

Ezekiel

Ezekiel: His name means “*May God strengthen/harden*” [*yehezqel*]. (Our English spelling is based on the Greek OT [*Iezekiel*], not the Hebrew.) He seems to have been born @ 623 BC. He was a priest-prophet (cf. 1:3) deported to Babylon in @ 597 BC (2 Kings 24:10-17) where he ministered in the Exile. His wife dies in 24:15-24.

Propositions for Preaching From Ezekiel (Daniel Block)

Proposition 1: *In order to preach from Ezekiel with authority and clarity, we need to understand the prophet—his character (ethos), passion (pathos), and argumentation (logos).*

Proposition 2: *In order to preach from Ezekiel with authority and clarity, we need to understand his audience.*

Proposition 3: *In order to preach from Ezekiel with authority and clarity, we need to understand the nature and structure of the book.*

Proposition 4: *In order to preach from Ezekiel with authority and clarity, we need to understand the message that Ezekiel proclaims.*

Proposition 5: *In order to preach from Ezekiel with authority and clarity, we need to understand Ezekiel’s rhetorical and homiletical strategy.*

Proposition 6: *In order to preach from Ezekiel with authority and clarity, we need to plan carefully.*

Proposition 7: *In order to preach from Ezekiel with authority and clarity for the church, we need to link his message with that of the New Testament responsibly.*

Time frame: before and slightly after the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. The dated messages cover @ 22 years, in mostly chronological order. This covers Ezekiel’s approximate ages of 30-52.

| <u>Reference</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Event</u> |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1:1–2 | July 31, 593 BC | Beginning of ministry |
| 8:1 | Sept. 17, 592 BC | Vision of idolatry |
| 20:1 | Aug. 14/17, 591 BC | Deportation of elders |
| 24:1 | Jan. 15, 588 BC | The siege begins |
| 26:1 | Feb. 12, 586 BC? | Oracle against Tyre |
| 29:1 | Jan. 7, 587 BC | Oracle against Egypt |
| 29:17 | Apr. 26, 571 BC | Ending of ministry |
| 30:20 | Apr. 29, 587 BC | Pharaoh’s broken arm |
| 31:1 | June 21, 587 BC | Oracle against Pharaoh |
| 32:1 | Mar. 3, 585 BC | Lament over Pharaoh |
| 32:17 | Mar. 17, 585 BC? | Pharaoh in Sheol |
| 33:21 | Jan. 8, 585 BC | The city has fallen |
| 40:1 | Apr. 28, 573 BC | Vision of the new Jerusalem |

There are four introductions in chapters 1-24 (1:1-3; 8:1; 14:1-2; and 20:1-2). These are reflected in the overall outline.

The book opens with the vision of the glory of God arriving in Babylonia. This conveys one of the book's major themes: Yahweh is abandoning his temple in Jerusalem (cf. chap. 8) and his presence will now be among the exiles. The book closes with the reversal of this: God's glory arrives back at the temple in Jerusalem—after God's judgment upon the city, initiating a new and glorious era.

The book is arranged and composed to inspire the exiled audience to sever their emotional ties with the doomed temple in Jerusalem and to place their trust in Yahweh, whose glorious presence is now among them and whose glorious presence will one day return with them to their homeland. (David Dorsey, emphasis mine)

Key concepts:

- “For the sake of My name” (15x; cf. 20:9, 14, 22, 39, 44; 36:20-23; 39:7, 25; 43:7-8)
- “Know that I am Yahweh” (@ 65x)
- “Adonai (the Sovereign) Yahweh” (@ 215x)
- “son of man” (@ 90x)
- “word of Yahweh came to me” (@ 45x)
- Spirit/spirit (@ 50x)

Ezekiel and other Scripture:

- Most of Ezekiel's @ 40 OT references are from the Law.
 - He mentions Daniel in 14:14, 20; 28:3
- There are seven OT echoes of Ezekiel, including: 2 Chron. 35:5-6; Ps. 106:8, 47; Joel 2:28-29; Zech. 2:1; 11:4-16
- There are three NT echoes of Ezekiel, including: Rom. 2:24 (36:20, 22); 2 Cor. 6:16-18 (20:34, 41; 37:27); and Rev. 10:9 (3:3)

