

WEEK 45. Ezekiel 1–19 (Warning to and Judgment of Jerusalem)

Sunday (**Ezekiel 1**)

A Vision of God's Glory

1:1 In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was among the exiles at the Kebar River, the heavens opened and I saw a divine vision. 1:2 (On the fifth day of the month – it was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile – 1:3 the word of the Lord came to the priest Ezekiel the son of Buzi, at the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. The hand of the Lord came on him there).

1:4 As I watched, I noticed a windstorm coming from the north – an enormous cloud, with lightning flashing, such that bright light rimmed it and came from it like glowing amber from the middle of a fire. 1:5 In the fire were what looked like four living beings. In their appearance they had human form, 1:6 but each had four faces and four wings. 1:7 Their legs were straight, but the soles of their feet were like calves' feet. They gleamed like polished bronze. 1:8 They had human hands under their wings on their four sides. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, 1:9 their wings touched each other; they did not turn as they moved, but went straight ahead.

1:10 Their faces had this appearance: Each of the four had the face of a man, with the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left and also the face of an eagle. 1:11 Their wings were spread out above them; each had two wings touching the wings of one of the other beings on either side and two wings covering their bodies. 1:12 Each moved straight ahead – wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. 1:13 In the middle of the living beings was something like burning coals of fire or like torches. It moved back and forth among the living beings. It was bright, and lightning was flashing out of the fire. 1:14 The living beings moved backward and forward as quickly as flashes of lightning.

1:15 Then I looked, and I saw one wheel on the ground beside each of the four beings. 1:16 The appearance of the wheels and their construction was like gleaming jasper, and all four wheels looked alike. Their structure was like a wheel within a wheel. 1:17 When they moved they would go in any of the four directions they faced without turning as they moved. 1:18 Their rims were high and awesome, and the rims of all four wheels were full of eyes all around.

1:19 When the living beings moved, the wheels beside them moved; when the living beings rose up from the ground, the wheels rose up too. 1:20 Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise up beside them because the spirit of the living being was in the wheel. 1:21 When the living beings moved, the wheels moved, and when they stopped moving, the wheels stopped. When

they rose up from the ground, the wheels rose up from the ground; the wheels rose up beside them because the spirit of the living being was in the wheel.

1:22 Over the heads of the living beings was something like a platform, glittering awesomely like ice, stretched out over their heads. 1:23 Under the platform their wings were stretched out, each toward the other. Each of the beings also had two wings covering its body. 1:24 When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings – it was like the sound of rushing waters, or the voice of the Almighty, or the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.

1:25 Then there was a voice from above the platform over their heads when they stood still. 1:26 Above the platform over their heads was something like a sapphire shaped like a throne. High above on the throne was a form that appeared to be a man. 1:27 I saw an amber glow like a fire enclosed all around from his waist up. From his waist down I saw something that looked like fire. There was a brilliant light around it, 1:28 like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds after the rain. This was the appearance of the surrounding brilliant light; it looked like the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I threw myself face down, and I heard a voice speaking.

PRAYER

Lord, even the smallest shadow of Your presence is overwhelming to a mere human, and Your Word must be shared even if those hearing choose to reject it. May I be humble in Your presence.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Ezekiel experienced an extraordinary event “In the thirtieth year ...” where a symbolic manifestation of the glory of the Lord God was manifested before him.

[There have been various efforts to explain “thirtieth” in this context; my view is that it may refer to the third decade of the Lord's punishment of His people for their chronic rebellion, beginning with Israel and the final stage concluding with the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of Judah.]

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Ezekiel was confronted with a vision the Lord God in an unmistakable manner.

DISCUSS

How does the description of the creatures and the vision of the Lord God compare to other such descriptions elsewhere in the Bible?

REFLECT

Ezekiel responded to the vision of the Lord God as had others “I threw myself face down ...”

SHARE

When have you been in a time of praise and worship, prayer and testimony, reading and reflecting on the Word and sensed the powerful presence of the Lord?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His presence to you in a uniquely powerful way.

ACT

Today I will spend some time in prayer and worship, undistracted in the Lord's presence, gratefully celebrating His presence in my life through His indwelling Holy Spirit and His Word.

Be Specific _____

Monday (**Ezekiel 2–3:11**)

Ezekiel's Commission

2:1 He said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet and I will speak with you.” 2:2 As he spoke to me, a wind came into me and stood me on my feet, and I heard the one speaking to me.

2:3 He said to me, “Son of man, I am sending you to the house of Israel, to rebellious nations who have rebelled against me; both they and their fathers have revolted against me to this very day. 2:4 The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and hard-hearted, and you must say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says.’ 2:5 And as for them, whether they listen or not – for they are a rebellious house – they will know that a prophet has been among them. 2:6 But you, son of man, do not fear them, and do not fear their words – even though briars and thorns surround you and you live among scorpions – do not fear their words and do not be terrified of the looks they give you, for they are a rebellious house! 2:7 You must speak my words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious. 2:8 As for you, son of man, listen to what I am saying to you: Do not rebel like that rebellious house! Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.”

2:9 Then I looked and realized a hand was stretched out to me, and in it was a written scroll. 2:10 He unrolled it before me, and it had writing on the front and back; written on it were laments, mourning, and woe.

3:1 He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you see in front of you – eat this scroll – and then go and speak to the house of Israel.” 3:2 So I opened my mouth and he fed me the scroll.

3:3 He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your belly with this scroll I am giving to you." So I ate it, and it was sweet like honey in my mouth.

3:4 He said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. 3:5 For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech and difficult language, but to the house of Israel – 3:6 not to many peoples of unintelligible speech and difficult language, whose words you cannot understand – surely if I had sent you to them, they would listen to you! 3:7 But the house of Israel is unwilling to listen to you, because they are not willing to listen to me, for the whole house of Israel is hard-headed and hard-hearted.

3:8 "I have made your face adamant to match their faces, and your forehead hard to match their foreheads. 3:9 I have made your forehead harder than flint – like diamond! Do not fear them or be terrified of the looks they give you, for they are a rebellious house."

3:10 And he said to me, "Son of man, take all my words that I speak to you to heart and listen carefully. 3:11 Go to the exiles, to your fellow countrymen, and speak to them – say to them, 'This is what the sovereign Lord says,' whether they pay attention or not."

PRAYER

Lord, You call and You send, for Your purposes. May I listen for Your call so that I may be a useful instrument in Your great plan.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Ezekiel's Commission began with a great wind from the Lord, together with the display of His glory, which combined had caused him to fall to the ground in humility – a voice called to him "He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet and I will speak with you." As he spoke to me, a wind came into me and stood me on my feet, and I heard the one speaking to me."

A "hand" gave him a scroll of " laments, mourning, and woe" which he was to "eat" and then speak without fear. The Lord made him hardened and strong to withstand the abuse and rejection he would experience.

He was then told "Son of man, I am sending you to the house of Israel, to rebellious nations who have rebelled against me ... You must speak my words to them whether they listen or not ..."

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

What would it be like to be swept to your feet after having fallen on your face in the presence of the Holy One?

DISCUSS

What are the similarities and distinctions between Ezekiel and Jesus, both referred to as “son of man”?

REFLECT

The Lord God persisted in explaining the why of rebellion and punishment, even to people He knew would mostly refuse to listen (hear with comprehension and respond with repentance).

SHARE

When have you observed the truth being presented and people refusing to accept and act on it, despite obvious and dire consequences?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place in your life where you are resisting a hard teaching.

ACT

Today I will submit to the Biblically-sound chastising of the Lord, repent and receive forgiveness, and make the necessary changes in my life as He directs.

Be Specific _____

Tuesday (Ezekiel 3:12-6)

Ezekiel Before the Exiles

3:12 Then a wind lifted me up and I heard a great rumbling sound behind me as the glory of the Lord rose from its place, 3:13 and the sound of the living beings' wings brushing against each other, and the sound of the wheels alongside them, a great rumbling sound. 3:14 A wind lifted me up and carried me away. I went bitterly, my spirit full of fury, and the hand of the Lord rested powerfully on me. 3:15 I came to the exiles at Tel Abib, who lived by the Kebar River. I sat dumbfounded among them there, where they were living, for seven days.

