

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 26

Ezekiel

Objects to have:

The sign for this Bible book: EZEKIEL

Visions from God

A very large picture of a pair of eyes

Several ovals, the size of the eyes in your picture, on which are written: OBEY, LISTEN TO THE BIBLE STORY, BE KIND AND LOVING, COME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL, WORK HARD

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Hold up your Bible.) I have in my hands the most wonderful book in the whole world. This is the Bible. Men wrote down the words that are in the Bible. God the Holy Spirit told the men what words to write in the Bible.

There are many books in this one book; we know how many there are. (Give the children an opportunity to say that there are 66 books in the Bible.) We have heard one story from each of 25 of these books. Let's say the names of these 25 books. (Do this with the children.)

(Open your Bible to the book of Ezekiel.) This is the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel was a man.

Telling the story:

(Lay down your Bible.) Ezekiel was sitting beside a river. It was nice sitting there by the river. The sun was shining brightly overhead; the trees were shading Ezekiel. The water in the river was flowing and making a nice swishing noise. The water was clear and clean so that Ezekiel could see the stones on the bottom of the river. It was so nice there by the river! But Ezekiel was not enjoying his being there.

Ezekiel was not happy. He was not at home; he was not on a vacation. He was in a strange country. The strange country was called Babylon. Thousands of people from his country were in this strange country of Babylon. They had not gone to this strange country because they wanted to go. An enemy army had come into their country and made them go to this strange country.

As Ezekiel sat by the river, he might have been thinking, "If my people were in their own country, they could go to Jerusalem where the huge, beautiful temple of the Lord stands. In Jerusalem they could hear preachers preaching about God. How sad it is that they have to be in Babylon."

Suddenly Ezekiel heard a voice! Ezekiel knew that he was not alone, but he did not see anyone! A voice spoke to him, "Ezekiel, stand up." Immediately Ezekiel knew Who was talking to him. Ezekiel did not question Whose voice that was; he knew that it was God talking to him. God said, "Ezekiel, I have sent you to this strange country. I have sent you to My people. Do you know why I let the enemy army take My people to this strange country? It is because they have been disobedient to Me." Ezekiel was standing, listening to God. "Ezekiel," said God, "watch My people. Whenever you see them sinning, preach against their sin." So Ezekiel was learning that God wanted Ezekiel to be a preacher! God's will for Ezekiel's life was that he preach. Ezekiel was to watch the Israelite people in the strange land where they were living, and then Ezekiel was to tell the people what God wanted them to know.

(Hold up the picture of the eyes.) Let's let this picture remind us that Ezekiel was watching God's people, and that he was ready to preach to them. Ezekiel said, "All right, dear Lord, I will do Your will. I will be a preacher." So, Ezekiel had a big job to do.

After talking with God for a while, Ezekiel went to the house where he was living. Mrs. Ezekiel was there. I think that Mr. Ezekiel said to Mrs. Ezekiel, "You will never guess what happened to me today. I was sitting by the river. While I was sitting there, I heard Someone speak to me; it was God. God told me to stand up and to listen to Him. God told me His will for my life. God told me to be a preacher." I am sure that Mrs. Ezekiel was proud of her husband. Mrs. Ezekiel would continue to keep Mr. Ezekiel's house clean, wash his clothes, and cook his meals so that he could do the job that God wanted him to do.

In Ezekiel's house lived somebody else, a baby. Ezekiel and Mrs. Ezekiel loved their baby. They were happy together, thinking about the job that God had for Ezekiel to do. Ezekiel would bow his head many times a day and pray, "Thank You, dear Lord. Thank You for all the blessings that You give to me. Thank You for the work You have given me to do. Thank You for Mrs. Ezekiel. Thank You for our baby. Thank You for the comfort of our home."