The Structure of the Book of Ezekiel by Daniel Block

1) Messages of Judgment Against Israel (1-24)

- a) The Call—1-3
- b) Signs and Visions—4-11
- c) Oracles of Judgment—12-24

2) Message of Hope for Israel (25-48)

- a) Oracles against the Nations—25-32
- b) The Restoration of Israel—33-39
- c) The Reconstitution of Israel—40-48

Overall outline by David Dorsey
Visions of the Glory of God

- 1) Ezekiel's call and **first** collection of messages about Israel's coming judgment (1:1–7:27)
- 2) **Second** collection of messages about Israel's coming judgment (8:1–13:23)
- 3) **Third** collection of messages about Israel's coming judgment (14:1–19:14)
- 4) **Fourth** collection of messages about Israel's coming judgment (20:1–24:27)
- 5) Oracles against the nations (25:1–32:32)
- 6) Messages about Israel's punishment and future restoration (33:1–39:29)
- 7) Vision of the new temple and the new land (40:1–48:35)

Ezekiel's messianic aspects: (MBC)

- a sprig from the line of David (17:22); an allusion to Is 11:1
- the future rightful King (Ezek. 21:26, 27; cf. Gen. 49:10; Rev. 5:5)
- the horn the Lord will cause to sprout, an intertextual link to the Davidic promise in Ps 132:17
- the True Shepherd who will restore Israel (Ezek. 34:11–31; cf. Jer. 23:5–6; Jn 10:1–10)
- the King Messiah and Son of David who will reign over the messianic kingdom from Jerusalem (Ezek. 37:15–28).

Part one: Ezekiel's call and first collection of messages about Israel's coming judgment (1:1–7:27) [July 31, 593 BC]

- 1) **Vision 1:** Ezekiel's Call and commissioning near the Chebar River (1:1–3:11)
 - *the hand of Yahweh was upon him* (1:3)
 - vision of the glory of Yahweh (1:22-28)
 - vision followed by Ezekiel's falling facedown, then receiving Yahweh's message about his prophetic task
- a) Introduction: 1:1-3
 - Note the shift from first person (1:1) to third person (1:2-3)
 - i) The **date:** July 31, 593 BC
 - (1) Men could begin serving as priests at age 30 (Num. 4:3, 23, etc.)
 - (2) He has been in Exile for 4-5 years.
 - ii) The **location:** the Chebar [Kebar] canal/aqueduct of the Euphrates River. (@ 60 miles southeast of Babylon or @ 125 miles south of Baghdad)
 - (1) This seems to be part of "*the waters of Babylon*" in Ps. 137:1.
 - iii) The **identity:** his age, occupation, father, and location
 - (1) Chaldean is an ethnic name, whereas Babylon is a political name.
 - iv) The **theme:** visions of God or visions from God? (cf. 1:1, 28)
- b) Vision for the work: 1:4-2:7
 - Four principles of interpreting visions (Geoffrey Grogan)
 - Seek to understand the major idea presented through the vision and do not dwell on minutiae. This guideline is underscored in the second principle.
 - Follow the divine interpretations normally accompanying the visions. These divine interpretations concentrate on the overall concept rather than on details.
 - Be keenly aware of parallel passages and the harmony of Scripture, since the prophets normally sought to apply past revelations of God to their contemporary situations. The general prophetic message among the prophets is essentially the same.
 - Use the same approach with the symbols and imagery of visionary literature as used with figurative language. Thus symbols and imagery are properly understood as figures and are not to be taken literally.
 - The basic idea of this chariot is the mobile and unhindered presence of God. (Abner Chou)
 - i) **Element one:** the glowing, yellowish, lightning storm cloud (1:4)
 - (1) Accompanied by a strong north wind.
 - ii) **Element two/layer one:** four composite animate beings (1:5-14)
 - (1) These are the cherubim of 10:1-22, esp. 10:20
 - (2) Their appearance (1:5-11, 13)
 - (a) Humanoid (upright) form (1:5-9, 13)
 - (i) Four faces, four wings, legs, feet, hands
 - 1. Seraphs have six wings (cf. Is. 6:2)

