

INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE OF EZEKIEL

The name “Ezekiel” means “God (the ‘el’ ending) will strengthen”

In 722, 721 BC, Assyria had conquered the northern kingdom, Israel, taking many away as captives. The prophets warned the southern kingdom, Judah, not to follow the wicked path and disastrous consequence of their northern neighbors (Hos 4:15).

In 606, 596, and 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar’s armies besieged Jerusalem, finally destroying the city and the Temple in the last siege.

Ps 137 gives a glimpse of life in Babylon for the Jewish captives - so does the first paragraph of Jeremiah 29.

Ezekiel was a later contemporary of Jeremiah, and contemporary with Daniel.

Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem before and during the early captivity.

Daniel went to Babylon in the 1st deportation (about 606 BC), and he prophesied during entire captivity.

Daniel preached and prophesied to the Babylonian Kings and the Court.

Ezekiel went in the 2nd deportation, about 596 BC (2 Ki 24:11-16) - probably died before captivity ended.

Ezekiel preached and prophesied to the (common) people (the Jews) in the captivity

Jeremiah is mentioned in *Daniel* 9:2, referencing the length of the captivity as 70 years

Daniel is mentioned 3 times in *Ezekiel* 14:14, 14:20, 28:3

Ezekiel’s name appears in neither of his contemporaries’ writings

Some of the historical background for this is found in 2 Ki 24, 25 and 2 Chron 36 (see also Psalm 137).

Jeremiah 29 was a letter to the exiles, including Ezekiel, directing them to settle down in the captivity: “Build houses, plant gardens, have families. Seek the good of the place of your captivity, for that will mean your good also. Don’t listen to the false prophecies that predict a short captivity and a quick return; you’ll be there for 70 years. Then I will come and restore you to your land.”

A broad, general outline of the book follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| I. Commissioning of the Prophet | chapters 1-3 |
| II. Controversy With Judah | chapters 4-24 |
| III. Condemnation of the Nations | chapters 25-32 |
| IV. Comforting End Time Prophecies | chapters 33-48 |

The prophecy was written over a period of about 22 years, beginning about 592 BC. Ezekiel was about age 35. It was not necessarily written in chronological order of the events described.

The prophet himself:

Was he thirty when he arrived in Babylon? 1:1

If so, he was born around 623-622 BC, during reign of good king Josiah

He was a boy when the book of the law was found during the Temple renovations

Ezekiel was a priest 1:3, so he was of Levi’s tribe and Aaron’s family

He was married, and chapter 24 records the death of his wife, a symbol of the fall of Jerusalem (33:21)

Ezekiel’s home seemed to be a meeting place for Jewish elders in the captivity (8:1, 14:1, 20:1)

Compare his call (1:26-2:8) with Isaiah 6 (Isaiah) and Revelation 1:10-18 (John)

He began in the 5th year of King Jehoiachin’s exile; the latest time mention is the 27th year (29:17)

His message included:

- 1) Results of sin (they were in captivity because of idolatry)
- 2) Repentance - they could not return to Jerusalem without returning to God
- 3) Restoration - in the end times, Jerusalem would exceed her former glory

EZEKIEL OUTLINE - RLP

A major purpose of events chronicled here: “they will know that I am the LORD.” Similar statements 71 times

I. COMMISSIONING OF THE PROPHET

(1:1 -

3:27)

[1] Coming of the Word (1-3), the Creatures (4-14), the Wheels (15-25), the Glory of the Lord (26-28)

[2,3] Enablement by the Spirit (2:1,2), Sent to the People (2:3-8), Eat the Scroll (2:9-3:3), Speak to the People, Whether they will Listen or not (3:4-27)

II. CONTROVERSY WITH JUDAH

(4:1 - 24:27)

