

Ezekiel Commentary-Daniel Woodhead

The Book of Ezekiel INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL August 23, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Old Testament book of the Jewish Prophet Ezekiel is one of the so-called Major Prophets in the Christian Bible because of its length. The other four are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations and Daniel. The twelve so-called Minor Prophets follow these. They are designated minor due to their length. Therefore all the prophetic books are collected together in the Christian Bible.

The Hebrew Bible, which is called the Tenach, arranges the books in a different order and assigns the Book of Ezekiel to third position in the category called the Latter Prophets (Hebrew, *Neve'em*). The other Later Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah and the Twelve Prophets. The Jewish Talmud arranges the sequence of the books of the Latter Prophets to follow a chronological order. Beginning with Jeremiah, which is primarily concerned with the prophecies of Israel's destruction following the narrative of the books of Kings. Ezekiel, which begins with destruction, ends with the consolation of the Messianic Kingdom. Isaiah follows that and is almost all concerned with prophecies of consolation.

Jewish Order of Books (Tenach)

Torah - The Law

- Bereshit - Genesis
- Shemot - Exodus
- VaYikra - Leviticus
- BaMidbar - Numbers
- Devarim - Deuteronomy

Neviim - The Prophets

Former Prophets

- Yehoshua - Joshua
- Shoftim - Judges
- Shmuel A - 1 Samuel
- Shmuel B - 2 Samuel
- Melachim A - 1 Kings
- Melachim B - 2 Kings

Latter Prophets

- Yisheyah - Isaiah
- Yermiyah - Jeremiah
- Yechezchial - Ezekiel

Treisar - The Minor Prophets

- Hoshea - Hosea
- Yoel - Joel
- Amos - Amos
- Ovadiyah - Obadiah
- Yonah - Jonah

- Michah - Micah
- Nachum - Nahum
- Chabakuk - Habakkuk
- Tzefaniyah - Zephaniah
- Chaggi - Haggai

- Zechariah - Zechariah
- Malachi - Malachi

Ketuvim - The Writings

- Tehilim - Psalms
- Mishlei - Proverbs
- Eyov - Job

Megillot - Scrolls

- Shir HaShirim - Song of Songs
- Ruth - Ruth
- Eichah - Lamentations
- Keholet - Ecclesiastes
- Esther - Esther
- Daniyel - Daniel
- Ezra - Ezra
- Nechemiyah - Nehemiah
- Divrei Yamim A - 1 Chronicles
- Divrei Yamim B - 2 Chronicles

TIMING

The famous battle of Carchemish (Jeremiah 46:3-12; II Chronicles 35:20-24) took place on the banks of the Euphrates River in 605 B.C. Babylonia had chased the Assyrians out of Nineveh, their capital city in 612 B.C. They fled to Harran and then finally to Carchemish. In 609 B.C. Pharaoh Neco of Egypt aligned himself with the Assyrians and marched to aid them against the Babylonians. However he was waylaid when the Israeli Judean King Josiah unexpectedly met Neco to battle in Megiddo. Josiah was killed, the Israelis were defeated and Neco continued on to Carchemish. Meanwhile the Jews made Josiah's son Jehoahaz king and he reigned for only three months. Neco returned to Jerusalem, deposed Jehoahaz, got tribute money of 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold and set up Eliakim and changed his name to Jehoiakim and took his brother Jehoahaz to Egypt. Jehoiakim was evil. The net result of battle of Carchemish was the end of the political power of both the Assyrians and Egypt. Babylon became the new Gentile world Empire.

1st Siege of Jerusalem by Babylon

Immediately following the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon successfully besieged Jerusalem in reign of the Judean King Jehoiakim, resulting in the fettering of King Jehoiakim as well as the carrying away of many of Israel's best young men including Daniel, Hananiah, Michael and Azariah. The temple was also plundered (II Chronicles 36:6-7). Jehoiakim submitted to Nebuchadnezzar for three years as a vassal King but then Jehoiakim revolted and unsuccessfully appealed to Egypt for help. He was eventually taken prisoner to Babylon (II Chronicles 36:6), but was released because he died in Jerusalem. Jeremiah the prophet despised Jehoiakim for his wickedness (Jeremiah 22:18-19; 26:20-23; 36).

2nd Siege of Jerusalem by Babylon

When Jehoiakim died in 598 B.C. in Jerusalem his son Jehoiachin succeeded him on the throne of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar had sent troops against Jerusalem late in Jehoiakim's reign because the Judean king continued to resist Babylonian control and tried to make league with Egypt for help in conquering Babylonian. Nebuchadnezzar himself decided to go up against Jerusalem but by the time he arrived (in 597 B.C.) Jehoiakim had died and Jehoiachin (aka Jeconiah or Coniah) had replaced him as king. The Babylonians dethrone him in the second siege and take him to Babylon along with his mother, wives, princes and servants. Along with the exile of King Jehoiachin, his court and many others including the prophet Ezekiel. The Babylonian king sets up Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah as king. Nebuchadnezzar changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah and made him another vassal king. For several years Zedekiah submitted obediently to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. But finally under continuing pressure from nationalists at home (Jeremiah 37-38) the king foolishly rebelled. He made an alliance with Pharaoh.

3rd Siege of Jerusalem by Babylon

In January 588 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar again besieged Jerusalem. The siege was lifted briefly when Egypt attacked Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 37:5) but the Babylonians again defeated Egypt easily and resumed the siege. Finally the Babylonians broke through the wall of Jerusalem. This was on July 16, 586 B.C. the fourth month of Zedekiah's 11th year. A few remaining soldiers fled by night but were overtaken and captured near Jericho. Zedekiah fled the city with the soldiers (Jeremiah 39:4) and was also captured. He was taken to Nebuchadnezzar's field headquarters at Riblah (II Kings 23:33) on the Orontes River north of Damascus. There Nebuchadnezzar killed Zedekiah's sons (to cut off the heirs to the throne) before his eyes, blinded Zedekiah (to make further rebellion virtually impossible; Ezekiel 12:3), placed him in shackles, and transported him to Babylon (Jeremiah 32:4; 34:1-3; 39).

AUTHORSHIP

The Book of Ezekiel, (Hebrew *Yechezcaal*), was written by the prophet Ezekiel. His name in Hebrew means "God Will Strengthen" or "God Strengthens." He is not mentioned in any other book in the Old Testament and only indirectly cited in the New Testament through the imagery of the Throne Room of God in Revelation chapters four and five. We know he held the office of a priest (Ezekiel 1:3) and his father Buzi (means contempt) who was also a priest of the Zadok family. There is no evidence that Ezekiel ever performed the role of a priest in Jerusalem. But this background formed his extensive knowledge of priestly traditions, language, and ideology, as well as the Temple of Jerusalem both in his day and the future Millennial Temple. He was born in 623 B.C. He was married and had his own home where the elders of Israel came to confer with him. Unlike Jeremiah, who appears to have remained unmarried, Ezekiel tenderly cherished as "the desire of his eyes," his wife. She suddenly died in the ninth year of his captivity, or four years after he had entered on his prophetic calling (Chapter 24). With few interruptions he continued to prophecy until he was fifty-two. We do not know anything regarding the end of his ministry. While he was a contemporary of Jeremiah but Ezekiel does not mention him anywhere in this book.

Ezekiel relates the many personal experiences God give him. He shut himself up in his home, bound himself and was made dumb (3:24-26); He was made to lie on his right side and then his left side for 430 days (4:4-8); he ate bread prepared in an unclean manner (4:12); he had to shave his head and beard (5:1); He was expressly forbidden to mourn for his wife (24:16-18); he lost his speech (24:27); God wanted Ezekiel to be a sign to the Nation Israel and so he gave the prophet these experiences during his life (24:24). Some commentators have said that he must have suffered from some mental disease because of the nature of his prophecies. They are ignoring the message God had given to the people through him. One can make a comparison of Ezekiel to the apostle John. Both lived in places of isolation and oppression. John was on the isle of Patmos and Ezekiel in Babylon.

Many of Ezekiel's prophecies can be dated with great detail from the captivity of King Jehoiachin. Earlier prophecies of his were not well received (14:1,3; 18:19). Over time they were accepted and the nation was purged of their idolatry. He lived at a time of great spiritual decline and clearly saw that additional stronger judgment was coming from the Lord. When the judgment had been accomplished Ezekiel then began to prophesy about consolation to a very weary and broken nation.