3:16 At the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me: 3:17 “Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you must give them a warning from me. 3:18 When I say to the wicked, “You will certainly die,” and you do not warn him – you do not speak out to warn the wicked to turn from his wicked deed and wicked lifestyle so that he may live – that wicked person will die for his iniquity, but I will hold you accountable for his death.

3:19 But as for you, if you warn the wicked and he does not turn from his wicked deed and from his wicked lifestyle, he will die for his iniquity but you will have saved your own life.

3:20 “When a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I set an obstacle before him, he will die. If you have not warned him, he will die for his sin. The righteous deeds he performed will not be considered, but I will hold you accountable for his death. 3:21 However, if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he will certainly live because he was warned, and you will have saved your own life.”

Isolated and Silenced

3:22 The hand of the Lord rested on me there, and he said to me, “Get up, go out to the valley, and I will speak with you there.” 3:23 So I got up and went out to the valley, and the glory of the Lord was standing there, just like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I threw myself face down.

3:24 Then a wind came into me and stood me on my feet. The Lord spoke to me and said, “Go shut yourself in your house. 3:25 As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and tie you up with them, so you cannot go out among them. 3:26 I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house. 3:27 But when I speak with you, I will loosen your tongue and you must say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says.’ Those who listen will listen, but the indifferent will refuse, for they are a rebellious house.

Ominous Object Lessons

4:1 “And you, son of man, take a brick and set it in front of you. Inscribe a city on it – Jerusalem. 4:2 Lay siege to it! Build siege works against it. Erect a siege ramp against it! Post soldiers outside it and station battering rams around it. 4:3 Then for your part take an iron frying pan and set it up as an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face toward it. It is to be under siege; you are to besiege it. This is a sign for the house of Israel.

4:4 “Also for your part lie on your left side and place the iniquity of the house of Israel on it. For the number of days you lie on your side you will bear their iniquity. 4:5 I have determined that the number of the years of their iniquity are to be the number of days for you – 390 days. So bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

4:6 “When you have completed these days, then lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah 40 days – I have assigned one day for each year. 4:7 You must turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem with your arm bared and prophesy against it. 4:8 Look here, I will tie you up with ropes, so you cannot turn from one side to the other until you complete the days of your siege.

4:9 “As for you, take wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt, put them in a single container, and make food from them for yourself. For the same number of days that you lie on your side – 390 days – you will eat it. 4:10 The food you eat will be eight ounces a day by weight; you must eat it at fixed times. 4:11 And you must drink water by measure, a pint and a half; you must drink it at fixed times. 4:12 And you must eat the food like you would a barley cake. You must bake it in front of them over a fire made with dried human excrement.” 4:13 And the Lord said, “This is how the people of Israel will eat their unclean food among the nations where I will banish them.”

4:14 And I said, “Ah, sovereign Lord, I have never been ceremonially defiled before. I have never eaten a carcass or an animal torn by wild beasts; from my youth up, unclean meat has never entered my mouth.”

4:15 So he said to me, “All right then, I will substitute cow’s manure instead of human excrement. You will cook your food over it.”

4:16 Then he said to me, “Son of man, I am about to remove the bread supply in Jerusalem. They will eat their bread ration anxiously, and they will drink their water ration in terror 4:17 because they will lack bread and water. Each one will be terrified, and they will rot for their iniquity.

5:1 “As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a barber’s razor. Shave off some of the hair from your head and your beard. Then take scales and divide up the hair you cut off. 5:2 Burn a third of it in the fire inside the city when the days of your siege are completed. Take a third and slash it with a sword all around the city. Scatter a third to the wind, and I will unleash a sword behind them. 5:3 But take a few strands of hair from those and tie them in the ends of your garment. 5:4 Again, take more of them and throw them into the fire, and burn them up. From there a fire will spread to all the house of Israel.

5:5 “This is what the sovereign Lord says: This is Jerusalem; I placed her in the center of the nations with countries all around her. 5:6 Then she defied my regulations and my statutes, becoming more wicked than the nations and the countries around her. Indeed, they have rejected my regulations, and they do not follow my statutes.

5:7 “Therefore this is what the sovereign Lord says: Because you are more arrogant than the nations around you, you have not followed my statutes and have not carried out my regulations. You have not even carried out the regulations of the nations around you!

5:8 “Therefore this is what the sovereign Lord says: I – even I – am against you, and I will execute judgment among you while the nations watch. 5:9 I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again because of all your abominable practices. 5:10 Therefore fathers will eat their sons within you, Jerusalem, and sons will eat their fathers. I will execute judgments on you, and I will scatter any survivors to the winds.

5:11 “Therefore, as surely as I live, says the sovereign Lord, because you defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable idols and with all your abominable practices, I will withdraw; my eye will not pity you, nor will I spare you. 5:12 A third of your people will die of plague or be overcome by the famine within you. A third of your people will fall by the sword surrounding you, and a third I will scatter to the winds. I will unleash a sword behind them. 5:13 Then my anger will be fully vented; I will exhaust my rage on them, and I will be appeased. Then they will know that I, the Lord, have spoken in my jealousy when I have fully vented my rage against them.

5:14 “I will make you desolate and an object of scorn among the nations around you, in the sight of everyone who passes by. 5:15 You will be an object of scorn and taunting, a prime example of destruction among the nations around you when I execute judgments against you in anger and raging fury. I, the Lord, have spoken! 5:16 I will shoot against them deadly, destructive arrows of famine, which I will shoot to destroy you. I will prolong a famine on you and will remove the bread supply. 5:17 I will send famine and wild beasts against you and they will take your children from you. Plague and bloodshed will overwhelm you, and I will bring a sword against you. I, the Lord, have spoken!”

Judgment on the Mountains of Israel

6:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 6:2 “Son of man, turn toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them: 6:3 Say, ‘Mountains of Israel, Hear the word of the sovereign Lord! This is what the sovereign Lord says to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys: I am bringing a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. 6:4 Your altars will be ruined and your incense altars will be broken. I will throw down your slain in front of your idols. 6:5 I will place the corpses of the people of Israel in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. 6:6 In all your dwellings, the cities will be laid waste and the high places ruined so that your altars will be laid waste and ruined, your idols will be shattered and demolished, your incense altars will be broken down, and your works wiped out. 6:7 The slain will fall among you and then you will know that I am the Lord.

6:8 “But I will spare some of you. Some will escape the sword when you are scattered in foreign lands. 6:9 Then your survivors will remember me among the nations where they are exiled. They will realize how I was crushed by their unfaithful heart which turned from me and by their eyes which lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves because of the evil they have done and because of all their abominable practices. 6:10 They will know that I am the Lord; my threats to bring this catastrophe on them were not empty.’

6:11 “This is what the sovereign Lord says: Clap your hands, stamp your feet, and say, “Ah!” because of all the evil, abominable practices of the house of Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine, and pestilence. 6:12 The one far away will die by pestilence, the one close by will fall by the sword, and whoever is left and has escaped these will die by famine. I will fully vent my rage against them. 6:13

Then you will know that I am the Lord – when their dead lie among their idols around their altars, on every high hill and all the mountaintops, under every green tree and every leafy oak, the places where they have offered fragrant incense to all their idols. 6:14 I will stretch out my hand against them and make the land a desolate waste from the wilderness to Riblah, in all the places where they live. Then they will know that I am the Lord!”

PRAYER

Lord, You continued to offer Your people an opportunity to repent, even as you detailed Your planned punishment. May I never forget that forgiveness is Your joy to grant when I come to You with a heart of repentance – confessing my sin and my desire to turn away from it.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Ezekiel was commissioned by the Lord God to be the “... watchman for the house of Israel”. In that role he was to warn the wicked and imperfectly-righteous alike of their sin. If he warned them and they ignored him their consequences were on them, if he failed to warn them then he would share in their consequences.

