



Welcome back! I hope you all had a good holiday, and I wish you all a happy New year!

Let's pray.

Unfortunately, on the world scene, 2017 ended poorly for the world versus Israel.

The UN General Assembly voted 128 member states for, 9 opposed, with 35 abstaining, and 21 absenting themselves from the vote—to deem US recognition of Jerusalem “null and void”. This is entirely absurd, and yet few people recognize it as such. What other country, other than Israel, has been told that it can't select which of its cities is its capital? The answer is none.

Even democratic countries such as Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, India, and the UK voted for this vile resolution. In essence, they sided with non-democratic nations against the only true democracy in the Middle East, Israel.

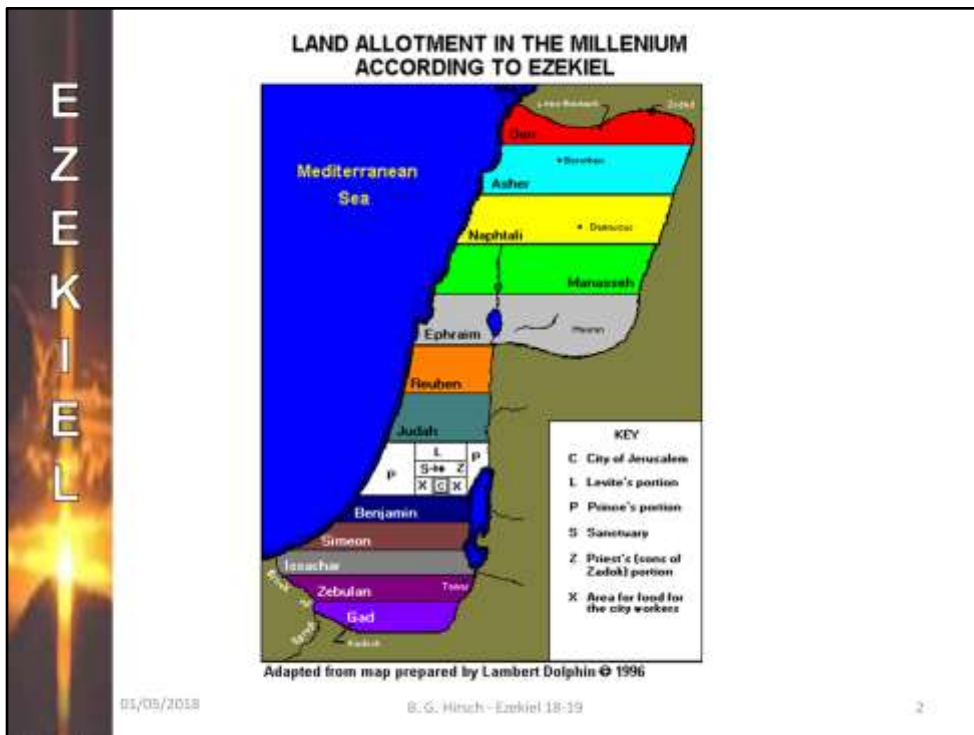
This vote was against the United States, and directly attacked our sovereignty to decide who we will recognize and where we will place our embassies. It also violated the UN's own charter, which states in Article 2 section 7, “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.”

In Zech 12:2-3 (KJV) it says:

²Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem.

³And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

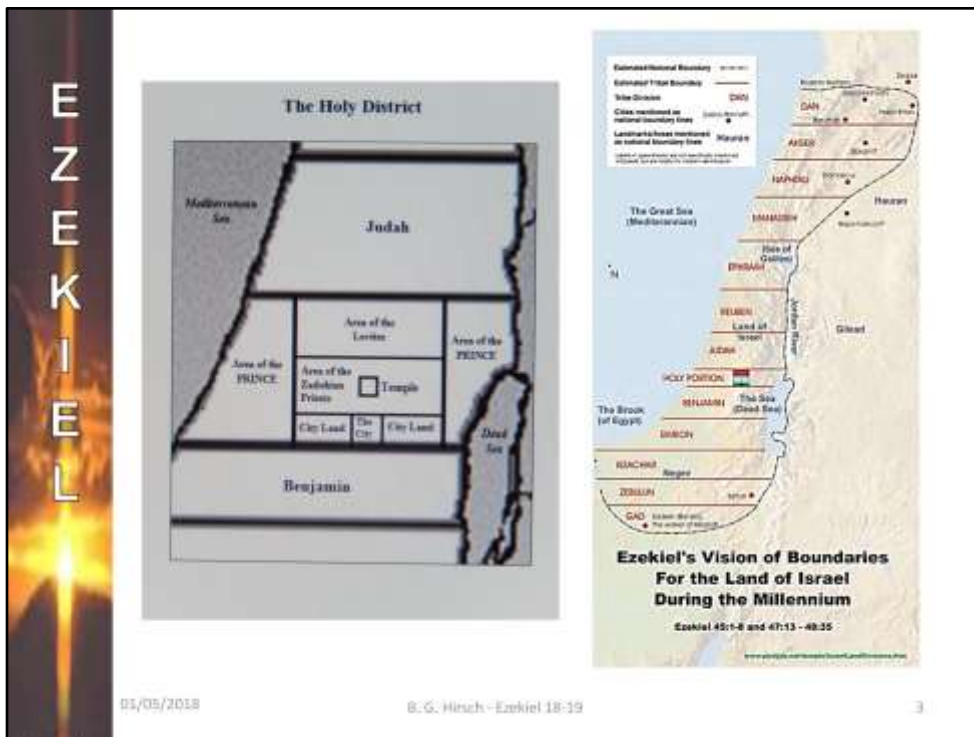
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I promised last time to bring a map of the nation of Israel in the Millennium. We will cover this again in chapters 45 and 47-48 of Ezekiel. But these maps will give you a preview.

