

# Ezekiel

## Resources:

The Book of Ezekiel Jim McGuiggan Montex Publishers  
Ezekiel The NIV Application Commentary Iain M. Duguid

## Historical context:

Josiah 640-609

Jehoahaz 608 (3 months, then replaced by Pharaoh)

Jehoiakim 608-597

Jehoiachin 597 (3 months, then into exile, when Ezekiel also was taken into exile)

Zedekiah 597-586

Jerusalem has been defeated. Jeremiah and Ezekiel advise submitting to Nebuchadnezzar (and therefore to the Lord's discipline). If not, then Jerusalem will be completely destroyed. This is, in fact, what happened. (Ezek 33:21-22).

Jehoiachin the child king is in exile and his uncle Zedekiah is on the throne as a regent. Ezekiel went into exile with Jehoiachin.

## Themes in Ezekiel:

1. The sovereignty/glory of God. (Ezek 1:4f, 2 Chron 7:1-2). The glorious and sovereign God has gone into exile with his people Ezek 11:16 Ezek 8-11 explains why the glory of God must leave the temple. God's sovereignty demands both the destruction of Jerusalem and the salvation of God's remnant.
2. The utter sinfulness of human beings. Israel sinful from birth (23:3) and worse than Sodom (16:46-48) Ezekiel 23 is so graphic it is offensive to some.
3. The inescapability (and justice) of God's judgment. This is the main theme of Ch 1-The end of the road. They will be burnt to a crisp (Ezek 24) Even Noah, Daniel and Job could only save themselves! (Ezek 14:12-20 (esp v. 14)
  - a. Theodicy: Ezekiel establishes a doctrine of "free will" and elucidates the nature of God's justice as it relates both to individuals and to groups of people.

Points #2,3 are virtually absent from today's preaching, even in our churches. This is something to take note of. A healthy balance of teaching on grace, love, peace as well as fear, holiness and judgment are called for.

4. The return of the King and the restoration of God's remnant to glory. The announcement of good news, importantly, only follows after the announcement of the destruction of Jerusalem (Ezek 24, 33:21-22). God's glory returns 43:1-5 East Gate closed forever. God will not leave his temple ever again. A new covenant, new heart, new spirit Ezek 37:1-14 Judah will be back in Eden Ezek 38-39

Outline:

Ezek Ch 1-24 Jerusalem must fall. The end of the road.

Ezek Ch 25-32 Judah's enemies must fall as well. (1 Pet 4:17-18) (Jerusalem destroyed)

Ezek Ch 33 Bridge from Ch 24 to Ch 34

Ezek Ch 34-48 Jerusalem must be comforted. The Messiah will come and will save a remnant.

The end of the road is not the end of the story.

Bottom line, the book of Ezekiel focuses on Jesus Christ.

Detailed Outline:

I Ch 1-24 The End of the Road for Judah

Ch 1-3 Vision and Commission of Ezekiel

Ch 4 Ezekiel acts out the destruction of Jerusalem

Ch 5 A haircut and its meaning

Ch 6-7 Idolatry of Judah

Ch 8-11 The necessity of the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah

Ch 12 Signs and warning of judgment

Ch 13 False prophets

Ch 14 God, the righteous judge

Ch 15 The parable of the useless vine

Ch 16 Shameful history

Ch 17 Parable of the two eagles

Ch 18 Individual righteousness

Ch 19 Parable of the lion and of the vine

Ch 20 A record of rebellion  
Ch 21 Babylon, the sword of God  
Ch 22 Corruption of God's people  
Ch 23 Ohola and Oholibah  
Ch 24 The cauldron. Ezekiel refuses to mourn.

II Ch 25-32 The End of the Road for Judah's enemies

Ch 25 Ammon  
Ch 26-28 Tyre  
Ch 28 Sidon  
Ch 29-32 Egypt

III Ch 33 The Watchman, Jerusalem has been destroyed

IV Ch 34-48 Comfort for God's people. The Messiah is coming

Ch 34 A better shepherd  
Ch 35 Edom judged  
Ch 36 The mountain of the Lord  
Ch 37 Valley of dry bones  
Ch 38-39 God and Magog—the enemies of God's people—destroyed. God's people saved.  
Ch 40-48 The temple rebuilt Restoration of the remnant

## **Ezekiel 1**

Ezekiel 1:1 30 years old when he began his ministry as a prophet. (also the age when he could act as a priest)

5<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiachin's exile 592 BC

Ezekiel has been in captivity already for five years, with 10,000 captives: the "cream of the crop" of Israel. (2 Kings 24:14 Jer 24:1-10)

One would think that Israel would have been softened up by now (Psalm 137:1-4 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept..). One would be wrong

Ezek 1:4-28 Ezekiel sees the glory of God—a prerequisite for being a prophet of God.

This is a vision of God on his throne, surrounded by the cherubim, coming in judgment. It is the Day of the Lord.

On the throne, surrounded by the cherubim (Rev 4:6f). The roving chariot symbolizes that God can be anywhere. Like other ancient kings who brought their throne with them as they traveled. (note: cherubim = God's chariot 1 Chron 28:18 also Ps 18:10)

The cherubim are the ones who guard God's holiness (they guard Eden, they were worked into the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies, they sat above the mercy seat and around the throne of God in Rev 4.)

There is a parallel vision to that in Ezekiel 10 when the presence of the Lord departs from the temple, leaving Jerusalem defenseless before the Babylonian army.

Break it down:

1:4 cloud, flash of lightening (also fire in v. 13) = judgment From the North = Babylon  
v. 5 four living creatures = cherubim Rev 4:6b-8 Identified as such in Ezek 10:1  
v. 10 four faces man, lion, ox (Hebrew could be bull), eagle (Rev 4 lion, ox, eagle, man)  
v. 12, 17 move God's judgment coming like a chariot  
v. 15-18 Wheels in wheels, with eyes all over = searching to protect God's holiness (the version in Ezek 10:12, Rev 4:6 has eyes all over).  
v. 22-28 The throne of God. v. 28 rainbow = hope (hope recalls Lam 3:22-23)

This is a picture of the throne of God, reminiscent of Holy of Holies.

The message of Ezekiel 1:4-28 God is coming to judge Judah! Jim McGuigan: "This is no social visit."

## **Ezek CH 2-3 Ezekiel commissioned**

Ezek 2:1-7 Ezekiel's mission (v. 4 say to them: this is what the Lord says.)

Stand on your feet. It is good to prostrate ourselves before God, but we need to get up from there to take action.

Note: The Spirit comes into Ezekiel as he stands up. This theme will come out more strongly in Ezekiel 37 with the Valley of Dry Bones. Ezekiel is to be the first of a new community of the

remnant whom God will raise from spiritual death into a revived nation. In this sense he is a prefigure of Christ.

I will speak to you. God makes Ezekiel a prophet.

Note: In OT, only certain people received the Holy Spirit, like Ezekiel, but those who did were commissioned to speak God's words to the people. In the NT, we all have the spirit, therefore, we all speak. (reminds me of 2 Cor 4:1-15 esp. v. 13)

v. 4 Ezekiel needs to be obstinate and stubborn. Why? Because the people are obstinate and stubborn. Remember: 5 years of captivity had not yet humbled them.

