

Supplemental Notes:

*The Book
of
Ezekiel*

*compiled
by
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Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant endnotes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

The complete recordings of the sessions, as well as supporting diagrams, maps, etc., are also available in various audiovisual formats from the publisher.

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The Book of Ezekiel

Session 1: Introduction and Chapter 1

Agenda for Session 1

- Historical Background
- Ezekiel the man
- Organization of the Book
- Chapter 1: The Vision of God's Throne

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Peter 1:20-21

Scripture does not have one meaning for you and another for me. In all these prophecies God had an intended communication. They were given to us in the Bible for our learning and enlightenment. Now, there may be areas in the Scripture where you and I may have different views. However, it is not a selective nor secret knowledge type of thing. Your only guide is the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:21 continues saying, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." This is very evident in the book we are about to study, Ezekiel. It is probably the most ignored book in the Old Testament.

Historical Background: The Two Kingdoms

- **The Northern Kingdom – Israel**
 - 19 Kings reigned 250 years
 - 7 different dynasties
 - Assyrian Captivity, 721 B.C. (no return)
- **The Southern Kingdom – Judah**
 - 20 Kings reigned 370 years
 - 1 dynasty: The Davidic
 - Babylonian Captivity, 606 B.C. (70 years)

Chronology

- 612 B.C.: Nineveh falls to an alliance of Babylon and Media.
- 609 B.C.: Pharaoh Necho leads army against Assyria. Josiah fights Necho and gets killed (2 Chr 35:20-24).

- 606 B.C.: Battle of Carchemesh. Nebuchadnezzar vs. Pharaoh Necho on the West bank of Euphrates (Jer 46:1-6).
- 606 B.C.: The Babylonians began the first of three deportations of the Jews; Daniel was in this group.
- 597 B.C.: In the second group was young Ezekiel, then about twenty-five years old. He was taken to Tel Aviv near the ship canal Chebar (3:15). There he lived in his own house with his beloved wife (8:1; 24:16ff).
- 592 B.C.: Five years after Ezekiel came to Tel Aviv, he was called to be a prophet of God, when he was 30 years old (this was 6 years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586, so while Jeremiah was ministering to the people back home, Ezekiel was preaching to the Jews of the captivity in Babylon. Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel was a priest called to be a prophet.

Ezekiel the Man

Ezekiel's name means "God strengthens, or God will strengthen." Ezekiel is one of the three that were called the *Captivity Prophets* (the other two are Jeremiah and Daniel).

It was during the eleven-year reign of Jehoiakim that the first deportation took place when Daniel was taken captive. Daniel was a young man, but also writing at that time. Daniel had been taken into the court of the king of Babylon and had become his prime minister. Ezekiel never mentions Jeremiah in his writings, but he does mention Daniel three times.

Ezekiel was a priest, but he never served in that office because he was taken captive to Babylon during the second deportation in the reign of Jehoiachin, who was the king of Judah who *followed* Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 24:10–16). Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah) then came to the throne and reigned only three months. Jehoiachin was the object of the blood curse that is circumvented by the virgin birth (Jer 22:30).

Jeremiah was an old man at this time. He had begun his ministry as a young man during the reign of young King Josiah. He had remained with the remnant in the land and then was taken by them down into Egypt.

Ezekiel was with the captives who had been brought down to the rivers of Babylon. The captives had been placed by the great canal that came off the River Euphrates, which was several miles from Babylon itself. Ezekiel's ministry was among those people.

The Captivity Prophets

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel each had a particular and peculiar ministry to a certain group of people, and apparently they never came into contact with each other. From the record in the Book of Daniel you would not gather that Daniel ever visited his people in Babylon where Ezekiel was; yet he had a great concern for them and he actually defended them.

Daniel was acquainted with the prophecies of Jeremiah. As a young man in his teens he may have listened to Jeremiah in Jerusalem. Ezekiel also was a young man when he was taken captive, and he too probably had heard Jeremiah.

Though the prophet was in distant Babylon, he was able to see events in Jerusalem through the power of the Spirit of God. Ezekiel not only proclaimed God's message to the people, but he had to live the message before them. God commanded him to do a number of symbolic acts in order to get the attention of the people:

Strange Similes

- He shuts himself up in his home.
- He binds himself.
- He is struck dumb.
- He was to lie on his right and his left sides for a total of 430 days.
- He ate bread that was prepared in an unclean manner.
- He shaved his head and beard, which was considered a shame in his particular calling.

Symbolic Acts

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| • Play at war | Ezek 4:1-3 |
| • Lie on his side a specific number of days | Ezek 4:4-17 |
| • Shave his hair and beard | Ezek 5:1-4 |
| • Act like someone fleeing from war | Ezek 12:1-16 |
| • Sit and sigh | Ezek 21:1-7 |
| <i>and, the most difficult of all,</i> | |
| • watch his wife die. | Ezek 24:15-27 |
| <i>It was not easy to be a prophet.</i> | |

Source: Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1993.

The Conflict of Messages

Jeremiah had told them to settle down in Babylon for seventy years, but the false prophets told the people that God would destroy Babylon and set the captives free (Jer 28 & 29). It was Ezekiel's task to tell the people that God would destroy *Jerusalem*, not Babylon, *but that there would one day be a glorious restoration of the people and a rebuilding of the temple*.

Organization of Ezekiel's Book

His book may also be divided into three sections, following the prophet's call in Ezekiel 1-3:

	<u>Ch.</u>
1) God's judgment on Jerusalem,	4-24
2) God's judgment on the surrounding nations,	25-32
3) God's restoration of the Jews in the kingdom.	33-48
• The Valley of Dry Bones	36-37
• Gog and Magog	38-39
• The Millennium	40-48

Chapters: 1 – 24 were given before the siege of Jerusalem;
25 – 32 during the siege;
33 – 48 after the siege.

Sequencing

- 1) Ezekiel's call to prophesy (1:1-3:15).
- 2) Symbolical predictions of Jerusalem's destruction (3:16-7:27).
- 3) 14 months later: a vision of the temple polluted by Tammuz or Adonis worship; God's consequent scattering of fire over the city and forsaking of the temple to reveal Himself to an inquiring people in exile; and, happier and purer times to follow (8:1-11:25).
- 4) Exposure of the particular sins prevalent in the priests, prophets, and princes (12:1-19:14).
- 5) A year later: the warning of judgment for national guilt repeated with greater distinctness as the time drew nearer (20:1-23:49).
- 6) Two years and five months later—the very day on which Ezekiel speaks—the day of the beginning of the siege; Jerusalem shall be overthrown (24:1-27).
- 7) Predictions against Muslim nations during the interval of silence towards his own people; if judgment begins at the house of God, much more will it visit the ungodly world (25:1-32:32). Some of

these were uttered much later than others, but they all *began* to be given after the fall of Jerusalem.

- 8) In the 12th year of the captivity, when the fugitives from Jerusalem had appeared in Chaldea (33:21), he foretells better times, the reestablishment of Israel, and the triumph of God's kingdom on earth over its enemies, Islam, and Gog (33:1-39:29).
- 9) After an interval of 13 years, the closing vision of the restored kingdom (40:1-48:35).

Source: Jamieson, Robert; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*, Logos Research Systems, Inc., Oak Harbor, WA, 1997.

Outline of Ezekiel

<u>Ch.</u>	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God's Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God's Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel 1: The Vision of God's Throne

The Chariot of God's Throne, described by Ezekiel, is a glimpse of hyperdimensional event. He is not describing an aircraft, UFO, et al. Let the text speak to you—personally. Remember, we live in only four (of 10) dimensions; cf. hypercube unraveled in 3D; et al. There have been various speculations, which have given prophetic studies a bad name...let the text speak to *you*...

- 1] Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.
 - 30th year: the year of maturity for a priest (Num 4:3);
 - 30th year since Josiah's revival (Ezekiel was born during Josiah's revival);

Other Reckonings

- 30th year of Jehoiachin's age, 585 B.C. (Snaith)
- 30th year after Josiah's reform, 593/592 B.C. (Targum, Jerome, Hermann, Holscher, L. Finkelstein)
- 30th year of the current jubilee period (*Seder Olam*, Kimchi, Hitzig)
- 30th year of the neo-Babylonian empire, 606/605 B.C. (Scaliger, Ewald)
- 30th year of Manasseh, 667 B.C. (Torrey)
- 30th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, 592 B.C. (Rothstein, Bertholet); fifth year of Jehoiachin's exile, 595/594 B.C. (Herntrich)
- 30th year of the editing of Ezekiel's book, three years after the twenty-seventh year of 29:17, or 567 B.C. and the 30th year of Jehoiachin's reign. (Albright and Howie) Cf 2 Kgs 25:27
- All the other dates in the prophecy are reckoned from Jehoiachin's "reign" or captivity,

Source: Pfeiffer, Charles F., *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1962.

"...in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month..." This was not quite the time of the destruction of Jerusalem that took place during the reign of Zedekiah, which followed.

...that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God": Contrast with the depression of the captives (Ps 137:1,2); cf. Visions of Isaiah (Isa 6) and the visions of John (Rev 4 & 5).

- 2] In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

King Jehoiachin

The 18th, and next to the last, king of Judah, was the son of the petty tyrant, Jehoiakim, and grandson of the godly Josiah. His name, meaning "The Lord establishes."

Enthroned by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, he reigned only three months when he was deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in the year 597 B.C., along with the upper classes (2 Kgs 24:8-16). He was released by Amel Marduk (Evil Merodach), son of Nebuchadnezzar in 560 B.C., the 37th year of his exile (2 Kgs 25:27). ["The Jehoiachin tablets," published in 1939, refer to "Yaukin" and his sons as receiving rations (Albright, *Biblical Archaeologist*, V (Dec. 1942), pp. 49-55).]

The fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity (June-July, 592 B.C.) is the first of 14 date references in the book of Ezekiel (cf. 1:2; 3:16; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1; 29:17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1; 32:17; 33:21; 40:1).

- 3] The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

Chebar was the main canal that came off the Euphrates River, which watered that area.

- This area was removed by quite a few miles from Babylon
- Evidently, the Jewish captives were put there to till the land.

The River Chebar

“The great river,” “the grand canal,” the River Chebar was an artificial watercourse of the Euphrates. Beginning above Babylon, it flowed south-east, passed through Nippur, site of ancient Jewish settlements (and of the wealthy banking house of Murashu and Sons, whose archives from 464-405 B.C. contain many Jewish names), and joined the Euphrates again below Ur. This area was removed by quite a few miles from Babylon and, evidently, the Jewish captives were put there to till the land.

Ezekiel's home was on the river Chebar, at Tel-aviv, the principal colony of the exiles, near the city of Nippur, southeast of Babylon

“...the hand of the LORD was there upon him”: Note phrase usage...

- 4] And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

“...out of the north”: Used in Scripture to point toward the throne of God (Isa 14:13; Ps 75:5-7).

“...a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.”

- “Our God is a consuming fire” Hebrews 12:29
- “God is light ...” 1 John 1:5

Paul, at the time of his conversion, saw “a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun ...” (Acts 26:13).

- 5] Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.
“...four living creatures”: Cherubim (Cf. Ezek 10:15,20).

“Likeness of a man...”: similar, not identical with (Cf. v.26); not a tautology: “Likeness” expresses the general form; “appearance,” a particular aspect.

- דְמוּת *demuth* “likeness” used 10 times;
- מְרֹאֶה *mareh* “appearance” used 14 times.

The prophet senses the inadequacy of human speech to describe the ineffable.

SuperAngels

- כְּרֻבִים Cherubim (4 wings): Seen guarding the Tree of Life (Gen 3:24) and adorning the Mercy Seat, et al. (Ex 25:10-22).
- שֶׁרָפִים Seraphim (6 wings): Vision of the Throne of God (Isa 6:2).
- ζῳον *zoon* Living Creatures (6 wings): Vision of the Throne of God (Rev 4,5).
- (Polymorphic?)
- *HaSatan* was the “anointed cherub that covereth” (Ezek 28:14).

- 6] And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

The four faces are subsequently described in v.10.

- 7] And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.
- 8] And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.
- 9] Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

These creatures symbolize the glory and power of God.

“...straight forward”: “No variableness or turning” (James 1:17). [Parallax: focus at infinity.] They could see in all directions and move in all directions without turning.

- 10] As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

Vision of the Throne of God: Ezekiel 1 & 10 (Cf. Isaiah 6, Revelation 4)

Cherubim	Camps	Gospels
Lion	Judah	Matthew
Ox	Ephraim	Mark
Man	Reuben	Luke
Eagle	Dan	John

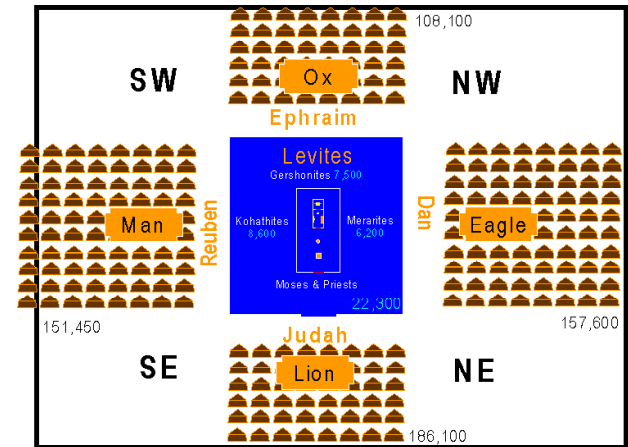
The Camp of Israel: Numbers 2

Is every detail in the Bible there by *Design*? What might be hidden behind the details of the Camp of Israel? “*The volume of the Book is written of Me*” (Ps 40:7; Heb 10:7).

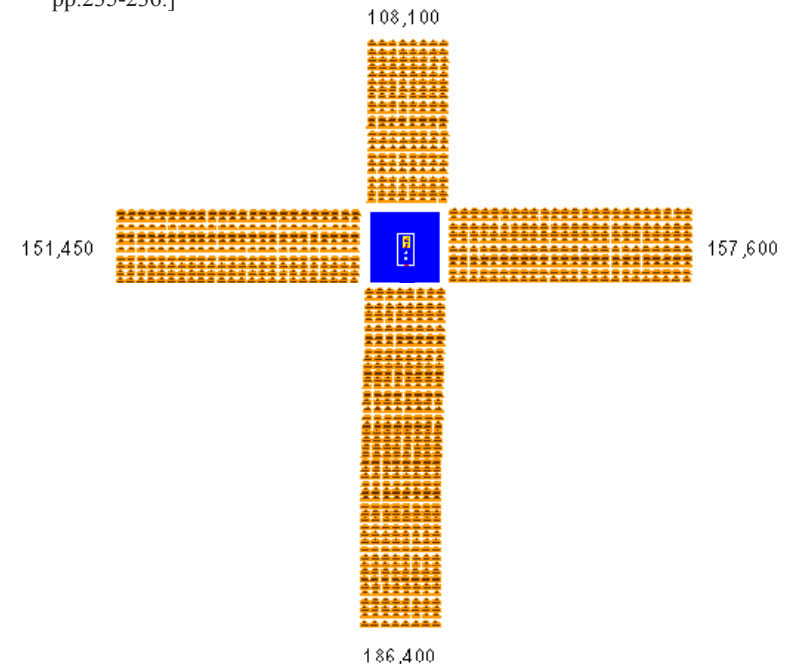
Judah	74,600
Issachar	54,400
Zebulun	<u>57,400</u>
	186,400
Reuben	46,500
Simeon	59,300
Gad	<u>45,650</u>
	151,450
Ephraim	40,500
Manasseh	32,200
Benjamin	<u>35,400</u>
	108,100
Dan	62,700
Asher	41,500
Naphtali	<u>53,400</u>
	157,600

Rabbinical Precision

The Camp of Judah was located **East** of Levites. The Camp of Reuben, **South** of Levites. Strict obedience denies camping in the area Southeast; thus, only **cardinal** directions ordained—only the width of Levite’s camp was allowed, with each camp’s length proportional to population.



[*Ahiezer changes the serpent (Gen 49:) for an eagle (with a serpent in its mouth):
Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1966,
pp.235-236.]



The Design of the Gospels

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Presents as:	Messiah	Servant	Son of Man	Son of God
Genealogy:	Abraham (Legal)	--	Adam (Blood line)	Eternal (Preexistence)
What Jesus	Said	Did	Felt	Was
To the:	Jew	Roman	Greek	Church
1st Miracle:	Leper cleansed (Jew = sin)	Demon expelled	Demon expelled	Water to Wine
Ends with	Resurrection	Ascension	Promise of Spirit: Acts	Promise of Return: Revelation
Camp Side: Ensign:	East Judah	West Ephraim	South Reuben	North Dan
Face:	Lion	Ox	Man	Eagle

- 11] Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.
- 12] And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

God is moving forward undeviatingly, unhesitatingly toward the accomplishment of His purpose in this world today. Nothing will deter Him—nothing can sidetrack Him at all.

- 13] As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

“...appearance of lamps”: “God is light ...” (1 Jn 1:5); “I am the light of the world ...” (Jn 8:12); “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7).

- 14] And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.
- 15] Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.
- 16] The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

“beryl”: ancient chrysolite (goldstone), probably corresponding to our gold-colored topaz.

“...a wheel in the middle of a wheel”: Orthogonal, not concentric; probably hyperdimensional (more than 3-D).

Wheels?

- Cf the wheels of the throne of “the Ancient of days” (Dan 7:9);
- Cf. the bases in Solomon’s Temple, (1 Kgs 7:27-30);
- Cf. the chariot in 1 Chr 28:18.

- 17] When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.

God is a God of intelligent purpose. You and I are not living in a universe that is moving into the future aimlessly and without purpose: randomness does not exist in nature. God has a purpose for every atom which he has created, and he has a purpose for you. The very fact that you and I are alive today reveals that we are to accomplish a purpose for God (Jer 29:11).

- 18] As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

They were “full of eyes” (Prov 15:3), picturing the omniscience of God as He rules His creation, and the movements of the wheels and the cherubim congruent. All of this speaks of God’s constant working in the world, His power and glory, His purpose for man, and His providence.

- 19] And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.

These wheels seem to speak of the ceaseless activity and energy of God.

- 20] Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

These four living creatures are guard the throne of God (Rev 4):

- 1) They protect the throne in that they do not allow man in his sin to come into the presence of God; and
- 2) They indicate the way that man is to come.

- 21] When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.
- 22] And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

“...firmament”: רָקִיעַ *raqia* (a solid expanse): occurs 17 times in the Scriptures (Gen 1; Ezek 1; 10:1; Ps 19:1; 150:1; Dan 12:3). This was a beautiful “platform” above the wheels and the cherubim, containing the throne of God.

- 23] And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

God is still on the throne, and His will is being accomplished in this world even if we do not see it. The complex movements of the cherubim and the wheels reveal how intricate is God’s providence in the universe: perfect harmony and order.

- 24] And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.

“...voice of the Almighty”: Cf. Seven thunders? (Ps 29; Rev 10:3,4).

Sounds

- “like the noise of great waters” (Ps 42:7; Isa 17:12).
- “like the thunder of the Almighty”, “voice of God,” seven times (Ps 29).
- “a sound of tumult like the sound of a host” (Isa 17:12; Joel 2:5).
- “Almighty” שַׁדַּי *Shaddai* is a pre-Mosaic term for God, used chiefly in poetry, or in prose prefixed with *El* (God) Gen 17:1.

- 25] And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.
- 26] And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

“Sapphire”: This may be the ancient marble-like, azure stone known as *lapis lazuli*.

“...appearance of a man”: God came to earth a Man, walked the dusty trails of Palestine, until spikes were driven into His feet... “And the

Word was made flesh, and dwelt [pitched His tent] among us ” (Jn 1:14); “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isa 52:7).

- 27] And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

The upper part of the human likeness seated on the throne shown like gleaming bronze which fire enclosed round about while the lower part, also, was covered by a fiery brightness

- 28] As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

In the presence of the Lord, this man found himself horizontal with the ground. Throughout the Old Testament when men came into the presence of God, they went down on their faces: “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa 6:5). That was the position Daniel took also (Dan 10:6-8) and it was the position John took on the isle of Patmos: “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead ” (Rev 1:17).

The result of this vision was total collapse on the part of Ezekiel. But God set him up on his feet, called him to be a watchman, fed him with the Word, and filled him with the Spirit (Jer 15:16; Job 23:12; Mt 4:4; Rev 10:9).

“They shall know that I am the Lord”: This phrase is found 70 times in this book; it summarizes the ministry and message of Ezekiel.

The Glory’s Impact

- Gave him a message at Tel-aviv (Ezek 3:12ff, 22ff).
- Transported him from his home in the exile to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court of the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 8:4,5).
- Departed from the cherubim in the Temple to the threshold of the Temple (Ezek 9:3; 10:4).

- Mounted up from the threshold to the eastern gate of the Temple's outer court (Ezek 10:15,16,18,19).
- Went up from the midst of the city to the Mount of Olives on the east side of the city (Ezek 11:22, 23).
- But returned to fill the new Temple and cleansed the people (Ezek 43:2-7; 44:4).

Next Session

Re-read Chapter 1 and reflect on what it means to you personally. Read Chapters 2 & 3.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 2 Chapters 2 & 3

The Babylonian captivity actually took place in three sieges, but it had been extensively prophesied well in advance (Isa 29:5-7; Jer 25:8-12). Daniel, who had been taken captive as a teenager in the first of the three sieges, came to know *from reading the Jeremiah prophecy* that the captivity would last for 70 years. That is when he went into prayer which was interrupted by Gabriel and the famous 70 week vision of Daniel 9.

Outline of Ezekiel

<u>Ch.</u>	
1-3	The Call of the Prophet
4-24	God's Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25-32	God's Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33-48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33-36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38-39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40-48	The Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel 2: The Call of the Prophet

- 1] And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

“Son of אָדָם Adam”: “son of the dust.” Daniel, also, is called the son of man (2X). Only these two men in the Old Testament were called by this title. This is also the title that the Lord Jesus appropriated to Himself—eighty-six times in the New Testament (of His humanity, as the representative of Man).

“...stand...”: Ezekiel clearly had been overwhelmed!

- 2] And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

“...the spirit entered into me”: In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit did not indwell all believers but indwelt selected persons temporarily for divine service (Ex 31:1-11; 1 Sam 10:9-11; Ps 51:11; Ezek 3:24).

- 3] And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.

“...rebellious nation”: A frequent term in Ezekiel: used 7X in 10 verses; 17X in total (Ezek 2:5-6, 8; 3:9, 26-27; 12:3, 9, 25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6).

“nation” גּוֹי *goi* (not normally used of Israel! Israel is usually *contrasted* with the “nations”). They were now become “Lo-ammi,” not the *people* of God (Hos 1:9).

Why 70 Years?

2 Chronicles tells us that is why they were enslaved in Babylon for exactly 70 years (2 Chr 36:21): They were supposed to keep (till) the ground for six years; the seventh year was to be a Sabbath for the land. They failed to not keep that (Lev 25). So after 490 years, God said, “You owe me 70.”

It was to make up for those years when they had violated His laws with respect to the land. He took the land away from them for 70 years. (More on this in Chapter 4). This becomes particularly heavy when you realize that they had been sent prophet after prophet after prophet to get them to repent, and they did not repent.

- 4] For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

“I do send unto them”: When God calls, He empowers.

“...LORD God”: An unusual feature of Ezekiel is the occurrence of the two-fold name LORD God, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה *Adonai Yahweh*, 217X vs. 103X elsewhere in OT. *Adonai YHWH* stresses both God’s sovereign authority and His covenant-keeping faithfulness.

“Thus Saith the Lord”

“...thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD”: By using that phrase, one exposed himself to be charged guilty of a capital crime. The Nation Israel, even in its idolatry, took the concept of blasphemy very seriously, and if you pretended to be speaking on behalf of God Himself, you took your life into your hands. They would put you to the test, and if you failed the test, they stoned you (Deut 18:20-22). Here, Ezekiel was instructed to declare that as the Word of God itself.

Ezekiel’s was the hardest job imaginable. Contrast the ordeals of Ezekiel with those of Daniel (who at least had the compensations of the court).

- 5] And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

Fulfillment is the test of a true prophet (Deut 18:21, 22; Jer 28:9).

- 6] And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

God is describing the job He is calling Ezekiel to...

- 7] And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.
8] But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.
9] And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein;
10] And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

“...behold, an hand was sent unto me...”: Whose hand? (Cf. 3:2). Would you want this job? Sounds pretty dangerous. Like today.

Scrolls “written on both the inside and the outside”: There are only two scrolls described this way in Scripture:

- One is given to Ezekiel to “eat” (Ezek 3:1);
- The other is the Seven Sealed Scroll, which also brings judgment (Rev 5).

“...lamentations, mourning, and woe”: This accurately summarizes the contents of Ezekiel 4-32. It does not, however, reflect the latter part of the book, in which the prophet spoke of Israel’s restoration. This could explain why Ezekiel was recommissioned in Chapter 33—the content of his message was substantially changed after his message of woe was fulfilled.

Ezekiel 3: The Preparation of the Prophet

The Setting

Jeremiah was a different type of individual from Ezekiel. Jeremiah was the prophet of the broken heart, tears often streaming from his eyes. At that crucial moment in history God needed Jeremiah to let His people know that it was breaking His heart to send them into captivity. Yet, now the people have gone into captivity, and they are bitter and rebellious.

Furthermore, at this time: the temple had not yet been burned, nor the city of Jerusalem destroyed. (It would not be until seven years after this delegation of captives arrived in Babylon that that destruction would occur.)

Therefore, the false prophets were still telling the people that they were God’s people and they would go back home. They said to this man Ezekiel, “Who do you think you are to tell us these things? We are God’s people, and we are going back to our land. We will not be in captivity a long time.”

But God had told Ezekiel, “You tell them they are *not* going back. They are going to be in captivity for seventy years just as Jeremiah said. They are going to be in Babylon seventy years, and they are going to work hard there along the canals, working in the fields and building buildings. It is going to be a hard lot for them.”

- 1] Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.
2] So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

Similar passages are: Jer 15:16; Deut 8:3; Ps 19:10; 119:103; Rev 10:8-11. [Shouldn't *we* also?] No man ought to preach the Word whose heart is not in it and who doesn't believe every word he says. The pulpit is the place to *declare* the Word of God.

Digesting His Words

The concept of “Eating the words” may sound a bit strange. Jeremiah said, “Thy words were found and I did eat them” (Jer 15:16). John is also so instructed (Rev 10:8-11). The Lord Himself, when He was confronted by Satan in the temptations (Mt 4:4) quoted: “Man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deut 8:3).

There are many levels of this concept of “eating His Word”: one is to fully digest what the Lord has said; another is to examine our own daily diet—what are we putting in ours?

- 3] And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

“...honey for sweetness”: The ultimate “hermeneutic!” (Cf. Rev 10:8-11). Do you love the Word of God? You will never love Him unless you love His Word.

- 4] And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.
5] For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel;

“...Son of man”: not to be confused with the title of Jesus Christ; here it means “son of the dust,” to speak of Ezekiel’s frailty.

- 6] Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.
7] But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

“The House of Israel” (101 occurrences)? I thought this was only the “House of Judah...” Hadn’t the Northern Kingdom been wiped out by Assyria? (The entire nation is now in view, and represented...)

Beware of false denotations; these can be a serious source of errors; “Jew” vs. “Israelite,” et al.

He is saying that if the language were difficult, or if it were that sort of impediment, it would not be a problem.

In this case, Ezekiel was being called to his own people. But God tells him up front that “They will not hear you, because they would not hear me.” Why would God send Ezekiel if He knows the people won’t listen? *So that God might be just when He judges.*

Ezekiel was in the second deportation and with the captives in Babylon while Jerusalem remained a vassal city. As long as Jerusalem had not fallen, Ezekiel’s message would be to his people, admonishing them to flee idolatry and return to the Lord. For the remnant who *did* hear him, that was valuable; but the period of grace finally ran out and God’s judgment fell on the city of Jerusalem, and the rest of the people were brought into captivity.

That is the point of time when Ezekiel’s message shifted. (That is also when our attention is picked up, because he will talk about *our current day*. It will get contemporary very quickly...). Ezekiel was first called to the House of Israel, and then to you and me. This book is more than just Biblical background: it has something to say to us *personally*.

Rather than acknowledging God’s judgment and confessing their sins, the Jewish exiles viewed their time in Babylon as a temporary setback that would be alleviated by their soon return to Jerusalem. They refused to admit their sin or to believe the threat of impending judgment on their disobedient nation. [*Sounds like us, doesn’t it?*]

- 8] Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

“strong” Perhaps a play on Ezekiel’s name, *God strengthens*. Cf. Jer 1:18; 15:20. God is preparing him to endure the abuse that he would suffer from his own people.

- 9] As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

“I have made you just as hardheaded as they are...”

- 10] Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.
11] And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

(Do we hear? Or will we forbear?) God was telling Ezekiel, “You are going to speak with my voice.”

“Thus saith the Lord” exposed him to the death penalty if he was wrong. *Blasphemy in Israel was a capital crime.*

- 12] Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place.
- 13] I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.

“Great rushing” reminds us of the “rushing of a mighty wind” of Acts 2:2. From this verse and others we can draw the inference that what he saw in Chapter 1 was not allegorical, not an hallucination, but was somehow Ezekiel’s attempt to describe, in conceptions of 2500 years ago, what he saw when he was confronted with this strange presence. It gives us the opportunity to glimpse into that dimension in which these other living sentient creatures operate.

- 14] So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

“...the hand of the LORD”: Ezekiel 1:3; 3:22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1 190X in OT.

- 15] Then I came to them of the captivity at Telaviv, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

“...Telaviv...”: The “b” & “v” are equivalent in the Semitic languages; this is not the Tel Aviv which we know today, but was their settlement by the Chebar in Babylon which had that name.

“...Chebar...”: The same as Chabor or Habor, where the Northern Kingdom had been transported by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser (2Kgs 17:6; 1Chr 5:26). It flows into the Euphrates near Carchemish or Circesium, 200 miles north of Babylon.

“...astonished...seven days...”: The whole experience of what he saw in Ch 1, and the Lord talking to him through Chapters 2 and 3 left Ezekiel physically overwhelmed for seven days; lit., *showing horror*; an inwardly transitive verb. Why seven days? Seven days were appointed for the consecration of the priests (Cf. Lev 8:33).

- 16] And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 17] Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

Here Ezekiel is being called to be a watchman. Put *yourself* in Ezekiel’s position as being called to be such a witness. Isaiah 62:6: “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night” In Psalm 127:1 it says, “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”

- 18] When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.
- 19] Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.
- 20] Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Blood accountability (Gen 9:5,6).

Four Cases

1. The habitual sinner who is not warned (v.18)
2. The sinner who is warned but does not repent (v.19)
3. The righteous man who apostatizes but is not warned (v.20).
4. The righteous man who is warned and remains righteous (v.21).

Ezekiel is accountable for the faithful deliverance of God’s message, not for its success or failure (vv. 17-19).

“Die” (v.18) and “live” (v.21) do not come up to the highest NT sense, but refer respectively:

- 1) to perishing in the destruction of the state and being excluded from the restored kingdom of God, and
- 2) to being preserved and entering into the blessedness of the kingdom.

“Fall from Grace?”

This verse has been used to argue that a believer can fall from grace, a teaching which is not found in the Word of God. Galatians 5:4 is the only place where you will find the expression “... fallen from grace.” There it is not speaking of salvation but of those who have been saved by grace but have fallen down to a legal level and are attempting to live by the law instead of living by grace. The great teaching of Galatians is that we are saved by grace *and are to live by grace*.

The Law

Here in Ezekiel we have a man who is living under the time of law. His life was determined by righteous acts. Under normal circumstances the righteous acts he might perform might look very good. But under time of stress and strain he might turn from God, and he would be judged for it. We are not to construe that he was once saved. He will be tested at the end of his life as to whether he is a child of God or not.

Under Grace

We are constituted righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith.

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted [reckoned] for righteousness.

Romans 4:5

The true believer today may fall into sin, but he will not deliberately practice and live in sin:

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [practice] sin.

1 John 3:9

If a believer falls into sin, a gracious provision is made—we have an Advocate with the Father, and we can come to Him in confession of our sins (1 Jn 1:9).

The emphasis in Ezekiel is not so much upon this man living under law but upon the responsibility of the watchman. The watchman is to warn the man who has turned from good works to living in a way that conforms to the standard of the enemy.

- 21] Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

See other “watchman” passages which describe the role of the watchman (2 Sam 18:24-27; 2 Kgs 9:17-20).

The main issue of a watchman was not to deliver results, but to give warning. What those warned do with that warning is not your responsibility. The role of the watchman is an informational role.

We should remember that it is not our objective to turn others around; that is the job of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to *be* a witness (Ezekiel 33:1-2 is a parallel passage). Remember also Acts 18:4-6 and 20:17-22, as Paul probably had these passages in mind when he addressed some of these issues.

The Call to the Nation

Comparing this passage to some of the other prophets we see that they saw that their mission had a national or corporate purpose (Hab 2, Jer 6, and Isa 56). They were to expect a reaction on the part of the Nation.

The Call to Individuals

Ezekiel’s call was to the individual. Compare this with the Letter to Laodicea: In all the letters to the Churches, Jesus was saying something good and also something critical (Rev 2 & 3). When He addressed Laodicea and reached the place in the letter where one expects a call to the Church, there is no call to the Church. Instead He says...

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20

That verse is a tremendous verse used by many evangelists as a personal call. *However*, where it sits in context, it is a scathing indictment of the Laodicean Church. The tone which comes across is that the Laodicean Church was, collectively, dead.

Here in Ezekiel that challenge was also to the individual. It again reinforces the concept of what God said earlier—that the Nation would not repent. Despite all his preaching and all the things he was going to go through, they were going to stay in idolatry as a nation, and thus, go into further judgment with Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.

- 22] And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.

“...the hand of the Lord...” Meaning he was gripped by the Hand of God. For seven days he has sat among them overwhelmed by how far they have apostatized and turned from God; God now calls him to separate himself. Is the hand of the Lord gripping you?

- 23] Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.

“...the plain...” = the valley (Cf. 37:1).

Glory?

The subject of the glory of God will appear again and again in the Book of Ezekiel. Some will say that glory is something you cannot see, that it is intangible. I feel that is entirely inadequate and wrong. Glory is something that produces a sensation on all five of our senses.

- 1) Glory has size. How big is it? Is it long or square or round? Glory has the size beyond the infinity of space. The Word of God tells us, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork” (Ps 19:1). The glory of God is seen in this tremendous universe that you and I live in.
- 2) Glory also has a beauty to it: Glory is beautiful. We read in Scripture that He was “... glorious in his apparel ...” (Isa 63:1). He is really dressed up and lovely in the garb that he wears vs. those “...whose glorious beauty is a fading flower ...” (Isa 28:1).
- 3) There is a majesty about glory: “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.” (Ps 8:1). This is the majesty of God; it is bright and light, precious and pure.
- 4) Finally, glory also sets forth honor and dignity. Daniel said, “O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor” (Dan 5:18). The very name of God suggests His dignity, His glory. Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord.

Source: McGee, J. Vernon: *Thru the Bible Commentary*. electronic ed. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, 1981.

The Glory's Impact

- It gave him a message at Telaviv (Ezek 3:12ff, 22ff).
- It transported him from his home in the exile to the entrance of

the gateway of the inner court of the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 8:4,5).

- It departed from the cherubim in the Temple to the threshold of the Temple (Ezek 9:3; 10:4).
- It mounted up from the threshold to the eastern gate of the Temple's outer court (Ezek 10:15,16,18,19).
- It went up from the midst of the city to the Mount of Olives on the east side of the city (Ezek 11:22, 23).
- But it will return to fill the new Temple and cleanse the people (Ezek 43:2-7; 44:4).

- 24] Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.

This does not imply that Ezekiel was never to leave his house (cf. Ezek 5:2; 12:3). Instead he was to refrain from open fellowship with the people. Often the leaders came to him at his house to receive God's word (cf. Ezek 8:1; 14:1; 20:1).

He was to open his mouth only in his own house to those who consulted him privately (v.24; 26:8). This intermittent silence prevailed from the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem until news of the fall of the city was brought to the prophet by a fugitive about two years later (Ezek 24:1, 27). Then Ezekiel spoke freely, and the people realized that God had spoken. [Pfeiffer, Charles F.: *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary : Old Testament*. Chicago : Moody Press, 1962, S. Ezek 3:22.]

- 25] But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them:

Not the fettering of a “demented” prophet, but to God's restraining him (cf. Ezek 4:8) except as He bade him speak (vv. 26, 27).

- 26] And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house.

Ezekiel started his ministry in silence. Saul also started his ministry in silence (at Damascus). Here Ezekiel is struck dumb except as the Lord elects to speak through him.

The Prophet's Restraint (Ezekiel 3:22-27)

Some scholars understand this section to indicate a pathological element in Ezekiel: that he was afflicted with catalepsy and aphasia and that his countrymen had to bind him with cords after he became demented

(vv. 23-26). However, I regard the various expressions of constraint as figurative for an enforced period of silence and inactivity on the part of the prophet.

He now will *act out* various parables...

Skits and Metaphors

Instead of speaking a great deal, Ezekiel is going to *act out the parables* which God gives to him. This is one of them: he goes into his house and locks himself in. Why? *To show that God has rejected this rebellious people.*

He was to open his mouth only in his own house to those who consulted him privately (v.24; 26:8). This intermittent silence prevailed from the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem until news of the fall of the city was brought to the prophet by a fugitive about two years later (Ezek 24:1, 27). Then Ezekiel spoke freely, and the people realized that God had spoken.

- 27] But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

“He who has ears, let him hear”: 7X: Mt in the Gospels 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mk 4:9, 23; Lk 8:8; 14:35; and 7X in Rev 2 & 3.

The visions and the Word of God gave Ezekiel the needed *perspective* and motivation for his task. Do *you* have *yours*? How will you get them for your assigned tasks?

Next Session

Read Chapters 4 and 5. Try to determine how the “430 years” fit into Israel’s history. (And be prepared for some surprises...)

The Book of Ezekiel Session 3 Chapters 4 & 5

The Babylonian Captivity

The Babylonian captivity actually took place in three sieges, but it had been extensively prophesied well in advance (Isa 29:5-7; Jer 25:8-12). Daniel, who had been taken captive as a teenager in the first of the

three sieges, came to know *from reading the Jeremiah prophecy* that the captivity would last for 70 years. That is when he went into prayer, which was interrupted by Gabriel and the famous 70 week vision of Daniel 9. [He took OT prophecy literally!]

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
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33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel’s task was to confront Israel with her sin and warn her of impending destruction (cf. Ezek 3:17). Ezekiel employed several means to focus on the people’s need for judgment. These included: **signs (Chapters 4-5)**; sermons (Chapters 6-7), and visions (Chapters 8-11). In each case the emphasis was on sin and its ensuing suffering.

Symbolic Actions

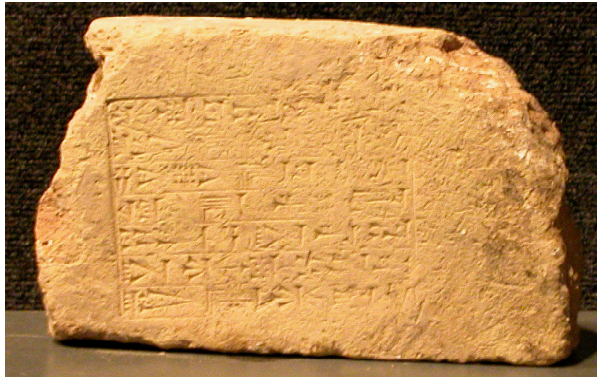
The prophets made effective use of symbolic action:

- Ahijah 1 Kgs 18
- Isaiah Isa 8; 20
- Jeremiah Jer 13; 14; 18; 19; 27; 28; 34; 35; 43; 51
- Ezekiel Ezek 3:25, 26; 4:1–5:4; 12:3-7, 17-20; 21:11, 12; 24:3-5, 15-24; 37:15-17

- 1] Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem:
- 2] And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about.

...a tile...”: This could refer to a soft clay tablet used by the Babylonians for a writing pad, or it could refer to a large sun-baked brick, the major building material used in Babylon (cf. Gen 11:3).

Babylonian Brick



“...a fort...”: Siegeworks; siege wall or wheeled watchtower.

“...cast a mount...”: To connect the tower with the walls of the besieged city.

“...set the camp...”: Detachments of soldiers.

“...batteringrams...”: or breakers. For these operations, Cf. Ezek 17:17; 21:22; 26:8; Deut 20:20; Mic 4:11; Isa 29:3.

Ezekiel set this up in some public place to dramatize a graphic model of prophecy. God was using Ezekiel to do the very obvious thing, to get it through their heads that Jerusalem was going to be besieged and plundered.

- 3] Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.

“...an iron pan...”: A flat plate such as was used for baking. God was using Ezekiel to do an object lesson to get their attention and warn that they were going to be in trouble.

- 4] Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity.

When facing the sunrise, left is north and right is south (Gen 14:15; Ps 121:5).

- 5] For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number

of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

390 days? (LXX: 190?) The LXX causes even more confusion by substituting 190 days (vv. 5, 9) for 390. This emending of the text was probably done so it would make more sense. If so, the translators of the Septuagint also had difficulty interpreting the passage.

- 6] And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

“...forty days...”: Ezekiel did not remain in this position 24 hours a day, because the very next sign includes some other actions Ezekiel was to do in that time (vv. 9-17). He probably remained in this position for a portion of each day.

“...each day for a year...”: Literally, “a day for a year, a day for a year.” Twice repeated, to mark more distinctly the specific reference to Num 14:34.

390 Days

He was to lie on his left side 390 *days* (v. 5 about 13 months); the siege of Jerusalem is computed to last 18 months (Jer 52:4-6). If we deduct from that five months’ interval, when the besiegers withdrew upon the approach of Pharaoh’s army (Jer 37:5-8), the number of the days of the close siege will be 390.

390 Years

He bears the guilt of that iniquity which *the house of Israel* had borne 390 years, possibly reckoning from their first apostasy under Jeroboam to the destruction of Jerusalem, which completed the ruin of those small remains of them that had incorporated with Judah.

430 Days

Most scholars do not believe that he laid there continually during those 430 days. They believe what he did was go out there at a certain point each day and lay on his side as a public statement. But that again is an inference that we have. Whether he was actually there all the time, we do not know. Most scholars assume he did this in some ceremonial sense, representing the 390 years the Northern Kingdom spent in idolatry, and the 40 years the Southern Kingdom did likewise: $390 + 40 = 430$ years.

- 7] Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it.
- 8] And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.
- 9] Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.

“...millet...”: An annual grass which grows and matures without rain, the seeds of which are ground to flour and mixed with other cereals to form breadstuffs for the poor.

These were common grains in Israel’s diet (2 Sam 17:27-29). Supplies were so scarce that several foods had to be combined to provide enough for a meal. The best exposition of this part of Ezekiel’s prediction of Jerusalem’s desolation is Jeremiah’s lamentation of it (Lam 4:3ff as well as vv.10,11), where he pathetically describes the terrible famine that was in Jerusalem during the siege and the sad effects of it.

- 10] And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it.
- 11] Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink.

“...twenty shekels...”: A shekel weighs 0.4 of an ounce, avoirdupois. His food allowance was thus about eight ounces a day!

“...sixth part of an hin...”: His water ration was about a pint and a half a day!

- 12] And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight.

He was not talking about mixing the dung into the food: He was talking about using it as fuel. Bread baked on human dung would be revolting, polluting and against the law (Deut 14:3; 23:12-14; Lev 5:3; 7:21).

- 13] And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.

Foreign nations and their products were considered unclean (Amos 7:17; Hos 9:3, 4). They insisted on taking on heathen worship, heathen idols, so God says, “Great, I am going to put you at the level of the heathen.”

Ezekiel was a priest. He knew the dietary laws; but those were ceremonial issues (Ex 22:30; Lev 7:18, 24; 17:11-16; 19:7; 22:8; Deut 12:16; 14:21). What he was talking about here was survival rations. Ezekiel was trying to convey the idea that they were coming up on a siege situation; they were not going to have the luxury of complying with dietary laws: They would be lucky to find anything to eat—*Famine was coming!*

- 14] Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.

This is one of the few recorded prayers in the book.

“...abominable flesh...”: Meat sacrificed to idols. All the things he mentioned were in the principle dietary laws from Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Cf. Peter and the vision of unclean animals (Acts 10:9-16).

- 15] Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow’s dung for man’s dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith.

Ezekiel was permitted to substitute cow’s dung, which is still used as fuel by the Bedouins and fellahin of Arabia and Egypt.

- 16] Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment:
- 17] That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.

So Ezekiel communicated through these object lessons, trying to get across to them that they should expect to be in siege conditions.

Ezekiel Chapter 5: God’s Judgment on Jerusalem Continues

- 1] And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber’s razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

“...knife...”: **חֶרֶב** *chereb* sword. Figurative of sweeping the city clean of its inhabitants (Isa 7:20; Jer 41:5). The divine justice is accurate. *Chereb* is the common word for weapon and is used 83x times by Ezekiel to speak of the means by which Jerusalem (6:11), Edom (25:13), Tyre (26:6, 8), Egypt (29:8-9; 30:4), and Gog (38:21) would be destroyed.

“...divide the hair...”: Hair was a sign of consecration of a priest (Lev 21:4-5). It was also the symbol of a Nazarite vow. In Jeremiah 41 it

was a sign of catastrophe. From Job 1, Isa 22, and Jer 7, it was a sign of mourning.

“...three balances...”: Ezekiel was to take three balances, implying the just discrimination with which God weighs out the portion of punishment allotted to each. He was then to divide his hair into three “thirds”; and what happened to that hair was symbolic of what was being predicted would happen to the Israelites.

- 2] Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them.

The last third of the people were scattered out; this group included those who went down to Egypt taking Jeremiah with them.

Judgment of Thirds

One third of the hair was to be burned, symbolic of the consuming of pestilence and famine; a second third was to be smitten with the sword, as was to be the lot of many inhabitants; and, a third part was to be scattered to the wind, a figure of the scattered exiles (v.12). [Cf. Rev 8:7-12: Judgment of Thirds.]

- 3] Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.
4] Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

“...thy skirts...”: Ezekiel’s robe. The small remnant of God’s people who eventually returned to the city is pictured by the few hairs that were bound up in Ezekiel’s robe (“skirts”). Cf. 6:8-10; 9:8; 11:13. Even this tiny remnant was to be subjected to additional trials.

כַּנָּף *kanaph*: wing, extremity, edge, winged, border, corner, shirt; skirt, corner (of garment). Translated (108x): wing 74, skirt 14, borders 2, corners 2, ends 2, feathered 2, sort 2, winged 2, misc 8. This is the same word used of the Cherubim in Chapter 1.

Fire

“...fire”: Many things are included in the concept of fire. One of the allegorical idioms is being “tried by fire.” We are familiar with the refining of silver and gold, but here in Ezekiel’s prophecy it is Israel

that is being refined by fire. Fire here is tribulation. The idea of fire being used as a method of refining is used throughout the Scripture in many contexts.

Example of the fiery furnace in Daniel: Shadrach, Meshach and Abenego were preserved through the fire by the Son of God, because they did not bow to the image. Nebuchadnezzar was ruler of the entire known world at that time, and was a type of the antichrist (Cf. Rev 13).

54x in Ezekiel, God makes the claim, “And they shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezekiel’s whole theme is the recognition that God is God. Early on, Ezekiel’s message pointed out that they were to repent of their idolatry. He warns them, but they do not listen. Judgment falls to demonstrate to them, and all the nations around them, that the Lord is God (Cf. Zech 13:8-9).

- 5] Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.

Jerusalem was the center of God’s providential choice and care (Ex 19:5, 6; Deut 7:6-8; 14:2; 26:19).

- 6] And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.

And she has wickedly rebelled; for the heinousness of Israel’s sin (cf. 16:47, 48; Jer 2:10, 11; 18:13).

Ezekiel is always talking of Jerusalem. Remember that Ezekiel is a prophet to slaves in Babylon, hundreds of miles away from Jerusalem. At the time he was warning them, Jerusalem was still around, yet it was about to be destroyed (see Deut 32:8). All nations have been assigned an inheritance by God.

See also Isa 2:1-4. God had an origin for Jerusalem; and He has a destiny for Jerusalem. It is fascinating that a city which has no natural harbor, no natural resources could make an impact.

Heavy judgment is predicted for Jerusalem (see Lev 26; Deut 28; Jer 19; or Lam 2). Jerusalem plays a pivotal role in God’s plan. When Jerusalem fails, He punishes it; and yet when the world is blessed, the blessings come from Jerusalem. Cf. Isa 2:4. This was then, not now. Micah 4:1-4 speaks of the last days and Jerusalem.

- 7] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you;
- 8] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.
- 9] And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations.

God will vindicate his holiness before the world (Ezek 20:9, 14, 22, 41; 22:16; 28:25; 38:23; 39:27) with unparalleled punishments upon Israel from the Lord (cf. Lam 1:12; 2:20; 4:6). Unparalleled, but ***not to ever be repeated?***...

- 10] Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.

Canibalism! (cf. 2 Kgs 6:24-29; Lev 26:29). Such horrors had been predicted by Moses (Deut 28:52-57) and were verified by Jeremiah (Lam 2:20; 4:10).

- 11] Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.

We will see details in chapter 8. “Diminish thee”: withdraw mine eye...

- 12] A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

These judgments are referred to in verse 2 (cf. Jer 14:12) and were not limited to Zedekiah’s time: 1/3 suffered the Nazi holocaust in Germany... Cf. Zech 13:8,9!

- 13] Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

This solemn asseveration appears in verses 13, 15, 17; 17:21, 24; 21:17, 32; 23:34; 24:14; 26:14; 30:12; 34:24; 36:36; 37:14; 39:5 and elsewhere in similar phraseology.

- 14] Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by.
- 15] So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I the LORD have spoken it.
- 16] When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for their destruction, and which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread:
- 17] So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it.

The four sore acts of judgment: famine, evil beasts, pestilence, and sword, also appear in 14:20 (Cf. Lev 26:22-26; Deut 32:24, 25; Rev 6:7, 8). These judgments on Israel have significance: for the world (Ezek 5:5-8); for Israel (5:13-17) and, for the survivors (6:8-10).

The Remnant

The concept of the remnant became the dominant note of prophecy in the Old Testament, from the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. on; but you can also find the idea in Genesis:

- Remember the flood of Noah: out of the entire world, God saved 8 people.
- As we go through both historically and prophetically, we are going to constantly run into this concept of a remnant.
- Isa 6:12-13; note that “substance thereof” is really “stump” referring to the root of Jesse, a prophecy (Cf. Isa 10:20-22).
- Notice that the remnant is gathered not from Babylon, but from all countries (Jer 23:3).
- This concept of the remnant is going to be intertwined with promises to restore them to their land.
- Isa 11 says that when they are called back to their land the second time, it would be the final time—the first time they were called back from Babylon, from one country; the second time was from May 14, 1948 onwards.

Jerusalem

Watch the role of Jerusalem in prophecy. In the end of chapter 5, God pronounced on Jerusalem the four scourges of famine, evil beasts, pestilence and sword (Lev 26:14-26). Ezekiel continually roots these judgments from the Torah.

The 430 Days: Historical or Prophetic?

430 Years?

Some scholars have said the numbers refer to 430 years of Gentile domination beginning with Jehoiachin's exile in 597 B.C., ending in 167 B.C., the year the Maccabean revolt began. This view has several problems:

- 1) There is no indication that 597 should be used as a starting point instead of 592 (the year Ezekiel began prophesying) or instead of 586 (the year the city actually fell).
- 2) This view does not explain why 390 years were assigned to Israel. They had gone into captivity (to Assyria in 722 B.C.) 125 years before 597, when the time assigned to them actually began.
- 3) it is not clear that 167 B.C. actually was the year Israel was freed from the yoke of Syria: that year was only the beginning of the struggle.

390 Years

The 390 years, in reference to the *sin* of Israel, was somewhat specific, being the years from the setting up of the calves by Jeroboam (1Kgs 12:20–33); that is, from 975 to 585 B.C., *about* the year of the Babylonians captivity.

Perhaps the 40 years of Judah refers to that part of Manasseh's 55-year reign in which he had not repented, and which, we are expressly told, was the cause of God's removal of Judah, notwithstanding Josiah's reformation (1Kgs 21:10-16; Kgs 23:26, 27).

On the 390 (or 190) days there is wide disagreement. The penalties of Israel and Judah would have been concurrent for the last forty years, but what is the *terminus a quo*?

From the disruption of the monarchy in 922 B.C. to the return in 538 is 384 years, which is very near to 390 years. Perhaps this could be looked upon as a period of iniquity and punishment for the Northern Kingdom.

In the books of Kings the total length of the reigns of the kings of Judah from Rehoboam to Zedekiah is given as 394 1/2 years; but this can hardly be equated with Israel's iniquity or punishment.