- (ii) Glowing like burning coals and torches
- (b) Faces (1:10-11)
 - (i) Human, lion (wild), bull (domestic), eagle (air)
- (c) Their activity (1:9, 12, 14)
- iii) **Element three/layer two:** four composite wheels (1:15-21) (cf. Dan. 7:9)
 - (1) Their yellow-green appearance (1:15-16, 18)
 - (2) Their synchronized, omni-directional activity (1:17-21)
- iv) **Element four/layer three:** the surface/platform (1:22-25)
 - (1) The ice/crystal-like appearance (1:22-23) (cf. Rev. 4:6)
 - (2) The cacophonous sounds of wings and an unknown source/voice (1:24-25)
 - (a) Shaddai is used 2x in Ezekiel. (1:24; 10:5)
- v) **Element five/layer four:** the “throne” and the theophany itself (1:26-28)
 - (1) The superior location (1:26a)
 - (2) The blueish appearance (1:26b)
 - (3) The majestic Enthroned One (1:26c-28b) (cf. Rev. 4:3)
 - (a) Humanoid, yellowish-reddish, rainbow-like-radiance
 - (b) Yahweh’s glory is mentioned 16x in Ezekiel (1:28; 3:12, 23; 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23; 39:21; 43:2 [2x], 4-5; 44:4)
 - (4) The worshipful response to God’s omnipresence (1:28c) (cf. Rev. 1:17)
 - (a) For Ezekiel the priest, the God whom he longed to serve in the temple in Jerusalem is now seen not only outside the temple but with His people in the land of exile.
- vi) **The difficult task** (2:1-7)
 - (1) Preparation for the difficult task (2:1-2)
 - (a) “Son of man” (lit. “son of Adam”)
 - (i) Used @ 90x in Ezekiel, but only 6x elsewhere in the OT.
 - (ii) Ezekiel is named only in 1:3 & 24:24.
 - (b) God’s command is accompanied by Spirit-enabled obedience.
 - (2) Description of the difficult task (2:3-7)
 - (a) His defiant audience: limited to those who are rebels, covenant-violators, and tenaciously unwilling to obey. (cf. 2:2, 4, 6, 8; 3:9, 26, 27; 12:2, 3, 9, 25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6)
 - (i) Still-faced (external stubbornness) and strong-hearted (internal hardness)
 - (b) His authoritative message: limited to “*Thus says Adonai Yahweh*”
 - (c) His encouraging reward: *they will know that a prophet has been among them*
 - (d) His responses to their response: do not fear or be dismayed (cf. 3:9-11)
 - (i) The increasing degree of opposition: thistles, briars, scorpions
 - (ii) Nowhere does the book hint that he cowered in fear or hesitated to proclaim God’s message. (Charles Dyer)
 - (e) His message restated: limited to *you shall speak My words to them*