He was sent to Jerusalem to be a symbolic gesture of the Lord to the people there “... they will put ropes on you and tie you up with them, so you cannot go out among them. I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with you, I will loosen your tongue and you must say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says.’ Those who listen will listen, but the indifferent will refuse, for they are a rebellious house ... take a brick and set it in front of you. Inscribe a city on it – Jerusalem. Lay siege to it ... This is a sign for the house of Israel ... lie on your left side ... the number of the years of their iniquity are to be the number of days for you – 390 days ...[then](#) lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah 40 days ... Look here, I will tie you up with ropes, so you cannot turn from one side to the other until you complete the days of your siege.”

Ezekiel then presented the prophesy of the Lord that He would destroy one-third of the people due to disease and famine during the siege of the Babylonians, one-third would be killed by them, and the final third would be exiled. He reported to them that they had been more arrogant in their rebellion even than the pagan nations around them.

He also declared the Lord prophesy against those who worshiped false gods in the mountains of Israel “I am bringing a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. Your altars will be ruined and your incense altars will be broken. I will throw down your slain in front of your idols. I will place the corpses of the people of Israel in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars.”

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The Lord God continued to offer a means by which His children would be warned and thus have an opportunity to repent.

DISCUSS

Is it possible that Ezekiel may not have wanted to warn everyone and thus the Lord provided for consequences should he fail and they then fall?

REFLECT

Those who worshiped idols would not only see them destroyed they would also see their peers, and those who facilitated the idol-worship, perish alongside the powerless symbols of rebellion.

SHARE

When have you observed a situation where someone insisted upon making the Lord second-place in priority to a worldly value and bad things happened to both that functional-idol and to that idol-worshiper?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place where the He says you have made the Lord a second-place priority.

ACT

Today I will confess and repent, seek and receive the Lord God's forgiveness, and I will remove the "idol" from my life. It may be the pursuit of money or prestige, it may be sloth or works-righteousness (legalism or perfectionism), it may be trusting a mere human more than the Word of God, etc.

Be Specific _____

Wednesday (Ezekiel 7-11)

The End Arrives

7:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 7:2 "You, son of man – this is what the sovereign Lord says to the land of Israel: An end! The end is coming on the four corners of the land! 7:3 The end is now upon you, and I will release my anger against you; I will judge you according to your behavior, I will hold you accountable for all your abominable practices. 7:4 My eye will not pity you; I will not spare you. For I will hold you responsible for your behavior, and you will suffer the consequences of your abominable practices. Then you will know that I am the Lord!

7:5 “This is what the sovereign Lord says: A disaster – a one-of-a-kind disaster – is coming! 7:6 An end comes – the end comes! It has awakened against you – the end is upon you! Look, it is coming! 7:7 Doom is coming upon you who live in the land! The time is coming, the day is near. There are sounds of tumult, not shouts of joy, on the mountains. 7:8 Soon now I will pour out my rage on you; I will fully vent my anger against you. I will judge you according to your behavior. I will hold you accountable for all your abominable practices. 7:9 My eye will not pity you; I will not spare you. For your behavior I will hold you accountable, and you will suffer the consequences of your abominable practices. Then you will know that it is I, the Lord, who is striking you.

7:10 “Look, the day! Look, it is coming! Doom has gone out! The staff has budded, pride has blossomed! 7:11 Violence has grown into a staff that supports wickedness. Not one of them will be left – not from their crowd, not from their wealth, not from their prominence. 7:12 The time has come; the day has struck! The customer should not rejoice, nor the seller mourn; for divine wrath comes against their whole crowd. 7:13 The customer will no longer pay the seller while both parties are alive, for the vision against their whole crowd will not be revoked. Each person, for his iniquity, will fail to preserve his life.

7:14 “They have blown the trumpet and everyone is ready, but no one goes to battle, because my anger is against their whole crowd. 7:15 The sword is outside; pestilence and famine are inside the house. Whoever is in the open field will die by the sword, and famine and pestilence will consume everyone in the city. 7:16 Their survivors will escape to the mountains and become like doves of the valleys; all of them will moan – each one for his iniquity. 7:17 All of their hands will hang limp; their knees will be wet with urine. 7:18 They will wear sackcloth, terror will cover them; shame will be on all their faces, and all of their heads will be shaved bald. 7:19 They will discard their silver in the streets, and their gold will be treated like filth. Their silver and gold will not be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord’s fury. They will not satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs because their wealth was the obstacle leading to their iniquity. 7:20 They rendered the beauty of his ornaments into pride, and with it they made their abominable images – their detestable idols. Therefore I will render it filthy to them. 7:21 I will give it to foreigners as loot, to the world’s wicked ones as plunder, and they will desecrate it. 7:22 I will turn my face away from them and they will desecrate my treasured place. Vandals will enter it and desecrate it. 7:23 (Make the chain, because the land is full of murder and the city is full of violence.) 7:24 I will bring the most wicked of the nations and they will take possession of their houses. I will put an end to the arrogance of the strong, and their sanctuaries will be desecrated. 7:25 Terror is coming! They will seek peace, but find none. 7:26 Disaster after disaster will come, and one rumor after another. They will seek a vision from a prophet; priestly instruction will disappear, along with counsel from the elders. 7:27 The king will mourn and the prince will be clothed with shuddering; the hands of the people of the land will tremble. Based on their behavior I will deal with them, and by their standard of justice I will judge them. Then they will know that I am the Lord!”

A Desecrated Temple

8:1 In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth of the month, as I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting in front of me, the hand of the sovereign Lord seized me. 8:2 As I watched, I noticed a form that appeared to be a man. From his waist downward was something like fire, and from his waist upward something like a brightness, like an amber glow. 8:3 He stretched out the form of a hand and grabbed me by a lock of hair on my head. Then a wind lifted me up between the earth and sky and brought me to Jerusalem by means of divine visions, to the door of the inner gate which faces north where the statue which provokes to jealousy was located. 8:4 Then I perceived that the glory of the God of Israel was there, as in the vision I had seen earlier in the valley.

8:5 He said to me, "Son of man, look up toward the north." So I looked up toward the north, and I noticed to the north of the altar gate was this statue of jealousy at the entrance.

8:6 He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing – the great abominations that the people of Israel are practicing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see greater abominations than these!"

8:7 He brought me to the entrance of the court, and as I watched, I noticed a hole in the wall. 8:8 He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and discovered a doorway.

8:9 He said to me, "Go in and see the evil abominations they are practicing here." 8:10 So I went in and looked. I noticed every figure of creeping thing and beast – detestable images – and every idol of the house of Israel, engraved on the wall all around. 8:11 Seventy men from the elders of the house of Israel (with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan standing among them) were standing in front of them, each with a censer in his hand, and fragrant vapors from a cloud of incense were swirling upward.

8:12 He said to me, "Do you see, son of man, what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in the chamber of his idolatrous images? For they think, "The Lord does not see us! The Lord has abandoned the land!" 8:13 He said to me, "You will see them practicing even greater abominations!"

8:14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the Lord's house. I noticed women sitting there weeping for Tammuz. 8:15 He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? You will see even greater abominations than these!"

8:16 Then he brought me to the inner court of the Lord's house. Right there at the entrance to the Lord's temple, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to the Lord's temple, facing east – they were worshiping the sun toward the east!

8:17 He said to me, "Do you see, son of man? Is it a trivial thing that the house of Judah commits these abominations they are practicing here? For they have filled the land with violence and provoked me to anger still further. Look, they are putting the branch to their nose! 8:18 Therefore I will act with fury!

My eye will not pity them nor will I spare them. When they have shouted in my ears, I will not listen to them.”

The Execution of Idolaters

9:1 Then he shouted in my ears, “Approach, you who are to visit destruction on the city, each with his destructive weapon in his hand!” 9:2 Next, I noticed six men coming from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his war club in his hand. Among them was a man dressed in linen with a writing kit at his side. They came and stood beside the bronze altar.

9:3 Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub where it had rested to the threshold of the temple. He called to the man dressed in linen who had the writing kit at his side. 9:4 The Lord said to him, “Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of the people who moan and groan over all the abominations practiced in it.”

9:5 While I listened, he said to the others, “Go through the city after him and strike people down; do not let your eye pity nor spare anyone! 9:6 Old men, young men, young women, little children, and women – wipe them out! But do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary!” So they began with the elders who were at the front of the temple.