Working from 734 B.C., the ravages of Tiglath-pileser (2 Kgs 15:29), to the exile yields 148 years, which would be very near to the 150 years of the LXX in the added phrase in Ezek 4:5. From the fall of Samaria in 721 to 538 is 183 years, which is close to the figure of 190 years in the LXX in Ezek 4:5, 9.

40 Years

From the fall of Jerusalem in 586 to the first return of the exiles in 538 is 48 years, which might (in round numbers) represent the duration of the punishment of the house of Judah (v. 6).

Sins of the House of Judah were those which they were guilty of during the last forty years before their captivity:

Since the thirteenth year of Josiah, when Jeremiah began to prophesy Jer 1:1, 2; or, as some reckon it, since the eighteenth, when the book of the law was found and the people renewed their covenant with God.

The forty may allude to the forty years in the wilderness. Elsewhere, God threatened to bring them back to Egypt, which must mean, not Egypt literally, but a bondage as bad as that one in Egypt (Deut 28:68; Hos 9:3). So now God will reduce them to a kind of new Egyptian bondage to the world: Israel, the greater transgressor. for a longer period than Judah (Ezek 20:35–38).

430 Years

The 390 years of punishment appointed for Israel, and 40 for Judah, cannot refer to the siege of Jerusalem. That siege is referred to in Ezek 4:1–3, and in a sense restricted to the literal siege, but comprehending the *whole* train of punishment to be inflicted for their sin; therefore we read here merely of its sore pressure, not of its result.

The sum of 390 and 40 years is 430, a period famous in the history of the covenant-people, being that of *their sojourn in Egypt* (Ex 12:40, 41; Gal 3:17).

390 Years

Not the whole of the 430 years of the Egypt state is appointed to Israel—this is shortened by the 40 years of the wilderness sojourn, to imply either that a way is open to their return to life by their having the

Egypt state merged into that of the wilderness; or, that by ceasing from idolatry and seeking in their sifting and sore troubles, a restoration to righteousness and peace.

But why did the Lord choose the numbers 390 and 40? The days represent the years of their sin (v. 5); that is, each day corresponds to a year in Israel's and Judah's history.

But were the years *past* or *future*? If they refer to the past, Ezekiel was showing the number of years Israel and Judah had sinned before this judgment. If they refer to the future, Ezekiel was indicating the number of years the nation would be oppressed by Gentiles after falling to Babylon.

Source: Cf. Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985.

430 Years?

430 (years) of judgment (Ezekiel 4:1-8): 430 – 70 [Babylon] = 360 years unaccounted for

And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

Leviticus 26: 18, 21, 24, 28

$360 \times 7 = 2520$ years?

Calendar Reconciliation

$2520_{360} = 2483_{365} + 9 \text{ mos} + 21 \text{ days} :$

Julian year = $11^m 10.46^{\text{sec}}$ > mean solar year
Gregorian Reform: 11 days removed

Leap Years: $2483/4 = 621$ (3 excess ea. 4 centuries: 18 excess)

621 - (18-11)	=	614 days
2483 x 365	=	905,295
9 months	=	270
21 days	=	21
2520_{360}	=	<u>907,200 days</u>

“Servitude of the Nation”

$70 \text{ years}_{360} = 25,200 \text{ days} = 69 \text{ years}_{365}$ (less 2 days)

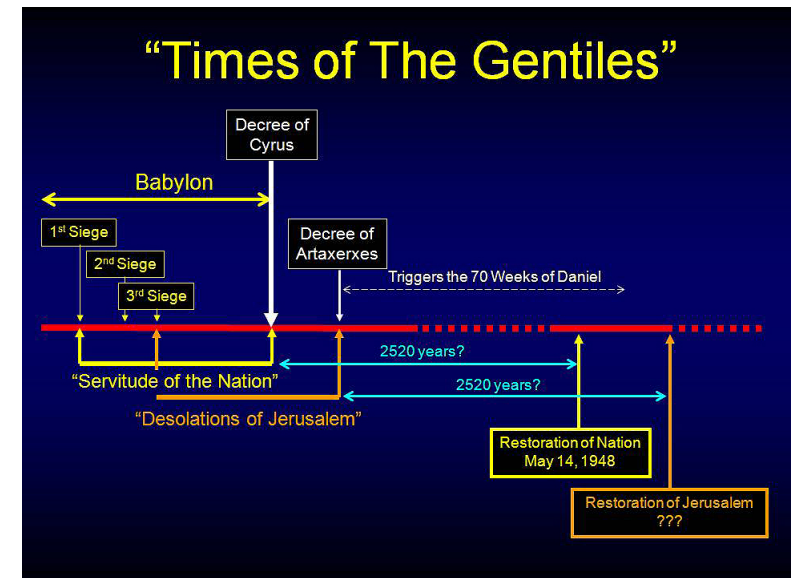
$606 \text{ B.C.} + 69 \text{ years} = 537 \text{ B.C.}$

If July 23, 537 B.C. was their release...

[Source: Cyrus conquers Babylon, Oct 539 B.C.; Cyrus Cylinder: 538 B.C.; Return, 537 B.C.; Returnees 1st altar: 536 B.C. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 11. 1. 1.]

-537 ^y	7 ^m	23 ^d	
+1			(no “year 0”)
2483 ^y	9 ^m	21 ^d	
1948	5	14	

On May 14, 1948, the nation of Israel was restored.



And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Luke 21:24

“Desolations of Jerusalem”

Window for the “Times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24):

-445 ^y	3 ^m	14 ^d	
+1			(no “year 0”)
2483 ^y	9 ^m	21 ^d	
2039	12	35	
2040	1	5	King Returns?
(less 7			70 th Week)
2033	1	5	Latest Harpazo date?

Next Session

Having acted out his four dramatic signs, Ezekiel now gives two sermons... Study Chapters 6 & 7.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 4 Chapters 6 & 7

Three Major Sections

It was five years after his captivity (Ezek 1:2), in 593 B.C., that Ezekiel received his call to be a prophet (Chapters 1-3).

Ezekiel had a unique two-part ministry: Between 592 B.C. and 586 B.C. his messages contained warnings about Jerusalem’s destruction (Ch. 4-32).

His last message of this era was delivered in April 585 B.C., just after the city and its temple were destroyed. For the next 13 years Ezekiel was silent. Then, in April 571 B.C., the prophet took up a new ministry. Now his message was one of hope, promise, and comfort for the exiles (Ch. 33-48).

Outline of Ezekiel

<u>Ch.</u>	
1-3	The Call of the Prophet
4-24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25-32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)

33-48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33-36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38-39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40-48	The Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel’s task was to confront Israel with her sin and warn her of impending destruction (cf. Ezek 3:17). Ezekiel employed several means to focus on the people’s need for judgment. These included: signs (Chapters 4-5); **sermons (Chapters 6-7)**, and visions (Chapters 8-11). In each case the emphasis was on sin and its ensuing suffering.

Ezekiel 6

Chapters 6 and 7 are “messages” or sermons. Until now Ezekiel had been pretty much just acting things out; he had been doing things to demonstrate object lessons. Now he is going to elaborate on the meaning of what went on before in effect, editorials. Up to this point we have had prophecies which largely concerned Jerusalem. However, the prophet will now turn his attention to the whole land of Israel: judgment is going to come upon the entire land.

Ezekiel is with the second delegation of people who were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. These were slaves of the government of Babylon working in the agricultural area by the river Chebar, the great canal running off the Euphrates River. Most of the people, however, were still back in the land, and Jerusalem had not yet been devastated.

The false prophets continued to assure the people that everything was going to be all right and that the captives would be able to return shortly. Meanwhile, Jeremiah was saying that the captivity would last seventy years, but they paid no attention to him. They listened to the false prophets because their message was more user-friendly...

- 1] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,

This verse opens the first of the two messages; the second message in Chapter 7 begins the same way. [And both of these messages conclude with “...and they shall know that I am the Lord.”]

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ...
2 Corinthians 5:11

The Mountains of Israel

They formed the chief topographical feature of the land of Israel. The phrase is peculiar to Ezekiel (Cf. Ezek 6:2, 3; 19:9; 33:28; 34:13, 14; 35:12; 36:1, 4, 8; 37:22; 38:8; 39:2, 4, 17).

Notice that he has given up on the people. Rhetorically, he is prophesying against the mountains because of idolatry (cf. 1 Kgs 13, where the prophet speaks to the altar rather than to King Jeroboam). Under the new kingdom, the prophet will portray the felicity of the mountains (Ezek 36:1-15).

Seriousness of Idolatry

God took idolatry seriously enough to make it a capital crime. He brought the nation heavy judgments, including what we saw in Chapter 5: cannibalism! The sieges and abuses on them by their conquerors were brought about as God's judgment of idolatry (Lev 26:30-33; Hos 4:13; Isa 65:7; Jer 3:6). The role of Jerusalem and of Israel was to be a witness to the rest of the world of what God was really all about.

- 3] And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.

The judgment is to come upon the entire land.

“...high places”: This is a reference to the idols that were up on high ground. In the Old Testament, they are referred to as “groves.” It was a characteristic heathen practice to establish altars in “high places”; the mountaintops. The “groves” were actually phallic symbols of Canaanite worship.

Mountains, Hills, Rivers, Valleys

The physical features of Israel were different from the flat Babylonian plains. They were also seats of idolatry of many kinds (Amos 7:9; Hos 4:13; Jer 2:20, 23; 7:31, 32; Isa 57:3-12; Zech 12:11; Mal 2:10, 11).

The course of idolatry had been checked in Israel by such leaders as Samuel, David, Asa, and Hezekiah. Manasseh re-introduced many types of pagan worship. Josiah had engaged in a far-reaching reform in 622 B.C., but his successors did not continue his work (2 Kgs 23:13-20).

- 4] And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols.
5] And I will lay the dead carcases of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

“...scatter your bones...”: This was one method of defiling altars (2 Kgs 23:16).

- 6] In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.

Small limestone altars, with a horn at each corner, and pottery stands for the burning of incense, have been found at Megiddo.

“...works...”: the mere work of men's hands (Isa 40:18-20).

High Places

High places were in Canaan before Israel arrived, and God commanded Israel to destroy them (Num 33:52). Israel was to worship only at the tabernacle, placed at Shiloh (Deut 12:2-14; 1 Sam 1:3).

After the destruction of Shiloh (probably by the Philistines) and before the construction of the temple in Jerusalem, Israel had no central place of worship. The altar and tabernacle were relocated at Gibeon (2 Chr 1:1-3) and the ark was taken to Kiriath Jearim (1 Sam 6:21-7:1).

After the temple in Jerusalem was completed, worshiping at high places was once again discouraged. Most high places remaining in the land were dedicated to false gods (1 Kgs 11:7-10).

The conflict between true worship and false worship often centered on these high places. Those kings who followed God tried to destroy the high places: Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3-4) and Josiah (2 Kgs 23:8-9); kings who did not follow God rebuilt them: Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:1-6).

- 7] And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

“...ye shall know that I am the LORD”: The main theme throughout this book. Levitically, contact with a dead body was considered defiling (Num 9:6-10; 2 Kgs 23, et al.). That is why the grave sites were white-washed at the time of Passover, so that strangers coming to celebrate

would not inadvertently stumble on the graves and become ceremonially defiled so that they could not celebrate the feast. Since the ground God wanted to have sanctified was defiled by the idols, He was defiling that ground with their bones.

It's ironic that the temple incense was being replaced by foul smell of decomposing dead bodies.

- 8] Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.

Here is a place where Ezekiel goes beyond his immediate audience of the Babylonian captivity.

“...countries...”: Note this is plural, which takes this statement much further than the Babylonian captivity *and into the longer diaspora*.

- 9] And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

“...among the nations whither...”: God did not bring captivity on Israel in vain.

The Remnant

A “remnant” is again mentioned. Cf. Isa 1:9 and note that Sodom and Gomorrah were completely wiped out, and obviously here, Israel was not totally wiped out (cf. Isa 20:20-22; Jer 43:5; Zeph 2:7; Zech 10:9, 12:2-3, 12:9-10; Rom 9:6-13, 11:5-25).

There were some among these people who remained faithful to God. The nation as a whole went away from God, but there was a believing remnant. This is true of the church today. Liberalism has taken over the bulk of the organized church, but there are many of God's people left. God takes note of His faithful ones.

Some have played the harlot: they have committed spiritual adultery. The organized church which will remain after Christ takes His true church out of the world is also called a harlot in Revelation 17.

- 10] And they shall know that I am the LORD, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.

“And they shall know that I am the LORD...” [third time in this chapter]: God did not bring captivity on Israel in vain.

Spiritual Fornication

All through Scripture, especially in the Book of Revelation and the Old Testament prophecies, the concept of unfaithfulness theologically was idiomatically identical with the concept of unfaithfulness in a sexual sense.

Just as a wife can be unfaithful to her husband, Israel was viewed as being unfaithful to YHWH. So the concept of the faithless woman was an idiom, poetically speaking, that God used to speak to Israel.

- 11] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.

God is basically instructing Ezekiel to amplify his words.

- 12] He that is far off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: thus will I accomplish my fury upon them.

Judgment will come not only on Israel but on idolatrous Jews *wherever they be*.

- 13] Then shall ye know that I am the LORD, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols.

This verse refers to the cult of the fertility goddess (Hos 4:13). The “oak” was the terebinth tree. It is a deciduous tree common to Palestine and grows to a height of 35-40 feet. The Elah Valley, where David slew Goliath, probably received its name because of the abundance of these trees (1 Sam 17:2, 19).

- 14] So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

“Diblathaim”: the Moabitish towns mentioned in Num 33:45; Jer 48:22 would not be logical sites in this context. Ezekiel was referring to all the land, from the desert in the south to Riblah in the north: from the southernmost boundary to the ideal northern boundary (Num 34:11, 12).

רִבְלָה **Diblah** or רִבְלָה **Riblah**?

From the unenclosed pastures S and SE of Israel to some town in the extreme N, probably Riblah. [The Hebrew letter resh (ר) and the Hebrew letter dalet (ד), bear close resemblance, becoming easily interchanged by copyists (such variants are found in Ginsberg's Masoretic Bible and in Codex Petropolitanus of A.D. 916).]

Here it was that Nebuchadnezzar had sat in judgment on the last Jewish king, Zedekiah, and killed his sons before his eyes, and then blinded him and slain the chief men of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:6,7).

Ezekiel 7: Four Oracles of Doom (Ezek 7:1-13)

Four short oracles of doom open the chapter with the recurring theme:

- “The end has come” vv. 2-4
- “Evil has come” vv. 5-9
- “The day has come” vv. 10, 11
- “The time has come” vv. 12, 13

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ...” (2 Cor 5:11). Ezekiel 7 is a climax to Chapters 4–6.

- 1] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
2] Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land.

“...an end, the end...”: The first message, given in Chapter 6, opened with the same words. “End” is used 5 times in the first 6 verses.

“...the four corners of the land...”: No portion would escape God's judgment. This prophecy is restricted to Israel (Ezek 7:1, 3, 7; Amos 8:2; Jer 10:22).

- 3] Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations.

“...will judge thee according to your ways...”: The judgment or the punishment will fit the crime. [How serious is it to be a phony Christian?]

- 4] And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

“...mine eye shall not spare thee...”: Cf. 5:11; 7:9; 8:18; 9:10. While the language of verses 5-9 applies to Judah's fall, it has resemblances to eschatological passages (Ezek 30:3; Joel 1:15; Mal 4:1; Dan 12:1).

- 5] Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come.
6] An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come.

“An end is come, the end is come”: In Hebrew the two words translated in the first clause are reversed in the second clause. In wordplay Ezekiel announced that the end had roused itself against you; The words “end” קֵץ *qets* and הֶקֶץ *haqets* and “roused” הִקִּץ *haqus* sound so much alike that they drew attention to themselves.

Disaster had been predicted for Jerusalem by Micah, but that prophecy had remained unfulfilled for over 100 years (Micah 3:12). Now Jerusalem's end was about to come.

This is a lamentation. In the English it will sound strange, it will sound repetitive, almost like a song or poem. All through it, in the Hebrew, there are puns of sound (homonyms) as well as ironies of thought. This is an emotional closing to this section of the book. The English translation loses much, but you will get the sense of an emotional lyric going on.

- 7] The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains.

“The morning...” = “Your doom”: This rendering of צִפְיָרָה *tsephiyrah* assumes a root like the cognate Akkadian *sapâru*, “to destroy,” (rather than the “*morning*” of the KJV based on Aramaic *saphrâ*, “dawn.”)

“The Day Is Near...”

In popular thinking, “the day” meant the victory of Israel over her foes (cf. Isa 9:3; Hos 2:2; Ezek 30:9), but the prophets stressed its aspect of judgment on Israel (Amos 5:18; Isa 2:12ff; 13:9; Jer 30:7; Ezek 7:19; 13:5; 36:33; Mal 4:1). A later development assigned to “the day of YHWH” was the overthrow of heathenism (Jer 46:10; Ezek 30:2ff.; 38:10, 14; 39:8, 11, 13; Zech 14:3) and the ushering in of the new order, the rule of God (Ezek 39:22; Mal 4:2).

- 8] Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations.

Verses 8 and 9 are virtually a repetition of verses 3 and 4.

- 9] And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the LORD that smiteth.

Those who professed to know Him by other names (Gen 22:14; 33:20; Ex 17:15) would now know Him by the name יהוה מַכֶּה *Yahweh-makke* “the Lord who strikes the blow.” A variation of the other statements on “...ye shall know that I am the Lord” (cf. Ezek 6:7,10,14; 7:4,27).

- 10] Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded.

“...morning...”: תְּצִיחַ *tsephiyrah* **doom**: again, assumes a root like the cognate Akkadian *sapâru*, “to destroy,” rather than the Aramaic *saphrâ*, “dawn.”

Ezekiel’s imagery could be drawn from Aaron’s rod that budded (Num 17), or he could have been familiar with Jeremiah’s picture of an almond tree in blossom (Jer 1:11-12).

If the allusion was to Aaron’s rod, the point was that just as its budding indicated God had selected him for service, so the budding of Israel’s rod of arrogance indicated God had selected Jerusalem for doom.

If the prophet alluded to Jeremiah’s almond tree in blossom, the point was that just as the budding of the almond tree indicated God’s judgment was sure to follow so the budding of violence in Israel indicated God’s judgment would follow.

- 11] Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them shall remain, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither shall there be wailing for them.
12] The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.

Property is of little value to either buyer or seller when exile threatens (Isa 24:2).

Property Worthless

Possessions would be confiscated and property owners torn from their land and carried to Babylon. The buyer who normally rejoiced over a good business deal should not be happy because he would not be able to possess the land he had purchased. And, one forced to sell his land should not grieve because he would have lost it anyway.

When land was sold in Israel, the transaction was always temporary. Every 50 years, during the Year of Jubilee, the property reverted to its original owners (Lev 25:10, 13-17). However, God’s coming judgment would prevent original owners from reclaiming their properties; they would be in exile along with the buyers.

- 13] For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life.

Final Scenes of Desolation (Ezekiel 7:14-27)

- The uselessness of defense (vv. 14-18)
- The wealth of the city becoming a prey to the invader (vv. 19-22)
- The stupefaction seizing all classes of people (vv. 23-27)
 - The city vv. 14-15
 - The king v. 27
 - The Temple vv. 20-22
 - The enemy v. 24 —are all referred to in enigmatic fashion.

- 14] They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.
15] The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him.

Those who sought escape outside Jerusalem’s walls were hunted down and murdered by Babylon’s armies. Those who sought protection within the city walls faced the dual enemies of famine and disease. The majority of the people would die, and even those who survived would pay a price. So, also, at the Roman invasion in A.D. 70...

- 16] But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity.

The pitiful wail of those hiding in the mountains, who were weeping over their sins and material losses, would sound like mourning doves.

- 17] All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water.
18] They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads.

“Sackcloth” was coarse cloth, woven from the long hair of goats or camels. To “put on sackcloth” was a sign of grief or mourning and repentance (Gen 37:34; 1 Sam 3:31; Job 16:15; Jer 6:26; Isa 58:5; Dan 9:3-4; Jon 3:5-9; Mt 11:21).

Shaved Heads

These were used to lament disaster (Ezek 27:31; Isa 15:2, 3; Jer 48:37) and to mourn the dead (Gen 37:34; Jer 16:6; Mic 1:16). The Hebrews were forbidden to make tonsures for the dead (Lev 21:5; Deut 14:1; Ezek 44:20).

- 19] They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity.

“...their gold shall be removed...”: Literally, *shall be impurity*, i.e., the ceremonial impurity of menstruation (Lev 15:19ff.; Ezek 18:6) or of touching a corpse (Num 19:13, 20, 21) and here of idolatry (cf. v. 20 and Ezek 36:17).

“...their gold shall not be able to deliver them”: The revulsion Israel would feel toward her wealth; items once deemed precious would be discarded.

“...shall not satisfy their souls”: Their silver and gold ... cannot satisfy their souls (Lam 1:11; 2:11, 12, 19, 20; 4:4, 8-10; 2 Kgs 6:25).

“...stumbling block”: It was the stumblingblock that caused their ruin (cf. Ezek 14:3; 18:30; 44:12).

- 20] As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations and of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them.

Up till now He had been talking about the land, the sin of the people broadly. God is now shifting His focus specifically on the Temple.

- 21] And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it.
22] My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.

Israel’s wealth would be plundered by foreigners. Even the Temple: “My Secret place” refers to the Holy of Holies.

- 23] Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.
24] Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled.

“Make a chain”: making a chain was symbolic, intended to speak of captivity.

This verse pretty much characterizes the land from that period of history until General Allenby entered Jerusalem in 1917 to deliver it from the Turks. *It was under Islamic rule for more than 1200 years!*

So the scope of what Ezekiel talks about often broadens from a specific focusing on the Babylonians coming to execute God’s fury. Sometimes you will see glimpses in the text where he goes far beyond that to the End Times (Cf. Ex 28!).

- 25] Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.
26] Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.

Literally, *shuddering comes*.

Famine of the Word

He is saying that they would not listen when they were in charge; now there would be a famine of the Word. Amos also talks of a famine of the Word (Amos 8:11). We have no ability to conceive what a famine of the Word would be like. But many countries are of that kind, where people expose themselves to incredible dangers just for a few pages of God’s Word. (Compare to the “Emergent church” retreating to icons, et al., of the Dark Ages, when the Word of God was not accessible to the common people...)

- 27] The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel refers to Jehoiachin (Ezek 17:12), to past kings (Ezek 43:7, 9), and to the future ruler as king (Ezek 37:22, 24), but he does not use the title in regard to the reigning Zedekiah (Ezek 12:12; 21:25).

“...they shall know that I am the LORD...”: 70 times in this book.

Ezekiel closes Chapters 6 and 7 by amplifying, commenting, and elaborating on the object lessons of the two previous chapters. Divine justice is one of the evidences of the living God. Just as the Lord announces through Ezekiel that retribution upon the wicked leaders of Israel will

convince them that He is the Lord (“they shall know that I am the Lord”), *so in the final judgment of the wicked the ultimate justice of God will leave no doubt of His reality!*

Idol Worship Today

What God would have us do, as we wade through Ezekiel and get this perspective of God’s judgments on those ancient peoples, is to recognize that there are elements of their problems *in our own lives* that probably offend God no less than Israel offended God 2500 years ago.

Idol worship in a classical sense *is* still going on today. If astrology and the occult were simply superstitions and harmful only because they represented ignorance, then God would have dealt with them accordingly; but the Bible deals with those things as capital crimes.

Those of you who are in any way drawn or attracted to Ouija boards, or similar things, you should recognize that you are toying with something *very* serious. The direct supernatural involvement of forces that would undo you and gain entrance and control over your life, are organized for your destruction. Turn your back on them. Turn your back on Satan who takes life, turn toward Almighty God who gives it.

We need to listen as to what God is teaching *us* through these words. While we might not light candles to some carved image, we can inadvertently make idols of other things in our lives, whether it be a person, or a company, or a hobby, or some other material objective. Any kind of excessive preoccupation with something other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, can become a form of idol worship.

How To Test the Situation

As we wonder about the meaning of some incident or experience that we are going through, let the Holy Spirit help explain:

- If it is the Holy Spirit, the incident or experience will draw you closer to the Lord. If the incident is of Satan, it will give you excuses to fall away from the Lord.
- That is how you can tell the difference between: the condemnation of Satan; or the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...

2 Corinthians 5:11

Next Session

We now come to the second major section of the prophecy of Ezekiel. In this division of the book the complete captivity of Jerusalem and Israel will become a reality, and *the glory of the Lord will depart from the temple in Jerusalem*. Study Chapters 8, 9, & 10. Review the vision in Chapter 1.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 5 Chapters 8 - 11

Ezekiel had received a vision of God	Chapters 1-3
He had acted out four signs	Chapters 4-5
And had given two messages on judgment	Chapters 6-7

A year later, God gave Ezekiel another vision, this time of the sins of the people back in Jerusalem. The glory appeared again (Ezek 8:2) and God took the prophet (in a vision) to the holy city. There he saw a four-fold view of the sins of the people...

Four-Fold View of the Sins

- 1) An image set up at the north gate of the temple, possibly of Astarte, the foul Babylonian goddess (Ezek 8:5);
- 2) Secret heathen worship in the hidden precincts of the Temple (Ezek 8:6-12);
- 3) Jewish women weeping for the god Adonis, who was supposed to die and be raised from the dead each spring (Ezek 8:13-14).
- 4) The high priest and the 24 courses of priests worshipping the sun (Ezek 8:15-16).

Ezekiel 8

- 1] And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me.

This vision is dated fourteen months after Ezekiel’s call in Ezek 1:1, 2. “The hand of the Lord GOD” put Ezekiel into a trance state (1:3; 11:5).

- 2] Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.

“...fire...”: The LXX reading, ἀνδρός “man,” is preferable to “fire,” עֵשׂה [vs. עֵשׂה ישׁה], of the MT and agrees with the description in 1:26, 27.

This is very similar to a part of Ezekiel’s vision recorded in Chapter 1. That vision of the glory of God is the basis of every vision in the Book of Ezekiel, and apparently is the basis of the Book of Revelation.

- 3] And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

“...a lock of mine head”: He had been shaven about a year before this, so his hair had time to grow out.

The Door to the Inner Gate

- The inner court was the temple court proper (Ezek 8:16; 10:3; 1 Kgs 6:36; 7:12).
- The middle court, on a lower level, contained the palace (1 Kgs 7:8; 2 Kgs 20:4).
- On a still lower level was the great court or outer court, which enclosed the entire palace complex (Ezek 10:5; 1 Kgs 7:12).
- In ancient temples the gateway was a covered building entered by means of an entrance or door (vv. 3, 5, 7). [See description and plan, W. S. Caldecott, *Temple*, ISBE, V, 2932f.

Ezekiel’s Vision

There are three possibilities:

- 1) Actually transported to Jerusalem?
- 2) Simply a vision by the river Chebar?
- 3) Or transported to heaven?

We are clearly told that these were visions (v. 3; 11:24; cf. 3:12) a kind of “second sight,” and not physical levitations? (cf. 2 Kgs 5:26; 6:8-12; Isa 21:6-10).

Ezekiel’s withdrawal to Jerusalem would not be something new in Scripture (Elijah also was caught up; cf. 2 Kgs 2). In the New Testament we read of Philip: “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39). Philip was removed bodily, and that is exactly what happened to Elijah and possibly to this man Ezekiel.

Paul said that he had been caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor 12:1-3). That may have occurred at the time he was stoned in Lystra in the Galatian country and was left for dead and that God raised him from the dead, and that at that time he was caught up to the third heaven. John also was caught up into heaven (Rev 4).

“...image of jealousy...”: May be a reference to the idol which Manasseh put in the temple (2 Kgs 21; 2 Chr 33), which was an abomination and a blasphemy.

The Seat of the Image of Jealousy

This is not speaking of “jealousy” itself, but (that) “which provokes to jealousy” (cf. Ezek 5:13; 16:38, 42; 36:6; 38:19; Deut 32:21). This may have been an image of Asherah, the mother-goddess of the Canaanites, set up by Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:7), subsequently destroyed by Josiah (2 Kgs 23:6).

The image of Astarte, or Asherah (as the *Hebrew* for “grove” ought to be translated; cf. 2 Kgs 21:3, 7) was set up by Manasseh as a rival to Jehovah in His temple, and arresting the attention of all worshippers as they entered (2 Kgs 21:7). The Syrian Venus, worshipped with licentious rites; the “queen of heaven,” wife of the Phoenician Baal; subsequently destroyed by Josiah (2 Kgs 23:6).

- 4] And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.

“...in the plain...”: This seems to imply a physical presence in Babylon.

The Departure of the Glory

In Chapters 8-10 of Ezekiel we are going to see the gradual withdrawal of the glory of the Lord from the temple and from Israel. (Some feel that the glory actually departed back during the reign of Manasseh and that Ezekiel is given a vision of that here.)

Here we see the glory, and then, because the people did not turn back to God, the glory lifted up from the temple and went out over the city to the east and hovered there. It will not be until Chapter 11 that we will see the final departure of the glory.

- 5] Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.

“...in the entry...”: The northern gate was that most frequently used, for the palace buildings were to the south and east.

- 6] He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.

“...thou shalt see greater abominations...”: The abominations of Israel were causing YHWH to withdraw from his sanctuary (Ezek 11:1, 22, 23; cf. vv. 13, 15).

- 7] And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.
8] Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.

An aperture in the wall of the priests' hidden chambers, through which he could see into the various apartments, and their private idolatries.

- 9] And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.
10] So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about.

“...portrayed...”: lit., *carved, incised* (cf. Ezek 23:14).

These people are worshiping the creature rather than the Creator—this is as low as they could go. Man will turn to this type of thing when he has absolutely repudiated the living and true God. This is what they were doing in Egypt at the time of the Exodus; they were worshiping every kind of beast. That is the reason the plagues upon Egypt were aimed at the different gods of Egypt.

In Romans 1 we read: “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God ... Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever ...” (Rom 1:21, 25). This means that Israel has sunk down to the level of the nations round about her, and she is no longer a witness for the living and true God.

- 11] And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.

Apparently a man well known. If this man was the son of Shaphan, who had assisted in Josiah's reform, he had greatly corrupted the faith of his family (2 Kgs 22:3-10; Jer 26:24; 29:3; 36:10-12; 39:14).

- 12] Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

They were apparently worshiping this idol, and they were doing it in their secret chambers. [*The believer's body is God's temple on earth. Is He pleased by what He sees going on in our minds and hearts?*]

- 13] He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do.
14] Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

Tammuz

Tammuz was the miraculously born son of Semiramis the queen wife of Nimrod the first world dictator. He corresponds to the Summerian Dumuzi, the god of spring vegetation. He died at the winter solstice and went down to the netherworld to be resurrected again. There are similarities to that of Egyptian Osiris, the Canaanite Baal, and the Syrian Adonis.

These weeping women were celebrating the death of this god; his worship was actually the worship of nature and connected with it were some vile and immoral ceremonies: human sacrifice and sexual union formed part of the various cult rites

- 15] Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.
16] And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

“...five and twenty...”: This alludes to 24 leaders of the classes of priests (1 Chr 24:5ff) and the high priest.

“...worshipped the sun”: The greatest of all the abominations was the worship of the sun (Cf. Deut 4:19; 2 Chr 14:5; 2 Kgs 23:5; Jer 44:17; Job 31:26). They can sink no lower than this.

- 17] Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit

here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.

Jewish commentators of the past have said that it speaks of shocking and degrading religious rites.

“...branch to their nose...”: Possibly it could be compared with a man “thumbing his nose” today.

- 18] Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

Israel has stepped over the line—God will now judge them in His fury (cf. Ezek 5:11; 7:4, 9; 9:5, 10).

Ezekiel 9

- 1] He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.
- 2] And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

“...slaughter weapon...”: a weapon of his breaking in pieces.

- 3] And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side;

“...whereupon he was...”: This has to be a “flashback”: *The Mercy Seat had already left during Manassah’s reign: the Levites had sought refuge for the Ark, et al, under Pharaoh Necho.*

“...gone up from the cherub...”: That is, it had gone up from the Holy Place. The “cherubim” were above the Mercy Seat. This is where the glory had been, but now it lifts up. The text implies YHWH went to the threshold (Ezek 9:3); the cherubim and vacant throne waited (Ezek 10:3) until the Lord remounted and departed (Ezek 10:18).

- 4] And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

“...the men that sigh and that cry...”: These are the remnant which God will save in that city. God’s servant is putting a mark of protection on

the faithful remnant of believers, lest they be slain in the judgment to come.

“...mark upon the forehead...”: תָּו *tav* the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, written in the old form (as a cross!) .

תָּו *Tav*

Here the word “mark” is *tav*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, written in the old form as a cross. Origen and Jerome found mystical significance in the mark. Compare:

- the “sign” given to protect Cain (Gen 4:15);
- the blood on the lintel and doorposts on the night of the first Passover (Ex 12:23);
- the sealing of the saints of God (Rev 7:3-8; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4).

- 5] And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:
- 6] Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

“...at my sanctuary...”: Where the grossest idolatry had been carried on. Neither Ezekiel nor Jeremiah held to the inviolability of the Temple (cf. Jer 7:4ff.; 1 Pet 4:17).

- 7] And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

“...Defile the house...”: The Temple was desecrated with the slain. Compare the actual happening (2 Chr 36:17, 18) to Rev 14:9-11, where those receiving the mark of the beast are subjected to Divine torments (Rev 13:16-18).

- 8] And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

Ezekiel so identified himself with the Lord’s wrath against sin that we seldom find expressions of pity in him. (Cf. intercessions of Abraham (Gen 18:23-32), Amos (Amos 7:1-6), Jeremiah (Jer 14; 15). See, however, Ezek 11:13; 24:15ff.

- 9] Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

All the prophets reminded Israel that a righteous God wants a righteous people, and that national calamity is a punishment for national sin. It may be easy to say that God is not out there and He doesn't know what is going on in the earth, but when you really think about it, that is absurd.

- 10] And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

Cf. 5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:5; Isa 5:25ff.; Amos 1:3, 6ff.

- 11] And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.

The recording angel stated that he had done his task, and the ominous silence with reference to the six executioners implied that they had done theirs.

Ezekiel 10

The narrative portion of the chapter comprises verses 2-4, 6, 7, 18, 19, and is completed by 11:22-25. The rest of the chapter contains descriptions of the throne-chariot very similar to those in Chapter 1.

The recording angel receives fire from the cherubim with which to burn the city, and the glory of the Lord departs to the outside eastern gate of the outer court. The nation of Israel had what no other nation had and, indeed, that which the church does not have today: the visible presence of God.

In the 9th chapter of Romans, Paul lists about eight different points of identification which were unique to the nation of Israel, and one of them was “the glory.” These people had the Shekinah glory, the visible presence of God, that which Ezekiel saw in his vision in the first chapter.

God judges; it is one of the evidences we have of the living God. The “wheels within wheels” which Ezekiel saw speak of the energy of God as He moves in the affairs of men...

The glory of the Lord was above the cherubim—between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies in the temple. The glory began its departure in the previous chapter, and will now continue to depart. It moved out from the temple and hovered over it.

- 1] Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.

The throne was empty (cf. Ezek 1:26; 9:3 and the chariot awaited the Lord's return, cf. 10:3, 18). This probably includes the affect of a “flash-back”: the departure was likely as result of the reign of Manassah.

- 2] And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight.

“...the man clothed with linen...”: who in this chapter becomes the agent of destruction.

“...the wheels...”: גלגל *galgal* wheel, whirl, whirlwind, whirling.

גלגל *galgal*

“a whirl,” is used of wagons (Ezek 23:24; 26:10); of wheels (Isa 5:28; Jer 47:3); and of whirlwinds (Ps 77:18; 83:13). Here the word is singular and collective, describing the whole wheelwork.

“...under the cherubim:” The LXX, the Syriac, and the Vulgate have the plural **cherubim** for the singular *cherub* of the MT, but the singular can be used in a collective sense, as is true of “living creature” in verses 15, 17, 20.

- 3] Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.

“...cloud”: the Shekinah Glory, the Presence of the God, the presence of His holiness. In Egypt, it was the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. It dwelt in the Tabernacle and lead the people for 40 years through the wilderness (Ex 40:34-35; 1 Kgs 8:10-11).

- 4] Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory.

The first half of the verse is a repetition of the act described in Ezek 9:3.

- 5] And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.
6] And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels.
7] And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out.

- 8] And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings.
 9] And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone.

In verses 8-17, there is a renewed description of the throne-chariot, greatly resembling that in Chapter 1. [The living creatures are definitely identified as cherubim.]

- 10] And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.
 11] When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went.

God has never had to come back to pick up something He has forgotten. He doesn't need to deviate from one side to the other; He never detours. He goes straight forward today toward the accomplishment of His purpose in the world.

- 12] And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had.

MT: *And all their flesh and their backs and their hands and their wings and the wheels were full of eyes*, which seems to confuse the cherubim and the wheels. Backs can be rendered as *rims* and hands as *spokes*, confining the reference to the wheels (cf. Ezek 1:18).

- 13] As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel.

(This verse seems out of place here and would more suitably follow verse 6...)

- 14] And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.
 15] And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar.
 16] And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them.
 17] When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for the spirit of the living creature was in them.
 18] Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims.

Finally, in Ezekiel 11:22-23, the glory moved out of the temple to the top of the Mount of Olives: "Ichabod—the glory has departed" (1 Sam 4:21).

- 19] And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

A Reluctant Departure

The throne-chariot moved to the east gate, apparently of the outer court, paused briefly on the Mount of Olives "on the east side of the city" (Ezek 11:23), and then left completely. Later, in prophetic vision, Ezekiel saw the glory return by the same eastern gate (Ezek 43:1-4).

- 20] This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims.
 21] Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.
 22] And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward.

Cherubim

These composite figures, exalted to be proximate to the dwelling place of God, function in several ways:

- They guard the way to the tree of life (Gen 3:24) and the ark in Solomon's Temple (1Kgs 6:23-28; 8:7).
- They engage in adoration of God in connection with the mercy seat in the Tabernacle (Ex 25:18-20; 37:7-9).
- They support the Lord's throne (1 Sam 4:2; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; Ps 80:1; 99:1).
- They form the chariot of Deity (2 Sam 22:11; Ps 104:3; 1 Chr 28:18).

These various actions are present in Ezekiel, especially their function as bearers of the throne of YHWH. In the book of Revelation they engage in perpetual worship (Rev 4:6ff.; 5:6ff.; 6:1ff; 7:11).

Recap

Ezekiel was first confronted with the wickedness of the people in the temple (Chapter 8). Then he was shown the slaughter of the people of

Jerusalem (Chapter 9). Jerusalem had become so wicked that God's glory departed from the Temple (Chapter 10). As it left the city, judgment was pronounced on her rulers (Chapter 11).

Ezekiel 11: The Judgment on Jerusalem's Rulers

Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed. Zedekiah was still on the throne. Not only were the rulers in rebellion against God, they were in rebellion against the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. Before God's glory departed from the city, it stopped at the eastern gate and gave Ezekiel another glimpse of the sin of Jerusalem's inhabitants.

Ezekiel received two messages from the Lord: The first emphasized judgment on the people who remained in Jerusalem (vv. 1-15). The second emphasized the promised restoration of the people who were in captivity (vv. 16-21). Then Ezekiel recorded the final departure of God's glory (vv. 22-25).

- 1] Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

"...five and twenty men": The same 25, with irony, "princes of the people." Not be confused with three other Jaazaniahs living at the same time (2 Kgs 25:23; Jer 35:3; Ezek 8:11).

"...Azur": It is possible (though by no means certain) that this "Azur" is the man named in Jeremiah 28:1-4. If so, then the Jaazaniah of Ezekiel 11 was a brother of Hananiah the false prophet who opposed Jeremiah and who delivered the same false message of hope just before Jerusalem's fall.

The leading *priests* were usually called "princes of the sanctuary" (Isa 43:28) or "chiefs of the priests" (2 Chr 36:14), but here are called "princes of the people," with irony, as using their priestly influence to be ringleaders of the people in sin (Ezek 11:2).

What's In a Name?

- Jaazaniah: signifying "God hears"
- Son of Azur: "help"
- Pelatiah: "God delivers"
- Son of Benaiah: "God builds"

These fellows are singled out (as is Jaazaniah, son of Shaphan, in the case of the seventy elders; cf. Ezek 8:11, 12) ... Their names ought to have reminded them that "God" would have "heard" had they sought His "help" to "deliver" and "build" them up.

Wicked Counsel

The anti-Babylon party counseled that the nation should revolt against Nebuchadnezzar and form an alliance with Egypt (Ezek 17). This was contrary to God's command (Jer 28:16) and in violation of the oath her ruler had sworn to the Chaldean monarch (2 Chr 36:13). This was the party of violence (Ezek 7:23; 9:9; 11:6; ch. 22).

- 2] Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city:
3] Which say, It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh.

The elders were urging the people to build houses, a sign of peace and safety (Ezek 28:26). After all, the people were safe in the city (Jerusalem), like meat in a kettle.

- 4] Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.
5] And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

"...the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me...": Only here is this expression used in Ezekiel. The prophet was enabled to prophesy while still in the trance.

- 6] Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.
7] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it.
8] Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD.
9] And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you.
10] Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

This was fulfilled literally when the captives of Jerusalem were deported to Riblah in Syria and killed (2 Kgs 25:18-21; Jer. 52:8-11, 24-27).

- 11] This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel:
- 12] And ye shall know that I am the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.
- 13] And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

WOW! Can you believe that while Ezekiel is prophesying these things, one of them actually passes away during his prophecy. Pelatiah was probably the ringleader of the scorners (Ezek 11:1), an earnest of the destruction of the rest of the 25, as Ezekiel had foretold, as also of the general ruin.

- 14] Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 15] Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.

“...given in possession...”: A correct but incomplete statement: God had given Israel the land, but He would remove them from it for disobedience (Deut 28:36, 64-68).

Recap

God had emphasized the coming judgment of the people who remained in Jerusalem (vv.1-12). He assured the prophet that He would preserve a remnant, but it would be comprised of those in captivity, not those in Jerusalem (vv.13-15). As a sign of His faithfulness, God promised to restore the remnant to the land (vv.16-21).

- 16] Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

They had lost access to the “sanctuary,” the temple in Jerusalem; but God Himself will be a sanctuary for them in those foreign countries.

“A little” [season]: 70 years, vs. the several thousand in the subsequent diaspora...

- 17] Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

- 18] And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

The remnant of Israel could look forward to a national restoration to the Promised Land. A partial restoration took place after the Babylonian Captivity (Ezra; Nehemiah). Less than 60,000 in the remnant returned at the end of the 70-year captivity. But Ezekiel 11:17-21 *goes beyond that return and points to a future gathering of Israel at the beginning of the Millennium* (Ezek 36:24-38; 37:11-28).

- 19] And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

“...new spirit within you...”: Nicodemus asked Jesus about being born again and Jesus rebuked him for not knowing these things as he was a teacher (Jn 3:1-10). The concept of being born again is not a New Testament idea; it is in the Old Testament: Deut 30:6; Jer 31:31-33; Jer 32:37-40; Ezek 36:24-26; Zech 7:11-12; Isa 53:2-6.

- 20] That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

While this was spoken to Israel, it does apply to us personally. Jesus expected Nicodemus to apply it personally. We are in a unique position, if we will but commit our way to Him, He will give us a new heart.

We do not get saved by being obedient; we are obedient because we are saved. Obedience is an evidence, not a cause. Our works are evidence of the work that God has already done in us. He gives us a new heart so that we may walk in His statutes and keep His ordinances.

- 21] But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

“...I will recompense their way...”: It is a great tragedy today that most ministries ignore the fact that judgment is coming upon this earth. God’s judgment is one of the sure proofs of His existence.

- 22] Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.
- 23] And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.

“...mountain which is on the east side of the city...”: The narrative of Chapter 10 is now completed with this paragraph. From this mountain Jesus wept over the doomed city (Lk 19:37-44; Ezek 10:19; 43:1-4).

Mount of Olives

As God's glory left Jerusalem, it passed over the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. This departure signaled Jerusalem's doom. The city would be devoid of God's blessing till the glory will return via the Mount of Olives (Ezek 43:1-3).

It is no coincidence that Christ ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12)...and promised to return to the same place (Acts 1:11; Zech 14:4).

The Kingdom

The departure of the divine glory from the Temple marked the end of the Theocratic Kingdom in OT history. The glory was manifested in the NT to the disciples at the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1-5; Cf. Jn 1:14; 2 Cor 4:6; Jas 2:1; 2 Pet 1:16-18). The visible glory will return when the Kingdom is restored to Israel (Ezek 43:1-7; Rev 21:22-24).

- 24] Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.
- 25] Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.

It was a vision, after all...

Ezekiel returns to tell the people that the false prophets have lied to them. He has seen the vision—Jerusalem will be destroyed, and full captivity is near at hand. He will be able to tell them why God will judge them.

The people are not going to listen to Ezekiel, but he is to continue to be a sign unto them.

Next Session

Study Chapters 12 & 13.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 6 Chapters 12 & 13

God was using Ezekiel not just to talk to those of Judah. There is the possibility that he may here be talking to us as well, in terms of the idols that we worship, and the false prophets that compete for our ears.

Moral Necessity of the Captivity

The prophet deals with the objections of men who thought the present storm would pass, who saw no calamity ahead, and who held that the Lord would never repudiate his people.

Ezekiel Chapters 4 - 11

Ezekiel's task had been to show the necessity of Jerusalem's judgment because of her disobedience. He had demonstrated the fact of the siege through a series of signs, and then he explained the reason for the siege through two messages and an extended vision.

Ezekiel Chapters 12 - 19

However, the people were still not ready to accept the fact of Jerusalem's fall. Therefore Ezekiel gave a new series of signs and messages: Any optimism would be futile; Jerusalem's fate had been sealed. (These messages were in the 11-year interval between the second and final deportations.)

Symbols, Allegories, Parables

By symbolical actions, allegories, and parables, Ezekiel demonstrates the moral necessity of the captivity. He gives two symbolical representations of flight from the besieged city (Ezekiel 12:1-20); expostulates with false prophets (Ezekiel 12:21-14:23); pictures Israel as a useless vine (Chapter 15); allegorically recalls Israel's long history of unfaithfulness to her bridegroom (Chapter 16); returns to the metaphor of the vine to emphasize Zedekiah's disloyalty (Chapter 17); answers objections to divine punishment by an analysis of individual responsibility (Chapter 18); and, bursts forth into a dirge over the princes of Judah and over Judah itself (Chapter 19).

- 1] The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying,

"The word of the LORD...came unto me...": Five times in this chapter: vv. 1, 8, 17, 21 & 26. "The word of the Lord came to me," in introducing 10 of the 11 signs, sermons, and proverbs in Chapters 12-19. The only variation is the final section (19:1), but this is a lament which seems to sum up the entire section's theme. When people say they cannot believe, it is not a mental problem: it is a matter of the *will of the heart*—they do not *want* to believe.

- 2] Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.

God continues to warn us of their closed eyes and ears (Deut 29:3,4; Isa 6:9-10; Jer 5:21; Acts 28:26,27). The result of perversity, not incapacity. They are willfully blind and deaf. Is that true *today*?

Once the Pharisees accused Jesus of working His miracles by the power of Satan, He began withholding His message from them. That led to the 7 Kingdom Parables of Matthew 13, where the disciples asked Him why He started speaking in parables. In His answer He quoted from Ezek 12:2 & Jer 5:21 (Cf. Mt 13:11, 15). *Let us not fall into the same trap Israel did in terms of their spiritual deafness and blindness.*

- 3] Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.

“...removing” is an Old English term for relocation, changing your address. “Three removes are like a good fire.” (Ben Franklin).

- 4] Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity.

The people recognized the meaning of that action because six years earlier they had made similar preparations for their own deportation to Babylon. This first action in the **daytime** was followed by a second action in the **evening**.

In other words, this was symbolic to indicate they were going to be fleeing the city to try to avoid capture. He was trying to separate them from their complacency. They knew their city was under vassal rule, but they had the attitude that it was just temporary and things would get better. So they were not listening to the prophets, neither to Jeremiah nor Ezekiel.

- 5] Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby.
6] In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.

As one who muffles his face, afraid of being recognized by anyone meeting him. So the Jews and Zedekiah should make their exit stealthily and afraid to look around, so hurried should be their fight... Ezekiel

was to pretend he was being taken captive, was to dig through the wall, carrying his belongings out through it on his shoulder

- 7] And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for captivity, and in the even I digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought it forth in the twilight, and I bare it upon my shoulder in their sight.
8] And in the morning came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,
9] Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou?

Evidently the people’s curiosity was aroused. Once Ezekiel had their attention he could deliver God’s message.

- 10] Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that are among them.

There is a play on words equivalent to, “The leader is this load.” Ezekiel nowhere refers to Zedekiah as “king,” as seeing in him one who was a ruler *de facto*, but not a king *de jure*.

Zedekiah

Zedekiah was Judah’s last king (599 to 588 B.C.); the youngest son of Josiah and Hamutal (Jer 1:3; 37:1) and brother to Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 24:17,18; 23:31). He was ten years old when his father died, 21 when he mounted the throne.

Originally named Mattaniah, Nebuchadnezzar changed his name to Zedekiah when he deposed Zedekiah’s nephew, Jehoiachin. This proves that Nebuchadnezzar treated his vassal kindly, allowing him to choose a new name and confirming it as a mark of his supremacy (Zedekiah is Hebrew: “Righteousness of YHWH”). This name was to be the pledge of his righteously keeping his covenant with Nebuchadnezzar who made him swear by God (Ezek 17:12-16; 2 Chr 36:13).

Had Zedekiah kept his oath of fealty he would have been safe, though dependent. But weak, vacillating, and treacherous, he brought ruin on his country and on himself.

It was through the anger of YHWH against Judah that Zedekiah was given up to his own rebellious devices, “stiffening his neck and hardening his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel” who warned him by Jeremiah; like Pharaoh of old, he would “not humble himself” (2 Chr 36:12,13 Jer 38:5; 39:1-7; 52:1-11; cf. Jer 21; 24; 27; 28; 29; 32; 33; 34; 37; 38).

- 11] Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove and go into captivity.

“...I am your sign...”: Ezekiel, in what he does in the presence of the exiles, is expressing that which, before long, will come to pass in Jerusalem.

- 12] And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with his eyes.

Verse 12 refers to Zedekiah’s disguising himself, or as a sign of mourning, and through some freshly made exit from the palace, “went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king’s garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls” (Jer 39:4), ...while verse 13 offers an ironic paradox...

- 13] My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there.

“...yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there...”: Josephus relates that Ezekiel sent this prophecy to Jerusalem, and that Zedekiah, finding an apparent discrepancy in the words that he should not see Babylon, and those of Jeremiah, hardened himself in his rebellion (Jer 32:4; 34:3).

And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.

Jeremiah 32:4,5

And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon.

Jeremiah 34:3

Josephus

[The following was excerpted from Josephus, Flavius; Whiston, William: *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, c1987, S. 273.]

Now Zedekiah was twenty-and-one years old when he took the government; and had the same mother with his brother Jehoiachin, but was a despiser

of justice and of his duty, for truly those of the same age with him were wicked about him, and the whole multitude did what unjust and insolent things they pleased;

Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 10, Chapter 7.2 (§103)

...for which reason the prophet Jeremiah came often to him, and protested to him, and insisted, that he must leave off his impieties and transgressions, and take care of what was right, and neither give ear to the rulers (among whom were wicked men) nor give credit to their false prophets who deluded them, as if the king of Babylon would make no more war against him, and as if the Egyptians would make war against him, and conquer him, since what they said was not true; and the events would not prove such [as they expected].

(§104)

Now as to Zedekiah himself, while he heard the prophet speak, he believed him, and agreed to everything as true, and supposed it was for his advantage; but then his friends perverted him, and dissuaded him from what the prophet advised, and obliged him to do what they pleased.

(§105)

Ezekiel also foretold in Babylon what calamities were coming upon the people, which when he heard, he sent accounts of them unto Jerusalem; but Zedekiah did not believe their prophecies, for the reason following:—It happened that the two prophets agreed with one another in what they said as in all other things, that the city should be taken, and Zedekiah himself should be taken captive; but Ezekiel disagreed with him, and said, that Zedekiah should not see Babylon; while Jeremiah said to him, that the king of Babylon should carry him away thither in bonds;

(§106)

...and because they did not both say the same thing as to this circumstance, he disbelieved what they both appeared to agree in, and condemned them as not speaking truth therein, although all the things foretold him did come to pass according to their prophecies, as we shall show upon a fitter opportunity.

