

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 1

August 23, 2015



The Prophet Ezekiel by Michelangelo Cir 1508-12

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Pentwater Bible Church

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INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL

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Ezekiel's Vision by Raphael cir. 1518

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
- Zechariyah - 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 and 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.

DATES IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Month	Day	Year of the Captivity of Jehoiachin	Chapter
4	5	5	Chapter 1–7
6	5	6	Chapter 8–19

5	10	7	Chapter 20–23
10	10	9	Chapter 24–25
10	12	10	Chapter 29–30
11	1	11	Chapter 26–28
1	7	11	Chapter 30
3	1	11	Chapter 31
10	5	12	Chapter 33
12	1	12	Chapter 32:1–16
12	15	12	Chapter 32:17–32
1	10	25	Chapter 40–48
1	1	27	Chapter 29:17–21

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)
 1. *He sees these heavenly creatures* (1:1–23).
 - a. The appearance of the living beings (1:5–11): Ezekiel is visited by four of these special beings.
 - (1) Each has four faces (1:5, 10).
 - (a) The face in front is a man's face (1:10a).
 - (b) The face on the right is a lion's face (1:10b).
 - (c) The face on the left is an ox's face (1:10c).

- (d) The face in back is an eagle's face (1:5, 10d).
 - (2) Each has two pairs of wings (1:6, 9, 11).
 - (3) Each has human hands beneath its wings (1:8) .
 - (4) Each possesses legs like those of men but feet like calves' feet (1:7) .
 - b. The vision of God (1:1–4): Ezekiel feels the hand of the Lord on him.
 - c. The activities of the living beings (1:12–23)
 - (1) They go in whatever direction the spirit chooses (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 (1:13) : It looks as though lightning is flashing among them.
 - (3) Their movement is swift as lightning (1:14) .
 - (4) Each is accompanied by a polished chrysolite wheel, with a second wheel crosswise inside (1:15–16, 19): When the beings move, the wheels move with them.
 - (5) The wheels have rims and spokes (1:18a).
 - (6) The rims are filled with eyes (1:18b).
 - 2. *He hears these heavenly creatures* (1:24–25).
 - a. Their wings roar like waves against the shore (1:24a).
 - b. Their wings sound like the voice of God (1:24b).
 - c. Their wings sound like the shout of a mighty army (1:24c–25).
- B. Ezekiel and the Christ of God** (1:26–28)
- 1. *Ezekiel sees a man seated upon a throne made of beautiful blue sapphire stones* (1:26) .
 - 2. *His appearance is like glowing amber, surrounded by a rainbowlike halo* (1:27–28): Ezekiel falls down in the dust and hears someone speaking to him.

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

- A. **The recipients** (2:1–5; 3:4–7)
 - 1. *Who they are* (2:1–3; 3:4): His message is directed to the nation of Israel.
 - 2. *What they are* (2:4–5; 3:5–7): They are hard, impudent, rebellious, and stubborn.
- B. **The reassurance** (2:6–3:3, 8–9)
 - 1. *God gives Ezekiel the sermon he needs* (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* (3:8–9): Ezekiel is not to be afraid.
- C. **The reflection** (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** (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** (3:16–21): Ezekiel assumes the role of a spiritual watchman by delivering a twofold warning:
 - 1. *To the godless* (3:16–19): Cease your wicked ways, or die!
 - 2. *To the godly* (3:20–21): Continue your good ways, or die!
- F. **The restriction** (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 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 (4–6)

A. **First illustration** (4:1–3)

1. *The symbol* (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* (4:3) : The Babylonian army, like an iron wall, will soon surround Jerusalem.

B. **Second illustration** (4:4–6)

1. *The symbol* (4:5–6)
 - a. He is to lie on his left side for 390 days (4:5) : This is for the years of Israel’s sin.
 - b. He is then to lie on his right side for 40 days (4:6) : This represents the years of Judah’s sin.
2. *The significance* (4:4) : Each day represents one year of punishment for Israel and Judah.

C. **Third illustration** (4:7–8)

1. *The symbol* (4:7) : He is to lie on his back with his arms tied.
2. *The significance* (4:8) : This depicts the helplessness of Jerusalem against the Babylonian attack.

D. **Fourth illustration** (4:9–17)

1. *The symbol* (4:9–15): He is to prepare a meager meal and cook it over some dried cow dung.
2. *The significance* (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** (5:1–17)

1. *The symbol* (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* (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** (6:1–10)

1. *The symbol* (6:1–2): He is to set his face against the mountains of Israel and is to prophesy against them.
2. *The significance* (6:3–10): This means that those living in the valley below will soon be destroyed by their enemies.

