Introduction to an Ezekiel Commentary

Ezekiel is a book that confronts the reader with the blazing holiness of God, the weight of covenant fidelity, and the unshakeable certainty of divine sovereignty. It is Scripture at its most vivid—visions of wheels within wheels, a temple filled with glory, a valley of dry bones rising to life, a river flowing from the throne of God. For the Christian committed to the full inspiration, inerrancy, and sufficiency of Scripture, Ezekiel stands as a monumental testimony to the God who speaks, judges, restores, and reigns. It is not merely ancient literature; it is the living Word of the living God, breathed out by the Spirit, preserved for the church, and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.

Yet Ezekiel is also one of the most complex landscapes in the biblical canon. Its terrain is rugged, its imagery foreign, its historical setting distant, and its theological architecture towering. To enter Ezekiel without preparation is to step into a world shaped by exile, temple theology, priestly symbolism, covenant curses, and prophetic drama. The modern reader—especially one shaped by Western categories, modern assumptions, and post-industrial sensibilities—may feel as disoriented as a traveler stepping onto the ancient Silk Road for the first time.

This is where commentary becomes indispensable. And few metaphors capture its role more vividly than that of the Silk Road guide.

The Silk Road and the Need for a Guide

The Silk Road was not a single path but a vast network of routes stretching from the Mediterranean to the Pacific. It was a corridor of cultural exchange, economic power, political tension, and religious encounter. Travelers faced deserts, mountains, unfamiliar customs, shifting alliances, and hidden dangers. A traveler could attempt the journey alone—but only at great risk, and often with great loss. A guide did not replace the traveler's responsibility; he equipped the traveler to walk wisely, safely, and fruitfully.

A Silk Road guide did three essential things:

- **He interpreted the terrain**—explaining landmarks, dangers, and the meaning of what lay ahead.
- **He translated the culture**—helping travelers understand the people, symbols, and practices they encountered.
- **He oriented the journey**—showing how each segment fit into the larger route and ultimate destination.

Biblical commentary, especially for a book like Ezekiel, performs the same function.

Commentary as a Guide into Ezekiel's World

From a Reformed perspective, commentary is not a supplement to Scripture but a servant of Scripture. It does not add revelation; it helps the reader perceive the revelation already given. It does not stand over the text; it kneels beside the text, pointing out its contours, connections, and canonical coherence.

Like the Silk Road guide, commentary helps us navigate:

- **The historical terrain**—the trauma of exile, the fall of Jerusalem, the priestly background of Ezekiel, and the geopolitical realities of Babylon.
- **The literary terrain**—symbolic actions, prophetic oracles, apocalyptic visions, temple architecture, and covenant lawsuits.
- **The theological terrain**—the holiness of God, the justice of judgment, the promise of restoration, the hope of a new heart, and the vision of a renewed temple.

Without guidance, the reader may grasp the words but miss the world. Ezekiel's imagery is not random; it is covenantal. His visions are not chaotic; they are structured. His symbolic actions are not eccentric; they are prophetic enactments of divine truth. Commentary helps the reader see what Ezekiel saw, hear what Ezekiel proclaimed, and feel what Ezekiel felt as the glory of the Lord departed—and later returned.

The Reformed Commitment to Inspiration and Orthodoxy

A Reformed approach to Ezekiel begins with several foundational presuppositions:

- **Scripture is fully inspired**—every word breathed out by God, including Ezekiel's visions, symbols, and narrative structure.
- **Scripture is inerrant**—Ezekiel's historical claims, theological assertions, and prophetic declarations are wholly true.
- **Scripture is sufficient**—Ezekiel provides everything necessary for understanding God's purposes in judgment and restoration.
- **Scripture is Christ-centered**—Ezekiel's temple, shepherd, covenant, and glory themes find their fulfillment in Christ and His kingdom.
- **Scripture is canonically unified**—Ezekiel participates in the single unfolding story of redemption, shaping the thought-world of the Gospels, Paul, and Revelation.

These presuppositions shape how we read Ezekiel. We do not treat it as myth, metaphor, or cultural artifact. We treat it as divine revelation—authoritative, coherent, and transformative.

Transformation Along the Road

The Silk Road did not merely transport goods; it transformed travelers. They encountered new cultures, new ideas, new wonders. They returned home changed.

Ezekiel does the same.

It confronts us with the holiness of God in a way few books do. It exposes the seriousness of sin, the reality of judgment, and the depth of divine mercy. It expands our vision of God's sovereignty—over nations, kings, history, and the hearts of His people. It lifts our eyes to the eschatological hope of a renewed people, a renewed covenant, and a renewed dwelling place of God.

Commentary helps us experience this transformation without losing our way.

The Guide Is Not the Destination

Travelers on the Silk Road did not return home telling stories about their guide. They told stories about the journey—the mountains, the markets, the cities, the discoveries.

So too with biblical commentary.

Its purpose is not to draw attention to itself but to illuminate the inspired text. A good commentary fades as the reader gains clarity. A faithful guide disappears as the traveler learns the terrain.

The goal of this Ezekiel commentary is not to make you an expert in commentaries. It is to help you encounter Ezekiel—its God, its gospel, its glory—with depth, accuracy, and wonder.

Conclusion

Ezekiel is a journey worth taking. It is demanding, but it is rich. It is strange, but it is beautiful. It is ancient, but it is alive. And like the Silk Road, it requires a guide—not to replace the traveler, but to equip him.

With the conviction that Scripture is inspired, inerrant, sufficient, and Christ-centered, this commentary aims to serve as that guide. It will help you navigate the terrain of exile, temple theology, prophetic symbolism, and covenant hope. It will orient you to the canonical connections that shape Ezekiel's message. And it will point you always to the God whose glory fills the book—and whose glory fills the earth.

Soli Deo Gloria
Philip Wolfe