Ezekiel never returned to Israel but died in Babylon. Similar to Maimonides Isaac Abravanel was a Jewish philosopher in Portugal in the late 1400's AD. He wrote many Bible commentaries on the prophets including Ezekiel. He cites a report by a contemporary one Benjamin of Tudela who was an explorer and claimed to have seen Ezekiel's grave in Babylon. He said that it was within a half mile of the synagogue in Babylon between the rivers Euphrates and Chebar. The tomb is located at the back of the synagogue also these of Ananiah, Mishael and Azariah. There is a tomb reportedly belonging to Ezekiel today in Iraq but the Muslims also claim it is the tomb to be that of a person named Dhul-Kifl. It was protected by Saddam Hussein as a holy site.

Topical Outline of The Book of Ezekiel

SECTION OUTLINE ONE (EZEKIEL 1-3)

Ezekiel describes a vision of God that he has received. He also describes his call from God.

I. THE VISION (1:1–28): Ezekiel receives visions of God. A. **Ezekiel and the cherubim of God** (1:1–25)

II. 1. 1. He sees these heavenly creatures (Ezekiel 1:1–23).

a. The appearance of the living beings (Ezekiel 1:5–11): Ezekiel is visited by four of these special beings.

1. Each has four faces (Ezekiel 1:5, 10).

a. The face in front is a man's face (Ezekiel 1:10a).

b. The face on the right is a lion's face (Ezekiel 1:10b).

c. The face on the left is an ox's face (Ezekiel 1:10c).

d. The face in back is an eagle's face (Ezekiel 1:5, 10d).

2. Each has two pairs of wings (Ezekiel 1:6, 9, 11).

3. Each has human hands beneath its wings (Ezekiel 1:8).

4. Each possesses legs like those of men but feet like calves' feet (Ezekiel 1:7).

b. The vision of God (Ezekiel 1:1–4): Ezekiel feels the hand of the Lord on him.

c. The activities of the living beings (Ezekiel 1:12–23)

1. They go in whatever direction the spirit chooses (Ezekiel 1:12, 17, 20–23): They move straight forward in all directions, without turning.

2. They glow like bright coals of fire when they move (Ezekiel 1:13): It looks as though lightning is flashing among them.

3. Their movement is swift as lightning (Ezekiel 1:14).

4. Each is accompanied by a polished chrysolite wheel, with a second wheel crosswise inside (Ezekiel 1:15–16, 19): When the beings move, the wheels move with them.

5. The wheels have rims and spokes (Ezekiel 1:18a).

6. The rims are filled with eyes (Ezekiel 1:18b).

2. *He hears these heavenly creatures* (Ezekiel 1:24–25).

a. Their wings roar like waves against the shore (Ezekiel 1:24a).

b. Their wings sound like the voice of God (Ezekiel 1:24b).

c. Their wings sound like the shout of a mighty army (Ezekiel 1:24c–25).

B. **Ezekiel and the Christ of God** (Ezekiel 1:26–28)

1. *Ezekiel sees a man seated upon a throne made of beautiful blue sapphire stones* (Ezekiel 1:26).

2. *His appearance is like glowing amber, surrounded by a rainbowlike halo*

(Ezekiel 1:27–28): Ezekiel falls down in the dust and hears someone speaking to him.

II. THE VOICE (Ezekiel 2:1–3:27): Ezekiel is called by God to deliver a certain message.

A. **The recipients** (Ezekiel 2:1–5; 3:4–7)

1. *Who they are* (Ezekiel 2:1–3; 3:4): His message is directed to the nation of Israel.

2. *What they are* (Ezekiel 2:4–5; 3:5–7): They are hard, impudent, rebellious, and stubborn.

B. **The reassurance** (Ezekiel 2:6–3:3, 8–9)

1. *God gives Ezekiel the sermon he needs* (Ezekiel 2:6–3:3): God's words are on a scroll, which he gives Ezekiel to eat.

2. *God gives Ezekiel the strength he needs* (Ezekiel 3:8–9): Ezekiel is not to be afraid.

C. **The reflection** (Ezekiel 3:10–11): Before delivering his message, Ezekiel is to allow God's words to sink down deep in his own heart.

D. **The reaction** (Ezekiel 3:12–15): Ezekiel's initial response to all this is one of bitterness and turmoil! However, God's hand is strong upon him.

E. **The role** (Ezekiel 3:16–21): Ezekiel assumes the role of a spiritual watchman by delivering a twofold warning:

1. *To the godless* (Ezekiel 3:16–19): Cease your wicked ways, or die!

2. *To the godly* (Ezekiel 3:20–21): Continue your good ways, or die!

F. **The restriction** (Ezekiel 3:22–27): Ezekiel is to imprison himself in his own house, where God will temporarily cause him to be unable to speak.

SECTION OUTLINE TWO (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 4–7)

Ezekiel employs both visual aids and sermons to describe the tragic spiritual decline among the people of Israel.

I. THE FIRST SYMBOLS PRESENTED BY EZEKIEL (Ezekiel 4–6)

A. **First illustration** (Ezekiel 4:1–3)

1. *The symbol* (Ezekiel 4:1–2): He draws a picture of Jerusalem upon a clay tablet and then places an iron plate next to it.
 2. *The significance* (Ezekiel 4:3) : The Babylonian army, like an iron wall, will soon surround Jerusalem.
- B. Second illustration** (Ezekiel 4:4–6)
1. *The symbol* (Ezekiel 4:5–6)
 - a. He is to lie on his left side for 390 days (Ezekiel 4:5) : This is for the years of Israel's sin.
 - b. He is then to lie on his right side for 40 days (Ezekiel 4:6) : This represents the years of Judah's sin.
 2. *The significance* (Ezekiel 4:4) : Each day represents one year of punishment for Israel and Judah.
- C. Third illustration** (Ezekiel 4:7–8)
1. *The symbol* (Ezekiel 4:7) : He is to lie on his back with his arms tied.
 2. *The significance* (Ezekiel 4:8) : This depicts the helplessness of Jerusalem against the Babylonian attack.
- D. Fourth illustration** (Ezekiel 4:9–17)
1. *The symbol* (Ezekiel 4:9–15): He is to prepare a meager meal and cook it over some dried cow dung.
 2. *The significance* (Ezekiel 4:16–17): This is a warning that the people of Israel will be forced to eat defiled food among the nations where God will drive them.
- E. Fifth illustration** (Ezekiel 5:1–17)
1. *The symbol* (Ezekiel 5:1–4): He is to shave both his head and his beard and is to place the hair into three equal parts. One part is then to be burned, the second part is to be struck with his sword, and the third part is to be scattered to the wind.
 2. *The significance* (Ezekiel 5:5–17): This is to predict that one third of Jerusalem's people will soon die by fire, another third will die by the sword, and the final third will go into captivity.
- F. Sixth illustration** (Ezekiel 6:1–10)
1. *The symbol* (Ezekiel 6:1–2): He is to set his face against the mountains of Israel and issue prophesy against them.
 2. *The significance* (Ezekiel 6:3–10): This means that those living in the valley below will soon be destroyed by their enemies.
- G. Seventh illustration** (Ezekiel 6:11–14)
1. *The symbol* (Ezekiel 6:11) : He is to clap his hands and stomp his feet.
 2. *The significance* (Ezekiel 6:12–14): This is done in horror, predicting the disease and death that await Israel.
- IV. THE FIRST SERMON PREACHED BY EZEKIEL** (Ezekiel 7:1–27): The prophet warns Jerusalem that the terrible day of God's judgment is at hand.
- A. The sin causing this judgment** (Ezekiel 7:1–4, 19–21, 23–24)
1. *Idolatry* (Ezekiel 7:1–4): Ezekiel calls the people to account for their disgusting behavior.
 2. *Greed* (Ezekiel 7:19–21): The love of money makes them stumble into sin.
 3. *Bloodshed* (Ezekiel 7:23) : The land is bloodied by terrible crimes.
 4. *Pride* (Ezekiel 7:24) : God will break down their proud fortresses.
- B. The severity of this judgment** (Ezekiel 7:5–18, 22, 25–27)
1. *Continuous disaster and calamity* (Ezekiel 7:5–6, 22, 25–27): They will have terror after terror and calamity after calamity. No one will be there to guide them.
 2. *God's punishment without his pity* (Ezekiel 7:7–14): He will neither spare nor pity them.
 3. *Death by plagues inside the city, death by sword outside the city* (Ezekiel 7:15–18): The few who survive will moan for their sins.

SECTION OUTLINE THREE (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 8–11)

Ezekiel has a vision of some of Jerusalem's sins and of the impending departure of God's glory from the Temple.