Why do they continue to be stubborn? They are holding out hope. Jerusalem has not yet been destroyed. They were listening to what their itching ears wanted to hear (2 Tim 4:3-4)

They were trusting in the temple, rather than the God of the temple. (Jeremiah 7:4). They were being told "peace, peace." (Jer 6:13-14, 8:11-12)

Illustration: During the dark days of the American Civil War, a woman asked Abraham Lincoln if he thought God was on the side of the North. He replied: "Madam, I am less concerned whether God is on our side (ICOC) than whether we are on his side."

Q: How can we be like this?

Ezek 2:5 Whether they listen or fail to listen.... We need to remember that it is not our job to convert people, but to speak to people. Noah preached repentance for 100 years with no apparent luck, but consider his effect in the long run.

Mcguiggan: "*Successful* evangelism is faithful proclamation by word and life."

v. 5 They knew a prophet had been among them. Q: How? How will people know you are a prophet among them? Because we declared the counsel of God.

Later on, when they finally come to their senses, they will remember the one person who truly spoke the words of God to them. We need to be that person. Even if they do not, on Judgment Day we need to be clear of conscience in this regard.

In Ezekiel's case he is being specifically told that he will have little or no "fruit" of his toil.

Ezek 2:8-3:3 Ezekiel eats the scroll. Message: 1. We need a personal encounter with God (1:4f) 2. We need to digest his Words (parallel Jeremiah 15:16, Rev 10:9-11 in which it tasted sweet but because sour in the stomach)

What is on the scroll? Probably the words God wants Ezekiel to communicate to his people.

Q: Have you, like Ezekiel, eaten the scroll?

Ezek 3:4-9 Why are these people not responding to Ezekiel? They have heard it all before. They are very religious. Religious people are hard to convert.

v. 4 speak my words to them. Again, this is his commission.

v. 5 not obscure speech. Theirs is not a language barrier, but a heart barrier.

v. 7 We need to remember this. It is not us they reject, it is God they reject (assuming that we have not been obnoxious or rude or weird in some way)

3:8 God's solution: We need to be as hard and stubborn as they are.

(skip 3:10-15)

3:16-21 The watchman of Israel. (Hosea 9:8 a lookout who provides advanced warning to the people of coming danger. In this case the coming "enemy"/danger is God himself!)  
Context: this is a warning/encouragement to Ezekiel that it is time to start delivering the message.

Ezekiel not too fired up about his mission. But if he does not deliver God's message he will be judged along with them. Sobering words for us. I do not want to be accountable for the "blood" of my family, neighbors, friends, coworkers, etc.

Christianity today: We hear God's love taught. We hear that God has a wonderful future for all in this life—that he will bless those who choose him. But.... Do we hear the message of judgment. Are we unwilling to be the Watchman of Israel? We need to teach Eph 2:1-3 and Eph 2:4-10.

v. 20 Does God put stumbling blocks in front of people? Yes, he does. 2 Thess 2:11 Those who refuse to love the truth, God will send a powerful delusion. Why? As a judgment? As a means

to let them go to the pit, in hopes that they will come to their senses? Besides, the stumbling block may simply be something he/she is offended by, such as the truth, or something he/she is looking for to appeal to greed, pride, etc.

(skip 3:22-27)

## **Ezekiel 4 & 5 Dramatic symbolism.**

Ezek 4:1-3 Parable/acting out the siege of Jerusalem. (which actually happened 587-586 BC)

1. drawing of the city.
2. siege works = attack of Babylon
3. iron pan = Q: Is it God behind this iron pan—separated from his people? God is no longer hearing the cries of his people. Ezekiel is now a prophet, but no longer a priest (intervening)

Ezekiel is acting the part of the Lord in this parody.

v. 3 It will be under siege and you will besiege it = The Babylonians will besiege the city but, behind the scenes, it will be the Lord who is besieging the city, with the Babylonians as his agent. Q: Application to us?

v. 5-6 Ezekiel continues this behavior for 430 days. Bizarre behavior. Q: How do you think the people responded to this bizarre behavior? Did the people understand what Ezekiel was acting out? How would you feel if a member of your church did something like this in a very public place?

Application: In a visual-image-focused age, might we do well to incorporate drama into our worship and our evangelism?

390 + 40 = 430 years = length of the captivity in Egypt (acc to Ex 12:40-41) captivity symbol

(note: the siege parable was maintained throughout the time of the laying down parable—these are parallel parables about the siege of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah)

390 years = time of the sin of Israel/Samaria/Northern Kingdom

40 years = time of the sin of Judah/Southern Kingdom.

So this vision represents the fact that all of Israel will go into captivity “in Egypt.” (Hosea 8:13 Egypt = Assyria Rev 18:2 Rome = Babylon Rev 11:8 Rome is symbolically Sodom or Egypt) Their expectation that the exile will be partial and temporary is wrong.

390 years implies the sin of Samaria was greater, but 40 years implies that Judah was also very sinful.

Q: Did Ezekiel actual lay down in the street for 430 days? More likely he went home at night, but came out again every day to act out this spiritual play. He did not literally lay down 24/7 as he cooked his food.

v. 4 “bear their sin” = suffer the consequences for their sin Is 53 “for he bore the sin of many”

4:9-11 Mixture of grains and weighing out grain and water = scarcity of food and water during the siege, rationing. 0.25 kg of grain is starvation rations. “Ezekiel’s bread.”

4:12 Eat food cooked over human excrement = without the temple, you will be unclean during your exile. (Hosea 9:3-4 a good parallel)

4:14-15 Please, no! God grants this concession.

4:16 A specific prophecy about the conditions in 587-586 BC in Jerusalem.

Purpose of this physical prophecy: Do not rely on the temple and God’s support of Jerusalem. All will go into captivity.

Ezek 5:1- The haircut parable. The point: From those to whom much as been given, much will be expected. (Luke 12:48) This certainly applies to us!

For a Jew, cutting off the hair and beard is a very humiliating thing—far more than it would be for us. (Ezek 7:18)

v. 2 fire, sword and exile.

v. 3 The remnant motif. God will protect a remnant. (but even some of them will suffer v. 4) Fortunately, for them, Malachi 3:6 applies. “I, the Lord do not change. So you; O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.



v. 5 “I have set you in the center of the nations.” God has made us a city on a hill. With this comes great responsibility (and potentially great punishment for rebellion against the mission)

Being on God’s side is not necessarily a blessing, if we are not faithful.

v. 7 You are worse than the pagans!!! An exaggeration? Possibly, but given God’s expectations, it seems that way to him.

v. 8-12 Judgment on Judah! v. 10 Cannibalism in Jerusalem. This actually happened, and it was prophesied (Deut 28:53-57). Reminiscent, also, if the judgments described in Leviticus 26:14f for “not carrying out all these commands and rejecting my decrees... for violating my covenant.” Wild animals (Lev 26:22) sword and pestilence (Lev 26:25) eating of one’s own children (Lev 26:29), being scattered among the nations (Lev 26:33) Because of theirs and their father’s sins (Lev 26:39) but... Lev 26:44f hope.

v. 12 God provides an interpretation of the dream.

v. 13 But... then my wrath will be satisfied and I will comfort my people.

Application: What about us under the New Covenant? 1. The blessings and curses are spiritual rather than physical. 2. Christ has already taken the penalty/curse for our sins so we avoid this by being born again. However, Hebrews 10:26f applies to Christians. 3. Either way, the principle of blessings and curses holds for us, because “it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

## **Ezekiel 6 & 7: Judgment on Israel (along with a ray of hope)**

Judgment, not only on Jerusalem, but on all Israel/Judah—on the mountains of Israel.