(§107)

Now the city was taken on the ninth day of the fourth month, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah. They were indeed only generals of the king of Babylon, to whom Nebuchadnezzar committed the care of the siege, for he abode himself in the city of Riblah. The names of these generals who ravaged and subdued Jerusalem, if anyone desire to know them, were these: Nergal Sharezer, Sangar Nebo, Rabсарis, Sarsechim, and Rabmag;

ibid, Chapter 8.2. (§135)

...and when the city was taken about midnight, and the enemy's generals were entered into the temple, and when Zedekiah was sensible of it, he took his wives and his children, and his captains and friends, and with them fled out of the city, through the fortified ditch, and through the desert;
(§136)

...and when certain of the deserters had informed the Babylonians of this, at break of day, they made haste to pursue after Zedekiah, and overtook him not far from Jericho, and encompassed him about. But for those friends and captains of Zedekiah who had fled out of the city with him, when they saw their enemies near them, they left him and dispersed themselves, some one way and some another; and every one resolved to save himself;
(§137)

...so the enemy took Zedekiah alive, when he was deserted by all but a few, with his children and his wives, and brought him to the king. When he was come, Nebuchadnezzar began to call him a wicked wretch, and covenant-breaker; and one that had forgotten his former words, when he promised to keep the country for him.
(§138)

He also reproached him for his ingratitude, that when he had received the kingdom from him, who had taken it from Jehoiachin, and given it him, he had made use of the power he gave him against him that gave it: "but," said he, "God is great, who hateth that conduct of thine, and hath brought thee under us."
(§139)

And when he had used these words to Zedekiah, he commanded his sons and his friends to be slain, while Zedekiah and the rest of the captains looked on; after which he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him, and carried him to Babylon.
(§140)

And these things happened to him, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel had foretold to him, that he should be caught, and brought before the king of Babylon, and should speak to him face to face, and should see his eyes with his own eyes; and thus far did Jeremiah prophesy. But he was also made blind, and brought to Babylon but did not see it, according to the prediction of Ezekiel.
(§141)

* * *

Cf. 2 Kgs 25:4-7; Jer 52:8, 11. The further significance of the covered face (Ezek 12:12) is found in the fact that Zedekiah was blinded at Riblah by Nebuchadnezzar's orders, and from that time could not see the ground on which he trod.

The Siege

The terrible siege soon followed (Jer 38:9) so that mothers boiled and ate the flesh of their own infants (Lam 4:5,8,10) and the visage of their nobles was blacker than coal, their skin clave to their bones and became withered.

On the 9th day of the 4th month in the middle of July after a year and a half's siege (from the 10th month of the 9th year to the 4th month of the 11th year of Zedekiah) about midnight a breach was made in the wall
— Josephus

The Babylonian princes took their seats in state in the middle gate, between the upper and the lower city. Zedekiah fled in the opposite direction, namely, southwards, with muffled face to escape recognition, and like one digging through a wall to escape, between the two walls on the E and W sides of the Tyropoeon valley, by a street issuing at the gate above the royal gardens and the fountain of Siloam.

Zedekiah was overtaken in the plains of Jericho. He was taken for judgment to Riblah at the upper end of Lebanon; there Nebuchadnezzar first killed his sons before his eyes, then caused the eyes of Zedekiah to be "dug out" (Jer 39; 52:4-11). Thus were fulfilled the ostensibly inconsistent prophecies. *On deeper search apparent discrepancies in Scripture prove to be hidden harmonies.*

God is literal. He places His Word even above His Name (Ps 138:2). When Daniel read Jeremiah who spoke of the 70 years of captivity, Daniel took Jeremiah literally, not allegorically nor figuratively. Every time Jesus quoted from the Old Testament, he applied it literally (Mt 5:17). Every time you see the Word of God applied by another servant of God in the Scripture, you will notice that it is always literal.

And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

2 Kings 25:1,2

"...king Zedekiah": Here the chronicler calls him "king" however, it was Ezekiel who never conveys that title; he always referred to him as "prince." Ezekiel was more precise, more technically accurate.

And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.

2 Kings 25:3,4

And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

2 Kings 25:5,6

And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

2 Kings 25:7

A Contrast

Zedekiah was a deceptive, wicked fellow, and had broken his treaty with Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar, the pagan king, was more honorable than the man on Israel's throne. Zedekiah, for breaking his oath of allegiance, was blinded and died in captivity in Babylon (Ezek 17:1-21). [We will encounter an elaborate allegory on Israel's history in Chapters 15-17...]

14] And I will scatter toward every wind all that are about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them.

15] And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries.

“...all his bands”: חֲבִילָּה *‘aggaph* men of number, *i.e.* easily counted.

The capture of the king would naturally be followed by the dispersion of his adherents, some of whom would fall by the sword, while a few (Hebrew, *men of number*; *i.e.*, easily counted) would escape to some nearby country, where they might hope to find a refuge. There they would have to tell their tale of shame, and to let the heathen know that YHWH was thus punishing their abominations (cf. Ezek 14:22, 23).

16] But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

The Lord's preserving the survivors will make clear to the nations that the catastrophe to his people was due not to his impotence but to his

justice. He is concerned for the honor of his name (Cf. Ezek 14:21-23). Note the sword, famine, and pestilence, which will be discussed more in Chapter 14.

17] Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

18] Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness;

A Pantomime of famine...vs. the symbol expounded in Ezek 4:9-17: There the emphasis was on the scarcity of food; here it is on the terror.

19] And say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord GOD of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the land of Israel; They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein.

Ezekiel's pantomime was intended to frighten and warn

“...people of the land”: the Jews “in the land” of Chaldea who thought themselves miserable as being exiles and envied the Jews left in Jerusalem as fortunate

“...land of Israel” contrasted with “the people in the land” of Chaldea. So far from being fortunate as the exiles in Chaldea regarded them, the Jews in Jerusalem were truly miserable, for the worst is before them, whereas the exiles have escaped the miseries of the coming siege.

20] And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Those left in Judea after the destruction of Jerusalem.

21] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

22] Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?

“...prolonged, and every vision faileth”: So also throughout the history has been the cry of those of little, or of no, faith (Amos 6:3; Isa 5:19; Jer 17:15; Mt 24:48; 2 Pet 3:4). Attacking the cynical proverb, “The days go by and every vision comes to nothing...”

The Coming Surprise

It shall again be the characteristic of the last times, when “faith” shall be regarded as an antiquated thing, seeing that it remains stationary (Lk 18:8), whereas worldly arts and sciences progress, and when the

“continuance of all things from creation” will be an argument against the possibility of their being suddenly brought to a standstill by the Coming of the Lord (Isa 66:5; 2 Pet 3:3, 4).

The very long-suffering of God, which ought to lead men to repentance, is made an argument against His Word (Eccl 8:11; Amos 6:3).

23] Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision.

24] For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel.

“...the days are at hand”: Israel’s time is up... (*and so is ours!*) Chapter 13 will elaborate on verse 24.

25] For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD.

(Note how He dwells on the word *prolonged*, as though that had specially stirred His indignation.)

26] Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

27] Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off.

The first proverb attacked by Ezekiel expressed the people’s doubts about the *fact* of God’s judgment. The second proverb expressed their doubts about the *imminency* of God’s judgment. Do you see a contemporary parallel here?

28] Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD.

False prophets had been contradicting God’s true messengers in both Jerusalem (Jer 28:1-4) and Babylon (Jer 29:1, 8-9). Their optimistic predictions would soon cease as God hastened to fulfill His word.

Imminence

Imminence = “about to occur”: See Eccl 8:11; Mt 24:48-50. These are mechanisms by which one tries intellectually or some other way to get out from under the scope of some prophecy. It is clear that Jesus Christ wanted us to be in a position of moment-by-moment expectation. *We*

tend to stay closer to him if we know that he might drop in on us at any moment.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

2 Peter 3:3, 4

They were scoffing at prophecy. There are different ways to deny a truth. One is to say that God didn’t say that. Another is to claim that was not what God meant, that He really didn’t mean it literally, He meant it spiritually, or some fuzzy other way that defies the way of any tangible reality. It is called liberalism. So, first of all, there is an expression of skepticism about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

2 Peter 3:5, 6

One thing that is not obvious at first, is the link between prophecy and creation. The important thread is the concept that God intervenes in man’s history. That man’s history did not just happen by the random events of the cosmos.

God created man. The concept of God creating man is consistent and part of the concept that God will also intervene in man’s history. God cares, He is involved. You are not an accident.

Ezekiel 13

As Chapter 12 denounced the false expectations of the people, so this chapter denounces the false leaders who fed those expectations

False Prophets

There were two classes of false prophets:

- 1) Those who were representatives of some object of worship other than the true God, e.g., Baal, Moloch, et al. (cf. Elijah’s contest with the prophets of Baal; 1 Kgs 18:19ff.); and
- 2) Those who falsely purported to speak in the name of YHWH (cf. Micaiah’s opposition to the prophets of Ahab; 1 Kgs 22:5-28).

Some of the strongest denunciations of these deceivers are by Jeremiah, who opposed them on moral, personal, and political grounds (Jer 23:9-32). During the dying gasps of Jerusalem, Hananiah opposed him at home (Jer 28); Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah opposed him in Babylon (Jer 29:15-32).

Ezekiel in this chapter also exposes the false prophets and the false prophetesses...

- 1] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

“...prophesy out of their own hearts...”: The sin of the men denounced was that they prophesied out of their own hearts and followed their own spirit instead of the Spirit of YHWH (Jer 14:14; 23:16, 26). *Not only was the message of the false prophets untrue; it was also dangerous* (Deut 13:1ff).

- 3] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

“...foolish prophets...”: Note the stronger Hebrew: “*the prophets, the fools*,” the words deriving their force from a kind of word play of alliteration: נְבִיאִים *nabiim* spokesman, prophet; נְבָלִים *n’balim* foolish, senseless, fool. We might say “profitless prophets...”

- 4] O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.

The fox is cunning (Lk 13:32; the term is applied to Herod Antipas). It spoils the vine and its fruits (Song 2:15); Israel being the vineyard (Ps 80:8-15; Isa 5:1-7). It burrows among ruins (Neh 4:3; Lam 5:18). Thus, the false prophets were crafty, laid waste the vineyard of the Lord of hosts (Isa 5:7), made their profit out of the ruin of Israel, and made that ruin worse.

- 5] Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.

“...into the gaps”: The verse contains two distinct images—there were breaches in the walls of Jerusalem, literally and spiritually, and the false prophets had not been “repairers of the breach” (Isa 58:12; Ps 106:23).

“...the hedge”: The hedge of the vineyard of Israel had been broken through (Isa 5:5) and they had done nothing to restore it (Ezek 22:30).

The day of battle, the day of the Lord, had come, and they were betraying the people instead of helping.

- 6] They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.

“...lying divination”: To gain knowledge of secret things by superstitious means was forbidden Israel (Ex 22:18; Num 23:23; Deut 18:10, 11) and divining was disparaged (Ezek 13:7, 9, 23; 21:29; 22:28; Mic 3:6, 7, 11).

“...they have *seen* vanity” implies that they believed their own lie (2 Thess 2:11).

- 7] Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken?
- 8] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD.
- 9] And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

“My People” is expressed **7x** in this chapter. He is so hostile to the false prophets because of *the endearment to Him of His people* that these false prophets are deceiving. The prophet contemplates a new register, in which their names will never even have appeared.

Threefold Punishment

In the new kingdom, they shall not be in the assembly of *my people* (Gen 49:6; Ps 89:7; 111:1); nor be enrolled in the register (i.e., list) of the *house of Israel* (Ezra 2; Neh 7; Ex 32:32, 33; Isa 4:3; Mal 3:16); neither shall they enter the *land of Israel* (Ezek 20:38; Jer 29:32). To be excluded from the list would deprive an individual of the *rights of citizenship* (cf. Ezra 2:62). They would die as captives in a foreign land.

- 10] Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:

“...a wall”: חָיִץ *chayits* a false, thin wall; a party-wall...The prophets were compounding Israel’s difficulties by hiding problems that needed to be exposed. The false prophets would smear it over with “untempered mortar” (the Hebrew word is found only here and in Ezekiel 22:28, and

is probably an example of Ezekiel's acquaintance with the technical vocabulary of his time)

- 11] Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.

Smooth words and promises rather than substance or reality...

- 12] Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?
13] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it.
14] So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

The prophets were buried beneath the collapsing walls (cf. Isa 25:12; Lam 2:2; Amos 9:1).

- 15] Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered mortar, and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it;
16] To wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord GOD.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

2 Peter 2:1-3

- 17] Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them,

“...daughters of thy people”: This is the only Old Testament passage where God speaks out against the false women prophets.

Gifted Women

Several godly, gifted women are referred to in Scripture as prophetesses: Miriam (Ex 15:20,21); Deborah (Judg 4:3-5); Isaiah's wife (Isa 8:3); Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14-20); Anna (Lk 2:36); the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8,9). In the next section, the prophetesses, or rather sorceresses, were counterparts of the false prophets, forerunners of the modern palmists, fortune-tellers, and mediums...

- 18] And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you?

“sew pillows to all armholes”: כֶּסֶת *keseth*, covered amulets, false phylacteries, used by false prophetesses to support their demonic fortune-telling schemes.

“...kerchiefs upon the head”: מִסְפָּחָה *micpachah*, a long veil.

The sorceress imputed magic influence upon her inquirers by the tying of knots and the shrouding of the persons in veils varying in length according to their stature.

- 19] And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?
20] Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make them fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly.

“...against your pillows”: Against your lying ceremonial tricks by which ye cheat the people

- 21] Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.
22] Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:
23] Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

God will indeed bring false prophets to an end. Similar passages can be found in Amos 8; Micah 3; & Zech 13, in which God takes off after them. The good news is that His people are delivered in spite of the false prophets.

The prophet now turns to the wickedness of those who inquired of God but whose hearts were with their idols all the time (Ezek 14:1-11). This raises the problem of general responsibility. The presence of a righteous man among a sinful people will not save a land when God brings His judgments upon it (Ezek 14:12-23).

Next Session

Read Chapters 14, 15, & 16.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 7 Chapters 14 - 16

Ezekiel 14

Chapter 14 is divided into two major sections: The prophecy against the idolatry of the elders and the certainty of the destruction of Jerusalem

The Lord continues in this chapter to outline why He judged the city of Jerusalem as He did. *The principles that are put down here are operative today also—God still judges nations!*

- 1] Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

These leaders, probably perplexed by Ezekiel's denunciations of the false prophets, came to inquire further about Jerusalem and its future. Jesus used the word "hypocrite" more than anyone...

- 2] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
3] Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

"...And the word of the Lord came to me..." "...in their heart...": Both sections open with these words (vv. 2, 12). They were spiritual phonies, hypocrites...

Samson

Samson was also a man who pretended to be God's man, and the Spirit of God *did* come upon him at times. The Holy Spirit—never his hair—was the secret of his power. But there came a day when he went out and

"... he wist it not ..." He knew not that the Spirit of God had departed from him (Judg 16:20; Lev 5:17). He had kept toying and playing with sin and at the same time wanting to be God's man.

- 4] Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

A legal formula (cf. Lev 17:3, 8, 10, 13; 20:2).

- 5] That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.
6] Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

"Repent": Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, *repentance* is God's message to His own people, those who profess to belong to Him.

- 7] For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

Note Ezekiel's care for the resident aliens (Ezek 22:7, 29; 47:22, 23). The proselyte enjoyed equal rights under the law and faced equal penalty (Lev 17:8, 10, 13; 20:2).

- 8] And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

The man whose heart was divided in its allegiance to Jehovah would receive no knowledge through a prophet, but would be answered by Jehovah himself in deeds (Cf. Lev 17:8-10; 20:3, 5, 6).

- 9] And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

False prophets can often quote an abundance of Scripture, and still be wrong... The best illustration of Ezekiel's meaning is the story of God's letting false prophets deceive Ahab, to bring him to his death (1 Kgs 22:19-23). It is YHWH who sends the "lying spirit" in 1 Kgs 22:20-23. It is he who in the latter days shall send men "strong delusions" that

they shall believe a lie (2 Thess 2:11). In both cases it is implied that the delusion is a righteous punishment, is indeed the natural, because the divinely appointed, punishment of the sin.

In ancient thought, secondary causes were often overlooked, and events attributed directly to the work of the Lord (Cf. Amos 3:6; Isa 45:7). When a man sins against spiritual light, he brings on himself spiritual blindness. This does not relieve him of responsibility, however, for always the principle of “no other gods before me” obtains (Cf. 2 Kgs 22:15-23:3).

- 10] And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him;

“...prophet...” “...him who seeketh...”: The prophet and he that seeketh alike would be punished, for the double purpose of deterring Israel from unfaithfulness (Cf. Isa 4:4) and of restoring her true relations with the Lord (Cf. Ezek 11:20).

- 11] That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

Use of False Prophets

God can use false prophets. There are a few strange examples in Scripture: A lying spirit causes Ahab’s ruin (1 Kgs 22:13-23); the witch of Endor (1 Sam 28:7-20) ...and a few others.

God used false prophets to in effect punish them for having already continued in disobedience. When the man did what the false prophet told him to do, why did God punish that man who got hooked?

Perhaps the most dramatic one is in the New Testament (2 Thess 2:8-11). There is an *ultimate* lie, a wild, extreme lie that the deceiver will unleash on the world at that time. God Himself is going to permit this “strong delusion” in order to deceive, “Those in whom there is not the love of the truth that they might be saved” (2 Thess 2:10b).

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delu-

sion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12

This is a disturbing rebuttal to those who are counting on a “second chance” after the Rapture...

- 12] The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,
13] Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:

God is very definite, and He means what He says. Judgment is unavoidable.

The Four Sore Judgments

The prophet declares that “when the land sinneth,” God sends one of his four judgments against it: cf. 5:16, 17

– Famine	vv.12-14
– Hurtful beasts	vv.15, 16
– Sword and war	vv.17, 18
– Pestilence	vv.19, 20

- 14] Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

Even if Noah were there, they wouldn’t listen to him! The Babylonians knew Daniel, and they knew he was God’s man. The Lord says that the Israelites would not have listened to Noah *or* Daniel *or* Job!

This is a tribute to historical Daniel (cf. vv.16,18,20; Jer 15:1). Though his prophecies mostly were later than those of Ezekiel, his fame for piety and wisdom was already established, and the events recorded in Dan 1:1-2:49 had transpired.

Noah, Daniel & Job

How were they *diverse*?

- 1) Noah the patriarch, looms on the horizon of history in epic grandeur;
- 2) Daniel is the brave hero in a tyrant’s court, and the man of skill and science in a civilized society
- 3) Job belongs to the region of pastoral life, and his tragic story carries us out among the Bedouin.

What did they have *in common*?

1. All three were holy men, true to God and upright in life. *The greatest fact in a good man's character is his goodness, and it constitutes a bond of union between all the true people of God.*
2. All three were faithful in circumstances of isolation. They all had to break from prevalent habits, and dare to stand alone:
 - Noah against the world's sin and impenitence;
 - Daniel against heathenism;
 - Job against a false orthodoxy.
3. All three were sorely tried. *The faith of each was assailed in a severe and most exceptional manner.*
4. All three were victorious by means of firm fidelity—by obedience, patience, faith, steadfastness. *They conquered, and they conquered in quiet ways—by obedience, patience, faith, and steadfastness.*

Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.

Jeremiah 15:1

Here in Jeremiah also we have “four sore judgments,” with the declaration that not even the presence of Moses and Samuel would avail to save the people. They were obviously selected by Jeremiah as examples of the power of intercession (Ex 32:11, 12; 1 Sam 7:9; 12:23).

And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the LORD: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy.

Jeremiah 15:2, 3

Ezekiel's selection of names proceeded on a different footing: He chose exceptional instances of saintliness that had been powerless to save the generation in which they lived; perhaps, also, such as were well known, not only in the records of Israel, but among other nations. Noah had not saved the evil race before the Flood; Job had not saved his sons (Job 1:18); Daniel, though high in the king's favor, had not been able to influence Nebuchadnezzar to spare the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

- 15] If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:

“...noisome beasts”: Literally, *an evil beast* (cf. 5:17; Lev 26:22).

- 16] Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.
 - 17] Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:
 - 18] Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.
- Though the righteous ancients, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in that land, they could deliver only themselves. Again, Daniel is mentioned.
- 19] Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:
 - 20] Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

That may be the reason that God got Daniel out of Jerusalem. God's people wouldn't hear him, but an old pagan king in Babylon listened to Daniel and made him prime minister (Cf. Dan 4)! (And that may be the reason God has opened the Internet to us...!?)

Uselessness of Intercession

Ezekiel's focus here was that Jerusalem was not going to be spared, and that even if Noah, Daniel, and Job could be there, they would be saved, but not those around them. *The thrust of this passage was the Jerusalem was NOT going to be spared.* Noah, Daniel, and Job were specified in particular as having been saved from overwhelming calamities for their personal righteousness.

It is interesting to contrast the judgments here with the judgments of Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 18. Abraham asked God if there were 10 righteous there, would He spare the city. Ten were not found. One was Lot. Lot had to get out of there first, before the city was destroyed. God preserved Lot before judging. In fact, the angels pointed out that they could not even produce the judgment until Lot got out of there. Getting the righteous man out was a condition for the judgment to go forth.

The intercession even of the holiest of men cannot avert God's judgments:

- 1) Noah, though a righteous man, could not by his intercession have preserved the old world from being drowned.

- 2) Job, though a righteous man, could not preserve his children from being killed by the fall of their house.
- 3) Daniel, though a righteous man, could not prevent the captivity of his country. The holiness of any man can only avail for himself.

Though Noah, Daniel, and Job united to plead for Jerusalem, their intercession would be all in vain:

1. This was contrary to expectation. There is power in intercession; there is a special power in the intercession of a “righteous man” (James 5:16); there is a still greater power in united prayer (Mt 18:20). Yet, here the union of three of the very best men, selected from all ages, could not secure the safety of Jerusalem. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job united to plead for Jerusalem, their intercession would be all in vain.

2. The cause of the predicted failure of such an intercession was hardened impenitence. God is more anxious to save than we are to plead for salvation. But it would be unjust and injurious to spare the impenitent on *any* plea. He sent his Son to save the world, an infinitely greater act than the most impassioned pleading of the best men. Therefore the failure cannot be attributed to His hardness.

3. The intercession of Christ succeeds where that of the best men fails. Yet Christ shed tears over Jerusalem, and Jerusalem perished. Why? His prayers are worth those of ten thousand Noahs and Daniels and Jobs. “He ever liveth to make intercession for us,” and he alone, bearing the weight of the whole world’s guilt, makes atonement for the sins of all men with ample sufficiency. *If they’re penitent!*

- 21] For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?

The application to Jerusalem (vv. 21-23) finds no righteous persons within it. And what wicked survivors will escape all four judgments, in apparent exception to the principle enunciated above, will be a grim proof to the exiles of God’s righteous judgment on Jerusalem.

The Four Sore Judgments (Summary)

Notice the architecture: Sword, Famine, Wild Beasts, and Plague (Cf. Rev 6: Sword, Famine, Wild Beasts, and Plague). Whether Israel reaped God’s blessings, or His Four Sore Judgments, was entirely up to them. It was their choice. They had been given truthful warnings up front:

- Lev 26:1-2, 14-15, 17: In Verse 17, “slain” = sword.
- Lev 26:20: “land shall not increase” = famine.
- Lev 26:22: wild beasts.
- Lev 26:25; plague.

These parallelisms of idioms in Scripture are very intentional, engineered to catch our attention so that we cannot miss who the real author of these Words is.

- 22] Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it.
- 23] And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD.

Men should see both the severity and the goodness of Jehovah. In each of these there was a ground of comfort for men who asked the question, which Abraham asked of old, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen 18:25) His punishments had not been arbitrary nor excessive. They had also been as a discipline leading men to repentance.

After his two signs (Ezek 12:1-20) and five messages (Ezek 12:21-14:23), Ezekiel then delivered a series of three parables (Ezek 15-17) *to show that there was no possibility of deliverance for Israel.*

Ezekiel 15: Parable of the Vine

There are at least four idioms for Israel: 1) The Olive Tree; 2) The Fig Tree; 3) The Vine; and, 4) The Bramble Bush.

Parable of Jotham (Judges 9:7-15)

- The **Olive Tree** as an idiom of the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel (Rom 11 & Jer 11).
- The **Fig Tree** is a common idiom which speaks of Israel in a national sense (Mt 24:32).
- The **Vine** in speaks of the Spiritual relationship between Israel and YHWH (Isa 5 & Hos 10).
- The **Bramble Bush** is idiomatic of Israel in terms of their failure (Judg 9:14,15).

- 1] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

“...vine...”: The vine is one of the figures of the nation Israel. “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel ...” (Isa 5:7; cf. Gen 49:22; Deut 32:32; Hos 10:1; Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21; Ezek 17:6; Ps 80:8-16). What is the purpose of a vine? The purpose of vine is not furniture, et al: it either produces fruit, or is burnt up in fire. [Who is the “true vine”? Jn 15:1, 8, et al.]

- 3] Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?
- 4] Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?

“...a pin of it”: Not even useful to make a peg...If a believer does not bear fruit, he is set aside...

“devoureth both the ends of it”: the north kingdom having been already overturned by Assyria under Tiglath-pileser; the south being pressed on by Egypt; Cf. 2 Kgs 23:29-35).

- 5] Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?
- 6] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is the vine destined for burning (Ezek 5:2; 10:2, 7; 16:38-4).

- 7] And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them.

They will escape the burning city, only to meet another fate (Ezek 5:4; 11:9; 12:14; 23:25).

- 8] And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD.

The section on which we now enter (with its companion picture in chapter 23), forms the most repellent part of Ezekiel’s prophetic utterances.

The Vine

Unregenerate man in general: tough, twisted, unworkable; fit only for fuel (judgment); Israel in particular (Ezek 15; Isa 5). Jesus transforms

it to apply to Himself —The True Vine (Jn 15), with Christians being His branches, to bear fruit for Him

Ezekiel 16: The Parable of an Abandoned Baby

The parable of a foundling, a dirty and filthy little child, for whom it would seem there is nothing that can be done. This allegory, like that in Chapter 23, depicts the connection between the Lord and his people in terms of a husband-wife relationship (cf. Hos 2; Jer 2:1-3; 3:1-5).

Summary

A foundling child of dubious origin, Jerusalem, is exposed by the roadside to die. But she is rescued by the Lord, who becomes her benefactor (vv. 1-7). Having grown up to beautiful maidenhood, she is taken in marriage by her benefactor and becomes his royal consort (vv. 8-14). The proud queen proves utterly unfaithful and plays the harlot with Canaanites and other pagans (vv. 15-34).

The Adulterous Wife of YHWH

Isaiah had spoken of the “faithful city that had become a harlot.” (Isa 1:21). **Jeremiah** had represented YHWH as remembering “the kindness of her youth, the love of her espousals” (Jer 2:2). **Hosea**, the forerunner who, in order that his own life might be itself a parable, was ordered to take to himself “a wife of whoredom,” one whose character was tainted before her marriage (Hos 1:2).

What is characteristic of **Ezekiel’s** treatment of that image is that he does not recognize any period in which Israel had been as a *faithful* wife.

The punishment for this conduct (vv. 35-43) is justified, since her depravity is worse than that of her two sisters, Sodom and Samaria (vv. 44-52). Nevertheless, the Lord makes glorious promises of restoration for the three sisters (vv. 53-58), foretelling that penitent Jerusalem will experience a glorious reconciliation through an everlasting covenant (vv. 59-63).

- 1] Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,
- 3] And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

Who is the little orphan? Who is the little dirty, filthy child who has been thrown out? It is the city of Jerusalem. This does not speak of the origin of the *nation* Israel; it is not speaking of Abraham and Sarah.

The City of Jerusalem

The history of Jerusalem is that it was an Amorite city: “But in the fourth generation they [that is, the children of Israel] shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen 15:16). Hammurabi (1728-1686), of the first dynasty of Babylon, was an Amorite.

Jerusalem was a Hittite city also. A non-Semitic people, resident in Asia Minor in the second millennium B.C. Israel, of course, descended from Shem (Gen 10:21-31). By contrast Jerusalem, before it was conquered by David (1 Chr 11:4-9) was a Canaanite city. Canaan descended from Ham, not Shem (Gen 10:6-20).

The city’s early inhabitants were called Jebusites (Judg 19:10-12). “The Jebusite city,” the prophet is indicating, “was never really of pure Israelite descent. Its people descended from Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, and are tainted, as by a law of *heredite*, with the vices of their forefathers.” [The doctrine of *heredite*: “Like father, like son.”]

Canaanites

The Canaanites represented the dwellers in the lowland country west of the valley of the Jordan. The plains of Philistia, Sharon, Esdraelon, and Phoenicia; their leading representatives in Ezekiel’s time were the cities of Tyre and Zidon.

The knowledge of the true God had originally been in Canaan, handed down from Noah (hence we find Melchisedek, king of Salem, in Canaan, “priest of the most high God”; Gen 14:18), but Canaan apostatized from it; this was what constituted the blackness of the Canaanites’ guilt...

Amorites

The Amorites were people of the mountains—at first, west of the Jordan, on the heights over the Dead Sea and as far as Hebron; afterwards, under Sihon, on the high tablelands east of the Jordan.

The Hittites

The Hittites appear first in the history of the purchase of the cave of Macphelah (Gen 23) at Kirjath-Arba, or Hebron, and that history im-

plies commerce and culture. They are always numbered with six other nations, whom the Israelites were to conquer or expel (Ex 3:8; 13:5; 33:2; 34:11). This fact obviously determined Ezekiel’s choice. Esau’s marriage with the daughters of two Hittite chiefs implies, perhaps, a recognition of their value as allies (Gen 26:34).

“The Hittite” is made their “mother”; alluding to Esau’s wives, daughters of *Heth*, whose ways vexed Rebekah (Gen 26:34,35;27:46), but pleased the degenerate descendants of Jacob, so that these are called, in respect of morals, children of the Hittite (cf. Ezek 16:45).

In the later historical books they appear but seldom. One Hittite captain, Uriah, occupied a high position in David’s army (2 Sam 11:3). The kings of the Hittites trade with Solomon, and give their daughters to him in marriage (1 Kgs 10:29). They meet us for the last time as possible allies of the kings of Judah (2 Kgs 7:6); in the lists of the older nations (Ezra 9:1 & Neh 9:8); then they disappear from the pages of history. Much light on their history has emerged through recent Egyptian and other discoveries...

- 4] And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.
- 5] None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

She was an orphan child who was just thrown out—abandoned and uncared for.

- 6] And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.
- 7] I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.
- 8] Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

“...spread my skirt over thee...”: Reminiscent of the request of Ruth to Boaz (Ruth 3:9).

- 9] Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

- 10] I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

“...washed I thee”: Preparatory ceremonies for the nuptials (Cf. Ruth 3:3).

“...badgers' skin”: תַּחַשׁ *tachash*, porpoise skins. They formed the over-covering of the tabernacle, which was, as it were, the nuptial tent of God and Israel (Ex 26:14), and the material of the shoes worn in the wanderings.

- 11] I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.
12] And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

“...forehead”: Hebrew word is “nose.” The marriage gifts to Rebekah (Gen 24:22, 47). He says, “This is what I did for Jerusalem.” What do *you* have to boast about? I think the application to our lives is quite obvious: you and I have a pretty bad background. Adam and Eve became sinners, and you and I were born in iniquity. David said, “... in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps 51:5), and David is no different than you and me. That is our origin, our background—we were all dead in trespasses and sin.

- 13] Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

“...kingdom”: History punctures through the parable, and points to the stage which it has now reached, that of the magnificence of the kingdom under Solomon.

- 14] And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.
15] But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.

“...playedst the harlot”: When she became grown, a beautiful young lady, she played the harlot. She went over into idolatry and turned her back on Him. Denotes the gods of the nations...*including ours*...

- 16] And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.

Gaily-colored tents on the high places (Cf. 2 Kgs 23:7).

- 17] Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,

Jerusalem forgot the One who had supplied her with her wealth, and turned away from Him (Deut 6:10-12; 8:10-20). Beginning in Solomon's reign (1 Kgs 11:7-13) and until her fall to Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem turned from God to idolatry. She had times of revival, but her general trend was downward. [“...images of men” = of the *phallus*.]

- 18] And tookest thy brodered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.
19] My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord GOD.
20] Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter,
21] That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?

“...pass through the fire”: Moloch worship...

Moloch Worship

Child sacrifice (Cf. Ezek 20:26; 23:37-39; Ex 22:29; Judg 11:39; 2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6; 23:10; Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35. Never wholly ceased as long as the monarchy of Judah lasted (2 Kgs 16:3; Ps 106:37; Isa 57:5; Jer 7:32; 19:5; Micah 6:7; Lev 18:21; 20:2).

- 22] And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood.
23] And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;)

Especially the worship of Baal and Moloch (vv. 15-22) and alliances with heathen nations (vv. 23-34). Now he enters on the later forms of evil which had been adopted from more distant nations. We pass from the time of Solomon to that of Ahaz and Manasseh.

- 24] That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street.
25] Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy

beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms.

When the Church lowers her testimony to the carnal tastes of the world, she loses everything and gains nothing.

- 26] Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.

Alliance with Egypt (Cf. Isa 30:1ff.; 31:1ff.; 2 Kgs 18:21).

- 27] Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way.

The Philistines attacked Judah and Jerusalem in the reigns of Jehoram (2 Chr 21:16-17) and Ahaz (2 Chr 28:16-19).

- 28] Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied.
29] Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.

Ahaz' and Manasseh's pro-Assyria policy (2 Kgs 16:7ff.; 21:1ff.; 2 Chr 33:1ff). Here the word *Canaan* is used in the sense of "a trader, merchant"; i.e., unto the merchants' land, even Chaldea (cf. 17:4; Hos 12:7; Zeph 1:11; Zech 14:21)

- 30] How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman;
31] In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire;
32] But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!
33] They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.

The conduct of Ahaz in stripping the Temple of its gold and silver to pay tribute to Assyria (2 Kgs 16:8) gives an apt illustration of what the prophet means (cf. Hos 12:1; Isa 30:6). She was as the adulterous wife who forsakes her husband, and gives what belonged to him to strangers.

- 34] And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.
35] Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD:

- 36] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;

The passage interweaves a description of the punishment of an adulteress with a preview of the destruction of Jerusalem.

- 37] Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.
38] And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.
39] And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare.

This signifies the exposure of the adulteress.

- 40] They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords.
41] And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.
42] So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.
43] Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.
44] Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter.
45] Thou art thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite.

The second part of the parable (vv. 44-63) is an analogy between Jerusalem and her sister cities Samaria and Sodom. The knowledge of the true God had originally been in Canaan, handed down from Noah (hence we find Melchisedek, king of Salem, in Canaan, "priest of the most high God," Gen 14:18), but Canaan apostatized from it; this was what constituted the blackness of the Canaanites' guilt...

- 46] And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters.

47] Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.

“...left hand”: Left, to the north as one faces east (Gen 14:15); right, south.

48] As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.

49] Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

One **north** and one **south** of Jerusalem—both were known for their gross sins and divine judgment

50] And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

51] Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.

52] Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.

53] When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them:

54] That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them.

55] When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.

56] For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride,

57] Before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of thy reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about.

The destruction of Jerusalem, here prophetically assumed, causes unholy glee among the Edomites and Philistines (Ezek 25:12-14, 15-17; Ob 10-14; Ps 137:7-9).

58] Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD.

59] For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.

60] Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

“Nevertheless I will remember...”: *It is a continual source of encouragement to God’s people to have the assurance from His Word that He remains faithful even when they themselves are unfaithful!* (2 Tim 2:13).

“...an everlasting covenant”: God is going to make good His covenants with the nation Israel. The sin of these people, their rebellion, their constant departure from Him, their backsliding, will not annul, abrogate, or destroy God’s covenant with them. How does that impact amillennialism?

61] Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.

Jerusalem had broken the covenant made in her youth at the Exodus (cf. vv. 8, 43). Consequently, she must suffer; but in the day of her repentance, God will give her an everlasting covenant (cf. 37:26; Isa 54:9, 10; 55:3; Jer 31:35, 36; 32:40; 33:20-22).

Samaria and Sodom (as representing the heathen world) are to be included in the new covenant as an act of grace, since the former covenant broken by Israel did not include them.

62] And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD:

63] That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

Unfortunately, these passages of Scripture are not studied very much at all. When they are, they make it very clear that God still has a future purpose with the nation Israel (Rom 9, 10, 11).

Homiletics

The destruction of Jerusalem was to be God’s answer to the disputing Jews. God speaks to us through his providence. *History is a record of God’s answers to man’s questions.* Such an answer has many merits.

1. It is perceptible to all. The fall of Jerusalem sent a shock through the Jewish world.

2. It is clear and unmistakable. God had threatened judgment. Would his threat prove true? Who could doubt the meaning of the terrible response?

3. It is irreversible. An event which has once occurred can never be undone. The lessons of history are eternal.

Next Session

Read Chapters 17, 18 & 19, completing the Allegory (15-17) with “The Riddle of the Two Eagles.”

The Book of Ezekiel Session 8 Chapters 17 - 18

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Review

We are in a context where Ezekiel, trained as a priest, but called to the office of a prophet, was captive in Babylon. The first siege had taken Daniel captive; the second one had taken Ezekiel; and, the third siege yet forthcoming (in several years from this passage), would be the final fall and destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel was not offering them hope. He had pointed out to them that Jerusalem would fall, that God was going to judge them for their idolatry and their sins.

After swearing allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah treacherously conspired against him and sought alliance with Egypt to avoid his commitments. The alliance, which Jeremiah had warned against, proved weak, unsatisfactory and foolhardy.

Ezekiel 17

Judah, Babylon and Egypt are the three in the riddle and the parable of Chapter 17: It will be stated in Ezek 17:3-10 and explained in Ezek 17:11-21. The date of the prophecy is between the 6th month of Zedekiah’s 6th year of reign and the 5th month of the 7th year after the carrying away of Jehoiachin, that is, *almost five years before the destruction of Jerusalem*

- 1] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;

“...a riddle”: חִידָה *chiydah* riddle, difficult question, enigmatic parable, requiring an explanation...Examples: the “riddle” Samson posed to the Philistines (Judg 14:12-19) and the “hard questions” the Queen of Sheba asked Solomon (1 Kgs 10:1; 2 Chr. 9:1).

- 3] And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar:

“A great eagle”: The literal *Hebrew* is, “*the* great eagle.” The symbol of the Assyrian supreme god, *Nisroch*; so applied to “the great king” of Babylon, his vicegerent on earth (Jer 48:40; 49:22; Isa 46:11).

“...great wings, longwinged...”: Great forces: Symbols such as are now seen in the Assyrian remains; implying the wide extent of his empire.

“...full of feathers...”: In the full freshness of renovated youth, answering to the variety of languages, habits, and costumes of the peoples subject to Babylon (Ps 103:5; Isa 40:31).

“...divers colours...”: Answering to the variety of languages, habits, and costumes of the peoples subject to Babylon.

“...unto Lebanon...”: A pseudonym for the Temple at Jerusalem, called “Lebanon” by Jews because its woodwork was wholly of cedars of Lebanon—Eusebius.

“...highest branch”: The *fleece-like tuft* at the top of the tree (Ezek 31:3-14). It is the nation Israel; specifically, the royal house of David, King Jeconiah, then but eighteen years old, and many of the chiefs and people with him (2Kgs 24:8, 12-16). The cedar, as a tall tree, is the symbol of kingly elevation (compare Dan 4:10-12—the chapter in the Bible that Nebuchadnezzar wrote!) [Jeconiah will be reviewed later in this session...]

The Great Eagle

Here is a picture of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who is going to come and crop the top of the tree.

Jeremiah used it as he wrote of Nebuchadnezzar: “For thus saith the Lord; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab” (Jer 48:40); “Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs!” (Jer 49:22).

Daniel saw the Babylonian Empire rising up out of the sea, and it was in the form of a lion with eagle’s wings (Dan 7:4).

Tribe of Dan

- Serpent prophecy Gen 49:16,17
- North of Camp Num 2:25
 - “Sides of north” Cf. Isa 14:12,13
- Ahiezer, chief at the time of the Exodus Num 1:12; 2:25; 10:25; 1 Chr 12:3
 - Replaced Serpent with Eagle as ensign

[Source: Merrill F. Unger, *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1966, pp.235-236.]

Eagle as Ensign

- 4] He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he set it in a city of merchants.

“...top of his young twig”: Who would this be? The very young King Jeconiah, 18 years old, sometimes called Coniah, sometimes called Jehoiachin.

“...land of traffick”: He was carried to Babylon, the city of merchants and trade. He was carried into captivity, leaving the Judean throne vacant. Babylon (2 Kgs 24:15, 16), famous for its transport traffic on the Tigris and Euphrates. Also, by its connection with the Persian Gulf, it carried on much commerce with India.

- 5] He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree.

“...seed of the land”: Nebuchadnezzar, in an attempt to be lenient, replaced him not with a foreigner, but with Zedekiah who was “of the

seed of the land,” a native of the region; a son of the soil, not a foreigner. A fruitful field (the land of Israel), in the vicinity of abundant waters (Deut 8:7; 11:11).

“...as a willow tree”: Derived from a *Hebrew* root, “to overflow,” from its fondness for water (Isa 44:4). Judea was “a land of brooks of *water* and fountains” (Deut 8:7–9; Jn 3:23).

- 6] And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

“...low stature...branches turned toward him...”: Expressing the fealty of Zedekiah as a vassal looking up to Nebuchadnezzar, to whom Judah owed its peace and very existence as a separate state. The “branches” mean his sons and the other princes and nobles. The implication, in the way this is presented, is that if nothing else happened, he would have blossomed.

The impression you get from Ezekiel here is that if had Zedekiah kept his oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, there would have been prosperity. The “fruitful field” suggests favorable conditions (Isa 44:4).

- 7] There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation.

“...another great eagle”: A rival eagle to the first one: The first one was Babylon; the second one was Egypt, Pharaoh Hophra (Jer 44:30; 37:7). But Nebuchadnezzar took Egypt and destroyed it and made it subject to himself.

- 8] It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine.

“...goodly vine”: Nebuchadnezzar had taken the youngest son of Josiah, Metaniah, put him on the throne as a vassal, and renamed him Zedekiah. Zedekiah swore an oath before the Lord to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar. It was not want of the necessities of life, nor oppression on the part of Nebuchadnezzar, which caused Zedekiah to revolt: it was gratuitous ambition, pride, and ingratitude.

Treacherous Rebellion

This second eagle was not only Egypt, but Pharaoh Hophra. (2 Chr 36:9-13; Jer 44:30; 37:7; 52:1-7). When Zedekiah turned to him for

support, Isaiah spoke out against such an alliance (Isa 30:1-7;31:1-3). Jeremiah and Ezekiel also opposed this idea of Judah aligning with Egypt. The prophets Jeremiah, and Isaiah, and Ezekiel and others, all pointed out that Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument of God bringing judgment to the land in the first place.

The main thrust you get from this passage and other passages is that there really was *no reason* for Zedekiah's revolt. They were not under oppression or dispersion; they were actually under a beneficial rule under Nebuchadnezzar. They had security under him. It was only through ambition and ingratitude that Zedekiah became insubordinate in his allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar.

When Ezekiel penned this prophecy Zedekiah's final revolt *had not yet happened*. This prophetic parable was written sometime between 592 B.C. (Ezek 8:1) and 591 B.C. (Ezek 20:1). Zedekiah's final revolt against Babylon actually began in 587 BC., so Ezekiel predicted Zedekiah's revolt almost five years before it happened.

- 9] Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof.

Ezekiel, like his contemporary Jeremiah (Jer 37:7) and his predecessor Isaiah (Isa 30:1-7), was against this policy of an Egyptian alliance

- 10] Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew.

“...the east wind”: This represents Nebuchadnezzar (Cf. Job 27:21; Isa 27:8; Hos 13:15). The undercurrent here is instead of being loyal to the first eagle, it treacherously turned to the second one. Zedekiah was taken at Jericho, on Jewish soil (Jer 52:8).

The Interpretation

Now we get to the second part, which is in effect the interpretation of this parable. From verse 11 - 21 we will see Ezekiel himself interpreting the previous 10 verses.

- 11] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
12] Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon;

“...the rebellious house...”: The history of Jehoiachin's deportation and of Zedekiah's oath of fealty is recapitulated (2 Chr 36:13; Gen 15:9-18; Jer 34:8-22)

- 13] And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land:

“...hath taken an oath...”: Zedekiah's oath. The issue here is his oath.
“...the mighty...”: Hostages for the fulfillment of the covenant; whom, therefore, Zedekiah exposed to death by his treason.

- 14] That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping of his covenant it might stand.

Nebuchadnezzar dealt sincerely and openly in proposing conditions, and these moderate ones; therefore Zedekiah's treachery was the baser and was a counterpart to their treachery towards God.

- 15] But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered?

“...horses...”: Egypt abounded in them and were forbidden to Israel (Deut 17:16; Isa 31:1, 3; 36:9). The whole region from Thebes to Memphis was filled with royal stalls: 20,000 chariots with two horses in each could be furnished for war—Diodorus Siculus [1.45].

“...he brake the covenant...”: The interesting thing is that Nebuchadnezzar kept his side of the covenant. God's people broke the covenant, but the pagan nation kept their side of it. In some churches you will find people still carrying their Bibles, but their hearts are far from God and you cannot believe what they say. On the other hand, there are businessmen who, although they are unsaved, are men of integrity.

Oaths

One of the issues you will discover in the Scripture is that an oath before the Lord, even an oath made under fraud, needs to be honored. Even the Gibeonite oath, made on fraudulent premises, still had to be honored (Josh 9; 2 Sam 21:1-3).

Jeremiah had been warning Zedekiah that he had made an oath and he would have to hold to it. But obviously Zedekiah went ahead despite those warnings, and sought aid from Egypt.

The swearing of an oath in the Old Testament was authenticated by accompanying sacrifices. That involved the Lord who took them seriously.

- 16] As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die.

Zedekiah would die in the land that he despised, and under the king whose covenant he broke. He repeats the prediction of Ezek 12:13.

- 17] Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons:
18] Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape.

“...Pharaoh”: Pharaoh Hophra (Jer 37:7; 44:30), the successor of Necho (2 Kgs 23:29). The Pharaoh here was Apries of the Greeks. [Pharaoh Necho was earlier the refuge for the Levites and the Ark of the Covenant during Josiah’s reign (2 Chr 35).] For more than a thousand years, from 1600 B.C. onward, the Egyptians led in terms of exploitation by chariots, horses, calvary etc.

- 19] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head.

“...mine oath”: The implication was that there had been a sacrifice with his oath, so that it was no longer just a little commitment on the part of Zedekiah; with a sacrifice it had become *the Lord’s* covenant. God Himself must therefore avenge the violation of *His covenant* “on the head” of the perjurer (compare Ps 7:16).

- 20] And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me.

God entraps him as he had tried to entrap others (Ps 7:15). This was spoken almost five years *before* the fall of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek 8:1; 20:1). Sometimes God allows a godless nation to harass and actually destroy a people who claim to be God’s people but have departed from Him.

- 21] And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it.

The first 10 verses were this parable and riddle. God, speaking through Ezekiel, on the treachery of trying to allure an alliance with Egypt,

shows it will fail. And verses 11-21 gave the explanation of that, being the Lord’s own reaffirmation.

The King of the Davidic Line

Ezekiel 17 - 18 are two chapters dealing with the ending of the Dynasty of David, the succession of kings in Judah: *But in the middle are next three verses which deal with the most important King of the Davidic line, namely the Messiah* (Ezek 17:22-24).

- 22] Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent:

“...I will also”: God opposes Himself to Nebuchadnezzar: “*He* took of the seed of the land and planted it (Ezek 17:3, 5); so will *I*, but with better success than he had. The branch he plucked (Zedekiah) and planted, flourished but for a time, but will perish at last.

“...*I* will plant a scion of the same tree, the house of David, to whom the kingdom belongs by an everlasting covenant, and it shall be the shelter of the whole world, and shall be for ever.”

“...the highest branch of the high cedar”: The Lord declares that He himself will pluck off a shoot from the top of the high cedar (the Davidic house; vv. 2, 3; Isa 53:2) and plant it on a high mountain, that all may see it and find protection under it (Isa 2:2; 11:10 Ezek 17:23; Mt 13:31, 32).

When the state of Israel shall seem past recovery, Messiah, Jehovah Himself, will unexpectedly appear on the scene as Redeemer of His people (Isa 63:5).

“...branch”: The peculiar title of Messiah (Zech 3:8; 6:12; Isa 11:1; 4:2; Jer 23:5; 33:15)

“...a tender one”: Messiah alone can be meant: originally “a *tender* plant and root out of a dry ground” (Isa 53:2). The beginning of His kingdom being humble, His reputed parents of lowly rank, though King David’s lineal representatives. Yet, God here calls Him, in respect to His purpose, “the highest ... of the high” (Ps 89:27).

“...high mountain and eminent”: Zion is destined to be the *moral* center and eminence of grace and glory shining forth to the world, out-topping all mundane elevation. The kingdom shall have its highest manifestation

at His reappearing to reign on Zion, and thence over the whole earth (Ps 2:6, 8; Isa 2:2, 3; Jer 3:17). Who does all this? God Himself. (*Ezekiel will have much to say about this in later chapters!*)

- 23] In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.

(Antichrist assumes in mimicry the universal power really belonging to Christ; Ezek 31:6; Dan 4:12.)

- 24] And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done it.

“...exalted the low tree”: The lofty top is in contrast to Nebuchadnezzar. This passage is also sort of an echo to Psalm 89, the essence of which is that the Covenant with David would never be made void or annulled.

The establishment of this new and universal kingdom by YHWH will lead the world to recognize him as the Lord of human life and the Controller of Israel’s destiny. Other kingdoms are likewise called trees (Ezek 31:5, 8, 14, 16, 18). For passages in Ezekiel concerning God’s kingdom, cf. 21:27; 34:24ff.; 37:24ff.; 40-48. See also Lk 1:51-55.

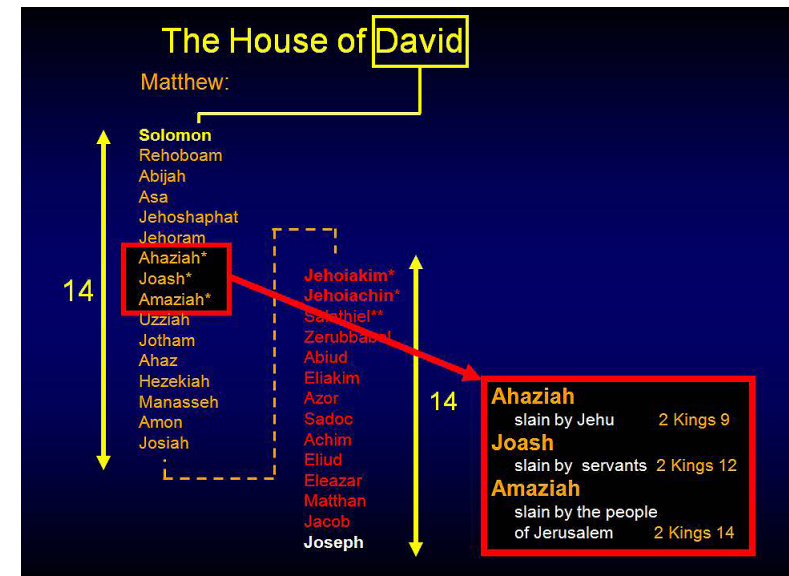
“...I the Lord have spoken and have done it”: God speaks about things yet future as if they were done, because He ordained them.

This prophecy was not fulfilled when Israel returned to the land after the Babylonian Captivity. The fulfillment of verses 22-24 awaits God’s establishment of Israel in the Millennium under the Messiah, Jesus Christ. At that time God’s kingdom will rule the world (Dan 2:44-45; Zech 14:3-9, 16-17).

Blood Curse on Jeconiah

After David there were all kinds of bad kings, declining and getting worse spiritually and into idolatry. In Jeconiah (also, Coniah, Jehoiachin) we see the end. (Zedekiah was never called a king by Ezekiel.) Jeconiah was not only cursed, God pronounced upon him a blood curse, and said none of his seed would rule any more in Judah.

The genealogy in Matthew begins with “the first Jew”: Abraham. Luke begins his with Adam (“Son of God” vs. ourselves: sons of Adam); the next 10 are familiar from Genesis 5. From Abraham to David they’re identical.



Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah all died violent deaths; God thus dealing with idolatry literally “to the 3rd and 4th generations” (Ex 20:4-5); their names are therefore “blotted out” according to the Law (Deut 29:20):

- Ahaziah slain by Jehu 2 Kings 9
- Joash slain by servant 2 Kings 12
- Amaziah slain by Jerusalem 2 Kings 14

The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.

Deuteronomy 29:20

Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

Jeremiah 22:30

The end of the line; the dynasty ends!?

Daughters of Zelophehad

There was a Torah exception on rules of inheritance—requested of Moses (Num 27:1-11) and granted by Joshua (Josh 17:3-6) the result of a petition by the **daughters of Zelophehad**, which provided for inheritance through the *daughter*, if no sons were available and she married within her tribe. The husband is adopted by father of the bride (Ezra

to those of their forefathers. Compare Gen 3:12, where Adam transfers the blame of his sin to Eve, and even to God, “The *woman* whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.”

