

The Watchman



Ezekiel 1:1–3; 3:1–21 · This week: A New Spirit Will I Put within You, Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–37; 47

In the manual: **Come, Follow Me lesson 45, “A New Spirit Will I Put within You,” on Gospel Library**

START

Ezekiel was a captive in Babylon, living by a river far from home, when “the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God” (Ezekiel 1:1).

READ TOGETHER

Babylon’s army had carried ten thousand captives away from Jerusalem, along with King Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:14–15). Ezekiel, a priest trained to serve in the temple, lived among those captives (Ezekiel 1:1–3).

EZEKIEL 3:1–3

¹Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. ²So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. ³And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

EZEKIEL 3:17

¹⁷Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord shining like “the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain,” a rainbow (Ezekiel 1:28). He saw it in Babylon, among captives far from the temple. The Lord had come to them where they were.

Then the Lord handed Ezekiel a scroll full of “lamentations, and mourning, and woe” and told

him to eat it (Ezekiel 2:9–10). A prophet takes the Lord’s word inside himself before he speaks it. The message was hard, and in his mouth it was still “as honey for sweetness.”

Before he said a word, Ezekiel went to the captives at Tel-abib and “sat where they sat” for seven days (Ezekiel 3:15). He sat with them in their sorrow first. Jesus Christ came closer still. He took our pains and sicknesses upon himself so that he would know how to help us (Alma 7:11–12).

Then the Lord made Ezekiel “a watchman unto the house of Israel” (verse 17). A watchman kept guard over a city and blew a trumpet when he saw an enemy coming (Ezekiel 33:2–6). Prophets see dangers we cannot see yet, and they warn us because the Lord wants to save us.

TALK ABOUT IT

When has someone warned you about a danger before you could see it? How did you feel about that warning later?

TAKE TO CHURCH

The Lord came to Ezekiel in Babylon, far from the temple. He can reach us wherever we are, and he sends prophets as watchmen to warn us in time.

Feed the Flock

Ezekiel 34 · This week: A New Spirit Will I Put within You, Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–37; 47

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START

In Ezekiel's day, Israel had shepherds who ate well and wore warm wool while their sheep wandered off and were lost (Ezekiel 34:2–6).

READ TOGETHER

The shepherds in this chapter are Israel's leaders, who were supposed to care for the people. The sheep are the Lord's people (Ezekiel 34:31).

EZEKIEL 34:4

⁴The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

EZEKIEL 34:15–16

¹⁵I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. ¹⁶I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Read verse 4 and verse 16 side by side. The sick, the broken, the driven away, and the lost appear in both. The leaders left each of them behind, and the Lord promises to go back for each one himself. “Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out” (Ezekiel 34:11).

A lost sheep wanders off. A sheep that is driven away gets pushed out, and verse 21 describes strong sheep shoving the weak ones with their horns until they scatter. Some people drift away from the Lord's flock, and others leave because someone hurt them. The Lord goes looking for both.

The Lord promised “one shepherd” and called him “my servant David” (Ezekiel 34:23). King David had died about four hundred years earlier. The promised shepherd is Jesus Christ, born into David's family line, who said, “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

After he rose from the dead, Jesus asked Peter three times, “Lovest thou me?” Each time he told Peter to feed his lambs or his sheep (John 21:15–17). Ministering to a family or a friend is shepherd's work.

TALK ABOUT IT

Who might feel lost or pushed out at school, at church, or in our neighborhood? What is one thing we could do this week to go and find them?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Ezekiel 34 names the sheep that Israel's leaders left behind, and then the Lord promises to go back for every one. When we minister, we do that work with the Good Shepherd.

Turn and Live

Ezekiel 33:10–20; 18:30–32 · This week: A New Spirit Will I Put within You, Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–37; 47

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START

The captives in Babylon asked a question many people ask after doing wrong. “If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?” (Ezekiel 33:10).

READ TOGETHER

To pine away is to waste away slowly, like a plant without water. The people believed their sins had ruined them for good.

EZEKIEL 33:11

¹¹Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

EZEKIEL 33:14–16

¹⁴Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; ¹⁵If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. ¹⁶None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

WHAT IT TEACHES

The Lord answered with an oath. “As I live,” he said, he has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11). Then he pleaded with them twice in one breath, “turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways.” He had said it before, “wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye” (Ezekiel 18:32).