Jeremiah 6:2 “Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel.

Here the mountains, hills, ravines and valleys are a personification of the people of Israel.

All have become polluted by their idolatry. Q: has our culture and society become ever-more-polluted by all kinds of idolatry? We are like the people in the days of Noah... When the rain came it was too late.

For them:

Baal, who represents the storm god. The god of power and authority and of wealth. Ashtoreth (Greek: Aphrodite), who represents sex, pleasure. The idols worshipped by Judah are the same idols worshipped in our modern culture, dressed up in different clothes (1 John 2:15-17). Our “high places” are more modern, but equally likely to bring about spiritual destruction and judgment.

v. 8 But a remnant will be saved from the devastation. I hope that we are among that remnant. When God saves us, we need to remember the depths we sank to and from which we turned. v. 9 like them, we need to “loathe ourselves for the evil we have done and for our detestable practices.

v. 10 An ominous passage. At final judgment, how will people “know that I am the Lord”? “I did not threaten in vain to bring calamity on them.”

“And you will know that I am the Lord” is in Ezekiel 72 times.

Jeremiah 7:1 The end has come. The time when one can repent has been reached. The time beyond which it is no longer possible to repent has arrived. A solemn warning to us. Hebrews 6:4-6.

This is the “Day of the Lord,” which is not good news for everyone. 1 Pet 3:10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief.

v. 4, 9 We can reach a point that God shows no pity. God’s love and mercy are, at least in a sense, at odds with his justice. God’s love and his justice met at the cross so that for those who accept Christ, God’s love supersedes his justice. For those who worship idols and reject covenant with God, his justice supersedes his love. Not that his love fails, but that justice prevails. In the words of Amos 5:24 Let justice roll on like a river.

Illustration: A person in the Niagara River reaches a point at which it becomes impossible to escape the current.

Illustration: Rev 6-15 were judgments meant to bring about repentance and a change of heart. Rev 16-19 were about judgment, plain and simple. We can reach a point that we cannot turn back from.

The message to the lost? v. 5 Disaster!!! Disaster is coming. v. 7 Doom!

v. 19-22 (read it) Quite an image “they will throw their silver into the streets and their gold will be an unclean thing. On the day of judgment, everything we thought of as awesome, we will realize it was in fact an abomination. The “almighty peso” is not so powerful.

Things you can buy

Medicine

Books

Position

Attention

Things you cannot buy

health

knowledge of God, wisdom

character

love

What have you relied on? How much assistance will it bring you on the Day of Judgment?

7:24 God’s instrument in this judgment: The most evil of nations (Babylon). God can use the evil in the world to chastise us.

## **Ezekiel Ch 8-11 The Necessity of the Destruction of Judah**

Ezek 8:1 In the sixth year in the sixth month. Ezekiel is now 31 14 months after the first vision. He is still in the midst of (but very near the end of) acting out the parables about Jerusalem. Note, he is in his house, so he did not act out the devastation 24/7.

Note: He is speaking to the elders of Israel, coming to the prophet for assurance. They are more spiritual than those committing acts we are about to witness—they are not bowing to idols, but they are still in sin, as we will see (Ezek 14:1 idols in their hearts)... Ezekiel is hesitant to give the vision to this group, as we will see, for obvious reasons.

8:2 A vision of the Holy Spirit or perhaps of Jesus.

8:3 ...by the hair of my head... Ezekiel is being forced to see this vision. He is reluctant to see it.

8:3 “An idol of jealousy” A statue of Ashtoreth? In the North = a guard against attack?

8:4 God is still in the temple in Jerusalem.

8:6 They are doing detestable things which will drive me far from my sanctuary (This is reminiscent of Hebrews 10:26-31. God will abandon his temple (us) if we provoke him to jealousy sufficiently.

8:7-13 Hidden idols (Jaazaniah son of a powerful noble who had taken part in Josiah’s reforms 2 Kings 22:3-14)

8:11 70 elders are symbolic of the whole people Their excuse? The Lord no longer sees us (v. 12) Q: Do we say that to ourselves as we indulge our sinful nature?

Duguid: "Far from the Lord's having abandoned the land, it is they who have driven the Lord away. Far from their incense-burning being an effective means for warding off dangers, it is one of the causes of God's impending judgment on them. Ironically, it is their vision that is clouded, not the Lord's."

8:14-17 even blatant idolatry open sin

v. 14 Women weeping for Tammuz. Not just the men. Tammuz was an Assyrian god—the consort of Ishtar—who died and went to the underworld, so this is part of worship of Tammuz.

v. 15 25 priests = 24 courses of priest plus the high priest = all the priests. Bowing to the sun. These guys are truly ecumenical!

v. 17 Do you see this, son of man. God is convincing Ezekiel that he is right in his judgment. Interesting.

8:18 Even if they shout in their prayers, I will not hear. (Heb 6:4-6)

Admonition to us: We should "Seek the Lord while he can be found" (Isaiah 55:6) for a time will come when we can no longer even do this.

Ezekiel 9 The vision is continued.

9:1f Executioners from the North with a war club. Babylon. "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it."

9:3 God is in command here (not Nebuchadnezzar)

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn. Q: Do you mourn? If we do not mourn over sin, then we may end up like these people.

9:4 Marking on the forehead reminds us of (or vice versa) Revelation 7:1-17 People protected from the coming judgment. (note: they are not saved from physical punishment, but only from judgment and being kept from heaven. Q: Does this sealing mean that the Christians will escape physical suffering in the coming tribulation? Answer: No! In Ezekiel 9:1-6, the righteous are sealed from judgment, but definitely not from the destruction about to come on Jerusalem. This is seen in Ezek 21:3-4 in which many of these righteous ones were killed in the siege. Conclusion: When people sin, all suffer but not all are punished. There is a lot about

**theodicy** in Ezekiel. There is a big difference between suffering with the guilty and suffering because we are guilty.

More on theodicy: In Ezekiel, we have is very strong terms both sides of the coin of God's grace and his judgment. We have in Exodus 34:6, we have Ezek 18:20, Jeremiah 31:30 and Deut 24:16 but we have clearly worked out Exodus 34:7 and Deuteronomy 5:9-10. When God is showing patience, it can cause us to doubt his willingness to judge, but when God finally comes in judgment, it can cause us to doubt his mercy.

For us, this "seal" this "mark" is the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)

9:5 Kill without pity or compassion. Not that God does not have pity or compassion, but for some of us, God's justice trumps his love for us. (also 8:18 I will not show pity, 9:10 I will not show pity or spare them)

9:6 Begin at my sanctuary.... Judgment, of course, begins with the elders/leaders. 1 Pet 4:17

9:8 Ezekiel crushed by the scene. Won't you save a remnant?

9:9 God: The people brought this on themselves. 9:10 They are sending themselves to hell.

9:11 It is done.

## **Ezekiel 10,11**

Ezekiel 10:1f Ezekiel sees God on his sapphire (royal blue) throne, over the cherubim, in the temple. In all this, God rules. This is one of the themes of Ezekiel.

10:2-8 The one in linen who showed mercy in Ezek 9 is the one asked to exact judgment in Ezek 10 by spreading coals around the city. This is us. We are the aroma of God to some and the stink of death to others (2 Cor 2:14-16).