G. **Seventh illustration** (6:11–14)

1. *The symbol* (6:11) : He is to clap his hands and stomp his feet.
2. *The significance* (6:12–14): This is done in horror, predicting the disease and death that await Israel.

II. THE FIRST SERMON PREACHED BY 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** (7:1–4, 19–21, 23–24)

1. *Idolatry* (7:1–4): Ezekiel calls the people to account for their disgusting behavior.
2. *Greed* (7:19–21): The love of money makes them stumble into sin.
3. *Bloodshed* (7:23) : The land is bloodied by terrible crimes.
4. *Pride* (7:24) : God will break down their proud fortresses.

B. **The severity of this judgment** (7:5–18, 22, 25–27)

1. *Continuous disaster and calamity* (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* (7:7–14): He will neither spare nor pity them.
 3. *Death by plagues inside the city, death by sword outside the city* (7:15–18): The few who survive will moan for their sins.

SECTION OUTLINE THREE (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 (8:1–10:3, 5–17; 11:1–22, 24–25).
 - A. **The man** (8:1–4): Ezekiel is supernaturally transferred from Bab-ylon to Jerusalem by a glowing figure from heaven who is probably the Messiah himself.
 - B. **The mockery** (8:5–18; 11:1–13): Ezekiel witnesses God's holiness mocked and blasphemed on four occasions.
 1. *The perversions* (8:5–18)
 - a. The people are worshipping a large idol north of the altar gate in the Temple entrance (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 (8:7–12): The people think the Lord doesn't see them.
 - c. Some Jewish women are weeping for the false god Tammuz (8:13–15).
 - d. Twenty-five men are worshipping the sun (8:16–18): The people of Judah are leading the whole nation into violence.
 2. *The promoters* (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.
 - C. **The marking** (9:1–11): God orders six men (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.
 - D. **The magnificent ones** (10:1–3, 5–17): The four cherubim Ezekiel described in chapter 1 suddenly reappear and begin their ministry before God.
 - E. **The message** (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 (10:4, 18–22; 11:23).
 - A. **From the Holy of Holies to the entrance of the Temple** (10:4) : The Temple courtyard glows with the cloud of God's glory.
 - B. **From the entrance of the Temple to the east gate** (10:18–22): The glory of God hovers above the cherubim.
 - C. **From the east gate to the Mount of Olives** (11:23) : The glory of God departs from Jerusalem.

SECTION OUTLINE FOUR (EZEKIEL 12–15)

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

- I. HIS ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL (12:1–28; 15:1–8)
 - A. **Through demonstrations** (12:1–20)
 1. *First illustration* (12:1–16)
 - a. The symbol (12:1–7): Ezekiel is commanded to pack his belongings on his shoulders and dig a tunnel through the city wall.
 - b. The significance (12:8–16): This depicts how Jerusalem’s frightened citizens will attempt to escape the Babylonian siege.
 2. *Second illustration* (12:17–20)
 - a. The symbol (12:17–18): Ezekiel is to tremble and shudder with fear as he eats his food and drinks his water.
 - b. The significance (12:19–20): This depicts how the people of Jerusalem will soon eat their food and drink their water.
 - B. **Through proverbs** (12:21–28)
 1. *The old proverb of the people* (12:21–22): “Those who predict judgment are wrong! Each passing day proves it!”
 2. *The new proverb of the prophet* (12:23–28): “These predictions are true! The coming day of destruction will prove it!”
 - C. **Through analogy** (15:1–8): Ezekiel compares the city of Jerusalem to a useless vine.
- II. HIS INDICTMENT OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL (13:1–14:23)
 - A. **Ezekiel condemns the false prophets** (13:1–23).
 1. *The male prophets* (13:1–16)
 - a. Their perversions (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 (13:8–9, 11–15): God’s wrath will crash down upon them like great hailstones.
 2. *The female prophets* (13:17–23)
 - a. Their perversions (13:17–20, 22): Prompted by greed, they deceive the people by their magic charms and veils.
 - b. Their punishment (13:21, 23): God will rescue the people from their grasp.
 - B. **Ezekiel condemns the idol worshipers** (14:1–23).
 1. *Three people* (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* (14:21–23): These four dreadful judgments are sword, famine, wild beasts, and plague.

