

Ezekiel 1

Introduction

Jacob was the first recorded servant to be given a vision. Followed by Moses on Mt Sinai and Isaiah at his call.

Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Gen 28:12-14

Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. 11 But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank. Ex 24:9-11

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. Isa 6:1-4

In each of these visions the setting changes from "a ladder" to "a paved work of sapphire stone," to "a throne in the temple." Ezekiel's visions of God at his own call into God's service was far more elaborate than any before or after him.

Dating Ezekiel

Although the exact date and place are both given for this event, it takes some comparing and examination to fully understand it.

*Now it came to pass in **the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month**, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. 2 **On the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity**, 3 the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was upon him there. Ezek 1:1-3*

It begins with "the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month," but doesn't give the context of the thirtieth year. He goes on to say it was "fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity," which we can work with: We simply have to compare different passages to put it together. First, Jehoiakim reigned 11 years in Jerusalem, and Daniel was taken captive in the third year.

***Jehoiakim was 25 years old** when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem*

***In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah**, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And **the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand**, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. Dan 1:1-2*

About ten years into Daniel's captivity, Jehoiakim died and Jehoiachin began his 3 month reign.

*So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place. 8 Jehoiachin was **18 years old** when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem **3 months and 10 days**. 2Kings 24:6*

His reign was cut short because of his wickedness. Babylon returned and took the second captivity from Jerusalem at that time.

And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. 12 Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner. 2Kings 24:10-12

It was after this captivity that the word came to Jeremiah that the good figs were taken and what

was left would be considered bad figs.

The Lord showed me, and there were two baskets of figs set before the temple of the Lord, after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. 4 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: **'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans.** 6 For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. Jer 24:1-2, 4-6

Soon after the second captivity either just before or just after this vision of the figs, the letter is sent to those in Babylon about their seventy year captivity.

Now **these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive — to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.** 2 (This happened after Jeconiah the king, the queen mother, the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.) ... 4 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 **Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit.** 6 **Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters — that you may be increased there, and not diminished.** 7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord. 10 For thus says the Lord: **After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.** Jer 29:1-10

After this **Zedekiah** reigned 11 years before the fall of Jerusalem.

Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. 2Chr. 34:1; 36:1-3; 5; 9-10; 11-13; 36:1-3

In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated. Jer. 24:7

If we take all this information we can gather the following facts.

Jehoiakim reigned 11 years. In the fourth year of his reign Daniel was taken captive (607-606bc)]
Jehoiachin took the throne and reigned 3 months and 10 days and was taken with others (597-596)
The prophecy of the good figs is fulfilled and this is all who will be going to Babylon
Jeremiah wrote his letter regarding the captivity of Judah after Jehoiachin taken captive.
In the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity Ezekiel is called by God (592-591)
Zedekiah then reigns 11 years and Jerusalem is destroyed. (587-586).
6 years after Ezekiel is called Jerusalem is destroyed.
Seventy years after the initial captivity they are freed and allowed to go back to Jerusalem (537-536)
This is 55 years after the call of Ezekiel.

So the call of Ezekiel was 15 years after Daniel was taken captive, and five years before Jerusalem was destroyed. We don't know if Ezekiel was taken with Daniel or with Jehoiachin ten years later.

So what about the thirtieth year? Many have suggested it was the age of Ezekiel when he was called, others the age of the Babylonian empire. The truth is we don't know what this date refers to.

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that **the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.** 2 On **the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity,** 3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans

by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

Since their Calander began with the Exodus and corresponds to what is now called Easter, it is in the month of March to April. The fifth month would therefore correspond to July to August. So on a summer day, the heavens were opened and Ezekiel saw visions of God.

Ezekiel's Visions of God

As with Jacob's ladder, and what Moses and Isaiah saw, so also here, it must be taken into account that there is some symbolism in the vision. Whether these are real, or only given to help those seeing it to appreciate the awesome nature of the event is not explained in Scripture.

A Whirlwind in a Cloud

In the distance, Ezekiel witnesses a whirlwind coming out of the North. We don't know if there is any significance to the north.

Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Ezek. 1:4

Ezekiel is not the first to witness a whirlwind in the presence of God. Both Elijah and Job had direct interaction with a whirlwind.

*Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and **Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.** 2 Kings 2:11*

***Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind,** and said: 2 "Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? 3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Job 38:1-2*

***Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind,** and said: 7 "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me: 8 "Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? Job 40:6-7*

Four Living Creatures

The description of the four living creatures who came out of the whirlwind presents the picture of a being standing like a man, with four different faces and four wings sparkling like the color of bright brass.

*Also **from within it came the likeness of four living creatures.** And this was their appearance: they had **the likeness of a man.** 6 **Each one had four faces,** and **each one had four wings.** 7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They **sparkled like the color of burnished bronze.** Ezek 1:5-8*

*Their **wings touched one another.** The creatures **did not turn when they went,** but **each one went straight forward.** 10 As for the likeness of their faces, **each had the face of a man;** each of the four had **the face of a lion on the right side,** each of the four had **the face of an ox on the left side,** and each of the four had **the face of an eagle.** ... 13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was **like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures.** Ezek 1:9-10, 13*

The description of the four living creature follows the same general idea as that of the seraphim in Isaiah and living creatures in Revelation.

*Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were **four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.** 7 The first living creature was **like a lion,** the second living creature **like a calf,** the third living creature had a face **like a man,** and the fourth living creature was **like a flying eagle.** Rev 4:6-8*

Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" Isa 6:2-3

Wheel in a Wheel Full of Eyes

As Ezekiel continue to watch the next detail that caught his eye were the wheels sitting on the earth next to each living creature. Each wheel was large enough to be awesome and each wheel's rims were full of eyes. While some picture this as two separate wheels, it is also possible they formed some form of sphere.

*Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, **a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces.** 16 **The appearance of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness.** The appearance of their workings was, as it were, **a wheel in the middle of a wheel.** 17 **When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went.** 18 **As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims were full of eyes, all around the four of them.** Ezek. 1:15-18*

The wheels were connected in some way to each living creature whose wings were all connected to each other so they formed a square with wheels moving beside them.

*When the living creatures went, **the wheels went beside them;** and when the **living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.** 20 **Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.** 21 **When those went, these went; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.** Ezek 1:19-21*

The Likeness of a Firmament Above their Heads

The firmament represents the area above the earth. When God first created the heavens and the earth He created two firmaments. The first separating the water from the clouds and the second the stars from the earth.

*Then God said, "Let there be a **firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.**" 7 **Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so.** Gen 1:6-8*

*Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. 17 **God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,** Gen 1:16-18*

In the same way, there was some form of firmament above the living creatures and the wheels that separated them from what was above. It was like the color of an awesome crystal and it stretched out over their heads. This created a separation that allowed the living creatures and wheels to operate separately from what was above. Under this firmament the noise of waters and an army, the movement of the living creatures.

***The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures was like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads.** 23 **And under the firmament their wings spread out straight, one toward another.** Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body. 24 **When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings.** 25 **A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings.** Ezek 1:22-25*

Above the Firmament the Likeness of a Throne

Above the firmament was the likeness of a throne which was the color of a sapphire stone. On the throne was the likeness of a man, but from his waist upward the color of amber and from his waist appearance of fire. Like the appearance of a rainbow on a bright day was the appearance of the fire above the throne. This was the likeness of the glory of the Lord. Note not white light, but light broken into it various parts.

And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it.** 27 **Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of

amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. Ezek 1:22-25

Ezekiel 2

Introduction:

Though there are distinct differences in the events leading up to them (*The Burning Bush, The Lord in the temple, The word of the Lord came to me*) the call of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are nearly identical.

*And the Lord said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, ... 10 **Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.**" Ex 3:7-8, 10*

*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "**Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."** 9 **And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'** 10 "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." 11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, Isa 6:8-12*

*But the Lord said to me: "**Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak.** 8 Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. 9 Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. Jer 1:7-9*

The Call of Ezekiel

As Ezekiel sees the magnificent vision, he falls on his face, but is told to stand as he hear the voice of One speaking. This one may have been the one on the throne or someone else. As the voice was heard the Spirit entered Ezekiel and set him on his feet. It appears that at this commission, his inspiration by the Holy Spirit occurred. At that same moment, he was picked up and set on his feet.

*So when I saw it, **I fell on my face**, and I heard a voice of One speaking. Ezek. 1:29*

*And He said to me, "**Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you.**" 2 Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me. Ezek. 2:1-2*

It has been decreed that Ezekiel would be sent to the house of Israel which is still identified as a rebellious nation. Though they had been taken into captivity nearly fifteen years back, and are were identified as a part of the "good figs" they have not yet repented nor left their attitude of stubborn rebellion against the Lord. Once again his inspiration is plainly stated with "you shall say to them 'Thus says the Lord God.'"

*And He said to me: "**Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day.** 4 For they are **impudent** and **stubborn** children. **I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.'**" me. Ezek. 2:3-4*

They are both "impudent" and "rebellious." The first is "hard faced" and the second "hard hearted."