Physical destruction of Jerusalem in 586 foreshadowed.

10:4 The glory fills the Temple (as it did when Solomon's temple was commissioned 1 Kings 8:10-11)

10:9-17 Cherubim redescribed. Only significant difference is eyes all over their bodies (protecting righteousness of God)

10:18 The glory of the Lord departs from the temple. Very significant. As in 30AD vs 70 AD God departed the temple before he allowed the Gentiles in to defile it.

Jerusalem is doomed.

Remember: the ones learning about this vision are the elders of the exile.

Ezekiel 11 Judgment on the leaders of Judah/Jerusalem. What is their sin?

11:3 The leaders say “peace, peace.”

Note on the text. It might say “Isn’t the time near to build houses?” or, in the margins they are saying “The time is not near to build houses” If the former, then the advice is being given in Jerusalem. If the latter, then the advice is being given to the exiles.

11:15 The people say “peace, peace.” We, not the exiles, are God’s favored people. (but we must always be reminded that faith is belief in things not seen... beware of appearances)

11:7-11 A prophecy that they will be killed outside the city. They are saying the city is a cauldron. God is saying, “not for you!” This is what happened, as Zedekiah and the leaders broke out of Jerusalem, were captured and executed at Riblah (2 Kings 25:1-7)

11:18f A hopeful promise to the exiled remnant.

11:19 A new heart and a new spirit. This prophecy applies to those that the remnant prefigures--those under the New Covenant (and is reminiscent of Ezekiel 36:24-30)

11:22-23 The end of the road. God leaves the temple. A foreshadow of what will happen to us if we are unfaithful to God (and the nail in the coffin of Calvinism’s P in TULIP)

v. 23 God left the temple and went to the Mount of Olives (above the mountain East of the city) to observe/wait for the destruction of the city by Babylon. This is a foreshadow of Jesus, rejected by the people Matthew 23:37. As a result her house will be left desolate Matthew 23:38. Jesus then left the temple until they are willing to welcome his coming and went to the Mount of Olives. Again, God left his temple and left it to be destroyed by the Gentile (in this case by Titus and Rome). Once more, the glory of God has left his temple and gone to the Mt. of Olives, leaving behind a doomed, empty structure.

11:24-25 Ezekiel given the unenviable job of relating all this to the elders who came to his house for assurance.

**Ezekiel 12 Ezekiel acts out the final destruction of Jerusalem and going into exile.**

Ezek 12:3 Son of man, pack your bags.... Ezekiel performs a visual prophecy. Like Ezekiel, we, too have packed our bags and are exiles. We are a remnant. We are strangers in a strange land. We are aliens and sojourners (Heb 11:13f)

v. 3 Do it “in their sight.” He made a big fuss about this and, presumably, drew a great crowd. Like acting out a skit in which normal things are done in a purposefully exaggerated way. Going through his stuff, making a lot of noise.

Pack your bags, dig through the wall (what wall? His house?)(v. 5), cover your face (v. 6) do it at night (v. 7)

This is a prophecy about Zedekiah (v 10). And of course, this is exactly what happened. They dug through the wall and left at night (v 12). Zedekiah was blinded and carried off into exile (He will not see Babylon v. 13) and died in Babylon. All this happened exactly as Ezekiel acted out (Jeremiah 52:4-11 2 Kings 25:1-7) Truly, Ezekiel was a prophet and, belatedly, the people realized he was a prophet.

But I will spare a remnant (v. 16)

Ezek 12:17-20 A second acted out prophecy. Ezekiel eats bread and drinks water with trembling. We should imagine his exaggerated motion.

Ezek 12:21 A proverb. “The days keep passing by, and every vision fails.”

Ezekiel turns this proverb around, saying, (v. 23) “The days are near when every prophecy will be fulfilled.”

v. 27 “it is about the distant future.” Sounds like 2 Peter 3:3-7(-13). As in the days of Noah....

Illustration: It reminds me of the time my mother spanked my brother and he whispered under his breath “that tickled.” God’s response to our mocking him is to bring on the judgment more quickly.

v. 28 God’s answer: No more delay!

## **Ezekiel 13 False prophets Condemned**

What is the false prophet’s message: “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” (Ezek 13:10)

Message: We should not be whitewashing empty tombs (v. 11). This is what so much of the religious (Christian) world does. Ironically, God asks: When I destroy your wall (with hail,

torrential rain and windstorms, symbolic of God's judgment), where will the coat of whitewash be? I will expose the foundation. Q: What is your foundation? Is it God?

Our church needs to be the real thing!

Summary of this chapter: 13:15-16. Let us not be like these false prophets!

17f Prophetesses as well.

v. 22 What do these false prophets do? They dishearten the righteous (you are too committed, you are too hard core, you are a legalist, you are in a cult) and encourage the wicked not to repent.

### **Ezekiel 14 God, the Righteous Judge Against Idols of the Heart**

Ezekiel 14:2 "These men (elders of Judah in the exile) have set up idols in their heart. They are "Christians" but their discipleship is outward, not inward. They have heart disease.

They put "stumbling blocks before their faces" (v. 3, 4, 7) They are willfully giving their attention to worldly things (entertainment, "toys," pornography, opportunities to gamble, overeat, etc.)

14:9 And if the prophet is enticed to utter a prophecy... God hardened Pharaoh's heart. God will "give them over to a depraved mind." (Romans 1:28) He will send them a powerful delusion (2 Thess 2:9-12) God is sovereign and will do whatever he wills. Those who speak the lie and those who believe the lie will both suffer judgment. When the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14)

14:11 The result: When others see the judgment that falls on false prophet and false hearer, they will be motivated not to behave that way.

God said something similar to this in Deut 13:1-5 where God says of the words of false prophets: "The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and all your soul."

14:12f God again justifies to Ezekiel his judgment on the people. Not that he has to do this, but he does this out of concern and compassion for Ezekiel.



14:13-14 If I have made my decision and we have reached the end of the road, not even the prayers of Noah, Daniel and Job could save this people!!!! (although they would be saved) What do these three have in common? They spoke to Gentiles the Word of God.

[aside: Liberals claim that this is not the Daniel who was well-known to Ezekiel because they need to date Daniel after 164 BC, but there is no support for this claim. Obviously, Ezekiel (and God) assume that this person is so obvious that no Jew would need to have the identity of this Daniel explained to him/her. This particular Daniel is pointed out as a righteous (14:14), wise, and a revealer of secrets (28:3). There is no reasonable doubt who this is a reference to.]

Why Noah, Daniel and Job? Because they are, of all the Jewish heroes, most noted for righteous behavior (Genesis 6:9 blameless among his people, Job 1:8 Daniel 6)

Also, note the parallel passage in Jeremiah 15:1-2 where the Lord says that he would not even listen if Moses and Samuel were to intercede for the people. It too late to change God's heart with regard to Judah.

14:22-23 The purpose of this passage is to console Ezekiel (and us) at the horrors his righteous wrath will bring on those who rebel against him. God is not sentimental, but he is compassionate

[aside: One theme of Jeremiah and Ezekiel is corporate responsibility. We, as Westerners, are used to assuming that all interactions with God are individual. We do not see God as interacting with us as a group—as a church. We should reevaluate this assumption in light of Ezekiel and Jeremiah]

## **Ezekiel 15 The parable of the useless vine**

What good is a vine if it bears no fruit (of righteousness)? It is good only for the fire.