SECTION OUTLINE FIVE (EZEKIEL 16)

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

- I. THE PLIGHT (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 (16:6–14)
 - A. **God and the baby girl** (16:6–7): He rescues, cleanses, clothes, and raises her.
 - B. **God and the young woman** (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 (16:15–26, 28–34)

- A. **The corruption of this young wife** (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** (16:26, 28–29): She commits spiritual adultery with the gods of other nations.
 - 1. *Egypt* (16:26) : She fans the flames of God’s anger with her promiscuity.
 - 2. *Assyria* (16:28) : She never seems to find enough new lovers.
 - 3. *Babylon* (16:29) : Even after she adds Babylon, she isn’t satisfied.

IV. THE PUNISHMENT (16:27, 35–58)

- A. **She will be given over to her enemies** (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** (16:37–41): The many nations that have been her lovers will destroy her.
- C. **She will be repaid for her sins** (16:35–36, 42–52): God will pour out all his jealous anger on her.
- D. **She will be restored** (16:53) : When God’s anger is spent, he will bring her back.
- E. **She will be ashamed for her sins** (16:54–58): Her wickedness will be exposed to the world.

V. THE PARDON (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 17–19)

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

I. THE PARABLES (17:1–24; 19:1–14)

- A. **First parable** (17:1–6, 11–14)
 - 1. *Information in the parable* (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* (17:11–14): The eagle is Nebuchadnezzar, who carries off many Jewish citizens (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** (17:7–10, 15–21)
 - 1. *Information in the parable* (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* (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** (17:22–24)
 - 1. *Information in the parable* (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* (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** (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** (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.

II. **THE PROVERB** (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** (18:1–4)

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

B. **The correction of the proverb** (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* (18:20, 25): The one who sins is the one who dies.
2. *The case of a righteous man* (18:5–9): He will surely live.
3. *The case of a righteous man’s unrighteous son* (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* (18:14–19): The son will not die because of his father’s sins.
5. *The case of a righteous man who becomes unrighteous* (18:24, 26): He will die.
6. *The case of unrighteous people who become righteous* (18:21–23, 27–28): They will live.

C. **The challenge from the proverb** (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 20–21)

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

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

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

1. *Upon the people* (20:1–32, 45–49; 21:1–5, 24): Israel is reminded of her constant sinning against God throughout her history.
 - a. In Egypt (20:1–9): The people of Israel did not get rid of their idols as God instructed.
 - b. In the wilderness (20:10–26): The people refused to obey God’s laws.
 - c. In Canaan (20:27–28): They continued to blaspheme and betray God.
 - d. In Ezekiel’s time (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* (21:25–27): The “wicked prince of Israel” is Zedekiah, Judah’s final ruler.
3. *Upon the pagans* (21:28–32): Here judgment is handed down against the Ammonites for their many national sins.

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

1. *First illustration* (21:6–7)
 - a. What he does (21:6) : He groans.
 - b. What it means (21:7) : This will be Jerusalem’s reaction as the Babylonian army marches against the city.
2. *Second illustration* (21:8–12)
 - a. What he does (21:12) : He beats upon his thighs.
 - b. What it means (21:8–11): Soon enemy swords will pierce through the hearts of Judah’s people.
3. *Third illustration* (21:13–17)
 - a. What he does (21:13–16): He claps his hands and slashes a sword from left to right.
 - b. What it means (21:17) : The same message is conveyed as that of the second illustration.
4. *Fourth illustration* (21:18–23)
 - a. What he does (21:18–21): He draws a map showing two roads with a fork in the middle.
 - b. What it means (21:22–23): This signifies that the king of Babylon will decide to attack Jerusalem before the Ammonite capital city of Rabbah.

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

SECTION OUTLINE EIGHT (EZEKIEL 22–24)

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

I. THE SINS OF ISRAEL (22:1–31)

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

1. *Bloodshed and idolatry* (22:1–6, 9, 27): Everyone in the city is murderous and idolatrous.
2. *Contempt for parents, orphans, and widows* (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* (22:8, 26): They violate the Lord’s holy days of rest.
4. *Adultery and incest* (22:10–11): They defile themselves.
5. *Bribe taking and extortion* (22:12, 29)
6. *Lying prophets* (22:28) : They say their message is from the Lord when the Lord hasn’t spoken.

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

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

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

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

III. THE SIGNS TO ISRAEL (24:1–27)

A. **The food sign** (24:1–14)

1. *What he does* (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* (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** (24:15–27)

1. *What he does* (24:15–18): God instructs Ezekiel to remain tearless at the funeral of his beloved wife, who dies suddenly.
2. *Why he does it* (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 25–28)

In these chapters Ezekiel pronounces judgment against six pagan nations.