Verse 15 shows what turning looks like. The man gives back the pledge he took and repays what he

stole. A pledge was something a borrower handed over until he paid, sometimes the coat he slept in (Exodus 22:26–27). Repentance includes making things right wherever we can.

The Lord promised that “none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him” (Ezekiel 33:16). When the Lord forgives, he does not bring it up again. In Isaiah he says he “will not remember thy sins” (Isaiah 43:25).

Some of the people called this unfair. “The way of the Lord is not equal,” they said (Ezekiel 33:17). They wanted to be judged by their past, and the Lord looks at which way a person is walking now (Ezekiel 33:18–19). Jesus told of two sons. The one who refused his father and then went to work in the vineyard was the one who did his father’s will (Matthew 21:28–31).

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the Lord chooses not to bring up sins he has forgiven? What would change in our family if we did the same with each other’s mistakes?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Ezekiel’s people thought their sins had ruined them for good. The Lord told them to turn and live, and he promised that forgiven sins would never be mentioned again.

A New Heart



Ezekiel 36:24–30; 11:19–20 · This week: A New Spirit Will I Put within You, Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–37; 47

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START

A human heart beats about a hundred thousand times a day. Through Ezekiel, the Lord promised his people a new one.

READ TOGETHER

The Lord had scattered Israel among the nations for their sins. In Ezekiel 36, he promised to gather them home and change them from the inside (Ezekiel 36:19; 36:24).

EZEKIEL 36:25–27

25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. **26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. **27** And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

WHAT IT TEACHES

In verse 25, the Lord promises to “sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.” Under the law of Moses, water was sprinkled on a person to make him clean (Numbers 19:18–19). For us, that cleansing begins with baptism.

Then he promises to take away “the stony heart” and give “an heart of flesh” (verse 26). A stone feels nothing. A heart of flesh can feel sorrow, love, and the Spirit.

In verse 27, the Lord puts his own Spirit within his people and causes them to walk in his statutes. He gives the new heart, and then he helps us keep his commandments. King Benjamin’s people felt this

change. They said the Spirit had changed their hearts until they no longer wanted to do evil (Mosiah 5:2).

Alma asked members of the Church whether they could still feel the mighty change of heart they had felt before (Alma 5:14; 5:26). President Ezra Taft Benson taught that for most people the change comes slowly. “For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds and thousands of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life.”

President Ezra Taft Benson, “A Mighty Change of Heart,” Ensign, October 1989

TALK ABOUT IT

What is something that used to be hard to do and now feels easier because your heart has changed? What might the Lord want to soften in your heart next?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Ezekiel’s promise of a new heart comes with a second promise. The Lord puts his Spirit within us to help us keep his commandments, so we never have to change ourselves alone.

Can These Bones Live

Ezekiel 37:1–14 · This week: A New Spirit Will I Put within You, Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–37; 47

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START

The Lord set Ezekiel down in a valley full of bones, “and, lo, they were very dry” (Ezekiel 37:2).

READ TOGETHER

This was a vision, and the Lord explained what it meant. “These bones are the whole house of Israel,” scattered in exile and sure they had no future (Ezekiel 37:11).

EZEKIEL 37:3–5

³ And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. ⁴ Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

EZEKIEL 37:12–14

¹² Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, ¹⁴ And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

WHAT IT TEACHES

When the Lord asked, “Can these bones live?” Ezekiel answered, “O Lord God, thou knowest” (Ezekiel 37:3). He could not see how, and he trusted

that the Lord could. Then he did what he was told and spoke the word of the Lord to the bones.

The bones came together and grew flesh and skin, “but there was no breath in them” (Ezekiel 37:8). They lived only when the breath came in (Ezekiel 37:10). In Hebrew one word, *ruach*, means breath, wind, and spirit. The Lord explains the vision himself, promising to “put my spirit in you, and ye shall live” (Ezekiel 37:14).

The Israelites said, “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost” (Ezekiel 37:11). The Lord answered, “I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves” (Ezekiel 37:12). Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, that promise reaches everyone who has ever lived. Every body will rise, with every limb and joint restored (Alma 11:43–44).