*qasheh ... An adjective meaning **hard, harsh, cruel, severe, strong, violent, fierce**. This term's basic function is to **describe something as hard**. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:7186)*

*chazaq ... "**strong; mighty; heavy; severe; firm; hard**." This adjective occurs about 56 times and in all periods of biblical Hebrew. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of OT Words OT:2389)*

It has not not yet been determined (although God already knows, Ezekiel is not to be concerned about the success effectiveness. Whether they will hear and submit or refuse to submit is the the main reason God has sent them. What matters is that they know God has sent a prophet to them.

*As for them, **whether they hear or whether they refuse** — for they are a rebellious house — yet they **will know that a prophet has been among them**. me. Ezek. 2:5*

He is not to fear them or be afraid of them even if they treat him like briars and thorns or even scorpions. Persecution is clearly a part of this call, but he is not to fear their words or be dismayed by their looks. God repeats again the charge Ezekiel must keep. He is only responsible to speak God's words, their response is immaterial.

*"And you, son of man, **do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house. 7 You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious.*** A scroll is then handed to him from the vision and it is written on both inside and outside. *me. Ezek. 2:6-7*

God warns Ezekiel that he must not drop to the level of the rest of the house of Israel. While they are violating negative commands of "you shall not...", Ezekiel is warned of a positive command he has just been given (*to him who knows to do and does it not, to him it is sin*). He must eat the scroll that is then handed to him out of the midst of the vision from the previous chapter. As He reads the words of the scroll, he notes its contents are *lamentations, mourning and woe*. Yet he is commanded to eat it.

*But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. **Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.*** 9 Now when I looked, there was **a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it.** 10 Then He spread it before me; and there was **writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.** *Ezek. 2:8-10*

Although there is a chapter break here, the thought continues without interruption. The eating of this scroll would complete his inspiration by the Holy Spirit. Eating these words was the final step in Ezekiel's commission. After he ate it, he would be prepared to go and speak. At the very least the woe and lamentations would be the words he must speak to Israel since they are rebellious with a hard face and heart.

*Moreover He said to me, "**Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.**"* 2 So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. 3 And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and **it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.** *Ezek 3:1-2*

The sweetness of the scroll has been interpreted in different ways so far apart that it is evident no one really knows. It does follow the same pattern as that of John, but in John it only prefaces his further prophecies and again no reason is given for the initial sweetness and the subsequent bitterness. At the least it may indicate the sweetness of speaking to God and receiving God's words and the bitterness of having to speak those words to the rebellious.

And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." 10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. 11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings." *Rev 10:9-11*

Once again, God returns to the rebellious nature of the children of Israel. He will speak God's words, but like all the previous prophets, they will not be able to understand him. God then makes an interesting observation. If you had gone to a people who spoke a different language than you, they would listen (at least they would hear him out and try to understand his words), but the children of Israel had heard it all before (from Jeremiah). As God had earlier told Isaiah at his call, they simply could not hear and understand what God was telling them. Through their prejudice, lack of interest, and inattention (too involved in the here and now), they were blind to the light.

*Then He said to me: "Son of man, **go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. 5 For you are not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, but to the house of Israel, 6 not to many people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, had I sent you to them, they would have listened to you. 7 But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.*** *Ezek. 3:4-7*

God identifies the real problem. How can they listen to the messenger who is bringing God's word when they will not listen to God Himself. (*He that rejects you, rejects Me and Him who sent Me*).

While Israel is rebellious (hard faced) and impudent (hard hearted), Ezekiel will have a strong face and a strong forehead. The message God has sent him with, the faith and obedience Ezekiel has been commanded to possess, and the providence of God, Ezekiel will not be overcome by them. Yet once again, God reveals that this will be the response he will receive from his message. While the preacher must be careful to only preach God's word the response of the people must never be a consideration in the style or content of the message.

Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. 9 Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house." Ezek. 3:8-9

Once again the contrast between Ezekiel and the house of Israel to whom he was going to preach is emphasized. He must receive all the words into his heart and listen to them. But their response is not the key factor, only Ezekiel's obedience.

Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. 11 And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord God,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse." Ezek. 3:10-11

Ezekiel is again made aware of the vision he had seen and it will be the last event he will observe before he is taken to the children of Israel to whom he is to speak.

Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: "Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place!" 13 I also heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, and a great thunderous noise. Ezek. 3:12-13

Like John above, the bitterness sets in as he "returns" to the captives at Tel Abib. Evidently this is a return more from the spiritual realm of the vision to the mundane realm of this world. He started among the captives when the vision began, so the return is likely not physical. As he returns the feelings that had been created by the vision came to the forefront and he sat and pondered them for a full week. There was a bitterness either at the change of course of his life, or the truth that no matter what he said to these people, he would not convince them. There was a heat (zeal or indignation at their rebellion) and an astonishment at what he had seen and heard.

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. Ezek 1:1-2

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. 15 Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days. Ezek 3:14-15

Ezekiel Begins his Work as a Watchman

God gave him those seven days to think through and prepare his heart then the inspiration given at the call began to be used. God now gives him further instructions as to how he is to view his mission.

Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came to me, Ezek. 3:16

God then gives him a parable that will reveal to him the nature of the work he will be doing. A watchman is a man selected by the city to keep an eye out for the coming of danger. When a watchman sees any form of danger approaching, he has been commissioned to give a warning. A faithful watchman will see danger and immediately blow the trumpet or indicate in some other way that danger is approaching and immediate attention must be given to it.

This is one of the most glaring inconsistencies in man. When he is warned of a material danger that he can see, he is grateful for the warning, takes it seriously and thanks the one who has given it.

But when it is a spiritual warning that cannot be seen, it is often ignored and the one who brought it is hated and persecuted.

God now reveals in very specific terms how He wants Ezekiel to be a watchman over the children of Israel. Every word that God revealed to him regarding the wickedness of these people, he must give that warning to all the people. When he gives Ezekiel the words that will condemn these sinners to a sure death, he must faithfully deliver them to those he has been sent to. Whether he does his work or not, the man himself will die in his iniquity. The difference in Ezekiel's response will only impact him.

If he faithfully gives the warning, then it is no longer his responsibility. He has fully discharged his mission and done all that he could to warn the man of his coming fate. Yet God doesn't begin with the positive, but with the negative. If God gives Ezekiel a warning, and Ezekiel fails to give that warning, God will require that man's blood at his hand, since his death might have been prevented Ezekiel will bear some part in his death and God will require him to explain that.

*"Son of man, **I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel**; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and **give them warning from Me**: 18 When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and **you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.** 19 Yet, **if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.** Ezek. 3:16-27*

The other side will also be demanded. Should Ezekiel find a righteous man, or something he is doing that is righteous that has been given up, so that the man is no longer righteous, ultimately God will punish that man for his apostasy and sin.

Yet once again, Ezekiel has a duty whenever he sees such an event. Just as he is to warn the wicked, he is also to warn those who have fallen away and joined them.

*"Again, **when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.** 21 Nevertheless **if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul.**" Ezek 3:16-27*

Much discussion has been made regarding this commission and if and how it is to be applied today. Ezekiel's commission was given to the people of Israel and no one else. No other prophet was made a watchman. He had been qualified to be a watchman and was responsible to them. Are Christians also watchman and if so over whom? We know the apostles were given such a charge as well as the evangelists and elders. The Christian has a general command to preach the gospel, but is everyone he meets under this charge and will he lose his soul and be guilty of that man's blood if he misses any. How far does this charge go? Should all Christians quit their jobs and spend all their time warning? The NT does not reveal it. Each Christian must assess this and determine his own obligations.

Ezekiel 3 (3-8)

Introduction:

We have two places in Ezekiel where he reveals the time from of the book. He will work with Israel for 12 years before the city of Jerusalem will fall, and he continues working with them at least until the 25th year.

And it came to pass **in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month**, that one who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "**The city has been captured!**" Ezek 33:21

In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, **in the fourteenth year after the city was captured**, Ezek 40:1

Ezekiel told to Go to the Plain

After the commission and the warning to fulfill it, Ezekiel's work begins not by preaching to the people but going to a place where God could speak to Ezekiel. The phrase "*the hand of the Lord was upon me*" is another clear indication of inspiration.

Then the hand of the Lord was upon me there, and He said to me, "Arise, go out into the plain, and there I shall talk with you." Ezek 3:16-27

Ezekiel immediately complies with God's command. Once again a vision similar in some respects to the one seen at the beginning of the book creates the same response as Ezekiel falls on his face. Once again the spirit enters and puts him on his feet.

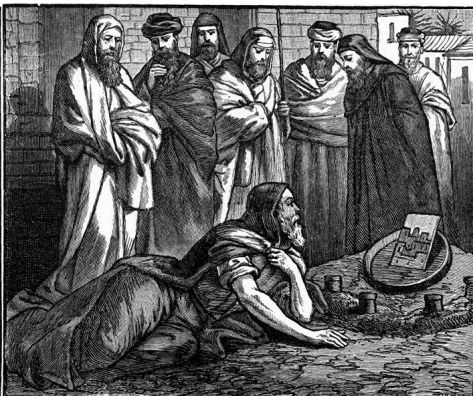
This time the command seems to contradict the previous one. He is to shut himself inside his home.