9:7 He said to them, “Defile the temple and fill the courtyards with corpses. Go!” So they went out and struck people down throughout the city. 9:8 While they were striking them down, I was left alone, and I threw myself face down and cried out, “Ah, sovereign Lord! Will you destroy the entire remnant of Israel when you pour out your fury on Jerusalem?”

9:9 He said to me, “The sin of the house of Israel and Judah is extremely great; the land is full of murder, and the city is full of corruption, for they say, ‘The Lord has abandoned the land, and the Lord does not see!’ 9:10 But as for me, my eye will not pity them nor will I spare them; I hereby repay them for what they have done.”

9:11 Next I noticed the man dressed in linen with the writing kit at his side bringing back word: “I have done just as you commanded me.”

God’s Glory Leaves the Temple

10:1 As I watched, I saw on the platform above the top of the cherubim something like a sapphire, resembling the shape of a throne, appearing above them. 10:2 The Lord said to the man dressed in linen, “Go between the wheelwork underneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” He went as I watched.

10:3 (The cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and a cloud filled the inner court.) 10:4 Then the glory of the Lord arose from the cherub and moved to the threshold of the temple. The temple was filled with the cloud while the court was filled with the brightness of the Lord's glory. 10:5 The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard from the outer court, like the sound of the sovereign God when he speaks.

10:6 When the Lord commanded the man dressed in linen, "Take fire from within the wheelwork, from among the cherubim," the man went in and stood by one of the wheels. 10:7 Then one of the cherubim stretched out his hand toward the fire which was among the cherubim. He took some and put it into the hands of the man dressed in linen, who took it and left. 10:8 (The cherubim appeared to have the form of human hands under their wings.)

10:9 As I watched, I noticed four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel beside each cherub; the wheels gleamed like jasper. 10:10 As for their appearance, all four of them looked the same, something like a wheel within a wheel. 10:11 When they moved, they would go in any of the four directions they faced without turning as they moved; in the direction the head would turn they would follow without turning as they moved, 10:12 along with their entire bodies, their backs, their hands, and their wings. The wheels of the four of them were full of eyes all around. 10:13 As for their wheels, they were called "the wheelwork" as I listened. 10:14 Each of the cherubim had four faces: The first was the face of a cherub, the second that of a man, the third that of a lion, and the fourth that of an eagle.

10:15 The cherubim rose up; these were the living beings I saw at the Kebar River. 10:16 When the cherubim moved, the wheels moved beside them; when the cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels did not move from their side. 10:17 When the cherubim stood still, the wheels stood still, and when they rose up, the wheels rose up with them, for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels.

10:18 Then the glory of the Lord moved away from the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim. 10:19 The cherubim spread their wings, and they rose up from the earth while I watched (when they went the wheels went alongside them). They stopped at the entrance to the east gate of the Lord's temple as the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

10:20 These were the living creatures which I saw at the Kebar River underneath the God of Israel; I knew that they were cherubim. 10:21 Each had four faces; each had four wings and the form of human hands under the wings. 10:22 As for the form of their faces, they were the faces whose appearance I had seen at the Kebar River. Each one moved straight ahead.

The Fall of Jerusalem

11:1 A wind lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the Lord's temple that faces the east. There, at the entrance of the gate, I noticed twenty-five men. Among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur

and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, officials of the people. 11:2 The Lord said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who plot evil and give wicked advice in this city. 11:3 They say, 'The time is not near to build houses; the city is a cooking pot and we are the meat in it.' 11:4 Therefore, prophesy against them! Prophesy, son of man!"

11:5 Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon me and said to me, "Say: This is what the Lord says: 'This is what you are thinking, O house of Israel; I know what goes through your minds. 11:6 You have killed many people in this city; you have filled its streets with corpses.' 11:7 Therefore, this is what the sovereign Lord says: 'The corpses you have dumped in the midst of the city are the meat, and this city is the cooking pot, but I will take you out of it. 11:8 You fear the sword, so the sword I will bring against you,' declares the sovereign Lord. 11:9 'But I will take you out of the city. And I will hand you over to foreigners. I will execute judgments on you. 11:10 You will die by the sword; I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord. 11:11 This city will not be a cooking pot for you, and you will not be meat within it; I will judge you at the border of Israel. 11:12 Then you will know that I am the Lord, whose statutes you have not followed and whose regulations you have not carried out. Instead you have behaved according to the regulations of the nations around you!'"

11:13 Now, while I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I threw myself face down and cried out with a loud voice, "Alas, sovereign Lord! You are completely wiping out the remnant of Israel!"

11:14 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 11:15 "Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, and the whole house of Israel, all of them are those to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'They have gone far away from the Lord; to us this land has been given as a possession.'

11:16 "Therefore say: 'This is what the sovereign Lord says: Although I have removed them far away among the nations and have dispersed them among the countries, I have been a little sanctuary for them among the lands where they have gone.'

11:17 "Therefore say: 'This is what the sovereign Lord says: When I regather you from the peoples and assemble you from the lands where you have been dispersed, I will give you back the country of Israel.'

11:18 "When they return to it, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. 11:19 I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them; I will remove the hearts of stone from their bodies and I will give them tender hearts, 11:20 so that they may follow my statutes and observe my regulations and carry them out. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God. 11:21 But those whose hearts are devoted to detestable things and abominations, I hereby repay them for what they have done, says the sovereign Lord."

11:22 Then the cherubim spread their wings with their wheels alongside them while the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them. 11:23 The glory of the Lord rose up from within the city and

stopped over the mountain east of it. 11:24 Then a wind lifted me up and carried me to the exiles in Babylonia, in the vision given to me by the Spirit of God.

Then the vision I had seen went up from me. 11:25 So I told the exiles everything the Lord had shown me.

PRAYER

Lord, You explained clearly Your reasons to Ezekiel, and You also made clear that there was both individual and tribal responsibility for the punishment to come. While there is no longer any tribal relationship I will be constantly aware that I am individually responsible to the Lord for my choices.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Ezekiel delivered the terrible declaration of judgment of the Lord God, and it was as much personal as it was tribal “My eye will not pity you; I will not spare you. For your behavior I will hold you accountable, and you will suffer the consequences of your abominable practices. Then you will know that it is I, the Lord, who is striking you ... Each person, for his iniquity, will fail to preserve his life.”

Ezekiel described the Lord God coming upon him “... as I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting in front of me, the hand of the sovereign Lord seized me.”

He then shared the vision of the Lord as to His reason to soon-withdraw from the Temple “Son of man, do you see what they are doing – the great abominations that the people of Israel are practicing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary?”

Ezekiel described what happened next “Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub where it had rested to the threshold of the temple. He called to the man dressed in linen who had the writing kit at his side. The Lord said to him, “Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of the people who moan and groan over all the abominations practiced in it.” While I listened, he said to the others, “Go through the city after him and strike people down; do not let your eye pity nor spare anyone! Old men, young men, young women, little children, and women – wipe them out! But do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary!” He said to them, “Defile the temple and fill the courtyards with corpses. Go!””

He then described, as best one may describe Heavenly beings, the process by which the Lord removed His presence from the Temple – concluding with “Then the glory of the Lord moved away from the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim ... Then the cherubim spread their wings with their wheels alongside them while the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them. The glory of the Lord rose up from within the city and stopped over the mountain east of it.”

Ezekiel pleaded with the Lord God for fear that He might completely obliterate the people and received this assurance “When I regather you from the peoples and assemble you from the lands where you have been dispersed, I will give you back the country of Israel.’ “When they return to it, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them; I will remove the hearts of stone from their bodies and I will give them tender hearts, so that they may follow my statutes and observe my regulations and carry them out. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God.”

He concluded this part of his record of the events “Then a wind lifted me up and carried me to the exiles in Babylonia, in the vision given to me by the Spirit of God. Then the vision I had seen went up from me. So I told the exiles everything the Lord had shown me.”

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Each individual was responsible for their choices and was protected or punished, in the midst of the punishment of the tribe, as was appropriate. There was also an interesting parallel to the Passover events as some were marked and protected while others were not.