Judgment necessary because of disobedience judgment (chs 4-11)	[4,5] 1 st sign: the siege drawn on a brick (4:1-3), 2 nd sign: lying on both sides for Israel and Judah (4:4-8), 3 rd sign: the unclean food (4:9-17), 4 th sign: the shaved head (5:1-4), signs interpreted (5:5-17) [6] Idolatry was the cause of the judgment of captivity [7] Grace is over; the end has come; when Jerusalem falls, you will know that I, the LORD, did it [8] Ezekiel, carried to Jerusalem in a vision, sees detestable acts that brought the judgment [9] Shekinah moves from ark to door. The vision, slaying of the wicked, but a marked remnant is spared [10] With Cherubim and wheels, the Shekinah departs from the Temple - the glory is gone! [11] “Tour vision” finishes up: judgment on Jerusalem’s rulers; God will bring a purged remnant home [12] Ezekiel enacts Jerusalem’s destruction and the deportation - the people see God means business! [13] Woe to false prophets who are like poorly built walls covered with whitewash to look good [14] Idolatry, false prophecies will cause sword, famine, wild beasts, plague; but there will be a remnant [15] Unfaithful Jerusalem like a vine fit only for burning [16] Israel, chosen as Jehovah’s wife, ran off in adulterous relationships with the nations - consequences [17] Riddle, Parable of the two eagles; Israel planted in Babylon, to be replanted back home (kingdom) [18] Parable of the “Sour Grapes” - but each man is responsible for the consequences of his own sin [19] Lament (eulogy) over the lion cubs (princes): Jehoahaz (1-4), Jehoiachin (5-9), Zedekiah (10-14) [20] A lengthy summary history of Israel’s rebellions, [21] God’s sword in Nebuchadnezzar’s hand to cut off the monarchy ‘til Messiah comes [22] Jerusalem’s shame because of her many sins, even sins of priests and prophets! [23] Parable of the two sisters: Ohola (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem) and their adultery (against God)
False hopes for a quick return home are futile See Jer 29 (Chs 12-19)	
Judah’s abominations corruption detailed (Chs 20-24)	

[24] Parable of the boiling pot (Jerusalem’s bloodshed); and the death of Ezekiel’s wife (no mourning)

III. CONDEMNATION OF THE NATIONS

(25:1 -

32:32)

[25] Prophecies against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia

[26-28] Prophecies against Tyre and Sidon {28:1-19} Is this beyond the king of Tyre to

Lucifer?

[29-32] Prophecies against

Egypt

IV. COMFORTING END-TIME PROPHECIES

(33:1 - 48:35)

[33] Ezekiel given the responsibility of being a Watchman

[34] False shepherds will be judged; the Lord is the Good Shepherd

[35,36] Israel's cousin, Edom, will be punished for her wrongs; Israel will be restored to her land

[37] Israel resurrected (Valley of dry bones), and northern and southern kingdoms (2 sticks) reunited

[38-39] Gog and Magog attack Israel and are repulsed, many dying on the mountains of Israel

[40-43] A Newly Restored Temple

[44-46] A New Service of

Worship at the Restored Temple

[47,48] A New River and a Newly Divided Land

These are
Tribulation
and
Millennium
Prophecies
(Chs. 25-48)

THE COMMISSIONING OF THE PROPHET - This record of the prophet's "call" is the longest such in Scripture (compare Isaiah 6 and Jeremiah 1). This vision of God's glory prepares him for difficult ministry.

Chapter 1:1-3 Ezekiel's introduction begins with the **when**, the **where**, and the **what**. There are many date tags in the book of *Ezekiel* (see discussion in the overview). His dates are tied to the exile from Judah to Babylon. The location is in the land of Babylon (also called "Chaldea," "Mesopotamia," and modern "Iraq"). Specifically there by the Chebar (Kabar) River. The event described is shared in a three-fold way: 1) he saw visions in the heavens; 2) Yahweh's Word came to him; and 3) Yahweh's hand was upon him. This is certainly a clear call to prophetic ministry. **(4-14)** The first vision is of the 4 living creatures, angelic beings (probably cherubim), each with four faces and four wings, with hands under their wings. They were characterized also by fast movements and flashes of lightning. **(15-21)** Perhaps the second most famous vision (behind the dry bones) is when "Ezekiel saw the wheels." They sound like "gyroscopes" in their wheels within wheels and their stable movements. The movement and the presence of eyes all around suggest the omnipresence and the omniscience of God. **(22-28)** Above the creatures and the wheels was a large expanse with the glorious throne of God. What sights and sounds Ezekiel was privileged to experience! So, he is called by God for prophetic tasks, but is first shown the power and glory of the God he will serve. When troubles come, and men do not respond well, it will be good to remember that his ministry is God-centered, not man-centered.