TALK ABOUT IT

Ezekiel said, “O Lord God, thou knowest,” when he could not see how the bones could live. What feels impossible to you right now that you could leave in the Lord’s hands?

TAKE TO CHURCH

In Ezekiel’s vision, the bones had flesh and skin and still could not live until the breath came. We need the Spirit of the Lord that way, and through Jesus Christ even graves will open.

One in Thine Hand



Ezekiel 37:15–28 · This week: A New Spirit Will I Put within You, Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–37; 47

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START

The Lord told Ezekiel to take two sticks, write a name on each, and join them so they would “become one in thine hand” (Ezekiel 37:17).

READ TOGETHER

After King Solomon died, Israel split into two kingdoms (1 Kings 12:16–20). Judah ruled the south. The north was often called Ephraim, after its leading tribe, which came from Joseph’s son Ephraim (Genesis 48:19–20).

EZEKIEL 37:16–17

¹⁶ Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: ¹⁷ And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

EZEKIEL 37:19

¹⁹ Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

WHAT IT TEACHES

The first meaning is a divided people made whole. “They shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all” (Ezekiel 37:22). The Lord gathers scattered Israel into one family under one king.

In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord called the Book of Mormon the record of the stick of Ephraim

(Doctrine and Covenants 27:5). Much of the Bible was written by the house of Judah. The Book of Mormon was written by Lehi’s family, who descended from Joseph through his son Manasseh (Alma 10:3). Joseph of Egypt was promised that the writings of his descendants and the writings of Judah would grow together (2 Nephi 3:12).

The Bible tells of the Savior’s birth, ministry, death, and Resurrection. In the Book of Mormon, the risen Christ visits a people on the other side of the world. He takes their little children one by one and blesses them (3 Nephi 17:21). Together they are two witnesses of the same Savior.

The chapter ends with “a covenant of peace” and the Lord’s sanctuary “in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezekiel 37:26). The scriptures gather people to Christ, and the gathering leads to his temple.

TALK ABOUT IT

What is one story from the Bible and one from the Book of Mormon that help you know Jesus Christ? What does each book add that the other does not have?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Ezekiel held two sticks as one in his hand. The Bible and the Book of Mormon work the same way, two witnesses that gather us to Jesus Christ.

Waters to Swim In

Ezekiel 47:1–12 • This week: A New Spirit Will I Put within You, Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–37; 47

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START

Fish cannot live in the Dead Sea. It is so salty that fish carried in by the Jordan River die. In Ezekiel's vision, that sea came to life (Ezekiel 47:8–9).

READ TOGETHER

Near the end of his book, Ezekiel saw a temple in vision. A man with a measuring line led him to its door, where water was flowing out from under the threshold (Ezekiel 47:1–3).

EZEKIEL 47:8–9

⁸Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. ⁹And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

EZEKIEL 47:12

¹²And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

WHAT IT TEACHES

The man measured a thousand cubits at a time, and each time the water was deeper. It reached Ezekiel's ankles, then his knees, then his waist, until it was “waters to swim in” (Ezekiel 47:3–5). The river grew as it went, and all of it came from the temple.

When the river reached the Dead Sea, the water was healed. “Every thing shall live whither the river cometh” (Ezekiel 47:9). Fishermen would spread their nets from En-gedi, a spring on the shore of what had been a dead sea (Ezekiel 47:10).

Trees along the banks bear new fruit every month, “and the leaf thereof for medicine” (Ezekiel 47:12). John saw a river and a tree like these in his vision of heaven, with leaves “for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:1–2). Jesus Christ is the source of that living water (John 4:14).

Elder Dale G. Renlund drew lessons about the temple from Ezekiel's river. This was his second. “Second, the river renewed everything that it touched. The blessings of the temple likewise have a stunning capacity to heal. Temple blessings can heal hearts and lives and families.”

Elder Dale G. Renlund, “Family History and Temple Work: Sealing and Healing,” General conference, April 2018

TALK ABOUT IT

The river got deeper the farther it went from the temple. How can what we feel at the temple, or while getting ready to go, stay with us through the week?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Ezekiel saw a river flow out of the temple and bring a dead sea back to life. The Lord's house can heal what looks beyond help in us and in our families.