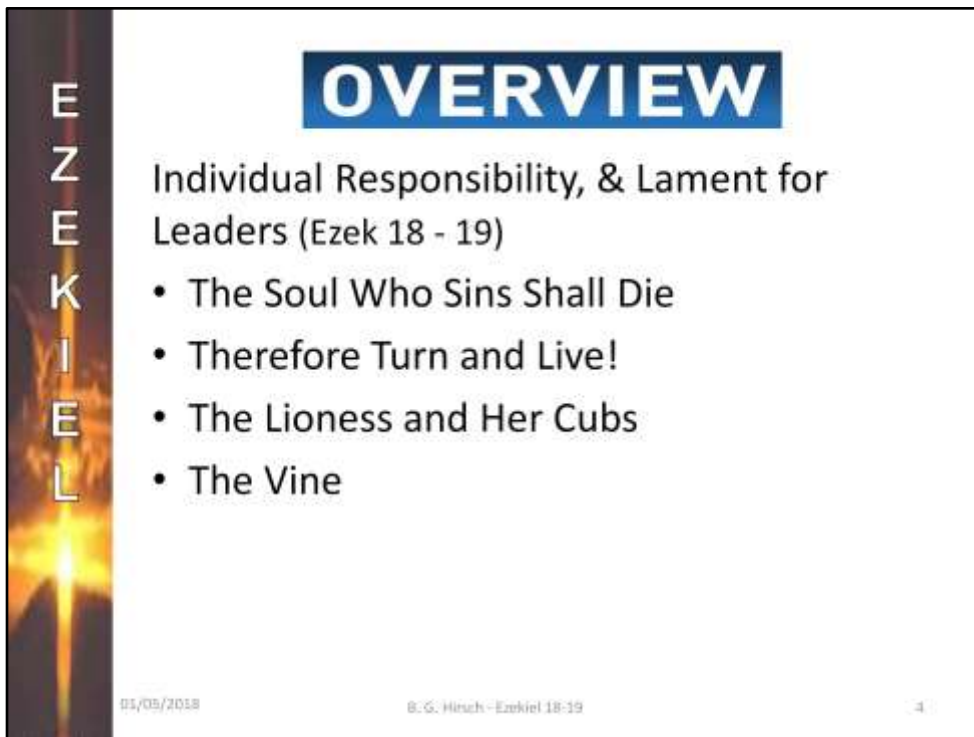
Here, you can see that Israel will be divided between the tribes differently than in the original allotments to the tribes. There will also be a separate holy district which includes Jerusalem.

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These images show the Holy portion of Israel that is set aside for the Prince, Jerusalem, the Levites, and the priests. The other image gives you a better feel for How large Israel's boundaries will be versus today. In this image, Israel is well into Syria on the north-east (e.g. Damascus is within Israel), Lebanon in the north, it includes what is today called the West Bank in the east, it includes the Gaza strip on the west, and it includes a portion of Egypt to the south.

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The slide features a vertical banner on the left with the word 'EZEKIEL' in white capital letters against a dark background with a glowing light effect. The main title 'OVERVIEW' is in a blue box. Below it, the subtitle 'Individual Responsibility, & Lament for Leaders (Ezek 18 - 19)' is in black. A bulleted list follows. At the bottom, there is a date '01/05/2018', a name 'B.G. Hirsch - Ezekiel 18-19', and a small icon with the number '4'.