Chapter 2:1,2 God addresses Ezekiel as "Son of Man," *ben adam*, reminding him that he is related to these people to whom he will minister. He calls him to stand, and then by the Spirit, enables him to stand - isn't that the character of God's call to us? He gives us tasks, then He enables us to do them! **(3-8)** Now the command begins - it is essentially this: "Even when this people rebel and will not hear what you say from me, keep saying it! Don't be afraid (3 times), and don't join their rebellion!" **(9)** Having been instructed to eat what God gives him, Ezekiel is now handed a scroll, unrolled and written on both sides with words of "Lament and mourning and woe." He is not called upon to preach pleasant words to the Israelites, but to tell them the hard truth about sin and judgment!

Chapter 3:1-3 The command is repeated to eat the scroll, and Ezekiel obeys. He then reports that it was in his mouth as sweet as honey to the taste! Similar thoughts are found elsewhere in Scripture: Ps 19:10 *They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.* Jeremiah 15:16 *When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty.* Revelation 10:9, 10 *So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.* **(4-11)** "Son of Man, these people are not foreigners with a strange tongue; they speak your language, but they will not heed the words you speak. They are hard-headed, but I will make you just as stubborn, so that you can keep on telling them the truth. Don't be afraid, just go to your fellow expatriate exiles and tell them 'what the Sovereign LORD says.'" **(12-15)** The things Ezekiel has seen and heard come together in a summary moment, as he hears sounds of wings, wheels, and a loud rumbling noise. The visions are followed by action as God's Spirit lifts up the prophet and places him in the presence of the people to whom he is to prophesy. It is by the River Chebar, at a place called Tel Abib (like the modern city in Israel, Tel Aviv [v and b are the same in Hebrew], next door to ancient Joppa). **(16-21)** The "Son of Man" is now named a "Watchman on the Wall." The matter of warning people about sin and its consequences is placed before him. If he warns them,

he is clear of his responsibility; if he doesn't warn them, they may fail and suffer, but also he will be held accountable for not warning them. **(22-27)** God reviews the order of receiving His Words and giving them to the people, regardless of their response.

God is a God of pictures, images. God tells Ezekiel to use 4 “signs” to instruct the people now in captivity.

Sign # 1 (4:1-3) The “tile” or “brick” or “clay tablet.” Ezekiel was to take a soft clay tile and draw on it the outline of the city of Jerusalem. It is distinctive, and everyone from there would recognize it. Then he was to “play army men” by erecting siege works on the tile to depict the Babylonian assault. Note these texts, written of these very events! (2 Kings 25:1) *So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it.* (Jeremiah 52:4) *So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. They camped outside the city and built siege works all around it.* What's the point? False prophets in captivity were predicting an end to the siege of Jerusalem and an early return to their city. This “sign” was to tell them Babylon would prevail and Jerusalem would fall - so get used to the captivity; it's going to last a while. “Not going home, no home to go to!”

Sign # 2 (4:4-8) This is the sign of Ezekiel lying on his side(s), the left side first for 390 days; then on his right side for 40 days. If his head were toward Jerusalem from Babylon, his left side would have him facing North, speaking of the Kingdom of Israel. Lying on his right side would face him South, representing the Southern Kingdom of Judah. This certainly seems to fit the picture. The significance of the numbers of days is of uncertain interpretation. What is certain is that they are tied to days of the sin of the 2 kingdoms. Israel's sin was greater, and they went into captivity earlier. Ezekiel probably didn't lie down the whole 430 days, but more likely part of each day, perhaps set times when the most people would see him.