- I. EZEKIEL SEES THE GOD OF GLORY DEFILED IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM (Ezekiel 8:1–10:3, 5–17; 11:1–22, 24–25).
- II. **The man** (Ezekiel 8:1–4): Ezekiel is supernaturally transferred from Babylon to Jerusalem by a glowing figure from heaven who is probably the Messiah himself.
- III. **The mockery** (Ezekiel 8:5–18; 11:1–13): Ezekiel witnesses God's holiness mocked and blasphemed on four occasions.
 1. *The perversions* (Ezekiel 8:5–18)
 - a. The people are worshiping a large idol north of the altar gate in the Temple entrance (Ezekiel 8:5–6): The people have made God so angry that he is going to leave the Temple.
 - b. Seventy Jewish elders are burning incense to devilish images inside the Temple (Ezekiel 8:7–12): The people think the Lord doesn't see them.
 - c. Some Jewish women are weeping for the false god Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:13–15).
 - d. Twenty-five men are worshiping the sun (Ezekiel 8:16–18): The people of Judah are leading the whole nation into

violence.

2. *The promoters* (Ezekiel 11:1–13): God holds 25 of Judah's most prominent leaders responsible for the people's sins.

The most important of these men, Pelatiah, is suddenly struck dead before the horrified eyes of Ezekiel.

- V. **The marking** (Ezekiel 9:1–11): God orders six men (Ezekiel possibly angels) to put a mark on the foreheads of the godly individuals in Jerusalem. Another group of men is then instructed to kill all those with unmarked foreheads, beginning with the 70 Jewish elders.
- VI. **The magnificent ones** (Ezekiel 10:1–3, 5–17): The four cherubim Ezekiel described in chapter 1 suddenly reappear and begin their ministry before God.
- VII. **The message** (Ezekiel 11:14–22, 24–25): God gives Ezekiel a note of encouragement to the Babylonian exiles, assuring them they will someday be regathered, returned, and regenerated.

II. EZEKIEL SEES THE GLORY OF GOD DEPART FROM THE CITY OF JERUSALEM (Ezekiel 10:4, 18–22; 11:23).

- III. **From the Holy of Holies to the entrance of the Temple** (Ezekiel 10:4) : The Temple courtyard glows with the cloud of God's glory.
- IV. **From the entrance of the Temple to the east gate** (Ezekiel 10:18–22): The glory of God hovers above the cherubim.
- V. **From the east gate to the Mount of Olives** (Ezekiel 11:23) : The glory of God departs from Jerusalem.

SECTION OUTLINE FOUR (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 12–15)

Ezekiel continues his ministry as a "watchman on the wall."

I. HIS ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL (Ezekiel 12:1–28; 15:1–8)

A. **Through demonstrations** (Ezekiel 12:1–20)

1. *First illustration* (Ezekiel 12:1–16)

- a. The symbol (Ezekiel 12:1–7): Ezekiel is commanded to pack his belongings on his shoulders and dig a tunnel through the city wall.
- b. The significance (Ezekiel 12:8–16): This depicts how Jerusalem's frightened citizens will attempt to escape the Babylonian siege.

2. *Second illustration* (Ezekiel 12:17–20)

- a. The symbol (Ezekiel 12:17–18): Ezekiel is to tremble and shudder with fear as he eats his food and drinks his water.
- b. The significance (Ezekiel 12:19–20): This depicts how the people of Jerusalem will soon eat their food and drink their water.

B. **Through proverbs** (Ezekiel 12:21–28)

- 1. *The old proverb of the people* (Ezekiel 12:21–22): "Those who predict judgment are wrong! Each passing day proves it!"
- 2. *The new proverb of the prophet* (Ezekiel 12:23–28): "These predictions are true! The coming day of destruction will prove it!"

C. **Through analogy** (Ezekiel 15:1–8): Ezekiel compares the city of Jerusalem to a useless vine.

III. HIS INDICTMENT OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL (Ezekiel 13:1–14:23)

A. **Ezekiel condemns the false prophets** (Ezekiel 13:1–23).

1. *The male prophets* (Ezekiel 13:1–16)

- a. Their perversions (Ezekiel 13:1–7, 10, 16): They assure the people that God will not punish them but rather will send peace their way!
- b. Their punishment (Ezekiel 13:8–9, 11–15): God's wrath will crash down upon them like great hailstones.

2. *The female prophets* (Ezekiel 13:17–23)

- a. Their perversions (Ezekiel 13:17–20, 22): Prompted by greed, they deceive the people by their magic charms and veils.
- b. Their punishment (Ezekiel 13:21, 23): God will rescue the people from their grasp.

B. **Ezekiel condemns the idol worshipers** (Ezekiel 14:1–23).

- 1. *Three people* (Ezekiel 14:1–20): God says the sins of the nation have become so great that his terrible wrath will fall even if righteous men like Noah, Daniel, and Job are numbered among the citizens. If so, they alone will be saved!
- 2. *Four punishments* (Ezekiel 14:21–23): These four dreadful judgments are sword, famine, wild beasts, and plague.

SECTION OUTLINE FIVE (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 16)

Ezekiel employs an extended allegory, depicting Israel as God's unfaithful wife.

- I. THE PLIGHT (Ezekiel 16:1–5): As the story opens, Israel is seen as a helpless and unloved baby girl who has been dumped into a field and left to die.
- II. THE PITY (Ezekiel 16:6–14)
 - A. **God and the baby girl** (Ezekiel 16:6–7): He rescues, cleanses, clothes, and raises her.
 - B. **God and the young woman** (Ezekiel 16:8–14): When she is of age, God marries her, dresses her in the finest apparel, and bestows lavish gifts upon her.
- III. THE PROSTITUTION (Ezekiel 16:15–26, 28–34)
 - A. **The corruption of this young wife** (Ezekiel 16:15–25, 30–34): Israel soon betrays her divine husband by playing the role of a common harlot.
 - B. **The clients of this young wife** (Ezekiel 16:26, 28–29): She commits spiritual adultery with the gods of other nations.
 1. *Egypt* (Ezekiel 16:26) : She fans the flames of God's anger with her promiscuity.
 2. *Assyria* (Ezekiel 16:28) : She never seems to find enough new lovers.
 3. *Babylon* (Ezekiel 16:29) : Even after she adds Babylon, she isn't satisfied.
- IV. THE PUNISHMENT (Ezekiel 16:27, 35–58)
 - A. **She will be given over to her enemies** (Ezekiel 16:27) : She will be handed over to the Philistines, who also will be shocked by her conduct.
 - B. **She will be stripped naked before them** (Ezekiel 16:37–41): The many nations that have been her lovers will destroy her.
 - C. **She will be repaid for her sins** (Ezekiel 16:35–36, 42–52): God will pour out all his jealous anger on her.
 - D. **She will be restored** (Ezekiel 16:53) : When God's anger is spent, he will bring her back.
 - E. **She will be ashamed for her sins** (Ezekiel 16:54–58): Her wickedness will be exposed to the world.
- V. THE PARDON (Ezekiel 16:59–63): In spite of all her sin, a loving and faithful God will someday reaffirm his covenant of grace with Israel!

SECTION OUTLINE SIX (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 17–19)

Ezekiel continues his message of judgment to Israel by additional parables and proverbs.

- I. THE PARABLES (Ezekiel 17:1–24; 19:1–14)
 - A. **First parable** (Ezekiel 17:1–6, 11–14)
 1. *Information in the parable* (Ezekiel 17:1–6): A great eagle plucks off the top of a tall cedar tree and replants it elsewhere, in fertile soil.
 2. *Interpretation of the parable* (Ezekiel 17:11–14): The eagle is Nebuchadnezzar, who carries off many Jewish citizens (Ezekiel the top of the cedar tree) into the Babylonian captivity, where they fare well, for the most part, due to God's faithfulness.
 - B. **Second parable** (Ezekiel 17:7–10, 15–21)
 1. *Information in the parable* (Ezekiel 17:7–10): A part of that cedar-tree replant, however, soon gives its allegiance to another eagle that arrives on the scene. Because of this, that section of the replanted tree is destroyed by God.
 2. *Interpretation of the parable* (Ezekiel 17:15–21): The second eagle represents Egypt's pharaoh, with whom Judean king Zedekiah allies against Nebuchadnezzar, resulting in Jerusalem's destruction.
 - C. **Third parable** (Ezekiel 17:22–24)
 1. *Information in the parable* (Ezekiel 17:22–23): God himself one day takes a tender sprout from a tall cedar and plants it atop Israel's highest mountains, where it becomes the ultimate and universal tree!
 2. *Interpretation of the parable* (Ezekiel 17:24) : The original tree seems to be a reference to the house of David, from which eventually comes the Messiah himself, the second tree.
 - D. **Fourth parable** (Ezekiel 19:1–9): A lioness has two cubs that become man-eaters. Both are eventually trapped. The first cub is taken to Egypt, and the second cub is taken to Babylon.
 - E. **Fifth parable** (Ezekiel 19:10–14): A strong and fruitful vine planted in fertile soil alongside a stream is suddenly uprooted

and replanted in a barren desert, where it begins to wither away.