Even less, what use are the trimmings from the vine? They have no earthly use at all, except to be burned.

v. 7 Although they have come out of the fire... (they had escaped 605 and 597 BC), they will yet be consumed by fire.

## **Ezekiel 16 Shameful history**

The most comprehensive list of Judah's sins. This is an analogy for Judah, but it is also an analogy for us to consider.

A parable of God's relationship with Israel.

Ezek 16:1-2 What should we do about the detestable practices of the religious: confront them!

God: v. 2-5 You were the lowest of the low, the poorest of the poor, the weakest of the weak, but I loved you nevertheless.

v. 6-7 (read vs. 6) I made you live. I planted you and made you the most beautiful of jewels.

v. 8-14 I entered into an intimate relationship with you. (gave you a covenant) I made you a queen.

v. 15f But you trusted in your beauty and became a prostitute. (1 Cor 4:7 What do you have that you did not receive) Daniel 4:30 Is this not the great Babylon that I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty? You loved God's gifts to you, not the God who gave them to you. Your blessings became a curse to you.

v. 20-22 You sacrificed your children to other gods (such as education, sports, success...)

v. 26-29 Prostitution with (trust in) Egypt, Philistia, Assyria and Babylonia.

v. 31 You became so low you refused payment for your prostitution.

v. 32 You paid your clients to have sex with you!

v. 35-41 So you will be destroyed!

v. 43 The antidote: remember the days of your youth.

This is us before we were saved!

v. 44-58 You are worse than Sodom and Samaria. If I save you, then I have to save them!

Praise God and how amazing!!! Ezek 16:60 But I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth. This reminds me of Hosea Ch 3

Ezek 16:62 I will establish a (new) covenant with you, which will include your sisters (Sodom and Samaria). This is the Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31.

## **Ezekiel 17 Parable of Two Eagles**

This is a parable about the relationship between Judah and its powerful neighbors Babylon and Egypt. It is a condemnation of Judah's reliance on Egypt, as well as a promise that God will plant a tree to replace Judah destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezek 17:2-4 A great eagle comes to Lebanon, takes off the topmost shoot and carries it away to a city of merchants. This is Nebuchadnezzar taking Jehoiachin (and the nobles and leading men v. 12-13) to Babylon (597 BC).

Lebanon is often used as a figure of Israel (ex Jeremiah 22:23 where “you who live in Lebanon” is a reference to living in a in Jerusalem built of Lebanese cedar)

17:5-6 The cedar shoot flourished like a low, spreading vine. This is the Jews, potentially flourishing with Zedekiah subservient to Nebuchadnezzar (but without political power, and thus a low, spreading vine, not a tall tree)

17:7-8 A second great eagle (but not as great as the first one, according to the description). Judah reached out to Egypt. A big mistake, as God had said through Jeremiah to trust him and submit to Nebuchadnezzar.

17:9-10 This policy will not work and Judah will be destroyed.

17:11-21 The parable interpreted (as stated above) v. 15 but the king (Zedekiah) rebelled and sent envoys to Egypt. v. 16 Pharaoh will be no help and Zedekiah will die in Babylon. (In fact, when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, Pharaoh Hophrah came in support and Nebuchadnezzar lifted the siege, but when he had dealt with Pharaoh, he returned, besieged Jerusalem again, and finally, after a long siege, razed the city. Jeremiah 37:5-15)

The cause of the destruction of Judah is a lack of faithfulness (v 20) (he had signed an oath to Nebuchadnezzar, swearing by Jehovah not to rebel). They relied on Egypt rather than on God.

17:22-24 But I (God) will also plant a shoot—a remnant and plant it on a high mountain (Zion... the Mountain of the Lord Isaiah 2: 2) and will make it flourish (Amos 9:14). It will be a tender sprig (a tender shoot Isaiah 53:2). Birds of every kind will come and nest in it. A prophecy of the church/kingdom. Isaiah 11:1-11 11:10-11 “In that day, the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and the islands of the sea.”

## **Ezekiel 18 Individual righteousness**

Ezek 18:2 The fathers eat sour grape and the children’s teeth are set on edge.

In other words, the children inherit the effect of what their parents did. They were applying this to the situation of being disciplined by Babylon. It is our father’s fault, not ours.

[There is a grain of truth to their complaint (for example 2 Kings 21:10-18) if we are talking about corporate consequences for sin]

18:3 God says that every person will be taken as an individual and will be accountable, before God, for what they do individually. (as reflected in the Mosaic Law Deut 24:16, but here God is stating a general principle)

We should be aware that a vast swathe of Christianity does not agree with this most basic doctrine. They are called Calvinists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Dutch Reformed and the majority of Protestants. They believe that we are totally depraved and guilty of the Original Sin of Adam.

“All souls are mine” And therefore all are predestined to salvation, if they will have it Romans 8:28-30

18:5-18 God’s justice. Does this contradict Exodus 20:4 No! Both are true, and this is borne out by Ezekiel as much as any book in the Bible. The sin of one can cause the suffering of another, but not the punishment of another.

18:5-9 A righteous man who (unrealistically) commits no sin (note the high proportion of social justice in this list...)

18:10-13 A son does evil the father did not do. The righteousness of his father will be irrelevant in his relationship with God.

[aside: there is no promise in the Bible that if you are a good, righteous parent, that all your children will be faithful disciples. As a principle, this is great, but as a promise, it is NOT TRUE. Train up a child in the way he should go... (Prov 22:6) is a principle, but not a doctrine. Environment is strong, but it is not omnipotent. (McGuiggan)]

18:14-18 Now, the reverse case. The grandson acts as the grandfather. He will not be punished for what his father has done.

Q: Is this works salvation? Answer: No. It is a crystal clear statement that when it comes to individual relationship with God, we stand on our own.

Just in case it needs to be restated: Ezek 18:20 repeating Ezek 18:3 but expanding on it applying v. 5-18.

18:21-24 The final state of our relationship with God/repentance will determine where we end up with God. (However, we should remember Hebrews 6:4-6 and 2 Peter 2:20-22).

(Share the story of Shmuley Boteach about how a Jew sees willful sin is dealt with: by repentance)

Ezek 18:22 None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered. How encouraging!!!

Ezek 18:24 None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. How scary a thought!!!

Ezek 18:25-29 Humans try to call God unjust in this.

Q: Does this make (human) sense? If a murderer repents and decides not to murder, do we let him off the hook? No!!!!

Parable of the workers in the field Matthew 20:1-16 (God: "Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or envious because I am generous?" 20:14) Humans are repelled by this, but this is God's justice.

Ezek 18:30-32 Here is the bottom line on the issue of eternal consequences for sin.

The bottom line is this: Judah as a whole, and most of the individuals in Judah need to repent. Let's worry about this fact and trust the rest to God's providence and sovereign will, trusting in both his justice and his grace. All this debating about whether God is just and who is to blame is just a waste of hot air. God has no intention to get into debates with us about his justice (as evidenced by Romans 9:14-18) Our job is to repent!

I will judge you, each according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. (v. 30).

God's plea to all of us: Why will you choose to die, O house of Israel? (v. 31)

How I longed to gather you in as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would were not willing (Matthew 23:37)

18:32 God desires that no man be lost. God desires that all men be saved. 1 Tim 2:4

Calvinism is a lie! The T and the P in TULIP are false doctrine, according to Ezekiel 18:30-32.