- (i) Ezekiel's message was not to be conditioned on his listener's response. (Geoffrey Grogan)
- (3) Remember our own past and the current condition of our unbelieving audience: Col. 1:21; Eph. 4:17, 18
- c) The message for the work (2:8-3:11)
 - Refers to Exo. 4:10
 - i) The initial four commands to internalize God's Word. (2:8-9)
 - (1) The prophet is warned not to let himself be infected by the Israelite disease—insubordination to the covenant Lord, which was expressed fundamentally in refusing to listen to Yahweh. (Daniel Block)
 - ii) The three-fold content of the papyrus (not parchment/leather) scroll (2:10)
 - (1) Cf. Rev. 5:1 as another example
 - (2) Lamentations, sighing, and woe (possibly chapters 4-32)
 - (3) This may explain Ezekiel's second commission in chapter 33.
 - iii) The second four commands (3:1-2)
 - iv) Obedience to the **first** pair of commands (3:3)
 - (1) His obedience stands in contrast to Israel's disobedience.
 - (2) Cf. Ps. 19:10; 119:103; Prov. 16:24; 24:13-14; Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:10
 - v) Obedience to the **second** pair of commands (3:4-7)
 - (1) There are no language or cultural barriers with his primary audience.
 - (a) Foreign languages were viewed as "deep of lip and hard/heavy of tongue." In other words, hard to speak.
 - (b) Ezekiel was not sent to the Babylonians, but the Jews in general.
 - (2) "Strong/stubborn" [*hazaq*] is a word play on Ezekiel's name.
 - (a) Hardness of **heart** is a bigger obstacle than hardness of **tongue**.
 - (b) Thankfully there are positive exceptions like Daniel, Jeremiah, Habakkuk.
 - vi) God enables his courageous, unyielding determination (3:8-9) (cf. 2:6)
 - (1) Note the comparison of word pictures in 3:7-8.
 - (a) "Diamond" (or some similar stone) was considered the hardest stone at this time. (cf. Jer. 1:18-19)
 - (2) "Strong/hard" [*hazaq*] is also a word play on Ezekiel's name.
 - (3) Had the destruction of Jerusalem softened the hearts of Israel?
 - (4) The calling is not to success (from a human standpoint) but to faithfulness. (Daniel Block)
 - vii) Additional similar commands (3:10-11) (cf. 2:5, 7)
 - (1) Regardless of the response of his audience, Ezekiel was to communicate the truth revealed by Adonai (the Sovereign) Yahweh.
 - (2) He was not to be influenced by their reactions to his words, but he was to declare authoritatively a message that was not his own. (John Taylor)

- 2) **Vision 2:** Ezekiel receives further instructions about his task (3:12–21)
- *the hand of Yahweh was upon me* (3:14)
 - vision of the glory of Yahweh (3:12–13)
 - vision followed by Ezekiel’s being overwhelmed, then receiving Yahweh’s message about his prophetic task
- a) Things he heard (3:12-13)
- i) Benediction: “*Blessed be the glory of Yahweh in His place.*”
 - (1) Whose voice?
 - ii) From the cherubim’s wings and the wheels
- b) Things he did (or didn’t) do (3:14-15)
- i) He experiences consuming affections (righteous indignation?) often associated with an intense spiritual encounter.
 - ii) Transported in a vision to Tel-abib and sits (apparently silent) for seven days.
 - (1) This may be associated with Ezekiel being a priest. (cf. Lev. 8:33)
 - (2) This may be associated with the time necessary to process disorienting things in his affections, intellectually, and spiritually.
 - iii) His silent presence results in consternation.
 - (1) Some translations read it was in the hearts of the guilty Jews in Exile. (LSB, NASB)
 - (a) The verb form (Hiphil) supports this choice.
 - (2) Many translations read it was in Ezekiel’s own heart. (NET, LEB, ESV, NIV, NJK, CSB, KJV, Geneva)
 - (a) The encounter with God, the digestion of the scroll, the charge to go and preach to an unresponsive audience, the hardening of his forehead, the sound of the throne-chariot, and the pressure of the hand of Yahweh upon him have left Ezekiel in a wretched state—socially ostracized, physically exhausted, and emotionally disturbed. (Daniel Block)
- c) The responsibility and accountability of the watchman (3:16-21)
- i) Divine timing (3:16)
 - (1) Yahweh gives Ezekiel time to process all that is happening.
 - (2) Ezekiel uses “the word of Yahweh came to me” @ 50x.
 - (a) Cf. the same phrase in Jeremiah (10x) and Zechariah (2x)
 - ii) Divine appointment (3:17)
 - (1) To function effectively as a lookout or sentry, he must know he is vigilantly looking for impending danger, what he should do when he sees it, and the consequences for not warning others.
 - (2) This appointment of Ezekiel is an act of grace to the rebellious Jews.
 - (3) Yahweh, who poses as the enemy, also dictates the nature and timing (*whenever*) of the alarms. Many in Israel would have found this notion shocking. The God of Israel is the danger against whose arrival the people are to be warned! He is coming as judge to pass the death sentence on his people. (Daniel Block)