DISCUSS

Why would the lord God take the time and trouble to explain and to visualize His reasons, to Ezekiel for punishing the people and for departing from the Temple?

REFLECT

Ezekiel shared with the exiles what the Lord God had shown him.

SHARE

When have you been confused about something and needed both words and visuals to truly comprehend it?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a time when He protected you as He chastised and/or punished others around you.

ACT

Today I will praise the Lord for His perfect justice and amazing grace.

Be Specific _____

Thursday (Ezekiel 12-15)

Previewing the Exile

12:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 12:2 “Son of man, you are living in the midst of a rebellious house. They have eyes to see, but do not see, and ears to hear, but do not hear, because they are a rebellious house.

12:3 “Therefore, son of man, pack up your belongings as if for exile. During the day, while they are watching, pretend to go into exile. Go from where you live to another place. Perhaps they will understand, although they are a rebellious house. 12:4 Bring out your belongings packed for exile during the day while they are watching. And go out at evening, while they are watching, as if for exile. 12:5 While they are watching, dig a hole in the wall and carry your belongings out through it. 12:6 While they are watching, raise your baggage onto your shoulder and carry it out in the dark. You must cover your face so that you cannot see the ground because I have made you an object lesson to the house of Israel.”

12:7 So I did just as I was commanded. I carried out my belongings packed for exile during the day, and at evening I dug myself a hole through the wall with my hands. I went out in the darkness, carrying my baggage on my shoulder while they watched.

12:8 The word of the Lord came to me in the morning: 12:9 “Son of man, has not the house of Israel, that rebellious house, said to you, ‘What are you doing?’ 12:10 Say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says: The prince will raise this burden in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel within it.’ 12:11 Say, ‘I am an object lesson for you. Just as I have done, it will be done to them; they will go into exile and captivity.’

12:12 “The prince who is among them will raise his belongings onto his shoulder in darkness, and will go out. He will dig a hole in the wall to leave through. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land with his eyes. 12:13 But I will throw my net over him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans (but he will not see it), and there he will die. 12:14 All his retinue – his attendants and his troops – I will scatter to every wind; I will unleash a sword behind them.

12:15 “Then they will know that I am the Lord when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them among foreign countries. 12:16 But I will let a small number of them survive the sword, famine, and pestilence, so that they can confess all their abominable practices to the nations where they go. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

12:17 The word of the Lord came to me: 12:18 “Son of man, eat your bread with trembling, and drink your water with anxious shaking. 12:19 Then say to the people of the land, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says about the inhabitants of Jerusalem and of the land of Israel: They will eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water in fright, for their land will be stripped bare of all it contains because of the violence of all who live in it. 12:20 The inhabited towns will be left in ruins and the land will be devastated. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

12:21 The word of the Lord came to me: 12:22 “Son of man, what is this proverb you have in the land of Israel, ‘The days pass slowly, and every vision fails’? 12:23 Therefore tell them, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says: I hereby end this proverb; they will not recite it in Israel any longer.’ But say to them, ‘The days are at hand when every vision will be fulfilled. 12:24 For there will no longer be any false visions or flattering omens amidst the house of Israel. 12:25 For I, the Lord, will speak. Whatever word I speak will be accomplished. It will not be delayed any longer. Indeed in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and accomplish it, declares the sovereign Lord.’”

12:26 The word of the Lord came to me: 12:27 “Take note, son of man, the house of Israel is saying, ‘The vision that he sees is for distant days; he is prophesying about the far future.’ 12:28 Therefore say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says: None of my words will be delayed any longer! The word I speak will come to pass, declares the sovereign Lord.’”

False Prophets Denounced

13:1 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 13:2 “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are now prophesying. Say to the prophets who prophesy from their imagination: ‘Hear the word of the Lord! 13:3 This is what the sovereign Lord says: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit but have seen nothing! 13:4 Your prophets have become like jackals among the ruins, O Israel. 13:5 You have not gone up in the breaks in the wall, nor repaired a wall for the house of Israel that it would stand strong in the battle on the day of the Lord. 13:6 They see delusion and their omens are a lie. They say, “the Lord declares,” though the Lord has not sent them; yet they expect their word to be confirmed. 13:7 Have you not seen a false vision and announced a lying omen when you say, “the Lord declares,” although I myself never spoke?

13:8 “Therefore, this is what the sovereign Lord says: Because you have spoken false words and forecast delusion, look, I am against you, declares the sovereign Lord. 13:9 My hand will be against the prophets who see delusion and announce lying omens. They will not be included in the council of my people, nor be written in the registry of the house of Israel, nor enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the sovereign Lord.

13:10 “This is because they have led my people astray saying, “All is well,” when things are not well. When anyone builds a wall without mortar, they coat it with whitewash. 13:11 Tell the ones who coat it with whitewash that it will fall. When there is a deluge of rain, hailstones will fall and a violent wind

will break out. 13:12 When the wall has collapsed, people will ask you, “Where is the whitewash you coated it with?”

13:13 “Therefore this is what the sovereign Lord says: In my rage I will make a violent wind break out. In my anger there will be a deluge of rain and hailstones in destructive fury. 13:14 I will break down the wall you coated with whitewash and knock it to the ground so that its foundation is exposed. When it falls you will be destroyed beneath it, and you will know that I am the Lord. 13:15 I will vent my rage against the wall, and against those who coated it with whitewash. Then I will say to you, “The wall is no more and those who whitewashed it are no more – 13:16 those prophets of Israel who would prophesy about Jerusalem and would see visions of peace for it, when there was no peace,” declares the sovereign Lord.’

13:17 “As for you, son of man, turn toward the daughters of your people who are prophesying from their imagination. Prophesy against them 13:18 and say “This is what the sovereign Lord says: Woe to those who sew bands on all their wrists and make headbands for heads of every size to entrap people’s lives! Will you entrap my people’s lives, yet preserve your own lives? 13:19 You have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and scraps of bread. You have put to death people who should not die and kept alive those who should not live by your lies to my people, who listen to lies!

13:20 “Therefore, this is what the sovereign Lord says: Take note that I am against your wristbands with which you entrap people’s lives like birds. I will tear them from your arms and will release the people’s lives, which you hunt like birds. 13:21 I will tear off your headbands and rescue my people from your power; they will no longer be prey in your hands. Then you will know that I am the Lord. 13:22 This is because you have disheartened the righteous person with lies (although I have not grieved him), and because you have encouraged the wicked person not to turn from his evil conduct and preserve his life. 13:23 Therefore you will no longer see false visions and practice divination. I will rescue my people from your power, and you will know that I am the Lord.”

Well-Deserved Judgment

14:1 Then some men from Israel’s elders came to me and sat down in front of me. 14:2 The word of the Lord came to me: 14:3 “Son of man, these men have erected their idols in their hearts and placed the obstacle leading to their iniquity right before their faces. Should I really allow them to seek me? 14:4 Therefore speak to them and say to them, “This is what the sovereign Lord says: When any one from the house of Israel erects his idols in his heart and sets the obstacle leading to his iniquity before his face, and then consults a prophet, I the Lord am determined to answer him personally according to the enormity of his idolatry. 14:5 I will do this in order to capture the hearts of the house of Israel, who have alienated themselves from me on account of all their idols.’

14:6 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, “This is what the sovereign Lord says: Return! Turn from your idols, and turn your faces away from your abominations. 14:7 For when anyone from the house of

Israel, or the foreigner who lives in Israel, separates himself from me and erects his idols in his heart and sets the obstacle leading to his iniquity before his face, and then consults a prophet to seek something from me, I the Lord am determined to answer him personally. 14:8 I will set my face against that person and will make him an object lesson and a byword and will cut him off from among my people. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

14:9 “As for the prophet, if he is made a fool by being deceived into speaking a prophetic word – I, the Lord, have made a fool of that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel. 14:10 They will bear their punishment; the punishment of the one who sought an oracle will be the same as the punishment of the prophet who gave it 14:11 so that the house of Israel will no longer go astray from me, nor continue to defile themselves by all their sins. They will be my people and I will be their God, declares the sovereign Lord.”