Despair and Fatalism

If they were being punished for the crimes of Manasseh (2 Kgs 24:3, 4) and for the sins of their fathers, why should they struggle? What chance does an individual have in the face of a fate inherited from the past?

Why should anyone try to be godly in such an unjust world? (Cf. the hedonism pictured in Isa 22:12, 13) Is there any alternative to bleak despair for man? (Ezek 33:10).

- 3] As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

“As I live...”: The word *live* or some form of it occurs 13 times in this chapter, and the word *die* occurs 14 times. We have life and death presented here, but it is not eternal life or eternal death that God is talking about.

- 4] Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

God is speaking of the way in which He judges individuals in this life. We need to look at this entire chapter from that viewpoint. Ezekiel anticipates here, and yet more fully in ver. 32. the teaching of St. Paul, that “God willeth that all men should be saved” (1 Tim 2:4).

Every man shall be put to death for his own sin. “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.” (Deut 24:16).

“The Soul that Sinneth, It Shall Die”

“Live” (vv. 9, 17, 19) and “die” (vv. 4, 13, 18) are used in both a literal and an eschatological sense. “To live” is to enter into the perfect kingdom of the Lord which is about to come (Ezek 37-48); “to die” is to have no share in it.

Ezekiel, like the other Old Testament writers, sees this kingdom as an earthly one.

Three Generation Example

Before this chapter is over, we are going to read about three generations: the father, the son, and the grandson. (While he was giving this example idiomatically to make a point rhetorically, it is also reasonable that he might have had in mind three kings of Judah):

- The just grandfather, Hezekiah;
- The ungodly son, Manasseh; and
- The just grandson, Josiah.

- 5] But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

The Just Grandfather, Hezekiah. The verses that follow are noticeable as forming one of the most complete pictures of a righteous life presented in the Old Testament.

- 6] And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour’s wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

“...eaten...”: Refers to the feasts which were connected with the sacrifices (Ex 32:6; Deut 32:38; Jdg 9:27; 1 Cor 8:4, 10; 10:7).

“Upon the mountains” here had reference to the places where their idol worshiping was conducted; and eating of that implied the partaking in the idol festivities and rites (Deut 12:13-14).

“neighbor’s wife...menstruous woman...”: The respecting of marriage rights (Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10 and Deut 22:22) and laws respecting unclean women (Lev 15:24; 18:19; and 20:18).

- 7] And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

“...restored to the debtor his pledge”: Ex 22:26,27; Deut 24:10-13; Amos 2:8 et al.

“...hath given his bread...”: Distributing food to the hungry (Isa 58:7; Mt 25:35, 36).

- 8] He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

“...usury...”: Jews were forbidden to take interest from their needy brethren (Ex 22:25; Lev 25:25-37; Deut 23:19), but were permitted interest on loans to foreigners (Deut 23:20).

- 9] Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

“...he shall surely live...”: He is talking about this life, not eternal life. God will bless him in this life—this is the blessing of the Old Testament.

So the first character introduced here idiomatically is one I am going to call “The Just Grandfather.” As you can get the tone of here, he is a just man. The son is going to be ungodly: a robber, a murdered, and a lot of other horrible things. But then the grandson (vv. 14-18), is going to be just, and that point is to put to silence the idea that you are being punished for your father’s sins.

- 10] If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things,

“any one of these things...”: Those listed in verses 6-9 (i.e., The Ungodly Son, Manasseh).

- 11] And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour’s wife,
12] Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,
13] Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

“...he shall not live...”: A good father cannot pile up merit for his son (cf. Ezek 14:16, 18). This confirmed the fallacy of the people’s proverb (Ezek 18:2) and the truth of God’s principle (Ezek 18:4).

- 14] Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father’s sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,
15] That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour’s wife,

The Just Grandson, Josiah, the pious son of guilty Amon (the son of Manasseh); Hezekiah, of Ahaz (2Kgs 16:1-20; 18:1-37; 21:1-22:20)

- 16] Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

- 17] That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.
18] As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.
19] Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

Here the Jews object to the prophet’s word and in their objection seem to seek a continuance of that very thing which they had originally made a matter of complaint.

It now would seem a consolation to them to think the son might suffer for his father’s misdeeds; for it would soothe their self-love to regard themselves as innocent sufferers for the guilt of others and would justify them in their present course of life, which they did not choose to abandon for a better.

- 20] The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

“The soul that sinneth...”: We have this twice in this chapter—here and in verse 4. Ezekiel points out that neither son nor father will be held responsible for the other’s iniquity, but each person is individually responsible to God.

- 21] But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

He is speaking about God’s judgment being equitable person to person. As a man does not inherit the consequences of what his fathers have done, so the individual, through repentance, can be emancipated from his own past.

- 22] All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.
23] Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

This is a call to repentance. This question reflects God’s mercy and his desire to save all. “Mercy” has been called “the most precious word in

the whole Book of Ezekiel.” To Ezekiel, as afterwards to Paul (1 Tim 2:4) and Peter (2 Pet 3:9), the mind of God is presented as being at once absolutely righteous and absolutely loving.

- 24] But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

If men perish, it is because they *will not* come to the Lord for salvation; not that the Lord is not willing to save them (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9 Jn 5:40). They trample on not merely justice, but mercy; what further hope can there be for them, when even mercy is against them? (Heb 10:26–29).

Eternal Security

Ezek 18:24 (and similar passages: Ezek 3:17-1; 33:10-20) have been understood by some that a Christian may lose his righteous standing before God. But in support of the security of the believer, it should be observed that these passages in Ezekiel do not teach the eternal loss of a saved person, because the word “righteous” may refer to ceremonial religion (cf. Mt 5:20) and not the righteousness which is of God by faith (cf. Phil 3:7-9).

Moreover, the punishment threatened refers only to physical death rather than to eternal death. In any case, these texts in Ezekiel must be considered in the light of such NT affirmations as John 10:28,29; Rom 5:8,9; Phil 1:6, et al. that so clearly teach the security of the believer.

- 25] Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?
26] When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

“The way of the Lord is not equal...”: Literally, *adjusted to the standard*. A figure from the mercantile exchange (cf. v. 29; 33:17; 1 Sam 2:3).

- 27] Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.
28] Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.
29] Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

- 30] Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

In the *Hebrew* there is a play of like sounds, “*Turn ye and return.*”

- 31] Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?
32] Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Not as being perfect; but sincerely *aim* at perfection, so as to not be habitually and willfully on terms with any sin (1 Jn 3:6–9).

- 33] Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?
34] For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

God alone can make us a new heart (Ezek 11:19; 36:26; Ps 51:10). Everyone stands alone. And he can’t blame it on his environment or upbringing...

The teaching of this chapter answers the new psychology we have today, which argues that the reason a person is irresponsible because his mother didn’t treat him right but neglected him and didn’t love him. You are a sinner because you are a sinner yourself. Every individual will stand before God, and he won’t be able to blame his parents at that time. Ezekiel makes it very clear that the Israelite will be judged in this life on the basis of the life he lived, whether he was a believer or not.

Freedom vs. Responsibility

How to harmonize the personal responsibility of the individual and his moral freedom with God’s justice in the treatment of every individual is a difficult problem, with which the Book of Job and Psalm 73 struggle. Even Socrates understood this dilemma: “*It may be that Deity can forgive sins, but I don’t see how.*” Only through the sacrifice of a Savior...

Next Session

In the next chapter he returns to his parables of history in the fashion of those of Chapter 17. Study Chapters 19 & 20. For perspective, you may also want to read the chapter in the Bible that King Nebuchadnezzar wrote: Daniel 4.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 9

Chapters 19 - 20

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.

1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel 19

This is not the lamentation of Ezekiel, as some Bible commentators have attempted to say. This is the lamentation of the Lord, actually the lamentation of the same One who later wept over Jerusalem (Mt 23:37-39).

There are two lamentations: 1) The lamentations over the Princes of Judah (vv.1-9) and, 2) The lamentation over the Land of Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel (vv. 10-14). The whole chapter finds a parallel in Jeremiah’s review of Josiah’s successors (Jer 22:10-30).

- 1] Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,
- 2] And say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions.

The lioness is Israel, the kingdom idealized and personified. The lionesses among whom she had lain down are the heathen kingdoms. The question asks why she had become as one of them and adopted their cruelty and ferocity. Jerusalem was called Ariel (the lion of God) in a good sense (Isa 29:1); and Judah “a lion’s whelp ... a lion ... an old lion” (Gen 49:9), to which, as also to Num 23:24; 24:9, this passage alludes.

- 3] And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men.

The whelp, as v.4 shows, is Jehoahaz, who “did evil” in the sight of the Lord (2 Kgs 23:32), the words that follow pointing to cruelty and oppression like that of Zedekiah.

- 4] The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.

The king of Egypt, Pharaoh Necho, whose subjects were many nations, marched against Jerusalem, took Jehoahaz prisoner, and brought him to Egypt (2 Kgs 23:33,34; Jer 22:11).

“...with chains...”: literally, *nose rings*, such as were put into the nostrils of brutes or men (Ezek 38:4; 2 Kgs 19:28; Isa 37:29).

- 5] Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion.
- 6] And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men.

The second lion whelp, Jehoiachin (v.9) became a complete heathen, and made Judea as idolatrous as any of the surrounding nations. [Ezekiel passes over Jehoikim (607-599 B.C.).]

- 7] And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring.
- 8] Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit.

Bear in mind that Nebuchadnezzar used his allies to set Jehoiachin’s clock when the time came: the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moab, and Ammon (2 Kgs 24:2).

- 9] And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

Nebuchadnezzar carried off Jehoiachin to Babylon as Jehoahaz had been to Egypt. The young lion was to roar in chains, not on the “mountains of Israel.”

- 10] Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters.
- 11] And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches.

Another metaphor is introduced here: Israel is compared to a vine (Cf. Isa 5:1-7; 27:2, 3; Ps 80:9; Mk 12:1-9). The vine, of course, was Israel, as we saw in Chapters 15 & 17 (Cf. Ps 10; Isa 5).

- 12] But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them.
- 13] And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground.

“...plucked up...”: not *gradually* withered. The *sudden* upturning of the state was designed to awaken the Jews out of their torpor to see the hand of God in the national judgment.

“...east wind”: here is Nebuchadnezzar.

“...dry and thirsty ground...”: Chaldea was well watered and fertile; but it is the condition of the captive people, not that of the land, which is referred to here.

- 14] And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

God’s wrath was kindled by the perjury of Zedekiah who by his perjury brought about the destruction of Jerusalem by fire.

The End of the Dynasty

There was no lawful king left. The royal line was cursed. That leaves only One who can be heir to the Throne of David. The only rightful King left is the Messiah Himself, who is alive today. He never sat on David’s throne as the angel promised Mary He would (Lk 1:32). This was also confirmed by James at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-18; q.v. Amos 9:11,12).

Another point we should gain from these quaint historic episodes is the fact that God is real and He is serious. The way He dealt with those kings can serve as a sobering lesson *for us*. God has gone through incredible trouble to lay out His plan for our redemption. *He has fulfilled His commitments to the letter, precisely, faithfully, without exception.*

Ezekiel 20: A History of Rebellion

Chapters 20–24 contain the final predictions concerning the judgment of Jerusalem. Under every facet and circumstance, man has sought to

be rebellious and to go any way other than that which the Lord had ordained. Here we will be reviewing *the history of Israel is seen from God’s point of view.*

A History of Israel’s Rebellion

Chapter 20

• In Egypt	vv. 5-9
• In the wilderness	vv. 10-17
• Of the 2nd generation	vv. 18-26
• Upon entering Canaan	vv. 27-29
• Ezekiel’s generation	vv. 30-32
• Diaspora and Selective Return	vv. 33-39
• Kingdom Established	vv. 40-44

- 1] And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the LORD, and sat before me.

A new date is given, and includes what follows to Ezek 23:49. The last note of time was in Ezek 8:1, and 11 months and 5 days had passed, during which the prophecies of the intervening chapters had been written or spoken.

“...me” is Ezekiel. They felt they had the right and the expectation to come to this Prophet of God who had been trained as a priest, for a word from the Lord. They were in for a disappointment...

- 2] Then came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,
- 3] Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

We are going to discover a surprising thing; God refused to respond to their inquiries. Yet, there can come a time when God says, “Ok, guys, no more.” Their moral state precluded them from capability of knowing the will of God (Ps 66:18; Prov 28:9; Jn 7:17).

One of the interesting things about his prophecies in general, was that they were not collective calls to repentance. Quite the contrary! The whole burden of Ezekiel’s prophecy, up to about Chapter 25, had to do with the certainty of God’s judgment that was coming, and why it had to come.

- 4] Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers:

God was really presenting His “Judicial Case” to them.

Israel’s Rebellion in Egypt (vv. 5-9)

God goes back to the very beginning when He called these people out of the land of Egypt, delivered them out of their slavery there, and brought them into the wilderness.

- 5] And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I am the LORD your God;

“...I chose Israel”: The basis here is God’s sovereign choice (Cf. Ex 6:1-4; Deut 7:6; Jer 33:24; Isa 40-46; Gen 15:17-21).

- 6] In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands:

“...flowing with milk and honey...”: First mention (of 18) in Scripture was in Exodus 3:8 = The Principle of First Mention.

- 7] Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

“...idols of Egypt”: Highlighting their idolatry; also is hinted in other verses (Lev 17:7, 18:3; Ex 6:6, 7; Josh 24:14, etc.). Also, in Lev 17:7, “They shall *no more* offer their sacrifices unto devils (literally, *seirim*, “he-goats,” the symbol of the false god, Pan), after whom they have gone awhoring.”

The call of God by Moses was as much to them to separate from idols and follow Jehovah, as it was to Pharaoh to let them go forth. Hence the need of their being removed out of the contagion of Egyptian idolatries by the exodus. Israel did not invent the golden calf; they were falling back to a practice that they had observed in Egypt (resembling the Egyptian ox, Apis; cf. Ex 32:4).

- 8] But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

He would have been justified to just wipe them out. Repeatedly, He extended His mercy and grace to them *for His Name’s sake*.

His Name’s Sake

The relationship was not just between God and Israel: it was intended to be a demonstration, a form of visibility, to the nations around there. He did this only for His name’s sake, for His glory among those nations.

God was attempting to communicate to all nations that He was a righteous God, therefore He had to judge sin. On the other hand, He wanted to demonstrate His mercy. But that ran the risk of being misunderstood by the nations around them that He was not powerful enough to enforce His own laws.

Moses understood that, and used that when he negotiated; he would plead on behalf of His Name’s sake (Ex 32:12, 14:16).

- 9] But I wrought for my name’s sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

He would make a very dramatic demonstration to show Himself strong, not only to the Egyptians, but to all the world. Later, during the days of Joshua, Rahab admitted to the two spies, “we have heard...” [“Friday the 13th” was the Egyptian side of the 14th of Nisan...]

Israel’s Rebellion in the Wilderness (vv. 10-17)

God was the one motivating this and causing this to happen, so recognize His identity with the cause here.

- 10] Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness.
11] And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.

All the way through this part of Ezekiel you are going to see, “I, I, I”: God is the primary agency here. Ezekiel recognizes, almost in the very language of Deut 30:16-20, as fully as the writers of Psalms 19 and 119 recognized, the excellence of the Law.

- 12] Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.

Not that the Sabbath was first instituted at Sinai, as if it were an exclusively Jewish ordinance (Gen 2:2, 3), but it was then more formally enacted, when, owing to the apostasy of the world from the original

revelation, one people was called out to be the covenant-people of God (Deut 5:15). The Sabbath was a sign that the Lord was their God and they were his people (v. 20; Ex 31:12-17; Isa 66:2,4).

“...sanctify...”: The observance of the Sabbath contemplated by God was not a mere *outward* rest, but a *spiritual* dedication of the day to the glory of God and the good of man. Otherwise it would not be, as it is made, the pledge of universal *sanctification* (Ex 31:12-17; Is 58:13, 14). Virtually it is said, all sanctity will flourish or decay, according as this ordinance is observed in its full spirituality or not.

- 13] But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.

The generation that went into the wilderness rebelled against God, and He let them die in the wilderness. They “rebelled” in the very place where death and terror were on every side and where they depended on His miraculous bounty every moment!

- 14] But I wrought for my name’s sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.

“...for my name’s sake...”: One of God’s motives for dealing with humanity. Israel “profaned my holy name” (Cf. Ezek 36:20). The Third Commandment deals with our *ambassadorship* (Ex 20:7)—Prov 30:9 is one of the verses that validates this view.

- 15] Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands;

I swore against them that I would not permit the generation that came out of Egypt to enter Canaan (Ps 95:11; 106:26; Num 14:20-35 Cf. Heb 4:1-11).

- 16] Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.
17] Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

The *special* reason is stated by Moses: the *general* reasons are summarized here: their rejection of God’s grace; the contempt of God and His laws, and love of idols. They wished to return to the idols of Egypt (Num 13:32,33; 14:4). God’s grace, in contrast! (Ps 78:38; Jer 30:11).

Rebellion of the Second Generation Against God (vv. 18-26)

It is an indirect denial of God, and a robbing Him of His due, to add man’s inventions to His precepts...

- 18] But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols:
19] I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them;
20] And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.
21] Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.

The next generation was rebellious also (Num 25:1, 2; Deut 31:27).

“...the children”: those who fell into the fearful apostasy on the plains of Moab at the close of the wilderness sojourn.

- 22] Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name’s sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth.
23] I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries;
24] Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols.

“...among the heathen, and disperse them...”: The Diaspora (not just the Babylonian Captivity; Cf. Deut 28:63-68, et al.). There are worldwide “scattering” passages, and worldwide “regathering” passages. We are going to touch on those shortly.

- 25] Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live;

Since they would not follow My statutes that were good, “I gave them” their own (Ezek 20:18) and their fathers’ “which were not good”; statutes spiritually corrupting, and, finally, as the consequence, destroying them. Righteous retribution: Ps 81:12; Hos 8:11; Rom 1:24; 2 Thess 2:11. Ezek 20:39 proves this view to be correct (cf. Isa 63:17).

Thus on the plains of Moab (Num 25:1-18), in chastisement for the secret unfaithfulness to God in their hearts, He permitted Baal’s worshippers

to tempt them to idolatry (the ready success of the tempters, moreover, proving the inward unsoundness of the tempted); and this again ended necessarily in punitive judgments.

- 26] And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.

“...I polluted them...”: Not directly, “but I judicially *gave them up* to pollute themselves.” A just retribution for their “polluting My sabbaths” (Ezek 20:24).

“...pass through the fire...”: Molech worship. Remember, we become that which we worship: Ps 115:8; 135:18.

Israel’s Rebellion Against God upon Entering Canaan (vv. 27-29)

- 27] Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me.

- 28] For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out there their drink offerings.

“...every high hill”: Canaanite idolatry. “Groves,” “high hills” = phallic symbols, et al. Canaanite idolatry included perverse sexual practices, etc.

- 29] Then I said unto them, What is the high place whereunto ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day.

בָּמָה *Bamah* = “high place.” [*ba* means “to go,” *mah* means “where.”] Thus, a contemptuous pun: *Bamah* indicates “going nowhere.”

Israel’s Rebellion in Ezekiel’s Generation (vv. 30-32)

Obviously, those were rhetorical questions and the implied answer is, “Yes.”

- 30] Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations?

- 31] For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

“I will not be enquired of by you”: A throwback to the opening verses: All of this is a presentation to the elders of Israel who had come to inquire. God was saying, “Shall I be inquired of by YOU?”

- 32] And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.

“...we will be as the heathen...”: And yet they have remained for nineteen centuries dispersed among all nations and without a home, but still a distinct people: a standing witness for the truth of the prophecy given so long ago. [This has all been historical: Egypt, the deliverance, the wilderness wanderings and so forth. Now in this passage we are going to shift to the future.]

Messianic Agenda (Mt 23:37-39)

- The Purpose of all history
- The Tragedy of all history
- The Triumph of all history.

...History is God’s answer to man’s questions.

The Purpose of All History

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings...

Matthew 23:37

The purpose of all history: that God might gather His children together. (Jerusalem is a synecdoche for all of Israel). The image of the mother bird gathering and covering her brood is a familiar one. Moses used it in his farewell sermon (Deut. 32:11). It is a picture of love, tender care, and a willingness to die to protect others. Jesus did die for the sins of the world, including the nation of Israel: but “His own received Him not” (John 1:11).

The Tragedy of All History

...and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Matthew 23:37b, 38

The Triumph of All History

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 23:39

“...til”: Logical linkage: Jesus left the nation with a promise: He would one day return, the nation would see Him and say, “Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord!” This is a quotation from Psalm 118:26, that great messianic psalm that was quoted so many times in His last week of ministry. The crowds had used those very words (Mt 21:9).

The 69 Weeks

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the King shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

The *Meshiach Nagid*: “The Messiah the King.” The prediction is to the presentation of the Messiah the King (נָגִיד *Nagid* = “ruler, captain, prince,” is first used of King Saul, 1 Sam 9:16, 10:1, et al). On several occasions in the New Testament when they attempted to take Jesus as a King, He invariably declined, “Mine hour is not yet come.” (Jn 6:15; 7:30, 44; etc.) Then one day, He *arranges* it.

The Triumphal Entry

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Zechariah 9:9

Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, “Master; rebuke thy disciples.” And He answered and said unto them, “I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

Luke 19:38-40

Jesus held them accountable to recognize *this very day*. (Lk 19:41-44).

Judgment Declared

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which

belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Luke 19:41-44

The Interval

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Daniel 9:26

Rabbinical Confirmations of Daniel 9:26

- Messianic; prior to the Temple destroyed [*Yalkut*, Vol II, 32b, p.79 Nazir edition.]
- Messiah to exit prior to 33 A.D. [*Midrash Berishit*, p.243 Warsaw edition; re: Yakov Prasch.]

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

Hosea 5:15

The Diaspora and their Selective Return (vv. 33-39)

God tells them that He intends to bring them back into the land. God’s purpose with Israel will yet be fulfilled.

- 33] As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:

I will assert My right over you in spite of your resistance (v.32), as a master would in the case of his slave, and I will not let you be wrested from Me, because of My regard to My covenant.

The Regathering

- The Diaspora: into all the nations (Deut 30:1-11) and regathered in stages (Ezek 36).
- “2nd time”: May 14, 1948 (Isa 11:11-16). Who hath heard such a thing? Shall a nation be born in a day? (Isa 66:8)

Israel is going to attain their role. What God had wanted them to do was be the mechanism by which He could show Himself strong throughout

the earth. They failed at that all through history, but in this period, they are going to achieve that destiny (Isa 49:17-23; 61:4-6; Cf. Isa 61:7-10; Jer 23:1-8).

It will be interesting to note how the “north country” is earmarked in these forthcoming passages. The country that is predominately north of Israel is Russia, the descendants of the Magog (the Scythians). We will get into this more in Ezek 36, 37, 38, 39; Cf. Amos 9:11-15 and Zech 10:8-12).

- 34] And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.
- 35] And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people(s), and there will I plead with you face to face.

“Countries” is plural, not just from Babylon.

- 36] Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD.
- 37] And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

This concept of being “passed under the rod” is like a shepherd counts sheep (Cf. Lev 27:32; Jer 33:13; Mt 25:31-40).

- 38] And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.
- 39] As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.

God’s way of expressing some finality, a form of exasperation (Cf. Rev 22:11). Equivalent to, “I would rather have you open idolaters than hypocrites, fancying you can worship Me and yet at the same time serve idols” (Amos 5:21, 22, 25, 26; compare 1Kgs 18:21; 2Kgs 17:41; Mt 6:24; Rev 3:15, 16). “Let him that is going to be wicked, be wicked still, etc.”

Future Judgment of Israel

This judgment determines who in that day enters the Kingdom (Ps 50:1-7; Ezek 20:33-44; Mal 3:2-5; 4:1,2). Israel’s glory is yet future (Rom 11:26). Ancient methods are also to be restored (Isa 1:26; Judg 2:18; Mt 19:28).

Other Future Judgments

- Sheep & Goats Mt 25:31-40
- Bema Seat of Messiah 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:11-15
- Of Fallen Angels Jude 6
- Great White Throne Rev 20:11-1

Plus the two most critical for us:

- This world (at the cross) John 12:31
- Self-judgment (to avoid chastisement) 1 Cor 11:31,32

The Cross

Believer’s sins were borne on the cross. Result: Justification for the believer who can never again be put in jeopardy (Jn 5:24; Rom 5:9; 8:1; 2; 1 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:11; Heb 9:26-28; 10:10; 14-17; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18).

Self-Judgment

If self-judgment is neglected, the Lord judges, and the result is chastisement, but never condemnation (1 Cor 11:31,32; Cf. 2 Sam 7:14,15; 12:13,14; 1 Cor 5:5; 1Tim 1:20; Heb 12:7).

Self-Loathing

When God gives the insight to see our sin, we are filled with loathing. Job experienced that in Job 42; so did Isaiah in Isaiah 6 when he saw the Throne of God and realized the righteousness of God, he loathed himself. Apparently Israel will also, when they realize, as they look back at their history, they will loathe themselves for their unbelief and for the evils they have committed against the Lord.

- 40] For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things.

God says the time is coming when He will accept their offerings, and will welcome their offerings: the Kingdom period...

- 41] I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.

All the nations will acknowledge My power displayed in restoring you, and so shall be led to seek Me (Isa 66:18; Zech 14:16-19).

- 42] And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers.
- 43] And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.
- 44] And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

This is where the Hebrew text ends Chapter 20 (vv. 45-49) are the beginning of Chapter 21, which along with 21:1-32 is called "The Prophecy of the Sword."

The Prophecy of the Sword

The sword in view here is Nebuchadnezzar. In 588 B.C. he had a campaign to quell the revolts of Tyre, Judah, and Ammon, the three principalities that were revolting against him. He launched a siege which ended in 586 B.C. with the destruction of Jerusalem.

Chapter 21 which follows is one of the most important chapters in the Book of Ezekiel as it makes it very explicit that the King of Babylon is going to remove the last king of the Davidic line until Messiah comes.

- 45] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 46] Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field;

"...south...south...south...": Three different Hebrew words, to express the certainty of the divine displeasure resting on the region specified.

- 47] And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein.

These verses are actually the first part of Chapter 21, in the Hebrew. This whole idea of a *fire*, of course, is judgment. The *green tree* is generally an idiom for that which bears fruit; and somebody *righteous and dry* is typically someone spiritually withered e.g., Luke 23:31.

- 48] And all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.

- 49] Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?

Ezekiel complains that by this parabolic form of prophecy he only makes himself, and it, a jest to his countrymen. God therefore permits him to express the same prophecy more plainly in Ezek 21:1-32.

Next Session

"Prophecy of the Sword": Chapter 21 is one of the most important chapters in the Book of Ezekiel as it makes it very clear that *the king of Babylon is going to remove the last king of the Davidic line until Messiah comes*. Study Chapters 21 & 22.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 10 Chapters 21 - 22

Outline of Ezekiel

<u>Ch.</u>	
1-3	The Call of the Prophet
4-24	God's Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25-32	God's Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33-48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33-36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38-39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40-48	The Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel 20:45-49: The Prophecy of the Sword

An introductory, brief description of the destruction by fire and sword, detailed more explicitly in Ezek 21:1-32.

The sword in view here is Nebuchadnezzar. In 588 B.C. he had a campaign to quell the revolts of Tyre, Judah, and Ammon, the three principalities that were revolting against him. He launched a siege which ended in 586 B.C. with the destruction of Jerusalem.

- 45] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

“...the word of the Lord...”: Ezekiel will repeat this four times in this segment and the next chapter. He is not giving his personal viewpoint.

- 46] Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field;

An introductory brief description in enigma of the destruction by fire and sword, detailed more explicitly in Ezek 21:1–32. Three different Hebrew words, תֵּמַן *tēmān*, דָּרֹם *dārôm*, and נֶגֶב *negeb*, meaning respectively, “right hand,” “brilliant” or “midday,” and “dry land,” the three variants of “south” are shown to mean respectively Jerusalem, the holy places, and the land of Israel.

- 47] And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein.

The righteous and the wicked will take the place of the “green” and the “dry” tree, and the fire is explained as meaning the sword of the invader.

This whole idea of a *fire*, of course, is judgment. The *green tree* is generally an idiom for that which bears fruit; somebody *righteous and dry* is typically someone spiritually withered (e.g., Lk 23:31).

- 48] And all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.
49] Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?

Ezekiel complains that by this parabolic form of prophecy he only makes himself, and it, a jest to his countrymen. God therefore permits him to express the same prophecy more plainly in Ezek 21:1-32.

Ezekiel 21

- 1] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
2] Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,

Up to this point, the mercy of God has been extended, but now coming judgment is inevitable and there is no alternative.

“...Jerusalem...holy places...land of Israel...”: Cf. the three “souths” of Ezek 20:46.)

- 3] And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.

“...I am against thee...”: This is the first time He has said this about His city of Jerusalem. The righteous and the wicked take the place of the “green” and the “dry” tree (Cf. Ezek 20:47).

“...my sword...”: The fire of Ezek 20:47 (Cf. 21:5; 30:24, 25; 32:10). The sword drawn against Israel is that of his agent, Nebuchadnezzar (Cf. v.19; 12:13; 17:20).

- 4] Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north:
5] That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more.

“...it shall not return any more”: The time for judgment has come.

- 6] Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.

The loins were regarded as the seat of strength (Job 40:16; cf. Ps 66:11; 69:23; Isa 21:3; Nah 2:10). The Lord was instructing Ezekiel to express his breaking heart and emotion, in order to convey, through him, the intensity that God felt here.

- 7] And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord GOD.

This was speaking of the coming judgment of Nebuchadnezzar on them in 588-586 B.C.

- 8] Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
9] Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD; Say, A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished:

The dazzling brightness of the sword is added to its sharpness as a fresh element of terror.

- 10] It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree.

Titus the Roman came in 70 A.D. and leveled that city—just as Nebuchadnezzar is about to do in Ezekiel’s time (Cf Isa 24:17; 66:16 Lk 21:26).

- 11] And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer.

- 12] Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh.
- 13] Because it is a trial, and what if the sword condemn even the rod? it shall be no more, saith the Lord GOD.
- 14] Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite thine hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers.

[The Masoretic Text (MT) of these verses is difficult, and all translations resort to conjectural emendations. Source: Pfeiffer, Charles F.: *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary : Old Testament*. Chicago : Moody Press, 1962.]

- 15] I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their heart may faint, and their ruins be multiplied: ah! it is made bright, it is wrapped up for the slaughter.
- 16] Go thee one way or other, either on the right hand, or on the left, whithersoever thy face is set.
- 17] I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the LORD have said it.
- 18] The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,
- 19] Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the way to the city.

There is a fork in the road, and God asked Ezekiel to now draw a map: Southwest it went to Judah and Jerusalem; Southeast it went to Rabbath-Ammon. The prophet was commanded to mark on the sand, or possibly on a brick or tile (cf. Ezek 4:1), two lines representing two roads which the king of Babylon and his army would follow. These roads come forth from the same land, Babylon, and follow the same route hundreds of miles to the Orontes Valley before diverging.

- 20] Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced.

In Greco-Roman times this city was called Philadelphia; today it is known as Amman. It is situated at the source of the Jabbok, twenty-five miles northeast of the Dead Sea. Rabbath-Ammon lay on one road and Jerusalem on the other. Both were guilty of conspiracy against Babylon (Jer 27:1-3).

In about 590 B.C. Ammon had conspired with Judah against Babylon, so they were in a sense together. The king was going to go against each of them, but as kings always did in those days, he used divination, or fortune-telling, to choose which one he was going to pick.

- 21] For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver.

Divination

One way of divining was known among the Greeks as the βέλομαντεία. The arrows were put into a quiver, with names (in this case probably Rabbath and Jerusalem) written on them.

Another way was to consult images, *teraphim* (Judg 18:18; Hosea 3:4). A third way was hepatoscopy, familiar in Greek, Etrurian, and Roman divination: They would cut open an animal, typically a sheep, and depending on the marks of the liver, decide what the choice might be.

- 22] At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering rams against the gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort.

The Lord was not here sanctioning the use of divination. He was just playing out how the Babylonian king was going to do it and, of course, the Lord had it come out so that Jerusalem was the king's choice (Prov 16:33).

- 23] And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken.
- 24] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand.

This was 2500 years ago, so we just read this casually; but if you try to put yourself in the position of the inhabitants of Jerusalem having to hear this prophet describe what God was going to do, these would be very heavy words. Ezekiel was probably not a very popular guy.

- 25] And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,
- 26] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

He is speaking of Zedekiah is to be brought low, and there will not be another king to sit upon the throne of David "until Shiloh come."

- 27] I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

This is Ezekiel's first distinct reference to the personal Messiah, who will have the right to wear the crown and will be a true king (Cf. Gen 49:10; Ezek 34:23). The repetition expresses the superlative degree (cf. Isa 6:3; Jer 22:29).

Jacob's Final Prophecy

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.
Genesis 49:10

שִׁילֹה *Shiloh*: He whose right it is, that which belongs to him.

שֶׁבֶט *Shebet*: scepter.

“Scepter”

The scepter refers to their tribal identity and their right to apply and enforce Mosaic Laws and adjudicate capital offenses: *jus gladii*. Even during their 70-year Babylonian captivity (606-537 B.C.), the tribes retained their tribal identity. They retained their own logistics, judges, etc. (Ezek 1:5,8). [Josh MacDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, pp. 108-168.]

Shiloh

Shiloh: he whose it is: “The scepter will not depart from Judah until He comes to whom it belongs.” The term “*Shiloh*” was understood by the early rabbis and Talmudic authorities as referring to the Messiah. [*Targum Onkelos*; *Targum Jonathan*; *Targum Yerusahmi*. Cf. *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation; The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*, Samson H. Levy, Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, 1974.]

Scepter Departs

Herod the Great died. Herod Antipater had been murdered. Herod Archelaus was appointed “*Entharch*” by Caesar Augustus but was broadly rejected: Dethroned, Banished (6-7 A.D.) cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 17:13. Caponius was appointed Procurator—the legal power of the Sanhedrin was immediately restricted and the adjudication of capital cases was lost. This was normal Roman policy (cf. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 2:8.).

After the death of the procurator Festus, when Albinus was about to succeed him, the high priest Ananias considered it a favorable opportunity to

assemble the Sanhedrin. He therefore caused James, the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, and several others, to appear before this hastily assembled council, and pronounced upon them the sentence of death by stoning. All the wise men and strict observers of the law who were at Jerusalem expressed their disapprobation of this act... Some even went to Albinus himself, who had departed to Alexandria, to bring this breach of the law under his observation, and to inform him that Aranius had acted illegally in assembling the Sanhedrin without the Roman authority.

Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20:9

The priests officially mourned: “*Woe unto us for the scepter has departed from Judah and the Messiah has not come!*” (Cf. *Babylonian Talmud*, Chapter 4, folio 37.) They believed the Word of God had failed! The scepter had, indeed, been removed from Judah, **but *Shiloh* had come**.

While the Jews wept in the streets of Jerusalem, a young son of a carpenter was growing up in Nazareth. He would present Himself as the *Meshiach Nagid*, Messiah the King, on the very day which had been predicted by the Angel Gabriel to Daniel five centuries earlier (Dan 9:24-27).

From Zedekiah down to the Lord Jesus, there has been no one in the line of David who ever sat on that throne. Ezekiel is saying that no one would ever be able to do so. The Lord Jesus is the only One who will. Right now He is sitting at God's right hand, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool when He comes to this earth to rule (Cf. Gen 49:10; Isa 2:1-4; Mt 3:2).

- 28] And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword is drawn: for the slaughter it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering:

Ezekiel now turns to the other city: denouncing judgment against Ammon, without the prospect of a restoration such as awaited Israel. Rabbat of the Ammonites was the other city mentioned in verse 20 along with Jerusalem. The lot fell on Jerusalem as the first one to be dealt with. *Now it is Ammon's turn.*

Ammon

Ammon and Jerusalem, though enemies, had allied against Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar decided to attack Jerusalem, Ammon was relieved and happy. They were thankful that Jerusalem would suffer in their place. In fact, after Jerusalem's fall the Ammonites organized a coup that caused the death of Gedaliah, the governor of the land appointed by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 40:13-41:10).

The Ammonites tried to set up another government in Israel that would be opposed to Babylon—probably so Nebuchadnezzar would again attack Judah instead of Ammon! Five years after the fall of Jerusalem, Ammon was destroyed for aiding Ishmael in usurping the government of Judea against the will of the king of Babylon (2 Kgs 25:25; Jer 41:15).

- 29] Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of them that are slain, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity shall have an end.

Ammon, too, had false diviners who flattered them with assurances of safety; the only result of which will be to add the Ammonites to the *headless trunks* of the slain of Judah, and “whose day” of visitation for their guilt “is come.”

Ezekiel is speaking of the judgment of the Ammonites, but we also have again the expression, “when their iniquity shall have an end,” suggesting the end of this age (Cf. 2 Thess 2:8).

- 30] Shall I cause it to return into his sheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity.
 31] And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, and skilful to destroy.
 32] Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no more remembered: for I the LORD have spoken it.

In contrast to Israel, there would be no future restoration for Ammon. The sword is against Ammon in this later part of Chapter 21. Chapter 25 is going to deal also with this judgment against Ammon. Ammon rejoiced at the fall of Jerusalem, as did Edom as well. Of course Edom is the subject of Obadiah’s prophecy, while Ammon is the subject of both this and some subsequent remarks.

Ezekiel 22

In Chapter 20 we were taken, in the vindication of God’s judgment, on a historical survey of the iniquities of the earlier ancestors of the Nation Israel. In Chapter 22 Ezekiel will now zero in on Jerusalem, “the bloody city.”

There are lessons here that we need to digest personally and for our own times. Worship practices in the early cultures of Chaldea, Syria, and Egypt had some very raunchy X-rated stuff. We are not going to go into detail, but will only cover this in broad terms.

From the standpoint of homiletics, this chapter specifies the abominations of which the nation was guilty (vv. 1-12); laments the absence of any voice raised against these sins (vv. 23-31); and announces the fires of judgment upon the nation (vv. 13-22).

- 1] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
 2] Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations.

He applies the very epithet (Hebrew, *oily of bloods*) which Nahum had applied to Nineveh (Nah 3:1).

“The Bloody City”

- “How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers” (Isaiah 1:21).
 - The Lord Jesus wept over the city and said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee . . .” (Luke 13:34). *After all, didn’t they slay Him also? They turned Him over to the Romans who did the killing job.*
 - At the death of Christ, the crowd cried out to Pilate, “. . . His blood be on us, and on our children” (Mt 27:25).
 - It was Stephen who declared to the Jews, “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52).
- 3] Then say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD, The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself.

These two sins opposed the Mosaic Law’s standards for Israel’s relationships with God and her fellow Israelites cf. Matt. 22:34-40 Rather than loving God she had turned to idolatry; and her love for her fellow Israelites had been replaced by treachery.

- 4] Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries.

Ezekiel mentioned blood or bloodshed seven times in this message to drive home the city’s sin of extreme violence (Ezek 7:23; 8:17; 12:19).

- 5] Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous and much vexed.

What a sad contrast to the Jerusalem once designated “the holy city!”

- 6] Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood.
7] In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow.

“...father and mother...”: Authority of parents has a heavy emphasis in Scripture (Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9; Deut 27:16). “Honor thy father and thy mother” (Ex 20:12)

“...the stranger...”: Protection of sojourners (Ex 21:21; 23:9)

“...the fatherless and the widow...”: The most vulnerable of all (Ex 22:22-24; Deut 24:17; 27:19).

- 8] Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths.

Ezekiel cited sins that specifically violated some of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17): social injustice (v. 7); apostasy (v. 8); idolatry (v. 9); immorality (vv. 10-11); and, greed (v. 12).

- 9] In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.

“...carry tales to shed blood”: Corrupt informers are linked to the incidents of judicial murders (vv. 6, 9; 23:27; 24:6, 9). Examples of this are in 2 Kings 2:16 and 24:4. Eleven times these things are mentioned as being in the city; there was a major emphasis on that. Lies are bad enough. Informing against innocence is even worse. (Cf. Lev 19:16.)

“...eat upon the mountains...”: The participation in the feasts of the idols in their high places, at the sites of those idol worshipping systems. There is a link between idolatry, the worshipping of idols, and the lewd sexual abusive practices.

- 10] In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution.

A strange command with deeper implications (Gen 9:20-25; Lev 18:4, 11-14; 20:19). [Paradox of Kabbalah: attempts to “uncover the Father's nakedness” within the Godhead!]

- 11] And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter.

There are many passages on various forms of incest, various forms of corruption (Lev 18, 20; Deut 22, 27; Gen 38; 2 Sam 13).

- 12] In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD.

The list concluded with another sin, the root problem behind the others: *you have forgotten Me* (Deut 32:18; Jer 2:32; 3:21).

Jerusalem's Defiling Crimes: Ezekiel 22:1-12

Four main groups of abominable deeds are treated in this first oracle:

1) Idolatry and irreligion: Forgetfulness of the Lord (v. 12) is at the root of all the sins (Ezek 23:35). Idols (vv. 3, 4); despising of holy things, profaning the sabbaths (v. 8; v. 26; 20:20, 21); eating idol sacrifices upon the mountains (v. 9; cf. 18:6).

2) Widespread bloodshed occurred throughout the city (vv. 2-4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 27).

3) Immorality and incest were common: men committed lewdness (v. 9b; 16:27; Lev 18:17); marrying a stepmother (v. 10; cf. Lev 18:7, 8; 20:11ff); they humbled women who were unclean in their impurity (v. 10b; 18:6; Lev 18:9); they committed adultery with a neighbor's wife and incest with a daughter in law and with a sister (v. 11; Lev 18:20, 5, 9).

4) Inhumanity was practiced: Father and mother are treated with contempt, the sojourner suffers extortion ... the fatherless and the widow are wronged (v. 7; Ex 21:17; 22:21, 22). Slander leading to bloodshed (v. 9; Lev 19:16); men took bribes, usury, and extortion (v. 12; Ex 23:8; 22:25; Lev 19:13).

The people did not keep the code of righteousness extolled in Ezekiel 18:5-9.

- 13] Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee.
14] Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it.
15] And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee.
16] And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

The chastisement would be a *Diaspora* among the nations, which Moses had warned them from the beginning (Lev 26:27-39; Deut 28:64-68).

- 17] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
18] Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver.

House of Israel is to me become dross. Dross was a symbol of worthlessness (Ps 119:119; Prov 25:4; 26:23). Metallurgy was a developed science throughout the ancient Near East (cf. Job 28:1-11).

- 19] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

Note the repetition of ideas throughout this paragraph. Heb 12:20: “For our God is a consuming fire.” Judgment on Israel under the figure of a smelting furnace (Cf. Isa 1:22, 25; 48:10; Jer 6:27-30; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:2, 3). Israel is the raw material; Jerusalem is the furnace. YHWH smelts the ore (Heb 12:29), and Israel comes out as dross!

- 20] As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you.

Hence the people must be thrown into the furnace of judgment, that the bad may be consumed, and the good separated (Jer 6:29, 30).

- 21] Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof.
22] As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.
23] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
24] Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.

Ezekiel indicts prophets, priests, and princes for their complicity in sin.

- 25] There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

Strike 1: Her false *prophets* were saying, “Everything is fine. We’re getting along nicely.”

- 26] Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

Strike 2: Her *priests* blatantly violated the law of God.

- 27] Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

Strike 3: Her *princes* were “like wolves ravening the prey.” Paul has warned the church about wolves in sheep’s clothing (Acts 20:29) and we do have them in the church today. Wolves are notorious for fierce and ravening cruelty (Micah 3:2, 3, 9-11; Jn 10:12). Why was Jerusalem called a bloody city? Because of the prophets, the priests, and the princes.

- 28] And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.
29] The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.
30] And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

Jeremiah was in Jerusalem at that time, but of what value would his prayers be for a people who would not repent? (Ps 66:18). Jeremiah had been forbidden to pray for the people as being doomed to wrath (Jer 11:14).

There was not a man to be found in the land who could stand in the gap. I thank God He did find a Man to stand between my sin and a holy God. *That Man is the Lord Jesus Christ, and God sees those who belong to Him in Christ.*

- 31] Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Next Session

Study Chapters 23 & 24. These will complete this section on the judgment on Israel and Jerusalem. (The subsequent sessions—25 to 32—will deal with the judgment of the Muslim nations. Those messages were given during the siege of Jerusalem.) Chapter 23, the dark parable of Aholah and Aholibah, unmasks the loathsome nature of unfaithfulness to God and provides a corrective for any light view of apostasy. The picture, revolting though it is, shows the awfulness of spiritual adultery whereby the Lord’s people, who are one with Him as bride and bridegroom, repudiate their union with Him and give themselves to the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil (Cf. James 4:4).

The Book of Ezekiel Session 11

Chapters 23 - 24

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel 23: The Two Sisters

Chapter 23 seems to be a restatement of the parable in Chapter 16, since both chapters deal with Judah’s unfaithfulness to God. However, in Chapter 16 Ezekiel focused on *Judah’s idolatry*, whereas in Chapter 23 he stressed Judah’s *illicit foreign alliances* in addition to her idolatry.

- 1] The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother:

“...word of the Lord”: Ezekiel didn’t make this story up—God gave him this message.

“...one mother”: The whole nation of Israel; the two women will be identified in verse 4.

- 3] And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity.

The role of Egypt in that sense can be found in Gen 45:10; 46:2-5; 47:1-6; Ex 1:8 (the golden calf) and 24:14.

- 4] And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.

- אֶהְלָה *‘Oholah* “her own tent, tabernacle”
- אֶהְלִיבָה *‘Oholiybah* “the tent, tabernacle is in her”

God never recognized the worship that Jeroboam set up in the north. King Jeroboam put up two golden calves, one in Beth-el and one in Samaria, and tried to keep his people from going south to worship in Jerusalem. But the faithful migrated south (2 Chr 11:13-17). It was very easy for the prophets and the people of the southern kingdom to say that God will judge those golden calves in the north—and He surely did. However, He is going to judge the southern kingdom also, because they were going through the ritual of a dead religion; they thought they were right with God, but they actually were living in sin.

- 5] And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours,
- 6] Which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses.

“...played the harlot...”: The lovers are, as in Ezekiel 16:33, the nations with which the kings of Israel were in alliance, and of these the Assyrians are named as preeminent.

The “Black Obelisk” of Shalmaneser III

The Black Obelisk is a black limestone bas-relief sculpture from Nimrud in northern Iraq, currently displayed in the British Museum. It is historically significant because it displays the earliest ancient depiction of an Israelite.



The Black Obelisk of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (dated ~ 841 B.C.) mentions “Jehu son of Omri” and pictures him bowing down to the Assyrian monarch. [You can find this marked on the black obelisk of his which is now in the British Museum.]

This is not mentioned in the Bible, but it probably resulted from the Syrian threat to Israel. Syria was expanding into Israel’s land in the Transjordan during Jehu’s reign (2 Kgs 10:32-34).

Israel's Relationships with Assyria

To counter that threat, Jehu allied Israel with Assyria and submitted himself as a vassal. The obelisk pictures Jehu and his servants bringing tribute to the Assyrian king. Menahem and Hoshea, two later kings of Israel, also paid tribute to Assyria (2 Kgs 15:19-20; 17:3-4).

The Prophet Hosea (~760-720 B.C.) rebuked Israel for her dependence on Assyria instead of on the Lord (cf. Hosea 5:13-14; 7:11; 8:9; 12:1). After Israel became Assyria's vassal she could not disentangle herself. When she finally tried to break away by forming a coalition with both Syria and Egypt, she felt Assyria's wrath (cf. 2 Kgs 17:4; Isa 7:1). The very nation to which Samaria had turned for assistance would destroy her.

- 7] Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted: with all their idols she defiled herself.

The next two verses paint the consequence of the alliance first with Assyria and then with Egypt. She adopted the religion of Assyria, probably in the form of the worship of Ishtar (Ashtoreth) as the queen of heaven. Having done this, the kings of Israel sought to play off one kingdom against the other (Hos 7:11; 2 Kgs 17:4). It was the discovery of Hoshea's treachery in this matter that led Shalmaneser to besiege Samaria. The result of that siege is described in general terms in v.10. She, the city of Samaria, was slain with the sword, her sons and daughters were taken into exile.

- 8] Neither left she her whoredoms brought from Egypt: for in her youth they lay with her, and they bruised the breasts of her virginity, and poured their whoredom upon her.
9] Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted.
10] These discovered her nakedness: they took her sons and her daughters, and slew her with the sword: and she became famous among women; for they had executed judgment upon her.

It was the Northern Kingdom, while still under the Lord's authority, we find chronicled that they went astray with the Assyrians. It was specifically climaxed with King Jehu's tribute to Shalmaneser in 841 B.C.

Who destroyed Aholah? It was her lovers! Who destroys the harlot, Mystery Babylon? (Rev 17 -18). Who turns on her and consumes her? The nation she rides on.

- 11] And when her sister Aholibah saw this, she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she, and in her whoredoms more than her sister in her whoredoms.

The Southern Kingdom had over a hundred year advantage over the Northern Kingdom. She saw them fall into idolatry and sin, and the foreign alliances with Assyria, ending up being taken captive by the Assyrians themselves! God judged them for spiritual corruption.

Did Judah learn by their example? The message here was that the same thing happened to the Southern Kingdom which had happened to the Northern Kingdom (2 Kgs 21; 2 Chr 33).

Israel and Syria had banded together to oppose Assyria, and they sought to bring Judah into the alliance. When Ahaz refused, they attacked Judah hoping to dethrone Ahaz and to replace him with a king who would support their uprising. Rather than trusting in God for deliverance (as Isaiah the prophet urged him to do), Ahaz sent to Assyria to enlist her aid and protection.

King Ahaz made his alliance with Tiglath-pileser and this political maneuver of Ahaz was denounced (Isa 7:3-17). With that act, Judah became a vassal of Assyria for the next century (cf. 2 Kgs 16:5-9).

A Sign for the House of Israel

This is what gave rise to that very famous verse in Isaiah's denunciation of Ahaz's league with Tiglath-pileser: "*The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*" (Isa 7:14). A woman having a child is not a big sign; but a *virgin* having one is. Judah did send her ambassadors to Chaldea (Jer 29 et al.). Those political alliances led to religious defections. You cannot separate religion from politics.

- 12] She doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men.

King Ahaz, on the throne in the southern kingdom, went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and he saw there the nicest altar he'd ever seen. So he sent Urijah the priest to get the pattern of it in order to make one just like it (2 Kgs 16:10-18).

- 13] Then I saw that she was defiled, that they took both one way,
14] And that she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion,

“...Vermilion...”: the peculiar color of the Chaldeans, as purple was of the Assyrians. The Jews (for instance Jehoiakim in Jer 22:14 copied these; cf. Ezek 8:10). In striking agreement with this verse is the fact that the Assyrian sculptures lately discovered have painted and colored bas-reliefs in red, blue, and black.

Jerusalem’s respite from Assyria’s domination was short-lived. King Josiah established her independence, but he was killed in battle with Pharaoh Necho (for the Ark? cf. 2 Chr 35:3, 20-23; 2 Kgs 23:29-30). Judah became a vassal of Egypt for four years.

Probably during that time King Jehoiakim contacted Babylon to request her aid. When Babylon defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish in 605 BC, Jehoiakim willingly switched allegiances and became Nebuchadnezzar’s vassal (2 Kgs 24:1).

- 15] Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity:

The Assyrians delighted in ample, flowing, and richly colored tunics, scarfs, girdles, and head-dresses or turbans, varying in ornaments according to the rank.

“...princes...”: Literally, a first-rate military class that fought by threes in the chariots, one guiding the horses, the other two fighting.

- 16] And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea.

God made the object of their sinful desire the instrument of their punishment. It was she that solicited the Chaldeans, not they her. Jehoiakim, probably by a stipulation of tribute, enlisted Nebuchadnezzar against Pharaoh, whose tributary he previously had been; failing to keep his stipulation, he brought on himself Nebuchadnezzar’s vengeance.

- 17] And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them.
 18] So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister.
 19] Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

Mark the danger of “calling to remembrance” and dwelling on the pleasure felt in past sins. The disappointment and failure, however, did not

lead to repentance. Foreign alliances, and with them foreign idolatries, were courted more eagerly than ever, though in a different direction. The lovers were changed, but the harlotry went on.

- 20] For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses.

To show his absolute disgust in this course of action, Ezekiel used coarse language (v. 20) not to be vulgar, but to portray graphically the utter spiritual degradation to which Judah had fallen. Horses on the Egyptian hieroglyphics were a symbol meaning a lustful person. Also, asses and horses were used proverbially to speak of the lustful (e.g., Jer 2:24, 5:8; 13:27).

