

Kids' Chronicle

God calls Ezekiel

BY JOE SARNICOLA

My name is Ezekiel. I am a priest. One day when I was sitting quietly beside the banks of the Chebar River the clouds parted and I saw a vision of heaven. Fierce winds howled around a huge cloud and lightning flashed around four bronze figures who were inside the cloud. A ball of fire danced around them as fast as the flash of lightning.

Then a throne of sparkling sapphire, crowned with a rainbow of lights and engulfed in a raging fire, appeared above the figures. A man who shined brighter than polished bronze sat majestically on the throne. I knew it was the Lord of Israel. I fell down on my face out of fear and respect for the Lord. And then I heard his voice.

"Stand up."

The spirit of God lifted me to my feet.

"My people have chosen to follow the desires of their hearts rather than obey me. I have chosen you to bring my word to them. Whether they believe you or not, they will know they have been in the presence of my word."

I tried to speak about my human weakness and how I could not possibly speak as a prophet of the living God. But my lips would not open. The voice of the Lord continued to speak to me.

"Ezekiel, you are a man, a mortal. But I am your God. Have no fear of the people. They will hate you, laugh at you, avoid you. Sometimes their words will feel like the sting of a scorpion. But I will always be with you."



Illustration by Zoe Maves

A pair of hands appeared in front of me. They unrolled a scroll that they held. Both sides of the parchment were covered with writing. Yet instead of words, I saw the cities of men in torment, women in pain.

"Eat what has been given to you," the Lord said.

I took the scroll from the hands and bit into it. It melted in my mouth with the sweetness of fresh honey. I ate the whole thing and my hunger was satisfied. Then the spirit of God lifted me up into the sky and I heard a voice as loud as an earthquake praising God. And then I found myself back by the river.

And I was alone.

I remembered that my people still lived in exile from their homeland, prisoners here in Babylonia. I was exhausted by my encounter with the Lord and discouraged by the plight of Israel. I stayed by the river for seven more days.

Q&A

Read more about it:
Ezekiel 2

1. What was Ezekiel's occupation?
2. What did Ezekiel do with the scroll?



Bible Accent

Babylonia, where Ezekiel lived with the Jewish people who were in exile, was located in what we now know as the southern portion of Iraq.

Because of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the area was very fertile, and suitable for the harvesting of grain and figs. However, because of the intense heat and low humidity, not many trees grew there. The prime building materials in ancient times were bricks made out of clay.

Archaeological excavation has shown that the Babylonians had a system of writing, a network of trade with other countries and knowledge of science, art and mathematics.

St. Audrey

Born into a royal house in seventh-century England, St. Audrey Etheldreda chose to live a more simple life and joined a convent. There she survived on small food rations and wore plain clothes. She often prayed from midnight until morning.

St. Audrey was loved and respected for her generosity and sensitivity to people's needs. During one drought, she bought cows and gave their milk to the people of her community. But she was unable to rid herself of feelings of guilt she had for being born rich.

When she contracted the plague, St. Audrey believed she was receiving a punishment she deserved. She died from the plague, as did many other English people. We honor her on June 23.

Bible Trivia

What was the name of Ezekiel's father? (chapter 1)

Send your answer to: *Catholic Courier Bible Trivia*, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your name, address and school name.

All entries must be received by July 10, 1997. A winner will be selected at random from all the correct entries submitted.

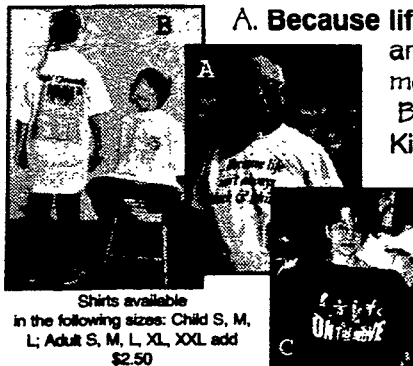
Last month's winner was **Francis Tringali**, a student at Auburn's St. Peter and Paul School. He correctly identified the Pentateuch as the first five books of the Bible.

Puzzle

Answers on page 12.

Using the books that bear their names for help, match the prophets with their deeds.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Daniel (ch. 6) | a) swallowed by a large fish |
| 2. Ezekiel (ch. 37) | b) saw four chariots |
| 3. Joel (ch. 2) | c) saw a vision of fruit |
| 4. Amos (ch. 8) | d) predicted a plague of locusts |
| 5. Jonah (ch. 1) | e) thrown to lions |
| 6. Zechariah (ch. 6) | f) saw bones come to life |



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B. I'm a Courier Kid... Our children's shirt design features Kids Chronicle, along with a puzzle for kids to complete. modeled by Kelsey and Patrick

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