

**GOD'S NEW COVENANT IN EZEKIEL****Ezekiel 11:14-21; 34; 36:16–37:28**

**Memory Verse:** *“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules (Ezek. 36:26-27 ESV).*

**Background Helps:**

In our study of God's covenants in the Prophets, we have concentrated on the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and (now this week) Ezekiel. Ezekiel prophesied from among the Jewish exiles in Babylon between 593-571 B. C. Some of his prophecies, especially those in the latter part of his book (chaps. 33–48), are prophecies of hope and restoration. This promise of restoration includes the promise of a new covenant or, what Ezekiel calls, “a covenant of peace” (34:25; 37:26) and “an “everlasting covenant” (16:60; 37:26).

Among the outstanding promises that the LORD makes to his people in Ezekiel, we find these:

- The LORD will restore Israel to their own land (11:17; 34:11-16; 36:24; 37:11-14, 21)
- He will cleanse them from their sin (11:18; 36:25, 29, 31, 33; 37:23)
- He will give them a new heart and a new spirit that will result in obedience to God (11:19-20a; 36:26); related to this promise is the promise of the gift of the Spirit (36:27; 37:14)
- “They shall be my people, and I will be their God” (11:20b; 34:30-31; 36:28; 37:23, 27)
- The LORD will shepherd his people and set his servant “David” as shepherd-king over them (34:11-24; 37:24-25)
- He will make “a covenant of peace” with his people, including renewed blessing on the land (34:25-31; 36:29-38; 37:26)
- He will reunite Israel and Judah as one people (37:15-22)
- The LORD will dwell in the midst of his people forever (37:26-28)

**Lesson Helps:**

You could take one of two approaches to all this material in Ezekiel:

1. Survey all the assigned passages (see the reading schedule) and list all the blessings of the new covenant (see Background Helps above). Your aim might be: My students will learn about the new covenant in Ezekiel, so that they will appropriate the blessings of the new covenant in their own lives. Along the way, as time permits, you can tie the promises in Ezekiel to specific passages in the New Testament (see under #2 below).
2. Camp on one of the passages in Ezekiel, drawing your lesson aim from that one passage. For example:

- My students will learn about God’s promise to shepherd his people in Ezekiel 37, so that they will make Jesus Christ the Shepherd in their own lives. In this lesson connect your study of Ezekiel 37 with Jesus’ teaching in John 10.
- My students will learn about God’s promise to give his people a new heart in Ezekiel 36 (see also, 11:14-21), so that they will trust the Holy Spirit to change them from the inside out. In this lesson you might connect the promises of Ezekiel 36 with Jesus’ teaching about the new birth in John 3. It seems likely that Jesus had this passage in Ezekiel in mind in his conversation with Nicodemus.
- My students will learn about Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones (37:1-14), so that they will trust in the Word of God and the Spirit of God to revive their own lives. The immediate lesson of this passage is the restoration and spiritual revival of the nation Israel, but the principles taught can be related to our own lives also. This passage is in itself a great “visual aid.”

The memory verse (Ezek. 36:26-27) is quite long. You could emphasize one verse or the other in class.

#### **Home Assignment:**

 Read Matthew 1; Luke 1–2; John 7:37-44

 Memorize Luke 1:32-33 ESV.