In the last 14 years of Judah’s history (600-586 B.C.) she attempted to elicit Egypt’s help in her revolt against Babylon. King Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon in 600 B.C. after Egypt defeated Babylon (2 Kgs 24:1). Judah eagerly grasped Egypt’s hollow promises of aid. Zedekiah’s final revolt against Babylon in 588 B.C. came with Egypt’s promise of assistance (2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 37:5-8; Ezek 29:6-7).

- 21] Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth.
 22] Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side;

Four threats are announced, each beginning with the expression, “Thus saith the Lord God”—vv. 22-27, 28-31, 32-34, 35

- 23] The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them: all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses.

Identified as the Pukudu, Sutu, and Kutu, tribes living east of the Tigris River, near its mouth, all part of the Chaldean empire (cf. Jer 50:20; Isa 22:5).

- 24] And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments.

“...buckler...”: A small shield carried on the arm.

- 25] And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the

sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.

In Mesopotamia, facial mutilation was a frequent punishment for adultery. Similarly Jerusalem would be rendered unattractive to any more potential lovers. A guilty woman would be rendered so grotesque that she would be forever undesirable to anyone else; she would be forced to bear her shame and guilt publicly.

- 26] They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels.
27] Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more.

When passions are sated, there is a loathing that often follows.

- 28] For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated:
29] And they shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labour, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.
30] I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols.
31] Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand.
32] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much.
33] Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria.

The Cup of Judgment

The concept of imbibing a cup of judgment occurs throughout the Bible (Ps 75:8; Isa 51:17-23; Jer 25:15-19; 51:7; Hab 2:16; Rev 17:3-4; 18:6).

The Lord Himself (Mt 26:39,42 (3X)).

- 34] Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.
35] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

“Thou hast forgotten me..” - the fundamental behind all sin. The “cup” is an idiom. (Ps 75:8; Isa 51; Jer 25; Hab2; but most of all Mt 20:22.

“...break the sherds ...” = “Pluck out your hair: A free rendering of the LXX for the MT “gnaw its sherds”; Cf. Jer 25:16; Job 39:24.

Now verses 36-42 are a detailed indictment. There is no comparable arraignment in the Scripture that is more incisive or scathing, and yet so complete.

- 36] The LORD said moreover unto me; Son of man, wilt thou judge Aholah and Aholibah? yea, declare unto them their abominations;
37] That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them.
38] Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths.
39] For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house.
40] And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments,
41] And satest upon a stately bed, and a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil.
42] And a voice of a multitude being at ease was with her: and with the men of the common sort were brought Sabeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads.

“...Sabeans”: סַבְאִים *sābā'im* may also be translated “drunkards” (from *sābā*’, “to imbibe, drink largely.”

- 43] Then said I unto her that was old in adulteries, Will they now commit whoredoms with her, and she with them?
44] Yet they went in unto her, as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot: so went they in unto Aholah and unto Aholibah, the lewd women.
45] And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands.
46] For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled.
47] And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire.

Stoning was the punishment for adultery prescribed by the Law (cf. 16:38-40; Deut 21:21). •Obviously they stoned literally.

- 48] Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness.
49] And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

Stoning

The week Jesus was betrayed He said, “Not one stone will be left upon another, because you did not recognize the day of your visitation.” (Lk 19:44). The whole Temple Judgment and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. had that very flavor. In the Book of Revelation, one of the key judgments is hailstones of 100 pounds each! (Rev 16:21).

Ezekiel 24: The Parable of the Boiling Pot and the Death of Ezekiel’s wife

God will use both of these to speak to the people.

The Boiling Pot

On the day when the siege and capture of Jerusalem began, the Lord gave the prophet an allegory and an acted parable to deliver concerning the siege and ultimate capture of the city. He was to set a rusted caldron (Jerusalem) on the fire, fill it with water, and throw pieces of flesh (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) into it. He was to pile fuel under it to make it boil furiously (the siege and its severities).

Then he should pull out pieces of flesh indiscriminately from the kettle (the universal dispersion when the siege was over). He next was to set the empty pot on coals so that its rust and filth might be molten and consumed (the purifying judgments were to continue long after the destruction of the city).

- 1] Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

This is the first time that Ezekiel has dated his message. At this very moment Nebuchadnezzar was breaking through the wall of Jerusalem... This was January 15, 588 B.C.—a day of national calamity for Jerusalem. *The king of Babylon besieged Jerusalem that very day.*

This was the day Ezekiel had been pointing to for over four years. The date was so significant that it was also mentioned by the writer of 1 and 2 Kings and by the Prophet Jeremiah (cf. 2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 39:1; 52:4). The day of the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 39:1; 52:4). January 587 (or 588) B.C. During the Exile and till 518 B.C., this day was observed as a fast (Zech 8:19).

- 3] And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it:
- 4] Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones.

This was similar to his message in chapter 11, in which some leaders used the figure of a cooking pot to give Jerusalem false hope. The people thought that being in the pot (Jerusalem) would keep them safe; but here Ezekiel prophesied that the pot would be their place of destruction.

- 5] Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein.
- 6] Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.

This time there were no lots being cast (2 Sam 8:2; Joel 3:3; Obad 11; and Nahum 3:10). Bones were used for fuel. That is the Parable of the Caldron. The concept of a pot was used for Jerusalem in several other places (Ezek 11:3; Isa 1:25-26; Jer 6:29-30). But verses 6 - 14 are going to explain what this parable of the pot is about. It is a heavy one, and as we saw before, we here read of the “bloody city” again. The pot is the city of Jerusalem; the citizens are in that pot. Their sin is the scum that’s in the pot.

- 7] For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust
- 8] That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.

It was a Levitical practice that underlies this; and we see this purging here. In Leviticus 17:13 blood was to be covered by dust. Any blood not covered by dust was supposed to be avenged.

The Cleansing of Jerusalem

See Leviticus 14:34-37, 44-45; which goes into a whole procedure in which they cleanse the house of leprosy. They take the house to pieces, scrape it, and after it is plastered, the priest comes again to look (v. 44-45).

This was the purging idea, leprosy being a type of sin. And, again, this was a cleansing. We have much the same intent here in terms of purging, cleansing, Jerusalem.

- 9] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great.

- 10] Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned.

We are reminded of the “bubble, bubble” of the witches’ cauldron in “Macbeth.”

- 11] Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed.
 12] She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire.
 13] In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.
 14] I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.
 15] Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
 16] Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

I imagine it was a heartbreak to Ezekiel, but again he must act a part: The Lord told Ezekiel that his beloved wife would die suddenly, and that he was not to engage in the customary mourning practices. He was thus to be a symbol of the despair of the people at the fate of their beloved city Jerusalem. For mourning customs, consult Eccl 38:17; Isa 20:2; Micah 3:7; Lev 13:45.

- 17] Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.

That morning Ezekiel told the people about his vision, and that evening his wife died. The next morning, when his wife would have been buried, he followed God’s instructions and did not mourn openly. Because the event had been explained to the people in advance, they realized that the action had some national significance. So they asked him to explain what it meant.

Uncovering the head was an ordinary sign of mourning in priests; whereas others covered their heads in mourning (2 Sam 15:30). The reason was, the priests had their headdress of fine twined linen given them for ornament, and as a badge of office. The high priest, as having on his head the holy anointing oil, was forbidden in *any* case to lay aside his headdress. But the priests might do so in the case of the death of the nearest relatives (Lev 21:2, 3, 10). They then put on inferior attire, sprinkling also on their heads dust and ashes (compare Lev 10:6, 7).

- 18] So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.
 19] And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?

It was even, perhaps, more profound than that, because Ezekiel’s not mourning his wife suggests somewhat the relationship between YHWH and Israel.

Ezekiel explained that the death of his wife symbolized the destruction of God’s temple and the slaughter of the people of Jerusalem—people loved by those in exile. Ezekiel had lost the “delight” of his “eyes” (v. 16 and the exiles would lose Jerusalem, the “delight of their eyes,” to Babylon (v. 25).

Just as Ezekiel had experienced a great personal tragedy, so those already in captivity would feel the tragedy when they heard about Jerusalem’s fall and the massacre of their loved ones there.

- 20] Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
 21] Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.
 22] And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.
 23] And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.
 24] Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

Verse 24 is regarded by many as the key to the entire Book of Ezekiel!

- 25] Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters,
 26] That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears?
 27] In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel had been commanded to remain silent before his fellow exiles except to pronounce the prophecies God gave him (cf. 3:25-27). His part-time dumbness would end when the prophecies he had delivered were confirmed (cf. 33:21-22). In Ezekiel 3:26, it had been prophesied

that he would be struck dumb. So from the time Jerusalem fell until (some 6 months later?) a fugitive who had escaped the destruction finally made his way down to Babylon and verified to Ezekiel that this event had taken place, Ezekiel was not allowed to speak.

And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.

Ezekiel 33:21

But with this documentation, his mouth was opened and Ezekiel did prophesy again.

“They Shall Know That I Am the Lord”

Jerusalem was *God’s* city, and the temple was *His* house. They were God’s witness to the world. And when the people of Israel failed, God said, “I will destroy even My own witness on the earth. I want you to know the city is destroyed. The rest of your people are being brought into captivity. But there’s no use weeping, there’s no use howling to Me now. I have done this—I am responsible for it.”

To each of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus said, “You had better be careful of your witness to the world, or I will come and remove your lampstand.” The lampstand of all seven of those churches has been removed. Not one of those churches remains today.

Next Session

From Chapters 1-24, we have reviewed *history*. From here on, we will see *prophecy*! Study Chapter 25.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 12 Chapter 25

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)

33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

A Transition

Chapters 25-32: The prophecies announcing punishment on Israel’s hostile neighbors constitute a transition between the prophecies of judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (Chapters 1-24) and the predictions of her restoration (Chapters 33-39; 40-48). Prophecies against foreign nations are grouped together in other prophets also (Isa 13-23; Jer 46-51; Amos 1; 2; Zeph 2:4-15).

God’s judgment would extend out from Judah in all directions.

- The first three—Ammon, Moab, Edom—formed the eastern boundary of Judah;
- the fourth nation, Philistia, was on her western boundary.
- Tyre and Sidon, cities of Phoenicia, were the principal powers north of Judah;
- Egypt was the major power to the southwest.

Judgment Upon the Nations

1) Ammon] Chapter	
2) Moab		
3) Edom		• 25
4) Philistia		
5) Tyre		• 26, 27, 28:1-10
(Satan)		• 28:11-19
6) Sidon		• 28:20-24
7) Egypt		• 29, 30, 31, 32

Why seven? (Completeness?)

Why?

The Lord was to mete out chastisement upon Israel’s surrounding foes because of their demeanor toward Israel and (Ezek 25:3, 8, 12, 15; 26:2; 29:6); and, their ungodly pride and self-deification (Ezek 28; 29:3).

Introduction

For 24 chapters we have been reading about God's judgment on the Nation Israel: "the Jew first." *In the next few chapters we are going to read about God's judgment on the nations*

God's faithful promise to Abraham was, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." (Gen 12:3). Ammon, Moab, and Edom descended from Shem. Tyre may have descended from Japeth. Philistia, Sidon, and Egypt descended from Ham.

Ammon

- 1] The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them;

"...Ammonites...": Their origin is in Gen 19:33–38.

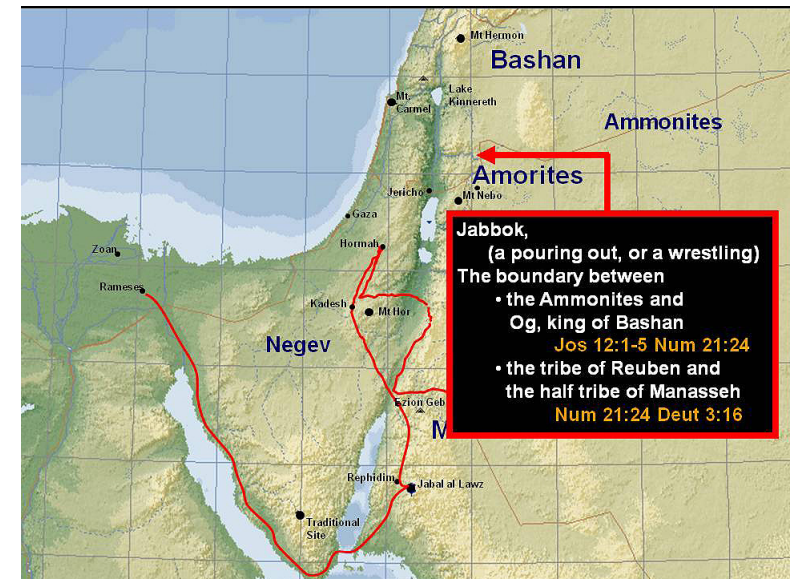
Ammonites

A nation sprung from Ben-ammi, Lot's son by his younger daughter as Moab by his elder, after Lot escaped from Sodom (Gen 19:38; Ps 83:7,8). Ammon and Moab appear continually together; both are said to have hired Balaam, though Moab alone is mentioned in the detailed account (Deut 13:4; Num 22; 23). The land from Arnon river to Jabbok is assigned to both (Judg 11:12-18, 25).

Old Testament designation: Heb: *Ben 'Ammi*, *Bene 'Ammon*, "son of my people," "children of my people," i.e. relatives. Hence we find that the Israelites are commanded to avoid conflict with them on their march to the Promised Land (Deut 2:19). Their dwelling-place was on the east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan, between the Arnon and the Jabbok, but, before the advance of the Hebrews, they had been dispossessed of a portion of their land by the Amorites, who founded, along the east side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, the kingdom of Sihon (Num 21:21-31).

The Israelites dispossessed the Amorites of land which afterward Ammon occupied, between Arnon and Jabbok (Num 21:24,26,29). We know from the records of Egypt, especially Tell el-Amarna Letters, the approximate date of the Amorite invasion (14th and 13th centuries, B.C.). They were pressed on the north by the Hittites who forced them upon the tribes of the south, and some of them settled east of the Jordan. Thus, Israel helped Ammonites by destroying their old enemies, and this makes their

conduct at a later period the more reprehensible. Ammon destroyed the aboriginal Rephaim or giants, named Zamzummim, and occupied their land, Jabbok being their boundary (Deut 2:20,21,37).



Moab was probably the more civilized half of Lot's descendants; whence we read of the plentiful fields, hay, summer fruits, vineyards, presses, songs of the grape treads, of Moab (Isa. 15; 16; Jer 48). Ammon was the more fierce, plundering, Bedouin-like half; we read of their threat of thrusting out the right eye of all in Jabesh Gilead (1 Sam 11:2); ripping up pregnant women in Gilead (Amos 1:13); treacherously murdering, as Ishmael, Baalis' agent, did (Jer 40:14; 41:5-7); and, suspecting and insulting their ally David to their own ruin (2 Sam 10:1-5; 12:31).

Ammon's one stronghold, Rabbah, "the city of waters" forms a contrast to Moab's numerous towns with their "high places" (Jer 48). [20 cities are mentioned Judg 11:33, perhaps some were Moabite cities.]

Their idol, Moloch, accordingly they worshipped in a tent, the token of nomad life, not a fixed temple or high place, such as was appropriated to the god of the more settled people Moab (Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43). They crossed the Jordan and seized Jericho for a time (Judg 3:13).

Their unwillingness to help Israel, and their joining Moab in hiring Balaam, caused their exclusion (like that of a bastard) from the Lord's

congregation for ten generations (Deut 23:2,46; Neh 13:2), whereas Edom, who had not hired him, was only excluded for three. The exclusion was from full Israelite citizenship, not from the spiritual privileges of the covenant, if they became proselytes.

Before David, Jephthah and Saul had sorely punished them (Judg 11:33; 1 Sam 11:11; 14:47). In the days of Jephthah they oppressed the Israelites east of the Jordan, claiming that the latter had deprived them of their territory when they came from Egypt, whereas it was the possessions of the Amorites they took (Judg 11:1-28). They were defeated, but their hostility did not cease, and their conduct toward the Israelites was particularly shameful, as in the days of Saul and of David (2 Sam 10; 11). This may account for the cruel treatment meted out to them in the war that followed (2 Sam 12:26-31).

Ammon joined with Moab in the expedition for uprooting Judah from its possession, in Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Chr 20; Ps 83:3-7). So utterly were the confederates routed that the Jews spent three days gathering the spoil. They had to bring gifts to Uzziah (2 Chr 26:8). Jotham reduced them to pay 100 talents of silver, 10,000 measures of wheat, and 10,000 of barley.

Their country came into the possession of Jeroboam, on the division of the kingdom, and when the Syrians of Damascus deprived the kingdom of Israel of their possessions east of the Jordan, the Ammonites became subjects of Benhadad, and we find a contingent of 1,000 of them serving as allies of that king in the great battle of the Syrians with the Assyrians at Qarqar (854 B.C.) in the reign of Shalmaneser II. They may have regained their old territory when Tiglath-pileser carried off the Israelites East of the Jordan into captivity (2 Kgs 15:29; 1 Chr 5:26).

Naamah, Solomon's wife, mother of Rehoboam, was an Ammonite. Their idol, Moloch, appears also under the varied form Milcom and Malcham, as the Heb. for "their king" may be rendered (Cf. Zeph 1:5; 2 Sam 12:30). Solomon's Ammonite wives seduced him to rear an altar to this "abomination," to his own hurt (Jer 49:1,3). These high places built for this idol by Solomon, at the instigation of his Ammonite wives, were not destroyed till the time of Josiah (2 Kgs 23:13).

Their hostility to Judah is shown in their joining the Chaldeans to destroy it (2 Kgs 24:2). Their cruelty is denounced by the prophet Amos (Amos 1:13), and their destruction by Jeremiah (49:1-6), Ezekiel (21:28-32), and Zephaniah (2:8,9). Their murder of Gedaliah was a particularly dastardly act. (2 Kgs 25:22-26; Jer 40:14).

Tobiah the Ammonite united with Sanballat to oppose Nehemiah and their opposition to the Jews did not cease with the establishment of the latter in Judea (Neh 4). They joined the Syrians in their wars with the Maccabees and were defeated by Judas (1 Mac 5:6).

In 593 B.C. Ammon joined a secret meeting of other potential conspirators to consider rebelling against Babylon (Jer 27:1-7). That plan did not materialize, but in 588 B.C. she did unite with Judah and Tyre against Babylon. So two ancient enemies, Judah and Ammon, were joined against a common foe.

When Nebuchadnezzar decided to attack Judah instead of Ammon (Ezek 21:18-27), Ammon was relieved that she had been spared. Instead of coming to Judah's aid, she rejoiced over Judah's misfortune, hoping to profit territorially from Judah's destruction.

- 3] And say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity;

The Ammonites applauded the enemy that destroyed Israel. They were allies. But the same enemy destroyed Ammon (Jer 49:6). Twice he repeated his "because/therefore/you will know" formula to show the destruction of Ammon (vv. 3-5, 6-8).

Ammon rejoiced over the destruction of the temple (mockingly saying "Aha!") and the decimation and exile of the people of Judah. The Ammonites gloated over Judah's misfortune (v. 6).

- 4] Behold, therefore I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk.

God's judgment would fit Ammon's sin. They rejoiced over Judah's downfall so *they* would fall. God would send them to the people of the East, nomadic desert tribesmen, as a possession. The Aramaean and Arabic tribes east of Ammon (cf. Judges 6:3, 33; Isa 11:14; Jer 49:28) were to despoil Ammon.

- 5] And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couchingplace for flocks: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

"Rabbah...": Its chief city (Ezek 21:20) was to become pasture (Isa 17:2; 32:14; Zeph 2:14).

“...ye shall know that I am the LORD”: Occurs about 65 times in Ezekiel, and repeatedly in the foreign oracles.

God’s judgment would fit Ammon’s sin. They rejoiced over Judah’s downfall so *they* would fall. God would send them **to the people of the** Because of Ammon’s malice against Israel, Ammon would be plundered by other nations and destroyed (cut . . . off).

- 6] For thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel;
- 7] Behold, therefore I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

Now the next prophecy is against Moab. It is located south of Ammon. It has its origin in Genesis 19. We find extensive prophecies against Moab (Jeremiah 48; Isaiah 15 and 16; Amos 2:1-3). They are subject to some substantial comment. Seir is another name for Edom; and Edom we will see shortly.

Moab

As mentioned earlier, Moab was probably the more civilized half of Lot’s descendants—we read of the plentiful fields, hay, summer fruits, vineyards, presses, songs of the grape treaders (Isa 15; 16; Jer 48).

The hostility between Moab and Israel began when Balak, king of Moab, tried to oppose Israel as Moses was leading them to Palestine (Num 22-24). During the time of the Judges, Israel was oppressed by Eglon, king of Moab (Judg 3:12-30). Relations between the countries improved slightly after that, and some Israelites went to Moab during a famine. Through this contact Ruth the Moabitess entered Israel’s history and the royal line of David.

The relationship between Moab and Israel again deteriorated during Saul’s reign (1 Sam 14:47). David conquered Moab and made it a vassal of Israel (2 Sam 8:2), and it remained under Israel’s control through Solomon’s reign. Moab rebelled against Israel years after Israel and Judah split, during Jehoshaphat’s regime (2 Kgs 3:4-27).

Moab united with Ammon and Edom in an ill-fated attempt to defeat Judah also during Jehoshaphat’s reign (2 Chr 20:1-23). Later, Moab

supported Babylon and attacked Judah after Jehoiakim’s revolt, possibly hoping to gain additional territory (2 Kgs 24:2). Moab then joined other nations and considered revolting from Babylon in 593 B.C. (Jer 27:1-7), but no evidence indicates that she ever did.

Moab’s territory lay between the river Arnon and the brook Zered, but Moab often laid claim to the land extending to the head of the Dead Sea.

After the death of Ahab at Ramoth-Gilead, Mesha shook off the yoke of Israel, but on the ascension of Jehoram to the throne of Israel, that king sought the help of Jehoshaphat in an attempt to reduce the Moabites again to their former condition. The united armies of the two kings came unexpectedly on the army of the Moabites, and gained over them an easy victory. Reduced to despair, he ascended the wall of the city, and there, in the sight of the allied armies, offered his first-born son a sacrifice to Chemosh, the fire-god of the Moabites (2Kgs 3:25-27).

The Moabite Stone

- A block of black basalt found near Dibon, Jordan, in 1868. B.C. The stone is now in the Louvre in Paris.
- Bears an inscription in the Moabite language from about 850 B.C., describing a 9th century B.C. victory of King Mesha of Moab over the Israelites.
- It was 3 1/2 feet high and 2 in breadth and in thickness, rounded at the top. It consisted of thirty-four lines, written in Hebrew-Phoenician characters. It was set up by Mesha as a record and memorial of his victories.
- It records Mesha’s wars with Omri, his public buildings, and his wars against Horonaim. This inscription in a remarkable degree supplements and corroborates the history of King Mesha in 2 Kgs 3:4-27.



With the exception of a very few variations, the Moabite language in which the inscription is written is identical with the Hebrew. It is the oldest inscription written in alphabetic characters, and hence is, apart from its value in the domain of Hebrew antiquities, of great linguistic importance. Here “we have the identical slab on which the workmen of the old world carved the history of their own times, and from which

the eye of their contemporaries read thousands of years ago the record of events of which they themselves had been the witnesses.”

- 8] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen;

Between Lot and his older daughter (Gen 19:33-38). Moab saw nothing good or unique in Israel’s existence. Other maledictions: Isa 15-16; 25:10-12; Jer 48; Amos 2:1-3; Zeph 2:8-11.

Seir

Seir was the name of the mountain range south of the Dead Sea that encompassed the country of Edom. The word became synonymous with the land of Edom (2 Chr 20:10; Num.20:14-21). Edom was included here with Moab (though her own judgment comes next) because she was guilty of the same sin of envy and contempt.

In their scorn, Moab and Edom were denying God’s promises to Israel. By minimizing Judah’s position of centrality among the nations, they were profaning the name of God who had promised Judah that position.

- 9] Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Bethjeshimoth, Baalmeon, and Kiriathaim,

- **Beth-jeshimoth:** 2 ½ miles NE of the Dead Sea (Josh 12:3; 13:20).
- **Baal-meon:** 9 miles E of the Dead Sea and 4 miles south of Medeba (Josh 13:17).
- **Kiriathaim:** 10 miles below Baal-meon and 7 miles NW of Dibon (Josh 13:9; Jer 48:1, 23).

God would remove Moab’s glory by exposing its northern flank to attack. He would destroy three towns: Beth Jeshimoth guarded the ascent to the Medeba Plateau from the Plains of Moab by the Jordan River. Baal Meon and Kiriathaim were important fortresses on the Medeba Plateau. The 2nd & 3rd of these cities are mentioned in the “Moabite Stone.”

- 10] Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites, and will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations.

“...will give them in possession...”: In addition to losing her defenses Moab would also lose her freedom; the same fate as Ammon (v. 4).

The nomadic desert tribesmen who would overrun Ammon would also overrun Moab.

- 11] And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

Psalm 60:8; 108:9

Edom is the nation that came from Esau, whose beginning is found in Genesis 25. The Book of Obadiah details the judgment against Edom and the rock-hewn city of Petra.

Edom

The strife actually began when Edom refused to let Israel cross her territory during the time of the wilderness wanderings (Num 20:14-21). Saul fought the Edomites (1 Sam 14:47) and David finally captured Edom and made it a vassal state to Israel (2 Sam 8:13-14). Solomon further exploited Edom and established Elath in Edom as Israel’s seaport (1 Kgs 9:26-28), but Edom opposed Solomon during the latter part of his reign (1 Kgs 11:14-18). The nation continued as a vassal state after Israel and Judah split, and it was controlled by a governor from Judah till after the time of Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:47-48).

In the days of Jehoram (~845 B.C.) Edom successfully rebelled against Judah and regained her freedom (2 Kgs 8:20-22). Thereafter, Judah and Edom struggled to see who would control the vital caravan and shipping routes at the southern end of the Transjordanian highway.

Both Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:7) and Uzziah (or Azariah; 2 Kgs 14:21-22) regained territory that had been lost to Edom, but Edom counterattacked during Ahaz’s reign and inflicted a major loss on Judah (2 Chr 28:17). Edom became a vassal of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar’s stunning defeat of Egypt in 605 B.C. Then in 593 B.C. Edom joined the other conspirators in planning to revolt against Babylon but did not carry out the plan (Jer 27:1-7). When Judah revolted in 588 B.C., Edom sided with Babylon and aided Babylon in her assaults on Judah (Ps 137:7; Jer 49:7-22).

Edom displaced the Hurrians in Seir to occupy the rugged country extending from the southern end of the Dead Sea on both sides of the Arabah to the Gulf of Akaba (Gen 14:6; 32:3; 36:20, 21, 30; Deut 2:1, 12; Judg 11:17, 18; 1 Kgs 9:26). Its capital was Sela, probably later the site of Petra..

At the fall of Jerusalem, the Edomites pressed into southern Judah (I Mac 4:29; 5:65). From the late 4th century B.C. through the 1st century A.D., the Nabataean Arabs established a high degree of culture in Edomite territory. The Edomites were subdued by John Hyrcanus in 125 B.C. and incorporated into Israel. Herod the Great was an Idumaean, the Greek and Roman name for Edomite (Josephus: *Ant.* XII. 8. 6; XIV. 1. 3; 7. 3; *Wars* IV. 9. 7; I Mac 5:3. 5).

- 12] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them;

Edom saw in Judah's conflict with Babylon an opportunity to oppose her rival: If her foe were destroyed then Edom could achieve a place of power at the southern end of the Dead Sea.

- 13] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.

Teman was a city in central Edom about 3 miles from Sela, later known as Petra. Dedan was southeast of Edom in northern Arabia (Jer 49:7, 8).

Edom was conquered by the Nabateans during the intertestamental period. The remnant of the Edomites (also called Idumeans) moved west toward the Negev. Later they were forced to become Jewish converts (Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 13. 9. 1). For other maledictions: Ezek 35:1-15; 36:5; Isa 34; 63:1-6; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11, 12; Ob; Mal 1:2-5.

- 14] And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.

The Edomites lost both their country and their national identity.

Now we get to a group that we read a lot about, the Philistines. They descended from Ham, and came from Caphtor, which we would call Crete (Deut 2:23; Amos 9:7; Gen 10:13-14).

Philistines (Latin: Palestina)

The Philistines were a small group that conquered a small portion of the land that gave it its name: *Palestina* is Latin for the land of Philistia. There are more Old Testament references to them than any

other nation (other than Israel itself). They were subjugated by David; when they were attacked vigorously in the days of Saul (1 Sam 13, 14). They were conquered by Jehosaphat (2 Chr 17) and were subjugated by Uzziah (2 Chr 21). They became very powerful under Ahaz (2 Chr 28) and were subdued again by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18). They were also mentioned in Isa 14. They confederated against Jerusalem (Ps 83), then they were invaded by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 47). They had many prophecies against them (Joel 3:4; Amos 1:6-8; Obad 19; Zeph 2; Zech 9).

Philistia

The Philistines had been Israel's enemy from the time of the Conquest. Israel had failed to take all the Promised Land because she disobeyed God and because of the Philistines' military superiority on the coastal plain (Judg 3:1-4). Then the Philistines moved into the hill country in an attempt to control all the territory of Israel.

They were opposed by the judges Shamgar (Judg 3:31), Samson (Judg 13-16), and Samuel (1 Sam 7:2-17). Saul's major battles in Israel were designed to check the Philistines' advances on the central Benjamin plateau (1 Sam 13:1-14:23) and in the Jezreel Valley (1 Sam 28:1-4; 29:1-2, 11; 31:1-3, 7-10).

David finally subdued the Philistines. After a series of battles early in his reign blunted a Philistine challenge to his kingdom, David was able to go on the offensive and defeat the Philistines (2 Sam 5:17-25; 8:1). Philistia remained a vassal country through the reign of Solomon and into the divided monarchy.

The battle between Philistia and Judah was renewed during the divided monarchy as each country tried to control the other. Jehoshaphat was able to dominate Philistia as a vassal state, but she revolted against his son Jehoram and sacked Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chr 17:10-11; 21:16-17). Uzziah reestablished Judah's control over Philistia, but Philistia again gained the upper hand in Ahaz's reign (2 Chr 26:6-7; 28:16-18). The feud between Philistia and Judah was halted by Babylon's intervention. Nebuchadnezzar established control over both countries.

- 15] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a spiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred;

Philistia's history included a string of attacks on God's Chosen People as they tried to dispossess Israel of the Promised Land...and they continue today...

- 16] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast.

The Cherethites seemed to be a sub-tribe under the Philistines. The word means “the cutters,” so in the Hebrew there is a play on words in verse 16, “I will cut off the cutters” (1 Sam 30 and Zeph 2). Once they were part of David’s body guard. The word might have come from “Crete,” which was known as “Caphtor” in Old Testament times (cf. Amos 9:7).

- 17] And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.

Some Strange Allusions

We will soon be exploring some rather strange allusions which hint at something far deeper than simply ancient ethnic ties:

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

Daniel 11:41

Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

Ezekiel 30:5

This appears to be an allusion to a mingling with the seed of humanity (Cf. Daniel 2:43). The Massoretic Text uses vowel pointing that means “all the twilight” (הָעֶרֶב *erev*). The LXX reads “all the mixed ones.”

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

Daniel 2:43

To “mingle themselves with” implies that they are something *other than* the seed of men...

Next Session

The Mysterious city of Tyre: Read Chapters 26-28. (Explore the strange segment in Chapter 28:11-19...)

The Book of Ezekiel Session 13

Chapters 26 - 27

A Transition

Chapters 25-32: The prophecies announcing punishment on Israel’s hostile neighbors constitute a transition between the prophecies of judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (Chapters 1-24) and the predictions of her restoration (Chapters 33-39; 40-48). Prophecies against foreign nations are grouped together in other prophets also (Isa 13-23; Jer 46-51; Amos 1; 2; Zeph 2:4-15).

God’s judgment would extend out from Judah in all directions.

- The first three—Ammon, Moab, Edom—formed the eastern boundary of Judah;
- the fourth nation, Philistia, was on her western boundary.
- Tyre and Sidon, cities of Phoenicia, were the principal powers north of Judah;
- Egypt was the major power to the southwest.

Judgment Upon the Nations

1) Ammon]	Chapter
2) Moab		
3) Edom		• 25
4) Philistia		
5) Tyre		• 26, 27, 28:1-10
(Satan)		• 28:11-19
6) Sidon		• 28:20-24
7) Egypt		• 29, 30, 31, 32

Why?

The Lord was to mete out chastisement upon Israel’s surrounding foes because of their demeanor toward Israel and (Ezek 25:3, 8, 12, 15; 26:2; 29:6); and, their ungodly pride and self-deification (Ezek 28; 29:3).

Tyre

The next three chapters are devoted to Tyre. While Tyre is also mentioned in Isaiah 23 and Jeremiah 27, it is Ezekiel who talked the most about the city.

צֹר *Tsor* literally, meaning “the rock-city,” was the most important city of ancient Phoenicia (located at the site of present-day Šūr in southern Lebanon, 34 mi N of Haifa; 45 mi S Beirut). Herodotus, the Greek historian, records a tradition that traced the settlement of Tyre back to the 28th century B.C.

Hiram was king of Tyre during the reigns of David and Solomon. He was a devoted friend, and he helped them both prepare for and subsequently build the Temple (2 Sam 5; 1 Kgs 5; 1 Chr 14; 2 Chr 2). After the days of David and Solomon, however, Tyre drifted away from Israel, and it finally got so bad that the people of Tyre sold Jews as slaves to the Greeks and to the Edomites (Joel 3; Amos 1).

Aside from that earlier friendship between Hiram and David and Solomon, the general interests of Tyre were adverse. It was north of Israel, and Egypt was to the south. Major north-south caravan routes had to go through Israel; and when they did, Israel exacted a tax, which in turn impacted the profits of the merchants in Tyre. So when Israel fell into trouble with Nebuchadnezzar, Tyre thought that was good news, and their anti-Semitism caught the attention of God.

Tyre moved from the mainland out to an island where they became almost invincible. Their navy was legendary, and sieges against them were by armies who failed to conquer it... until Alexander the Great.

Tyre was the capital of the great Phoenician nation which was famous for its seagoing traders. They plied the Mediterranean and even went far beyond that. We know today that they went around the Pillars of Hercules and the Rock of Gibraltar, and into Great Britain, where they obtained tin. They also established a colony in North Africa. They were great colonizers and went a lot farther than we used to think they did in their explorations.

In Ezekiel’s time Phoenician colonies were located in places that we now know as Cypress, Rhodes, Malta, Spain, Sicily, Sardinia and others. It was really the capital of a fairly broadly based commercial world empire

Ezekiel 26: Tyre

- 1] And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:

“...the eleventh year...”: After the carrying away of Jehoiachin, the year of the fall of Jerusalem. From Jeremiah 52:12 we discover that the month here was the fifth, the month of Av.

The prophecy here was about Nebuchadnezzar’s attack against Tyre which was about to happen. But it was more than that; the Lord had in view here more than just the 13-year siege of Nebuchadnezzar as seen in the “many nations” of which his empire consisted. This prophecy included Alexander subsequently...

Both Tyre and Jerusalem had vied for the lucrative trade routes between Egypt and the rest of the Middle East. Tyre dominated the sea routes, but Jerusalem controlled the caravan routes. Tyre responded to Jerusalem’s fall like a greedy merchant gloating over a rival’s catastrophe. Without Jerusalem being able to secure the overland caravan routes, more products would be shipped by sea.

- 3] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

Tyre: צֹר *Tsor* “rock,” located on a rocky island of 142 acres, had two harbors connected by a canal, the Sidonian harbor on the NE and the Egyptian on the S. The island city was 1200 yards offshore from the walled city (“Old Tyre”) on the mainland.

Tyre

“New Tyre,” a century and a half before the fall of Jerusalem, had successfully resisted Shalmaneser of Assyria, for five years besieging it [Josephus, *Antiquities*, 9.14.2.] Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of it lasted thirteen years (Ezek 29:18; Isa 23:1-18).

- 4] And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

Fishermen generally spread out their nets to dry on barren rocks, to keep them from becoming tangled in trees or bushes. Tyre would be so decimated that the once-bustling city would be barren enough to use as a drying place for nets. (*Nebuchadnezzar came against the city and destroyed it, but he didn’t scrape it.*) That is exactly what Alexander did. He literally scraped the rubble of the old mainland site of Tyre to make his causeway out to the island city to level it.

- 5] It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

God said it would be a fishing village—not the proud commercial capital—and that is what it is today.

- 6] And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

“...her daughters...”: The colonies that she established. She had established one on the island of Cyprus: *Cyprus* means “copper,” and she obtained copper from there. The Phoenicians were the traders who brought these metals into the ancient civilized world.

- 7] For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.

Nebuchadnezzar breached the walls of ancient Tyre, just as he had at Jerusalem, and this prophecy was literally fulfilled. Josephus tells us that Nebuchadnezzar began the siege in the seventh year of Ithobal’s reign as king of Tyre. Tyre’s gloating over Jerusalem’s fall would be short-lived. The king who destroyed Jerusalem would also attack Tyre.

After defeating Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar moved his army north to Tyre in 585 B.C. and besieged the city for 13 years till all settlements on the mainland were destroyed. Tyre could hold out for all those years because her navy brought in supplies that would otherwise have been depleted. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed mainland Tyre, but not the island stronghold (Ezek 26:8-12).

- 8] He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.
9] And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.
10] By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.
11] With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

Verses 7-11 clearly predict that Nebuchadnezzar will take the city, and the pronoun *he* is all through that section. But now, beginning with the next verse, the pronoun changes to *they*. God had said that the nations were coming and here is that prediction:

- 12] And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses:

and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.

“...and they shall lay thy stones...in the midst of the water”: Years later Alexander the Great made his attack on Tyre: that is exactly what Alexander did to make his causeway.

Destruction of Tyre

Although Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the city, this second prophecy had not been fulfilled. Who was going to take up the stones and even scrape the dust into the ocean?

After the return of the Tyrians from the Babylonian captivity, they decided to rebuild their city on an island and forget all about the mainland. Since they were a seafaring power, they could better protect themselves on an island.

In 332 B.C. Alexander got there, he saw the ruins of the city, but the inhabited new city was on the island out of his reach. So he built a causeway to the city. He took the building material of old Tyre, the stones, the pillars, and even the dust of the city, and in seven months built a causeway over which his army marched right into the new city of Tyre. He destroyed the city, and from that day to this it has never been rebuilt.

The critics try to explain away the prophecy regarding Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of the city by saying that Ezekiel wrote it after it had happened, but it is impossible for them to claim that Ezekiel wrote after Alexander the Great!

The ruins are being excavated and there were all kinds of broken pieces of pottery and artifacts around. Ezekiel’s prophecy was literally fulfilled. Sidon stands today as it always has, but Tyre is gone. Nobody has tried to rebuild it. Lebanon hasn’t tried. God’s Word says that Tyre will never be rebuilt.

- 13] And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.
14] And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

Now from verses 15-18 we are going to see the focus of Ezekiel on the effect of the fall of Tyre on the nations: the lament is not just for Tyre; *the lament is also for the nations which are affected by the fall of Tyre.*

- 15] Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?

“...the isles...”: תִּי ‘ty ee, a coast, island, shore, region (this ambiguous term will become important later in Ezekiel...)

- 16] Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee.

The ancient symbol of mourning for a king of a foreign land when he was mourning the fall of another king, would be to come off his throne, put on different garments, and go through a ceremonial mourning

- 17] And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it!
- 18] Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.

Verses 15 - 18 here are in a Hebrew meter called the *kinah*, a word which can also mean a dirge, like a funeral hymn. This is a particular meter in Hebrew poetry that is suggestive of a lamentation, or funeral dirge.

- 19] For thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee;

It is God's style to speak of a local event, but in a more connotative sense. The lamentation is against Tyre here, a literal city of the ancient world; but what is said about Tyre may have a broader application. How about *us*?

Insanity of Prosperity

Other instances: Sennacherib (2 Kgs 17:33-35); Pharaoh (Ezek 29:3); Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:15; 4:30); Herod (Acts 12:21-23); “The man of sin” (2 Thess 2:3, 4). Conquerors who rely on their weapons (Hab 1:11, 16). All who today worship the “goddess of getting ahead.”

- 20] When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living;
- 21] I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 27: *sic transit gloria mundi*

(Latin for “thus passeth the glory of the world.”)

The dirge over the merchant-city that follows, the doom is worked out with a fullness of detail which reminds us of the Homeric catalogue of ships, is almost without a parallel in the history of literature (*Iliad*, 2:484-770).

It's as if Ezekiel had, at some time or other in his life, trod the sinful streets of the great city, and noted the mingled crowd of many nations and in many costumes that he met there. Apart from its poetic or prophetic interest, it is for us almost the classical catalogue of the geography and commerce of that old world of which Tyre was in some sense the center.

- 1] The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
2] Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus;
3] And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.

What brought Tyre down? Pride in the glory, pomp, and prosperity is the thing that has brought down many great nations of the world and reduced them to ruins. This chapter speaks of how extensive the kingdom of Phoenicia was. It begins with Chittim (Cyprus), meaning copper, which was one of their colonies, and extends all the way to Tarshish, which means smelting plant or refinery.

- 4] Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty.
5] They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee.

“...Senir”: the Amorite name for Mount Hermon north of the Sea of Chinnereth, later named the Sea of Galilee (Deut 3:9).

- 6] Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim.

“...oaks of Bashan...”: the area east of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee), famous for its oak forests (Isa 2:13; Zech 11:2).

- 7] Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee.

“...isles of Elishah”: The location of Elishah is unknown, though some scholars identify it with Alashia, the ancient name for Cyprus. Other suggestions are that Elishah was in Greece (called by Homer, *Alisium*), Italy, or Syria. The dye industry was common throughout the Mediterranean.

- 8] The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots.

Sidon, another seaport 20 miles north of Tyre (Ezek 28:20-23), was one of the oldest maritime powers (Gen 10:15-19). Arvad was an island off the coast of Syria. Both cities were known for their shipping. The earliest Phoenician ships each had 50 oarsmen and were quite fast. The later commercial ships were much longer and had a crew of up to 200 with two or three banks of oars on each side.

- 9] The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.

Gebal (Gr. Byblos; Jebeil of today, 21 mi. N of Beirut), is located on Syria’s Mediterranean coast. The craftsmen of Gebal were famous builders (1 Kgs 5:18).

- 10] They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness.

Persia ultimately defeated the Babylonians in 539 B.C. (first mention of Persia in the Bible). Lydia, on the west coast of Asia Minor, is sometimes translated Lud. Phut may be Cyrene, in Northern Africa, or Punt or Somalia (Ezek 38:5). Both Lydia and Phut supplied mercenary soldiers for the Egyptian army (Jer 46:8-9).

Persia

The name does not meet us in any Old Testament book before the exile, Elam taking its place. It was just about the time that Ezekiel wrote that the Persians were becoming conspicuous through their alliance with the Medes (Ezek 38:5; Dan 5:28; 8:20; 2 Chr 36:20, 22; Ezra 1:1; 4:5; Esther 1:3). Here they are named as mercenaries in the Tyrian army.

- 11] The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect.

“Arvad”: Possibly *Helech*, in Cilicia; or Hethlon near Hamath. “Gammadim”: Perhaps the Kumidi of northern Syria, mentioned in the Amarna

Letters, or the Gomerim from Cappadocia. Others take it from a *Hebrew* root, “a dagger,” or short sword (Jdg 3:16), short-swordsmen.”

- 12] Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.

Britannia was from a word meaning tin; the Phoenicians brought tin from Cornwall. Jonah bought a ticket to that city, but he never saw it—instead he saw the interior of a big fish! The “ships of Tarshish” were the larger merchant vessels that were made for distant ocean-going traffic (1 Kgs 22:48; Isa 2:16). Worldwide trade at Stonehenge—made over a period 300 years; the eclipse capability had an error of 300 years...

Ophir

Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold (1 Kgs 22:48). It was a region famous for its gold (1 Kgs 9:28; 10:11; 22:48; Job 22:24; 28:16; Isa 13:12). In the LXX this word is rendered “Sophr,” which is the Coptic name for India. Josephus has identified it with the Golden Chersonese, i.e., the Malay peninsula. Some suspect it may even have been an allusion to Central or South America

- 13] Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market.

These are, respectively, the Ionians of Asia Minor, Tabal, and Musku of cuneiform sources, who settled on both sides of the Anti-Taurus range in Asia Minor, remnants of the old Hittite population (Cooke, *ICC*, p. 353); or they may be the Tibarenoi and Moschoi, who lived southeast of the Black Sea (Herodotus iii. 94; vii. 78). The *Ionians* of Asia Minor were the first Greeks with whom the Asiatics came in contact. Tubal and Meshech were key cities in Anatolia, now the eastern 2/3 of Turkey.

- 14] They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules.

Beth Togarmah: eastern Turkey and Armenia. Armenia: descended from Gomer (Gen 10:3). Their mountainous region south of the Caucasus was celebrated for horses.

- 15] The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony.

The MT has Dedan; the LXX has Rodan (Rhodes). The difference between ρ and ρ is subtle. Probably Rhodes, since Dedan appears again in v.20)

- 16] Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and brodered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate.

Aram (Syria). Some manuscripts say Edom.

- 17] Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants: they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm.

These are names of places in Israel famed for good wheat, wherewith Tyre was supplied (1 Kgs 5:9, 11; Ezra 3:7; Acts 12:20). Minnith was formerly an Ammonite city (Judg 11:33). “Pannag” is identified by Grotius with “Phenice,” the *Greek* name for “Canaan.”

- 18] Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool.

Helbon, 12 miles N of Damascus, was famed for its wine; the Persian monarchs would drink no other.

- 19] Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market.

Dan became a sea-going tribe: Moses’ prophecy: “he shall leap from Bashan” (Deut 33:22) and Deborah’s criticism: “he wouldn’t leave his ships” (Judg 5:17).

Tribe of Dan

The Tribe of Dan had the largest population (Num 1:39, but the smallest allocation, W of Benjamin. They lost territory after the death of Samson (Jud 16-21). The tribe resettled at Laish in the North and were “lost” long before Assyrian Invasion (1 Chr 1-8; Rev 7).

Moses’ Prophecy

And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion’s whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.

Deuteronomy 33:22

Song of Deborah

Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches. Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.

Judges 5:16, 17

- 20] Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots.

- 21] Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these were they thy merchants.

Kedar was one of the 12 sons of Ishmael—the nomad Bedouins of northern Arabia and a nomad race in the Syro-Arabian desert (Gen 25:13; Jer 2:10; 49:28).

- 22] The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold.

Sheba was in SW Arabia, almost 1,200 miles from Jerusalem. It was famous for gold, frankincense, and precious stones (1Kgs 10:1-13; Job 6:19). Raamah probably was on the Persian Gulf (Gen 10:7). Contrived lineage to Menilik I (a son of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon) was an attempt to link the early kings of Ethiopia with Solomon... thus, the Ark legend...

- 23] Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were thy merchants.

- **Haran:** ancient city in NW Mesopotamia, 60 miles E of Carchemish; the dwelling-place of Abraham in Mesopotamia, after he moved from Ur (Gen 11:31, 32; 12:4-5).
- **Canneh:** Calneh, an Assyrian city on the Tigris; the Ctesiphon of the Greeks (Gen 10:10).
- **Eden:** Situated on the middle course of the Euphrates, south of Haran (Amos 1:5; Isa 37:12).
- **The merchants of Sheba** of the MT is probably a dittography from v.22.
- **Asshur:** the city S of Nineveh on the W side of the Tigris, between the Upper and Lower Zab rivers.
- **Chilmad:** a compound; the place designated by Ptolemy “Gaala of Media.” The *Chaldee version* interprets it of Media.

- 24] These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and brodered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise.

- 25] The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.

“Ships of Tarshish” refer to unusually large vessels carrying cargo on the open sea. This was the kind of ship Hiram and Solomon built to bring cargo to Israel (2 Chr 9:21; 20:36-37; Isa 2:16). China is building container ships that carry 15,000-20,000 containers each...

- 26] Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.
- 27] Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin.
- 28] The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots.
- 29] And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land;
- 30] And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes:
- 31] And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.

“..utterly bald...”: This was another form of humiliation: they would shave their heads. It was not allowed for Israel (prohibited by Moses in Deut 14:1); but it was an ancient practice of humiliation to make one’s self bald.

- 32] And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?
- 33] When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise.
- 34] In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall.
- 35] All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in their countenance.
- 36] The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt be any more.

This was an interesting passage for an Israeli prophet to be sending to them from Babylon, where he was enslaved, against Tyre, speaking of their predicament.

Tyre

In the 7th century A.D. it came under the dominion of the Saracens. In the 12th century it was taken by the Crusaders, who kept it until 1291, when the town came under Muslim rule.

Tyre as the great commercial center, is comparable to a prophecy of Babylon in the future when it will become the commercial, religious and political center of the world. It apparently will be the capital of the Antichrist.

The Fall of Mystery Babylon (Revelation 18:9-24)

- 9] And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,
- 10] Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Note three groups of people singled out: **kings, merchants, and those who trade by sea...**

- 11] And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:
- 12] The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,
- 13] And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.
- 14] And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.
- 15] The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,
- 16] And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!
- 17] For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,
- 18] And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!
- 19] And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.
- 20] Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

First time in this book the command to rejoice is given! Jer 51:56; 59-64. [What do *you* rejoice over? What is your heart fixed on today?]

- 21] And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.
- 22] And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

Factories close. Lights are off. It's all over.

- 23] And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.
- 24] And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Insanity of Prosperity

- Other instances:
 - Sennacherib (2 Kgs 17:33-35)
 - Pharaoh (Ezek 29:3)
 - Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:15; 4:30)
 - Herod (Acts 12:21-23)
 - “The man of sin” (2 Thess 2:3, 4)
 - Conquerors who rely on their weapons (Hab 1:11, 16)
 - All who today worship the “goddess of getting ahead.”

Ezekiel 28: The Power Behind the Throne

The language, though primarily here applied to the king of Tyre, as similar language is to the king of Babylon (Isa 14:13, 14), yet has an ulterior and fuller accomplishment in Satan and his embodiment in Antichrist (Dan 7:25; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:6).

The Power Behind the Throne

The Prince of Tyre (Ezek 28:1-11): “Ruler” נָגִיד *nagid* means “the man at the top” (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 13:14; 2 Sam 7:8). Ezekiel had prophesied against the whole city; he was now singling out the city’s leader for a special word from God. This ruler then was Ethbaal III, who ruled from 591-590 B.C. to 573-572 B.C.

The King of Tyre (Ezek 28:11-19): “King” מֶלֶךְ *melek*. Ezekiel used the word “king” sparingly. Apart from King Jehoiachin (Ezek 1:2) he did not use the title “king” of any of Israel’s monarchs.

- 1] The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

This is the vicegerent of Satan: “Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God”—this is exactly what the Antichrist is going to say. The apostle Paul says this of him: “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thess 2:4).

- 3] Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:
- 4] With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures:
- 5] By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:
- 6] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God;
- 7] Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.
- 8] They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.
- 9] Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee.
- 10] Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

sic transit gloria mundi—Latin for “thus passeth the glory of the world.”

Next Session

The Origin, Career, and Destiny of הַשָּׂטָן *HaSatan*. Study: Ezekiel 28; Isaiah 14; and, Revelation 12, 13, 17, 18.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 14 Chapter 28

Judgment Upon the Nations

1) Ammon]	Chapter
2) Moab		
3) Edom		• 25
4) Philistia		
5) Tyre		• 26, 27, 28:1-10
(Satan)		• 28:11-19
6) Sidon		• 28:20-24
7) Egypt		• 29, 30, 31, 32

Tyre (Review)

צִיֹּר *Tsor* literally, meaning “the rock-city,” was a name applying to the island Tyre, called New Tyre, rather than *Old Tyre* on the *mainland*. They were half a mile apart. “New Tyre,” a century and a half before the fall of Jerusalem, had successfully resisted Shalmaneser of Assyria, for five years besieging it (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 9.14.2). Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of it lasted thirteen years (Ezek 29:18; Is 23:1-18).

Tyre was the capital of the great Phoenician nation which was famous for its seagoing traders. They plied the Mediterranean and even went beyond that. We know today that they went around the Pillars of Hercules and the Rock of Gibraltar, and into Great Britain, where they obtained tin. They established a colony in North Africa. They were great colonizers and went a lot farther than we used to think they did in their explorations.

Tyre was a great and proud city. Hiram, king of Tyre, had been a good friend of David and supplied him with building materials. Solomon and Hiram did not get along as well as David and Hiram had. Apparently Hiram was a great king. But also the center of Baal worship was there in Tyre and Sidon. Jezebel, the daughter of a king and former priest, married Ahab, king of Israel, and introduced Baal worship into the northern kingdom.

Both Tyre and Jerusalem had vied for the lucrative trade routes between Egypt and the rest of the Middle East. Tyre dominated the sea routes, but Jerusalem controlled the caravan routes. Tyre responded to Jerusalem’s fall like a greedy merchant gloating over a rival’s catastrophe. Without Jerusalem being able to secure the overland caravan routes, more products would be shipped by sea.