Sign # 3 (4:9-17) This sign had to do with the famine caused by the Babylonian siege of the Holy City. To depict this, Ezekiel would have meager rations of food and water. The food would not be the best, but made with mixed grains instead of pure. Even the cooking of the bread was illustrative of the sad circumstances in Jerusalem - cooking over excrement! God did allow him to cook over cow dung, instead of His original instruction of human excrement (see Deut 23:12-14 for its uncleanness). Jeremiah describes the famine in these places:

Lam 1:{11} All her people groan as they search for bread; they barter their treasures for food to keep themselves alive. "Look, O LORD, and consider, for I am despised." 2:{11} My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within, my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city. {12} They say to their mothers, "Where is bread and wine?" as they faint like wounded men in the streets of the city, as their lives ebb away in their mothers' arms. {19} Arise, cry out in the night, as the watches of the night begin; pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street. 4:{4} Because of thirst the infant's tongue sticks to the roof of its mouth; the children beg for bread, but no one gives it to them. {5} Those who once ate delicacies are destitute in the streets. Those nurtured in purple now lie on ash heaps. 4:{9} Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of famine; racked with hunger, they waste away for lack of food from the field.

Sign # 4 (5:1-17) The prophet was to cut off his hair and beard, a sign of mourning - *Isaiah 15:{2} Dibon goes up to its temple, to its high places to weep; Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba. Every head is shaved and every beard cut off. {3} In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the roofs and in the public squares they all wail, prostrate with weeping.* Verses 1-4 give the actions; verses 5 ff, explanation. The cause of the defeat and captivity is described (5:5-9). The sad woes of Jerusalem's inhabitants in

the last days before the city falls is next chronicled: cannibalism, God's face turned away, death by famine (1/3) inside the city and sword outside (1/3), and the captivity of the remaining 1/3 (all in verse **12**). The final verses (**13-17**) describe the utter devastation physically of the Jerusalem Jews, but the blessing of seeing in the judgment the fulfillment of things that "I the LORD have spoken."

Chapter 6: 1-7 The prophet rails on the people for their idolatry. “Mountains and hills” are the “high places” which were centers of idolatry. Some of the idols were of Baal and Asherah. Here the people had violated commandments one and two: No other gods and no graven images. Leviticus 26 details God’s promise of blessing for obedience and warning of punishment for idolatry (esp vss 30-33).

6:8-14 God spares a remnant through the captivity, and they know His threats were not empty. The result of the Jews knowing that God is the Lord is a recurring theme (7, 10, 13, 14). This passage is reminiscent of Isa 6:10-13. Israel’s idolatry is metaphorically called “adultery.”

Chapter 7: 1-9 Jehovah has had enough! The time for judgment has come; the basis for it is their “conduct and detestable practices” (vss 3, 4, 8, 9). The “You will know” theme shows up again (4, 9). There will be no pity and no sparing as when Assyria came against the north, but God spared Judah. **7:10-27** Now he describes the misery of Jerusalem’s inhabitants as the city falls (586 BC). Their sin had matured and was ready for judgment. There would be economic disaster, military failure, the sword’s slaughter outside the city, famine inside, fugitives mourning, and all because God has turned His face away. Civil and religious leaders falter, as prophet, priest and king are useless to help.

Chapter 8: 1-18 Ezekiel is removed from an elders’ meeting and transported to Jerusalem (1,2), where he is shown detestable things that brought about the fall of the city and the captivity. Ezekiel saw an idol just inside the north gate of the temple, one that made God jealous (**3-6**); he also saw 70 elders of Israel burning incense to idols, thinking God did not see (**7-12**). He observed women mourning for Tammuz, a god connected with rain for vegetation and fertility for women (**13,14**). 25 men worshiped the sun with their backs turned on God (**15,16**). Because of their violence and insults to God, He would judge them in anger, without pity, sparing, or hearing their prayers, even shouted (**17,18**).

Chapter 9: 1-11 This short chapter contains two things - 1) the beginning of the departure of God’s glory from the Temple, and 2) the slaughter in judgment of those in the city who did not grieve over the great sins of Jerusalem. A single man marks those who did grieve, and a band of men slay those who didn’t - showing the widespread acceptance of detestable practices in Jerusalem. The words “Begin at my sanctuary” reminds of 1 Peter 4:17, *“For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”*

Chapter 10: 1-5 As in 9:3, this paragraph tells of God’s glory moving from Cherubim to the threshold of the Temple door. As in 1:5-21, we see here fire among the cherubim and the wheels (**6-17**). God’s glory moves again (**18-22**), moving with the Cherubim and the wheels, like those in chapter 1 by the River Chebar. Clearly, God is removing His presence from the Temple in displeasure over sin.

