

## **FOCUS Ezekiel Studies.**

### **Leader's guide.**

### **Introduction.**

Ezekiel is a large book and has many themes. Because we only have 6 sessions to do it at FOCUS, it is important to set the right kinds of expectations. We will only be doing broad brush strokes. So inform the group that it will only be an overview. For leaders, please familiarize yourself with Ezekiel at least read the selected Chapters in Ezekiel which the bible studies cover. This is the minimum reading requirement. I would suggest reading all of Ezekiel (if possible). If you want a quick overview of the entire book let me suggest reading "How to Read the Bible book by Book" by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart.

The reasons why I chose this book

1. Covers the OT exilic period. (most people are unfamiliar with this period)
2. Presents God's response to sin. (judgment and mercy)
3. Show that the OT God is the same as the NT God. It looks forward to Jesus.
4. Enrich our background knowledge of Jesus and hence a greater appreciation for Jesus.
5. It also asks us tough questions about what it means to be in a covenant relationship with God.
6. I can write the studies quite quickly. 😊

### **How to run the studies.**

Here are some suggestions on how to run the discussions. You will notice that the studies are fairly confined to specific chapters, this means you will need to provide some background information before launching into the first question. Some studies may already have these but not all of them. Please take note, that it may require more time for you to prepare and present. (This is especially true for the ESL/ new comers group).

I will give a summary guide for each study so that you know where the logic is going.

### **Leader's hints.**

#### **Study 1.**

Chapter 1 introduces Ezekiel's vision of God's throne Chariot. Let members try to work out the image themselves. Doesn't matter if they don't understand it fully. I will explain it in the talk. Focus on the commission of Ezekiel and his responsibilities as a prophet. Help them work out what is clear and what is unclear. (ie. What the passage explains and what it doesn't explain – stay away from speculation).

The main application is to understand that God is angry with sin. Ongoing Sin and continued rebellion not only damages relationships but also makes God angry.

#### **Study 2.**

This is a simple study on Ezekiel's role as watchman. The application point for us is: what is involved in warning someone about dangers of sin and rebellion? How should we warn people and how should we handle rejection? Furthermore, (for non Christians especially) How should people respond to warnings?

#### **Study 3.**

This will be a difficult study because of the shocking image of God's punishment. It is important for us to understand the seriousness of sin and ferocity of God's righteous anger. Is God right to be angry?

#### **Study 4.**

We skip a huge section to move on towards the theme of restoration and salvation. The study is not difficult but tries to link it with Jesus in John 10. Help them see the significance of Jesus in terms of fulfilling the OT prophecies. Help them understand that God's goal is not to punish people but to restore

his people. This should help them appreciate better the idea of Jesus being the King of Israel.

### **Study 5.**

Another restoration study, this time related to God's spirit. God not only promises to save his people objectively (i.e. from his anger and the penalty of sin) but he also promises to restore his people inwardly. So that they will not continue to sin but rather acknowledge Him as God. He will turn their hardened hearts to love him. This is the great yearning of the OT.

### **Study 6.**

This is another overview study. It deals with the Vision of the temple at the end. The temple features greatly in Ezekiel and needs to be talked about. So the idea of temple will be explored and its significance. It will lead us to John Revelation of the new Jerusalem where there is no temple because God dwells amongst his people. Help members understand how sin is a terrible barrier to our relationship with God and how necessary forgiveness is if they want God to dwell amongst them.. God's glory is representative of this, his glory fills the temple during Solomon's dedication, leaves the temple in Ezekiel as a judgment and then returns again. Finally, Jesus speaks of his body as the temple and finally the new Jerusalem where there is no temple. This is a big study hopefully will end with a big call to look forward to God's kingdom and a call to follow Jesus.

The studies are not merely launching pads to get to Jesus. It is trying to help them see that sin is a very serious matter and God does all he can to restore his people. Help people to see God's holiness and mercy. Ask people to turn to Christ.