- iii) Divine message (3:18-21)
- (1) Warning the wicked (3:18-19)
 - (a) Case # 1: Failure to warn the rebels (3:18)
 - (b) Case # 2: Failure of the rebels to obey the warning (3:19)
 - (2) Warning the outwardly obedient (3:20-21)
 - (a) Case # 3: Disobedience to the warning (3:20)
 - (b) Case # 4: Obedience to the warning (3:21)
 - (3) Additional thoughts:
 - (a) Ezekiel's responsibility ends with providing the warning. (FSB)
 - (b) Ezekiel was not accountable for the response to his message but was only accountable to obey God by delivering His message. (MBC)
 - (c) Ezekiel may have been influenced by the older prophet Jeremiah. (cf. Jer. 6:16-21; 29:1-32)
 - (d) Faithfulness in service is measured not by effectiveness but by fidelity to the divine charge. (Daniel Block)
- 3) **Vision 3:** even more instructions about Ezekiel's task (3:22–27)
- *the hand of Yahweh was upon me* (3:22)
 - vision of the glory of Yahweh (3:23)
 - vision followed by Ezekiel's falling facedown, then receiving Yahweh's message about his prophetic task
 - this appears to run all the way through 8:4
- a) A new, unspecified location of ministry (3:22-23a)
 - b) A repeated vision of Yahweh's glory in Babylon (3:23b) (cf. 1:28)
 - c) A Spirit-enabled ministry (3:24a)
 - d) A restricted ministry (3:24b-26)
 - i) The three restrictions: modified seclusion (cf. 8:1), prevention of movement (hostile or compassionate?), and temporarily incapable of speech (as long as seven years; cf. 33:21-22).
 - e) A restored ministry (3:27)
 - i) Obedience: speak God's message at God's time
 - ii) Possible responses: (cf. Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43)
 - (1) Acceptance/obedience: *he who hears, let him hear*
 - (2) Refusal: *he who refuses, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.*

- 4) **Symbolic action:** the siege of Jerusalem, a clay tile/brick, and unclean bread (4:1–17)
- begins: *and you, son of man, take for yourself*
 - Appears to take place @ seven years before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.
- a) The clay tile/brick (4:1-8)
- Ancient Near Eastern bricks were 10 to 24 inches long and 6 to 13 1/2 inches wide. (NET Bible)
- i) **The first lesson:** the **fact** of the siege of Jerusalem (4:1-3) (cf. Isa. 29:3)
- The “Let’s play army!” object lesson
 - (1) Fulfilled in 2 Kings 25:1
 - (2) An iron plate/griddle used for preparing grain offerings (cf. Lev. 2:5)
 - (3) Ezekiel’s face against Jerusalem reflects Yahweh’s face against Israel (cf. Lev. 26:17)
- ii) **The second lesson:** sin and its consequences for both parts of Israel (4:4-8)
- He was not tied up 24 hours per day (cf. 4:9-17)
 - The significance of the number of days is not clear. Does it cover the time of their past sinning or the time of their future punishment?
 - (1) Generally: relation to all the tribes of Israel (4:4-5)
 - (2) Specifically: relation to the southern tribe of Judah (4:6)
 - (3) Reflecting God’s preparation against Israel (4:7)
 - (a) “Baring one’s arm” is like “rolling up your sleeves.” (cf. Is. 52:10)
 - (4) Reflecting Israel’s loss of freedom (4:8)
- b) The unclean bread (4:9-17) (the **length & severity** of the siege of Jerusalem)
- This is not a required recipe or diet for us. It is a symbol of judgment.
- i) The menu (4:9-12)
- (1) The ingredients in his diet: wheat & barley are the only normal ones.
 - (a) This is an abnormal blend of superior and inferior grains and legumes. (cf. 2 Sam. 17:27-29)
 - (2) The duration of his diet: 390 days
 - (3) The timing of his rations: “from time to time” means at specific times
 - (4) His near-starvation rations: @ 8-9 oz. of bread, @ 20 oz. of water
 - (a) Leading to malnutrition and dehydration and resulting symptoms
 - (5) The significance of using human excrement: it makes him unclean.
- ii) The significance (4:13-17)
- (1) Yahweh’s interpretation (4:13)
 - (2) Ezekiel’s innocent disgust (4:14)
 - (3) Yahweh’s merciful “compromise” (4:15)
 - (4) Yahweh’s explanation of His role in their discipline (4:16-17)
 - (a) Echoes of the curses in Deut. 28:15-68 and Lev. 26:14-45.