23 So I arose and went out into the plain, and behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. 24 Then the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and spoke with me and said to me: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25 And you, O son of man, surely they will put ropes on you and bind you with them, so that you cannot go out among them. 26 I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and not be one to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house. Ezek 3:16-27

Ezekiel's Four Part Demonstration

The opening of his work is not in a sermon, but in a very powerful (and uncomfortable) demonstration. Because the details are scant, it is difficult for us to set it forth. **First**, He is either to do all this on a clay tablet or he is to draw a picture of Jerusalem on the tile then built the siege around it, or it is all to be done on the clay tablet. This is to be a sign to the house of Israel.

*"You also, son of man, take a clay tablet and lay it before you, and portray on it a city, Jerusalem. 2 Lay siege against it, build a siege wall against it, and heap up a mound against it; set camps against it also, and place battering rams against it all around. 3 Moreover take for yourself an iron plate, and set it as an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face against it, and it shall be besieged, and you shall lay siege against it. Then take an iron plate and place it between him and the city. **This will be a sign to the house of Israel.** Ezek 4:1-3*



Second, he is to lie for 390 days on his left side and then 40 days on his right side to depict the punishment of the house of Israel and the house of Judah. The Lord will be restraining him so he can't turn from side to side.

Third, he is to take three vessels and place them before him. In the first vessel is all the food he is to eat (wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt) for all the days. The second vessel is to hold the water he is to drink. This third vessel was to contain the human waste he was to use to cook his bread, but after a serious objection for the uncleanness of such a fire, God relents and gives him cow dung.

Fourth as he eats his bread and drinks his water, he is to do so with anxiety and dread All this to reveal the circumstances that Jerusalem is to face.

*"Also take for yourself **wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt; put them into one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself.** During the number of days that you lie on your side, three hundred and ninety days, you shall eat it. 10 And your food which you **eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day;** from time to time you shall eat it. 11 **You shall also drink water by measure, one-sixth of a hin; from time to time you shall drink.** 12 And you shall eat it as barley cakes; and **bake it using fuel of human waste in their sight.**" Ezek. 4:9-12*

*So I said, "Ah, Lord God! Indeed **I have never defiled myself from my youth till now; I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has abominable flesh ever come into my mouth.**" 15 Then He said to me, "**See, I am giving you cow dung instead of human waste, and you shall prepare your bread over it.**" 16 Moreover He said to me, "**Son of man, surely I will cut off the supply of bread in Jerusalem; they shall eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and shall drink water by measure and with dread,** Ezek 4:14-16*

The Fifth Demonstration:

This fifth thing that Ezekiel is to do either just before or just after these things is the cutting off of the hair and beard. Which is to be measured into three parts. At the end of the seige, a 1/3 of the hair will be burned on the tile of the city that Ezekiel has made for the seige. Another 1/3 is to be taken with struck with a sword, the final 1/3 is to be thrown to the wind. A very small portion is to be set aside, some tied to the garment and the rest again thrown to the wind.

*"And you, son of man, **take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and pass it over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the hair.** 2 You shall **burn with fire one-third in the midst of the city,** when the days of the siege are finished; then you shall **take one-third and strike around it with the sword,** and **one-third you shall scatter in the wind:** I will draw out a sword after them. 3 You shall also **take a small number of them and bind them in the edge of your garment.** 4 Then **take some of them again and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire.** From there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel. Ezek 5:1-4*

The Horrible and Terrible Explanation for this Sign is then Given.

The destruction of Judah and Jerusalem will not follow the normal path of a seige as it is a special divine judgment as the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah were before them. God is to do thing He has never done before and would never do again. The nature of their sin is so far more wicked than anything man has ever done before, God will use an extraordinary means to punish them.

Some of these judgments are based on "God is not mocked, A man will reap what he sows." These people have sunk so low in wickedness and ungodliness that they would stoop to do what others would never consider. To eat their own family members.

*"Thus says the Lord God: 'This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her. 6 **She has rebelled against My judgments by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against My statutes more than the countries that are all around her; for they have refused My judgments, and they have not walked in My statutes.**' 7 Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'Because you have multiplied disobedience more than the nations that are all around you, have not walked in My statutes nor kept My judgments, nor even done according to the judgments of the nations that are all around you' — 8 therefore thus says the Lord God: '**Indeed I, even I, am against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations.** 9 **And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again,** because of all your abominations. 10 Therefore **fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you,** and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the*

winds. Ezek 5:5-10

Added to this are some additional explanations as to the severity of their sin which merited such punishment. God had given them His sanctuary. The one place on earth where He would meet with His chosen people. The honor that had been given to them was not only squandered but defiled and spat upon. The brought detestable images into the sanctuary. This is given as the reason why they would be killed in the manner God had selected.

They will become a *“a reproach, a taunt, a lesson, and an astonishment to the nations that are all around you.”* Even to this day, we can learn some very important lessons from this passage.

'Therefore, as I live,' says the Lord God, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish you; My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. 12 One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. 13 Thus shall My anger be spent, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them, and I will be avenged; and they shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them. 14 Moreover I will make you a waste and a reproach among the nations that are all around you, in the sight of all who pass by. 15 'So it shall be a reproach, a taunt, a lesson, and an astonishment to the nations that are all around you, when I execute judgments among you in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I, the Lord, have spoken. Ezek. 5:11-16

The Time Frame of Ezekiel:

*And it came to pass in the **sixth** year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, Ezek 8:1
It came to pass in the **seventh** year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, Ezek 20:1
Again, in the **ninth** year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Ezek 24:1
And it came to pass in the **eleventh** year, on the first day of the month, Ezek 26:1
In the **tenth** year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, Ezek 29:1
And it came to pass in the **twenty-seventh** year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, Ezek 29:17
And it came to pass in the **eleventh** year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, Ezek 30:20
Now it came to pass in the **eleventh** year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, Ezek 31:1
And it came to pass in the **twelfth** year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, Ezek 32:1
It came to pass also in the **twelfth** year, on the fifteenth day of the month, Ezek 32:17
And it came to pass in the **twelfth** year of our captivity, tenth month, fifth day of the month, Ezek 33:21
twenty-fifth year of our captivity, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, Ezek 40:1*

A Prophecy against the Mountains of Judah

Like Jeroboam who was ignored as the altar was condemned, long ago, God again does not speak to Israel, but to the mountains and valleys where their idols had been served and their wicked deeds had been done.

*Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 2 "Son of man, **set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,** 3 and say, '**O mountains of Israel,** hear the word of the Lord God! Thus says the Lord God to the mountains, to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys: "**Indeed I, even I, will bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places.** 4 **Then your altars shall be desolate, your incense altars shall be broken, and I will cast down your slain men before your idols.** 5 And I will lay the corpses of the children of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones all around your altars. Ezek 6:1-6*

This is very similar to the warning God had given to Judah through Jeremiah.

it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. 33 The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. Jer 7:32-33

God's own Heartache Revealed

God will leave a remnant to remember the terrible things they have done and the anguish and agony they had given God with their adulterous heart.

*"Yet **I will leave a remnant**, so that you may have some who escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered through the countries. 9 Then **those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations** where they are carried captive, **because I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols; they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations.** 10 And **they shall know that I am the Lord; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them.**" Ezek. 6:8-10*

God Continues to Address the Land of Israel

We don't know how much of this is heard by those who are with him in Babylon. It seems evident that this would be preached to them as it was to the mountains valleys and land, but it is not stated that they did so.

Once again the reasons behind the punishment are described. This is a divine judgment and there will be no pity.

*Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "And you, son of man, thus says the Lord God **to the land of Israel: 'An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land.** 3 Now the end has come upon you, **And I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways, And I will repay you for all your abominations.** 4 **My eye will not spare you, Nor will I have pity; But I will repay your ways, And your abominations will be in your midst; Then you shall know that I am the Lord!**" Ezek 7:1-4*

Ezekiel 4 (8-10)

Review

Ezekiel was given a vision. There were four living creatures with four wheels beside each of them. There was a firmament like crystal with a throne of sapphire sitting on it and on the throne was “a likeness of the appearance of a man” from the waist up, the appearance of amber with fire in it and from the waist down the appearance of fire with brightness which “was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.” Since the wheels moved and went up and down, it appears to be some form of transportation.

After the Spirit entered him he was told to go to the house of Israel and preach to them. He is given a book to eat and is filled with the words God wants him to preach. He then returns to his existence here and ponders what he has seen for 7 days.

After those seven days the Word of the Lord came again and made him the watchman over Israel, then he was told to go into the plain where he again met the vision of the glory of the Lord. He was told to make a tablet of the city of Jerusalem, then put up a siege. He is to gather food and water and plan to lie on his left side for 390 days and his right side for 40 days. He must cut his hair and divide into portions as a sign of the terrible things that would come upon Judah and Jerusalem.

He then prophesies to the rocks and mountains of Judah where all their idolatrous activities had taken place, warning that all those who had worshipped there would lie slain beside the altars.

Now six years have passed and God gives Ezekiel another vision. Since Jerusalem will fall in the twelfth year, only six years remain.

And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, that one who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has been captured!" Ezek 33:21

The Sixth Year

Though in his own home, in the presence of the elders of Israel, the hand of the Lord fell on him. This appears to be the language of how he went into a vision or trance. Once again he sees a vision very similar to the one in the beginning. From the waist down fire and from the waist up amber. We are not told what the elders were allowed to see nor their response. They are not mentioned again.