Chapter 11:1-6 The Spirit shows Ezekiel 25 wicked men by the Eastern Gate (faces Mt of Olives). They are talking of a quick end to the captivity and rebuilding the city (same old lie). Such teaching led to many deaths. (**7-12**) Their failure to be different as a nation leads to God sending a sword against the Jews (while they do not fear God, they do fear an enemy’s sword!). Again the phrase of the purpose of the events: “Then you will know...” [11:10]. (**13-21**) “What **is** going to become of Israel? Men are dying; others are gone into exile!” God’s response is, “I am protecting the exiles

[16], and I will bring them back to Israel [17] and that with a new heart! Idolatry will end” [18]. In **(22-25)** God’s glory moves from the city to the Mt. Of Olives (to the east of Jerusalem); Ezekiel is transported in spirit back to Babylon, and he reports the vision to the exiles there, faithful prophet that he is.

Chapter 12: 1-16 Even in exile, the Jews rebelled against God. Still thinking they were headed home soon to join the remnant in Jerusalem, the “sign of the baggage” indicated the remnant was coming to join them! The “prince” is Zedekiah, who “will not see it.” 13 times in these 8 chapters “they will know.” (17-20) His trembling at a meal was a sign of the anxiety of the remnant in Jerusalem. (21-28) The proverb about “visions coming to nothing” will be shortly invalidated as God finishes the judgment.

Jer 52:10,11

Chapter 13: 1-16 God cries out against false prophets who speak the lie of “peace when there is no peace.” He will expose their lies, which he likens to flimsy walls not repaired but only whitewashed. They speak “their imagination;” they “follow their own spirit.” “Their visions are false... their divinations a lie.” (17-23) Female prophets had also deceived people to 1) save their own lives, 2) get food (scraps). God will also punish them and deliver the people from their deceptions.

Chapter 14: 1- 11 The captivity caused by idolatry found the exiles holding idols in their hearts, even the elders who sought to Ezekiel for a word from God. Most people went to false prophets, and those prophets shared their guilt. (12-23) God’s rods against countries for their sins: famine, sword, wild beasts, and plague, could not be stayed even by such righteous men as Noah, Job, and Daniel. If the Gentiles suffer such, how much more Jerusalem, the city of God, with all its light from God! “After his two signs (12:1-20) and five messages (12:21-14:23), Ezekiel delivered a series of three parables (chapters 15-17) to show that there was no possibility of deliverance for Israel.” (BKC)

Chapter 15: 1-8 This parable of the uselessness of a fruitless vine is about Jerusalem. As a “wooden” (old and hard) vine can’t even be made into a peg, so Jerusalem, devoid of the fruit of righteousness, is fit only for the fire of judgment. She has been partially burned, but Babylon will return to finish the job.

Chapter 16: 1-7 Ezekiel personifies Jerusalem, and he speaks of her early years. Formerly a city of Gentile nations (Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites mentioned here), God chose her and gave her immortality (life) as the city of God. (8-14) God made the young woman His wife; she became royalty. (15-34) The beautiful maiden queen shamefully committed adultery with other nations and with false gods. (35-43) The double sins of prostitution and child-sacrifice will be punished by stoning and by sword. (44-52) You reverted to the sins of your parents, you acted like your sisters (Samaria and Sodom), but you made them look righteous by comparison! (53-63) As wicked as she had been, God promised to restore Jerusalem; then she would have deep shame for her gross sins. Her pride will turn into humility

Chapter 17: The background is Jer 27, God’s command to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. The parables and their explanations are like this (1-4 with 11,12) Jehoiachin was deposed, and nobles (like Daniel) were transplanted in Babylon; (5,6 with 13,14) Nebuchadnezzar didn’t destroy Jerusalem at once - he left a remnant there, making a treaty with Zedekiah; (7,8 with 15) 2nd eagle was Egypt, who joined with Zedekiah to rebel against Babylon; (9,10 with 16-21) Zedekiah’s ill-advised alliance with Pharaoh will fail; he will be carried off to Babylon, where he will die. (22-24) Israel’s hope is in Messiah, the sprig from David’s shoot.

