



Welcome back! Remember that you may ask questions or comment at any time.

Let me start with an announcement. Thanksgiving falls on Thursday, next week. We will not have a Bible study the next day, which is Friday, November 24th.

In December I am planning to have studies on the 1st, 8th, and 15th, but not on the 22nd or the 29th. God willing, this will take us through Chapter 19.

Let's pray.

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The slide features a vertical banner on the left with the name 'EZEKIEL' in white capital letters against a background of fire and a bright light source. The main content area has a white background with a blue header box containing the word 'OVERVIEW' in white. Below this, the title 'Visions of the Temple(Ezek 8-11)' is written in black. A bulleted list follows, detailing the key events of the chapters. At the bottom, there is a date '11/17/2017', a name 'B. G. Hirsch - Ezekiel 8-11', and a small number '2'.

EZEKIEL

OVERVIEW

Visions of the Temple(Ezek 8-11)

- Taken to Jerusalem
- Abominations in the Temple
- Marking Faithful & Slaying Faithless
- God's Glory Leaves the Temple
- Judgment for the Evil Leaders
- Gathered Again with a New Heart

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This week we will examine chapters 8 through 11 of Ezekiel.

We will see the depths of depravity and abomination of the people in Jerusalem and we will see the hope of renewal in the LORD.

We will visit Jerusalem in the Spirit.

We will once more see God's glory revealed to Ezekiel as it was in Chapter 1.


We will see the marking of the remnant and the slaying of those that are not marked.

We will see God abandon Jerusalem.

And we will hear God's promise for the future.

So let's begin...

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Review

- Ezekiel, a priest, is now the LORD's prophet to the exiles in Babylon
- Ezekiel is a watchman giving God's warnings
- Ezekiel was directed by God to carry out different symbolic enactments
- As chapter 8 starts, over a year has passed since the events in Chapter 7...

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Let's review.

Ezekiel, a priest from Jerusalem, is now in exile in Babylon. In very dramatic fashion the LORD commissioned Ezekiel to be a prophet for the LORD to the other exiles in Babylon.

Ezekiel serves as a watchman to the exiles. When God speaks to Ezekiel, Ezekiel in turn warns the exiles in Babylon.

Ezekiel was directed to carry out symbolic enactments and to bear the punishment for his people by lying on his left side for 390 days and on his right side for 40 days.

Ezekiel is given dire warnings to give to the people about the destruction coming to Jerusalem by famine, pestilence, and the sword.

The last time we met, the LORD had said that the end had come for Jerusalem.

Over a year has passed for Ezekiel since the last chapter.

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Taken to Jerusalem

- After the 430 days of the “siege”?
- September 17, 592 B.C.
 - 14 months later?
 - Leap year adds 1 month (Adar I)
- Sitting with “elders of Judah” when the LORD appears
- Ezekiel taken by the Spirit to Jerusalem and sees glory of the God of Israel
- What God says about idols: Ex 20:4-5 Is 44:7-9

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Let's read chapter 8 of Ezekiel verses 1 – 4. (Read verses 8:1-4.)

Right off the bat, we have a question. What happened to the 430 days of Ezekiel's “siege” against the model of Jerusalem?

When we started in chapter 1, it was the 5th year of Ezekiel's exile, and the 4th month. At the start of chapter 8, it is the 6th year and the 6th month. So, it appears that 14 months have passed, and this is what all commentaries I checked say.

However, this presents us with a problem. 14 months is 420 days in the Jewish calendar of that time. That is 10 days short of Ezekiel completing his “siege”. He is now sitting in his house with the elders of Judah, which seems to violate the completion of his task from God. The generally accepted date was September 17, 592 B.C.. This is interesting, because the 6th month, Elul, straddles August and September, not usually September and October as the commentaries say. So it should have been the end of August, not September.

Some of the commentaries just said that this chapter starts after the 430 days. And some, who can count, said that it happens between the 390 days and the 40 days. I found both answers unsatisfactory, so I did some additional study and calculations to arrive at a third answer.

The Jewish calendar is lunar based. And because the moon's cycle is 29.5 days and there are 12.4 lunar months in the solar year, the Jewish calendar adds periodic leap months. When this occurs, an extra month is added to the beginning of the year. A year with 13 months is referred to in Hebrew as Shanah Me'uberet (pronounced shah-NAH meh-oo-BEH-reht), literally: a pregnant year. The first month, usually called Adar, is called Adar Beit or the 2nd Adar. The leap month, inserted at the beginning, is called Adar Aleph, or the 1st Adar. Why do we care?

