheel," provide mobility to the throne on the ground. The "eyes" on the wheels symbolize God's omniscience, representing His knowledge of everything happening in the world. The spirit controls both the living creatures and the wheels, acting as an animating force.

7. What is the symbolic meaning of Ezekiel eating the scroll, and how does it relate to his prophetic role?

The act of Ezekiel eating the scroll symbolizes his internalization of God's message. The scroll, containing "words of lamentations, mourning, and woe," represents the grim contents of his prophecies of judgment. Despite the harsh content, the scroll tastes "as sweet as honey" to Ezekiel, signifying his willing acceptance and satisfaction in doing God's will. This symbolizes that Ezekiel accepts his role as a prophet of judgement.

8. What challenges does Ezekiel face in his commission, and how is he prepared for them?

Ezekiel is sent to a "rebellious house" of Israel, who are unlikely to listen to his message. He is warned not to be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, even though he will be surrounded by opposition. God assures Ezekiel that He will make his "face hard against their faces" and his "forehead hard against their foreheads," giving him the toughness and authority he needs to deliver God's message of judgment. He is reminded that, as hard as it may be, he is speaking to his people.