14:12 The word of the Lord came to me: 14:13 “Son of man, suppose a country sins against me by being unfaithful, and I stretch out my hand against it, cut off its bread supply, cause famine to come on it, and kill both people and animals. 14:14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would save only their own lives by their righteousness, declares the sovereign Lord.

14:15 “Suppose I were to send wild animals through the land and kill its children, leaving it desolate, without travelers due to the wild animals. 14:16 Even if these three men were in it, as surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, they could not save their own sons or daughters; they would save only their own lives, and the land would become desolate.

14:17 “Or suppose I were to bring a sword against that land and say, ‘Let a sword pass through the land,’ and I were to kill both people and animals. 14:18 Even if these three men were in it, as surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, they could not save their own sons or daughters – they would save only their own lives.

14:19 “Or suppose I were to send a plague into that land, and pour out my rage on it with bloodshed, killing both people and animals. 14:20 Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, they could not save their own son or daughter; they would save only their own lives by their righteousness.

14:21 “For this is what the sovereign Lord says: How much worse will it be when I send my four terrible judgments – sword, famine, wild animals, and plague – to Jerusalem to kill both people and animals! 14:22 Yet some survivors will be left in it, sons and daughters who will be brought out. They will come out to you, and when you see their behavior and their deeds, you will be consoled about the catastrophe I have brought on Jerusalem – for everything I brought on it. 14:23 They will console you when you see their behavior and their deeds, because you will know that it was not without reason that I have done everything which I have done in it, declares the sovereign Lord.”

Burning a Useless Vine

15:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 15:2 “Son of man, of all the woody branches among the trees of the forest, what happens to the wood of the vine? 15:3 Can wood be taken from it to make anything useful? Or can anyone make a peg from it to hang things on? 15:4 No! It is thrown in the fire for fuel; when the fire has burned up both ends of it and it is charred in the middle, will it be useful for anything? 15:5 Indeed! If it was not made into anything useful when it was whole, how much less can it be made into anything when the fire has burned it up and it is charred?

15:6 “Therefore, this is what the sovereign Lord says: Like the wood of the vine is among the trees of the forest which I have provided as fuel for the fire – so I will provide the residents of Jerusalem as fuel. 15:7 I will set my face against them – although they have escaped from the fire, the fire will still consume them! Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I set my face against them. 15:8 I will make the land desolate because they have acted unfaithfully, declares the sovereign Lord.”

PRAYER

Lord, You continued to make clear to the people what was to come, and You also continued to show them a way to avoid destruction. May I remember Your consistency well into the New Testament where You in taught [1 Corinthians 10:13](#) that You would continue to provide “... a way out” in overwhelming [spiritual] circumstances.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Ezekiel was instructed by the Lord God “Bring out your belongings packed for exile during the day while they are watching. And go out at evening, while they are watching, as if for exile. While they are watching, dig a hole in the wall and carry your belongings out through it. While they are watching, raise your baggage onto your shoulder and carry it out in the dark. You must cover your face so that you cannot see the ground because I have made you an object lesson to the house of Israel.”

He then was told “I will let a small number of them survive the sword, famine, and pestilence, so that they can confess all their abominable practices to the nations where they go. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

Ezekiel was given a second instruction, as an object lesson to the people “Son of man, eat your bread with trembling, and drink your water with anxious shaking. Then say to the people of the land, “This is what the sovereign Lord says about the inhabitants of Jerusalem and of the land of Israel: They will eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water in fright, for their land will be stripped bare of all it contains because of the violence of all who live in it. The inhabited towns will be left in ruins and the land will be devastated. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

He then was told that the expectation of old age and unchanging routines was over so that the saying “The days pass slowly, and every vision fails”? Would be ended as a local proverb, rather “The days are at hand when every vision will be fulfilled. For there will no longer be any false visions or flattering omens amidst the house of Israel. For I, the Lord, will speak. Whatever word I speak will be accomplished.” Things were about to change radically.

Ezekiel was told by the Lord that anyone who worshiped idols who then came to a prophet for wisdom would be punished, that any prophet who spoke unwisely to such men – because they deceived him – would be punished, any nation/tribe who worshiped idols would be punished, and that “Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, [present in any place where judgment was to come] they would save only their own lives by their righteousness, declares the sovereign Lord.”

He then was told that the people were like the useless wood of a vine, only good to be burned up in the fire, perhaps useful only for a momentary purpose. He was to understand that the people had also made themselves like that useless wood of the vine and thus they also would be burned up.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Ezekiel was called to role-play a great deal, forgetting about the opinions of man, serving the Lord without question.

DISCUSS

What would have been the value of listing Noah, Daniel, and Job as unable to save anyone by their presence or their pleading?

REFLECT

Observe the parallels in visual imagery from the early OT to Ezekiel to the NT using the vine.

SHARE

When have you either benefited from, or used role-play to the benefit of others in the learning process?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a routine or tradition that He wants to change in your life.

ACT

Today I will prayerfully seek clarity as to where the Lord would have me make a change, I will ask a fellow believer to pray in-agreement, and I will begin the process of change.

Be Specific _____

Friday (Ezekiel 16-17)

God's Unfaithful Bride

16:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 16:2 "Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her abominable practices 16:3 and say, "This is what the sovereign Lord says to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 16:4 As for your birth, on the day you were born your umbilical cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water; you were certainly not rubbed down with salt, nor wrapped with blankets. 16:5 No eye took pity on you to do even one of these things for you to spare you; you were thrown out into the open field because you were detested on the day you were born.

16:6 "I passed by you and saw you kicking around helplessly in your blood. I said to you as you lay there in your blood, "Live!" I said to you as you lay there in your blood, "Live!" 16:7 I made you plentiful like sprouts in a field; you grew tall and came of age so that you could wear jewelry. Your breasts had formed and your hair had grown, but you were still naked and bare.

16:8 "Then I passed by you and watched you, noticing that you had reached the age for love. I spread my cloak over you and covered your nakedness. I swore a solemn oath to you and entered into a marriage covenant with you, declares the sovereign Lord, and you became mine.

16:9 "Then I bathed you in water, washed the blood off you, and anointed you with fragrant oil. 16:10 I dressed you in embroidered clothing and put fine leather sandals on your feet. I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 16:11 I adorned you with jewelry. I put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck. 16:12 I put a ring in your nose, earrings on your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 16:13 You were adorned with gold and silver, while your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidery. You ate the finest flour, honey, and olive oil. You became extremely beautiful and attained the position of royalty. 16:14 Your fame spread among the nations because of your beauty; your beauty was perfect because of the splendor which I bestowed on you, declares the sovereign Lord.

16:15 "But you trusted in your beauty and capitalized on your fame by becoming a prostitute. You offered your sexual favors to every man who passed by so that your beauty became his. 16:16 You took some of your clothing and made for yourself decorated high places; you engaged in prostitution on them. You went to him to become his. 16:17 You also took your beautiful jewelry, made of my gold and my silver I had given to you, and made for yourself male images and engaged in prostitution with them. 16:18 You took your embroidered clothing and used it to cover them; you offered my olive oil

and my incense to them. 16:19 As for my food that I gave you – the fine flour, olive oil, and honey I fed you – you placed it before them as a soothing aroma. That is exactly what happened, declares the sovereign Lord.

16:20 “You took your sons and your daughters whom you bore to me and you sacrificed them as food for the idols to eat. As if your prostitution not enough, 16:21 you slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols. 16:22 And with all your abominable practices and prostitution you did not remember the days of your youth when you were naked and bare, kicking around in your blood.

16:23 “After all of your evil – “Woe! Woe to you!” declares the sovereign Lord – 16:24 you built yourself a chamber and put up a pavilion in every public square. 16:25 At the head of every street you erected your pavilion and you disgraced your beauty when you spread your legs to every passerby and multiplied your promiscuity. 16:26 You engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, your sexually aroused neighbors, multiplying your promiscuity and provoking me to anger. 16:27 So see here, I have stretched out my hand against you and cut off your rations. I have delivered you into the power of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed by your obscene conduct. 16:28 You engaged in prostitution with the Assyrians because your sexual desires were insatiable; you prostituted yourself with them and yet you were still not satisfied. 16:29 Then you multiplied your promiscuity to the land of merchants, Babylonia, but you were not satisfied there either.