This week's lesson will examine chapters 18 and 19 of Ezekiel. We will draw even nearer to the end for Jerusalem and Judah, and we will observe the LORD use allegories again to illustrate His case.

Also this week we will learn a very vital principle from the LORD regarding the consequences of sin, God's forgiveness, and our responsibility.

We will also see Ezekiel commanded to raise a lamentation for the leadership of Israel and then for Judah and Jerusalem.

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Review

- Ezekiel, a priest, a prophet, and a watchman is in Babylon continuing to speak forth God's warnings
- Zedekiah is king over Judah in Jerusalem and is in rebellion to Nebuchadnezzar
- The LORD has pronounced judgement on His faithless bride
- The LORD promises restoration for the nation of Israel

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Let's review.

Ezekiel is a priest from Jerusalem who was taken to Babylon more than 6 years ago in Nebuchadnezzar's second conquest in 598 B.C. While there, the LORD dramatically commissioned Ezekiel as a prophet and watchman to the exiles in Babylon.

Currently in our study, Zedekiah is the king in Judah and Jerusalem. Zedekiah's rebellion to Nebuchadnezzar's rule is the catalyst for the ultimate destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, which will come in 586 B.C. after a siege of Jerusalem. In Jerusalem Zedekiah is hearing the same things from the prophet Jeremiah that Ezekiel is telling the exiles in Babylon.

The last time we met we reviewed different allegories that the LORD used to illustrate the sins of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem. The LORD used a vine, a faithless bride, and two eagles and a vine to convict the Jewish people and Jerusalem. We learned that the vine represents the LORD's spiritual relationship with Israel.

The LORD (i.e. the Father) pronounced his judgement of doom on his faithless bride. However, the LORD also promised restoration. And lastly, we saw that the LORD promised to bring the Messiah to rule in Jerusalem.

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The Soul Who Sins Shall Die

- God is against proverb concerning Israel
 - All souls are the LORD's
 - The Soul who sins shall die
- Righteous will live (12 things)
- Unrighteous will die (8 things)
- All are responsible and are judged for their own lives
- General Rule: Nations (groups, corporate entities) are judged in this world; individuals are judged in the next

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So, now let's read chapter 18 of Ezekiel verses 1 – 18. *(Read verses 1-18.)*

The LORD tells Ezekiel that He, the LORD, is against the people using the proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." The LORD says that He will put an end to this proverb in Israel. The proverb is also mentioned and rejected by the LORD in Jeremiah 31:29-30. So, the proverb may have been in use for awhile since the 2nd conquest.

The subtle message of the proverb is that the present generation was not responsible for the disasters that had befallen them. In essence, the present generation was saying that they were being punished for the sins of their fathers.

However, the LORD makes it clear that He does not judge the children for the sins of their fathers. The LORD says that all souls belong to Him. He gave the present generation ample opportunity to repent, and if they had repented, they would not be facing destruction. See Hosea and Isaiah for the LORD's warnings to the people. The LORD mentions 12 things the righteous do and 8 things the unrighteous do.

One generation's sins can affect a subsequent generation, but only because the consequences for sin can have impacts beyond ourselves and can be long lasting. This does not mean the LORD is judging the offspring for what their parents or grandparents did.

In both the Old and the New Testaments, salvation comes through faith. As it says in James 2:17, our good works are the evidence of that faith. Jesus in Matt 7:17 says that good fruit comes from a good tree. In Ephesians 2:10, Paul says, "For we are His workmanship (poema) created in Christ Jesus for good works,...". As Douglas Stuart said, "God's people act like they are God's people."

The Hebrew words for live and die, used in this chapter, are respectively "chaya" and "moot". They speak of ultimate eternal life or death, not living longer or dying sooner in this life. Jesus in John 16:33 said that we would have tribulation in this world, and Paul in 2 Tim 3:12 said that those who live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But, the eternal destinations and rewards are different. This world is not our home.

As a general rule, nations or groups or corporate entities are judged in this world, while individuals are judged in the next. Therefore, righteous people may be affected when a city or nation is judged by the LORD. But, their ultimate end is based upon their individual judgment. Also, when a nation, group, or church is blessed by the LORD, the associated unbelievers or unrighteous among the group share in the favor even though they are undeserving, but their final status depends upon their individual judgment.

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Therefore Turn and Live!

- Child will not bear the guilt of the parents
- Parents will not bear the guilt of their children
- God has no pleasure in the death of anyone
- If righteous turns from righteousness he will die; prior righteous deeds forgotten
- If wicked turns from wickedness he will live; prior transgressions forgotten
- LORD's way is just – everyone judged according to their ways – Turn and live!