And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell upon me there. 2 Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire — from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber. Ezek. 8:1-2

Ezekiel Taken in a Vision to the Outer Court of the Temple in Jerusalem

What follows is a very complex vision taking up 8, 9, 10, and 11. It is an explanation to Ezekiel of the why and the how of what the Lord will do to Jerusalem and the people of Judah. The same person seen in chapter 1 on the throne. He stretched out not a hand, but the form of a hand. He touched a lock of his hair(which has now grown back), he was brought “in visions” to Jerusalem and is now looking from the North gate of the inner court, so he is right in front of the temple that always faced east. This time too the presence of the LORD is depicted with the same vision of the chariot as it was in the plain except, as Isaiah before him now right next to the temple.

He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy. 4 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain. Ezek 8:1-4

The image of jealousy is some form of idol that has been placed right outside the temple itself in the courtyard right next to the door. Added to this are some form of abominations that Ezekiel is allowed to witness. These things have forced God to leave His temple. He did not leave voluntarily, they forced him out. He then warned Ezekiel that this is only the beginning and not the worst of the abominations he would see.

*Furthermore He said to me, "**Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations.**" 7 So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. Ezek. 8:6-7*

After seeing the hole in the wall that would allow him to enter the court right before the temple, we are not told if he is seeing inside the temple, or if these things are on the outer wall of the temple. Nor are we told if they were really there, or only a part of the vision to depict what they brought inside of their hearts as they approached the temple. We do not know who Jazaniah is, but he is clearly an important man. The censers that should be using the offer the incense to the Lord is being offered instead to his idols.

*Then He said to me, "**Son of man, dig into the wall**"; and when I dug into the wall, **there was a door.** 9 And He said to me, "**Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there.**" 10 So I went in and saw, and there — **every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls.** 11 And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. **Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up.** Ezek. 8:8-11*

The vision is actually not of the temple, but what these leaders were doing in their inner rooms before they arrived at the temple to do their work. No holy hands here. Their reasoning was of the most wicked character. They had reasoned that since God had forsaken the land after the captives were taken He could no longer see them.

*Then He said to me, "**Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.'**" Ezek. 8:12*

Ezekiel then returns to the North gate of the temple and saw the women of Israel weeping for Tammuz. Various opinions have been set forth to explain who Tammuz was. The best answer is the general one, he/she was an idol the women had sympathy for. Even Ezekiel is dismayed at this obvious sign of apostasy.

*And He said to me, "**Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.**" 14 So He **brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord's house;** and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. Ezek. 8:13-14*

Even greater abominations await him as he enters the inner court of the Lord's house(temple). Between the altar and the porch that enters directly into the temple. They are not looking at the temple where the presence of God was, but instead have their backs to the temple while they worshiped the sun.

*Then He said to me, "**Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these.**" 16 So He brought me into **the inner court of the Lord's house;** and there, **at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they were worshipping the sun toward the east.** Ezek. 8:15-16*

To fully complete the picture, God now sums up why He is destroying the city and nation. If this was not enough for them to be destroyed in violating the commands to serve the Lord and worship him alone, they have also violated the command to love their neighbor. They have filled the land with violence. God likes it to putting the branch to their nose. This expression had puzzled those who deeply study this verse and no real substantial solution has been offered. Some see it as a further

explanation of how they have set themselves up to the wrath of God. Either another form of idolatrous worship, or an idiom for that day of how someone does something to bring about great trouble upon themselves, akin perhaps to they shot themselves in the foot or put their foot in their mouth. God will not spare them when adversity finally comes and forces them to cry out to the only one who can truly save them, as they had done since the time of the Judges.

*And He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? **Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. 18 Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.**" Ezek 8:17-18*

Judgment is Decreed

This voice is not identified, it might be the Lord, the Word, or an angelic being. It is time for the preparation of judgment. As we witnessed a single angel kill 185,000:

*Then the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians **one hundred and eighty-five thousand**; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses — all dead. Isa 37:36*

Now there are six men (only in appearance as men), who have a deadly weapon in their hands and are prepared to destroy all in the city. Yet in their midst is another "man" clothed in linen (not ready for battle), with a writer's inkhorn in his hand. They all came to the side of the altar where animal sacrifices were offered.

*Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "**Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand.**" 2 And suddenly **six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.** Ezek. 9:1-2*

The imminent nature of this calamity is not pictured as God has removed himself from between the wings of the cherubim as God had promised Solomon He would be to hear the prayers of those who prayed to the temple. Now He has left that place and is now at the threshold of the temple, one step away from leaving. While He is still in the temple, the man with the inkhorn is called.

*Now the **glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple.** And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; Ezek. 9:3*

The concern of Abraham over Sodom and Habbakuk over the coming of Babylon is first addressed. One of them must go through the city and identify the righteous. He now identifies these righteous servants by their attitude toward what is happening in the city. If they are sighing and crying over the abominations then they have proven themselves to be worthy of the mark that would identify them as God's people.

*and **the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."** Ezek. 9:3-4*

This is the attitude we see in Lot and we do not see in those who are condemned in Romans 1.

*and delivered righteous Lot, who was **oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked** 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, **tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds**) — 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 2 Peter 2:7-10*

*who, **knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.** Rom 1:32*

The Lord then commands those with the battleaxes to follow right behind this man and if they do not find a mark, they are to kill. No one is to be removed from this judgment. Even the young

children who have not yet reached the age of accountability but are already steeped in the attitudes of their parents are not to be spared.

To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. 6 Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the temple. 7 Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city. Ezek. 9:5-7

Ezekiel seeks to mediate for the people as Moses before him and Christ after him.

So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left alone; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord God! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?" Ezek. 9:8

But it is too late for them. They are passed the iniquity level that removes any right for them to hold the land or their lives.

Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!' 10 And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, but I will recompense their deeds on their own head." Ezek. 9:9-10

This was the exact warning God had given to them when they came out of Egypt.

You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27 (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. 29 For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Lev 18:26-29

'You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. 23 And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. Lev 20:22-24

But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." Gen 15:16

As soon as God pronounces this doom on Jerusalem the man returns with the inkhorn revealing to the Lord that what he had been asked to do with the mark on the forehead

Just then, the man clothed with linen, who had the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, "I have done as You commanded me." Ezek. 9:11

Judgment is also depicted by the use of portions of the chariot that God has ridden on. The same man that had marked the heads of the foreheads is now told to take fire out from the midst of the wheels of the chariot and take some of the coals and scatter them over the city.

And I looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne. 2 Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, "Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city." And he went in as I watched. Ezek. 10:1-2

It is difficult to say with certainty, but it appears that these cherubim are the true reality of the ones depicted in the temple above the mercy seat. That which was only a likeness in the temple now leave the temple along with the presence of God, which is no longer in the temple, but is in the court.

Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. 4 Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and paused over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of

the brightness of the Lord's glory. 5 And **the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard** even in the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks. Ezek. 10:3-5

The fire is taken from the wheels and the cherubim places it in the hands of the man in linen garments.

Then it happened, when He commanded **the man clothed in linen**, saying, "Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim," that **he went in and stood beside the wheels**. 7 And **the cherub stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire that was among the cherubim, and took some of it and put it into the hands of the man clothed with linen**, who took it and went out. 8 The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man's hand under their wings. Ezek. 10:6-8

The wheels depicted in the first chapter are now described again.

And when I looked, there were four wheels by the cherubim, **one wheel by one cherub and another wheel by each other cherub**; the wheels appeared to have **the color of a beryl stone**. 10 As for their appearance, **all four looked alike** — as it were, **a wheel in the middle of a wheel**. 11 When they went, they went toward any of their four directions; **they did not turn aside when they went**, but followed in the direction the head was facing. They did not turn aside when they went. 12 And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and **the wheels that the four had, were full of eyes all around**. 13 As for the wheels, **they were called in my hearing, "Wheel."** Ezek. 10:9-12

The creatures are again described. Either one of the faces has now changed or the face of the cherubim was like that of ox that it replaced

Each one had four faces: the **first face was the face of a cherub**, the second face **the face of a man**, the third the **face of a lion**, and the fourth the **face of an eagle**. 15 And the cherubim were lifted up. **This was the living creature I saw by the River Chebar**. 16 When the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also did not turn from beside them. 17 When the cherubim stood still, the wheels stood still, and when one was lifted up, the other lifted itself up, for the spirit of the living creature was in them. Ezek. 10:14-17

Now the glory of the Lord leaves the temple and rises above the throne on the chariot.

Then **the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim**. 19 And **the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight**. When they went out, the wheels were beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house, and **the glory of the God of Israel was above them**. Ezek. 10:18-19

The nature of the four living creatures is now revealed as they are identified the end of the chapter as the cherubim. They are now on the south side of the temple.

This is the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they were cherubim. 21 Each one had four faces and each 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 as the faces which I had seen by the River Chebar, their appearance and their persons. They each went straight forward. Ezek. 10:20-22

Ezekiel 5 (11-14)

Review

This vision began in chapter 8 when Ezekiel was brought to Jerusalem and given the opportunity to witness the wickedness of Judah and the judgments God was preparing against Jerusalem. As a parent explains the reasons for the discipline of a child, so God now does for Ezekiel. Many who see God's wrath think it is too severe, but after hearing God's side, it is only righteous indignation.