2. THE PROVERB (Ezekiel 18:1–32): Ezekiel begins this chapter by referring to a popular proverb, widely quoted in Israel at the time.

A. **The contents of this proverb** (Ezekiel 18:1–4)

1. *The information* (Ezekiel 18:1–2): It says, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, but their children’s mouths pucker at the taste.”
2. *The interpretation* (Ezekiel 18:3–4): The proverb says Israel is simply being punished for the sins of her fathers.

B. **The correction of the proverb** (Ezekiel 18:5–28): Ezekiel refutes this false teaching by pointing out that God punishes only the individual for his or her sin. He cites five examples to illustrate his point.

1. *The case of the righteous versus the unrighteous* (Ezekiel 18:20, 25): The one who sins is the one who dies.
2. *The case of a righteous man* (Ezekiel 18:5–9): He will surely live.
3. *The case of a righteous man’s unrighteous son* (Ezekiel 18:10–13): The righteous man’s son will surely die and take full blame.
4. *The case of an unrighteous man’s righteous son* (Ezekiel 18:14–19): The son will not die because of his father’s sins.
5. *The case of a righteous man who becomes unrighteous* (Ezekiel 18:24, 26): He will die.
6. *The case of unrighteous people who become righteous* (Ezekiel 18:21–23, 27–28): They will live.

C. **The challenge from the proverb** (Ezekiel 18:29–32): In light of all this, God urges the people of Israel to repent so that they will not be punished for their unrighteous ways.

SECTION OUTLINE SEVEN (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 20–21)

Ezekiel warns Israel of the consequences of her sins by physically acting out messages of judgment.

I. ISRAEL’S CONDEMNATION (Ezekiel 20:1–32, 45–49; 21:1–32)

A. **The indictments** (Ezekiel 20:1–32, 45–49; 21:1–5, 24–32)

1. *Upon the people* (Ezekiel 20:1–32, 45–49; 21:1–5, 24): Israel is reminded of her constant sinning against God throughout her history.
 - a. In Egypt (Ezekiel 20:1–9): The people of Israel did not get rid of their idols as God instructed.
 - b. In the wilderness (Ezekiel 20:10–26): The people refused to obey God’s laws.
 - c. In Canaan (Ezekiel 20:27–28): They continued to blaspheme and betray God.
 - d. In Ezekiel’s time (Ezekiel 20:29–32, 45–49; 21:1–5, 24): They continue to sin and are not ashamed of it. God has become their enemy and will unleash his anger on them.

2. *Upon the prince* (Ezekiel 21:25–27): The “wicked prince of Israel” is Zedekiah, Judah’s final ruler.

3. *Upon the pagans* (Ezekiel 21:28–32): Here judgment is handed down against the Ammonites for their many national sins.

B. **The illustrations** (Ezekiel 21:6–23): Once again Ezekiel acts out his message of judgment.

1. *First illustration* (Ezekiel 21:6–7)

- a. What he does (Ezekiel 21:6) : He groans.
- b. What it means (Ezekiel 21:7) : This will be Jerusalem’s reaction as the Babylonian army marches against the city.

2. *Second illustration* (Ezekiel 21:8–12)

- a. What he does (Ezekiel 21:12) : He beats upon his thighs.
- b. What it means (Ezekiel 21:8–11): Soon enemy swords will pierce through the hearts of Judah’s people.

3. *Third illustration* (Ezekiel 21:13–17)

- a. What he does (Ezekiel 21:13–16): He claps his hands and slashes a sword from left to right.
- b. What it means (Ezekiel 21:17) : The same message is conveyed as that of the second illustration.

4. *Fourth illustration* (Ezekiel 21:18–23)

- a. What he does (Ezekiel 21:18–21): He draws a map showing two roads with a fork in the middle.
- b. What it means (Ezekiel 21:22–23): This signifies that the king of Babylon will decide to attack Jerusalem before the Ammonite capital city of Rabbah.

3. ISRAEL’S RESTORATION (Ezekiel 20:33–44): In spite of their terrible sins, God will someday regenerate, regather, and restore his people!

SECTION OUTLINE EIGHT (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 22–24)

Ezekiel details the sins of Israel and compares Samaria and Jerusalem to two prostitutes.

I. THE SINS OF ISRAEL (Ezekiel 22:1–31)

A. **The perversions** (Ezekiel 22:1–12, 23–29)

1. *Bloodshed and idolatry* (Ezekiel 22:1–6, 9, 27): Everyone in the city is murderous and idolatrous.
2. *Contempt for parents, orphans, and widows* (Ezekiel 22:7, 23–25): Fathers and mothers are ignored, the number of widows increases, and people are destroyed for profit.
3. *Utter disregard for the Sabbath* (Ezekiel 22:8, 26): They violate the Lord's holy days of rest.
4. *Adultery and incest* (Ezekiel 22:10–11): They defile themselves.
5. *Bribe taking and extortion* (Ezekiel 22:12, 29)
6. *Lying prophets* (Ezekiel 22:28) : They say their message is from the Lord when the Lord hasn't spoken.

B. **The punishment** (Ezekiel 22:13–22, 30–31)

1. *They are scattered among the nations* (Ezekiel 22:13–16): God purges their wickedness.
2. *They are thrown into the furnace of God's fiery wrath* (Ezekiel 22:17–22, 30–31): God heaps on them the full penalty for their sins.

III. THE SISTERS DEPICTING ISRAEL (Ezekiel 23:1–49): In this parable Ezekiel compares Israel to two sisters who become prostitutes.

A. **The identity of these sisters** (Ezekiel 23:1–4): The elder sister is named Oholah and represents Samaria. The younger sister is named Oholibah and represents Jerusalem. God "marries" both sisters and "fathers" sons and daughters through them.

B. **The immorality of these sisters** (Ezekiel 23:5–49): Both sisters prove untrue to their divine husband.

1. *The sins of Oholah, the older sister* (Ezekiel 23:5–10)
 - a. Her perversion (Ezekiel 23:5–8): She commits spiritual adultery with the Assyrian gods.
 - b. Her punishment (Ezekiel 23:9–10): God allows the Assyrians to capture and enslave the city of Samaria.
2. *The sins of Oholibah, the younger sister* (Ezekiel 23:11–35, 43–49)
 - a. Her perversions (Ezekiel 23:11–21)
 1. She, like her sister, commits spiritual adultery with the Assyrian gods (Ezekiel 23:11–13).
 2. She then does the same with the Babylonian gods (Ezekiel 23:14–21).
 - b. Her punishment (Ezekiel 23:22–35, 43–49): She is captured and enslaved by the Babylonians.
3. *The sins of both sisters* (Ezekiel 23:36–42): Each sister city is guilty of the following:
 - a. Murder (Ezekiel 23:36–37a)
 - b. Idolatry (Ezekiel 23:37b)
 - c. Child sacrifice (Ezekiel 23:37c)
 - d. Total hypocrisy (Ezekiel 23:38–39): After doing these terrible things, they come to worship God at his Temple.
 - e. Gaudy lifestyle (Ezekiel 23:40–41): They paint themselves and put on their finest jewels.
 - f. Drunkenness (Ezekiel 23:42) : The sound of carousing comes from their room.

III. THE SIGNS TO ISRAEL (Ezekiel 24:1–27)

A. **The food sign** (Ezekiel 24:1–14)

1. *What he does* (Ezekiel 24:1–7): Ezekiel is commanded to boil some meat in a pot of water until the flesh falls off the bones; then he is to cast out everything upon the ground.
2. *What it means* (Ezekiel 24:8–14): God will consume Israel, corrupted by her sin, in his pot of judgment and then will cast her out!

B. **The funeral sign** (Ezekiel 24:15–27)

1. *What he does* (Ezekiel 24:15–18): God instructs Ezekiel to remain tearless at the funeral of his beloved wife, who dies suddenly.
2. *Why he does it* (Ezekiel 24:19–27): When asked why he shows no sorrow, Ezekiel responds by telling the people that they will likewise not be allowed to display any tears over the coming destruction of their nation.

SECTION OUTLINE NINE (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 25–28)

In these chapters Ezekiel pronounces judgment against six pagan nations.

I. THE PROPHECY AGAINST AMMON (Ezekiel 25:1–7)

A. **Their crimes** (Ezekiel 25:1–3, 6): They rejoice over the destruction of Israel's Temple and mock the Jewish exiles on their way to the Babylonian captivity.