16:30 “How sick is your heart, declares the sovereign Lord, when you perform all of these acts, the deeds of a bold prostitute. 16:31 When you built your chamber at the head of every street and put up your pavilion in every public square, you were not like a prostitute, because you scoffed at payment.

16:32 “Adulterous wife, who prefers strangers instead of her own husband! 16:33 All prostitutes receive payment, but instead you give gifts to every one of your lovers. You bribe them to come to you from all around for your sexual favors! 16:34 You were different from other prostitutes because no one solicited you. When you gave payment and no payment was given to you, you became the opposite!

16:35 “Therefore O prostitute, hear the word of the Lord: 16:36 This is what the sovereign Lord says: Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness was uncovered in your prostitution with your lovers, and because of all your detestable idols, and because of the blood of your children you have given to them, 16:37 therefore, take note: I am about to gather all your lovers whom you enjoyed, both all those you loved and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from all around, and I will expose your nakedness to them, and they will see all your nakedness. 16:38 I will punish you as an adulteress and murderer deserves. I will avenge your bloody deeds with furious rage. 16:39 I will give you into their hands and they will destroy your chambers and tear down your pavilions. They will strip you of your clothing and take your beautiful jewelry and leave you naked and bare. 16:40 They will summon a mob who will stone you and hack you in pieces with their swords. 16:41 They will burn

down your houses and execute judgments on you in front of many women. Thus I will put a stop to your prostitution, and you will no longer give gifts to your clients. 16:42 I will exhaust my rage on you, and then my fury will turn from you. I will calm down and no longer be angry.

16:43 “Because you did not remember the days of your youth and have enraged me with all these deeds, I hereby repay you for what you have done, declares the sovereign Lord. Have you not engaged in prostitution on top of all your other abominable practices?

16:44 “Observe – everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb about you: “Like mother, like daughter.” 16:45 You are the daughter of your mother, who detested her husband and her sons, and you are the sister of your sisters who detested their husbands and their sons. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. 16:46 Your older sister was Samaria, who lived north of you with her daughters, and your younger sister, who lived south of you, was Sodom with her daughters. 16:47 Have you not copied their behavior and practiced their abominable deeds? In a short time you became even more depraved in all your conduct than they were! 16:48 As surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, your sister Sodom and her daughters never behaved as wickedly as you and your daughters have behaved.

16:49 “See here – this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had majesty, abundance of food, and enjoyed carefree ease, but they did not help the poor and needy. 16:50 They were haughty and practiced abominable deeds before me. Therefore when I saw it I removed them. 16:51 Samaria has not committed half the sins you have; you have done more abominable deeds than they did. You have made your sisters appear righteous with all the abominable things you have done. 16:52 So now, bear your disgrace, because you have given your sisters reason to justify their behavior. Because the sins you have committed were more abominable than those of your sisters; they have become more righteous than you. So now, be ashamed and bear the disgrace of making your sisters appear righteous.

16:53 “I will restore their fortunes, the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters (along with your fortunes among them), 16:54 so that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all you have done in consoling them. 16:55 As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters will be restored to their former status, Samaria and her daughters will be restored to their former status, and you and your daughters will be restored to your former status. 16:56 In your days of majesty, was not Sodom your sister a byword in your mouth, 16:57 before your evil was exposed? Now you have become an object of scorn to the daughters of Aram and all those around her and to the daughters of the Philistines – those all around you who despise you. 16:58 You must bear your punishment for your obscene conduct and your abominable practices, declares the Lord.

16:59 “For this is what the sovereign Lord says: I will deal with you according to what you have done when you despised your oath by breaking your covenant. 16:60 Yet I will remember the covenant I

made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish a lasting covenant with you. 16:61 Then you will remember your conduct, and be ashamed when you receive your older and younger sisters. I will give them to you as daughters, but not on account of my covenant with you. 16:62 I will establish my covenant with you, and then you will know that I am the Lord. 16:63 Then you will remember, be ashamed, and remain silent when I make atonement for all you have done, declares the sovereign Lord.”

A Parable of Two Eagles and a Vine

17:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 17:2 “Son of man, offer a riddle, and tell a parable to the house of Israel. 17:3 Say to them: “This is what the sovereign Lord says: “A great eagle with broad wings, long feathers, with full plumage which was multi-hued, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar.

17:4 He plucked off its topmost shoot; he brought it to a land of merchants and planted it in a city of traders.

17:5 He took one of the seedlings of the land, placed it in a cultivated plot; a shoot by abundant water, like a willow he planted it.

17:6 It sprouted and became a vine, spreading low to the ground; its branches turning toward him, its roots were under itself. So it became a vine; it produced shoots and sent out branches.

17:7 ““There was another great eagle with broad wings and thick plumage. Now this vine twisted its roots toward him and sent its branches toward him to be watered from the soil where it was planted.

17:8 In a good field, by abundant waters, it was planted to grow branches, bear fruit, and become a beautiful vine.

17:9 ““Say to them: This is what the sovereign Lord says: ““Will it prosper? Will he not rip out its roots and cause its fruit to rot and wither? All its foliage will wither. No strong arm or large army will be needed to pull it out by its roots.

17:10 Consider! It is planted, but will it prosper? Will it not wither completely when the east wind blows on it? Will it not wither in the soil where it sprouted?”

17:11 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 17:12 “Say to the rebellious house of Israel: ‘Don’t you know what these things mean?’ Say: ‘See here, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and took her king and her officials prisoner and brought them to himself in Babylon. 17:13 He took one from the royal family, made a treaty with him, and put him under oath. He then took the leaders of the land 17:14 so it would be a lowly kingdom which could not rise on its own but must keep its treaty with him in order to stand. 17:15 But this one from Israel’s royal family rebelled against the king of Babylon

by sending his emissaries to Egypt to obtain horses and a large army. Will he prosper? Will the one doing these things escape? Can he break the covenant and escape?

17:16 “As surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, surely in the city of the king who crowned him, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke – in the middle of Babylon he will die! 17:17 Pharaoh with his great army and mighty horde will not help him in battle, when siege ramps are erected and siege-walls are built to kill many people. 17:18 He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Take note – he gave his promise and did all these things – he will not escape!

17:19 “Therefore this is what the sovereign Lord says: As surely as I live, I will certainly repay him for despising my oath and breaking my covenant! 17:20 I will throw my net over him and he will be caught in my snare; I will bring him to Babylon and judge him there because of the unfaithfulness he committed against me. 17:21 All the choice men among his troops will die by the sword and the survivors will be scattered to every wind. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken!

17:22 “This is what the sovereign Lord says: “I will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and plant it. I will pluck from the top one of its tender twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

17:23 I will plant it on a high mountain of Israel, and it will raise branches and produce fruit and become a beautiful cedar. Every bird will live under it; Every winged creature will live in the shade of its branches.

17:24 All the trees of the field will know that I am the Lord. I make the high tree low; I raise up the low tree. I make the green tree wither, and I make the dry tree sprout. I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it!”

PRAYER

Lord, You make of each of us what we could not ourselves become, children of God. May I never forget that You provided the way to a saving relationship and that You provide the way to a meaningful life as Your instrument of blessing in a dark and dying world.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Ezekiel was reminded those in Jerusalem originated in “... the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite”.

They were meaningless and without purpose or value in the fallen world and the Lord God gave them both, set them apart, and established a covenant with them as His “bride”.

They sold-out to the false gods of the nations around them and the symbolism continued “Your older sister was Samaria, who lived north of you with her daughters, and your younger sister, who lived south of you, was Sodom with her daughters.”

He was then given “A Parable of Two Eagles and a Vine” where rebellion led to destruction yet He would raise up a remnant from a “sprig”.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

God gives Ezekiel provocative language so that the people in rebellion will understand His message.

DISCUSS

Why would the Lord even bother to explain Himself at this point?