Q: Does this mean that God's will is not always done? Yes (if so, then why pray it in the Lord's prayer) It is God's will that we have free will. In the broadest sense, God's will is always done.

## **Ezekiel 19 Parable of the lion and of the vine**

Message of both parables: Do not trust in the fact that you have kings from the line of David (such as Zedekiah). They will not save you from destruction.

Ezekiel 19:1-9 The “lioness” is the royal line of rulers descended from David. The lion represents royalty, especially for Babylon.

19:3-4 The young lion is Jehoahaz. He was 23 years old when his father Josiah died. He reigned for only 3 months in 608 BC (2 Chron 36:1-4). Pharaoh Neco took him to Egypt, where he died (2 Kings 23:31-14)

19:5-9 The second young lion is Jehoahaz’s brother Jehoiachin, who took the throne at only 18 years old (2 Kings 24:8). He also ruled only three months and was taken in chains, this time by Nebuchadnezzar, to Babylon.

[aside: This parable skips Jehoiakim, which is especially interesting given that in Jeremiah 22:18 God tells Jeremiah not to lament for Jehoiakim—that he should have the burial of a donkey (which is confirmed by Josephus *Antiquities* 10:6 “without burial”) and Ezek 19:14 says that this is a lament]

The point: Do not trust in your royal line. Psalm 89, 2 Chron 7, the lying prophets, etc. When a king and a nation are unfaithful, they will be judged.

19:10-14 The same idea. The “mother” vine is Israel or, more likely the Davidic line. She had powerful branches/rods (rulers, kings) come from her (v. 11)

19:12. These branches have already been uprooted and sent in to exile (planted in the desert). The branches are no longer strong.

The point of Ch 19. Stop trusting in man, no matter how powerful he may appear. Don’t go down to Egypt. Isaiah 36:6 (Rev

## **Ezekiel 20 More Shameful History: A record of rebellion**

In the seventh year, in the fifth month on the tenth day... 590 BC Ezekiel now 32 years old.

The hypocritical elders come to Ezekiel for comfort again. Sometimes we have a lot of gall!!! They receive no comfort! He will indeed speak to them, but not a word they want to hear.

20:2-29 You have always rebelled. Even the history you are proud of is a story of continuous rebellion. The only reason I did not destroy you a dozen times (in Egypt, in the desert, in the

Promised Land) [but even so, I destroyed them in the desert and left only a remnant. v. 15] is because of my name and because I promised to Abraham and because of the effect it will have on the nations. Similar to Acts 7:9-53.

God wants to be glorified in the church and he wants the church to be a beacon, but if we are unfaithful, prideful and rely on self, he will oppose us and take away our lampstand.

20:39-44 Even now there is hope, but not for this generation (afterward v. 39). At least the remnant will learn the lesson and repent. This is a dual prophecy of both Zerubbabel and of Jesus Christ.

### **Ezekiel 20:45 and Ezekiel 21 Babylon, the Sword of God**

Ezek 20:45 “ ... set your face toward the south” Judah and Jerusalem.

20:49 God, the vision is not clear enough. They are not getting it. They don't know it applies to them.

Ezek 21. God makes it plenty clear. Set your face against Jerusalem (v. 1) A fire will burn which will consume both the dry trees and the green trees if Judah.

21:3-4 is significant. The sword will carry off both the righteous and the wicked. (despite the fact that the righteous had been sealed in Ezek 9) Isaiah 57:1 seems to deserve a reading here. The righteous perish and no one ponders it in their heart. They are taken away to spare them from evil. They may die, but they enter into peace. Death is not evil!

21:10 “The sword despises every such stick” Judgment will be equal on the kings (the scepter/stick) and on the people. God treats all people equally.

Ezekiel may be acting out the swordwork before the elders.

21:18-24 Another visual parable. A signpost. Ezekiel acted this out, with the two names on the signs.

21:18 Nebuchadnezzar comes to destroy (in 586 BC?) and at a fork in the road chooses between Rabbah/the Ammonites and Jerusalem. He picks the arrow for Jerusalem (belomancy to the Greeks), he examines the images (teraphim) he examines the liver (divination) Nebuchadnezzar turns against Jerusalem. God can even use the work of diviners to accomplish his will. But because of their guilt, they will be taken captive.

21:23 A difficult passage. It may mean that it will seem like a false omen to the false prophets in Jerusalem who swore Jerusalem was safe. Surely God could not allow Nebuchadnezzar to

choose Jerusalem, but they will be taken captive. Or.... It will seem a false omen to the Judeans who have sworn to obey Nebuchadnezzar. Surely....

21:26-27 Hope! Judgement of Zedekiah and the death of the Davidic monarchy will not be the final end. Both the monarchy (the crown) and the priesthood (the turban) will suffer mortal blows. The Messiah—the new priest and king—will come. Under him the lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low. Matthew 23:11 God turns everything upside down. That which the world tells us will be our salvation will prevent our salvation. That which the world says is powerless will be what saves us.

What a wonderful messianic prophecy?

21:28-32 Do not gloat, Ammon. You will be judged as well.

### **Ezekiel 22 Shameful Judah Part III**

It is almost as if God is trying to wear us out with the repeated listing of Israel's sins. Guess what, folks, we need (nearly) constant reminder of our sins. It is not popular to preach against sin, but it is necessary.

Ezekiel 16 and 20 were about shameful history of Israel. This is a list of the current prevalent sins of Judah. It is more of the same.

The message: Doom! (v. 3) I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their heads all they have done. (v. 31)

Much of this sin list is social injustice. 1. Treated father and mother with contempt. (v. 7) 2. oppressed the alien, the orphans the widows (v. 7) and the poor and the needy (v. 29). We are told to help the weak (James 1:27, Micah 6:8, etc), but they abused the weak.

A litany of sexual sins, idolatry, violence, violating the Sabbath, bribery, extortion....

Result: v. 15 I will disperse you among the nations. This is what sin does. It creates loneliness, aimlessness, purposelessness, separation, humiliation and desperation.

22:25-28 God calls out the leaders of Judah.

### **Ezekiel 23 Oholah and Oholibah**



Oholah is Samaria/Ephraim/Israel/the Northern Kingdom

Oholibah is Jerusalem/Judah/the Southern Kingdom

The Hebrew words Oholah and Oholibah derive from the word for tent or tabernacle.

Oholah her tent

Oholibah my tent is in her

This is R rated stuff.

23:5-10 Oholah began her prostitution in Egypt, and continued it with Assyria.

Her husband was God himself, and she lusted after an ugly arrogant, violent brute. How typical of us! Her problem? She lived by sight, not by faith.

23:9 God gave them over to the sin they lusted for. Romans 1:24-28.

23:5-8 God will give us to that which we give ourselves to. Is this what hell will be like?

23:11-27 Oholibah was worse than her sister! First she prostituted herself with (trusted in) Babylon. Then she prostituted herself with (trusted in) Egypt. v. 20 is amazingly shocking.

Sin is disgustingly ugly!!!!!! This is what our sin is like! We call it "pro choice" We call it "social drinking" "alternative lifestyle" I was "frustrated" "hormones"

Oholah's and Oholibah's mistake was that they were not satisfied with God. Are you satisfied with what God has given you? 1 Timothy 6:8 If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

23:22 Here is the take-home lesson. I will give you over to what you gave yourself to.

v. 25 I am jealous!!! Godly jealousy is a good thing. Yet, despite all these things, God loved Oholah and Oholibah. This is the story of Hosea told in parable. God commanded Hosea to take back Gomer even though she was living in prostitution and did not even want to come back to him. God's grace is truly amazing Romans 5: God shows his love in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

v. 28 You will become the very thing you hate. This is what sin does!!!! It will "take away everything you have worked for. John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. Jesus came that we might have life!

v. 49 Then you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord.