B. **Their condemnation** (Ezekiel 25:4–5, 7): Their land will be overrun by enemy forces, and their people will be enslaved.

II. THE PROPHECY AGAINST MOAB (Ezekiel 25:8–11): They, too, are condemned for applauding the destruction of Jerusalem.

III. THE PROPHECY AGAINST EDOM (Ezekiel 25:12–14): A similar judgment awaits the Edomites.

IV. THE PROPHECY AGAINST PHILISTIA (Ezekiel 25:15–17): The same punishment will soon fall upon the Philistines.

V. THE PROPHECY AGAINST TYRE (Ezekiel 26:1–28:19)

A. **The splendor of Tyre** (Ezekiel 27:1–9)

1. *The shipbuilding* (Ezekiel 27:1–7)

a. Its harbor is the most beautiful in the world (Ezekiel 27:1–4): It is the gateway to the sea.

b. Its ships are the finest in the world (Ezekiel 27:5–7): The ships are made of cypress, cedar, oak, pine, ivory, and linen.

2. *The sailors* (Ezekiel 27:8–9): They come from many nations to join the fleet.

B. **The soldiers of Tyre** (Ezekiel 27:10–11): The most experienced and best-equipped men serve in the army of Tyre.

C. **The substance of Tyre** (Ezekiel 27:12–25): The city is one of the richest of its day! Note the exotic items imported to Tyre:

1. *Silver, iron, tin, and lead* (Ezekiel 27:12)

2. *Slaves* (Ezekiel 27:13)

3. *Chariot horses, steeds, and mules* (Ezekiel 27:14)

4. *Ebony and ivory* (Ezekiel 27:15)

5. *Emeralds, purple dyes, fine linen, and jewelry of coral and rubies* (Ezekiel 27:16)

6. *Wheat, honey, oil, balm, wine, and wool* (Ezekiel 27:17–18)

7. *Iron and saddle cloths* (Ezekiel 27:19–20)

8. *Rams, lambs, and goats* (Ezekiel 27:21)

9. *Spices and gold* (Ezekiel 27:22)

10. *Blue cloth, embroidery, and carpets* (Ezekiel 27:23–25)

D. **The sin of Tyre** (Ezekiel 26:1–2; 28:1–5)

1. *The city celebrates the fall of Jerusalem* (Ezekiel 26:1–2): Tyre thinks it will benefit from Jerusalem's destruction.

2. *The prince of Tyre is filled with pride, conducting himself as a little god* (Ezekiel 28:1–5): His wisdom and treasure have made him rich.

E. **The sentence on Tyre** (Ezekiel 26:3–21; 27:26–36; 28:6–10)

1. *The city will be destroyed down to its bare foundation* (Ezekiel 26:3–21; 28:6–10).

a. The attack by the Babylonians (Ezekiel 26:3–21): Babylon will destroy Tyre's villages and tear down her walls and her gates.

b. The attack by the Greeks (Ezekiel 28:6–10): They draw their swords against the king of Tyre, and he dies.

2. *An ocean storm destroys its ships* (Ezekiel 27:26–36).

F. **The satanic force behind Tyre** (Ezekiel 28:11–19): Many Bible students feel these verses describe the original sin and fall of Satan himself! If this be the case, observe:

1. *The perfection* (Ezekiel 28:11–13): This magnificent angel is created by God as the ultimate in wisdom and beauty.

2. *The position* (Ezekiel 28:14) : He is then appointed to be the anointed guardian angel.

3. *The pride* (Ezekiel 28:15–16a): All this causes Lucifer to be filled with pride, prompting him to attempt a violent overthrow of God himself!

4. *The punishment* (Ezekiel 28:16b–19): He is removed from his lofty position, cast to the ground, and made an example of concerning God's wrath toward sin!

VI. THE PROPHECY AGAINST SIDON (Ezekiel 28:20–26)

A. **Sidon is destroyed** (Ezekiel 28:20–24): Invading armies and terrible plagues will devastate both the land and the people.

B. **Israel is delivered** (Ezekiel 28:25–26): The people will be regathered, regenerated, and restored to the land.

SECTION OUTLINE TEN (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 29–32)

These chapters describe for us God's relationship with the nation of Egypt.

I. THE PARABLE DESCRIBING EGYPT (Ezekiel 31:1–9): Egypt is pictured as a mighty and magnificent cedar tree in Lebanon, envied by all other trees.

II. THE PRIDE OF EGYPT (Ezekiel 29:1–3; 31:10; 32:1–2)

- A. **She feels she owns the Nile River** (Ezekiel 29:1–3): God is her enemy.
- B. **She boasts of being the greatest** (Ezekiel 31:10) .
- C. **She claims to be a lion among the nations** (Ezekiel 32:1–2): She is really just a sea monster, heaving around and stirring up mud.

IV. THE PLUNDERING OF EGYPT (Ezekiel 29:4–10, 17–21; 30:1–26; 31:11–18; 32:3–32): No less than seven times, Ezekiel predicts the enemies of Egypt invading and spoiling her land!

- A. **First occasion** (Ezekiel 29:4–10): God will put hooks in her jaws and drag her out on the land.
- B. **Second occasion** (Ezekiel 29:17–21): God will give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar.
- C. **Third occasion** (Ezekiel 30:1–19): A sword will come against Egypt, and those who are slaughtered will cover the ground.
- D. **Fourth occasion** (Ezekiel 30:20–26): Pharaoh's arms will be broken and his people scattered.
- E. **Fifth occasion** (Ezekiel 31:11–18): They will be cut down and left on the ground.
- F. **Sixth occasion** (Ezekiel 32:3–16): They will be completely destroyed.
- G. **Seventh occasion** (Ezekiel 32:17–32): They will be dragged away to judgment.

IV. THE PITY ON EGYPT (Ezekiel 29:11–16): Mercifully, God will partially restore Egypt.

- A. **The decades** (Ezekiel 29:11–12): Egypt first will suffer God's wrath for a period of 40 years.
- B. **The deliverance** (Ezekiel 29:13–16): Following this, God will partially regather and restore the Egyptians to their land.

SECTION OUTLINE ELEVEN (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 33–34)

Ezekiel uses various images to depict Israel's relationship with her leaders.

I. THE WATCHMAN AND THE WALL (Ezekiel 33:1–33)

- A. **God and the messengers to Israel** (Ezekiel 33:1–9): Here a distinction is made between a faithful watchman and an unfaithful watchman (Ezekiel or messenger).

1. *The faithful watchman* (Ezekiel 33:1–5, 7, 9): This kind of prophet (Ezekiel like Ezekiel) keeps on warning the people to repent even if they refuse to listen.

2. *The faithless watchman* (Ezekiel 33:6, 8): The blood of the guilty is on his hands for not warning the people.

- B. **God and the messenger to Israel** (Ezekiel 33:10–33): Ezekiel is instructed to preach two sermons to Israel.

1. *The message before the fall of Jerusalem* (Ezekiel 33:10–20): The message is twofold:

- a. "Your past good deeds will not deliver you from the coming judgment unless you repent!" (Ezekiel 33:10–12a)
- b. "Your present bad deeds will not deliver you to the coming judgment if you repent!" (Ezekiel 33:12b–20)

2. *The message after the fall of Jerusalem* (Ezekiel 33:21–33)

- a. The report (Ezekiel 33:21) : A Jew who escaped the destruction of Jerusalem tells Ezekiel about it.
- b. The restoration (Ezekiel 33:22) : God now opens the mouth of the previously mute Ezekiel.
- c. The rebuke (Ezekiel 33:23–29): Ezekiel predicts that severe punishment will soon fall upon those Jews who have survived Jerusalem's destruction but still continue in their evil ways!
- d. The ridicule (Ezekiel 33:30–33): Some of the Jewish exiles already in Babylon are laughing at Ezekiel behind his back.

II. THE SHEPHERDS AND THE SHEEP (Ezekiel 34:1–31)

- A. **The false shepherds** (Ezekiel 34:1–8, 18–19)

1. *They feed and water themselves and ignore their flocks* (Ezekiel 34:1–3, 18–19): What they don't use for themselves, they trample or make muddy.

2. *They refuse to care for the weak, sick, and injured sheep* (Ezekiel 34:4) : They rule with force and cruelty.

3. *They allow wild animals to devour the sheep* (Ezekiel 34:5–8): The sheep are easy prey for any wild animal.

- B. **The faithful shepherd** (Ezekiel 34:9–17, 20–31): These verses doubtless refer to the Messiah himself, Jesus Christ!

1. *His relationship with the false shepherds* (Ezekiel 34:9–10, 20–21)

a. He removes them and holds them responsible (Ezekiel 34:9–10): He considers them his enemies.

b. He judges them (Ezekiel 34:20–21): He will separate the fat, unruly sheep from the scrawny, downtrodden

sheep.