REFLECT

Ezekiel must have been emotionally-overwhelmed by the powerful imagery.

SHARE

When have you observed an organization so focused on power or profit or some other worldly priority apart from the Lord simply self-destruct?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place where you have become too-attached and too-focused on something of which He disapproves or which obsession He identifies as imbalanced.

ACT

I agree to repent, seek and accept His forgiveness, then break-away from anything and everything which He shows me as bad for me and offensive to Him.

Be Specific _____

Saturday (Ezekiel 18-19)

Individual Retribution

18:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 18:2 “What do you mean by quoting this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The fathers eat sour grapes And the children’s teeth become numb?”

18:3 “As surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, you will not quote this proverb in Israel anymore! 18:4 Indeed! All lives are mine – the life of the father as well as the life of the son is mine. The one who sins will die.

18:5 “Suppose a man is righteous. He practices what is just and right, 18:6 does not eat pagan sacrifices on the mountains or pray to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor’s wife, does not have sexual relations with a woman during her period, 18:7 does not oppress anyone, but gives the debtor back whatever was given in pledge, does not commit robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and clothes the naked, 18:8 does not engage in usury or charge interest, but refrains from wrongdoing, promotes true justice between men, 18:9 and follows my statutes and observes my regulations by carrying them out. That man is righteous; he will certainly live, declares the sovereign Lord.

18:10 “Suppose such a man has a violent son who sheds blood and does any of these things mentioned previously 18:11 (though the father did not do any of them). He eats pagan sacrifices on the mountains, defiles his neighbor’s wife, 18:12 oppresses the poor and the needy, commits robbery, does not give back what was given in pledge, prays to idols, performs abominable acts, 18:13 engages in usury and charges interest. Will he live? He will not! Because he has done all these abominable deeds he will certainly die. He will bear the responsibility for his own death.

18:14 “But suppose he in turn has a son who notices all the sins his father commits, considers them, and does not follow his father’s example. 18:15 He does not eat pagan sacrifices on the mountains, does not pray to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor’s wife, 18:16 does not oppress anyone or keep what has been given in pledge, does not commit robbery, gives his food to the hungry, and clothes the naked, 18:17 refrains from wrongdoing, does not engage in usury or charge interest, carries out my regulations and follows my statutes. He will not die for his father’s iniquity; he will surely live. 18:18 As for his father, because he practices extortion, robs his brother, and does what is not good among his people, he will die for his iniquity.

18:19 “Yet you say, ‘Why should the son not suffer for his father’s iniquity?’ When the son does what is just and right, and observes all my statutes and carries them out, he will surely live. 18:20 The person who sins is the one who will die. A son will not suffer for his father’s iniquity, and a father will not suffer for his son’s iniquity; the righteous person will be judged according to his righteousness, and the wicked person according to his wickedness.

18:21 “But if the wicked person turns from all the sin he has committed and observes all my statutes and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. 18:22 None of the sins he has committed will be held against him; because of the righteousness he has done, he will live. 18:23 Do I actually delight in the death of the wicked, declares the sovereign Lord? Do I not prefer that he turn from his wicked conduct and live?

18:24 “But if a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and practices wrongdoing according to all the abominable practices the wicked carry out, will he live? All his righteous acts will not be remembered; because of the unfaithful acts he has done and the sin he has committed, he will die.

18:25 “Yet you say, ‘The Lord’s conduct is unjust!’ Hear, O house of Israel: Is my conduct unjust? Is it not your conduct that is unjust? 18:26 When a righteous person turns back from his righteousness and practices wrongdoing, he will die for it; because of the wrongdoing he has done, he will die. 18:27 When a wicked person turns from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will preserve his life. 18:28 Because he considered and turned from all the sins he had done, he will surely live; he will not die. 18:29 Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The Lord’s conduct is unjust!’ Is my conduct unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your conduct that is unjust?

18:30 “Therefore I will judge each person according to his conduct, O house of Israel, declares the sovereign Lord. Repent and turn from all your wickedness; then it will not be an obstacle leading to iniquity. 18:31 Throw away all your sins you have committed and fashion yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why should you die, O house of Israel? 18:32 For I take no delight in the death of anyone, declares the sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

Lament for the Princes of Israel

19:1 “And you, sing a lament for the princes of Israel,

19:2 and say: “What a lioness was your mother among the lions! She lay among young lions; she reared her cubs.

19:3 She reared one of her cubs; he became a young lion. He learned to tear prey; he devoured people.

19:4 The nations heard about him; he was trapped in their pit. They brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt.

19:5 “When she realized that she waited in vain, her hope was lost. She took another of her cubs and made him a young lion.

19:6 He walked about among the lions; he became a young lion. He learned to tear prey; he devoured people.

19:7 He broke down their strongholds and devastated their cities. The land and everything in it was frightened at the sound of his roaring.

19:8 The nations – the surrounding regions – attacked him. They threw their net over him; he was caught in their pit.

19:9 They put him in a collar with hooks; they brought him to the king of Babylon; they brought him to prison so that his voice would not be heard any longer on the mountains of Israel.

19:10 “Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard, planted by water. It was fruitful and full of branches because it was well-watered.

19:11 Its boughs were strong, fit for rulers’ scepters; it reached up into the clouds. It stood out because of its height and its many branches.

19:12 But it was plucked up in anger; it was thrown down to the ground. The east wind dried up its fruit; its strong branches broke off and withered – a fire consumed them.

19:13 Now it is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty land.

19:14 A fire has gone out from its branch; it has consumed its shoot and its fruit. No strong branch was left in it, nor a scepter to rule.’ This is a lament song, and has become a lament song.”

PRAYER

Lord, You use every possible means to communicate Your message to humankind because You desire that we have the wisdom to make right choices, yet we often still choose poorly. May I be intentional about listening closely to You so that I do not require Your discipline.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Ezekiel delivered the Lord God's prophesy using the imagery of the Lord as a husband and Israel as His adulterous wife.

He then shared another parable, this time using a vine and eagles, to describe the broken covenant and Israel's effort to escape the Babylonians by appealing to the Egyptians.

Ezekiel announced the Lord God's new covenant, based upon the choices of every individual, no longer family or tribe or nation-based.

“The person who sins is the one who will die. A son will not suffer for his father’s iniquity, and a father will not suffer for his son’s iniquity; the righteous person will be judged according to his righteousness, and the wicked person according to his wickedness. But if the wicked person turns from all the sin he has committed and observes all my statutes and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the sins he has committed will be held against him; because of the righteousness he has done, he will live. Do I actually delight in the death of the wicked, declares the sovereign Lord? Do I not prefer that he turn from his wicked conduct and live? But if a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and practices wrongdoing according to all the abominable practices the wicked carry

out, will he live? All his righteous acts will not be remembered; because of the unfaithful acts he has done and the sin he has committed, he will die.”

He shared the parables of a lion and of a vine to further emphasize why and how judgment was due to Israel.

When they came to Ezekiel for help from the Lord he was commissioned by the Lord God to remind the leaders of their history of rebellion and His punishment.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The Lord God was patient and persistent in trying to teach His people.

DISCUSS

Why would the leaders, who were in chronic rebellion, imagine that they'd receive help from the very One against Whom they'd chosen to unrepentantly sin?

REFLECT

God's covenant relationship, for the purpose of blessing or discipline, changed profoundly from family to individual, tribe to individual, and nation to individual.

SHARE

When have you sought the Lord's blessing or direction in prayer and the Word, only to be convicted that you were acting in rebellion against Him and needed to deal with that first?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place where He wants to bless you but that your sin was blocking the way to blessing.

ACT

Today I will confess and repent, seek and receive His forgiveness, then return to Him with a clean heart.

Be Specific _____

Note 1: These Studies often rely upon the guidance of the NET Translators from their associated notes. Careful attention has been given to cite that source where it has been quoted directly or closely paraphrased. Feedback is encouraged where credit has not been sufficiently assigned.

Note 2: When NET text is quoted in commentary and discussion all pronouns referring to God are capitalized, though they are lower-case in the original NET text.

Commentary text is from David M. Colburn, D.Min. unless otherwise noted.

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