Chapter 18: 1-20 The exiles (and perhaps the ones suffering back in Jerusalem) were blaming their plight on the sins of the fathers (see proverb in vs 2). God says, “No, each man is wicked or righteous on his own.” (21-32) In fact, righteous-living men may go bad and die for it, as well as wicked men may repent and live. In either case, God is just, and it is wrong to charge Him with injustice.

Chapter 19: 1-14 The Israelites should shelve their false optimism about returning soon to Jerusalem, and weep for their losses. **(1-4)** Jehoahaz carried to die in Egypt. **(5-9)** Jehoiachin was removed to die in Babylon. **(10-14)** The final king, Zedekiah, also died in Babylon, leaving the land stripped of kings.

Ezekiel 20 - 24

This chapter (20) and 24, detail Judah's rebellious history; parallels ch 16 and its long metaphor.

Chapter 20: 1-3 The elders came to the prophet to inquire. Whatever they sought, God had a message for them that pre-empted any inquiry on their part. **(4-9)** He twice asks Ezekiel a question that seems more like an order - "Will you judge them?" He is to confront them with the sad record of Judah's rebellious history. Israel's love for Egyptian gods almost brought God's wrath there, but, for His oath's sake and His name's sake, He brought them out. **(10-17)** In the wilderness God blessed Israel with His law, especially the Sabbath, which set her apart from other peoples. Still she rebelled, but God spared her in His pity. **(18-26)** The next generation fared no better, as they, too, rebelled against God. Yet for the sake of His name He spared them destruction, but gave them over to their sins. **(27-31)** From Egypt, through desert, now - in the land of promise, and what? Rebellion continues, and even to Ezekiel's day they want to inquire of God - but He says, "NO!" **(32-44)** As God had brought the Jews out of Egypt "with a mighty hand and outstretched arm" (Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 11:2), so He would rule over them, having brought them home. "Pass under the rod" = judgment. Repentance will come; idolatry will end. **(45-49)** actually belong to ch 21's four messages.

Chapter 21: 1-7 God drew the sword (Babylon) from its sheath and judged Jerusalem, bringing great grief. **(8-17)** The sword in God's hand is sharpened and ready for use against Judah, people and prince alike. Great is the slaughter! **(18-27)** Nebuchadnezzar will choose to attack Jerusalem first of the rebelling cities. **(28-32)** The Ammonites, who rebelled with Judah, will not escape Babylon, God's polished sword.

Chapter 22: 1-16 Violence ("shedding blood") and idolatry were Jerusalem's besetting sins. God calls on Ezekiel (with a question) to pronounce her judgment. Power led men to violence, and idolatry led them to immorality, as it invariably does. **(17-22)** The people shall gather in Jerusalem, and there God will judge them. **(23-31)** All alike will be judged - none shall escape: princes, priests, prophets, officials, and people. God looked for a man to stem the tide of wrong, but none could do so.

Chapter 23: 1-21 In a parable, God describes the unfaithfulness of the divided kingdoms. One sister is Samaria (capital in the North); the other is Jerusalem, Judah's main city. Their adultery was earlier described as idolatry; here is it not trusting in false gods, but in other nations - Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt in the main. **(22-35)** Ezekiel describes the "consequences of your lewdness and prostitution" (35). Their very "lovers" will turn on them. **(36-49)** Again, the conclusion of the matter is that penalty for wrongs, consequences for actions will follow. As they sowed, so they will reap (Gal 6:7,8). And "like sin, like punishment."

Chapter 24: 1-14 Jerusalem, where the people look and gather for security and safety, becomes a pot under which the Babylonians build a fire and cook the inhabitants. This is not safety, but rather destruction. Judah

refused God's efforts to cleanse her, so she will remain defiled. (15-27) Ezekiel here suffers the death of his wife. Like Aaron's family in Leviticus 10, the prophet is not allowed to mourn or express grief. This tragic loss is a parable for Judah - Jerusalem, the delight of their eyes and object of their affections, will fall. And they are not to mourn or express grief, either. Word of the fall of Jerusalem would come to Ezekiel in Babylon by a fugitive from the city.