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

- A. **Their crimes** (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** (25:4–5, 7): Their land will be overrun by enemy forces, and their people will be enslaved.

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

the destruction of Jerusalem.

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

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

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

A. **The splendor of Tyre** (27:1–9)

1. *The shipbuilding* (27:1–7)
 - a. Its harbor is the most beautiful in the world (27:1–4): It is the gateway to the sea.
 - b. Its ships are the finest in the world (27:5–7): The ships are made of cypress, cedar, oak, pine, ivory, and linen.
2. *The sailors* (27:8–9): They come from many nations to join the fleet.

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

C. **The substance of Tyre** (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* (27:12)
2. *Slaves* (27:13)
3. *Chariot horses, steeds, and mules* (27:14)
4. *Ebony and ivory* (27:15)
5. *Emeralds, purple dyes, fine linen, and jewelry of coral and rubies* (27:16)
6. *Wheat, honey, oil, balm, wine, and wool* (27:17–18)
7. *Iron and saddle cloths* (27:19–20)
8. *Rams, lambs, and goats* (27:21)
9. *Spices and gold* (27:22)
10. *Blue cloth, embroidery, and carpets* (27:23–25)

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

1. *The city celebrates the fall of Jerusalem* (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* (28:1–5): His wisdom and treasure have made him rich.

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

1. *The city will be destroyed down to its bare foundation* (26:3–21; 28:6–10).
 - a. The attack by the Babylonians (26:3–21): Babylon will destroy Tyre's villages and tear down her walls and her gates.
 - b. The attack by the Greeks (28:6–10): They draw their swords against the king of Tyre, and he dies.
2. *An ocean storm destroys its ships* (27:26–36).

F. **The satanic force behind Tyre** (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* (28:11–13): This magnificent angel is created by God as the ultimate in wisdom and beauty.
2. *The position* (28:14) : He is then appointed to be the anointed guardian angel.
3. *The pride* (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* (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 (28:20–26)

- A. **Sidon is destroyed** (28:20–24): Invading armies and terrible plagues will devastate both the land and the people.
- B. **Israel is delivered** (28:25–26): The people will be regathered, regenerated, and restored to the land.

SECTION OUTLINE TEN (EZEKIEL 29–32)

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

- I. THE PARABLE DESCRIBING EGYPT (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 (29:1–3; 31:10; 32:1–2)
 - A. **She feels she owns the Nile River** (29:1–3): God is her enemy.
 - B. **She boasts of being the greatest** (31:10).
 - C. **She claims to be a lion among the nations** (32:1–2): She is really just a sea monster, heaving around and stirring up mud.
- III. THE PLUNDERING OF EGYPT (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** (29:4–10): God will put hooks in her jaws and drag her out on the land.
 - B. **Second occasion** (29:17–21): God will give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar.
 - C. **Third occasion** (30:1–19): A sword will come against Egypt, and those who are slaughtered will cover the ground.
 - D. **Fourth occasion** (30:20–26): Pharaoh's arms will be broken and his people scattered.
 - E. **Fifth occasion** (31:11–18): They will be cut down and left on the ground.
 - F. **Sixth occasion** (32:3–16): They will be completely destroyed.
 - G. **Seventh occasion** (32:17–32): They will be dragged away to judgment.
- IV. THE PITY ON EGYPT (29:11–16): Mercifully, God will partially restore Egypt.
 - A. **The decades** (29:11–12): Egypt first will suffer God's wrath for a period of 40 years.
 - B. **The deliverance** (29:13–16): Following this, God will partially regather and restore the Egyptians to their land.

SECTION OUTLINE ELEVEN (EZEKIEL 33–34)

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

- I. THE WATCHMAN AND THE WALL (33:1–33)
 - A. **God and the messengers to Israel** (33:1–9): Here a distinction is made between a faithful watchman and an unfaithful watchman (or messenger).
 - 1. *The faithful watchman* (33:1–5, 7, 9): This kind of prophet (like Ezekiel) keeps

- on warning the people to repent even if they refuse to listen.
- 2. *The faithless watchman* (33:6, 8): The blood of the guilty is on his hands for not warning the people.
- B. **God and the messenger to Israel** (33:10–33): Ezekiel is instructed to preach two sermons to Israel.
 1. *The message before the fall of Jerusalem* (33:10–20): The message is twofold:
 - a. “Your past good deeds will not deliver you from the coming judgment unless you repent!” (33:10–12a)
 - b. “Your present bad deeds will not deliver you to the coming judgment if you repent!” (33:12b–20)
 2. *The message after the fall of Jerusalem* (33:21–33)
 - a. The report (33:21) : A Jew who escaped the destruction of Jerusalem tells Ezekiel about it.
 - b. The restoration (33:22) : God now opens the mouth of the previously mute Ezekiel.
 - c. The rebuke (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 (33:30–33): Some of the Jewish exiles already in Babylon are laughing at Ezekiel behind his back.