The Abominations of Judah (8:1-18)

- (1) The image of jealousy at the North gate of the inner court.
- (2) Though a hole in the wall he saw the abominations in the hearts of the 70 men of the elders.
- (3) The women of Judah weeping for the idol Tammuz.
- (4) The 25 men with their backs to the temple worshipping the sun.
- (5) In addition, God reminds Ezekiel that the land was filled with violence.

Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them." Ezek 8:18

Those who sigh and cry over these abominations – marked and spared (9:1-11)

- (1) Six "men" with battle axes are called, and one with an inkhorn are given instructions.
- (2) The latter is to mark the foreheads and the others to destroy all without that mark.
- (3) Ezekiel cries out as they begin to kill and God shows why and proclaims He will not spare.

The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; ... as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, but I will recompense their deeds on their own head." Ezek 9:9-10

The "chariot" Ezekiel saw appears: God is now leaving His Temple (10:1-22)

- (1) The man in linen takes coals of fire from under the wheels and casts them over Jerusalem.
- (2) The glory of the Lord moved from over the Cherub to the Threshold of the temple.
- (3) The glory of the Lord moves past the threshold to stand over the chariot.
- (4) The chariot begins to move away and pauses at the East gate of the temple.

Ezekiel is also lifted up and moved to the East Gate.

He now witnesses another 25 men. Although they may or may not be the same men, they are now in a different location. God identifies these men as those who are "princes," who "devise evil and give wicked counsel" to Jerusalem.

*Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to **the East Gate of the Lord's house**, which faces eastward; and there **at the door of the gate were twenty-five men**, among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, **princes of the people**. 2 And He said to me: "Son of man, **these are the men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city**, 3 who say, **'The time is not near to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the meat.'**" Ezek. 11:1-3*

Their counsel is "the time is not near to build houses," may be as direct contradiction to Jeremiah's words to the captives. As was even spoken right after the letter was written.

*Now therefore, **why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth** who makes himself a prophet to you? 28 For **he has sent to us in Babylon, saying, 'This captivity is long; build houses and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat their fruit.'**" Jer 29:27-28*

These man are likely contradicting these words. Then they are saying. We are more than protected here in Jerusalem. The city will protect us from the danger of death just like a pot protects the meat from burning in the fire.

God commands Ezekiel to prophesy against them. Whether this was actually done or only part of

the vision is impossible to know for certain. Either way, the main purpose of the whole vision is to give more power and emotion to the prophecies he will make when he returns to the captives. He is to strongly rebuke them for the thoughts they still harbor in their minds of escaping God's punishment. The reality is that it is not them, but those already slain who are the meat and soon they too will be drawn out and slain by the sword. The punishment given is due to their rebellion against God's statutes and judgments.

*Therefore **prophesy against them, prophesy**, O son of man!" 5 Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said to me, "Speak! 'Thus says the Lord: "**Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind.** 6 **You have multiplied your slain in this city, and you have filled its streets with the slain.**" 7 Therefore thus says the Lord God: "**Your slain whom you have laid in its midst, they are the meat, and this city is the caldron; but I shall bring you out of the midst of it.** 8 **You have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you,**" says the Lord God. 9 "**And I will bring you out of its midst, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and execute judgments on you.** 10 **You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.** 11 **This city shall not be your caldron, nor shall you be the meat in its midst. I will judge you at the border of Israel.** 12 **And you shall know that I am the Lord; for you have not walked in My statutes nor executed My judgments, but have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which are all around you.**" Ezek. 11:4-12*

Again, whether only in the vision, or the vision interrupted and Ezekiel actually speaking these words, in the midst of his words, Pelatiah died and Ezekiel is again deeply distressed with the results of the task he has been given.

*Now it happened, **while I was prophesying**, that **Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died**. Then I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, and said, "**Ah, Lord God! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?**"*

Words of Comfort to Ezekiel

God gives Ezekiel a comforting explanation, although the comfort will not come for many centuries. God is going to punish all who are guilty of this wickedness. But of those who have been cast far out among the Gentiles, God will give them sanctuary and bring them back with a new heart of flesh and not stone. Yet those who continue to rebel against him will only reap what they have sown.

*14 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 15 "**Son of man, your brethren, your relatives, your countrymen, and all the house of Israel in its entirety, are those about whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Get far away from the Lord; this land has been given to us as a possession.'** 16 Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "**Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.**" 17 Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "**I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.**" 18 And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. 19 Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. 21 **But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,**" says the Lord God. Ezek. 11:14-21*

God leaves the City

The final portion of the vision shows Ezekiel that God is now high above the wheels of the "chariot" and that the chariot now moves out of the midst of city to a mountain on the east side. Ezekiel is then taken by vision back to the captives in Babylon. The vision ends with his return and he immediately begins to tell the captives all that he saw while he was there.

*22 So **the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them.** 23 **And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.** 24 **Then the Spirit took me up and***

brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. 25 So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the Lord had shown me. Ezek. 11:22-25

Ezekiel is Given Tasks to Portray Judah's Captivity

Pack your Belongings and Dig through the Wall

Similar to Jesus parables, God uses different ways to allow Judah the opportunity to grasp the enormity of what was occurring in Jerusalem either at that moment or soon. First, he was to prepare (pack) his belongings as though going into captivity

Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 2 "Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they are a rebellious house. 3 "Therefore, son of man, prepare your belongings for captivity, and go into captivity by day in their sight. You shall go from your place into captivity to another place in their sight. It may be that they will consider, though they are a rebellious house. 4 By day you shall bring out your belongings in their sight, as though going into captivity; and at evening you shall go in their sight, like those who go into captivity. Ezek. 12:1-4

After going through all the previous events of packing and going, he is now told to dig through the wall and carry his belongings through the wall at twilight. In this way he has now become a sign to them.

Dig through the wall in their sight, and carry your belongings out through it. 6 In their sight you shall bear them on your shoulders and carry them out at twilight; you shall cover your face, so that you cannot see the ground, for I have made you a sign to the house of Israel." 7 So I did as I was commanded. I brought out my belongings by day, as though going into captivity, and at evening I dug through the wall with my hand. I brought them out at twilight, and I bore them on my shoulder in their sight. Ezek. 12:5-7

The next morning, God now gives him the exact response he is to tell these people when they ask him about the events of the day before. He is a sign to them for exactly what they saw Ezekiel would soon be done by the king of Judah.

And in the morning the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 9 "Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing?' 10 Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "This burden concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are among them."' 11 Say, 'I am a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity.' 12 And the prince who is among them shall bear his belongings on his shoulder at twilight and go out. They shall dig through the wall to carry them out through it. He shall cover his face, so that he cannot see the ground with his eyes. 13 I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there. 14 I will scatter to every wind all who are around him to help him, and all his troops; and I will draw out the sword after them. Ezek. 12:8-14

The fulfillment of these words was recorded by Jeremiah:

In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated. ... 4 So it was, when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, that they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls. ... 6 Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah; the king of Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah. 7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. Jer 39:2-7

Ezekiel is to leave nothing out. The terror of their deaths and the terror of the captivity of those who did not die.

"Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. 16 But I will spare a few of their men from the sword, from famine, and from pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the Gentiles wherever they go. Then they shall know that I am the Lord." Ezek. 12:15-16

Eat and Drink with Trembling and Anxiety

The second parable he is to portray before them is how he is to eat his food and drink water. This time as they see him doing these things, he explains that they too are in imitation of what is to occur in Jerusalem.

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, eat your bread with quaking, and drink your water with trembling and anxiety. 19 And say to the people of the land, 'Thus says the Lord God to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the land of Israel: "They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink their water with dread, so that her land may be emptied of all who are in it, because of the violence of all those who dwell in it. 20 Then the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall become desolate; and you shall know that I am the Lord."'" Ezek. 12:17-20

Expose the Folly of their Proverb:

Once again, God commands Ezekiel to speak directly to the people regarding the false information they have been given. Just as today we hear the day of the Lord is imminent, when God has told us it will be as a thief in the night, so then what was imminent was being proclaimed as far off.

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 22 "Son of man, what is this proverb that you people have about the land of Israel, which says, 'The days are prolonged, and every vision fails'? 23 Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I will lay this proverb to rest, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel." But say to them, "The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision. 24 For no more shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. 25 For I am the Lord. I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it," says the Lord God.'" 26 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 27 "Son of man, look, the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.' 28 Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "None of My words will be postponed any more, but the word which I speak will be done," says the Lord God.'" Ezek. 12:21-28

Condemnation of False Prophets

God now commands Ezekiel to do what all true servants of God are called upon to do. Error must be exposed and condemned. All who move the people from the plain words of God into their own teachings must be dealt with. God is very clear here. All who speak from their own heart and contradict the true words of God will be condemned and those who follow them as well.,

*And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, **prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, 'Hear the word of the Lord!'**" 3 Thus says the Lord God: "**Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!** 4 O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts. 5 You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord. 6 **They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, 'Thus says the Lord!'** But the Lord has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. 7 Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? **You say, The Lord says, but I have not spoken.** Ezek. 13:1-7*

God accuses them of seduction, of building what will be destroyed by flood, hail and stormy wind.