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

Ezekiel 26:3-4

Fishermen generally spread out their nets to dry on barren rocks, to keep them from becoming tangled in trees or bushes. Tyre would be so decimated that the once-bustling city would be barren enough to use as a drying place for nets. Nebuchadnezzar came against the city and destroyed it, but he didn’t scrape it.

It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

Ezekiel 26:5

God said it would be a fishing village—not the proud commercial capital—and that is what it is today.

Tyre’s gloating over Jerusalem’s fall would be short-lived. The king who destroyed Jerusalem would also attack Tyre. After defeating Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar moved his army north to Tyre in 585 B.C. and besieged the city for 13 years till all settlements on the mainland were destroyed.

Tyre could hold out for all those years because her navy brought in supplies that would otherwise have been depleted. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed mainland Tyre, but not the island stronghold (Ezek 26:8-12).

Alexander the Great devastated the city in 332 B.C. when it refused to submit to his advancing forces. Alexander destroyed the mainland city and then built a causeway out to the island fortress which he destroyed. With the “stones, timber,” and rubbish of Old Tyre, in seven months he built a causeway to New Tyre on the island and so took it.

Tyre, as the great commercial center, is comparable to a prophecy of Babylon in the future when it will become the commercial, religious and political center of the world. Babylon apparently will be the capital of the Antichrist.

Insanity of Prosperity

- Other instances:
 - Sennacherib (2 Kgs 17:33-35)
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 - All who today worship the “goddess of getting ahead.”

Ezekiel 28: The Power Behind the Throne

- 1] The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God,

in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

“I am a God”

Cf. Isaiah’s words of the King of Babylon (Isa 14:13, 14). For similar examples: the boast of Pharaoh Hophra (Ezek 29:3); the praise given to Herod Agrippa by the Tyrians (Acts 12:21); and, Paul’s description of “the man of sin” with nearly the same words (2 Thess 2:4).

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

2 Thessalonians 2:4

“I Sit in the Seat of God”

Tyre was known as the Holy Island. The city was thought of as “rising from its waters like the rock-throne of God.” [Sanchon., edit. Orelli, p. 36.] “Though thou set thy heart.”

The words remind us of the temptation in Genesis 3:5. To forget the limitations of human ignorance and weakness, to claim an authority and demand a homage which belong to God, was the sin of the Prince of Tyre, as it had been that of Sennacherib, as it was of Nebuchadnezzar, as it has been since of the emperors of Rome, and of other rulers.

- 3] Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:
- 4] With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures:
- 5] By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:

The irony was that Ethbaal III felt his wisdom exceeded that of even Daniel, who served the country that would ultimately defeat Tyre. Daniel, who attributed all his wisdom to God (cf. Dan 2:27-28), was much wiser than Ethbaal III, who claimed to be a god.

- 6] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God;
- 7] Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.
- 8] They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.
- 9] Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee.

Ethbaal III was removed from his throne by Nebuchadnezzar in 573-572 B.C.

- 10] Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

Phoenicians practiced circumcision. Herodotus tells us that [Herodotus, 2:104] ...but the Babylonians did not. They were to die at the hands of the uncircumcised.

The Power Behind the Throne

The Prince of Tyre (Ezek 28:1-11): “Ruler” נָגִיד *nagid* means “the man at the top” (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 13:14; 2 Sam 7:8). Ezekiel had prophesied against the whole city; he was now singling out the city’s leader for a special word from God. This ruler then was Ethbaal III, who ruled from 591-590 B.C. to 573-572 B.C.

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- 11] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 12] Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

“Prince” is consistently used by Ezekiel of Zedekiah (Ezek 7:27; 12:20, *et al.*) The King of Tyre at the time was Ithobal or Ethbaal III, who had taken part with Pharaoh-Hophra and Zedekiah in the league against Nebuchadnezzar [Josephus, *Contra Apion*, 1:21]. The language, though primarily here applied to the king of Tyre, as similar language is to the king of Babylon (Isa 14:13, 14) ...yet has an ulterior and fuller accomplishment in Satan and his embodiment in the Antichrist (Dan 7:25; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:6).

- 13] Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Stones

“...sardius...jasper...”: Sardius and jasper are the first and twelfth stones on the breastplate of the high priest. Jasper will also later appear as first in both the wall and foundation of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:11, 18-19).

Sardius is in the foundation of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:20). Pliny says it was discovered in Sardis and its color was a fiery red.

The nine precious stones mentioned in this verse answer to nine of the 12 in the high priest's breastplate (Ex 39:10-13; Rev 21:14, 19-21). [Of the 4 rows of 3 in each, the 3rd row is omitted in the MT, but is supplied in the LXX.]

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

“... thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created”: Tabrets = tambourines. Pipes: literally, “holes” in musical pipes or flutes.

- 14] Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Cherubim: super angels (Isa 6; Ezek 1 & 10; Rev 4 & 5).

- 15] Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

“...thou wast created...”: Christ was the one who created him. God used the Logos to create all things, including Satan. So, Satan, even with all his power, is still only a created being.

Ezekiel described the *king* in terms that could not apply to a mere man. This “king”: had appeared in the Garden of Eden (v.13); had been a guardian cherub (v.14a); had possessed free access to God's holy mountain (v.14b); and, had been sinless from the time he was created (v.15).

- 16] By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

“...profane out of the mountain of God...”: driven out of the place of sanctity (Ezek 28:14), which he had occupied (cf. Ps 89:39). When did he fall? ...and a third of the angels with him...?

Satan: His Origin, Agenda, and Destiny

The origin and career of Satan can be addressed indirectly in Gen 3:14,15; Isa 14:12-20; and Mt 16:23. He is called Accuser (Job 1—he had access) and Tempter (Lk 4:1-13):

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Luke 4:5-8

An Offer by the Owner

The Lord rejected Satan's offer, but not because He didn't recognize his ownership—Christ knew that Satan *did* have the kingdoms. Ultimately Christ will rule over the kingdoms of the world—but not as a vice-regent of Satan!

Today, however, the Devil is still the prince of the power of the air. He is the one who is in back of the kingdoms of our world, whether we recognize it or not.

The Woman and Man-Child

Revelation 12

- **Woman**
 - with sun, moon, 12 stars
 - With childIsrael
- **Red Dragon**
 - 7 heads, 10 horns, 7 crowns
 - To devour Man-child when bornSerpent, Devil, Satan
- **Man-Child**
 - To rule all nations with rod of iron
 - Caught up to God and His throne
 - Woman flees into wilderness,Kinsman-Redeemer
- **Michael and His Angels**
 - Fights Dragon and his angels1260 days
- **Dragon cast to earth**
 - Persecutes the Woman3 ½ years

Satan's Whereabouts

- God expelled him from **the mount of God** (heaven; Ezek 28:16,14).
- Satan was cast from God's government in heaven (Lk 10:18), but was still allowed access to God (Job 1:6-12; Zech 3:1-2).
- In the Tribulation Satan will be cast from heaven and restricted to the earth (Rev 12:7-13).
- In the Millennium he will be in the bottomless pit (Rev 20:1-3).
- After his brief release at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:7-9), he will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev 20:10).

The Stratagems of Satan

- Corruption of Adam's line (Gen 6).
- Abraham's seed (Gen 12, 20).
- Famine (Gen 50).
- Destruction of male line (Ex 1).
- Pharaoh's pursuit (Ex 14).
- The populating of Canaan (Gen 15).
- Against David's line (2 Sam 7).

Attacks on David's Line

- Jehoram kills his brothers (2 Chr 21).
- Arabians slew all (but Ahaziah)
- Athaliah kills all (but Joash; 2 Chr 22).
- Hezekiah assaulted, etc. (Isa 36, 38).
- Haman's attempts (Est 3).

New Testament Stratagems

- Joseph's fears: Mt 1
- Herod's attempts: Mt 2
- At Nazareth: Lk 4
- 2 storms on the Sea: Mk 4; Lk 8
- The Cross
- Summary: Rev 12
- ...and he's still not through...

- 17] Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.
- 18] Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee,

it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

- 19] All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Isaiah 14: Lamentation on The King of Babylon

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

Isaiah 14:12-16

Cf. Ezek 31:16-18.

That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

Isaiah 14:17

(When did this happen? Cf. Jer 4:23-26.)

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

Isaiah 14:18-20

The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

Isaiah 14:24-25

"...the Assyrian...": Cf. Isa 10:5-27; Mic 5:5-6; Zeph 2:13.

This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

Isaiah 14:26-27

The “Gap Theory”: Genesis 1:2

Some Basic Issues:

- When were the angels created?
- *When* did Satan Fall?
- Is there a “gap” between Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2?

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were Day One.

Genesis 1:1-5

vav conjunction

“And...”: (Vav = Adversative, “But”: LXX & Vulgate) Also suggests a time delay: Exodus 2:1-2, an eight-year period; Deuteronomy 10:5-6, a 38-year period; 1 Chronicles 10:14; 11:1, a seven-year period; Ezekiel 6:22, 7:1, a 58-year period.

“...was...”: The word order (normally, conjunction - verb - subject - object) is reordered to suggest the pluperfect form: “had become.” (Just as Lot’s wife “became” a pillar of salt”; cf. Gen 19:26.)

But the earth became without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

Isaiah 45:18

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger.

Jeremiah 4:23-26

But the earth became without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Genesis 1:2

חֹשֶׁךְ choshek, unnatural darkness Exodus 10:21

תְּהוֹם tehowm LXX: ἄβυσσος, abussos, abyss;
the home of demons and evil spirits;

Choshek, not *lyilah*. Used as a judicial darkness (Ex 10:21); and the barricading darkness in Job 38:9.

The “Gap” Theory

The Gap Theory was originally suggested by Thomas Chalmers, in 1814. Compare: George H. Pember, *Earth’s Earliest Ages*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1907; Donald Gray Barnhouse, *The Invisible War*, Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids MI, 1965; and Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void*, Brockville, Ontario, Canada, 1970.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Job 38:4-7

Bar HaElohim: “Sons of God” = OT for angels. Ranks of angels: “Principalities,” “Powers,” et al. “Cherubim” apparently the top “SuperAngels”—they were *already present* when “the foundations of the earth” were laid!

Judgment Upon the Nations

1) Ammon] Chapter	
2) Moab		
3) Edom		• 25
4) Philistia		
5) Tyre		• 26, 27, 28:1-10
(Satan)		• 28:11-19
6) Sidon		• 28:20-24
7) Egypt		• 29, 30, 31, 32

Sidon

Sidon lay 25 miles north of Tyre. The city was founded by Canaan's firstborn (Gen 10:15). The tribe of Asher did not drive out the Sidonians (Judg 1:31; 10:12) and Sidon later became subject to its daughter city Tyre (Josephus *Antiq.* IX. 14. 2). It was destroyed by Esarhaddon in 677 B.C., and it, with Tyre, became subject to Pharaoh-Hophra in 588 B.C.

About the time of Solomon it was the headquarters of Baal worship, Ashtoeth, and Tammuz worship: it submitted to Cambyzes in 526 B.C. (Herodotus VII. 89; VIII. 67); it sold cedar for the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple (Ezra 3:7); it was destroyed by the Persians in 345 B.C.; it surrendered to Alexander the Great in 333 B.C.; and, it passed to the Romans in 64 B.C.

Jesus Christ made an interesting contrast about both Sidon and Tyre, saying that if the works Israel saw would have been seen by Tyre and Sidon, they would have been turned around (Lk 10:14; Mk 3:8; 7:24). Paul touched at its port (Acts 27:3).

- 20] Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
21] Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it,

We know it today as the city of *Saida*. It became corrupt under the judges (Judg 10:6). Other maledictions against Sidon (Joel 3:4-8; Zech 9:2).

- 22] And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her.

Sidon was judged, but not destroyed. That city exists today; it is the place where oil is brought in from the Near East.

- 23] For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD.
24] And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

Like so many of these passages, this one closes now with a few verses that shifts the focus back to Israel, and their restoration in the land. This is yet future.

- 25] Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob.
26] And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God.

One reason that so many say that God is through with the nation Israel is because they are not acquainted with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the minor prophets. The theme song of these prophets is that God is *not* through with Israel as a nation (Cf. Rom 9, 10, & 11...)

Next Session

The Judgment upon Egypt. Read Chapters 29 - 32 and watch for some subtle surprises...

The Book of Ezekiel Session 15 Chapters 29 - 31

Judgment Upon the Nations

1) Ammon] Chapter	
2) Moab		
3) Edom		• 25
4) Philistia		
5) Tyre		• 26, 27, 28:1-10
(Satan)		• 28:11-19
6) Sidon		• 28:20-24
7) Egypt		• 29, 30, 31, 32

Seven Oracles Against Egypt (Ezekiel 29:1 - 32:32)

- 1) Pharaoh as a sea-monster or crocodile is to be cast out to be devoured, and the nation is to be restored to lowly status after 40 years (Ezek 29:1-16).
- 2) Egypt is to be given to Nebuchadrezzar as a recompense for his futile siege of Tyre (Ezek 29:17-21).
- 3) Egypt will be overthrown, together with its allies, wealth, princes, and cities (Ezek 30:1-19).
- 4) The arms of Egypt will be broken by the arms of the king of Babylon (Ezek 30:20-26).
- 5) Pharaoh, the mighty cedar, is cut down and enters the underworld in disgrace (Ezek 31:1-18).
- 6) A lament over Pharaoh, the crocodile of Egypt, destroyed by the king of Babylon (Ezek 32:1-16).
- 7) A dirge sung at the descent of Egypt into the underworld (Ezek 32:17-32).

Egypt

Other maledictions against Egypt: Isa 19; Jer 46; Zech 14:18, 19. Egypt's sin was its pride (Ezek 29:3, 9b; 30:10) and its leading Israel away from the Lord (Ezek 29:6-9a).

Since Egypt was a great world power, ruling nations and aspiring to universal dominion (Ezek 29:15), the prophet treats of it on a cosmic scale—the judgment of Egypt was to be “the Day of the Lord” (Ezek 30:3) and the fall of that great nation would be felt throughout the world (Ezek 32:10), while even creation would shudder (Ezek 31:15). The world was to know that God is the Lord (Ezek 30:19, 26).

Ezekiel 29:1-16

1) Pharaoh as a sea-monster or crocodile is to be cast out to be devoured, and the nation is to be restored to lowly status after 40 years.

- 1] In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt:

January 586 (or 587) B.C., seven months before the fall of Jerusalem.

“...Pharaoh, King of Egypt...”: Apries or Hophra, of the 25th Dynasty (588–569 B.C.).

- 3] Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.

“...great dragon...”: תַּנִּים *tanim*, any large aquatic animal, here the crocodile, which on Roman coins is the emblem of Egypt. It is, also, often associated with Leviathan (Isa 27:1; Job 41:1; Ps 74:14) and with “Rehab” (Isa 51:9; Job 26:12, 13).

It was also one of those creatures that the Egyptians worshiped. They went through all kinds of bizarre episodes in terms of the various things they held sacred. The enterprising son of Cyprus the Great of Persia had done his homework and found that the Egyptians regarded dogs and cats as being sacred. So when he was in a military confrontation with them, he placed before his army dogs and cats, and the Egyptians would not attack. --Herodotus

The Blessing of the Nile

The original seat of power had been Upper Egypt; but Pharaoh Hophra set up his headquarters in Lower Egypt, in the heart of the delta area. He made many improvements there which caused Egypt to prosper in commerce relative to their neighbors.

His pride in those accomplishments led to his boast. Pharaoh Hophra was recorded in Scripture, and by Herodotus, as being known for his boasts and arrogant pride. Here he was taking credit for the benefits of the Nile.

Pharaoh Hophra

Also called Apries in the Greek, he was the grandson of Pharaoh Necho, who defeated King Josiah of Judah at Megiddo; in fact, Josiah was slain in that battle. Kings Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah all turned to Pharaoh Hophra when Jerusalem was besieged. The Egyptian army came up, went through Phoenicia, and forced the Chaldeans to raise the siege of Jerusalem. The prophet Jeremiah announced the doom of Pharaoh Hophra (Jer 46:25-26).

- 4] But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.

“I will put hooks in thy jaws...”: Repeated phrase in Ezekiel (cf. Ezek 38:4). In the Assyrian sculptures, prisoners are represented with a hook in the underlip, and a cord from it held by the king.

- 5] And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven.

Improper burial was considered a fearful fate in the ancient world, especially to the Egyptians in view of their meticulous care of the dead (cf. Ezek 32:4, 5; Jer 22:18, 19).

- 6] And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.
7] When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

“...a staff of reed”: A staff to lean on. A reed would collapse under your weight. The idiom here implied weakness, disappointment.

Israel on several occasions prior, had made alliances with Egypt for their protection, and Egypt either turned on them, or in some cases was just ineffective and ran for cover. So the other accusation laid to their charge was that they failed in the role of being a staff to Israel politically

- 8] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee.
9] And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it.

In antithesis to the blasphemous boast repeated here from Ezek 29:3.

- 10] Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia.

“...the tower”: Migdol (*tower*). Tel el-Heir, 12 miles SW of Pelusium, the NE border of Egypt (cf. 30:6; Ex 14:2; Jer 44:1). Migdol was in the Delta region in northern (lower) Egypt.

“...Syene...”: Egyptian *Sun* (prob. meaning “elephant”), Aswan was at the first cataract in southern (upper) Egypt and was the southern boundary between Egypt and Cush (Josephus, *Wars* IV. 10. 5). Cush corresponds to present-day southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia.

- 11] No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.
12] And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

Egypt desolate in the midst of the Arabian and Libyan deserts on either side (cf. Ezek 30:7). The Egyptians were to be scattered (cf. 30:23, 26).

- 13] Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered:
14] And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom.

“...forty years”: 17 years later, Nebuchadnezzar, came and took the Egyptians into captivity. They were in captivity for 40 years, (not 70 years like Israel) Cf. Jer 46:26.

“...Pathros”: (*southland*): Upper Egypt (Cf. Ezek 30:14; Isa 11:11; Jer 44:15).

- 15] It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.
16] And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

No one can go to Cairo without his heart being sick when he sees the poverty and the low levels to which the people have sunk.

Ezekiel 29:17-21

2) Egypt is to be given to Nebuchadnezzar as a recompense for his futile siege of Tyre.

- 17] And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

March - April 570 (571) B.C. The latest prophecy of Ezekiel.

- 18] Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it:

In the arduous siege laid to Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar's army (585-573 B.C.), every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare, by the chafing by carrying loads.

- 19] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt in the 37th year of his reign (568/567 B.C.).

- 20] I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD.
21] In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

“...opening of the mouth”: Symbolizing Israel's restoration to power (cf. 1 Sam 2:1, 10; Ps 92:10; 132:17). The verification of the prophet's words to his fellow exiles, that the divine judgments would be followed by new hope (Ezek 16:63). Psalm 132:17 indicates that the Davidic dynasty is to be restored.

Ezekiel 30:1-19

3) All Phases of Egypt's Life To Be Punished on the Day of the Lord(!)

- 1] The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
2] Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day!
3] For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

“...the day of the Lord”: The “day of wrath” (Cf. 7:7; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph 1:7, 14; Isa 13:6; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2 et al.). *This has just changed the breadth of the horizon before us!* This is the day of judgment on sin and the final doom of the heathen world, of which Egypt is representative.

This section, of an *eschatological* character, is the only one not dated (but may be chronologically related to Ezek 29:1-16). It consists of four oracles, each beginning with, “Thus saith the Lord” (vv. 2, 6, 10, 13).

“...the heathen”: This is a time of wailing and mourning, a lamentation, for the *nations*.

The Nations

...taking vengeance on them. The judgment on Egypt is the beginning of a world-wide judgment on all the heathen enemies of God (cf. Isa 13:6, 9; Joel 1:15, 2:11, 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 1:15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Zech 14:1; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10).

- 4] And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.

“...great pain”: Literally, “pangs with trembling as of a woman in childbirth.”

“...her foundation”: The political and social institutions in which Egypt's strength lay (vv. 6, 8, 13, 15, 17). (It is believed by many conservative scholars that Moses, when he was Pharaoh's daughter's son, would have been the next Pharaoh, and that he actually led an expedition against Ethiopia.)

- 5] Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

“...mingled people...and the men of the land that is in league”: The allies of Egypt were to be overthrown. Literally, *and the sons of the land of the covenant with them*; that is, the *Jews* who migrated to Egypt and carried Jeremiah with them (Jer 42:1-44:30). Even *they* shall not escape (Jer 42:22; 44:14). A reference to Egypt's allies rather than to Jewish mercenaries in the army of Psamtik II (594-588)(?) [*Cf. Letter of Aristeas*, ch. 13.]

“Mingled People”?

The mercenary troops of Egypt from various lands, mostly from the interior of Africa? Cf. Ezek 27:10; Jer 25:20, 24) Or a reference related to “miry clay”?

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

Daniel 2:43

- 6] Thus saith the LORD; They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord GOD.

Not only Israel, but all of these other nations had looked to Egypt for help, and they will all be judged together.

- 7] And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted.
- 8] And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and when all her helpers shall be destroyed.
- 9] In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh.

The Lord's acts against Egypt were meant to warn the unsuspecting Ethiopians and the world (Isa 18:2).

- 10] Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
- 11] He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.

Carried off by Nebuchadnezzar, first referred to here by name. In fact, he is the head of gold in Daniel's prophecy (ch. 2) of the four great world kingdoms.

- 12] And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken it.

Drying up of the Nile would be a calamity to Egypt (Cf. Isa 19:5ff).

"...the hand of strangers": Egypt fell later on to Alexander the Great, and when he died his generals took over the nations he had conquered. Cleopatra, who was not an Egyptian but a Greek, ruled over Egypt.

The Dependence upon the Nile

Their whole lives hung on the Nile and its ability to produce sustenance by its overflowing and fertilizing the fields. So God saying He would make the rivers dry would be a very scary threat to them. This threat of letting the river dry up has happened literally in our times; the famous Aswan Dam, and the disasters it has brought ecologically.

Ecological Disaster

Since the Aswan Dam has been put in place, the water is no longer muddy; it is clear, it is wonderful, they've got it all under control.Ex-

cept the problem is that what the Nile always did was bring nutrients down river, which provided an attraction for fish in the Mediterranean, so that the fishing industry of Egypt was always rich and plentiful. It is no longer rich, and therefore it is no longer a good harvest for fishermen, and they are all starving! A nation of 40 million people now has a problem feeding itself.

It also turns out that there are some snails that attack the flax which makes linen, and those reeds and various things upon which Egypt had been dependent for millennia. The snails were previously washed away by the annual flooding of the Nile. With the Aswan Dam control, the snails have multiplied and killed off all those crops upon which Egypt used to gain enormous economic benefit. Some have suggested that one of the best things they could do would be to blow the Dam up.

- 13] Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.

Eight principal cities, three in Lower and five in Upper Egypt, are singled out for destruction.

"...Noph": *Noph* (Heb.), or Memphis (Gr.), or *Mennofri* (Egyptian), near *mit Rahuineh*, 10 miles S of Cairo. The home of the fire-god, Ptah, and the Apis bull.

- 14] And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No.

"...Pathros": In Upper Egypt, with "No" or Thebes as its capital (famed for its stupendous buildings, of which grand ruins remain), in antithesis to Zoan or Tanis, a chief city in Lower Egypt, within the Delta.

"...Zoan": Egyptian *Scnt*, Greek *Tanis*, the Hyksos capital Avaris; present day San el-Hagar, in the E Delta of the Nile, W of Pelusium. (Goshen).

"...No": "No-Amon," Thebes. Egyptian *Net*, capital of Upper Egypt, 400 miles S of Memphis, home of the sun-god, Amon. Thebes (or No), mentioned three times in this passage (Ezek 30:14-16), was in southern (Upper) Egypt about 400 miles south of Cairo at the site of modern Karnak and Luxor. For a long time it was the country's capital.

- 15] And I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No.

“...Sin”: (only here in Ezekiel); identified as Tell Foramen, a frontier fortress on the NE boundary, in the vicinity of Pelusium, 23 miles SE of Port Said. It is now completely buried in the sand.

“...No”: Thebes, the great city in the upper Nile.

- 16] And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph shall have distresses daily.

From Pelusium (*Sin*) to Thebes (*No*) is all Egypt from north to south. These cities have now disappeared altogether...

- 17] The young men of Aven and of Pibeseth shall fall by the sword: and these cities shall go into captivity.

“...Aven”; or On = Greek Heliopolis. The present Tell Hasn, or “sun fountain,” located about 7 miles NE of Cairo; the seat of the sun-god Ra. It was also the home of Joseph’s father-in-law (Gen 41:45, 50).

“...Pibeseth”: Egyptian *Pi Bastis*, Greek *Bubastis*. Present-day Tel Basta, 30 miles NNE of Cairo. It was the house of the goddess Bast, to whom the cat was sacred.

- 18] At Tehaphnehes also the day shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity.

“Tehaphnehes”: Elsewhere *Tahpanhes*, Greek *Daphnae*. Modern Tell Defenneh, on the Pelusiac bank of the Nile. It was an eastern frontier fortress, about 30 miles SW of Pelusium. Pharaoh’s residence (Jer 43:9). Called from the queen of Egypt mentioned in 1Kgs 11:19. The same as Daphne, near Pelusium, a royal residence of the Pharaohs (Jer 43:7, 9). Also called Hanes (Is 30:4).

- 19] Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

“...they shall know that I am the Lord”: 54X in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 30:20-26

4) The arms of Egypt will be broken by the arms of the king of Babylon

- 20] And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

March-April 586 B.C. (or 587)—three months after Ezek 29:1, and four months before the fall of Jerusalem.

- 21] Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword.

“...broken the arm of Pharaoh”: Probably a reference to a recent defeat of Pharaoh Necho (Jer 37:5-8; 34:21). In vv. 21-23 the Lord is the destroyer of Pharaoh; in vv. 24-26, the king of Babylon is His agent.

- 22] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand.

- 23] And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

“...scatter the Egyptians” refers to the army still in Egypt for defense and the one defeated and fleeing.

- 24] And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand: but I will break Pharaoh’s arms, and he shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man.

- 25] But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt.

Babylon was going to conquer Egypt, and Pharaoh would be powerless to stop it. All of this was literally fulfilled.

- 26] And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

“...they shall know that I am the Lord”: 54X in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 31: The Lament for the Fall of Pharaoh

- 1] And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
2] Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness?
3] Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.

“Thou art like the haughty king of Assyria; as he was overthrown by the Chaldeans, so shalt thou be by the same.”

- 4] The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field.
- 5] Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.
- 6] All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.

(In Matthew 13 the fowls of the air nested in the branches of a mustard plant, which grew unnaturally into a monstrosity large enough to support them. The birds there are identified as the ministers of Satan.)

- 7] Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters.
- 8] The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty.
- 9] I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.
- 10] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height;
- 11] I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness.
- 12] And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him.

A subtle tone here somewhat analogous to Ezekiel 28, where clearly God reaches through the king of Tyre and those idioms, to speak to Satan. There are hints of that same kind of thing here, but not as strong. Daniel 10 presents an angelic messenger, a bizarre, supernatural conflict going on invisibly behind the powers that be in the world. That same perspective seems to be behind the Pharaoh of Egypt.

- 13] Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches:
- 14] To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.
- 15] Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and

the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him.

- 16] I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.
- 17] They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.
- 18] To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

Nebuchadnezzar's Testimony

All the nations in this passage were symbolized or characterized by trees. In Daniel Nebuchadnezzar had a vision of a great tree (Cf. Daniel 4:1-4,10-12, 19- 22, 28-31). Nebuchadnezzar points out that it was due to his own pride that his kingdom was taken away for seven years (Dan 4:36-37). So, not only did all of this really happen to Nebuchadnezzar, but he also wrote his testimony and had it published throughout the known world!

Seven Oracles Against Egypt (Ezekiel 29:1 - 32:32)

- 1) Pharaoh as a sea-monster or crocodile is to be cast out to be devoured, and the nation is to be restored to lowly status after 40 years (Ezek 29:1-16).
- 2) Egypt is to be given to Nebuchadnezzar as a recompense for his futile siege of Tyre (Ezek 29:17-21).
- 3) Egypt will be overthrown, together with its allies, wealth, princes, and cities (Ezek 30:1-19).
- 4) The arms of Egypt will be broken by the arms of the king of Babylon (Ezek 30:20-26).
- 5) Pharaoh, the mighty cedar, is cut down and enters the underworld in disgrace (Ezek 31:1-18).
- 6) A lament over Pharaoh, the crocodile of Egypt, destroyed by the king of Babylon (Ezek 32:1-16).
- 7) A dirge sung at the descent of Egypt into the underworld (Ezek 32:17-32).

Next Session

Review Chapters 29-31. Study Chapter 32: What nations are also involved? *When* did/does this all happen? What does Islam have to do with any of this?

The Book of Ezekiel Session 16

Chapter 32

Ezekiel 32:1-16

6) A lament over Pharaoh, the crocodile of Egypt, destroyed by the king of Babylon (Ezek 32:1-16).

- 1] And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.
- 3] Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net.
- 4] Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee.

The monster would be slain and his carcass flung out to be devoured. (Ezek 29:3-5, 7, 8).

- 5] And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height.
- 6] I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimmest, even to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee.

Egypt's fall would make a profound impression on the nations (Ch. 30; 31). Was the plague of the water of the Nile turned to blood (Exodus 7:19, 20) on Ezekiel's mind?

- 7] And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.
- 8] All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD.

Similar to those that will accompany the day of the Lord (Joel 2:30-31; 3:15). Or perhaps the darkness of the 9th plague (Ex 10:21-29).

- 9] I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known.
- 10] Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee, when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they shall tremble at every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall.
- 11] For thus saith the Lord GOD; The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.

- 12] By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall, the terrible of the nations, all of them: and they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed.
- 13] I will destroy also all the beasts thereof from beside the great waters; neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them.
- 14] Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD.
- 15] When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I am the LORD.
- 16] This is the lamentation wherewith they shall lament her: the daughters of the nations shall lament her: they shall lament for her, even for Egypt, and for all her multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 32:17-32: The Tour of Sheol

This seventh and final oracle against Egypt contains the most graphic portrayal of the Pit or Sheol in the OT.

It is the international abode of the dead, full of graves (vv. 22, 23) and peopled with nations once vital (vv. 18, 29, 30). Nations are in places of honor or dishonor (vv. 23-25, 30); kings on their thrones are surrounded by their subjects (Isa 14:9, 10, 18, 19) and warriors are buried with their weapons under their heads (v. 27).

The nations are weak (vv. 20, 21; Isa 14:10; cf. also Job 3:17-19) and Egypt would be consigned among the uncircumcised (v. 19 Cf. 31:18).
[Note: Outside time—not necessarily chronological.]

- 17] It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 18] Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.
- 19] Whom dost thou pass in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised.
- 20] They shall fall in the midst of them that are slain by the sword: she is delivered to the sword: draw her and all her multitudes.
- 21] The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.
- 22] Asshur is there and all her company: his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword:
- 23] Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living.

“Asshur” is Assyria. Assyria had already been used as an object lesson by Ezekiel (Chapter 31).

- 24] There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit.

Elam, mentioned only here in Ezekiel, was located east of the Tigris River and north of the Persian Gulf. The Elamites were a non-Semitic people.

- 25] They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of them that be slain.
- 26] There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living.

Northern fringe of what is now eastern and central Turkey; Gog’s allies Ezekiel 38 & 39. Aggressive Meshech and Tubal had carried on a long battle with the Assyrians for control of the area south of the Black Sea.

- 27] And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.
- 28] Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shalt lie with them that are slain with the sword.

The Main Point: *Like those once-powerful nations that were now in the grave, Pharaoh and his powerful army could expect the same fate!*

- 29] There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which with their might are laid by them that were slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit.

The Edomites were circumcised, but here they are to lie with those who were not.

- 30] There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain; with their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit.
- 31] Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord GOD.

- 32] For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that are slain with the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

The Nations

- Egypt • Asshur • Elam • Meshech & Tubal • Edom
- Princes of the North, Sidonians • Pharaoh of Egypt

Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee: The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.

Psalms 83:1-8

Muslim States

Edom	Southern Jordan
Ishmaelites	Father of the Arabs
Moab	Central Jordan
Hagarenes	Egypt
Gebal	Lebanon
Ammon	Northern Jordan
Amalek	Sinai Peninsula
Philistines	Gaza
Tyre	Lebanon
Assyria	Iraq and parts of Syria

Divine Interpretation

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| • Basis: | • Destiny: |
| – Blood ties | – Conversion |
| – Anti-semitism | – Occupation |
| | – Destruction |

Destinies

- (Esau):
- Edom Total Destruction (Ez 35:6-9; Isa 34:8-15; Jer 49:7-20; Obed; Ezek 25:12-14).

(Lot):

- Moab Subservient (Jer 48:1-47).
- Ammon Subservient (Jer 49:1-2,6).
- Egypt Subservient (Isa 19:1-22);
 - Civil war; upheaval (Isa 11-15)
 - Fear of the Lord (Isa 17)
 - 5 cities (Hebrew) (Isa 18)
- Conversion (Isa 19-22)
- Allah -> YHVH
- 40 years dispersion (Ezek 29:8-14)
- 960 years (Zech 14:16-19)
- Lebanon Occupation (Ezek 47:13-48:29)
- Iraq
 - Assyria Conversion (Isa 19:23-25)
 - “My people” (Isa 24,25)
 - Babylonia Destruction (Isa 13,14; Jer 50, 51; Rev 18)
- Saudi Arabia Desolation (Jer 49:28-33)
- (Kedar, Hazor)
- Iran (Elam) Conversion (Jer 49:34-39)

Hermeneutical Alternatives

- Ethnic peoples – Reappearing?
- Territorial/Geographic?
- Divorced from any specific timeline? – Allusions to Eden, et al.
- Metaphorical: simply to make a moral point?

The Rise of Islam: Pervasive in the Scriptures

Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison: Which perished at Endor: they became as dung for the earth. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna:

Psalm 83:9-11

A remez? A hint of something deeper?

Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

Judges 8:21

שָׁהָרֹן *saharon* = moon, crescent; as an ornament.

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor; free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Revelation 13:16, 17

Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

Zechariah 11:17

Identity Practice

Islamic *Shahadatan*: a declaration of allegiance to Allah and Muhammad worn by millions on the forehead or right arm. Greek *dexios*: right arm or right side. *Charagma*: badge of servitude. The number of his name, or a multitude?

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Revelation 13:18

χ	600	ἑξακόσιοι	<i>hexakosioi</i>
ξ	60	ἑξήκοντα	<i>hexakonta</i>
ς	6	ἕξ.	<i>hex</i>
	666		
Χριστός			<i>Christos</i>
X ξ ς			<i>Antichrist = Pseudo-Christ</i>

Whose Number?

Insertable chips, RFID, bar codes, etc. for implementation? Remember: it is *His* number and name that are the critical identity issues.

Alternative Forms of Gematria

- *Ragil* (nominal)
- *Kolel*, the *ragil* values plus the number of letters in the word.
- *Katan*, small values; all tens and hundreds reduced to 1 - 9 by summing the digits. (Also called “reduced” values.)
- *Hakadmi*, nominal values plus the values of each letter preceding it.

- *Hameruba Haklali*, the value of the word *squared*.
- *Hameruba Haperati*, the sum of the squares of each individual letter.
- *Miluy*, the sums of the values of the *names* of each letter that makes up the word. (Also called “filling.”)

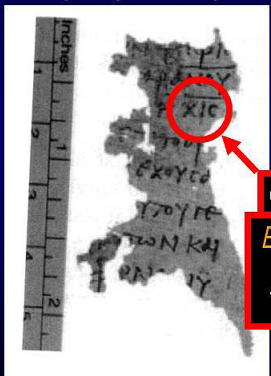
Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Revelation 13:18

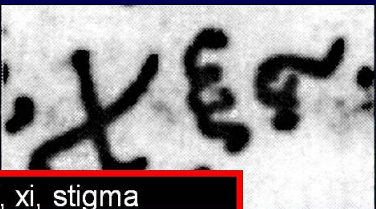
- “wisdom”: σοφία *sophia* wisdom, broad and full of intelligence; used of the knowledge of very diverse matters.
- “count”: ψηφίζω *psephizo* to count, reckon, decide by voting.
- “number”: ἀριθμός *arithmos* a definite number; an indefinite number, a multitude.
- “man”: ἄνθρωπος *anthropos* a human being; a man.
- 666: ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ. Six hundred sixty six?

Manuscript Evidence

Oxythynchus Papyri
(P.Oxy LVI 4499)



Codex Vaticanus
350 AD



Chi, xi, stigma
Bism Allah: “In the Name of Allah”
 (is written at an upward angle)
 The two swords also are clearly visible

The newest volume of Oxythynchus Papyri (P.Oxy LVI 4499) contains a fragmentary papyrus of Revelation which is the earliest known witness to some sections (late third, early fourth century). Chi, iota, stigma (hexakosiai deka hex) is in the third line.]

Iraqi Flag



Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding decide [who] the multitude of the beast [is]; for it is the multitude of a man [that is, Muhammad]; and his multitude are “In the name of Allah.”

Revelation 13:18

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Next Session

The prophecies of Israel’s restoration. Read Chapters 33 - 36.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 17 Chapters 33 - 35

Ezekiel was forbidden to speak to his people any more about their future until he got the message that Jerusalem had indeed fallen. For those of you who like to deal in seven-year prophecies, that imposed silence lasted for seven years! Meanwhile, he spoke prophecies of judgments on the surrounding nations, as we have seen in the last few chapters.

Ezekiel 33: The Watchman Chapter

- 1] Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:

God reverts to the commission that he gave to Ezekiel at the beginning of his ministry. He likens him to the watchman of a city.

- 3] If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;
- 4] Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.
- 5] He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.
- 6] But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

Ezekiel had warned them; the false prophets had not. Ezekiel had done a good job.

The Watchman Role

OT References: 2 Sam 18; 2 Kgs 9; Jer 4:5-6; Hos 8:1; Amos 3:6; Hab 2:1.

“Sounding the trumpet” was a quaint Old Testament phrase, but Paul uses the same idiom in the context of spiritual gifts and witnessing which we should be more concerned with (Cf. 1 Cor 14:8).

- 7] So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

Ezekiel has fulfilled that commission. He *had* warned them; the false prophets had not. Ezekiel had done a good job. The prophet receives a new appointment as the watchman of the people (Cf. Isa 21:6; 56:10; Jer 6:17; Hab 2:1).

- 8] When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Let's make sure that the fellow who hears has been properly warned: If he is not warned, the speaker is held responsible. He will have to answer to God for neglecting his duty.

- 9] Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.
- 10] Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

The parallelism with Leviticus 26:39-42 is so striking that it can scarcely be accidental:

And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them. If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

Leviticus 26:39-52

- 11] Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

“...I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked...”: It is quite obvious from this verse that God does not want to judge. Isaiah said that judgment was His *strange* work (Isa 28:21). God wants to save them, and He is urging them to turn to Him and accept life.

- 12] Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.

He was saying that all the good deeds you might do will not compensate for your bad deeds. To have adequate righteousness before God, you have to be blameless. He that is guilty of one fault is guilty of all. A “chain” of righteousness must have all the links effective...

- 13] When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

That is the same idea here, only it is said in another way. You have to stand in God's righteousness, and that comes about through repentance, and taking refuge in His mercy, not by standing in your own righteousness. Whatever you have done that is noteworthy before the Lord is not enough to offset your iniquities.

- 14] Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

- 15] If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.
- 16] None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.
- 17] Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.

The children of Israel had another complaint. They said that God was not fair in His judgment. He judged everybody alike; yet there were some “good people” among the captives.

- 18] When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

This verse is not speaking about somebody losing salvation. God is saying that when one of His children gets into sin, He will judge him. That is exactly what Paul said 1 Cor 11:31. And God says through John that there is a sin unto death (1 Jn 5:16). He is speaking about a child of God. What kind of death is he talking about? He is talking about physical death. Some Christians are judged for their sins by physical death.

- 19] But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

God is righteous in what He does. If a wicked man will turn to God, God will save him.

- 20] Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.

Whoever you are, you will have to stand before God for judgment some day. If you are a child of God, He will judge you for the sins you have committed, but you will not lose your salvation (2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:11-15). However, if you are a lost person, you have no claim on God whatsoever. He has made that clear in the NT:

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

1 Peter 3:12

- 21] And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.

On that very day that this news was brought, Ezekiel’s wife died, and he was prohibited to mourn for her (Ezek 24:16-24).

Dating Issues

“12th year, 10th month, 5th day”: The reading of the Masoretic Text implies that the fugitive reached the exile one and one-half years after the fall of Jerusalem. Jeremiah’s year began in the autumn, while Ezekiel, following the Babylonian reckoning, began the year in the spring. Thus the 11th year of Jeremiah 39:2 is the same as the 12th year of Ezekiel 33:21, and so the news reached Ezekiel in January 585.

Jerusalem fell in the 11th year, 4th month, and 9th day of the reign of Zedekiah (Jer 39:2 parallels 52:5-7 and 2 Kgs 25:2), and was burned a month later (Jer 52:12-14 parallels 2 Kgs 25:8-10).

Eight manuscripts, the LXX, Lucian, and the Syriac read *eleventh year*. Dating this oracle in the 11th year, 10th month, 5th day, permits it to fit in before Ezek 26:1, which may have been delivered in the 11th or 12th month of the 11th year. The news would have come about six months after the fall of Jerusalem; i.e., about January, 585 B.C. Cf. Ezra’s journey, 108 days (Ezra 8:31; 7:8, 9).

[**Sources:** E. Auerbach (VT, X (1960) 69, 70, and M. Noth (ZDPV, LXXIV (1958), 133-157) have amassed data to show that in the late monarchy the year began in the spring.]

- 22] Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.

The Lord opened his mouth by the time the man arrived the next morning (Cf. Ezek 3:26, 27; 24:27). Ezekiel was now free to devote himself to the pastoral work hinted at earlier (Cf. Ezek 16:60ff.; 17:22ff.; 20:33ff). One tradition identifies the messenger with Baruch (Jer 45:5; Baruch 1:2).

Restricted Speech

Ezekiel 24:25-27 was where the Lord prophesied that he would be silent to Judah until Jerusalem fell. From that point on (Chapters 25-33), He had given him no prophecy for Jerusalem; instead He had given him messages for the surrounding nations. Seven years passed as he waited for the day that occurs in these next verses of Chapter 33. Now we find that God no longer makes Ezekiel mute about Jerusalem

- 23] Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
24] Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying,

Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance.

“...the land is given us for inheritance”: They are ignoring the fact that there was a great deal of difference between Abraham and themselves. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. These people do not believe God. They were so confident of their safety before the fall of the city (Ezek 11:3-12), they are charged with six specific sins which disqualified them for any inheritance.

- 25] Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land?
- 26] Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land?

Six specific sins (cf. Ezek 8:6, 10-12, 15; 22:6, 9) disqualified them.

“...Ye work abomination”: The verb, curiously enough, has the feminine suffix. Was it used intentionally, either as pointing to the prominence of women in those rites (Jer 44:15), or to the degrading vices which involved the loss of true manhood (2 Kgs 23:7)?

- 27] Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence.

Those who are hiding in ruins, the depopulated countryside, and in “forts and caves” will fall before the three destructive forces of Ezek 5:12; 14:13-20.

- 28] For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through.

It remained desolate *until now*. Something new is now in the *Ruach*...

- 29] Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed.
- 30] Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD.

The people are shaken, and they want to listen to Ezekiel now, but they won't follow through.

- 31] And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

On the surface they appeared to be turning to the Lord. They wanted to hear what the Lord had to say but had no intention of obeying Him. Hearers, but not doers (James 1:22).

- 32] And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

Unbelief is *willful*. The real problem is that people do not want to give up their sin. They were willing to come and listen to what Ezekiel had to say, but it had no effect upon them whatsoever.

- 33] And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

Ezekiel was the *only* man who said that Jerusalem would be destroyed. All of the false prophets said that it would not be destroyed. The word of confirmation has come. Jerusalem is destroyed. Ezekiel is declared a true prophet.

Ezekiel 34: The Wicked Shepherds

In the Old Testament, the shepherds of the people are always its kings and other civil rulers (1 Kgs 22:17; Ps 77:20; 78:71; Jer 23:1-6), and those whom Ezekiel had in his thoughts were the tyrannous rulers of the house of David, like Jehoiakim and Zedekiah and their lieutenants.

The false prophets of Israel have now been shown to be liars because the destruction of Jerusalem as prophesied by Ezekiel has become a reality. The concept of a shepherd was not just that of a spiritual leader; it was used of kings and leaders in general (Ps 78; Isa 44 & 63; Zech 11 & 13). You will even find the antichrist spoken of as the wicked shepherd, and see a physical description of him (Zech 11:17).

- 1] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

“...feed the flocks”: They had not given the people the Word of God. This should still be the standard by which we judge a ministry today.

- 3] Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

All of us are needy people, and the only thing which can minister to our deep needs is the Word of God. If a minister is not giving the Word of God, he is not ministering to the people. [“Little sermonettes delivered to Christianettes by preacherettes are not quite doing the job today.” J. Vernon McGee.]

- 4] The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.
- 5] And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.
- 6] My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

“...meat” should be translated “food.”

“...my flock”: Unfed sheep will scatter elsewhere. These were still God’s sheep. There is an interesting possessive here: God never relinquished His right to those that were under the shepherds...

- 7] Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;
- 8] As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;
- 9] Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;
- 10] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

“...deliver my flock”: Now we are going to a Messianic prophecy...

- 11] For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.
- 12] As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

The Good, Great, Chief Shepherd: the Messiah (Ps 22, 23, 24).

“I will” occurs 18 times in vv. 11-29.

- 13] And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

Some of the language goes far beyond the return from Babylon that they experienced under Ezra and Nehemiah. The debates should have ended on May 14, 1948.

- 14] I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

Obviously this is for a future time. The land of Israel does not lie in safety today.

- 15] I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.
- 16] I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Ezekiel, like the Lord, had a pastor’s heart (Cf. Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10; Ps 23:1; 30:1; 95:7). The Lord identifies himself as the Good Shepherd. In the NT (Cf. Lk 15:3-7; Jn 10:10-16; Heb 13:20; I Pet 2:25; 5:4; Rev 7:17). This, of course, is Messianic (Cf. Jn 10:14-16). We would do well to read that whole chapter speaking of the Good Shepherd which God is referring to here in Ezekiel 34.

- 17] And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats.

“...cattle”: Commonly used in the Old Testament of sheep rather than of kine (Gen 30:34-42; 31:8-12). In Gen 30:32 we have the same Hebrew word as that which Ezekiel uses; cf. Matt 13 (Tares); 25 (Sheep & Goats).

- 18] Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?
- 19] And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.
- 20] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle.
- 21] Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad;
- 22] Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.
- 23] And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

- 24] And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.

“...David a prince among them”: The earth will be the eternal home of Israel and it appears that David will rule here on this earth throughout eternity. He will be a vice-regent of the Lord Jesus. David is also referred to by name elsewhere in passages that look to the future restoration of Israel (Jer 30:9; Hos 3:5).

Messianic references to Jesus Christ as the son of David: Jer 23:5, 30:9; Hos 3:5; Isa 55:3-5; 2 Sam 20:1; 1 Kgs 12:16. However, Christ as the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:14-18) and the “Son of David” completely fulfills the promises found in 2 Sam 7:13; Jer 23:5, 6; Mic 5:2-5; Isa 9:6, 7; Dan 9:25, 26; Cf. Mt 1:1; 22:41-45; Lk 1:31-33; Jn 1:43; 4:25; Acts 2:29-33; 13:22, 23, et al. Also Cf. Jer 30:9; Hos 3:5; Isa 55:3-5; 2 Sam 20:1; 1 Kgs 12:16.

- 25] And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.
- 26] And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.
- 27] And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.
- 28] And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.
- 29] And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

Verse 25ff are obviously Millennial. They correspond to Isaiah 65 and Revelation 21. The concept of the plant being raised was an idiom Isaiah used of the Messiah in his chapter 11. Jeremiah 23:5 speaks of the Messiah as the root out of the dry ground.

- 30] Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD.
- 31] And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 35: Judgment of Edom

The present oracle, much more detailed than that in Ezek 25:12-14, was called forth by Edom’s hostile behavior to Judah after 586. Israel must be cleared of hostile neighbors before the blessings of the new

age would begin (Ezek 36:1-7). The desolation of Mount Seir and the restoration of the mountains of Israel form a striking contrast (Ezek 35:3, 4, 7-9, 15; 36:1-6, 8).

- 1] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
2] Son of man, set thy face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it,

“Mount Seir” = (*hairy*, covered with brushwood). The highlands east of the Arabah, stretching from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba, were the home of Edom (Gen 36:8, 9; Deut 1:2; 1 Chr 4:42).

- 3] And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate.
4] I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel has previously mentioned Edom’s judgment in Ezekiel 25:12-14. Petra and Teman were the main cities of Edom, and just as the prophecy had indicated, they are now in ruins (Jer 18, 49). Edom was subjugated: by Babylon, then by the Medo-Persians, and in 126 B.C. the Hasmoneans compelled them to become Jews; so they became known as Idumeans. Herod, of course, was an Idumean.

- 5] Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end:

Edom is the people descended from Esau, Jacob’s brother. Esau was Jacob’s bitterest enemy, and the people of Edom probably hurt the people of Israel more than any other enemy they had. Edom represents the enemy of God in this world today.

- 6] Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee.
7] Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth.

“...blood”: 4X in this verse. Edom means “red.”

- 8] And I will fill his mountains with his slain men: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword.
9] I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

For thousands of years in that part of the country, one of the worst things that could happen to you was to die but not be buried. It was a form of

ultimate shame, a form of disgrace. What he was saying was that they would fall, and would not get buried.

- 10] Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the LORD was there:

“...two nations”: Israel and Judah (cf. Jer 33:24).

“...whereas the Lord was there”: The Lord had withdrawn his visible presence from the Temple and the city (Ezek 10:18; 11:22, 23), but he had not renounced his right to the land (Ezek 36:5). This prophecy declares a purified Israel shall return, and Jerusalem will be given a new name (Ezek 48:35).

- 11] Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee.
- 12] And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume.
- 13] Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them.
- 14] Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.
- 15] As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

The Victorious Return

Jesus is the one who is “mighty to save.” This is linked to Revelation 19, where the Lord comes riding on a white horse and his vesture is dipped in blood (Cf. Isa 34:2-5; 63:1-4). Notice that He comes riding *from Edom* (Isa 63:1ff).

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

Isaiah 63:1-4

The whole scenario of what occurs at the time that the Lord returns is found in Zech 12, 13, 14). A prerequisite condition to Jesus Christ returning is that Israel needs to petition Him to come back (Hos 5:15).

Next Session

Study carefully Chapters 36 & 37: the reason for Israel’s restoration; the vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones. (These will be a prelude to fabled Chapters 38 & 39 following...)

The Book of Ezekiel Session 18 Chapters 36 & 37

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Order of Final Section

	Ch.
The Restoration of the Land	36:1-15
The Restoration of the Nation	36:16-36
– The Vision of the Dry Bones	37:1-28
Judgment on Israel’s Invaders	38:1-39:24
The Millennial Temple	40:1 – 47:12
The Division of the Land	47:13- 48:35

In Chapter 36 we find that Israel’s past sins must be judged and forgiven before she can be restored to the land.

- 1] Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD:
- 2] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession:

“...ours in possession”: The enemy is Edom and the other nations who claim the Land, and seek Israel’s harm: Islam (Cf. vv. 5, 7). Islam echoes Edom’s position today.

This prediction must be read in contrast—first, to that delivered against the mountains of Seir in the last chapter (Ezek 35) and, secondly, to that uttered against the mountains of Israel at an earlier stage of Ezekiel’s activity (Ezek 6).

- 3] Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people:
- 4] Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about;
- 5] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.

“...the residue of the heathen...” Islamic nations, collectively.

- 6] Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:
- 7] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame.

“...lifted up mine hand”: The gesture accompanying an oath (cf. Ezek 20:5, 15, 23; 47:14).

- 8] But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.
- 9] For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown:

“For they are at hand to come” could be translated “For they are *soon* to come.”

- 10] And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded:
- 11] And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

- 12] Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men.
- 13] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations;
- 14] Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD.
- 15] Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 36:16-21: Israel Exiled for Her Sins

Verses 16-23 constitute the prophetic lesson, or *haphtarah*, to the weekly Sabbath reading, Num 19:1 - 22:1, the *Pārah*, “The Red Heifer.”

- 16] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 17] Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.

“...uncleanness of a removed woman”: A figure for idolatry (Cf. Ezek 7:19; 18:6; Lev 15:19ff).

- 18] Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it:
- 19] And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.

“...I scattered them among the heathen...” Referring to the Diaspora as a judgment.

- 20] And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.

Just being out of the Land profaned His holy name.

- 21] But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went.