- 5) **Symbolic action:** exile and judgment and Ezekiel's hair (5:1–17)
- begins: *and you, son of man, take for yourself*
 - This addresses the **results** of the siege of Jerusalem.
- a) Just a shave and a haircut? (5:1-4)
- Shaving was normally done in Israel for *mourning* (Jer. 7:29), *purification* (Num. 8:7), *humiliation* (Is. 7:20), or related to a vow (Acts 18:18).
 - (Cf. priests in Lev. 21:5) (Cf. Nazirites in Num. 6:18)
 - i) The awkward blade (5:1a)
 - ii) The unusual three-fold division of his hair (5:1b-2)
 - iii) The leftovers are worn and burned (5:3-4)
 - (1) The Remnant is spared, the others destroyed.
- b) The Sovereign explains the symbol (5:5-12)
- i) Their rebellion and rejection are worse than the Gentile nations, despite Israel's privileged position. (5:5-6) (cf. Deut. 12:5; Is. 2:1-4)
 - (1) Some world maps from the Middle Ages, both Jewish and Christian, oriented the world around Jerusalem.
 - (2) They had been warned about this potential danger. (cf. Lev. 26:14-15)
 - ii) Unique, shocking judgment of multi-generational cannibalism (5:7-10) (
 - (1) They sinned against greater revelation. (5:7-8)
 - (2) This is a one-time judgment. (5:9)
 - (3) Cannibalism and dispersion are part of Yahweh's judgment against them. (5:10) (cf. Deut. 28:52-57; 2 Kings 6:29; Jer. 19:9; Lam. 2:20; 4:10)
 - (4) The world around them was watching.
 - iii) The three-fold judgment (5:11-12) (cf. Lev. 26:25, 33)
 - (1) The Sovereign One takes an oath to withdraw His compassion and bring plague/famine, slaughter, and exile. (cf. 5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; 16:48; 17:16, 19; 18:3; 20:3, 31, 33; 33:11, 27; 34:8; 35:6, 11)
- c) The Sovereign explains His judgments (5:13-17)
- i) Yahweh's legal judgments (5:13-15)
 - (1) Words for God's anger: *anger, wrath, and zeal*
 - (2) Words for God's satisfied justice: *spent, rest, and appeased*
 - (3) Words for God' withdrawal of protection: *ruin, reproach, reviling, chastisement, and desecration*
 - (a) Cf. Deut. 28:37; Lam. 2:15-16
 - ii) Yahweh's specific agents of judgment (5:16-17)
 - (1) Famine, wild animals killing children, plague, and slaughter
 - (2) Cf. Lev. 26:22, 26; Deut. 32:23-25
- d) The historical eyewitness records are found in 2 Kings 25:1-21; 2 Chron. 36:17-21; and Jer. 39:1-18.
- e) Five principles to remember: (Daniel Block)
- i) The acceptance of privilege must be accompanied by the assumption of responsibility.

- ii) Those who have presumed upon the light of God's grace must reckon with the darkness of His fury.
- iii) The relationship between the Lord and his people is open to public view.
- iv) The Lord, not the god of the netherworld or his demonic agents, is the master of life and death.
- v) The word of the Lord is sure; he does not speak in vain.