It so happens that 592 B.C. was a leap year. So, it would have had an extra month, which means that 15 months or 450 days would have passed rather than 420. Ezekiel would have completed his 430-day “siege”, and there is no conflict.

Ezekiel is sitting with the “elders of Judah” in his house. Nebuchadnezzar took the top survivors back to Babylon from each of his first two conquests. Daniel and his friends were taken in 605 B.C. and Ezekiel and others were taken in 598 B.C. Presumably, these elders, זִקְנֵי זָדָן in Hebrew, were some of the older leaders who were taken either in the first or second conquest. They probably have come to regard Ezekiel as a prophet, and they are waiting for the LORD to speak through him.

The description of the “man” that appears to Ezekiel matches the description from chapter 1 of the LORD. Then, the Holy Spirit puts out the “form” or a hand and picks up Ezekiel by Ezekiel's hair and takes him in the spirit to the Temple in Jerusalem. Please note that Ezekiel is still in his house, but he is also really in Jerusalem in the spirit realm. The elders don't see what Ezekiel sees, and Ezekiel is not seen in Jerusalem. But Ezekiel is able to interact in this spiritual form with the things the LORD asks Ezekiel to do. Ezekiel behaves as though he has a body.

There were 3 gates from the outer to the inner court of the Temple. They faced north, east, and south. At the north gateway, where the altar of burnt offerings was, Ezekiel sees where there was “the seat of the image of jealousy”. In other words, an idol of some sort had been set up in clear violation of God's law. See Exodus 20:4-5 and Is 44:7-9 for the law and what God says about idols.

Ezekiel then sees the glory of the LORD as he had seen it previously in chapter 1. So, God's presence was still in the Temple at this point.

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Abominations in the Temple

- Abominations are driving God from His sanctuary
- Ezekiel sees a hole in the wall of the inner court and he is told to dig there
- Ezekiel finds a door, and he is told to go through
- Inside, Ezekiel sees vile engravings, and before the engravings there were 70 elders worshipping
 - Doing this in the dark
 - In their room of pictures/imagination (seeing their thoughts?)
- Women at north gate weeping for Tammuz
- 25 men worshipping the Sun in the east

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Let's read chapter 8 of Ezekiel verses 5–18. (*Read verses 8:5-18.*)

The LORD tells Ezekiel to observe “the image of jealousy” at the north gate. The LORD calls this an abomination that is driving the LORD from His sanctuary! This is God's sanctuary, and the Israelites are putting loathsome images there. And they are conducting evil idol worship as we will see next. All of this is causing the LORD to abandon His Temple, and to punish the idolaters.

Ezekiel is then brought to the entrance to the inner court, where he sees a hole in the adjoining wall. The LORD tells Ezekiel to dig in the wall. Ezekiel complies revealing a door hidden in the wall. The LORD tells Ezekiel to go in the door and to observe the abominations that are occurring.

Once inside, Ezekiel sees offensive engravings and numerous idols. Standing before the pictures and idols were 70 elders, each of whom was holding an incense censer from which a cloud of incense was ascending. The LORD tells Ezekiel that the elders are doing these things in the dark, and the elders think the LORD can't see them because the LORD has forsaken them.

What is Ezekiel really seeing here? Possibly this is one of the inner chambers in the Temple where a group of elders had gathered to worship idols and perform abominable rituals. However, the word for images or pictures can also be translated imagination. So it is possible that the LORD is allowing Ezekiel to see the thoughts of these men.

Once more Ezekiel is brought to the north gate. Now he sees women there weeping for Tammuz. Tammuz was the Sumerian-Babylonian deity associated with agriculture, and he was said to die in fall and be restored to life in spring. Hence, the women were weeping at the supposed death of Tammuz.

Ezekiel is now brought to the Inner court in front of the entrance to the sanctuary itself. Here there were about 25 men, most likely priests, who were facing away from the Temple and toward the Sun, which they are worshipping. Remember that Solomon when he dedicated the Temple asked the LORD to forgive the people when they faced toward the Temple and repented. This is a tremendous affront to the LORD.