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

- A. **The false shepherds** (34:1–8, 18–19)
 1. *They feed and water themselves and ignore their flocks* (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* (34:4) : They rule with force and cruelty.
 3. *They allow wild animals to devour the sheep* (34:5–8): The sheep are easy prey for any wild animal.
- B. **The faithful shepherd** (34:9–17, 20–31): These verses doubtless refer to the Messiah himself, Jesus Christ!
 1. *His relationship with the false shepherds* (34:9–10, 20–21)
 - a. He removes them and holds them responsible (34:9–10): He considers them his enemies.
 - b. He judges them (34:20–21): He will separate the fat, unruly sheep from the scrawny, downtrodden sheep.
 2. *His relationship with the sheep* (34:11–16, 22, 25–31)
 - a. He rescues and regathers them (34:11–12, 22): The Lord is their shepherd.
 - b. He feeds them (34:13) : He brings them back home.
 - c. He gives them good pasture (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 (34:16) : He destroys those who have hurt his own.
 - e. He protects them (34:25, 28): They live in safety and fear no one.
 - f. He adopts them as his own (34:29–31): They know God is with them.
 3. *His relationship with the goats* (34:17) : He separates them from the sheep.
 4. *His relationship with the undershepherd* (34:23–24): He allows King David to assist him in feeding and leading the sheep.

SECTION OUTLINE TWELVE (EZEKIEL 35–37)

Ezekiel foretells Edom's destruction and Israel's salvation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. *The symbol of the skeletons, illustrating Israel's resurrection* (37:1–14)
 - a. The miracle of the dead bones (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 (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* (37:15–28)
 - a. The merging (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 (37:18–23): God will someday reunite the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
 - c. The monarchy (37:24–25): David will then be appointed to rule over both kingdoms.

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

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

SECTION OUTLINE FOURTEEN (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 (40:1–43:27)

- A. **The man** (40:1–4): Ezekiel is introduced to a man carrying a measuring stick, his face shining like bronze.
- B. **The measurement** (40:5–42:20; 43:13–27): This man proceeds to measure the following:
 - 1. *The outer court* (40:5–27)
 - 2. *The inner court* (40:28–47): It is 175 feet square.
 - 3. *The Temple vestibule* (40:48–49): It is 35 feet in depth and 19 {1/4} feet wide.
 - 4. *The Temple itself* (41:1–26)
 - 5. *The chamber in the outer court* (42:1–14): It is 175 feet long and 87 {1/2} feet wide.
 - 6. *The place of separation* (42:15–20): It is 875 feet on each side.
 - 7. *The altar of burnt offerings* (43:13–27)
- C. **The magnificence** (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* (43:1–5): It is like the roar of rushing waters.
 - 2. *The speech from God's glory cloud* (43:6–12): God reassures Ezekiel that he will someday permanently dwell with Israel!

II. THE TRUSTEES (44:1–46:24)

- A. **The officials** (44:1–45:17; 46:1–8, 16–18)
 - 1. *The prince* (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* (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** (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.

III. THE TERRITORY (47:1–48:35)

- A. **Facts concerning the millennial soil** (47:1–48:29)
 - 1. *The river* (47:1–12): Water flows from the Temple to the Dead Sea, bringing new life to Israel!
 - 2. *The dimensions* (47:13–23): Here the northern, southern, eastern, and western dimensions are given.
 - 3. *The tribal land divisions* (48:1–29): The specific land area for each tribe is now allotted.
- B. **Facts concerning the millennial city** (48:30–35)
 - 1. *The gates in the city* (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* (48:35) : It is called “Yahweh-Shammah,” meaning, “The LORD Is There.”¹

NEXT MESSAGE: EZEKIEL INTRODUCTION II

¹ Willmington, H. L. (1999). *The Outline Bible* (Ezekiel 1–48:35). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

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