Ezekiel 36:22-32: Restoration of Israel

- 22] Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.
- 23] And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen,

which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

- 24] For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.
- 25] Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you”: Ezekiel the priest recalls the Mosaic ritual (Cf. Ex 30:17-21; Lev 14:5-7, 9; Num 19:9, 17-19), which is a picture of forgiveness (Cf. Ps 51:7; Jer 33:8; Heb 9:13; 10:22).

- 26] A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
- 27] And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

“A new heart...a new spirit”: God’s part in regeneration is stressed here (Cf. 11:19; 18:30-32; Jer 31:31-34; Ps 51:10-12).

The Prophecy of Joel

This is what Joel meant in his prophecy—there is a day coming when God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh, not just *some* (Joel 2:28, 29). The Spirit was poured out upon very few on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21). All Peter said on that day was, “Don’t ridicule us and say we are drunk. This is *like* what Joel said is going to happen in the last days.” The Spirit has come upon a few, and today God is calling out a people for His name.

Ezekiel 36:28-32

The results of Israel’s regeneration will be: her permanent occupation of the land (v.28a); a covenant relationship with God (v.28b); protection against relapse into idolatry (v.29a); the abundant supply of every want (vv. 29b, 30); and, self-humiliation and repentance on account of past sin (vv. 31, 32).

- 28] And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.
- 29] I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.
- 30] And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.
- 31] Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.

- 32] Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

“Not for your sakes do I this...”: These benefits are of pure grace (Cf. v. 22).

Ezekiel 36:33-36: Effect of Israel’s Prosperity on the Nations

- 33] Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.
- 34] And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.
- 35] And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.
- 36] Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.
- 37] Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.
- 38] As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 37:1-28: Reintegration of the People of Israel into One Nation

The Vision of Dry Bones

[This, obviously, is not referring to the church.] The Lord, through Ezekiel, proclaims to Israel the coming resurrection of her national life (vv.1-14).

That restoration has to do both with the *national* entity of Israel as well as the *spiritual* revival or restoration which the Lord announced in the preceding chapter. He foretells by the symbolic act of joining two sticks the future union of the two kingdoms under one head, David (vv.15-28).

- 1] The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,
- 2] And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

Here, again, he is transported (as he was to Jerusalem before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; cf. Chapter 8).

- 3] And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.
- 4] Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

“...and say unto them...”: Do see the humor here?

- 5] Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:
- 6] And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

רוּחַ *rûah* is translated “breath” in vv. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10; “winds” in vv. 9; “spirit” in verses 1, 14. The context usually determines the translation. Breath is a sign of life, identical with wind or air, and becomes, in this prophecy, the living principle itself, spirit.

- 7] So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.
- 8] And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.
- 9] Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

The breath of life is breathed from the four winds of heaven (cf. Jer 49:36), a symbol of the universal life-giving Spirit of God (v. 14; Cf. Gen 1:2).

- 10] So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Three steps: 1) They were scattered; 2) They came together, with flesh and skin (still dead bodies); 3) They came to life.

Ezekiel 37:11-14: The Explanation of the Vision

- 11] Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

“...whole house of Israel...”: Both Israel and Judah (vv. 16, 22).

“...our hope is lost”: The prophet frequently quotes sayings of the people (e.g., Ezek 11:13; 12:22, 27; 16:4; 18:2; 20:49; 36:20).

- 12] Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

This is *not* the physical resurrection of individuals (cf. v.21). The nation of Israel is buried amidst the nations of the world.

The prophet is not here speaking of the bodily resurrection, though there are intimations of this doctrine in the OT (Isa 25:8; 26:19; Dan 12:2). It was “our Saviour Christ Jesus, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim 1:10).

- 13] And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,
- 14] And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

Ezekiel 37:15-28: A Symbol of the Reunion of Judah and Israel

- 1] The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
- 2] Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

“...one stick”: עֵצ׃ *ets*, tree, wood, staff (vv. 17, 19, 20; cf. Zech 11:7). Perhaps a wooden tablet.

No “Lost” Tribes Here

“For Judah...and for all the house of Israel his companions”: Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, Levi, et al. (Cf. 2 Chr 11:13-17).

“Joseph or Ephraim”: The northern tribes (remnants of the eight remaining...)

Voting With their Feet

In 930 B.C., Jeroboam ruled the Northern Kingdom from his capital in Samaria (1 Kgs 11:43-12:33). When Jeroboam turned the Northern Kingdom to idolatry, the Levites (and others who desired to remain faithful) migrated south to Rehoboam (2 Chr 11:13-17):

And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to [Rehoboam] out of all their coasts. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD: And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made. And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.

2 Chronicles 11:13-17

Pursuit of Political Correctness

Horried that Jeroboam set up a rival religion, with golden calf worship at Bethel and Dan, many northerners moved south, knowing that the only place acceptable to God was the Temple on Mt. Moriah (Deut 12:5-7; 16:2-6; Isa 18:7). Those who favored idolatry, migrated north to Jeroboam. Later, when Asa reigned as king in the south, another great company came from the north (2 Chr 15:9).

Confirmations

Eventually, all 12 tribes were represented in the south. God even addresses the 12 tribes in the south: “Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin...” (2 Chr 11:3). The “tribe of Judah” is used idiomatically for the Southern Kingdom (Cf. 1 Kgs 11:13,32, etc.; 2 Kgs 17:18).

When encountering the tribal designations, it is important to distinguish between the *territories* allocated to the tribes and the people themselves.

Years after the deportation by Assyria, King Hezekiah of Judah issued a call to all Israel to come and worship in Jerusalem and celebrate Passover (2 Chr 30:5-6, 10-11, 21). Eighty years later, King Josiah of Judah also issued a call and an offering for the temple came back from “Manasseh and Ephraim and all the remnant of Israel...” (2 Chr 34:9).

The Northern Kingdom Falls

In 724 B.C., Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria for three years. King Hoshea of Israel attempted to revolt against paying Assyrians annual tribute money; a treaty with Pharaoh of Egypt did not help (2 Kgs 18:2). Samaria, Jeroboam's capital, fell in 722 B.C.; Assyrians pulled down

towers, took 27,290 captive; placed an Assyrian ruler over the city, and looted it of 50 royal chariots, and other items, etc.

The Northern Kingdom Falls

The Assyrians implemented their infamous policy of intermixing conquered peoples to keep them from organizing a revolt. Israelite captives were mixed with Persians and others; and strangers from far-off lands were resettled in Samaria. (The resulting mixed, quasi-Jewish populations resulted in “Samaritans”; cf. John 4:20-22.)

The Babylonians Take Over

When the Northern Kingdom went into captivity (722 B.C.), all 12 tribes were also represented in the south. The northern kingdom had been taken by Assyria as slaves, which were a valuable commodity. (It is difficult to view them as careless enough to let them wander off to Europe.)

When the Babylonians took the Southern Kingdom into captivity (586 B.C.), members of all 12 tribes of Israel were involved. Isaiah, prophesying to Judah, refers to them as the “House of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel...” (Isa 48:1,12-14).

When the Babylonians take over Assyria, the descendants of the “Lost tribes” were probably again commingled with the captives of Judah.

Commingled Terminology

After the Babylonian captivity, the terms “Jew” and “Israelite” are apparently used interchangeably: Ezra calls the returning remnant Jews 8 times and Israel 40 times. Ezra speaks of “all Israel” (Ezra 2:70; 3:11; 8:35; 10:25, et al.); Nehemiah calls them Jews 11 times, Israel 22 times, and speaks of “all Israel” being back in the Land (Neh 12:47). The remnant who returned from Babylon is represented as the nation (Mal 1:1).

New Testament Testimony

Our Lord is said to have offered Himself to the nation, “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10:5-6; 15:24). Other tribes than Judah are mentioned specifically in the NT as being represented in the land (Mt 4:13,15; Lk 2:36; Acts 4:36; Phil 3:5).

- “The Twelve Tribes” (Acts 26:7; James 1:1);
- Anna knew her tribal identity from the tribe of Asher (Lk 2:30);

- Paul knew he was of the tribe of Benjamin—a “Jew” and an “Israelite” (Rom 11:1).
- At Pentecost, Peter cries “Ye men of Judea” (Acts 2:14); “Ye men of Israel...” (Acts 2:22); and, “All the house of Israel...” (Acts 2:36).
- The New Testament speaks of Israel 75 times and uses the word “Jew” 174 times (Acts 21:39; 22:3; Rom 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5, etc.)

*Attempts to discriminate among these terms are often used as aspersions against the current State of Israel. [Gal 6:16 is often misunderstood by failing to note the kai before “the Israel of God,” contrasting them to the Gentiles. See Arnold Fruchtenbaum’s book on *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (pp. 690-699).]*

Eschatological Implications

- There are 12,000 sealed from each of **The 12 Tribes** (Rev 7).
- The 12 Apostles are to rule over each of **The 12 Tribes** (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30).
- **The 12 Tribes** each have designated divisions of the Land in the Millennium (Ezek 48).

- 17] And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.
- 18] And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?
- 19] Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.
- 20] And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.
- 21] And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

Ezekiel 37:21-28: Five Blessings Resulting from Unification

- 1) The people will be brought back home (vv. 21, 22);
- 2) They will be purified from idolatry (v. 23; cf. 36:25);
- 3) David will be installed as king over them (vv. 24, 25);
- 4) A covenant of peace will be established (v. 26a; Cf. 34:25);
- 5) God will dwell in their midst (vv. 26b-28).

- 22] And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

“...one nation”: The prophets regarded Israel of the north as still living (Hos 1:11; 8:3, 4; Jer 3:12-15; Isa 43:5-7; 49:5, 6). Note the disposition of the twelve tribes in the New Kingdom (Chapter 48).

- 23] Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.
- 24] And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

“...David my servant shall be king...”: Indeed. We will see more of this in the final section of Ezekiel’s book.

- 25] And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

“...Jacob my servant”: Jacob was an ancestor of Israel, as Abraham was (Hos 12:12; Isa 29:22).

“David shall be their prince forever...”: This is the first of four mentions (Ezek 34:23,24; 37:24,25).

- 26] Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

“...sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore”: Looking forward to Chapter 40ff.

- 27] My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
- 28] And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

There is soon to come an event that will awake them to realize that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob once again has His hand upon them (Ezek 38, 39). I believe it that it may be on our near horizon. *This will be taken up in our next session.* The Throne of David was promised to the Son of Mary (Lk 1:32). The reestablishment of the

“Tabernacle of David” was also confirmed by James at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:16,17; quoting Amos 9:11,12). *These will be taken up in the following sessions.*

Next Session

The Magog Invasion: Read Ezekiel Chapters 38 & 39. Review: Genesis 10—The Table of Nations (Rev 20:8). (Is this the same event or a different one?) Who are those that “dwell carelessly in the isles” in Ezekiel 39:6?

The Book of Ezekiel Session 19 Chapters 38 & 39

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel 38 & 39: The Magog Invasion

This is the occasion where God Himself intervenes to quell the ill-fated invasion of Israel by Magog and its allies: Persia, Cush, Phut, Libya, Gomer, Togarmah, Meshech, and Tubal. Why all the strange names? *We* make it do so: we keep changing the names of things: Petrograd = St. Petersburg = Leningrad = St. Petersburg again; Byzantium = Constantinople = Istanbul; Cape Canaveral = Cape Kennedy, etc. This passage also appears to anticipate the use of nuclear weapons.

- 1] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2] Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,
- 3] And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

“...the chief prince” = “Prince of *Rosh*,” or “*Rhos*” [LXX]. The Scythian Tauri in the Crimea were so called.

Who Is “Gog”?

It is uncharacteristic for the Holy Spirit to introduce a key player without some kind of preamble or background. There is, however, a strange anomaly in the prophecies of Amos (Amos 7:1-3).

Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king’s mowings.

Amos 7:1

“Behold” appears as an abrupt participle...What on earth does *this* verse mean?

And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

Amos 7:2, 3

Amos intercedes, like Moses did (Num 14:11-21).

“It shall not be”: So the Lord changed His mind: thus, this prophesied event never happened. [*So why is this all written here?*]

Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king’s mowings.

Amos 7:1 (LXX)

οὕτως ἔδειξέν μοι κύριος καὶ ἰδοὺ
ἐπιγονὴ ἀκρίδων ἐρχομένη ἐωθινή καὶ
ἰδοὺ βροῦχος εἰς Γωγ ὁ βασιλεὺς

The Lord hath shown me, and, Behold, a swarm of locusts were coming, and behold, one of the young devastating locusts was Gog the King.

Amos 7:1 (LXX)

The Septuagint (LXX) is over 1000 years older than the Masoretic Text (MT), which is the basis of our English translation of the Old Testament text.

Γωγ ὁ βασιλεὺς = Gog the King. However, the locusts “have no king” (Prov 30:27).

The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;
Proverbs 30:27

Natural locusts have no king. However, demon locusts do (Rev 9:1-11).

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.
Revelation 9:3

And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.
Revelation 9:11

Abaddon (Hebrew), *Apollyon* (Greek). *Abaddon*: 6 X in OT (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps 88:11; Prov 15:11; 27:30). *Apollyon*: “destroyer,” Jn 10:10. “Prince of the Air”: Eph 2:2; Jn 14:30; Isa 14:15.

The Gog Identity

The Demon King identity would solve several interpretive problems: It would supply the missing background linkage regarding a key eschatological personage. It explains how both Gog and Magog could reappear at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:8). “Magog” is a people; “Gog” is demon title.

Meshech and Tubal

Meshech and Tubal, identified with the people named *Sarmatians* and *Mushovites* who lived in the ancient province of Pontus in Northern Asia Minor [Herodotus, *Histories* IV]. *Muscovy* and the *Thobelites* were founded by Meshech and Tubal [Josephus, *Antiquities* I.6].

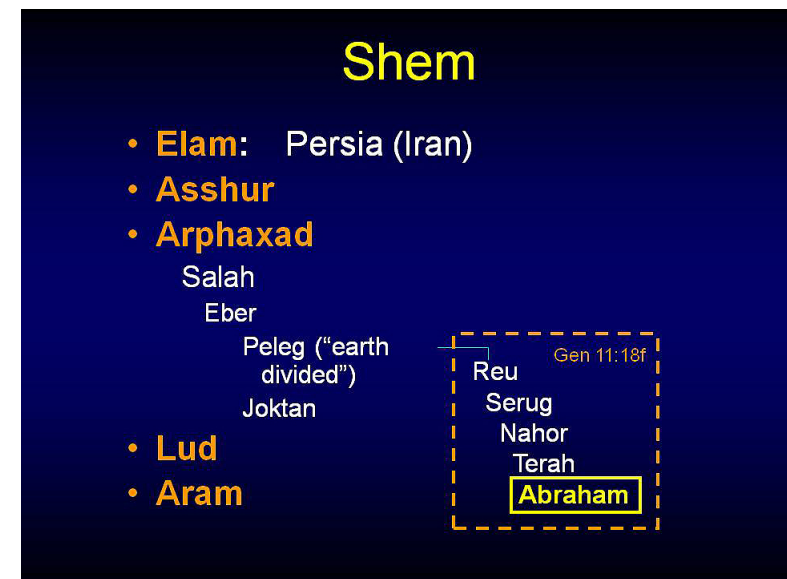
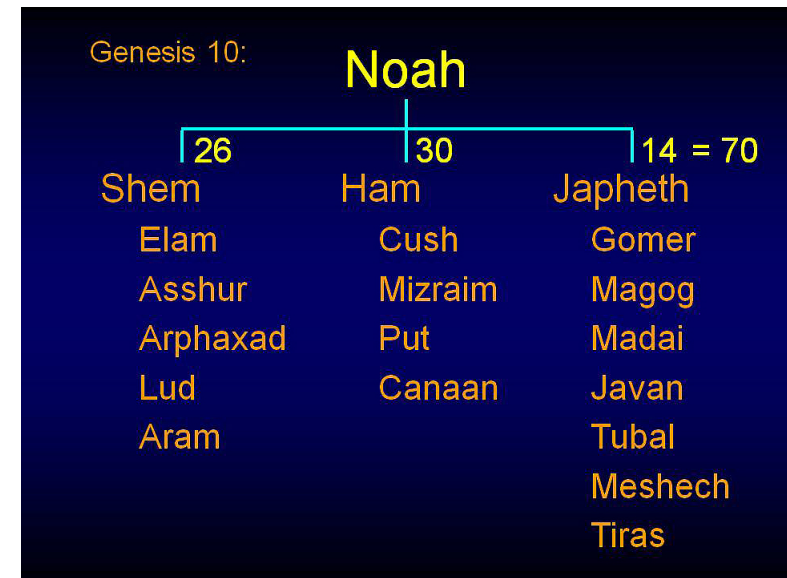
Linguistic Links

Meshech was the barbarous people known as the *Moschi* who dwelt in the Moschian Mountains; the root from which the city of Moscow gets its name [Wilhelm Gesenius]. *Rosh*, or *Ros*, possibly a proper name, referred to those dwelling north of the Tarus Mountains near the Vulga River [C.F. Keil].

[Sources: Wilhelm Gesenius was a Hebrew scholar of about the 19th century, who developed an authoritative lexicon of the Hebrew language. C.F. Keil (Keil & Delachure) is an authoritative 10-volume commentary set on the Old Testament.]

The Other Identities

(Why does the Bible use such strange names? It’s our fault: we keep changing the name of things!)



Ham

- **Mizraim:** Upper & Lower Egypt;
 - Philistines (“Palestinians” = not sons of Ishmael);
- **Cush:** Ethiopia, Kassites, E of Assyria (Settled S of the 2nd cataract of the Nile);
 - Nimrod: Bab-El, Erech, Accad, Calneh;
- **Phut:** (Settled W of Egypt) Libya, N Africa;
- **Canaan:** Sidon to Gaza, Sodom, & Gomorrah;
 - Khittae (“Cathay”); Sinites (Sino = China).

Japheth

- **Gomer:** (Herodotus, Plutarch, et al.). Cimmerians settled along the Danube and Rhine;
 - Ashkenaz: Germany;
 - Riphath: (Josephus: Paphlagonians; “Europe” from Riphath);
 - Togarmah: Armenians, Turkey, Turkestan;
- **Magog:** “Scythians” (Critical to understanding Ezek 38 & 39);
 - Hesiod, Greek didactic poet, 8th cent. B.C.;
 - Herodotus, “The Father of History”, 5th cent. B.C.

The Magog Identity

- Hesiod, Greek Didactic Poet, 8th century B.C.
 - *Magogians* = *Scythians*.
- Herodotus, “Father of History,” 5th century B.C.
 - *Scythians* (10th - 3rd century B.C.).
- Philo, Josephus, et al.
 - *The Great Wall of China: “Ramparts of Gog & Magog.”*
- Soviet Archaeologists’ discoveries.
- From the “Uttermost parts of the north.”

Classic Identities

Writing prior to 1900, identifying the Rosh as Scythians, and Russia: Bishop Lowth of England, 1710; Dr. John Cumming, London, 1864; Rev. Walter Chamberlain, 1854; J.A. Seiss, *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 1860.

The ancient writers refer to the Great Wall of China as *Sud Yagog et Magog*, the “Ramparts of Gog and Magog.”

Japheth

- **Madai:** Medes (Kurds) emerged about 10th century B.C. coalition with Persia (Elam), 7th century B.C.
- **Tubal:** Eastern Anatolia (Turkey).
- **Meshech:** Eastern Anatolia (Turkey).
- **Javan:** Ionia; Greece.
- **Tiras:** Pelasgians of the Aegean the Etruscans of Italy.

Madai represented the Medes east of Assyria and southwest of the Caspian Sea. **Javan** was the general word for the Hellenic race, the Ionians of western Asia Minor. **Tubal** and **Meshech** were northern military states in Anatolia, (now eastern Turkey). **Tiras** may refer to the seafaring Pelasgians of the Aegean coasts.

The Scythians

The name Scythian designates a number of nomadic tribes which dominated the Russian steppes from the Ukraine to China, from the 10th to the 3rd centuries B.C.

The *hippomolgoi* (“mare-milkers”) mentioned in Homer’s *Iliad* were equestrian nomads of the northern steppes, and several authorities identified these with the Scythians. (One of the delicacies I was offered while I was a guest of the Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Union was fermented horse milk! These traditions seem to have a deep history, indeed.)

[Sources: *Iliad*, 13.5; 27. B. N. Grakov, *Die Skythen*, *Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1980, 4. “Scythian”(Rus: *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*), 3rd ed., 1979, vol. 23, 259–260. Also, *Herodotus* 4.117, 4.108, 4.106.]

After being repulsed from Media, many of the later Scythians settled in the fertile area of the Ukraine north of the Black Sea. Other related tribes occupied the area to the east of the Caspian Sea. Herodotus describes them living in Scythia. [Scythia as a square, 20 days journey (360 miles) on a side. It encompassed the lower reaches of the Dniester, Bug, Dnieper, and Don Rivers, where they flow into the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.]

[Source: B. A. Rybakov (Rus: *Herodotus’s Scythia*) (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 19.]

The Scythian language belonged to the Iranian family of the Indo-European languages. The original area in which Iranian was spoken extended from the mid-Volga and the Don regions to the northern Urals and beyond. From here, Iranian-speaking tribes colonized Media, Parthia, Persia, Central Asia, and as far as the Chinese border.



In the 7th century B.C., the Scythians swept across the area, displacing the Cimmerians from the steppes of the Ukraine east of Dnieper River, who fled from them across the Caucasus. [Herodotus 4.12.] Even the name “Caucasus” appears to have been derived from *Gog-hasan*, or “Gog’s Fort.” [Dr. John Gill, *A Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1748.]

The Scythians occupied territory from the Danube to the Don; the northern boundary extended beyond the latitude of Kiev. Meshech and Tubal are in the region known today as Turkey. (Note Georgia blocking the way south...)

*Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision,
Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all*

Colossians 3:11

- 4] And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:

“...horses”: סוס *soos* = leaper, (from a root, “to skip”) “bird” (Jer 8:7); “chariot rider” (Ex 14:9).

- 5] Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:

“...Persia” = Elam: or Iran; “...Ethiopia” = Cush: Kassites, E of Assyria (Settled S of the 2nd cataract of the Nile); “Libya” = Phut: (Settled W of Egypt) Libya, N Africa.

- 6] Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.

“Gomer”: Cimmerians settled along the Danube and Rhine: Poland, Czechoslovakia East Germany, et al. [Herodotus, Plutarch, Josephus, et al.]. Josephus points out that Ashkenaz became what was in the Roman Empire called “the Reginians,” which today would derive to Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany. Also, the Hebrew Talmud references support the same concept.

“Togarmah”: Armenians, Turkey, Turkestan.

“...of the north quarters”: “The uttermost part of the north” (Ezek 38:6, 15; 39:2). In the Hebrew, the word for North has been modified to imply the extreme or uttermost parts of the North. That is why, if you have a modern English translation, or an Amplified, you may see it read a little differently.

- 7] Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

“...and all thy company”: So who is currently providing Persia, Cush, Phut, Gomer and Togarmah their arms? Russia. (This was written 2600 years ago!)

- 8] After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.

The Land has been restored from its desolation...

- 9] Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.
10] Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:
11] And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,
12] To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.
13] Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered

thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?

“...Sheba and Dedan... “Tarshish”: Questioning Bystanders? There are many theories on Tarshish, everything from Spain to Sardinia, to Britain...

Tarshish?

A source of tin (Ezek 27:12). Britannia was from a word meaning tin; the Phoenicians brought tin from Cornwall. (Legendary folklore re: British Israelism.) Jonah bought a ticket to that city; but he never saw it—instead he saw the interior of a big fish!

The “ships of Tarshish” were the larger merchant vessels that were made for distant ocean-going traffic—two year voyages? (1 Kgs 22:48; Isa 2:16; Cf. Ezek 27:12, 25). Worldwide trade at Stonehenge... (made over a period 300 years; the eclipse capability had an error every 300 years. Re: Gerald Hawkins).

- 14] Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?

“...my people of Israel”: One of the reasons that many scholars believe this is a “post-Church” event.

- 15] And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:

“...north parts”: Grammatically, “the uttermost parts of the north.”

- 16] And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.
17] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?

Amos 7:1?

- 18] And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face.
19] For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

“...great shaking”: A global phenomenon (Cf. v.20).

- 20] So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

“...and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence...”: A 25-megaton warheads could alter the orbit of the Earth (Classified Research Report).

- 21] And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man’s sword shall be against his brother.

(Reminiscent of Ishmael: “And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren” Gen 16:12.)

- 22] And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.
23] Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 39: The Denouement

- 1] Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

“...Meshech and Tubal”: Key cities along the southern coast of the Black Sea in the area known as Anatolia, currently the eastern 2/3 of Turkey.

Meshech

Meshech was once one of the most powerful nations of western Asia. The Assyrians were frequently warring with them, from 1100 to 700 B.C.; then living E of Taurus range and in Cappadocia. Inscriptions call them *Muskai*, the *Tibareni Tuplai* (Tubal). Caesarea Mazacha was the great Moschian capital. (Some attribute Moscow and Tobolsk as deriving their names from Meshech and Tubal.)

Tubal

This nation was probably the *Tiberini* of the Greek historian Herodotus, a people of the Asiatic highland west of the Upper Euphrates, the southern range of the Caucasus, on the southern coast of the Black Sea.

They are most probably the Greek: *Tibarenoi*, and Greek: *Moschoi*. [Herodotus iii. 94; vii.78.]

- 2] And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel:

“...the sixth part of thee”: Hebrew equivalent of “decimate”...

“...from the north parts” = “From the “uttermost parts of the north.”

- 3] And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.

חֶרֶב *chereb* = destroying instrument; “sword”

קֶשֶׁת *qesheth* = launcher; “bow.”

חֵץ *chets* = piercing missile; “arrow.”[!]

“Arrow” is the name of Israel’s missile system. “I will smite thy launchers out of thy left hand, and cause thy missiles to fall out of thy right hand.”

- 4] Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.
5] Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.
6] And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

“...among them that dwell carelessly in the isles”: This appears to refer to a “third party”: neither the Magog forces nor Israel. (“Isles” or “coastlands”: imply the farthest reaches of the known world; cf. Ezek 26:15, 18; 27:3, 6-7, 15, 35—we’ll return to this verse later...)

- 7] So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.
8] Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken.
9] And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years:
10] So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD.

The left-over weapons provide all their energy needs for seven years...

- 11] And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamongog.

“...The valley of Hamongog”: “The valley of the hordes of Gog.”

- 12] And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land.
13] Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord GOD.
14] And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search.

“...men of continual employment”: They employ professionals...And wait seven months before entering the area?

- 15] And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man’s bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamongog.
16] And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land.

A form of the word “hordes.”

Nuclear Weapons?

Left-over weapons provide all the energy for the nation Israel for seven years; professionals hired to clear the battlefield—they wait seven months; then clear for seven months and bury the dead east of the Dead Sea (downwind). If a traveler finds something the professionals have missed, *he doesn’t touch it*: he marks the location and lets the professionals deal with it. [The same instructions can be found in the *Operator’s Manual for Marking Set, Contamination: Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC)*, US Armed Forces.]

- 17] And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.
18] Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

(Similarities with Rev 19:17,18 cause some to assume this is somehow associated with Armageddon.)

- 19] And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you.
- 20] Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.
- 21] And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.
- 22] So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward.
- 23] And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword.
- 24] According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.
- 25] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;
- 26] After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.
- 27] When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations;
- 28] Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.
- 29] Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

The ultimate result of the battle with Gog will be Israel's national repentance and spiritual restoration (cf. 36:27; 37:14; Joel 2:28). This will be fulfilled when the Millennial Kingdom is established (Hos 5:15; Zech 12:10).

And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 39:6

“...and among them”: In addition to Magog and Israel, a “third party” is involved!

“...dwell carelessly”: “carelessly” = *betach*: false confidence.

Magog Invasion Imminent

Ezekiel 38 and 39 appear ready to happen. The allies are in position: except one (watch Turkey!)

Placement Alternatives

- 1) As part of the Armageddon sequence? or...
- 2) Prior to the “70th Week”? “Kremlin decision has been made...” [Intelligence Digest.]

Prior to the 70th Week vs. Armageddon

- 1) The Magog invasion forces come from the north; Armageddon, from the whole earth.
- 2) Magog and its allies come to take spoil; Armageddon, to destroy the Jews.
- 3) The seven-month cleanup would seem inconsistent with Israel's flight to Bozrah, etc.
- 4) The seven years' energy requirement seems inconsistent with the establishment of the Millennium.
- 5) There is no mention of other key end-time elements: the Coming World Leader (“Antichrist”) or Babylon, etc.

Treaty of Lisbon

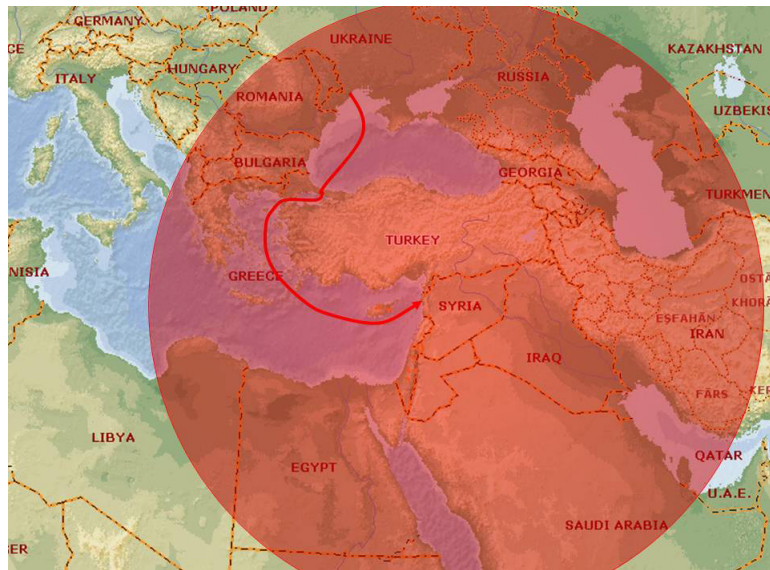
In December 2007 the EU Reform Treaty (Treaty of Lisbon) was signed by Europe's leaders, an attempted “end run” around the 2005 failure to get approval for a Constitution for the European Union. On June 13, 2008, Ireland's referendum rejected the Treaty of Lisbon (Ireland is the only EU member whose constitution required a referendum on the Treaty—19 of 27 parliaments had approved the Treaty.) Croatia's and Turkey's accession talks have now been put on hold.

Russia's Black Sea Fleet

Russia is moving its Black Sea Fleet to the Syrian port of Tartus. Russia's Black Sea Fleet currently uses a range of naval facilities in the Ukrainian region of Crimea under a 1997 agreement that allowed Russia to continue its presence in its neighboring former Soviet republic for rent of \$93 million/yr. The fleet was not scheduled to withdraw until 2017, but the Ukraine has demanded that a new agreement be signed and negotiations between Russia and the Ukraine have stalled.

Russia has started dredging at the Syrian port of Tartus, where it maintains a logistical supply point, to turn it into a full-fledged naval base. Russia has also launched a modernization project at the port of Latakia, 90 km to the north of Tartus. [A private source at the Defense Ministry

indicated that Moscow is forming a squadron led by the *Moskva*, the Black Sea Fleet's flagship missile cruiser.] The squadron will operate in the Mediterranean Sea on a permanent basis.



Islamic End-Game

One can thus shudder at the serious conviction of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that he is destined—and *committed*—to cause the appearance of the 1^{2th} Imam by ushering in the “Last Days.” On Oct 31, 2004, the Majlis (Iran’s Parliament) changed, “Death to America,” “Death to Israel” in their stand-up vote (247 of 290) approving a bill requiring the government to resume uranium enrichment.

Israel vs. Iran

Israel is purchasing from the U.S. \$319 million worth of military goods: 2,500 one-ton bombs; 1,000 half-ton bombs; 500 quarter-ton bombs; and 500 one-ton BLU-109s “Bunker Busters”—these can penetrate walls 2 meters (6.5 ft) thick. Israel has also received the first of 102 long-range F-16s from the U.S.

Attack Imminent?

Israel’s existence is at risk: it has 120 aircraft at the ready; two 747 tankers; and an F-117 Stealth on loan. The general has been given the “green light” to go *when “the winds are favorable.”*

Next Session

The Grand Finale: The Millennium. Read Chapters 40-48, plus Revelation 20 and Isaiah 65.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 20 Chapters 40 - 42

Outline of Ezekiel

Ch.	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God’s Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God’s Judgment on the Muslim Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

The Millennial Kingdom

- Promised to David (2 Sam 7:12-17; 23:5) under oath (Ps 89:34-37);
- Predicted in the Psalms and the Prophets (Ps 2; 45; 110; Isa 2:1-5; 4:1-6; 11:1-9; 12:1-6; 30:18-26; 35:1-10; 60, 61:3-62; 66; Jer 23:3-8; 32:37-44; Ezek 40-48; Dan 2:44-45; 7:13-14; 12:2-3; Mic 4:1-8; Zech 12:10-14:21);
- Promised to Mary (Lk 1:32; Micah 5:2; Isa 9:6, 7; Dan 2:44); reaffirmed to apostles (Lk 22:29-30);
- Lord’s Prayer: “Thy Kingdom come” (Mt 6:10, 13; Acts 1:6; Ps 45, 46, 47, 48);
- Jesus will rule (Ps 2; 110) with a “Rod of Iron” (Rev 12:5; 19:15); “Every knee will bow” (Phil 2:6-11).
- Creation changed: Physical changes (Zech 4:9,10; Isa 35:1-10); curse lifted (Isa 11:6-9); creation redeemed (Gen 3 → Rom 8:20-22); Earth in full of knowledge of the Lord (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14);
- Yet, *not eternity* (Isa 65); death, sin (Isa 65:20); each to have land (Micah 4:15); and will be fruitful (Amos 9:13).

Millennial Limitations

- Not “heaven.” vs. the eternal state which follows; not the “New Earth” (Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1); not “where righteousness dwells”;
- Limited amount of evil, judged immediately (Isa 11:1-16).

Millennial Longevity

- Death for unbelievers only (Isa 65:17). Nowhere is there a resurrection of Millennial saints. The tribulation saints complete the “first resurrection” (Rev 20:4-6).
- No Jewish unbelievers (Jer 31:31-34); all accept by 100th year (Isa 65:20).
- Thus, death only among Gentiles?

Unconditional Covenants

1. The Abrahamic Covenant
2. The Land Covenant
3. **The Davidic Covenant**
4. The Everlasting Covenant

*Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the **throne of his kingdom** for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. **And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.** According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.*

2 Samuel 7:8-17

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon **the throne of David**, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Isaiah 9:6-7

*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him **the throne of his father David**: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

Luke 1:32, 33

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon **the throne of his glory**...Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Matthew 25:31, 34

The Council of Jerusalem

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

Acts 15:14-15

Then James quotes Amos 9:11, 12:

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

Acts 15:16-17

The Davidic Covenant

Throne of David will be re-established *in Jerusalem*. This was also emphasized to Abraham (Gen 17:2-8). Is *David* to rule in the Millennium? (Ezek 34:23,24; 37:24,25; Hos 3:5). This cannot be applied to the Church (Ezek 37:21-28). It will include profound changes on the earth (Isa 11:1-13; 65:17-24; Micah 4:1-5; Zeph 3:14-20; Zech 14:1-21).

*And **David my servant shall be king** over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.*

Ezekiel 37:24

Cf. Ezek 34:23,24; 37:25; Jer 30:9; Hos 3:5. When will all this happen?

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

Hosea 5:15

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom
of
Heaven *

* 739 references to "Heaven"

Only Matthew:
"Kingdom of Heaven" – 33X
"Kingdom of God" – 5X
'Kingdom' – 7X
"His", "Father's", "Thy" 5 X

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Daniel 2:44

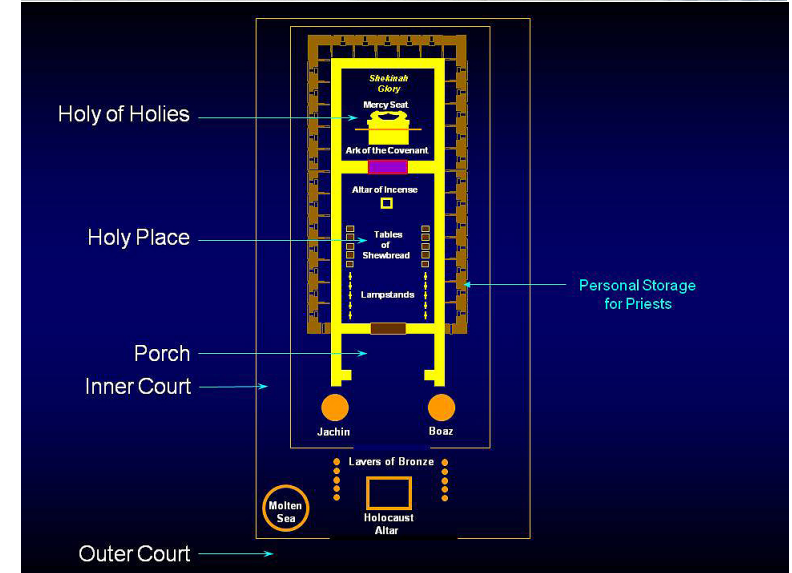
Why a Temple?

Ezekiel was told to reveal these plans to the people in order to make them ashamed of their sins and rebellions (Ezek 43:10-11). The regulations of Chapters 40-48 are intended for a regenerated people (Cf. Ezek 33-37). No prophet speaking under God's authority ever uttered a false prediction (Deut 18:21-22; Cf. Mt 5:17-18). The climax to her restoration as a nation will come when God's glory reenters the new temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 43:1-5).

Ezekiel 40 - 48: The Millennial Temple

Ezekiel's description of the Millennial Temple is highly detailed (not simply symbolic). All nations to worship there; offerings and sacrifices resumed; open only on the Sabbath day and new moons.

The "Second" Temple



Ezekiel's Temple

Is it historical? Is it the "3rd" Temple? *Is it a 4th?* Is it allegorical? Is it the Church?

Ezekiel 40

The temple area consists of three terraces, on the highest of which, facing east, stands the Temple with its annexes, the temple yard, and a

large building directly behind it. On a middle terrace are kitchens and chambers for the priests, the court containing the altar of burnt offering, and the inner courts with three elaborate porticos. The lowest terrace, surrounded by an exterior wall, contains the outer courts with three porticos and kitchens and chambers for the people.

- 1] In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither.

Jerusalem has been destroyed and the temple is burned, but Ezekiel is to be shown now the temple that will be in that city during the millennial kingdom.

- 2] In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south.
- 3] And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate

Every time in Scripture that we find a man with a measuring rod—it generally is an angel, and it is an angel here—it means that God is getting ready to move again in dealing with His earthly people. We find this again in the minor prophets and in the Book of Revelation.

“...with a line of flax”: For long measurements.

“...And a measuring reed”: For shorter measurements.

The Hebrew cubit was 17.58 inches or 44.65 centimeters. The long cubit was 20.679 inches. Ezekiel’s *reed* was about 10 1/3 feet long.

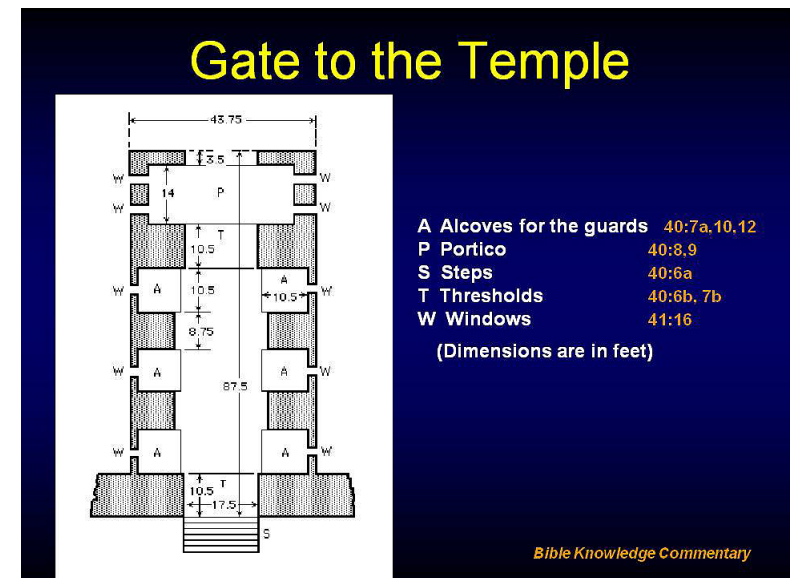
- 4] And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.

Ezekiel 40:5-27: The Outer Court

- 5] And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man’s hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.
- 6] Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and measured the threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad; and the other threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad.

The east gate was to be especially sacred: it was through it the glory of God had departed (Ezek 11:23); through it the glory was to return (Ezek 43:1, 2).

- 7] And every little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers were five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within was one reed.
- 8] He measured also the porch of the gate within, one reed.
- 9] Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and the posts thereof, two cubits; and the porch of the gate was inward.
- 10] And the little chambers of the gate eastward were three on this side, and three on that side; they three were of one measure: and the posts had one measure on this side and on that side.
- 11] And he measured the breadth of the entry of the gate, ten cubits; and the length of the gate, thirteen cubits.
- 12] The space also before the little chambers was one cubit on this side, and the space was one cubit on that side: and the little chambers were six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side.
- 13] He measured then the gate from the roof of one little chamber to the roof of another: the breadth was five and twenty cubits, door against door.
- 14] He made also posts of threescore cubits, even unto the post of the court round about the gate.
- 15] And from the face of the gate of the entrance unto the face of the porch of the inner gate were fifty cubits.
- 16] And there were narrow windows to the little chambers, and to their posts within the gate round about, and likewise to the arches: and windows were round about inward: and upon each post were palm trees.



- 17] Then brought he me into the outward court, and, lo, there were chambers, and a pavement made for the court round about: thirty chambers were upon the pavement.

- 18] And the pavement by the side of the gates over against the length of the gates was the lower pavement.

The use of these rooms is not stated, but they may have been storage rooms or meeting rooms for the people when they celebrated their feasts (cf. Jer 35:2).

- 19] Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate unto the forefront of the inner court without, an hundred cubits eastward and northward.
20] And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north, he measured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof.

From the inside of the lower gateway to the outside of the inner court (to the threshold of the gate leading to the inner court) was 175 ft (100 cubits).

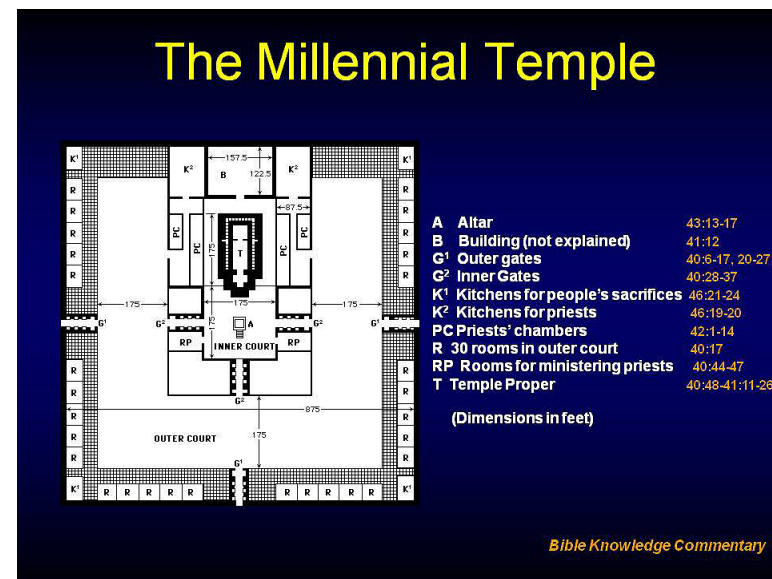
- 21] And the little chambers thereof were three on this side and three on that side; and the posts thereof and the arches thereof were after the measure of the first gate: the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.
22] And their windows, and their arches, and their palm trees, were after the measure of the gate that looketh toward the east; and they went up unto it by seven steps; and the arches thereof were before them.
23] And the gate of the inner court was over against the gate toward the north, and toward the east; and he measured from gate to gate an hundred cubits.
24] After that he brought me toward the south, and behold a gate toward the south: and he measured the posts thereof and the arches thereof according to these measures.
25] And there were windows in it and in the arches thereof round about, like those windows: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.
26] And there were seven steps to go up to it, and the arches thereof were before them: and it had palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts thereof.
27] And there was a gate in the inner court toward the south: and he measured from gate to gate toward the south an hundred cubits.

Ezekiel 40:28-47: The Inner Court

- 28] And he brought me to the inner court by the south gate: and he measured the south gate according to these measures;
29] And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to these measures: and there were windows in it and in the arches thereof round about: it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.
30] And the arches round about were five and twenty cubits long, and five cubits broad.

(Verse 30 is omitted in the *Septuagint*, the Vatican manuscript, and others. The dimensions here of the inner gate do not correspond to the outer, though Ezek 40:28 asserts that they do.)

- 31] And the arches thereof were toward the utter court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof: and the going up to it had eight steps.
32] And he brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures.
33] And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, were according to these measures: and there were windows therein and in the arches thereof round about: it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.
34] And the arches thereof were toward the outward court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it had eight steps.
35] And he brought me to the north gate, and measured it according to these measures;
36] The little chambers thereof, the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, and the windows to it round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.
37] And the posts thereof were toward the utter court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it had eight steps.



- 38] And the chambers and the entries thereof were by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering.
39] And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to lay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering.

In verses 39-42 the reinstating the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. (We'll review this in Chapter 45.)

- 40] And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, were two tables; and on the other side, which was at the porch of the gate, were two tables.

- 41] Four tables were on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables, whereupon they slew their sacrifices.
- 42] And the four tables were of hewn stone for the burnt offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice.

Millennial Sacrifices?

These verses have caused some to take the passage symbolically rather than literally. However, no difficulty exists if one understands the proper function of these sacrifices. First, animal sacrifices *never* took away human sin; only the sacrifice of Christ can do that (Heb 10:1-4, 10). In OT times Israelites were saved by grace through faith, and the sacrifices helped restore a believer's fellowship with God.

Second, even after the church began, Jewish believers did not hesitate to take part in the temple worship (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42), and even to offer sacrifices (Acts 21:26). They could do this because they viewed the sacrifices as memorials of Christ's death.

The millennial sacrifices will differ from the Levitical sacrifices though there are some similarities (we will review these in Chapter 45). Other passages also refer to a sacrificial system in the Millennium (Isa 56:7; 66:20-23; Jer 33:18; Zech 14:16-21; Mal 3:3-4).

- 43] And within were hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables was the flesh of the offering.
- 44] And without the inner gate were the chambers of the singers in the inner court, which was at the side of the north gate; and their prospect was toward the south: one at the side of the east gate having the prospect toward the north.
- 45] And he said unto me, This chamber, whose prospect is toward the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house.
- 46] And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him.

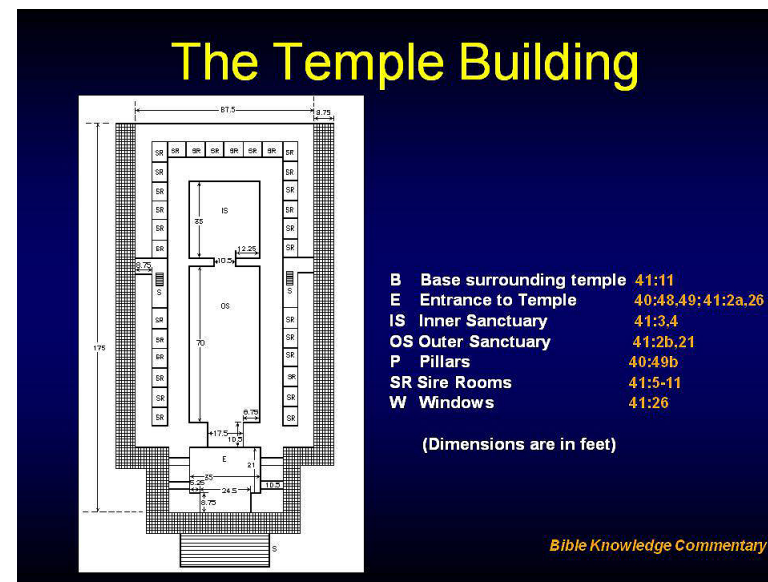
Zadok—lineally descended from Aaron. He had the high priesthood conferred on him by Solomon, who had set aside the family of Ithamar because of the part which Abiathar had taken in the rebellion of Adonijah (1Kgs 1:7).

- 47] So he measured the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar that was before the house.

Not to be confounded with the court of Israel, which was open to all who had sacrifices to bring, and went round the three sides of the sacred

territory, one hundred cubits broad. This court was one hundred cubits square, and had the altar in it, in front of the temple.

Ezekiel 40:48 - 41:26: The Temple Building



- 48] And he brought me to the porch of the house, and measured each post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side: and the breadth of the gate was three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side.

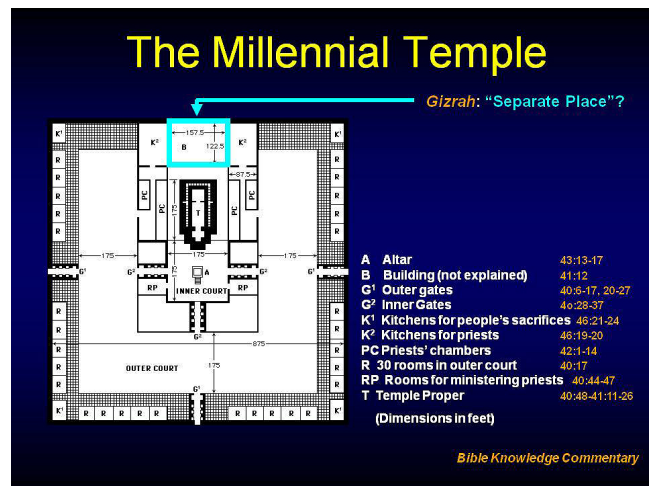
These two verses belong to Chapter 41, which treats the temple itself.

- 49] The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits; and he brought me by the steps whereby they went up to it: and there were pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.
- 1] Afterward he brought me to the temple, and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, which was the breadth of the tabernacle.
 - 2] And the breadth of the door was ten cubits; and the sides of the door were five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side: and he measured the length thereof, forty cubits: and the breadth, twenty cubits.
 - 3] Then went he inward, and measured the post of the door, two cubits; and the door, six cubits; and the breadth of the door, seven cubits.
 - 4] So he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he said unto me, This is the most holy place.

The dimensions of the two apartments are the same as in Solomon's temple, since being fixed originally by God. The angel went in and measured it, while Ezekiel stood in front, in the only part of the temple accessible to him.

- 5] After he measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the breadth of every side chamber, four cubits, round about the house on every side.
- 6] And the side chambers were three, one over another, and thirty in order; and they entered into the wall which was of the house for the side chambers round about, that they might have hold, but they had not hold in the wall of the house.
- 7] And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers: for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house: therefore the breadth of the house was still upward, and so increased from the lowest chamber to the highest by the midst.
- 8] I saw also the height of the house round about: the foundations of the side chambers were a full reed of six great cubits.
- 9] The thickness of the wall, which was for the side chamber without, was five cubits: and that which was left was the place of the side chambers that were within.
- 10] And between the chambers was the wideness of twenty cubits round about the house on every side.
- 11] And the doors of the side chambers were toward the place that was left, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south: and the breadth of the place that was left was five cubits round about.
- 12] Now the building that was before the separate place at the end toward the west was seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about, and the length thereof ninety cubits.

“...the separate place”: גִּזְרָה *gizrah*. A place reserved for repair, polishing, maintenance support? The building, or the space it faces? (Behind Solomon's temple lay a similar space; 2 Kgs 23:11; 1 Chr 26:18.) The building [בִּינְיָן *binyan*] *behind the Temple*. Its purpose is not explained: a



large building (90 x 70 cubits, with walls 5 cubits thick) behind or west of the Temple, facing the temple yard ("separate place") גִּזְרָה *gizrah* (Ezek 41:12-15; 42:1, 10, 13).

- 13] So he measured the house, an hundred cubits long; and the separate place, and the building, with the walls thereof, an hundred cubits long;
- “...the separate place”: On the west or back of the temple, there was a separate place occupied by buildings of the same external dimensions as the temple, that is, one hundred cubits square in the entire compass. The purpose of this space is not explained.
- 14] Also the breadth of the face of the house, and of the separate place toward the east, an hundred cubits.
- 15] And he measured the length of the building over against the separate place which was behind it, and the galleries thereof on the one side and on the other side, an hundred cubits, with the inner temple, and the porches of the court;
- 16] The door posts, and the narrow windows, and the galleries round about on their three stories, over against the door, cieled with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows were covered;
- 17] To that above the door, even unto the inner house, and without, and by all the wall round about within and without, by measure.
- 18] And it was made with cherubims and palm trees, so that a palm tree was between a cherub and a cherub; and every cherub had two faces;
- 19] So that the face of a man was toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side: it was made through all the house round about.
- 20] From the ground unto above the door were cherubims and palm trees made, and on the wall of the temple.
- 21] The posts of the temple were squared, and the face of the sanctuary; the appearance of the one as the appearance of the other.
- 22] The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the table that is before the LORD.