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Let's read chapter 18 of Ezekiel verses 19 – 32. *(Read verses 19-32.)*

The LORD continues His comments to the people in verse 19. He makes it clear that He will not judge the children for the sins of their parents. The LORD will also not judge the parents for the sins of their children.

The LORD says that the righteousness of the righteous and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon themselves. We should understand this principle, because as Christians we know that salvation requires an individual decision. We can't make the decision for anyone else; we can only tell them the good news and pray for them.

The LORD looks on the heart. Hence, He states that when a wicked person turns from their wickedness, the LORD will forget their prior wickedness, and they will live. Conversely, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness, their prior righteous deeds will be forgotten, and they will die. This should serve as a warning to all Christians as well.

After all of the terrible prophecies of impending destruction by famine, pestilence, wild beasts, and the sword, the LORD says something amazing twice in this section of chapter 18. The LORD says that He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked or anyone. No, in fact the LORD would rather they turn from their wickedness and live. Isn't this like an Old Testament rendition of the Gospel? Repent, and turn to the LORD?

The people then, much as they still do today, said that the LORD's way is not just. But, the LORD reproves them and states flatly that His ways are just, and their ways are not! This is also done twice in this section.

In the end of the chapter, the LORD tells the people to turn from their ways and live. If they do not the LORD has already made it abundantly clear that they will die.

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The Lioness and Her Cubs

- Ezekiel called to take up lamentation, קִינָה qiy nah (funeral dirge), for the princes (kings) of Israel
- Mother/lioness is most likely Israel/Judah or possibly Hamutal, the wife of Josiah
- 1st young lion/king is Jehoahaz – taken to Egypt where he died
- 2nd young lion/king is Jehoachin – taken to Babylon where he died

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Let's read chapter 19 of Ezekiel verses 1 – 9. *(Read verses 1-9.)*

The beginning of chapter 19 differs from the proceeding chapters in that it does not start with the usual, "The word of the LORD came to me." In fact, it appears, because the LORD simply says, "And you,..." that the LORD just continues and tells Ezekiel to raise a lament for the princes (or kings) of Israel.

The Hebrew word used for lament is קִינָה qiy nah (kee-naw'). Qiy nah means funeral dirge. It is a song sung at or after a funeral to honor or commemorate a person or persons who have died. It may have been accompanied by instruments, and they were thought to have a 3/2 beat. There are usually four elements to a qiy nah:

1. Instruction to mourn
2. Direct address to the departed
3. Description of the tragedy (how greatly the loss is felt)
4. Retrospective praise of the qualities of the departed

Ezekiel's qiy nah has all of these elements, and Ezekiel's audience would have recognized it as a dirge.

The mother of the young lions is called a lioness. This is a reference to either the nation of Israel in total or to Judah. Verse 10 refers to the kings' mother as a vine, which strongly suggests that this is Israel.

The first young lion is Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz was a bad king that was taken to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco, where Jehoahaz eventually died.

Ezekiel skips the reign of Jehoiachim, who was not exiled.

The second young lion is then Jehoiachin, who went into exile in 598 B.C. His voice as it says in verse 9 was heard no more on the mountains of Israel. Some feel that Ezekiel may have been referring to Zedekiah. However, Zedekiah was still reigning in Judah, and Ezekiel did not consider Zedekiah the rightful king.

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The Vine

- The vine once flourished, but now it has been destroyed
- East wind is Nebuchadnezzar
- The Davidic line of kings ends here
 - No more throne of David from then until now
 - Only the Messiah, Jesus, is left as the rightful heir
 - One day the throne of David will exist again and Jesus will be the ruler

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Let's read chapter 19 of Ezekiel verses 10 – 14. (*Read verses 10-14-.*)

Israel is likened once more to a flourishing vine. And, had Zedekiah not rebelled, it would have been spared the destruction that eventually came. But, because of Zedekiah's rebellion and breaking his vow before God to serve Nebuchadnezzar, God brought the Babylonians to destroy Judah and Jerusalem.

The flourishing vine that had provided for a number of kings would now be thrown down in God's fury. And Nebuchadnezzar, the east wind, would dry up the fruit, leaving the land desolate for 70 years.

At this point, the line of Davidic kings has come to an end. As we had discussed in a prior lesson, the LORD pronounced that no child of Jehoiachin, who was the rightful heir, would sit on the throne of David. The palace, the throne of David, the Temple, and the walls and most of Jerusalem were destroyed in 586 B.C. So there was no throne of David when Jesus came the first time. However, when Jesus returns, King of kings and LORD of Lords, He will sit on the throne of David.

Questions? Please read chapters 20 and 21 for next week.

Let's pray.