COMFORTING END-TIME PROPHECIES (Pt 1)

Ezekiel 33 - 39

Chapter 33: 1-9 The responsibility of a watchman to warn, and Ezekiel's commission as a watchman. (10-20) God defends His righteousness, calling for individual accountability for sins. Men live who obey, while the disobedient die. Actions have consequences. (21-33) News of Jerusalem's fall reaches the exiles in Babylon. God reveals to Ezekiel that the remaining Jews in destroyed Judah (people group 1) still didn't get it. Their parable about Abraham was off the mark. Lawlessness cost them their homeland. As for the exiles (people group 2), while they listen to Ezekiel, it is for entertainment, not to believe or obey his words. But "they will know" he is a prophet when his words are fulfilled.

Chapter 34: 1-6 The leaders of Judah (shepherds) did not protect or nurture their flock. They rather enriched themselves. (7-10) God will hold the evil shepherds accountable and will rescue the flock. (11-16) The Lord Himself will become the shepherd (Ps 23, Jn 10:11). He will properly care for the flock. (17-24) The sheep themselves are not without fault, as well. Jehovah will also judge between them, and He will place David over them as prince (perhaps a Messianic reference). (25-31) This looks like millennial kingdom language - prosperity and plenty, respect for Israel among the nations, fear will be banished from God's chosen ones.

Chapter 35: 1-4 The prophet returns to a decree against Edom (25:12-14), perhaps as the prototype enemy of Israel. Edom's devastation will lead men to know Jehovah. (5-9) As in Obadiah, "like sin - like punishment." God has a long memory when it comes to how nations treat His people. (10-15) There is a clear correlation between Edom's guilt and God's judgment. This is a glimpse at the Judgment of the nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1ff; Matt 25:31-46).

Chapter 36: 1-7 Representing all the nations, Edom's anti-Semitism will reduce her to being scorned, as she scorned Israel. (8-12) This is millennial blessing. Security, growth in numbers, possessing the land forever! (13-15) The scorn of the nations will be removed forever. (16-21) God reminds the exiles of the reason for their woes - disobedience. (22-23) God's name had been brought low by Israel, so Israel was brought low. God would lift Israel up, not for her sake, but so His name might be lifted up. (24-32) The Nation Israel will not only be restored to her ancient land, she will be spiritually cleansed by Jehovah. Cleansed, she will trust and obey. (33-36) The land, now inhabited, will be made to flourish like never before. (37-38) The people of Israel will become more numerous than any ever imagined.

Chapter 37: 1-14 The famous "dry bones" vision. The bones are Israel - dead and dry. "Can these bones live?" "Prophecy to these bones..." Ezekiel does so, and he sees the bones come together and live. This is the fulfillment of the promise (ch 36) of Israel's restoration as a nation, in her own land. (15-28) The two kingdoms (Judah and Israel [Ephraim]) separated under Rehoboam, will be brought together as one with David as their king. It is clearly Messianic (David represents Christ) and Millennial (it hasn't yet happened).

Chapter 38: 1-9 God will use a group of nations to fulfill His purposes for Israel; they will attack her. (10-

16) The allied armies of many nations will come against Israel from all directions - catching her unawares in her temporary peace with the Antichrist. **(17-23)** Jehovah had spoken of this before through the prophets. The defeat of Gog will be accomplished by God using natural forces, as well as miraculous intervention. When He finally brings it to pass, the nations will be forced to acknowledge the greatness and holiness of His deity.

Chapter 39: The prophecy against Gog continues **1-8** God declares that He will certainly defeat these enemies of Israel upon the mountains of Israel. The allied armies will include Russia, Iran, Turkey, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Libya. **(9-11)** Israel will use the munitions of the hordes, and bury the dead in Israel. **(12-20)** There will be a 7-month clean-up of the dead by carrion creatures and burial squads. **(21-24)** Gentile nations and Israel will acknowledge God after this great victory, which is clearly His! **(25-29)** This is the final and complete regathering of Israel. This will include a spiritual restoration of the nation.