Altar of Incense (vs. Brazen Altar in outer court)

- 23] And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors.
- 24] And the doors had two leaves apiece, two turning leaves; two leaves for the one door, and two leaves for the other door.
- 25] And there were made on them, on the doors of the temple, cherubims and palm trees, like as were made upon the walls; and there were thick planks upon the face of the porch without.
- 26] And there were narrow windows and palm trees on the one side and on the other side, on the sides of the porch, and upon the side chambers of the house, and thick planks.

Ezekiel 42:1-14: Priest's Chambers

- 1] Then he brought me forth into the utter court, the way toward the north: and he brought me into the chamber that was over against the separate place, and which was before the building toward the north.
- 2] Before the length of an hundred cubits was the north door, and the breadth was fifty cubits.
- 3] Over against the twenty cubits which were for the inner court, and over against the pavement which was for the utter court, was gallery against gallery in three stories.
- 4] And before the chambers was a walk of ten cubits breadth inward, a way of one cubit; and their doors toward the north.
- 5] Now the upper chambers were shorter: for the galleries were higher than these, than the lower, and than the middlemost of the building.
- 6] For they were in three stories, but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts: therefore the building was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground.
- 7] And the wall that was without over against the chambers, toward the utter court on the forepart of the chambers, the length thereof was fifty cubits.
- 8] For the length of the chambers that were in the utter court was fifty cubits: and, lo, before the temple were an hundred cubits.
- 9] And from under these chambers was the entry on the east side, as one goeth into them from the utter court.
- 10] The chambers were in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, over against the separate place, and over against the building.
- 11] And the way before them was like the appearance of the chambers which were toward the north, as long as they, and as broad as they: and all their goings out were both according to their fashions, and according to their doors.
- 12] And according to the doors of the chambers that were toward the south was a door in the head of the way, even the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one entereth into them.
- 13] Then said he unto me, The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place is holy.
- 14] When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they are holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people.
- 15] Now when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect is toward the east, and measured it round about.
- 16] He measured the east side with the measuring reed, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.
- 17] He measured the north side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.
- 18] He measured the south side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed.

- 19] He turned about to the west side, and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed.
- 20] He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.

Levitical Difficulties

The rabbis of the Talmud remarked that only the prophet Elijah, who will herald the ultimate redemption, will elucidate the discrepancies with the Torah laws and the terms which do not occur elsewhere. [Babylonian Talmud, Menahot 45a.] Moreover, said they, had it not been for Rabbi Chanina ben Hezekiah, who explained away several of these difficulties, the Book of Ezekiel would have been excluded from the Canon of Scripture [Babylonian Talmud, Hagiga 13a.].

Textual Difficulties

- 1) Were the manifold details of this vision meant to be actualized at some future date (Ezek 40:2)?
- 2) What part will the bloody sacrifices play in any future economy (Ezek 40:38-43; 43:18-27; 45:13-17; 46:13-15)?
- 3) Will the Zadokite priesthood, without a high priest, function again (Ezek 40:45, 46; 42:13, 14; 43:18-27; 44:15-31; 45:18-20; 46:19-24)?
- 4) Who is the prince and who are his sons (Ezek 44:3; 45:7-12, 13-17, 21-24; 46:1-8, 12, 16-18)?

Who are the:

- Downgraded Levites (Ezek 44:10-14)?
- The uncircumcised foreigners excluded from the sanctuary (Ezek 44:5, 9) and the resident aliens who receive property (Ezek 47:22, 23)?
- How are the geographical problems relating to the stream issuing from the Temple (Ezek 47:1-12) and how is the apportionment of the land among the twelve tribes to be explained? (Ezek 47:13-48:29).

Next Session

The ministries of the Temple. Read Ezekiel Chapters 43 - 45.

The Book of Ezekiel Session 21

Chapters 43 - 45

The Temple Observances

Chapter 43 The Future Sanctuary:

- The consecration of the new temple by the entrance of the glory of the God (vv. 1-12).
- A description of the altar and its dedication (vv. 13-27).

Chapter 44 The Sacrifices:

- To be offered in the temple; treating the several classes in the new community, and of their relation to the sanctuary.

Chapter 45 Regulations:

- To be observed in the maintenance of worship.

Chapter 46 Supplementary orders:

- For the prince, the people, and the priests

Review

It is interesting to note the things which are *not* mentioned. Throughout the entire nine chapters describing Ezekiel's Temple we don't see any gold or silver mentioned. There is no Table of Shewbread. No Golden Lampstand; no Ark of the Covenant mentioned (Jer 3:16). Where's the Seat of Mercy? Where's the Throne?

Ezekiel 43

- 1] Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east:
- 2] And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

“...like a noise of many waters”: One of 24 identities of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:15-16; 14:2; 19:6).

Comparisons

- Ezek 1 with Rev 4;
 - Ezek 26, 28 with Rev 18;
 - Ezek 38, 39 with Rev 20:7-10;
 - Ezek 40 - 43 with Rev 11:1-2.
- 3] And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.

“...I came to destroy”: A translation problem—who is speaking? (Cf. Zech Ch.12, 14). Interesting use of the first person singular pronoun.

- 4] And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.

“...the glory of the LORD came...”: The climax of Ezekiel's entire book. Through the same gate: The *Shekinah* Glory exiting the Temple (Ezek 10:19;11:23). Earlier entering Solomon's Temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11; 2 Chr 5:13-14; 2 Chr 7:1-3). We will look at this again in Chapter 44.

- 5] So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.
- 6] And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me.

- Where was Ezekiel? On the outside
- Where is “he”? On the inside.
- Who is “he”? YHWH

The Ark of the Covenant (Parenthetical Inclusion)

Where is the Ark today?

And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.

Jeremiah 3:16

We too have used this verse to dismiss the various theories. However...

*At that time they shall call Jerusalem **the Throne** of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.*

Jeremiah 3:17

- 7] And he said unto me, Son of man, [Behold] the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.

[“Behold”] interpolated: LXX ἑώρακας “thou hast seen.” YHWH is speaking (Cf. Lev 16:15): “...my throne...” “...soles of my feet...”

Yom Kippur

*Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, **and before the mercy seat:***

Leviticus 16:15

His Throne

*And in **mercy shall the throne** be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.*

Isaiah 16:5

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall **He sit upon the throne of his glory:***

Matthew 25:31

*And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory, and **shall sit and rule upon his throne; and He shall be a priest upon his throne:***

Zechariah 6:12-13

The Ark and Mercy Seat were two separate objects in the Scripture. The Ark is no longer the focus of worship in Jerusalem. It will be replaced by the Throne of the Lord as all nations shall be gathered to it.

The only object known in all history that is suitable for the Throne of Christ is the Mercy Seat. This suggests that the Mercy Seat may have a distinct place in Biblical prophecy, as it relates to Christ's Second Coming, where He will rule and reign on earth in the Temple on Mount Zion.

- 8] In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.
- 9] Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcases of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.
- 10] Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.

“...the carcases of their kings...”: A contemptuous and satirical designation of the idols they had formerly served.

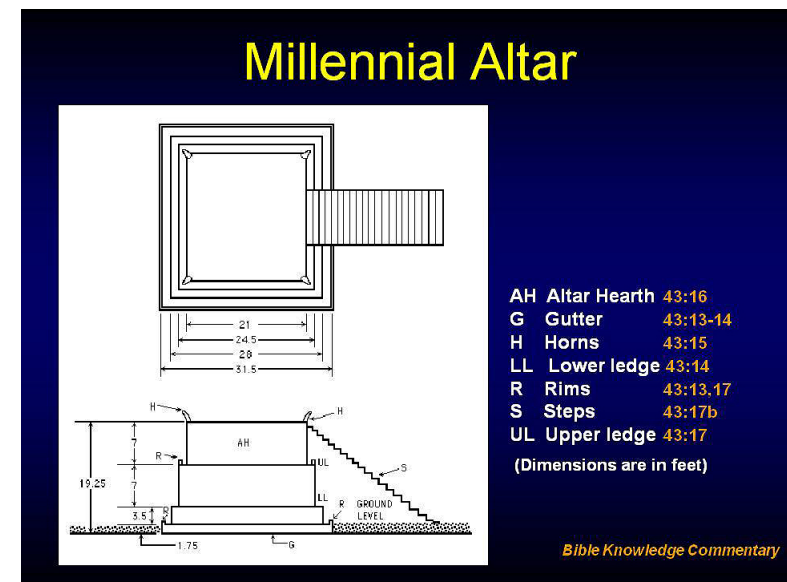
“...let them measure the pattern”: Hebrew idiom, “Pattern is prophecy...”

- 11] And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.
- 12] This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

“...most holy”: This superlative, which had been used exclusively of the holy of holies (Ex 26:34 now characterizes the entire building).

“...the law of the house”: This all-pervading sanctity was to be “*the* law of the (whole) house,” as distinguished from the Levitical law, which had confined the peculiar sanctity to a single apartment of it.

- 13] And these are the measures of the altar after the cubits: The cubit is a cubit and an hand breadth; even the bottom shall be a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about shall be a span: and this shall be the high place of the altar.



These are the “long” cubits: a cubit + a handbreadth: ~22 inches. (Solomon had used “short” cubits: ~ 18 in.)

- 14] And from the bottom upon the ground even to the lower settle shall be two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle even to the greater settle shall be four cubits, and the breadth one cubit.

- 15] So the altar shall be four cubits; and from the altar and upward shall be four horns.

“...the altar”: *הָרָאֵל Harel*, that is, “mount of God”; denoting a high place, but a high place *of God*, not of idols.

- 16] And the altar shall be twelve cubits long, twelve broad, square in the four squares thereof.
17] And the settle shall be fourteen cubits long and fourteen broad in the four squares thereof; and the border about it shall be half a cubit; and the bottom thereof shall be a cubit about; and his stairs shall look toward the east.

“...his stairs”: Stairs prohibited (Ex 20:26); ramp in the Second Temple described by Josephus.

- 18] And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon.

There were seven days of celebration (Ex 29:37; Lev 8:11, 15, 19, 33; 1 Kgs 8:62-66; 2 Chr 7:4-10). We find the same for Ezekiel’s Temple.

- 19] And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering.
20] And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it.

Ezekiel 43:19-27: Millennial Sacrifices

These sacrifices are only memorial in nature—retrospective, rather than prospective as in the OT (Cf. Ezek 9:12,26,28;10:4, 10,14). They are not expiatory (Heb 10:4), because objects used in the worship contact defilement from sinful man; blood, as the seat of life, is applied to them to remove uncleanness and to impart holiness (cf. Lev 16:15-20).

Consecration of the Altar

The altar is consecrated by the applying of the blood of the sin offering for seven days on its four horns, on the four corners of the upper ledge, and on the rim of the base: to **cleanse** *חָטָא khaw-taw’*, to remove sin, to “unsin,” by applying sacrificial blood to the object; to **purge** *כָּפַר kaphar*, “to purge,” “to expiate by a ritual act” (v. 20; Ex 29:12; Lev 8:15)

- 21] Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary.

The “place of the house, without the sanctuary” may mean the *gizrah*, or separate place (Ezek 41:12), which was a part of the “house” in the widest sense, and yet not of the “sanctuary” in the strictest sense (Cf. Ezek 45:2). It was prescribed in the Mosaic code that the flesh of the bullock, with his skin and dung, should be burned without the camp (Ex 29:14; Lev 4:12, 21; 9:11, 15; Heb 13:13).

- 22] And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse it with the bullock.

The sin offering the first day is a bullock (v.19) and on the succeeding days of the week a hegoat (vv.22, 25).

- 23] When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish.
24] And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the LORD.

Salt

Following the daily sin offering, a bullock and a ram sprinkled with salt are offered as a burnt offering. Salt was originally added to the cereal offerings (Lev 2:13); to incense (Ex 30:35); and, was later placed on burnt offerings (Mk 9:49) [Josephus, *Antiq.* III. 9.1.]

- 25] Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish.
26] Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves.

“...they shall consecrate...”: And so consecrate it: Literally, fill its hand, i.e., confer a dignity, invest with office (cf. Ex 28:41; 29:37; Lev 16:32; 1 Chr 29:5).

- 27] And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.

From **the eighth day forward** the regular burnt offerings and peace and offerings can be offered on it. *שָׁלֵם shelem*, Lev 3, signifying peace and communion with God; they also include the thank, votive, and voluntary offerings (Lev 7:12,16a, 16b).

So the first seven days will consecrate the altar, and after that it will be the basis for their acceptability here.

What is interesting about these offerings is that not all of the Levitical ones are detailed here, and so this raises some questions: Why are some omitted? Are the ones that are not mentioned a significant omission? Or are they included by implication?

Ezekiel 44:1-46:24: New Service of Worship

The following ordinances deal with: who may minister in the Temple (Ezek 44:1-31); the revenues of the priests, the Levites, and the prince, and the prince's obligations to the Temple (Ezek 45:1-17); and the festal and daily offerings in the Temple, and the special offerings of the prince (Ezek 45:18-46:24).

Ezekiel 44

- 1) The relation of the prince to the sanctuary (vv. 1-3);
 - 2) The relation of the people, Levites, and priests (vv. 4-16);
 - 3) The duties and emoluments of the priests (vv. 17-31).
- 1] Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut.
 - 2] Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

A difference between the new sanctuary and the old is that the east gate stood always open.

East Gate

- The prince cannot enter through the gate but is permitted to eat the sacrificial meal in its vestibule (v. 3; cf. Jer 30:21).
- The East gate was the place where the Shekinah Glory left the Temple (Ezek 10).
- It is the same gate by which the Shekinah Glory just entered the Temple (Ezek 43).
- The East Gate is special: It is used only by the Lord.
- It was an eastern tradition that one way to honor a king was to provide a gate for him that no one else used. So it is a point of honor.

(There is a gate on the east, toward the Mount of Olives, sometimes called the Golden Gate, which has been sealed since 1543 A.D.; but this has nothing to do with the Temple Gate which is yet future.)

- 3] It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.
- 4] Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face.

Who Is the “Prince”?

- The Messiah? • David? • Lineage of David?

The prince cannot enter through the gate but is permitted to eat the sacrificial meal in its vestibule (cf. Jer 30:21).

The Messiah?

There are at least three reasons why the indications are that the prince here is not the Messiah.

- 1) First of all, this prince has no priestly rights. Even some of the former kings of Israel picked up certain priestly rights (1 Kgs 8:22, 54; 9:25; 10:5). Some of the kings of Judah even usurped some of the priestly rights (2 Kgs 16:12-13; 2 Chr 26:16).

This prince has no priestly prerogatives as described in Ps 110:4 and very prominent in Zech 6:12-13. Clearly, the Messiah has a priestly role. *There are at least three reasons why the indications are that the prince here is not the Messiah.*

- 2) The second thing we are going to discover in the next chapter is that this prince offers a sin offering (Ezek 45:22). The Messiah would not offer a sin offering; He offered Himself for sin. That offering was not ceremonial as we see here.

- 3) Thirdly, this prince has natural sons (Ezek 46:24).

David?

Some scholars believe that the prince may be David himself; we have had reference to David reappearing (Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24). A literal appearance of David himself might qualify quite nicely to be this prince; but if that were the case, why didn't the text just say David and not this “prince”? Ezekiel had no problem of speaking of him as David before.

The Lineage of David?

Not Messianic, but from David's lineage. No priestly rights, but favored above the people. He is not permitted to enter the inner court, but he can get closer to it than the people can. This prince is obligated to provide festival offerings, and certain solemnities on behalf of Israel (Ezek 45:13-22). There is a portion for the prince; but he is prohibited from usurping anybody else's inherited land (Ezek 45:7-8; 46:18; 48:21-22).

- 5] And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.

"...all that I say": Here it is again, an instruction to take particular note.

- 6] And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations,

The word "rebellious" is a very frequently used word by Ezekiel in the first 24 chapters. The words "rebellious" in verse 6, and "abominations" and "iniquities" leap out at us here, because Ezekiel has not used those words for several sections; but now they come up again. As you recall, we went through chapter after chapter after chapter of Ezekiel bearing the heavy message on his people. Once Jerusalem fell, his message shifted to the future, and he talked positively, upliftingly. There was the dry bones, the regathering to the land, and all that. Remember?

- 7] In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.
- 8] And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves.
- 9] Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.

The Jews who returned from the Babylonian Captivity stressed this prohibition (Ezra 4:1-3; Neh 13:1-9; cf. Acts 21:27-32).

Strangers

Part of the indictment was their permitting foreigners to enter and profane the Sanctuary. Under the Levitical laws, it was permissible under certain circumstances to allow foreigners to offer offerings (Lev 17:10,

12; Num 15:4), but never was it allowed to have foreigners officiate in the Sanctuary. Not only had to be Jewish, but of the Tribe of Levi. We also have some apostate priests to deal with in verse 9.

- 10] And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity.
- 11] Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.
- 12] Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.
- 13] And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

Duties of the Levites

Because of their sinful practices before Israel's fall to Babylon, their position will be downgraded in the new temple from ministers to servants. They will be allowed to serve as gatekeepers, slayers of the sacrifices, and to help the worshipers. However, they will not be allowed to serve the Lord as priests or come near any of His holy things or offerings. The tasks of the Levites in Solomon's temple were more extensive (1 Chr 15:16; 16:4; 23:28-31).

- 14] But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.
- 15] But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:

Priesthood History

The priesthood, at its institution, was entrusted to Aaron and his sons (Ex 27:20, 21; 28:1-4; 29:9, 44; Num 3:10; 16:40; 18:7; 25:13). On Aaron's death the high priesthood passed into the hands of Eleazar, his eldest (living) son (Num 20:26-28). After Eleazar's death unto Phinehas, his eldest son (Num 25:11-13). In the last days of the judges the high priesthood belonged to Eli, of the line of Ithamar (cf. 1 Sam 14:3; 22:20; 1 Chr 24:3). It continued till the reign of David, when it was held conjointly by Abiathar of the line of Ithamar, and Zadok of the line of Eleazar (2 Sam 8:17; 20:25; 1 Kgs 4:4).

This arrangement, however, Solomon eventually overturned, by deposing the former for espousing Adonijah's pretensions to the Throne (1 Kgs 1:7; 2:26,27). From that time forward until the exile the high priesthood remained with Zadok and his sons (1 Kgs 2:35; 1 Chr 29:22). In Ezekiel he and his sons are mentioned a total of 4 times (Ezek 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). There is no high priest mentioned; which is consistent with Zech 6:12,13.

- 16] They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.
- 17] And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.
- 18] They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat.
- 19] And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.
- 20] Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads.
- 21] Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court.
- 22] Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.
- 23] And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.
- 24] And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.
- 25] And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves.
- 26] And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days.

Death in the Millennium is also mentioned in Isaiah 65:20.

- 27] And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD.
- 28] And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I am their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I am their possession.
- 29] They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs.
- 30] And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.
- 31] The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

Best Offering

In regard to the offerings here, they give nothing but the best. If you have studied the offerings in Lev 22:8 or 17:15 or Deut 14:21, etc., you know that the Lord is entitled to the best, not the left-overs. Not only without blemish, but the best of the series, whatever it is. It is something we usually forget when we are making a sacrifice of ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, whether it is an offering in the Sunday morning envelope, or whether it is some other kind of sacrifice that we are giving to the Lord. He is entitled to the firstfruits, and He is entitled to whatever is our best.

- 1] Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about.

They are actually going to divide the land. We will see that in Chapters 47 and 48. What we are dealing with here is 25,000 by 10,000 cubits, or about 8.3 miles by 6.6 miles on a side. Length refers to East and West, and breadth is North and South (cf. Ezek 48:8-22).

- 2] Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred in length, with five hundred in breadth, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof.
- 3] And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanctuary and the most holy place.

“...suburbs”: מִגְרָשׁ *migrash*, or “open spaces,” surrounding the temple precincts.

- 4] The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the LORD: and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary.
- 5] And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth, shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers.
- 6] And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy portion: it shall be for the whole house of Israel.

Yielding a square with the priests and Levites portions: 8.3 miles/side.

- 7] And a portion shall be for the prince on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy portion, and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy portion, and before the possession of the city, from the west

side westward, and from the east side eastward: and the length shall be over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border.

- 8] In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.
- 9] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD.

Kings confiscate property: 1 Kings 21 (Naboth) Also: Num 36:7-9; Isa 5:8; Hos 5:10; Mic 2:1-2. Most commentators intend to view the princes as in an administrative role here during the Millennium, for the House of Israel. So they are literally princes as such (cf. Num 1).

- 10] Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath.
- 11] The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer.
- 12] And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.

Measures

- Bath is a liquid measure of about 8-9 gallons.
- Ephah was a dry measure of approximately a bushel.
- Each of these were 1/10th of a Homer, or “donkey load.”

Honest measures are called for here. The homer (or, *cheroot*) is to be distinguished from the omer of Exodus 16:36, which was the tenth part of an ephah.

Monetary Measures

- The shekel is to consist of 20 gerahs.
- A “shekel” weighed just under 11½ grams or about 2/5 of an ounce.
- The gerah was Israel’s smallest unit of weight; it took 20 gerahs to make one shekel (Ex 30:13; Lev 27:25; Num 3:47).
- Ezekiel stated that 60 shekels (20+25+15, coins of different value) equal one mineh.

(The standard weights were lost when the Chaldeans destroyed the temple.)

- 13] This is the oblation that ye shall offer; the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley:
- 14] Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, ye shall offer the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, which is an homer of ten baths; for ten baths are an homer:

- 15] And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD.
- 16] All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel.
- 17] And it shall be the prince’s part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.

Taxation

This tithe or tax will be required of each of the people for use by the prince in Israel: a 60th of their wheat and barley (v.13); 1% of their olive oil (v.14); and one sheep from every 200 of their flocks (v.15).

- 18] Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary:
- 19] And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court.

That the first month, Abib (Nisan), was intended is apparent from verse 21(Cf. Ex 12:2; Num 9:1).

The Two Calendars (Exodus 12:2)

Civil:	<i>Tishri</i> (in the Fall) <i>Rosh Hoshana</i>
Religious:	<i>Abib (Nisan)</i> (in the Spring)

- 20] And so thou shalt do the seventh day of the month for every one that erreth, and for him that is simple: so shall ye reconcile the house.

It is a practice we see in the New Testament, and certainly in the current rabbinical literature; but here in Scripture we have, in effect, a basis for that. Something else that is kind of strange is that that they do not wait for the 7th month to cleanse the sanctuary, which is the Mosaic procedure (Lev 16).

The year is to begin with a consecration service, not mentioned under the Levitical law; but an earnest of it is given in the Feast of Dedication of the second temple, which celebrated its purification by Judas Maccabeus, after its defilement by Antiochus IV (i.e., *Hanukkah*; Cf. Jn 10:22).

- 21] In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

Here several feasts are combined as one feast: Passover and Unleavened Bread (and Firstfruits). (No lambs are involved.)

“A feast of seven days”; *literally, a feast of hebdomad of days* (שָׁבֻעַת יָמִים), or *a feast of weeks of days*. Thus, *Shavout?* (Cf. Ex 34:22; Deut 16:1).

Parallelisms

Under the ***Mosaic Torah***, the Passover began on the 10th day of the 1st month by the selection of a lamb (Ex 12:3-6). Corresponding to which the great Day of Atonement in the 7th month fell upon the 10th day (Lev 23. 27).

In the ***Torah of Ezekiel***, the ceremonies introducing and leading up to the Passover should begin with the 1st day of the month; under the Law, the Feast of Trumpets on the 1st day of the 7th month began the solemnities which culminated in the Feast of Tabernacles.

- 22] And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering.
- 23] And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering.

The fact that the prince is to make a sin offering for himself shows that he is not Christ.

Torah Comparisons

- Mosaic (Num 28:19-21): 2 bullocks; 1 ram; 7 lambs; 1 oblation of fine flour and oil
- Ezekiel (Ezek 45:25): 7 bullocks; 7 rams; *no lambs*.

In Chapter 46 you are going to find more of the same of these observances, but you are going to find a major emphasis on the Sabbath, New Moon: a very, very Jewish setting...

- 24] And he shall prepare a meat offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah.
- 25] In the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil.

Corresponding to the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech 14:18,19).

Missing Feasts?

Only four of the seven annual feasts under the Levitical system are reported (Lev 23:4-44). Passover, Unleavened Bread, & Firstfruits are combined as one feast; which will point back to Christ's death and resurrection. The Feast of Tabernacles will celebrate Israel's new position in God's Millennial Kingdom. Why did Ezekiel *omit* Israel's other national feasts, the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement? The fulfillment of Israel's Kingdom (& the Church) promises may render those three feasts obsolete.

Levitical Difficulties

The rabbis of the Talmud remarked that only the prophet Elijah, who will herald the ultimate redemption, will elucidate the discrepancies with the Torah laws and the terms which do not occur elsewhere. [*Babylonian Talmud*, Menahot 45a.]

Moreover, said they, had it not been for Rabbi Chanina ben Hezekiah, who explained away several of these difficulties, the Book of Ezekiel would have been excluded from the Canon of Scripture. [*Babylonian Talmud*, Hagiga 13a.]

Final Session

Study Chapter 46: The Feasts, Prince's gifts, Healing waters, etc. Study Chapters 47 & 48: The Allocation of land in the Millennial Kingdom. Review additional background: Zech 14; Rev 22; Joel 3:18

The Book of Ezekiel Session 22 Chapters 46 - 48

The Millennium

- Chapter 43 The Future Sanctuary
- Chapter 44 The Sacrifices
- Chapter 45 Regulations
- Chapter 46 Supplementary orders
 - Regulations for the Sabbath and New Moon sacrifices (vv. 1-10);
 - the conduct and offerings of the people in the temple (vv. 11-15)
- Chapter 47 The River from the Temple
- Chapter 48 The Allocation of the Land

Ezekiel 46

- 1] Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

“...but on the sabbath...”: This was the inner court, to be opened only on Sabbath and New Moon.

- 2] And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.

No entrance to the temple on the west, and the east gate will be permanently shut 44:1-2

- 3] Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.
4] And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.

Offerings enlarged (Num 28:9).

- 5] And the meat offering shall be an ephah for a ram, and the meat offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.
6] And in the day of the new moon it shall be a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram: they shall be without blemish.

Offering reduced for New Moon.

- 7] And he shall prepare a meat offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and for the lambs according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah.
8] And when the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of that gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof.
9] But when the people of the land shall come before the LORD in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it.

Predesignated routes for worshippers.

- 10] And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth.
11] And in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.

- 12] Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the LORD, one shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth one shall shut the gate.
13] Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt offering unto the LORD of a lamb of the first year without blemish: thou shalt prepare it every morning.
14] And thou shalt prepare a meat offering for it every morning, the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; a meat offering continually by a perpetual ordinance unto the LORD
15] Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meat offering, and the oil, every morning for a continual burnt offering.

What is conspicuous by its omission, are the evening sacrifices. Does that mean anything? Or are they implied? (Cf. Num 28:3-4). We do know that these daily Burnt Offerings imply public worship. We saw that in Daniel 8:11-13; 11:31; and 12:11. Evening and morning oblations were symptomatic of allowing public worship. That is part of what we see here.

- 16] Thus saith the Lord GOD; If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it shall be their possession by inheritance.

The prince has sons that can inherit. The Year of Jubilee will be in force. If the prince will give part of his estate to one of his sons, it will also belong to his descendants. Property given to a family member will not be returned in the Year of Jubilee.

- 17] But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them.

“...the year of liberty...”: The year of Jubilee. A gift made to a servant will not be permanent; the servant may keep it until the year of Jubilee; then it will revert to the prince.

- 18] Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.

This regulation assures that no one individual will gain permanent control of the land. In contrast with evil princes in Ezekiel's day (Ezek. 45:8-9), the prince during the Millennium will not oppress the people or take their property.

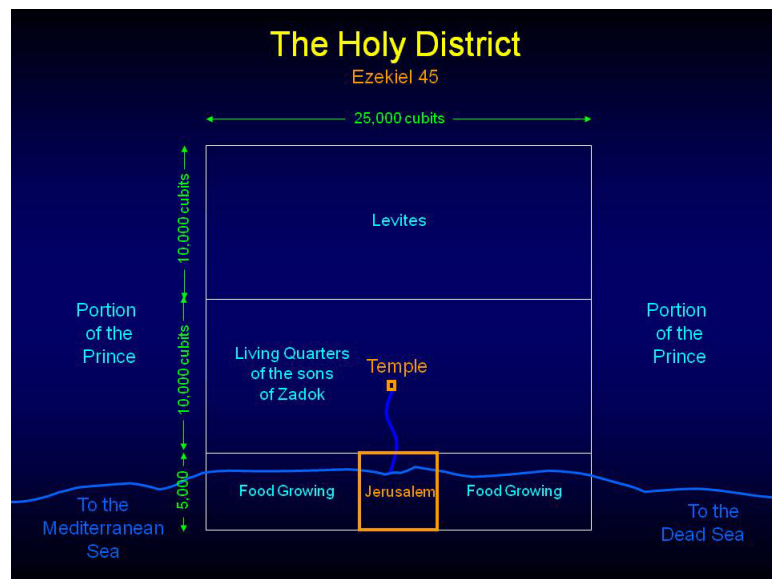
- 19] After he brought me through the entry, which was at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north: and, behold, there was a place on the two sides westward.

- 20] Then said he unto me, This is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, where they shall bake the meat offering; that they bear them not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people.
- 21] Then he brought me forth into the utter court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and, behold, in every corner of the court there was a court.
- 22] In the four corners of the court there were courts joined of forty cubits long and thirty broad: these four corners were of one measure.
- 23] And there was a row of building round about in them, round about them four, and it was made with boiling places under the rows round about.
- 24] Then said he unto me, These are the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people.

Note that no wine is mentioned. That is kind of interesting. We have a lunar calendar introduced, which implies some astronomical issues.

Ezekiel 47:1-12: The River from the Temple

A literal life-giving river with the inclusion of details such as the fishermen (v.10) and the salty swamps and marshes (v.11). Joel had mentioned this river before Ezekiel's time (Joel 3:18); Zechariah spoke of it after Israel returned from the Babylonian Captivity (Zech 14:8).



- 1] Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

- 2] Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

“...eastward”: Zechariah recorded that the water flowing from Jerusalem will divide, with half flowing E toward the Dead Sea and half flowing W toward the Mediterranean (Zech 14:8). Ezekiel followed only the branch that went toward the east.

- 3] And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.
- 4] Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.
- 5] Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

The River

Ezekiel is brought from the outer court (Ezek 46:21) to the vestibule of the Temple (Ezek 40:48, 49). There he sees a stream issuing from below the threshold of the Temple, eastward, passing south of the altar (v. 1) and south of the outer east gate (v. 2). At 1,000 cubits from the gate, the waters are ankle deep (v. 3), but within 4,000 cubits they have become a river (*nahal*), deep enough to swim in (vv. 4, 5).

- 6] And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.
- 7] Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.
- 8] Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

The water goes down into the Arabah, the depression of the Jordan Valley reaching to the Gulf of Akabah, transforming it, making the waters of the (Dead) Sea fresh (v. 8) and teeming with life (v. 9) like the Mediterranean Sea (v. 10).

- 9] And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

The Dead Sea, now some six times saltier than the ocean, will become completely salt-free.

- 10] And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En Gedi even unto En Eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

“...En Eglaim”: (lit., “Spring of the Two Calves”) is uncertain. Suggestions have included the SW shore of the Dead Sea near Zoar and an area on the NW shore S of Khirbet Qumran.

- 11] But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.
- 12] And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Cf. Joel 3:18; Zech 13:1; 14:8; Jn 4:14; 7:37, 38; Rev 22:1, 2

- 13] Thus saith the Lord GOD; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions.

The north to south boundaries span about 280 miles (Cf. Num 34:1-12), according to the original promise of Jacob (Gen 48:5, 22). Joseph’s sons were given the birthright forfeited by Reuben, the first-born (1 Chr 5:1).

- 14] And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance.

“I lifted up mine hand...” A gesture that often accompanied oath-taking (Ex 6:8; Neh 9:15; Ps 106:26; Ezek 20:5, 15, 23, 42; 36:7; 44:12).

The Land Covenant

- God promised Abraham and his descendants the land of Palestine (Gen 13:14-17; 15:17-21) and that promise has never been rescinded.
- Israel’s experiencing blessing in the land was conditioned on her obedience (Deut. 28), but her right to possess the land has never been revoked.
- When God inaugurates His New Covenant with Israel in the future, she will be restored to her place of blessing in the land (Ezek 36-37).
- To prepare the people for this new occupation, God defined the boundaries of the country. Israel’s borders during the Millennium will be similar to those promised her during the time of Moses (Num 34:1-12).

- 15] And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad;

“...Zedad”: on the north boundary of Canaan.

- 16] Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran.

Between the parallel ranges of Lebanon is the El-Bekaa valley, leading to “the entering in of Hamath” on the Orontes, in the Syrian frontier.

- Berothah—a city in Syria conquered by David; meaning “wells.”
- Hazar-hatticon—meaning “the middle village.”
- Hauran—a tract in Syria, south of Damascus; Auranitis.

- 17] And the border from the sea shall be Hazar-Enan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side.

Hazar-Enan—a town in the north of Canaan, meaning “village of fountains.” The northern border will stretch E from the Mediterranean Sea N of the modern city of Tripoli and will include what was then the northern border of Syria; 115 mi N of Damascus

The North Boundaries

- From the great (Mediterranean) sea by way of Hethlon (Heitela, 6 mi N of Tripoli, or Adlun, between Zarephath and Tyre);
- to the entrance of Hamath on the Orontes (115 miles N of Damascus (Amos 6:2);
- to Zedad (Sadad, SE of Homs), Berothah (belonging to Zobah (2 Sam 8:8); or Beraitan near Baalbek), Sibram (Ziphron, between Hamath and Homs (Num 34:9);
- to Hazer-hatticon on the border of Hauran (E of the Jordan, S of Damascus).

- 18] And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side.

The eastern border will be the Jordan River and 25 mi SE of the Dead Sea. Gilead and the Transjordan area to the east of the Jordan will not be included in Israel’s future inheritance.

- 19] And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward.
- 20] The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west side.

The southern boundary is 50 mi S of Beersheba. The country E of Jordan is excluded.

- 21] So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel.
- 22] And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.
- 23] And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 48

- 1] Now these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; a portion for Dan.

The locations of all 12 tribes will differ from their locations during Joshua's time to the captivities (Josh 13-19).

Tribe of Dan

Dan, so long locally and morally semi-heathen, is to have the least honorable place, at the extreme north (Judg 18:1-31). Dan has the largest population (Num 1:39) but the smallest allocation, W of Benjamin. It lost territory after death of Sampson (Judg 16-21) and resettled at Laish in the N: "Leap from Bashan" (Deut 33:22; Josephus, *Antiq.* 5:3:1). "Lost" long before Assyrian Invasion (1 Chr 1-8; Rev 7); Song of Deborah: Why did Dan remain in his ships? (Judg 5:17).

- 2] And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Asher.
- 3] And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Naphtali.
- 4] And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Manasseh.
- 5] And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Ephraim.
- 6] And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Reuben.
- 7] And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Judah.

Reuben—doomed formerly for incest and instability "not to excel" (Gen 49:4). So no distinguished prophet, priest, or king had come from it.

Of it were the notorious Dathan and Abiram, the mutineers. A pastoral and Bedouin character marked it and Gad (Jdg 5:16).

- 8] And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand reeds in breadth, and in length as one of the other parts, from the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it.
- 9] The oblation that ye shall offer unto the LORD shall be of five and twenty thousand in length, and of ten thousand in breadth.
- 10] And for them, even for the priests, shall be this holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand in length, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof.
- 11] It shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.
- 12] And this oblation of the land that is offered shall be unto them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.
- 13] And over against the border of the priests the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length shall be five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand.
- 14] And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firstfruits of the land: for it is holy unto the LORD.
- 15] And the five thousand, that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a profane place for the city, for dwelling, and for suburbs: and the city shall be in the midst thereof.
- 16] And these shall be the measures thereof; the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred.
- 17] And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty.
- 18] And the residue in length over against the oblation of the holy portion shall be ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward: and it shall be over against the oblation of the holy portion; and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that serve the city.
- 19] And they that serve the city shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel.
- 20] All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city.
- 21] And the residue shall be for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city, over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for the prince: and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house shall be in the midst thereof.

- 22] Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince.
- 23] As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side unto the west side, Benjamin shall have a portion.
- 24] And by the border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west side, Simeon shall have a portion.
- 25] And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar a portion.
- 26] And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun a portion.
- 27] And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad a portion.
- 28] And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be even from Tamar unto the waters of strife in Kadesh, and to the river toward the great sea.
- 29] This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord GOD.
- 30] And these are the goings out of the city on the north side, four thousand and five hundred measures.
- 31] And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi.

Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob's 12 sons, Judah was the royal tribe, and Levi was the tribe of the priesthood. All three were children of Jacob's first wife Leah (Gen 29:31-35).

- 32] And at the east side four thousand and five hundred: and three gates; and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan.

The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were combined as the tribe of Joseph (Gen 48:1). Joseph and Benjamin were both sons of Rachel (Gen 30:22-24; 35:16-18). Dan was the first son of Rachel's servant Bilhah, who became Jacob's concubine (Gen 30:4-6).

- 33] And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun.

These three were also born to Leah (Gen 29:33; 30:17-20). Since each of these tribes was relocated in the southern portion of the land the gates faced their inheritances (Ezek 48:24-26).

- 34] At the west side four thousand and five hundred, with their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali.

These three tribes descended from sons of Jacob's concubines. Gad and Asher were born to Zilpah (Gen 30:9-13). Naphtali was born to Bilhah (Gen 30:7-8).

- 35] It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.

The Millennium

- Promised to David (2 Sam 7:12-17; 23:5) under oath (Ps 89:34-37).
- Predicted in the Psalms and the Prophets (Ps 2; 45; 110; Isa 2:1-5; 4:1-6; 11:1-9; 12:1-6; 30:18-26; 35:1-10; 60, 61:3-62; 66; Jer 23:3-8; 32:37-44; Ezek 40-48; Dan 2:44-45; 7:13-14; 12:2-3; Mic 4:1-8; Zech 12:10-14:21).
- Promised to Mary (Lk 1:32; Mic 5:2; Isa 9:6, 7; Dan 2:44); reaffirmed to apostles (Lk 22:29-30).
- Lord's Prayer: "Thy Kingdom come" (Mt 6:10, 13; Acts 1:6; Ps 45, 46, 47, 48).
- Rule (Ps 2; 110) with a "Rod of Iron" (Rev 12:5; 19:15); "Every knee will bow" (Phil 2:6-11).

Millennial Limitations

- Not "heaven" vs. Eternal State which follows.
- Not the "New Earth" (Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1).
- Not "where righteousness dwells"
- Limited amount of evil, judged immediately (Isa 11:1-16).

Millennium Changes

- Creation changed: Physical changes (Zech 4:9,10; Isa 35:1-10;55:3; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13). Curse lifted (Isa 11:6-9).
- Lambs lie with lions, etc. Creation redeemed (Gen 3 → Rom 8:20-22).
- 7X as much light (Isa 30:26; 60:19-20). Earth: full of knowledge of the Lord (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14)
- Yet, *not eternity* (Isa 65); Death, sin (Isa 65:20-22).
- Extended longevity: Each to have land (Micah 4:15); Fruitful (Amos 9:13).

Millennial Longevity

- Death for unbelievers only? (Isa 65:17). Nowhere is there a resurrection of Millennial saints. Tribulation saints complete the "first resurrection" (Rev 20:4-6).
- No Jewish unbelievers? (Jer 31:31-34). All accept by 100th year (Isa 65:20).
- Thus, death only among Gentiles?

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Revelation 20:7-9

Last Sessions

Supplemental Addendum: *The Origin of Evil*—Part 1: The Gap Theory; Satan's Origin, Agenda & Destiny; Part 2: Our Predicament and Our Resources

Ezekiel Session 23: The Origin of Evil Part 1

The Temptations of Christ

- Making stone into bread (Lk 4:3,4 ; Mt 4:3,4).
- The kingdoms of the world (Lk 4:5-8; Mt 4:8-10).
- The Temple pinnacle (Lev 4:9-12; Mt 4:5-7).

An Offer by the Owner

The Lord rejected Satan's offer, but not because He didn't recognize his ownership—Christ knew that Satan *did* have these kingdoms. Ultimately Christ will rule over the kingdoms of the world—but not as a vice-regent of Satan! Today, however, the Devil is still the prince of the power of the air. He is the one who is in back of the kingdoms of our world, whether we recognize it or not.

A Few of Satan's Titles

- The Prince of This World (Jn 12:31).
- The Prince of the Power of the Air (Eph 2:2).
- Head of the World—Ruler of Darkness (Eph 6:12).
- The God of This Age (2 Cor 4:4).

Origins?

We know that the angels were created before the earth was (Job 38:1-15). We first find Satan in the Garden *already fallen* (Gen 3). Questions: *When did he fall? How did he gain his position of power?*

The Nebular Hypothesis: A Modern Myth

Some four billion years ago, the sun had ejected a tail, or a filament, of material that cooled and collected and thus formed the planets...

General History of Nature and Theory of the Heavens,
Immanuel Kant, 1755

Difficulties With the Nebular Hypothesis

The sun contains 99.86% of all the mass of the solar system. Yet the sun contains only 1.9% of the *angular momentum*. The nine planets contain 98.1%. (This was known in the time of Laplace a century ago.)

There is no plausible explanation that would support a solar origin of the planets. James Jeans (1877-1946) pointed out that the outer planets are far larger than the inner ones. Jupiter is 5,750 times as massive as Mercury, 2,958 times as massive as Mars, etc. This is also a difficulty with current theories.

Other Enigmas

There are three *pairs* of rapid-spin rates among our planets, each within 3% of each other: Earth and Mars; Jupiter and Saturn; and, Neptune and Uranus. Why?

Earth and Mars also have virtually identical *spin axis tilts* (about 23.5°). Why? From angular momentum and orbital calculations, *it would seem that these three pairs of planets may have been brought here from elsewhere*. Why does Mars have 93% of its craters in *one hemisphere* and only 7% in the other? It would appear that over 80% of these craters occurred *within a single half-hour!*

Alternative Cosmological Views

Uniformitarians cling to the presumption that things have remained essentially unchanged over billions of years.

Catastrophists believe that the universe has been subjected to a series of catastrophic events (fiat creationists are included in this view). View any surface in the solar system and you will find craters and disruptive evidences. Under a constant rain of interplanetary debris, the Earth accumulates about 100 tons of extraterrestrial material per day.

The “Gap Theory”: Genesis 1:1-2

When were the angels created? *When* did Satan fall? Is there a “gap” (interval) between Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2?

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

This is certainly straightforward (and if you fully grasp that verse you will have no problem with any other verse in the Bible!). It is the next verse that raises some basic issues:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:2

The words “without form and void,” תהו ובוהו *tohu v'bohu*, will become critical elements of our vocabulary. תהו *tohu* means without form, confused; בוהו *bohu* means void, empty. (The ו *vav* between them is the conjunction “and.”) When we examine a declaration of God in Isaiah we note an apparent contradiction:

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

Isaiah 45:18

The same word for “vain,” תהו *tohu* (without form, confused), appears in both verses, and would appear to contradict the declaration in Genesis 1:2. The phrase in Genesis 1:2 also appears in Jeremiah:

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.

Jeremiah 4:23

Whenever you find an apparent contradiction in the Biblical text, we should rejoice! It may be what the rabbis call a *remez*: a hint of something deeper. It's like a signpost saying, “Dig here! A treasure is hidden here.” So this compels us to more carefully examine the passage in Genesis 1:2.

The verb “was” is actually a transitive verb (indicating action) and the word order (normally, conjunction-verb-subject-object) is reordered to suggest the transitive pluperfect form: “had become.” (It is so ordered in the International Standard Version.) It is the identical transitive verb which appears in Genesis 19:26, where Lot's wife “became a pillar of salt.”

Furthermore, we also find that the initial conjunction, “And,” is an *adversative* conjunction (“but”) and is so rendered in both the Septuagint and Vulgate translations. (It often suggests a significant time delay.) Putting this all together suggests the following rendering:

But the earth had become without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Genesis 1:2

There appears to be an interval of some kind—perhaps eons—between verses 1 and 2. It would seem that the earth was *not originally* “without form and void,” but had been subjected to some kind of catastrophic judgment prior to the sequence that continues in Genesis 1.

The “Gap Theory” was originally suggested by Thomas Chalmers in 1814. Compare: George H. Pember, *Earth's Earliest Ages*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1907; Donald Gray Barnhouse, *The Invisible War*, Zondervan Publishing Co., MI, 1965; and Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void*, Ontario, CAN, 1970.

The Power Behind the Throne

*The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, **I am a God, I sit in the seat of God**, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, **though thou set thine heart as the heart of God**:*

Ezekiel 28:1,2

“I am a God”: Cf. Isaiah's words of the King of Babylon (Isa 14:13, 14). For similar examples: the boast of Pharaoh Hophra (Ezek 29:3); the praise given to Herod Agrippa by the Tyrians (Acts 12:21); Paul's description of “the man of sin” uses nearly the same words (2 Thess 2:4).

“I sit in the seat of God”: Tyre was known as the Holy Island. The city was thought of as rising from its waters like the rock-throne of God. [Sanchon., edit. Orelli, p. 36.]

“Though thou set thy heart.” The words remind us of the temptation in Genesis 3:5.

The Prince of Tyre

“Ruler” נָגִיד *nagid* means “the man at the top” (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 13:14; 2 Sam 7:8). Ezekiel had prophesied against the whole city; he was now

singling out the city's leader for a special word from God. "King" = מֶלֶךְ *melek*. The language, though primarily here applied to the king of Tyre, as similar language is to the king of Babylon (Isa 14:13, 14), yet has an ulterior and fuller accomplishment in Satan and his embodiment in the Antichrist (Dan 7:25; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:6).

Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Ezekiel 28:13

Eden was on the earth...see also the description of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:18-21.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Ezekiel 28:14

Cherubim are super angels (Isa 6; Ezek 1, 10; Rev 4, 5).

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

Ezekiel 28:15

Christ was the one who created him. God used the Logos to create all things, including Satan. So, Satan, even with all his power, is still only a created being. Ezekiel described the *king* in terms that could not apply to a mere man. This "king" had appeared in the Garden of Eden (v.13); had been a guardian cherub (v.14a); had possessed free access to God's holy mountain (v.14b); and had been sinless from the time he was created (v.15).

*By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as **profane out of the mountain of God**: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.*

Ezekiel 28:16

He was driven out of the place of sanctity (Ezek 28:14) that he had occupied (cf. Ps 89:39).

***Thine heart was lifted up** because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will*

bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Ezekiel 28:17-19

Lamentation on The King of Babylon

*How art thou **fallen from heaven**, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, **I will** ascend into heaven, **I will** exalt my throne above the stars of God: **I will** sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; **That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof**; that opened not the house of his prisoners?*

Isaiah 14:12-17

When did this happen? (Cf. Jer 4:23-26).

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

Isaiah 14:18-20

*The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. **This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.** For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?*

Isaiah 14:24-27

Next Session

The "unseen world"; the nature of this "cosmic warfare"; and, our resources for battle.

Ezekiel Session 24: The Origin of Evil Part 2

“Reality” Reexamined

*For we wrestle **not against flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Ephesians 6:12

Paul is describing ranks of (fallen) angels and demons...

Model of the Atom

The nucleus is 100,000 times smaller than the diameter of the whole atom: a pinhead vs. 100 meters: a pinhead in a football field! By volume, the atom is mostly empty space. Items we consider “solid” are really the same ratio of matter vs. space as *one second is to 30 million years!*

Our visible universe is simply a three-dimensional “shadow” of a larger reality [*Scientific American*, June 2005, p.57-63.] This is what the Bible has said all along (Heb 11:3; 1 Cor 15:44-49; Eph 3:17-19 gives example of four dimensions ...one of the Greek words denotes the dimension of time)!

Beyond Euclid (>3 Dimensions)

- 1854: Georg Riemann’s Metric Tensors;
- 1915: Einstein, 4-Dimensional Spacetime;
- 1953: Kaluza-Klein: 4th Dimensions (Light & Supergravity);
- 1963: Yang-Mills Fields (Electromagnetic & Both Nuclear Forces);
- 1984: Superstrings, 10-Dimensions.

Dimensions of “Reality”

- Nachmonides (13th Century) 10 dimensions; only 4 are “knowable” [*Commentary on Genesis*, 1263.]
- Particle Physicists (20th Century) 10 dimensions; 4 are directly measurable: (3 spatial + time); 6 are “curled” into less than 10⁻³³ cm, and thus inferable only by indirect means.

A Glimpse of the Dark Side (Daniel 10)

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God,

*thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. **But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days:** but, lo, **Michael**, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.*

Daniel 10:12-14

*Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? **and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.** But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.*

Daniel 10:20, 21

A Glimpse of Unseen Warfare (2 Kgs 6:8-23)

*And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. **And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.***

2 Kings 6:15-17

Satan: His Origin, Agenda, and Destiny

When did he fall? ...and a third of the angels with him...The origin and career of Satan is addressed indirectly (Gen 3:14,15; Isa 14:12-20; Mt 16:23). He is an accuser (Job 1—Satan had access) and a tempter (Lk 4:1-13).

The Woman and Man-Child (Rev 12)

- Woman (with sun, moon, 12 stars; with child);
- Red Dragon (7 heads, 10 horns, 7 crowns; to devour Man-child when born);
- Man-Child (to rule all nations with rod of iron; caught up to God and His throne);
- Woman flees into wilderness for 1260 days;
- Michael and His Angels fight Dragon and his angels;
- Dragon cast to earth and persecutes the Woman for 3 ½ years.

Satan’s Whereabouts

God expelled him **from the mount of God** (heaven; Ezek 28:16,14). Satan was cast from God’s government in heaven (Lk 10:18) but was still allowed access to God (Job 1:6-12; Zech 3:1-2).

In the Tribulation, Satan will be cast from heaven and restricted to the earth (Rev 12:7-13). During the Millennium he will be in the bottomless pit (Rev 20:1-3). After his brief release at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:7-9), he will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev 20:10).

The Stratagems of Satan

- Corruption of Adam's line Gen 6
- Abraham's seed Gen 12, 20
- Famine Gen 50
- Destruction of male line Ex 1
- Pharaoh's pursuit Ex 14
- The populating of Canaan Gen 15
- Against David's line 2 Sam 7
- Jehoram kills his brothers 2 Chr 21
- Athaliah kills all (but Joash) 2 Chr 22
- Hezekiah assaulted, etc. Isa 36, 38
- Haman's attempts Esther 3
- Joseph's fears: Mt 1
- Herod's attempts: Mt 2
- At Nazareth: Lk 4
- 2 storms on the Sea: Mk 4; Lk 8
- The Cross
- Summary: Rev 12
- ...and he's still not through...

Our Present Predicament

America is in moral free fall. We are victims of *spiritual* warfare. Our government is now the *purveyor* of immorality. Why are we surprised? Governments have always loved crises: they provide the rationale for increasing budgets and bureaucracies, and subjugating the population. Most new dictators create external crises to consolidate their internal powers. In our country, they long ago learned that social crises serve as well as military ones. There is one insight that supplies a key missing link: *immorality* results in social crises. Is it any surprise to learn that governments have an enormous incentive to promote immorality?!

The Armor of God For *Spiritual* Warfare

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the **whole armour of God**, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against*

*principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the **whole armour of God**, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

Ephesians 6:10-13

*Stand therefore, having your **loins girt about with truth**, and having on the **breastplate of righteousness**; And your **feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace**; Above all, taking **the shield of faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take **the helmet of salvation**, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**: **Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

Ephesians 6:14-19

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: **but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***

1 John 3:2

Thou madest him [for] a little [while] lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour; and didst set him over the works of thy hands.

Hebrews 2:7

Adam through sin forfeited his dominion. Did he ever have dominion over the angels? No. The last Adam, however, gained dominion over everything (Heb 2:7; Ps 8:5-9).

*Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see **not yet** all things put under him.*

Hebrews 2:8

Yet, some unfinished business remains (1,000 years worth?) Eventually, joint-heirs with Him? (Cf. Rev 21:7; Rom 8:17).

*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have **delivered up the kingdom to God**, even the Father; when he shall have put down all*

rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that **God may be all in all.**

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Romans 8:31-36

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 3:37-39

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About The Cover Design

(on the tape cassette volumes)

The “Front” cover:

The Greek border: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).” The center design element symbolizes the Word of God Incarnate, illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

The “Back” cover: (the “front” to the Jewish reader)

The Hebrew border: “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (from the Sh’ma, Deut 6:4-5).”

The center design represents the Burning Bush, made up of Hebrew letters which proclaim “the Eternal One cannot lie.”

The Spine:

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