## **Ezekiel 24 The cauldron Ezekiel refuses to mourn.**

Jan, 588 BC A date to mark down. This is the date when Nebuchadnezzar put Jerusalem under siege. Here, as before, Ezekiel proves that he is a prophet—capable of knowing the future, as news of the siege certainly did not come for several months. The city did not fall for about two years.

24:6 The cauldron with the encrusted layers of stuff is Judah with her unrepented sin.

24:6 Empty it piece by piece without casting lots for them. Babylon will destroy indiscriminately.

Ezek 24:12 Sin is a “heavy deposit.”

24:11,13 When God has finished pouring his wrath on Jerusalem it will get really hot, but then the impurity/encrusted junk in the pot will finally be cleaned.

v. 14 I will not have pity (as illustrated by Ezek 24:15-24 when Ezekiel does not mourn for his wife)

Ezek 24:15-24 God tells Ezekiel to not mourn over the death of his wife.

24:15 I am about to take away the delight of your eyes. (Judah is the delight of God’s “eyes.” Yet, do not lament or shed any tears.

The point: God loves Judah as Ezekiel loves his wife. But because of their sin, God will destroy Judah and will not mourn over it.

Q: How did God feel about the people in Sodom and Gomorrah? He loved them intensely. It is not that he did not love Judah. Far from it.

v. 21 God: You are so proud of the Tabernacle—it is the object of your affection as is his wife to Ezekiel. It will fall, and you will not mourn.

Whether they accepted the advice is debatable, but the point is clear. When we suffer discipline for our sins, or even for the sin of others, we should accept it with equanimity, as it is from a sovereign God who loves us.

v. 27 Ezekiel will be prophetically silent for two years—until news of the fall of Jerusalem arrives.

## **II Ezekiel 25-32 The End of the Road for Judah's enemies**

Judgment may begin with God's people, but those who oppose the Lord will also be judged.

1 Peter 4:17-18

Should the Christian rejoice when their enemies are judged?

## **III Ezekiel 33 The Watchman, Jerusalem has been destroyed**

Transition chapter bridging Ch 24, Ch 34 (as we will see below)

Ezek 33:1-6 The Watchman of Israel. God repeats his admonition to Ezekiel. This time it is at least in part a defense of Ezekiel to the people who are now ready to repent (sort of) (say to your countrymen v. 1 He did not say this in Ezek 18. In other words, Ezekiel did his part!). He was simply doing his duty.

33:7-9 repeating it to Ezekiel. A sort of recommissioning as the people will now consider him a true prophet.

33:10 The people have finally repented! Amen! About time! You would think so.

But... It appears to be worldly sorrow. They admit the discipline is their fault, but they do not have the godly sorrow of 2 Cor 7:11 What readiness to see justice done. Do you accept the Lord's discipline? Do you accept the negative consequences of your sin without complaining?

33:11 God: My only desire in this judging is that you will live. It is AMAZING that God stoops to justify himself to these people.

Again, I am reminded of Matthew 23:37, 1 Tim 2:4

v. 12 to the whining "repentant" person whose attention God has now gotten, he says "the wickedness of the wicked will not cause him to fall when he turns from it."

v. 13 but if you trust in your righteousness....

v. 17 These people are not done complaining and justifying themselves, so God repeats himself. God does not need to defend himself in this matter.

Romans 11 is a discussion of God with Jews and Gentiles in which the Jews are saying "not fair." God rebukes the Jews. Rom 10:5f The Jews say to God "It's too hard." God says, no it is not. It is very near you, in your mouth and your heart. It's too hard is not a good excuse for not repenting. Rom 11:2f Elijah said "it's too hard" God tells him to open his eyes. Rom 11 Jews: It's not fair. Rom 11:22f Consider the kindness and the sternness of God. Both have the same object in mind.

Ezekk 33:21 585 BC A messenger arrives (Ezekiel 24:26) Jerusalem has fallen! Ezekiel is vindicated as a prophet. v. 22 Ezekiel again begins to prophesy to the people (Ezekiel 24:27) Here we see that CH 33 is a bridge. The content of his message is to change dramatically.

33:23-29 Those left behind in Jerusalem (specifically Ishmael Jer 40,41 2 Kings 25:25-26) are back to saying peace, peace, when there is not yet peace for Jerusalem. v. 24 Abraham was only one man... God: You are no Abraham!

33:30-33 Ezekiel now a very popular prophet. Beware of being popular with unrepentant people. God's true prophet will only be popular with a very few.

33:30 Come hear the message. v. 31 Yes, but they do not put them into practice.

They "express devotion" but their hearts are greedy. 2 Tim 3:5 Remember, the evangelist is and always will be a watchman for the church.

v. 32 They are looking for entertainment. "one who sings a love song with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well."

v. 33 If you are a faithful watchman, then when they truly repent, they will know that "a prophet has been among them."

#### **IV Ch 34-48 Comfort for God's people. The Messiah is coming, bringing salvation.**

Now that the working of God's wrath is complete, the rest of the book will be a comfort.

There is some double prophecy here in that, the restoration under Cyrus and the restoration under the Messiah are both in mind.

#### **Ezekiel 34 A better shepherd**

In this chapter bad leadership is condemned, godly leadership is described and, most importantly, a future perfect leader is prophesied. Jesus Christ, the "good shepherd John 10:11-18 What is a good shepherd? One who lays down his life for his sheep. (John 10:18)

What is the job of the shepherd?

1. Ezek 34:2 To take care of the flock. NOT to take care of yourself! They had taken advantage of their position as shepherd and had used the sheep.
2. 34:4 Take care of the weak. One key measure of a Jesus church is how the shepherds care for the weak.
3. 34:4 Bring back the strays.

4. 34:4 Bring in the lost.

The worst possible charge against a shepherd: You have treated them harshly and brutally. (sounds like the ICOC at one time) The result of bad shepherding: The sheep are scattered. (also sounds like what happened with the ICOC when we had bad shepherding)

Ezek 34:7-10 God's response to bad shepherds.

v. 10 1. I will hold you accountable.

2. I will remove you from leading the flock. I will rescue my flock from you. May it never be that God has to rescue his flock from us.

34:11-22 God: If the shepherds will not do it, then I will shepherd my sheep (probably by raising up better shepherds)

34:18-20 The sheep are not completely without responsibility. Do not muddy the water—keeping the best for yourselves. Do not make of yourself a “fat sheep.”

34:23f God's shepherd—the Messiah—is coming! John 10. Jesus the branch of Jesse, David will tend them!!!

v. 26 Showers of blessing!

v. 27 Much fruit! Security. Freedom (John 8 31f)

v. 29 Spiritual food. He will give us the bread of life. No longer will we hunger.

## **Ezekiel 35 Edom judged**

## **Ezekiel 36 The mountain of the Lord**

God personifies the “Mountains of Israel,” making them represent the people.

Ezekiel 36:1-7 God: I will judge the nations who hated and opposed you.

36:8-15 My wrath is complete. I will bless you more, even, than before.