*"Because, indeed, because **they have seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace — and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered mortar —** 11 **say to those who plaster it with untempered mortar, that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear it down.** 12 Surely, when the wall has fallen, **will it not be said to you, 'Where is the mortar with which you plastered it?'**" 13 Therefore thus says the Lord God: "I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume it. 14 **So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered; it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.** Ezek. 13:10-14*

Condemn the False Prophetesses

Not only were there prophets among them who were teaching error, but also there were women among these who were also proclaiming themselves to be speaking for God.

*"Likewise, son of man, **set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own heart**; prophesy against them, 18 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: **"Woe to the women who sew magic charms on their sleeves and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of My people, and keep yourselves alive?** 19 **And will you profane Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?"** 20 'Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against your magic charms by which you hunt souls there like birds. I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, the souls you hunt like birds. 21 I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall no longer be as prey in your hand. Then you shall know that I am the Lord. 22 **"Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life.** 23 Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; **for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord.**"'" Ezek. 13:17-23*

God will not Answer those who have Idols in their Heart

God used the opportunity of the hypocrisy of the elders who came to Ezekiel to seek God's counsel when they were fully committed to idols to reveal He can see through their hypocrisy.

*Now **some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me.** 2 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 3 **"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?** 4 "Therefore speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: **"Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols,** 5 that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols.'" Ezek. 14:1-5*

Ezekiel is to use this opportunity to try to create godly sorrow that will lead them to repentance.

*"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: **"Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations.** 7 For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, **who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the Lord will answer him by Myself.** 8 **I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb,** and I will cut him off from the midst of My people. Then you shall know that I am the Lord. Ezek. 14:6-8*

Ezekiel 6 (14-24)

(Important Passages in Ezekiel)

Introduction:

Although they are not part of Ezekiel's life, there are some important parables, prophecies and details about our spiritual life. We will give a quick overview of them.

Deliverance by Righteousness (Ezek 14:

Judgment on Nations (14)

It may be that this is similar to what God did with Cain and what God did after they left the ark. The first time it occurred, God gave Cain a lighter sentence, but after they left the Ark, God now demands the death penalty. As Abraham pleaded for Sodom, God promised to spare the cities if there were 10 righteous. Not knowing the size of the cities, this may have been a much larger percentage than we think. Here, God makes it clear that nations are no longer going to be spared simply because there is one righteous man in its midst. God first uses famine, then moves to wild beasts, a sword, and pestilence. Finally he speaks of the four severe judgments (probably those above as He was about to send on Jerusalem. Jeremiah speaks of all of these many many times.

*"Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will **cut off its supply of bread**, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14 **Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,**" says the Lord God. ... 15 "If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they empty it, ... 16 even **though these three men were in it, as I live,**" says the Lord God, "they would **deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered**, and the land would be desolate. ... 17 "Or if I **bring a sword on that land,** ... 18 even **though these three men were in it, as I live,**" says the Lord God, "they would **deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves** would be delivered. ... 19 "Or if I **send a pestilence into that land** and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, 20 **even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,**" says the Lord God, "**they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves** by their righteousness." ... "How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem — the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence — to cut off man and beast from it? Ezek 14:12-23*

The Parable of the Vine (15)

There are many types of wood that man can carve and cut into furniture and other things. But the wood of the grape vine is not among them among them. It is worthless for anything. God then adds that this vine has been placed in the fire and is partially consumed. At that point what could anyone do with it? This is how God now sees the nation of Judah

*Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 2 "Son of man, **how is the wood of the vine better than any other wood**, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest? 3 Is wood **taken from it to make any object? Or can men make a peg** from it to hang any vessel on? 4 Instead, **it is thrown into the fire for fuel; the fire devours both ends of it, and its middle is burned. Is it useful for any work?** 5 Indeed, when it was whole, no object could be made from it. How much less will it be useful for any work when the fire has devoured it, and it is burned? 6 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: **'Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem;** 7 and I will **set My face against them. They will go out from one fire, but another fire shall devour them.** Ezek 15:1-7*

God's Marriage to Jerusalem — Continued unfaithfulness(16).

We have to understand that this is not literal, but spiritual. These two nations were among the seven wicked nations Israel destroyed when they took the land, but their heritage was so similar in spiritual likeness that God used it. Though Abraham and Sarah were neither Amorites nor Hittites, using these two nations would cause a visceral response.

"Son of man, **cause Jerusalem to know her abominations**, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: **"Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.** 4 As for your nativity, on the day you were born **your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.** Ezek. 15:1-4

The next section revealed the disgust and lack of value others had. This is a very apt description of all of us before we are washed in the blood of Jesus. But God had pity on this poor and despised orphan. Through God's blessings and providence, Israel grew.

5 **No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.** 6 "And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' 7 **I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful.** Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare. Ezek. 15:5-7

God then likened Israel in Egypt as the time of love. God swore an oath and gave a covenant. God cleansed them and clothed them in beautiful garments.

8 "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed **your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness.** Yes, **I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,**" says the Lord God. Ezek. 15:8

God then made her more beautiful in their new land giving them beautiful clothing and jewels.

9 "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10 **I clothed you in embroidered cloth** and gave you **sandals of badger skin**; I clothed you with **fine linen** and covered you with **silk**. 11 **I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck.** 12 And I put a **jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.** 13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. **You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil.** You were **exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty.** 14 **Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,**" says the Lord God. Ezek. 15:9-14

Jerusalem's Harlotry

Jerusalem became a harlot to the god's of other nations. She gave them as sacrifice God's blessings. Then they took their own sons and daughters, God had given to them and threw them into the fire. She forgot the days of her youth and became a brazen prostitute. God then began to send judgments to bring them to their sense. The judges is an example of the unfaithfulness of these people.

15 **"But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. ... 20 "Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be ... you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood. ... You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. 26 You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger. ... 27 "Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior. 28 You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. 29 Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied. 30 "How degenerate is your heart!" says the Lord God, "seeing you do all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot.** Ezek. 15:15-30

God continued his comparison to a wife of a good man. Just like Gomer with Hosea. She became a prostitute who left her husband. But she was so lewd and lustful she did paid them.

Yet you were **not like a harlot, because you scorned payment.** 32 You are an adulterous wife, who

takes strangers instead of her husband. ... 35 'Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord! 36 Thus says the Lord God: ... with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them, ... I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. Ezek 15:31-39

Those they had sought will now be those who destroy them. God then revealed again the anguish of heart, jealousy and anger Jerusalem had provoked in Him all these years.

they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords. 41 They shall **burn your houses with fire**, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers. 42 **So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more.** 15:40-42

The depth of their depravity led to the accusation that Jerusalem had become more wicked than Samaria and Sodom.

44 "Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: **'Like mother, like daughter!'** 45 You are your mother's daughter, **loathing husband and children**; and you are the **sister of your sisters**, who loathed their husbands and children; your **mother was a Hittite** and your **father an Amorite**. 46 "Your **elder sister is Samaria**, ... your **younger sister**, who dwells to the south of you, **is Sodom** and her daughters. 47 You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, **you became more corrupt than they in all your ways**. ... "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. 49 Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had **pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness**; neither did she **strengthen the hand of the poor and needy**. 50 And they were **haughty and committed abomination** before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

God still Promised to Remember His Covenant

God is faithful. The promises made to Abraham and given again to Israel must be kept even if they are unfaithful. God had made many promises regarding Jerusalem. They must be kept and would be when Jerusalem was moved from earth to heaven. She is now the church and her humility has replaced her pride.

60 "Nevertheless **I will remember My covenant** with you in the days of your youth, and I will **establish an everlasting covenant with you**. 61 Then you will **remember your ways and be ashamed**,... ... And I will **establish My covenant with you**. Then you shall **know that I am the Lord**, 63 that you may **remember and be ashamed**, and **never open your mouth anymore because of your shame**, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done," says the Lord God."

"Riddle" and "Parable" of the Eagle and Vine (17)

This is both a riddle needing proper investigation and meditation. An eagle takes the top of a great cedar on the great mountain of Lebanon. This eagle transplants this and it becomes a great tree. But the plant rejects the eagle that planted it and chose another eagle. Thus the plant withered and died. The God gave the interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar had spared them and made a covenant with the remnant, but they had chosen Egypt instead. God will allow Nebuchadnezzar to conquer Egypt and those who broke the covenant will be judged and punished.

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, **pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel**, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "**A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, Full of feathers of various colors, Came to Lebanon And took from the cedar the highest branch**. "**But there was another great eagle with large wings and many feathers; And behold, this vine bent its roots toward him, And stretched its branches toward him,** "Say now to the rebellious house: '**Do you not know what these things mean?**' Tell them, 'Indeed **the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and took its king and princes, and led them with him to Babylon**. 13 And he **took the king's offspring, made a covenant with him, and put him under oath**. ... that **by keeping his covenant it might stand**. 15 **But he rebelled** against him by **sending his ambassadors to Egypt**, that they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will he who does such things escape? **Can he break a covenant and still be delivered?** Therefore thus says the Lord God: "As

I live, surely My oath which he despised, and My covenant which he broke, I will recompense on his own head. ... I will bring him to Babylon and try him there for the treason which he committed against Me. Ezek 17:20-21

The Proverb of Sour Grapes (18)

Israel has coined a proverb to describe their current plight. Through no fault of their own (in their eyes), they have found themselves captives in Babylon. What their father's had done is now imputed to them and they must pay the price for their fathers actions. God destroys this reasoning, hoping they will no longer use this proverb again. Yet it is still being used up to this present day by those who teach that Adam's sin was imputed to all of us.