- 6) **Message** against the mountains (“high places”) of Israel (6:1–14)
- begins: *the word of Yahweh came to me: “Son of man”*
 - ends: *then they will know that I am Yahweh* (4x in this section)
 - This section echoes Lev. 26.
- a) The announcement (6:1-10) (in the form of a metonymy/substitution)
- i) Against **isolated** locations of false worship (6:1-5) (cf. Lev. 26:25, 30)
 - (1) Mountains of Israel is unique to Ezekiel (cf. 6:2, 3; 19:9; 33:28; 34:13, 14a, 14b; 35:12; 36:1a, 1b, 4, 8; 37:22; 38:8; 39:2, 4, 17)
 - (2) The progression is from highest to lowest: *mountains, hills, ravines, and valleys*
 - ii) Against **public** places of false worship (6:6-7) (cf. Lev. 26:31; 2 Kings 23:14-20)
 - iii) The promise of a remnant (6:8-10) (cf. Lev. 26:33)
 - (1) This was promised in 5:3. (cf. 12:16; 14:22)
 - (2) Three characteristics of repentance: remember Yahweh, loath themselves (cf. 20:43; 36:31), and know that I am Yahweh
 - (3) Question: What are we to do with a broken God? (6:9)
- b) The explanation (6:11-14) (cf. Lev. 26:25-26, 28)
- i) “*Strike your hands together*”
 - (1) Clapping may indicate joyful praise (Ps. 47:1; 98:8), applause (2 Kings 11:12), anger (Num. 24:10), or mockery (Job 27:23). This may be done either vertically or horizontally.
 - ii) Three groups of people
 - (1) Those who are *far off*, those who are *near*, and those who *remain*.
 - iii) “*The wilderness toward Diblah/Riblah*” (i.e. south to north) is the reverse of “*from Dan to Beersheba*” (i.e. north to south).
- c) Five helpful principles (Daniel Block)
- i) There is an impassioned side of God’s character.
 - ii) It is possible to be sincere in one’s religious commitment to false gods, but to be sincerely in error.
 - iii) The Lord is faithful to His covenant.
 - iv) The Lord’s wrath is never so hot that it cancels out His grace.
 - v) We all must look on ourselves as God sees us.

- 7) **Message** about the coming disaster upon Israel (7:1–27)
- begins: *the word of Yahweh came to me: “Son of man”*
 - ends: *then they will know that I am Yahweh* (cf. 7:4, 27)
 - the word “end” occurs 5x (7:2 [2x], 3, 6 [2x]) (cf. Amos 8:2)
- a) The Sovereign Yahweh will judge Israel’s sins. (7:1-4)
- i) He speaks to “the land” but it impacts the inhabitants of the land.
 - (1) Synonyms for land: *adamah* and *arets*.
 - ii) “Four corners” indicates no one escapes.
- b) The unique judgment will be upon Israel. (7:5-9)
- i) Yahweh’s wrath without Yahweh’s pity.
 - ii) The word “come/coming” occurs 6x in 7:5-7.
- c) The imminent judgment is described (7:10-27)
- i) The judgment will collapse the economy. (7:10-13)
 - (1) Property, money, and materials will become worthless.
 - (2) Cf. Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25) and Sabbatical Year (Deut. 15:1-2)
 - ii) The judgment will result in psychological despair. (7:14-22)
 - (1) Invasion, disease, and famine are part of the covenant curses. (cf. Lev. 26) (7:15)
 - (2) Discouragement and fright lead to men “wetting their pants”. (7:17)
 - (3) Do the silver and gold (7:19) refers to money or to metal idols? (7:20)
 - iii) The judgment will impact every social level with rudderless despair. (7:23-27)
 - (1) The Babylonians will take complete control. (7:23-24)
 - (a) Cf. Ps. 74:7
 - (2) The common people will seek guidance and find none. (7:25-26)
 - (3) The leadership (King Jehoiachin and Prince Zedekiah) will fail the people because they have failed Yahweh. (7:27)

Part two: the second collection of messages about Israel's coming judgment (8:1–13:23) [Sept. 17, 592 BC]

The Departure of God's Glory and His Millennial Return

(MacArthur Study Bible)

- God's glory in the temple views idolatrous practices in 592 BC (8:4)
- God's glory moves from a cherub to the threshold of the temple in 592 BC (9:3; 10:4)
- God's glory moves from the threshold of the temple and stands over the cherubim in 592 BC (10:18-19)
- God's glory departs from the temple and Jerusalem, moving to the east in 592 BC (11:22-23); not to return until the time of the Messiah's millennial kingdom.
- God's glory returns to Jerusalem and the temple from the east to inaugurate the Millennium (43:2-9; 44:4)