36:22 It is not for your sake that I do this. It is for my holy name and for my holiness.

We need to remember this. Reminds of Deut 7:7-9

36:24f You will be a remnant devoted to me. A prophecy of the New Covenant.

-from all nations 24

-cleansed with water 25

-a new heart and a new spirit (born again) 26

-receive the Holy Spirit 27

- blessings (physical rather than spiritual because this is the Old Testament) 29-30
- repentance 31

No wonder Jesus challenged Nicodemus that he should have known this was coming. (John 3:10)

- I am not doing this because you were doing so awesome 32
- much fruit 33f ...like the garden of Eden v. 35 Symbolic of being in the Kingdom of God. Parallel to Isaiah 65:19-25 where the vision is of the Kingdom of God/restored Israel/the Church/ Heaven. Note the symbolism is of physical things.

### **Ezekiel 37 Valley of dry bones**

The promise of a resurrection, and of the calling of a remnant.

Ezek 37:2 These bones aren't just dry, they are "very dry". The situation is hopeless. God loves a hopeless situation. So should we.

v. 3 God: Can these bones live?

Wisely, Ezekiel says "O Sovereign Lord, you alone know"

What about your neighbor: Can these bones live? What about your marriage: Can these bones live? What about your career, your spiritual life, you children who have gone into the world. Can these bones live?

v.4 What is the solution to spiritual death? "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord."

Who is this prophecy about? This is a "double prophecy" Its principle subject is Israel, defeated, scattered and in ruins. Can it be brought back to life? Yes!!! How, by hearing (and listening to) the Word of the Lord.

v. 5 How can we be raised from the dead? By receiving the Holy Spirit. When we receive the Holy Spirit at baptism, we come to life, spiritually. Zech 4:6 Romans 8:9-11

He's Alive!!! (Frankenstein)

v. 7 What a bizarre vision. "I heard a rattling sound."

v. 10 Breath entered them and they came to life—a vast army.

37:11 God interprets the vision. The primary application is to Israel. They were “dead” in Babylon, but God will bring them back to life in Canaan. “I will settle you in your own land.”

Ezek 37:15f Parable of two sticks. Another visible parable. Join the stick of Judah and the stick of Ephraim.

[aside: Mormons claim that the two sticks are the Bible and the Book of Mormon. What do you think?]

37:22 A clear messianic prophecy. “I will make them one nation in the land.... There will be one king over them.... I will save them.... I will cleanse them.... They will be my people. Reminds of Hosea 1:10-11, Hosea 2:23 “You are my people.” This is clearly messianic, but it also is a double-fulfillment, as is Hosea 11:1 (which is a quadruple fulfillment. Out of Egypt I called my son. Moses, Israel, Jesus, us)

37:24 As clearly messianic as it could be. My servant David will be king over them. (OT parallels?)

v. 26 A new covenant under David. I will put my sanctuary among them forever. (We are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20) God will tabernacle among us. John 1:14

This is about the church, but it is also about heaven/the Kingdom of God Revelation 21-22.

### **Ezekiel 38-39 God and Magog—the enemies of God’s people—destroyed. God’s people saved.**

How God will deal with the enemies of his people at any time. It can be applied to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. God’s comfort to his people that what happened before will not happen again. Of course, all this is messianic as well.

The purpose of this vision is similar to that of Revelation (especially Rev 20:7-10 with Gog and Magog). It may look bad, but God is in control.

Is this about Antiochus Epiphanes? Yes. Is it about the persecution of the church by Rome? Yes.

Jim McGuiggan: Gog is a grand illustration of any and all who oppose God’s people.

38:1-4 I am against you Gog, prince of Magog.

Meshech and Tubal are two tribes in Asia Minor. Herodotus tells us that they were involved in the slave trade.

Gog and Magog have allies from Persia (east), Cush (Ethiopia, south), Put (North Africa, west) and Gomer and Togarmah (north) In other words, Israel is surrounded!

v. 8 You will invade the Promised Land “gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel”

v. 11 unwalled cities. God’s people living in security. No problem. God will destroy them without a shot.

v. 16 God is in control.

v. 19-23 Apocalyptic language against God’s enemies

39:1-4 Judgment on Gog and Magog: the enemies of God’s people.

v. 9-16 more apocalyptic language. 17-20 Clearly apocalyptic.

Prophecy vs Apocalyptic    Apocalyptic like a divine comic book.

Prophecy: Mainly preaching and secondarily prediction.

Apocalyptic: Mainly prediction and secondarily preaching.

Apocalyptic: A wider scope than prophecy. (whole world addressed, rather than just the Jews)

Apocalyptic: A heavy emphasis on eschatology (the study of end times) Daniel, by far, gives most clear glimpse of heaven and the resurrection in the OT. Ezekiel: valley of dry bones.

Apocalyptic (vs. prophecy): Very visual. A valley of dry bones

Apocalyptic literature always has a historical setting and significance. Knowledge of the historical situation is very important to understanding the vision.

Symbolic. The rule of thumb with apocalyptic literature **ought** to be that, unlike historical, doctrinal or other literature, things should be taken figuratively, unless



the context demands a literal interpretation. This is the exact reverse of historical or doctrinal literature, in which things should be taken literally unless the context demands it be taken figuratively.

Dramatic. Apocalyptic literature is very dramatic, vivid, forceful. Uses the grotesque and the terrifying to catch our attention. We should avoid interpreting the small details of such dramatic visions (such as interpreting the ten toes of the statue in Daniel 2 as the Common Market)

v. 25-29 This is what it is about. This vision is to encourage God's people that he will protect them.

### **Ezekiel 40-48 The temple rebuilt Restoration of the remnant**

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the Kingdom of God/God with his people. Do not get caught up in the details. It gives very precise instructions for building the restored temple.

Is it about the restoration of the kingdom and the temple in 516 BC? Yes

Is it about the church and the heavenly tabernacle? Yes

Is it about the ultimate embodiment of the tabernacle/Kingdom of God/Heaven? Yes.

Hebrews 8:3-6 "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." (or in Ezekiel 40-48).

This section is about God's holiness—his perfection, and about dwelling with God. The instructions must be carried out "to the letter."

Ezek 40:1 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile and the 14<sup>th</sup> year after the destruction of Jerusalem (572 BC)

Ezek 43:1 The glory of the Lord returns to the temple (after leaving it Ezekiel 10:18). He enters through the East Gate (as he had exited it through the East Gate).

43:10 Why is God giving us all this precise details? "that they may be ashamed of their sins."

44:2 The East gate is to stay shut (because only the holy can enter through the East gate).  
46:1-3 Except on Sabbaths and New Moons.

44:15f Only the Zadokites (also 43:19) (a particular family of Levitical priests) have been righteous (for example when they supported Solomon when others were opposing him). They can minister in the temple. v. 23 teach the difference between the holy and the common.  
v. 28 I am to be their only inheritance. They will have no possessions in the land.

Ezekiel 47 The river from the temple. Parallel Revelation 22:1-5, This is about God taking care of his people in need. It has imagery from the Garden of Eden.

v. 1 It comes from the temple—from God.

It cleanses (Zech 13:1)

v. 8 It is living water (Zech 14:8, John 7:37-39)

Ezek 48:35 A great summary of Ezek 40-48. “And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE.”

This is the definition of the Kingdom of God. We end Ezekiel back in the Garden of Eden, as God had designed all along. And to God be the glory!