2. *His relationship with the sheep* (Ezekiel 34:11–16, 22, 25–31)
 - a. He rescues and regathers them (Ezekiel 34:11–12, 22): The Lord is their shepherd.
 - b. He feeds them (Ezekiel 34:13) : He brings them back home.
 - c. He gives them good pasture (Ezekiel 34:14–15, 26–27): They lie in pleasant places and feed in lush pastures.
 - d. He binds up the injured and strengthens the weak (Ezekiel 34:16) : He destroys those who have hurt his own.
 - e. He protects them (Ezekiel 34:25, 28): They live in safety and fear no one.
 - f. He adopts them as his own (Ezekiel 34:29–31): They know God is with them.
3. *His relationship with the goats* (Ezekiel 34:17) : He separates them from the sheep.
4. *His relationship with the undershepherd* (Ezekiel 34:23–24): He allows King David to assist him in feeding and leading the sheep.

SECTION OUTLINE TWELVE (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 35–37) Ezekiel foretells Edom's destruction and Israel's salvation.

I. THE CONDEMNATION OF EDOM (Ezekiel 35:1–15; 36:1–7)

A. **The perversions of Edom** (Ezekiel 35:5, 10–13; 36:1–5)

1. *They hate and betray Israel* (Ezekiel 35:5) : Edom butchered Israel after Israel had already been punished by God.
2. *They plan to occupy Israel*(Ezekiel 35:10) : They don't care that the Lord is there.
3. *They slander Israel* (Ezekiel 35:11–12): They say Israel has been given to them.
4. *They slander God* (Ezekiel 35:13; 36:1–5): They boast against God, and he hears them.

B. **The punishment of Edom** (Ezekiel 35:1–4, 6–9, 14–15; 36:6–7)

1. *To be smashed by God's fist* (Ezekiel 35:1–4): They will be completely destroyed.
2. *To suffer a bloodbath* (Ezekiel 35:6–9): God will fill the mountains with their dead since they have no distaste for blood.
3. *To be wiped out* (Ezekiel 35:14–15): Then they will know that he is the Lord.
4. *To be filled with shame* (Ezekiel 36:6–7): They will have their turn at being wiped out.

III. THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL (Ezekiel 36:8–37:28)

A. **The sin** (Ezekiel 36:16–17): Israel defiles her own land by shedding blood and worshiping idols.

B. **The scattering** (Ezekiel 36:18–19): For this the people are scattered among the nations.

C. **The slander** (Ezekiel 36:20–21): This, however, gives rise to a problem, for the pagans are defaming God's name, saying he cannot take care of his own people.

D. **The solution** (Ezekiel 36:8–15, 22–38): God determines to vindicate his great name through the following actions:

1. *He will give Israel crops* (Ezekiel 36:8–12): The ground will be tilled and planted.
2. *He will keep other nations from devouring Israel* (Ezekiel 36:13–15): Other nations will no longer sneer at her.
3. *He will regather his people from among the nations* (Ezekiel 36:22–24): He will bring them back to honor his name.
4. *He will regenerate his people, giving them new hearts* (Ezekiel 36:25–27): Their filth will be washed away.
5. *He will restore his people, allowing them to rebuild their cities and harvest their crops* (Ezekiel 36:28–38): They will be his people, and he will be their God.

E. **The symbols** (Ezekiel 37:1–28): Ezekiel is given two symbols to illustrate all this:

1. *The symbol of the skeletons, illustrating Israel's resurrection* (Ezekiel 37:1–14)
 - a. The miracle of the dead bones (Ezekiel 37:1–10): An amazed Ezekiel sees dry bones in a valley suddenly reassemble themselves and then become covered with muscles, flesh, and skin!
 - b. The meaning of the dead bones (Ezekiel 37:11–14): God explains that he will someday do a similar thing for the nation of Israel!
2. *The symbol of the two sticks, illustrating Israel's reunion* (Ezekiel 37:15–28)
 - a. The merging (Ezekiel 37:15–17): Ezekiel takes two sticks, writing the name **Juda** on one stick and **Ephrai** on the other. These then are joined together in his hand.
 - b. The meaning (Ezekiel 37:18–23): God will someday reunite the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
 - c. The monarchy (Ezekiel 37:24–25): David will then be appointed to rule over both kingdoms.

- d. The mercy (Ezekiel 37:26–28): God will make an everlasting covenant of peace with Israel.

SECTION OUTLINE THIRTEEN (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 38–39)

Ezekiel predicts that Israel will someday be attacked by an enemy confederation led by a warrior named Gog, from the land of Magog.

- I. THE ABHORRENCE OF GOG (Ezekiel 38:1–3): God states his anger concerning the evil plans of Gog.
- II. THE ALLIES OF GOG (Ezekiel 38:4–7): Ezekiel identifies these nations as Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Beth-togarmah.
- III. THE ATTACK BY GOG (Ezekiel 38:8–16)
 - A. **When Gog will attack** (Ezekiel 38:8–11): The invasion will occur “in the latter days” when Israel is at peace in their own land.
 - B. **Why Gog will attack** (Ezekiel 38:12–16): This will be done to plunder and loot.
- IV. THE ANNIHILATION OF GOG (Ezekiel 38:17–39:24)
 - A. **As foretold in the former days** (Ezekiel 38:17–18): This destruction was predicted by the prophets long ago.
 - B. **As fulfilled in the final days** (Ezekiel 38:19–39:24)
 1. *The plan* (Ezekiel 38:19–22): God will accomplish this annihilation by a threefold method:
 - a. A mighty earthquake (Ezekiel 38:19–20): All living things will quake in terror at God’s presence.
 - b. Mutiny among the enemy troops (Ezekiel 38:21) : Their men will turn against each other.
 - c. The use of sword, disease, floods, hailstorms, fire, and brimstone (Ezekiel 38:22)
 2. *The place* (Ezekiel 39:1–6): This will occur on the mountains of Israel.
 3. *The purpose* (Ezekiel 38:23; 39:7–8, 21–24)
 - a. In regard to the Gentile nations (Ezekiel 38:23; 39:21, 23–24): Upon witnessing this destruction, the pagan nations will acknowledge the person and power of the true God.
 - b. In regard to the Jewish nation (Ezekiel 39:7–8, 22): They also will know that Israel’s God is indeed the only true God!
 4. *The purifying* (Ezekiel 39:9–16)
 - a. Seven years of fuel (Ezekiel 39:9–10): There will be sufficient war debris to serve as fuel for the people of Israel for seven years.
 - b. Seven months of funerals (Ezekiel 39:11–16): It will take Israel seven months to bury the dead.
 5. *The proclamation* (Ezekiel 39:17–20): God will personally invite the wild birds and animals to consume the flesh of the fallen enemy warriors.
 - C. THE ASSEMBLING AFTER GOG (Ezekiel 39:25–29): God will then regather, regenerate, and restore his people to their land.

SECTION OUTLINE FOURTEEN (Ezekiel EZEKIEL 40–48)

These chapters describe for us the glories of the Millennium, including facts about the new Temple—its size, its priests, its location, etc.

- I. THE TEMPLE (Ezekiel 40:1–43:27)
 - A. **The man** (Ezekiel 40:1–4): Ezekiel is introduced to a man carrying a measuring stick, his face shining like bronze.
 - B. **The measurement** (Ezekiel 40:5–42:20; 43:13–27): This man proceeds to measure the following:
 1. *The outer court* (Ezekiel 40:5–27)
 2. *The inner court* (Ezekiel 40:28–47): It is 175 feet square.
 3. *The Temple vestibule* (Ezekiel 40:48–49): It is 35 feet in depth and 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ feet wide.
 4. *The Temple itself* (Ezekiel 41:1–26)
 5. *The chamber in the outer court* (Ezekiel 42:1–14): It is 175 feet long and 87 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide.
 6. *The place of separation* (Ezekiel 42:15–20): It is 875 feet on each side.
 7. *The altar of burnt offerings* (Ezekiel 43:13–27)
 - C. **The magnificence** (Ezekiel 43:1–12): Ezekiel, who previously saw the glory of God depart from the Temple, now witnesses its return.
 1. *The sound of God’s glory cloud* (Ezekiel 43:1–5): It is like the roar of rushing waters.
 2. *The speech from God’s glory cloud* (Ezekiel 43:6–12): God reassures Ezekiel that he will someday permanently dwell with Israel!
- III. THE TRUSTEES (Ezekiel 44:1–46:24)
 - A. **The officials** (Ezekiel 44:1–45:17; 46:1–8, 16–18)
 1. *The prince* (Ezekiel 44:1–3; 45:13–17; 46:1–8, 16–18): Here Ezekiel describes an especially important Temple official known only as “the prince.”