- 1) Vision, part 1: idolatry in the temple (8:1–18)
 - This takes place @ 14 months since 1-3.
 - He will explain this vision to the exiled Jewish elders later in 11:24-25.
 - stage 1: glory of God *is in the temple*
 - a) He is carried to Jerusalem in a private vision. (8:1-4)
 - i) The vision of God is similar to 1:26-27.
 - ii) An idol is in the inner court of the Temple. (cf. Ex. 20:4; Dt. 4:16, 23-24)
 - (1) This has happened before. (cf. 2 Kings 21:7; 23:6; 2 Chron. 33:7, 13, 15; Ps. 78:58)
 - iii) God's Shekinah glory was ignored while the people worshiped the idol in His residence. Yahweh is alienated from His people in His own house.
 - (1) At night, God's glory would illuminate this idol.
 - iv) But wait, it gets worse! (cf. 8:6, 13, 15)
 - b) Reason # 1 for Yahweh's departure: **idolatry** (8:5-6) (cf. 5:11)
 - i) This would be the altar gate near the altar of sacrifice. (cf. Lev. 1:11) It was the gate closest to the king's private residence.
 - ii) Either Yahweh alone is Israel's God or He is not their God at all. (Daniel Block)
 - (1) Cf. Is. 42:8.
 - iii) But wait, it gets worse! (cf. 8:6, 13, 15)
 - c) Reason # 2 for Yahweh's departure: **animal worship** (8:7-13) (cf. Rom. 1:21-23)
 - i) The creatures that are being worshiped. (8:7-10)
 - ii) The creatures that are worshiping. (8:11-13)
 - (1) The seventy leaders of Israel should have stopped this. (cf. Ex. 24:1, 9; Num. 11:16-17)
 - (a) This is not the Sanhedrin, which develops later.
 - (2) The house of Shaphan was generally faithful to Yahweh. Here is an exception. (cf. 2 Kings 22; 2 Chron. 34)

- (3) They assume Yahweh does not see them. (cf. 9:9)
- (a) They denied His immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, and faithfulness to His covenant.
 - (b) What the men in this dark room are saying about Yahweh is in fact false about *him*, but it is true of the images before which they stand. (Daniel Block) (cf. Deut. 4:28; Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18; Is. 44:12-20)
 - iii) But wait, it gets worse! (cf. 8:6, 13, 15)
- d) Reason # 3 for Yahweh's departure: **Tammuz/Dumuzi/Adonis worship** (8:14-15)
- i) It is not just the *men* who are sinning. Here the *women* are engaged in worshipping false gods.
 - ii) Tammuz was a dying and resurrecting god associated with fertility rituals for both people and spring crops.
 - (1) They had abandoned the Giver of rain. (cf. Lev. 26:4; Deut. 11:14)
 - iii) But wait, it gets worse! (cf. 8:6, 13, 15)
- e) Reason # 4 for Yahweh's departure: **sun worship** (8:16-18)
- i) The Greek OT (LXX) reads 20 men; the Hebrew OT reads 25. The sun god Shamash was associated with the number 20.
 - ii) The men (probably priests) literally turned their backs on Yahweh to face east. (cf. Dt. 4:19; 17:2-5; 2 Kings 21:5; 23:5, 11; 2 Chron. 29:6-7)
 - (1) Long-term sun worship is attested to in the location names as Beth Shemesh, En Shemesh, and Mount Heres. (cf. Josh. 15:7, 10; Judg. 1:33, 35)
 - iii) God hears all prayers, but He chooses not to respond favorably to all prayers.
- f) The biggest threat to Israel is not from the Babylonians who imposed new religions on them. It grew from within. The hope expressed in the name Jaazaniah (8:11; "Yahweh hears") is in vain. (Daniel Block)
- g) Some see these acts of worship to reflect *Canaanite* worship (8:5-6), *Egyptian* worship (8:7-13), *Mesopotamian* worship (8:14-15), and *syncretism* (8:16-18).