COMFORTING END-TIME PROPHECIES (Pt 2)

Ezek 40 - 48

Chapter 40: 1-5 Ezekiel is carried in a vision to Israel and told to tell the people all that he saw there. He saw a man prepared to measure the Temple. **(6-16)** Here Ezekiel gives a detailed description (with measurements) of the Temple gate (see drawing). **(17-27)** Further description. Now of the outer court, the northern and southern gates. **(28-37)** The prophet now describes the inner court, with southern, northern, and eastern gates. **(38-49)** He finally details the rooms for preparation of sacrifices and for the priests; now he introduces the Temple itself.

Chapter 41: 1-11 Further details include that there are 90 rooms in the Temple, 30 on each of three stories. **(12-26)** More dimensions of the Temple proper, followed by details about the furnishings it contains.

Chapter 42: 1-14 A much-detailed description of certain buildings and rooms around the Temple proper, used for priestly activity. **(15-20)** Finally, over-all measurement of the exterior walls of the Temple complex - 500 cubits on a side. This is big enough to put 13 football fields inside! What a place this will be!

Chapter 43: 1-5 As Ezekiel had seen God's glory depart from Solomon's Temple, now he sees it return to the Millennial Temple. **(6-9)** God tells the prophet that this Temple will be the place of His presence, and that Israel will never again commit spiritual adultery with false gods. **(10-12)** A word-picture of the millennial Temple will shame those whose sins led to the Temple's destruction. It will be a call to holiness. **(13-27)** It appears that sacrifices (memorial in nature) will resume in the kingdom Temple. God describes the altar of that Temple, as well as the process by which it should be consecrated.

Chapter 44: 1-4 Ezekiel is shown the locked eastern gate - locked because the Lord has entered through it, making it holy (Muslims closed the present eastern gate 1,000 years ago). Entering *via* the north gate, he sees God's glory filling the Temple. **(5-9)** He is to call for holiness from the Israelites. **(10-14)** Because the Levites practiced unholy things, in the kingdom they will serve in a reduced role in the Temple sacrifices. **(15-19)** Those of Zadok's line will minister before the Lord in the Temple, since they remained faithful. Their garments are described also. **(20-23)** By their appearance and their marriages, the priests will demonstrate the difference between unclean and holy. **(24-31)** Finally, there are instructions about the priests serving as judges, about how they are cleansed from defilement, and what is to be their portion and provision in Israel.

Chapter 45: 1-6 Here the prophet is informed about an allotment of land around the Temple as a "sacred district." **(7-8)** From this 8.3 mile square, east to the Jordan and west to the Mediterranean, will be the portion for the "prince" (David). **(9-12)** From the distant future, back to the painful present, Ezekiel urges

the leaders to be just in their dealings in business. **(13-25)** Details about offerings and sacrifices in the future Temple.

Chapter 46: 1-10 Again Ezekiel is given instruction about daily offerings and comings and goings to and from the Temple. God's love for order is seen here. **(11-15)** More instruction about offerings and sacrifices. **(16-18)** Reflections of the year of jubilee seen in the kingdom - assuring that property stays within a family. **(19-24)** Ezekiel sees and describes places where cooking of certain offerings and sacrifices is done.

Chapter 47: 1-12 Ezekiel is shown a kingdom river that goes from ankle-deep to swimming deep, flowing from the Temple, eastward. This tree-lined river goes to the Dead Sea, making its waters alive again with fish! The fishing industry will flourish here. The trees provide fruit for eating, leaves for healing. **(13-23)** He describes boundaries for the whole land of Israel in the millennium. It is vast and larger than ever possessed.

Chapter 48: 1-29 Here are transcribed the tribal allotments for Israel in the kingdom age. The tracts are horizontal, running east from the Mediterranean Sea. Seven are above the Temple district, and five are below it. **(31-35)** The city's circumference will be 18,000 cubits, 4,500 on each side. Each side will have three gates, and the "name of the city is 'the LORD is there.'"