But, a sad day came in the life of Ezekiel and his wife. One day the baby died: the baby's little body became very still and did not move anymore. The real, living part of the baby had gone on to Heaven. Ezekiel and Mrs. Ezekiel were sad; they would miss their baby very much. Ezekiel could have said, "Dear Lord, I will not be Your preacher anymore; You have let our baby die." But Ezekiel did not tell God that; Ezekiel was glad that their baby went to Heaven when it died. Ezekiel went on being God's preacher. Ezekiel was happy because he knew that he was obeying God. Ezekiel still had Mrs. Ezekiel. She was a help to him.

Ezekiel still gathered the people around him. (Hold up again the picture of the eyes.) Ezekiel was still preaching: "Israelites, I have seen you. I have been watching you. You have not obeyed God; you have not listened to His Word. Be sorry for your sins; tell God about them." (Lay down the picture.)

One day Mrs. Ezekiel got very sick. She was so sick that she could not do her work anymore. She kept getting sicker and sicker; she was not getting any better. Then Ezekiel's wife died. How sad! Now what will Ezekiel do? Will he say, "Dear Lord, You let my wife go to Heaven, too; You let her die, now I won't be Your preacher anymore"? No, Ezekiel did not do that. Ezekiel still did God's work. Ezekiel kept on being a preacher; he knew that one day he would go to Heaven, too, and that he would once again be with his baby and his wife. That made him happy. Until the day that he would go to Heaven, he would be happy doing God's work.

Ezekiel was wanting to get the people to come to listen to what God was telling him to preach to them. Ezekiel had an idea from God: Ezekiel did the strangest thing. Ezekiel went outside, and he hung a great big pot—a great big kettle—on a post. Into the big pot he put pieces of lamb meat into the boiling water. Under the kettle he laid some wood and some meat bones—some bones that were left over from eating the meat called lamb.

People wondered what Ezekiel was doing. One or two of the Israelite people who were passing by stopped to watch Ezekiel. Then some more stopped and a few more and a few more. Ezekiel was getting a big crowd of people to come! They were gathered around Ezekiel, watching him as he was cooking the lamb meat in this pot of water and burning the meat bones in the fire under the big pot. The only reason Ezekiel was doing this was to get people to come to where he was. Finally Ezekiel decided that enough people had come so that he could preach to them. That was pretty smart of Ezekiel; he followed God's idea and that way got his crowd of people to come to listen to him.

Ezekiel turned and preached to the people. (Hold up the picture of the eyes.) "I am still watching you, Israelites. God told me to do that. I have seen how you are living. Before you came to this enemy country, you would not go to the temple. Oh, sometimes you went to the temple, but you did not listen to the sermons. You usually went to another temple to kneel down before statues and to pray to those statues just as if they were God. Israelites, I have been watching you in Babylon. You have not been sorry for your sins. God is punishing you. That's why

you're here in this strange country. Now, be sorry for your sins!" The people listened to the sermon which Ezekiel preached to them. Then they went to their houses.

Day after day Ezekiel preached; he never stopped doing God's will. Even though sometimes he was very sad, and even though sometimes the work of preaching was very hard, Ezekiel still did God's will. Ezekiel still did the work that God wanted him to do.

I wonder, children, if our preacher were watching us, what he would see? (While calling off each one of the following actions that a person could see, hold that oval sign in an eye of your picture.) Would he see us obeying God? Would he see us listening to the Bible story in Sunday school? Would he see us being kind and loving? Would he see us coming to Sunday school every Sunday? Would he see us doing work that God wants us to do? (Lay down the pictures.)

You know what Jesus wants you to do. Jesus wants you to obey your mothers and your daddies; Jesus wants you to obey your teachers. Jesus wants you to listen to the Bible story when it is told to you. Jesus wants you to be kind and to be loving. Jesus wants you to come to Sunday school every Sunday. Jesus wants you to do work that is given you to do. Doing all these things is doing God's will.

Someday God will tell you the job that He wants you to do for the rest of your lives. I wonder what you are going to be when you grow up. Let God tell you what He wants you to be; start asking Him that question even now while you are _____ years old. You cannot be completely happy unless you are doing what God wants you to do. Remember Ezekiel.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Ezekiel 3:4, "And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them."