"What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge'? 3 "As I live," says the Lord God, "you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. 4 "Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die. Ezek 18:2-4

God begins with a just man who has favor with Him. When he has a wicked son, God makes clear that it is for his own sin that he will die. He moves then to the son of this wicked man who sees the wickedness of his father and refuses to follow him, once again becoming a just man. It seems like what the wicked want is an excuse to remove responsibility. It is not my fault is much more comforting even though a lie. God shows if to what it is.

19 "Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. 20 The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. ... "But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 22 None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him ... when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; ... "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? 26 When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. 27 Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. 28 Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ... "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!"

God gives an Account that Summarizes the History of Israel (20)

God starts His history with His covenant to them. He gave an account of Israel's wickedness we don't find in Exodus. Even before they left Egypt, God had been tempted to destroy them, but spared them for His name's sake. This was later used by Moses to seek God's compassion after the golden calf.

*Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge them? Then **make known to them the abominations of their fathers.** 5 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "**On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, 'I am the Lord your God. Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.'** 8 **But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.'** 9 **But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they were, in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.** 20:1-9*

A Parable of Fire (in Jerusalem?) (20)

God now gives another parable about a forest fire that will destroy the land of the South. At the end of it Ezekiel proclaims Israel's attitude toward his preaching.

"Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land, the South, 47 and say to the forest of the South, 'Hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree and every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, ... 49 Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! They say of me, 'Does he not speak parables?'" Ezek. 20:46-49

Prophecies Regarding the Destruction of Jerusalem (21-22)

Sighing and The Sign of Two Roads

God wants those in Babylon that Jerusalem's end is now imminent. He will do this first by sighing, then by a setting up a sign as an indication that even then the king of Babylon is on his way to Jerusalem.

"Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, preach against the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel; ... Sigh therefore, son of man, with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. 7 And it shall be when they say to you, 'Why are you sighing?' that you shall answer, 'Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. ... The Lord came to me again, saying: 19 "And son of man, appoint for yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go; both of them shall go from the same land. Make a sign; put it at the head of the road to the city. For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. 22 In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a siege mound, and to build a wall.

Judgment of Jerusalem

God now lists all the terrible things that are going on in Jerusalem. Not only are there idols, but there are also many other perversions. Murder, sexual perversions of incest and false prophets.

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Now, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations! 3 Then say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "The city sheds blood in her own midst, that her time may come; and she makes idols within herself to defile herself. ... 7 In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. 8 You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. ... 18 "Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they are all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver... The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured people; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. 26 Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean;

God Sought for a Man

Like Jeremiah, God also tells Ezekiel that He had sought for one man who could heal the breach, but could not find one.

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. 31 Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord God. Ezek 22:30-31

Parable of the Two Harlots (23)

This parable is similar to the one in verse sixteen. God again uses the figure of a wife under

covenant to her husband who becomes a prostitute. This time He speaks of the sins of Samaria and Jerusalem.

Parable of the Cooking Pot

Ezekiel is told to get some very precious ingredients to make a stew and put it into a pot. After it is well cooked and seasoned Ezekiel puts the ingredients into the fire to be burned up and the empty pot is put on the fire to be destroyed.

The Death of Ezekiel's Wife is to be a Sign and Parable

God warns Ezekiel that his wife is going to die that day and he is not to mourn for her because no one will mourn for Jerusalem when she falls.

Also the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 16 "Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down. 17 Sigh in silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind your turban on your head, and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover your lips, and do not eat man's bread of sorrow." 18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died; and the next morning I did as I was commanded. 19 And the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these things signify to us, that you behave so?" Ezek. 24:16-18

Ezekiel 7

Introduction:

The last portion of Ezekiel can be outlined in the following way:

- 25-32 Prophecies against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt
- 33
 - Ezekiel gives Israel the parable and interpretation of the watchman (1-11).
 - Immediate affects of sin and repentance — God's Way is Fair! (12-20).
 - Fall of Jerusalem – words of those who remain rebuked (21-29).
 - How they hear the words of Ezekiel but don't do them. (30-33).
- 34 Rebuking the Shepherds of Israel
- 35-36 End for Esau and Israel
- 37 The vision of the dry bones
- 38-39 God & Magog
- 40-48 A Vision of a New Temple

Prophecies against the Surrounding Nations (25-32)

The thing that ties the prophecies against the first five nations is their hatred, jealousy, or covetousness that had been created at the fall of Israel.

Ammon felt a sense of accomplishment and relief. Their claims of divine protection finally crushed.

*The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, **set your face against the AMMONITES**, and prophesy against them. 3 Say to the Ammonites, 'Hear the word of the Lord God! Thus says the Lord God: "**Because you said, '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, 4 indeed, therefore, I will deliver you as a possession** to the men of the East, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. Ezek 25:1-5*

Both Moab and Edom feel this sense of glee that the protection God had given them was finally removed. They may have attributed it to the fact that God was not that powerful or maybe even just an idol. The thought that this was a righteous judgment and the pity that should have been created were completely absent.

*'Thus says the Lord God: "**Because MOAB and SEIR (EDOM) say, 'Look! The house of Judah is like all the nations,' 9 therefore, behold, I will clear the territory of Moab of cities, of the cities on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon, and Kirjathaim. 10 To the men of the East I will give it as a possession, together with the Ammonites, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations. 11 And I will execute judgments upon Moab, and they shall know that I am the Lord.**" Ezek 25:8-11*

Edom had taken it a step further and taken part in it. They had taken vengeance on supposed past wrongs and thus greatly offended against God.

*'Thus says the Lord God: "**Because of what EDOM did against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended by avenging itself on them," 13 therefore thus says the Lord God: "I will also stretch out My hand against Edom, cut off man and beast from it, and make it desolate** from Teman; Dedan shall fall by the sword. 14 I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel, that they may do in Edom according to My anger and according to My fury; and they shall know My vengeance," says the Lord God. Ezek 25:12-14*

So also the Philistines had taken vengeance with spite in their heart at the fall of Judah.

*'Thus says the Lord God: "**Because the PHILISTINES dealt vengefully and took vengeance with a spiteful heart, to destroy because of the old hatred," 16 therefore thus says the Lord God: "I will stretch out My hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the remnant of the seacoast. 17 I will execute great vengeance on them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I lay My vengeance upon them."**" Ezek 25:15-17*

Tyre also felt a great sense of vindication, due to the fall of Jerusalem. They took it one step further, thinking that this fall would lead to greater riches and prosperity for them. The judgment of is of such importance that Ezekiel goes on for another two chapters dealing with the details of their destruction.

*And it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, **because TYRE has said against Jerusalem, 'Aha! She is broken who was the gateway of the peoples; now she is turned over to me; I shall be filled; she is laid waste.'** 3 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: '**Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. 4 And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. 5 It shall be a place for spreading nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,**' says the Lord God; 'it shall become plunder for the nations. 6 Also her daughter villages which are in the fields shall be slain by the sword. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.'* Ezek 26:1-6; 27-28

Sidon and Egypt appear to be far enough away that their feelings or attitudes toward Judah are not even mentioned. It doesn't say Sidon will fall, but God will execute judgments in her.

*Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 21 "Son of man, **set your face toward SIDON, and prophesy against her,** 22 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "**Behold, I am against you, O Sidon; I will be glorified in your midst; And they shall know that I am the Lord, When I execute judgments in her and am hallowed in her.** Ezek 28:20-22*

Like Sidon, Egypt is not rebuked for their feelings toward the fall of Jerusalem or Judah. Also like Sidon, God does not prophesy a full end. Like Judah Egypt will also return after a period of

*In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "**Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of EGYPT, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt.** 3 Speak, and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster who lies in the midst of his rivers, Who has said, 'My River is my own; I have made it for myself.' 4 But I will put hooks in your jaws, And cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales; I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, And all the fish in your rivers will stick to your scales. Ezek 29:1-4*

*I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate; and among the cities that are laid waste, **her cities shall be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries.**" 13 'Yet, thus says the Lord God: "**At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered. 14 I will bring back the captives of Egypt and cause them to return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. 15 It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms; it shall never again exalt itself above the nations, for I will diminish them so that they will not rule over the nations anymore** Ezek. 29:12-15; 30:1-32:23*

The Watchman

Although God had already made Ezekiel a watchman back at the very beginning of his work (Ezek. 3:16-21), Israel was not told at that time. Now Ezekiel is told to give a parable to them fully describing the work and value of the watchman over a city. This is the amazing thing about the human race. They would be so happy if someone warned them about saving their physical life and property, but become irate when it is their spiritual life.

*Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "**Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them:** 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, 3 when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, 4 then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.' Ezek. 33:1-6*

Israel is also informed that Ezekiel informed that God has made him their watchman. While he is responsible to warn them (a duty he has done well), they are responsible to take warning. If they refuse to take warning, each one will “die in his iniquity.” God then uses their own words against them. They have proclaimed that in their terrible fate in Babylon they were pining away. If that is how they truly feel, they are manifesting the godly sorrow that precedes repentance. Yet they must take this sorrow and turn from their evil ways or they will still die in those sins. God then reveals an important part of His character. He did not create the heavens and the earth so he could punish them with eternal death. He created so that people would turn and live.

*"So you, son of man: **I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel;** therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. 8 When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 9 Nevertheless **if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity;** but you have delivered your soul. 10 "Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "**If our transgressions and our sins lie upon us, and we pine away in them, how can we then live?**"' 11 Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord God, '**I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?**' Ezek. 33:7-11*

God then returned to the subject He had revealed to them in Ezekiel 18. There, their proverb regarding sour grapes was refuted and shown to be false. There, their concern was the ability of the guilt of their father's sins to be transferred to them. God completely repudiated that doctrine. Since all souls come from the hands of God, only the soul that sins can die. Now, he speaks of the immediate consequences of sin and repentance. Any righteous man who sins immediately dies and all his previous acts are forgotten. In the same way any wicked man who repents will have all his previous sins forgotten and he shall live.

*"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: '**The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins.**' 13 When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but **he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die.** 14 Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' **if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right,** 15 if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, **he shall surely live; he shall not die.** 16 **None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live.** Ezek. 33:12-16*

Israel considers this totally unfair! In their eyes, a man who lives his entire life faithful to God then falls at the end and loses it all. With all forgotten, it seems unfair that the wicked sinner who lived his entire life in sin, then repented at the last minute, he would live. Their concept of unfairness centered on the amount of effort and work both had put forth. The one man had done many righteous deeds, while the sinner had done few. Weighed on the scale, the righteous man had many more good deeds than the wicked. What seemed unfair was completely fair, when God reminds them of the terrible consequences of sin.

*"Yet the **children of your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.'** But it is **their way which is not fair!** 18 **When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it.** 19 **But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it.** 20 Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, I will judge every one of you according to his own ways." Ezek. 33:17-20*

The time frame is not in exact order here, so these events are not necessarily tied to the passages above. Ezekiel has been informed that the city of Jerusalem had fallen. God then revealed to Ezekiel that there was no remorse or repentance in the hearts of those who were still alive. Instead there was still a sense of entitlement because of their relationship to Abraham. God then revealed that with their sinful conduct their physical relationship from Abraham would be of no avail.

And it came to pass **in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, that one who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has been captured!"** 22 Now the hand of the Lord had been upon me the evening before the man came who had escaped. And He had opened my mouth; so when he came to me in the morning, my mouth was opened, and I was no longer mute. 23 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 24 **"Son of man, they who inhabit those ruins in the land of Israel are saying, 'Abraham was only one, and he inherited the land. But we are many; the land has been given to us as a possession.'** 25 **"Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You eat meat with blood, you lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood. Should you then possess the land? 26 You rely on your sword, you commit abominations, and you defile one another's wives. Should you then possess the land?"**" 27 **"Say thus to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "As I live, surely those who are in the ruins shall fall by the sword, and the one who is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who are in the strongholds and caves shall die of the pestilence. 28 For I will make the land most desolate, her arrogant strength shall cease, and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that no one will pass through. 29 Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have made the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed."**" Ezek. 33:21-29

Although Ezekiel was made a watchmen, God now revealed to him that it was all a show and a sham. These people had no care or concern for God's word. They spoke like they did and acted like they did, but because it did not translate into doing, it was all in vain.

"As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.' 31 **So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. 32 Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them. 33 And when this comes to pass — surely it will come — then they will know that a prophet has been among them."** Ezek. 33:30-33

Condemnation of the Shepherds with a Promise of Better Shepherds to Come.

The shepherds of Israel were those leaders among the priests and Levites who were also teachers and guides. These men had been entrusted with the spiritual welfare of the people. Yet they had failed the people in every way. Using the lives and possessions of the people to enrich themselves.

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 **"Son of man, prophecy against the shepherds of Israel, prophecy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. 4 The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them."** Ezek. 34:1-6

God warned them much as James did that they would receive a heavier judgment because not only had they sinned and fallen short in their own lives, but also they had failed the people.

7 **"Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: 8 "As I live," says the Lord God, "surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock" — 9 therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord! 10 Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them."** Ezek. 34:7-10

God, then promised to remove these worthless shepherds take over. He would become their true shepherd and with the mention of David as their king, moves it ahead to the time of the church. He also spoke of a new covenant in which things would be very different than they are in the present.

'For thus says the Lord God: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord God. 16 "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment." Ezek. 34:11-15

'Therefore thus says the Lord God to them: "Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep. 21 Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad, 22 therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David. He shall feed them and 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. 25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness Ezek. 34:20-25

Thus they shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are My people," says the Lord God." 31 "You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God," says the Lord God. Ezek. 34:30-31

God Continues His Judgment of Mt Seir (Edom)

There can be no doubt that this is a judgment on the brother of Jacob, Esau.

So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom. 9 And this is the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. Gen 36:8-9

As you rejoiced because the inheritance of the house of Israel was desolate, so I will do to you; you shall be desolate, O Mount Seir, as well as all of Edom — all of it! Then they shall know that I am the Lord." Ezek 35:15

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it, 3 and say to it, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O Mount Seir, I am against you; I will stretch out My hand against you, And make you most desolate; 4 I shall lay your cities waste, And you shall be desolate. Then you shall know that I am the Lord. 5 "Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity came to an end, 6 therefore, as I live," says the Lord God, "I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; since you have not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue you. 7 Thus I will make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it the one who leaves and the one who returns. 8 And I will fill its mountains with the slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those who are slain by the sword shall fall. 9 I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited; then you shall know that I am the Lord. Ezek. 35:1-9

"Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess them,' although the Lord was there, 11 therefore, as I live," says the Lord God, "I will do according to your anger and according to the envy which you showed in your hatred against them; and I will make Myself known among them when I judge you. 12 Then you shall know that I am the Lord. I have heard all your blasphemies which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, 'They are desolate; they are given to us to consume.' 13 Thus with your mouth you have boasted against Me and multiplied your words against Me; I have heard them." Ezek. 35:10-13

After God completed His words of Judgment he promises a different end for Israel. This is an excellent commentary of the words of Malachi.

2 **"I have loved you,"** says the Lord. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us? 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?'" Says the Lord. **"Yet Jacob I have loved; 3 But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."** 4 Even though Edom has said, "We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places," Thus says the Lord of hosts: **"They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, And the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever. Mal 1:2-4**

"And you, son of man, **prophecy to the mountains of Israel,** and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord! 2 Thus says the Lord God: "Because the enemy has said of you, 'Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession,'" ... 5 therefore thus says the Lord God: **"Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy and spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country."** Ezek. 36:1-2; 5

God then revealed His thoughts and intents.

Israel did not deserve this grace from God and God did not do it for them, but for His holy name. He would do so many wonderful things under the New Covenant that even the Gentiles would take notice and be converted.

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 17 "Son of man, **when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds;** to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. 18 **Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it.** 19 **So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds.** 20 **When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name** — when they said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of His land.' 21 **But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. Ezek. 36:16-21**

"Therefore **say to the house of Israel,** 'Thus says the Lord God: **"I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.** 23 **And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord,"** says the Lord God, **"when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.** 24 **For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.** 25 **Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.** 26 **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** 27 **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. ... 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.** 32 **Not for your sake do I do this,"** says the Lord God, **"let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!" Ezek. 36:22-32**

The Figure of the Bones

God then gave Ezekiel the parable of a symbolic resurrection for Israel. At this time they were likened to a valley full of dead bones. God asked Ezekiel if these bones could live and Ezekiel with trust replies that only God could know the answer for only God had the power to do it.

The hand of the Lord came upon me and **brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.** 2 **Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry.** 3 **And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"** So I answered, **"O Lord God, You know."** 4 **Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.** 6 **I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and**

put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord."" Ezek 37:1-6

First the bones came back together, then the sinews returned and the flesh and skin covered them. Yet they were not yet alive. At that time God breathed into them to breath and they lived. Like this resurrection, God would restore Israel to its former glory.

*7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and **suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone.** 8 Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and **the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.** 9 Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'"" 10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and **breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.***

*11 Then He said to me, "**Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.** They indeed say, '**Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!**' 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "**Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.** 13 Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. 14 **I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord.**" Ezek. 37:11-14*

The time is then established as that when both tribes return together in one nation, and the king will reign again.

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 16 "As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.' 17 Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.

"And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, '**Will you not show us what you mean by these?**' — 19 say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Surely **I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.**"' 20 And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.

"Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "**Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;** 22 and I will make **them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.** 23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but **I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.**

"**David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd;** they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; **and My servant David shall be their prince forever.** 26 Moreover **I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.** 27 **My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** 28 The nations also will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." Ezek 37:15-28

The remainder of the book is made up of some very symbolic language that no one seems to agree on its meaning.