2. *The priests and Levites* (Ezekiel 44:4–45:12): The Levites, except for the family of Zadok, will no longer be able to serve as priests, because they encouraged the people to worship foreign gods.

B. **The offerings** (Ezekiel 45:18–25; 46:9–15, 19–24): On the first day of each new year, in the early spring, they are to sacrifice a bull to purify the Temple.

V. THE TERRITORY (Ezekiel 47:1–48:35)

A. **Facts concerning the millennial soil** (Ezekiel 47:1–48:29)

1. *The river* (Ezekiel 47:1–12): Water flows from the Temple to the Dead Sea, bringing new life to Israel!

2. *The dimensions* (Ezekiel 47:13–23): Here the northern, southern, eastern, and western dimensions are given.

3. *The tribal land divisions* (Ezekiel 48:1–29): The specific land area for each tribe is now allotted.

B. **Facts concerning the millennial city** (Ezekiel 48:30–35)

1. *The gates in the city* (Ezekiel 48:30–34): It has 12 gates, each gate bearing the name of one of the Old Testament tribes.

2. *The name of the city* (Ezekiel 48:35) : It is called “Yahweh-Shammah,” meaning, “The LORD Is There.”

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

The Christian Church at large has generally neglected this book. Some have found it fanciful or fail to get past the intricate visions Ezekiel was given in chapter one and elsewhere. The cultists, critics and Cabbalists have relied upon this book to further their corrupt theological view of the Bible. Added to this is the great difficulty the Jews had over getting this book included in their Tenach, our Old Testament. Very little is known regarding the process the Jews used to collect the various Old Testament books into their Scriptures. What is known is the various dates of books acceptance through their usage. The Old Testament itself does furnish some hints as to how the ancient Hebrews preserved their writings. For example in Exodus 40:20 it is stated that the “testimony,” by which is meant the two tables of the law containing the Ten Commandments, was put into the ark of the covenant for safekeeping. In Deuteronomy 31:9, 24–26, the laws of Deuteronomy are said to have been delivered to the sons of Levi, and by them deposited “by the side of the ark ... that it may be for a witness against you.” One other passage shows an acceptance of the books of the Law in 2 Kings 22:8. Here is a story regarding the “finding” of the “book of the law” and how Josiah the king on the basis of it instituted religious reforms while commanded the people to obey its precepts. This is an instance in which the Law, is regarded as authoritative as God’s Word. The king and his assistants immediately recognized that it contains the Word of God (2 Kings 22:13, 18). While they recognize its authority nothing is said of the process that was used to determine its inclusion into their Scripture. There is a tremendous amount of discussion regarding this in the theological literature. What is important to understand is that despite significant disputes regarding the book of Ezekiel’s authority it has been placed in to the Jewish Old Testament. Further much of it has been found in the Dead Sea Scrolls Cir. 200 B.C. and at Masada. The fragments, which survived range over the course of the entire book from chapters 1 to 41. The closest to any formal Jewish council recognizing the totality of the Old Testament was the Council of Jamnia.

The Council of Jamnia, which seems to have taken place around 90 AD established and closed the canon authoritatively for nearly all Jews. It has been their canon ever since. Yet it should be noted that the council did not speak for all Jews, for there were Jews living in Ethiopia who either did not hear of it or did not accept the decision of Jamnia. To this day they use a different canon than their Israeli brethren.¹

The Hebrew Bible refers to Yavne’el (Joshua 15:11; 2 Chronicles 26:6-8) (sometimes transliterated as Jebneel), a border city between the tribal allotments of Judah and Dan.

In Roman times, the city was known as Jamnia, also spelled Jamnia. It was bequeathed by King Herod upon his death to his sister Salome. Upon her death it passed to Emperor Augustus who managed it as a private imperial estate, a status it was to maintain for at least a century.

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai moved the Sanhedrin to Yavne. Some scholars believe the Council of Yavne (Jamnia) met there. The Sanhedrin left Yavne for Usha in 80 AD and returned in 116 AD. This group of Rabbi’s who were survivors of the Roman annihilation of Jerusalem in 70 AD met at Jamnia and canonized a Hebrew Scripture specifically devoid of Greek writings. Any work of scripture not originally written in Hebrew was discarded as unclean.

This codification of the Hebrew Bible by the Jewish Rabbi’s cancelled for the Jews the authority, not only of the contested books we now call apocryphal, but also the popular Septuagint itself that foreign Jews had been using for the previous 300 years. That work had earlier been authorized for publication by the Jewish Sanhedrin in Jerusalem for uses by the Jews of the Dispersion whose language was primarily Greek.

Jamnia was a seminal decision because it isolated Christians from Jews on the basis, not just of scripture, but of language as well. Its importance for the book of Ezekiel was its acceptance into the Hebrew Bible once and for all. There were disputes over its final

acceptance. The centered around its apparent contradiction to the Mosaic Law in several areas, the visions of God's Throne produced speculative ideas such as the Merkaba, and the dimensions of the Temple did not coincide with either the first or second Temples.

One Hananiah ben Hezekiah ben Garon is said to be the Rabbi as one of several who weighed in on the question of the canonization of the Book of Ezekiel. The contradictions of the Book of Ezekiel are said to have been resolved in the aliyah, or upper chamber, of his house of study. He took 300 barrels of oil along with him, and shut himself at that place, where he looked up and studied their claims, until he was able to resolve the contradictions. Mostly it was decided that the images and descriptions in the book are prophecies of future events and not to be duplicates of prior periods. 2

The early Christians stuck to the Greek Old Testament and the Jews consecrated themselves on the Hebrew Old Testament decided on by the Rabbi's at Jamnia.

The early Christians had good reason for their decision to retain the Greek scriptures. Not only did the entire pagan world speak Greek, but according to the Talmud, at the time Jesus preached, Hebrew and Greek scrolls hung side by side in Herod's Temple. Even the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran include fragments written in both languages. When Christ's disciples wrote the New Testament books, they, too were composed in the same Greek language, allowing the world at large to read them.

The Jewish action, fixated as it was on the Greek language, nullified both sets of Christian books. The New Testament and the apocryphal books were both relegated to pagan classification and permanently discarded.

Within this book we see a significant amount of God's plan for the future includes the modern Zionist movement (Jews returning to Israel in unbelief), an imminent Russian led invasion of Israel, and the reinstatement of the Old Testament animal sacrificial system in a Millennial Temple yet future to us in Jerusalem.

- Wenger, Paul D. The Journey from Texts to Translations, The Origin and Development of the Bible, 1999 BridgePoint Books Division of Baker Books Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287 pgs.112-13

Ezekiel 1:1-14

INTRODUCTION TO THE LIVING CREATURES

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, 3 the word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of Jehovah was there upon him. 4 And I looked, and, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with a fire infolding itself, and a brightness round about it, and out of the midst thereof as it were glowing metal, out of the midst of the fire. 5 And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man; 6 and every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings. 7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished brass. 8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings thus: 9 their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. 10As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle. 11 And their faces and their wings were separate above; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. 12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; they turned not when they went. 13As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches: the fire went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. 14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning (ASV, 1901).

THE HEAVENS OPENED TO EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 1:1-3 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, 3 the word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of Jehovah was there upon him (ASV, 1901).

In this first verse of the Book of Ezekiel we are given the exact timing of the visions he received. Even though there is much disagreement amongst commentators regarding the specific designation of the term “thirtieth year” the thirtieth year is most appropriately designated as the thirtieth year of his life. He was in the resettlement by the river Chebar a canal off the Euphrates River that flowed to the east of Babylon. Since he was taken captive in March of 597 B.C. along with king Jehoiachin this first vision would be July 31, 593 B.C. As Ezekiel was thirty years old and saw heaven open at the banks of a river so was the case with the Lord Jesus. He was thirty years of age, when He saw heaven open at His baptism in Jordan (Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:21). Starting with the introduction to his prophetic ministry Ezekiel cites five notable experiences, which remain constant throughout his prophetic career.

- The Heavens were opened.
- He saw visions of God.
- The Word of the Lord came upon him.
- The hand of the Lord was upon him.

The visions came solely to him (Hebrew *hai* translated as expressly). The Hebrew word *hai* is used in Jeremiah and Ezekiel to describe the reception of God Word to the prophet.