God then tells Ezekiel that all of these evil practices have provoked the LORD to anger. The phrase about putting the branch to their nose is obscure. It may refer to part of the idolatrous worship, or it may mean that these practices are a stench to the LORD. It's not clear.

Nevertheless, the LORD states that because of all these abominations, he will bring down His wrath without pity. Even if the people cry out to the LORD, He will not hear them.

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Marking Faithful & Slaying Faithless

- Bring in the Executioners
 - 6 “men” with their weapons for slaughter
 - One man is in linen with a writing case/inkhorn
- Glory of the LORD goes up threshold of sanctuary and calls to man in linen
- Mark the people that mourn abominations
- Executioners told to slay everyone else
- Ezekiel entreats the LORD who refuses to relent
- What really happened?

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Now, let's read chapter 9 verses 1 through 11. (*Read verses 9:1-11.*)

While Ezekiel listens, the LORD calls 7 “men”, presumably angels. Six of the men have weapons for slaughter, and the seventh man has a writing case or inkhorn. The seventh man is also clothed in linen.

The LORD then tells the man in linen to go through Jerusalem and mark the forehead of the people ('עֲנֹשׁ enowsh = mortal) “who sigh and groan over all the abominations”. Note that Satan is a counterfeiter, and he may be counterfeiting God's positive mark in Ezekiel with his own evil mark in Revelation 13. Or perhaps Satan is counterfeiting the marking of the 144,000 in Revelation 7.

The LORD then commands the 6 executioners to go through Jerusalem and strike without pity all who do not have the mark. They are to begin at the LORD's sanctuary. This meant that they started with the 25 elders that were worshipping the Sun, possibly including the High Priest.

While the executioners were going throughout the city, Ezekiel falls on his face before the LORD and entreats the LORD for Jerusalem. However, the LORD says that the land is beyond redemption and that He will not spare or pity the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The man in linen then returned and told the LORD that he had done as the LORD commanded. This interestingly is what Jesus says in His prayer to the Father in John 17:4, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

So, did this mean that the LORD actually had His angels slay the inhabitants of Jerusalem during Ezekiel's vision? There are three possibilities that occur to me:

1. It seems to me that the LORD is not actually having all of these people in Jerusalem killed immediately during the vision. Why? Because Nebuchadnezzar had not even begun the siege of Jerusalem yet. Therefore, the people would not begin to die due to the siege and the eventual conquest for another 4 to 6 years. It also does not appear that those who are marked know that they have been marked. They apparently did not see it or feel it.
2. The LORD may have been using the man in linen and the executioners to “mark” those who would live and die in the city eventually.
3. If the LORD is actually showing Ezekiel the future, that is approximately six years from the current date, then it may be that the executioners were slaying with famine, pestilence, and along with the Babylonian soldiers.

Take your pick. (next slide)



God's Glory Leaves the Temple

- Ezekiel sees the LORD's chariot again
- Burning coals are given to the "man" in linen from between the "whirling wheels" to scatter over the city
- The glory of the LORD departs from the sanctuary and stands over the east gate

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Let's read chapter 10 verses 1 – 22. (*Read verses 10:1-22.*)

Most of this chapter describes the same things that we saw in chapter 1. Therefore, I am not going to go over the cherubim, the wheels, and their relative movement. Instead I will talk about what is new in this chapter. Although I did notice that the description does include spokes for the wheels.

The LORD, continuing with the outpouring of his wrath on Jerusalem, calls the man in linen to take fire from between the wheels and scatter it over Jerusalem.

Once again this appears to me to be symbolic of the destruction that will occur in 6 years. This in a sense is God stamping this as irrevocable.

Lastly, the LORD, whose presence was still in the Temple, departs from the Temple. This was predicted by Moses in Deut 31:17 and in Hosea 9:12.

God abandons the Temple to be destroyed as He had decreed. Remember that the LORD was causing the Temple to be profaned and destroyed because the Jewish people did not honor the Temple. We saw in chapter 8 and 9 just how awful the people had become .

It is interesting that the LORD leaves over the east gate. The east gate is the gate that Jesus will return through. In the present day it is closed up, and it will remain so until Jesus returns.

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Judgment for the Evil Leaders

- 25 Leaders of Jerusalem Gathered at the East Gate while the LORD is There
- Ezekiel Told to Prophesy Against Leaders
- Because the Leaders Believe that They are Safe, Like Meat in an Iron Cauldron, God will Judge them at the Border of Israel
- They have Not obeyed the LORD, but have acted Like the Foreign Nations
- Pelatiah Dies, and Ezekiel Cries Out to the LORD

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Let's read chapter 11 verses 1 – 13. (*Read verses 11:1-13.*)

Ezekiel is taken by the Spirit to the East Gate, where the LORD is hovering above. There Ezekiel sees 25 elders or leaders of Jerusalem. These include Jaazaniah (yah-az-an-yaw'), not the one from chapter 8, and Pelatiah (pel-at-yaw').

The LORD says that these men devise iniquity, and they say a strange saying, "The time is not near to build houses. This city is the cauldron, and we are the meat." It is not clear what the first part of this saying means in the original Hebrew. The Hebrew actually suggests something like "this is a time to build houses" rather than the text I read. The reference to meat in a cauldron actually speaks of them being safe within the iron cauldron of Jerusalem.

Because the Leaders are wicked, they are not obeying the LORD's statutes and laws, their behavior is like the foreign nations (i.e. goyee) around them, and they think they are safe; God will judge them. The LORD actually says that He will give them into the hands of the foreigners, and God will Judge them at the border of Israel. This is actually what happened when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem in 586 B.C. He executed the leaders in Riblah in West Syria.

The LORD tells Ezekiel to prophesy against the leaders. As Ezekiel is in Jerusalem in the spirit, it does not appear that the leaders are aware of Ezekiel or his prophesying. Nevertheless, while Ezekiel is prophesying, Pelatiah dies.

As the leaders represent the entire city of Jerusalem, Ezekiel is stunned by Pelatiah's death and the realization that it is foreshadowing God's destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel then cries out to the LORD in fear that the LORD will not leave even a remnant of Israel.

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Gathered Again with a New Heart

- The LORD has/will Move the Remnant of the Jewish People “Far Off” Among the Nations (i.e. the Diaspora)
- The LORD will be a Sanctuary in the Countries for the Diaspora
- The LORD will Gather the Diaspora
- The LORD will Give Them a New Spirit and will Replace Their Stone Hearts with a Heart of Flesh (Deut 30:6, Jer 31:30-33)

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Let's read chapter 11 verses 14 – 25. (*Read verses 11:14-25.*)

Finally, we get to a hopeful message from the LORD. Those who do evil the LORD will destroy, but the remnant He will disperse “far off” among the “nations”. This dispersion of the Jewish people is known as the Diaspora, and as I mentioned previously, I am part of the Diaspora. So in fact is Joan, because she has Jewish ancestry also.

While the Diaspora are in the other countries, the LORD says that He will be a sanctuary for them. The LORD Himself will preserve the people. We know that many Jewish people were persecuted and killed, and we know about the Holocaust. Yet still, the LORD preserved the Jewish people and their beliefs through it all.

The Lord also says that He will gather the Diaspora back from the countries where they reside, and He will return them to the land. We will delve deeper into this in chapters 33 to 37. The LORD here is not speaking of the exiles return from Babylon. He speaks of returning the people from the countries plural where they are scattered. So this is a prediction for the future. And we have seen this come to pass. LORD willing, when we get to chapter 33, I will describe the gathering that led to the rebirth of the nation of Israel May 14th, 1948 and the subsequent history of the nation.

In addition, the LORD says that He will do an incredible thing. In verse 19, the LORD says He will give the people one heart and a new spirit. He says that he will remove their stony hearts and replace them with hearts of flesh. This is in fact the born again experience. Jesus, when He spoke to Nicodemus in John 3 said that Nicodemus should know these things. Well, Nicodemus could only have known this from the Old Testament, as the Gospel of John had not been written yet. We see here in Ezekiel, as well as elsewhere (such as Deut 30:6 and Jer 31:30-33) that the LORD spoke about being born again long before Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.

After this, the LORD went up from Jerusalem and stood on the mountain on the east side of the city, which is the Mt. of Olives. Ezekiel is then returned to the Elders in his house in Tel-aviv, where Ezekiel relates what the LORD showed him.

Questions? Please read chapters 12 through 14 for next time, and have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Let's pray.