Other men for whom God opened the Heavens were Daniel, Isaiah, Elisha, Stephen, Paul and John. The phrase “the hand of the Lord was upon him” or “came upon me” is found exactly seven times in the Book of Ezekiel 1:3; 3:14, 22; Ezek 8:1; 33:22; 37:1, 40:1. This describes Ezekiel’s direction for his ministry. He was not acting on his own. These visions were from God who constrained him to minister in a very detailed manner to the nation Israel at a critical time in their overall history when they would have been quite sensitive and receptive to God’s Word. Prophetic divine revelation to a legitimate biblical prophet is an overpowering experience.

Many commentators have had difficulty with the following passages. The imagery opened up to Ezekiel are impossible to describe using human terms. As a result he uses similes and metaphors to describe the indescribable (as and like). He sees visions within the throne of God that he cannot describe but he must do so anyway. He is attempting to put the magnificence of the infinite into our finite minds. This then is the task of the prophet, to convey the infinite to the finite.

THE STORM FROM THE NORTH

Ezekiel 1:4 And I looked, and, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with a fire infolding itself, and a brightness round about it, and out of the midst thereof as it were glowing metal, out of the midst of the fire (ASV, 1901).

The vision opens with Ezekiel looking and focusing his attention on the north where a stormy wind, a great cloud, with a fire infolding itself is in view. Jeremiah 1:14 clearly explain that the Babylonians came and will come again from the north. He said, “From the north the misfortune will break forth.” This great cloud with a stormy wind give us the impression that there will be an appearance of God as in other Scriptures (Isaiah 29:6; Psalm 18:7-15, 104:3). The fire infolding itself gives the imagery of judgment, which was threatening to come upon Judah for her sins. Fire is associated with Judgment in the Scriptures (Amos 7:4; Jeremiah 15:14; Isaiah 4:4; 29:6; 66:16; Ezekiel 28:18; 30:8; Amos 1:14; Zechariah 13:9; etc.). This description of the fire lets us realize that the fire is consuming itself without expiring. It is essentially taking or engulfing itself. It is feeding or kindling itself, which is adding its self as fuel to continue the fire. It is fire feeding fire! Picture a great wind with clouds bringing a fire consuming and feeding itself as the flames circle inward perpetually without end. This description of the consuming fire only appears here and Exodus 9:24 in the entire Bible where God’s judgment is coming on Egypt in a series of plagues. Moses relates the experience as, “So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.” Next the prophet relates a metal like substance that projects out of the middle of the fire that has the property of glowing as a red-hot iron that has been prepared for special work as in a blacksmith’s forge. The Hebrew text designates the color of the fire and the metal like object as *chashmal*. Rashi a medieval French Jewish commentator called *chashmal* the name of an angel. He as well as others saw the celestial beings in the fire, which are about to be described. The Hebrew, *chashmal*, is from two roots, “smooth” and “brass” (Ezekiel 1:7; Revelation 1:15). The Septuagint and Vulgate translate it, “electrum”; a brilliant metal compounded of gold and silver.

THE CHERUBIM

Ezekiel 1:5-11 And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man; 6 and every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings. 7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf’s foot; and they sparkled like burnished brass. 8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings thus: 9 their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when

they went; they went every one straight forward. 10 As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle. 11 And their faces and their wings were separate above; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies (ASV, 1901).

These four living creatures are identified as Cherubim in Ezekiel 10:5,20. The Hebrew word for living creature is chayot and it is used in a number of places in the Old Testament. For example we see it in the creation account (Genesis 1:20-21). Cherubim were placed on the top of the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. They guarded with flaming swords the Garden of Eden, which closed off access to the Garden. Their likeness was embroidered on the curtain of the Tabernacle to guard the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:31). Isaiah had a vision of Heaven opening up and a lower order of celestial beings was revealed to him, which are the Seraphim (Isaiah 6:2). However the apostle John saw the same four living beings in the Throne Room of God and around God (Revelation 4:1-5:14). Somehow each of these cherubim had a likeness of a human man. Each had four faces and four wings with human hands under the wings. The wings touched each other just and the wings of the cherubim touched each other across the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies (1 Kings 6:27). The human form in several expressions dominates the characteristics of the cherubim. Human form supersedes the other the other characteristics and is their predominate character. Yet every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings, which correspond to the human characteristics of each one. This is not a likeness of God, which is expressly forbidden (Exodus 20:4). These are creatures of His not Him. He uses them as His instruments.

They are the celestial beings that are closest to Him, obedient to His will and they are used for His highest purposes. They are used for His government and in the Revelation they are seen in the midst of and around the Throne. Here they are underneath it for here the view Ezekiel is given is from the vantage point of the earth but in the Revelation Throne Room scenes (Revelation 4:1-5:14) John's vision is right there in Heaven so he sees them covering (encircling) the Throne. We see a similar scene in Ezekiel 28 describing the fall of the anointed cherub Halal (Lucifer) who became Satan the adversary after his fall. He was covering the throne of God and was above it as the arch cherub.

So while the appearance of the cherubim has the dominant characteristic of a human (first character listed as a general appearance) they also have feet like an ox which are upright not at 90° angles from the human leg calf. They sparkle as glowing brass like the Revelation scene where John sees the Lord Jesus in His resurrected powerful form preparing to extract vengeance on the earth (Revelation 1:15). The sole of the foot in this vision is said to be like fine glowing brass as if they were burned in a furnace. There is an implication of trampling the earth in righteous judgment.

They all had human hands under their wings. Contrasted to the legs and feet the hand provided them with dexterity, which the lower extremities did not have. The hand is the symbol of leading power, guided by skillfulness (Psalm 78:72). The creatures were not quadrupedal, that is like an animal with four feet, they were like a human. Their hands are under wings, which show that they are fitted for service in the celestial sphere. The wings are joined together so there is perfect unity of action among the four living creatures. That is they moved together in perfect harmony of motion as the Lord directs. He guides and governs their actions. In the Throne Room scene in the Revelation the four living creatures are separated but here they are united for a different purpose.

Their faces; they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle. Here as mentioned the dominant feature is of a man followed by a lion then an ox and finally an eagle. In the Revelation the order of their likeness is Lion first followed by man, calf (ox) and a flying eagle. The activity seems to dictate their order. In Revelation the Lion of the Tribe of Judah our Lord Jesus is taking the reins of the control of the earth to extract vengeance on sin when He takes the seven-sealed scroll, the title deed to the earth. Here the focus is on man indicating God's tenderness of judgment. It will not be a total devastation of the earth as in the Tribulation.

The human face is seen first. On the right Ezekiel sees the lion, on the left the ox, and the face of the eagle is behind.

(1) The human face represents the thought that man, as made "after the image of God" (Genesis 1:27), is the highest symbol of the Eternal.

(2) The lion is the emblem of sovereignty, both in the temple (1 Kings 7:29) and in Solomon's palace (1 Kings 10:20; 2 Chronicles 9:18, 19).

(3) The ox here, also in 1 Kings 7:25, 44, is aligned with the lion, as demonstrated in the twelve oxen that supported the "sea" or "laver" in the temple clearly indicated work or service. Here also we have a kind of sovereignty—the natural symbol of a strength made subservient to human uses.

(4) The eagle is the emblem of kingly power, and is used elsewhere (Ezekiel 17:3, 7). The human face represents the Son of man who shared in the glory of the Father; the ox with that of his sacrifice; the lion with that of his sovereignty over Israel, as the Lion of the tribe of

Judah (Revelation 5:5); and the eagle with His bearing His people as on eagles' wings, into the highest heavens (Exodus 19:4;

Deuteronomy 32:11).

There is a direct comparison to the Gospels and the Cherubim. The linkage of the four aspects of the Cherubim to the Gospels has been recognized since the early Church fathers.³ The Fathers identified them with the four Gospels,

1. Matthew the lion,
2. Mark the ox,
3. Luke the man,
4. John the eagle:

What is interesting regarding these symbols is that they do not express the personal character of the Evangelists, but the different characteristics of the Lord Jesus our Christ in relation to the world (four being the number referring to the entire world, for example, the four quarters of the world).

1. The Lion expressing royalty, as Matthew describes this feature of Christ; The Lion of the Tribe of Judah.
2. The Ox, laboring in endurance, which is Christ's prominent characteristic in Mark.
3. The Man, brotherly sympathy with the whole race of man, Christ's prominent feature in Luke;
4. The Eagle, soaring majesty, prominent in John's description of Christ as the Divine Word.

This section of Scripture closes with; and their faces and their wings were separate above; i.e. were stretched upward, touching the neighboring wings at the tip, and so "joined," while the other two covered the bodies and were never stretched. The effect was to form a box like pattern with a cherub at each corner. Because they were ministering in God's presence they covered their bodies in holy reverence as did Isaiah see the Seraphim who did the same in Heaven (Isaiah 6:1-3). This is just like the way the cherubim were represented on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant.