

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Prophecy

June 16: Ezekiel 1-6 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all. Please find below a link to my notes on the opening chapters to Ezekiel. I also linked within the notes a short summary of the book. I hope both will help you.

We are entering into the territory of prophecy that often leaves many bewildered. I encourage you just to push through it and, if nothing else, center in on the major themes contained in these incredible apocalyptic visions.

Happy reading to you all!

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-odjZH-yMjy1aYkEwVKQ4SP-jYLDdv4sR_Ltf7iyn3c/mobilebasic

Chapter 1

Ezekiel 1 contains one of the most intriguing piece of imagery in the entire Bible. The entire chapter is a description of God's throne, His retinue, and the awesome glory that surrounds Him.

Ezekiel 1 is also our first taste of apocalyptic literature. The word "apocalypse" simply means "to uncover or reveal." This represents the beginning of a fascinating (and at times perplexing) phase in prophecy when God communicates with His prophets through heavily symbolic dreams and visions. Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah will all receive such visions many of which are difficult to understand. As we venture into this thought-provoking realm, it is best to bear a couple of things in mind.

1. If a literal explanation/interpretation does not make sense, then we should interpret the prophecy from a symbolic perspective.
2. The simplest explanation/interpretation is generally the best.
3. We should use the Bible's rich palette of idioms, metaphors, and other assorted literary devices to unlock the meaning of the symbolism in a given passage.

With that in mind, let's wade into the chapter.

Verses 1-3: see Summary of Ezekiel

https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://drive.google.com/open?id%253D12YMmHf4ABqIf63mEwpOwiTN5oFvi4YmgWeDcsJHdHIQ%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1515563209113000%26amp;usg%3DAFQjCNEM6WazTFcwXpTP-vziMBJ_w6eTMA&sa=D&ust=1515563209130000&usg=AFQjCNF9OmU_Pn9mbcZSpYOhNGXbRzZm1Q

Verses 4-14: Ezekiel sees what Isaiah calls seraphim (chapter 6). Later, Ezekiel tells us that these are cherubim (see 10:18-22). Like Ezekiel, John calls these "living creatures" (see Revelation 4:6-8). Though the descriptions vary from prophet to prophet, the similarities are such that we can safely conclude that these are the same creatures. The prophets vary in their descriptions due to personal perspective and the visual context in which they are seen. In

each case, the cherubim/seraphim/living creatures dwell in the presence of God, a detail that is consistent from the Garden of Eden, to the tabernacle, to the ark of the covenant, to the temple, etc. Here are a few intriguing aspects to Ezekiel's description:

1. They come from the north (verse 4). Having grown acquainted with both Jeremiah and Isaiah, you know that both Assyria and Babylon were enemies who would come from the north. The whirlwind from the north with clouds and raging fire prefigure the terrible wrath of God Almighty.
2. They do not turn when they changed direction (verse 9). Each creature had four faces, therefore it was not necessary for them to turn in order to change direction. They would always be moving forward because a face was pointing the direction they traveled.
3. The four faces -- man, lion, ox, and eagle -- communicate the special station occupied by these beings. Man, created in the image of God, is called to subdue the created realm. The lion is known as the king of all wild animals; the ox is considered the greatest among domesticated animals; the eagle is the greatest among all fowl. Cherubim, therefore, occupy the highest echelons in angelic hierarchy.
4. Notice that their movement is directed by the spirit (verse 12). The exact identity of "the spirit" is left to interpretation. However, I think the Spirit of God fits the bill best. The angelic hosts are messengers dispatched and directed by God. Both the Spirit and the angels are the primary communicators in apocalyptic literature and serve to transport, animate, reveal, interpret, act out, interact, etc.
5. Much more can be said about the appearance of the living creatures. Each piece of imagery is chosen to reflect a particular aspect of their character and/or nature.

Verses 15-21: As we will see, the throne of God is a mobile unit powered by the angels and directed by the Spirit. Ezekiel describes the wheels and dwells on the directions these wheels would take. The overriding message is these wheels can any direction and therefore anywhere on the earth, depicting the omnipresence of God. Daniel describes the throne of God as "a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire" (7:9). See also Psalm 104:3-4.

Verses 22-28: The crystal clear firmament represents the dwelling place of God from which the Almighty speaks. God is anthropomorphised and described in very vague terms. Given that no man has seen God at any time (John 1:18), this is likely a representation of God, acted out by one of the many angels involved in this vision (notice how Ezekiel uses the word "likeness" throughout, especially verse 28, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord."). Ezekiel's view of God is similar to Daniel's (7:9-10) and John's (Revelation 4). The surpassing glory of this vision drives Ezekiel into a prostrate position in which he hears God speak to him.

Chapter 2

Verses 1-5: Ezekiel ends chapter 1 lying prostrate before the presence and glory of the Lord. Through the Spirit, God enables him to stand. God commissions Ezekiel to be a prophet and sends him to a people who will refuse to listen to him.

Verses 6-8: Though his words will provoke animosity from the people, Ezekiel is to speak the words of God regardless of his reception.

Verses 9-10: The scroll of the book represents the content of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry.

Chapter 3

Verses 1-3: Consuming the scroll represents Ezekiel consuming the word of the Lord; to the righteous man it is sweet but to the rebellious it will be bitter.

Verses 4-9: Ezekiel is being sent to his own countrymen; God assures him that what the prophet says will not be received because they are God's words; just as God enables Ezekiel to stand; so too He strengthens him to speak without being intimidated.

Verses 10-15: Ezekiel's initial vision concludes; he returns to the River Chebar full of righteous indignation and yet dumbfounded by the incredible vision he has witnessed.

Verses 16-21: As a watchman, Ezekiel is to warn the wicked; if he does so, God will not hold the prophet responsible; if he fails to warn the wicked, Ezekiel will be held responsible.

Verses 23-27: The vision of God's glory returns and the prophet falls prostrate again; the Lord enables him to stand a second time; God warns the prophet that chains and resistance await him; it appears that God will limit Ezekiel's communication with the people to the prophetic message alone.

Chapter 4

Verses 1-3: God instructs Ezekiel to make a replica of Jerusalem which, at this point, is under the rule of Babylon and has not been destroyed; Ezekiel is to enact a siege, forecasting what will happen to the holy city in a few short years.

Verses 4-8

- "House of Israel": represents the northern kingdom that split off after Solomon during the reign of Jeroboam I
- "House of Judah": the southern kingdom (Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and refugees from the north) that maintained the Davidic line of succession
- 390 days + 40 days = 430 days which represents a period of 430 years
 - The first temple was dedicated in the year 966 B.C. Cyrus, king of Persia, would return the first Jewish captives to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple in 536 B.C., a period, uncoincidentally, of 430 years.
 - This "prophecy-in-action" illustrates the failure of the Jewish nation to keep the temple of the Lord's house consecrated.
 - The northern kingdom abandoned God and was ruled by a succession of unrighteous kings; for this reason, they bear a greater responsibility in the prophecy.

Verses 9-16: This portion of the prophecy illustrates the conditions of Jerusalem during the coming siege. The inhabitants would resort to desperate measures in order to survive, wasting away due to malnutrition and dehydration.

Chapter 5

Verses 1-4: Ezekiel is to illustrate the various ways Jerusalem will perish -- by fire, by sword, and by captivity. Those who escape the sword and fire will not ultimately escape the judgment of God.

Verses 5-17: The depth of Jerusalem's sins far exceeds those of the surrounding nations. She was set in their midst to be a light. Her syncretism and outright rebellion warrant a uniquely severe response from God.

Chapter 6

Verses 1-7: As one reads through the books of Kings and Chronicles, one notices the prominence of "the high places." Not only would God direct His wrath against the city of Jerusalem, He also would cast judgment on the numerous shrines, altars, etc. scattered across the land. Here is a nice article from the Archaeological Study Bible on the topic.

https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://docs.google.com/document/d/1eyy6Mhhr8_UMuuw4lz5V5y8VFpgebc4pelod8ICKpw/edit?usp%253Dsharing%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1515563209121000%26amp;usg%3DAFQjCNHp6RIGZuqzE29QJwMjPpLB1hOaCA&sa=D&ust=1515563209132000&u sg=AFQjCNGC_WgKlrugGCt57sk0p48H4C18MA

Verses 8-10: God would preserve a remnant of the Jewish people among the nations where they were scattered. Verse 9 offers an insightful look into the impact of Israel's idolatry on God.

Verses 11-14: Those Jews who heard of God's impending wrath should grieve for those who would suffer.

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Thank you, Wade!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
That was an incredible resource of help to me as I read these chapters, Wade! Thank you! I think it's safe to say if we have a future 2 week meeting & choose to cover prophecies you and John Morris are going to be well prepared & seasoned for the task. 😊 If we do this 7 Bible study again I'd prefer to switch the day prophecies fall on. For me my mind is most tired Friday night & it's the subject which requires most focus. Therefore your notes give excellent guidance. Thx again!

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:
Just last night I was asking marc if a tornado was ever referenced in the Bible. He said there were places "whirlwind" or "windstorm" was mentioned. Here it is in Ezekiel 1:4.



June 23: Ezekiel 7-12 (John Morris)

Reading for June 23, 2017
EZEKIEL 7-12

Highlights, as usual.

CHAPTER 7

• 7:4: "My eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity." Frightening to contemplate. Similar statements appear in Jeremiah. God says this five times in Ezekiel (5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:10), instructing His heavenly executioners to be of the same mind in 9:5. Notice also the repetition of "I will repay" (7:3, 4, 8, 9). God is about to do what only He can (Heb. 10:30).

• 7:5-7: Ezekiel may have been an eloquent orator (33:32). God has use for such a gift. Can you imagine the force with which these words may have been proclaimed? "Behold, it has

COME! An end has COME, the end has COME...Behold, it has COME! Doom has COME...the time has COME....”

• 7:10-11: “The rod has blossomed, pride has budded. Violence has risen up into a rod of wickedness.” Possibly, the intended meaning is this: “the rod” is Babylon, the tool with which God will punish Judah (cf. Is. 10:5); “blossomed” indicates the time for punishment has come; “pride has budded” speaks to the arrogance of Babylon (Jer. 50:31): “Violence has risen up into a rod of wickedness” refers to the violent sins of Judah (7:23; 8:17; 9:9) and that this wickedness is what has brought on the upcoming judgment.

• 7:12-13: No use being concerned about selling or buying property. It will soon all belong to Babylon (7:24).

• 7:23: “It was customary to lead away captives in a row with a chain passed from the neck of one to the other.” It appears Ezekiel may have been commanded to make a chain to symbolize the coming captivity.

CHAPTER 8

Chapters 8-11 comprise a single visionary experience of Ezekiel’s. Ezekiel is transported from Babylon to the land of Judah to behold the people’s sins, their destruction, the departure of God’s glory from the Temple, and is called to speak words of both doom and hope to his countrymen.

• 8:1: “sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month.” Fourteen months after the vision of chapter 1 (1:1-2).

• 8:2-3: Ezekiel again sees the same likeness he saw in 1:26-27, “the likeness of the glory of the LORD” (1:28). Note how the work of the Spirit is connected with “the form of a hand.” Reminds me of Dan. 5 and of Jesus’ description of the Holy Spirit as “the finger of God.”

• 8:3-15: Ezekiel is shown four separate examples of Judah’s sins, all being perpetrated within the temple precincts! First, he is shown an idolatrous image set up at the north entrance to the Temple’s inner court (8:3-5). This may have been the carved image of Asherah set up by King Manasseh (2 Kings 21:7). Whatever the case, it rightly provoked God to jealousy...and this was only the tip of the iceberg. Secondly, he is shown 70 men of the elders of Israel burning incense to false gods they had taken the pains to have depicted on the walls (again within the temple precincts) (8:9-12). Thirdly, he is made to witness women mourning the supposed annual death of the false god, Tammuz (8:14). Fourthly and finally, Ezekiel is brought into the inner court of the Temple, to its very door, where he sees 25 men with their backs to the God of heaven, worshipping the sun in the east (8:16-17)! Note how God says each time, “you will see greater abominations” (8:6, 13, 15). Each sin was more aggravated and egregious than the one before it. All sin can earn us death, but not all sin is equal.

CHAPTER 9

• 9:1-2: While in the inner court, Ezekiel hears God call upon six men (probably angels) to execute His will for Jerusalem. They are armed, and come from the north, the direction from which the armies of Babylon will come. Among them (the sixth or a seventh?) is another, this one clothed in white, armed for writing not killing. He had, not an “inkhorn” (NKJV), but rather a “writing case” (NAS/ESV) or “writing kit” (NIV) at his side. “A scribe carried his pens and receptacle for mixing ink in a case. Sometimes these cases were made of silver. They were elaborately and beautifully engraved.”

- 9:3-5: God dismounts, so to speak, from His chariot (more on this in ch. 10) and moves to the door of the Temple to give direction to the man with the writing case. The man is to put a mark on the foreheads of those whose hearts ache over the sins of Jerusalem, those who are like Lot was (2 Pet. 2:8). These will be spared the coming destruction (9:6). Like so many other symbols in Revelation, the mark on the forehead (Rev. 13:16; 14:9; 20:4) makes its first appearance in the Old Testament.

CHAPTER 10

Oh boy. This chapter (in connection with chapter 1) could make for pages and pages of notes. And we would still have more questions than answers. One of those instances where we've been given enough to satisfy our needs, but not nearly enough to satisfy our curiosities. =) There are some definite takeaways, though. Will just note a few things.

- 10:1-2: Ezekiel again sees God's throne-chariot (cf. 1:26): the cherubim, the firmament (expanse) above the cherubim, the throne, and the wheels. Why call it a chariot? This arrangement appears to carry God (hence, the wheels) from place to place (10:19; 11:22-23; cf. Ps. 18:10), and the cherubim in God's presence in the Temple were so designated in 1 Chron. 28:18. On an entirely different note, note how coals of fire are scattered over the city that is to be destroyed, and how this symbol is revisited in Rev. 8:5.

- 10:10-11: "a wheel in the middle of a wheel." Perhaps arranged in a gyroscope-like fashion. From the top, might have looked like an "X." This might help explain how the wheels could move in any direction without having to be turned (vs. 11).

- 10:14: The four faces listed in chapter 1 were: man, lion, ox, eagle (1:10). Here, they are: man, lion, cherub, eagle. The face of the ox appears to be replaced by the face of a cherub; however, Ezekiel says, "And the likeness of their faces was the same as the faces which I had seen by the River Chebar..." (10:22). Hmm. Sounds like the ox face may have been the primary face of a cherub. At least this is one possible take on it. Why would that be? I don't know. Perhaps because oxen are the servants of men, as cherubim are the servants of God?

- 10:18-19: The one event in this chapter we mustn't miss. The Temple sanctuary is abandoned by God. He will leave the Temple precincts altogether in 11:22-23. Judah now loses the presence and protection of the God whom they have rejected.

CHAPTER 11

- 11:1-4: Ezekiel is brought to the east gate of the LORD's house, the same location where the glory of the LORD has temporarily stopped on its way out (10:19). Ezekiel is confronted with 25 men of standing (same as the 25 in 8:16?) who are giving wicked counsel to the people. Translations differ in vs. 3 (build or not build?), but the advice was subversive, however it was intended. Their reference to "the caldron" was prompted by Jeremiah's prophecy of a seething pot (Jer. 1:13).

- 11:13: While prophesying of the judgments to befall Jerusalem, Ezekiel sees Pelatiah the son of Benaiah (one of the wicked counselors, vs. 1), drop dead. Was this just part of the vision, or was it an actual event incorporated into the vision? Don't know. But Ezekiel falls on his face, as he did in 9:8, fearing that God intends to destroy even the remnant of Judah.

- 11:16-20: Words of hope! The people will be protected while in foreign lands, and will again be reassembled in the Promised Land. Vss. 19-20 look to the day when God will work in the hearts of the spiritual Israel of God (Gal. 3:7; 6:16). This theme will be revisited in chapter 37.

• 11:24-25: Ezekiel is taken by the Spirit back to Chaldea/Babylon, and the vision begun in 8:2 comes to a close. And what a ride it was. Faithful to his calling, Ezekiel shares with the captives what he has seen.

CHAPTER 12

Pretty straightforward. More evidence that God believes in visual aids.

• 12:26: Reminds me of Eccl. 8:11- "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil."

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John! Again, very helpful.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

I need to catch up on the prophecy study. In the meantime please know how much we appreciate your notes, John! It really makes a difference when I study. Thanks much!

June 30: Ezekiel 13-18 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all. Here are some notes on Ezekiel 13-18. The chapters for today's reading are fairly straightforward and do not require a great deal of exposition. If you have ever wrestled with the doctrine of original sin or the companion doctrine of Total Depravity, you will find Ezekiel 18 to be a real help.

I hope to see some of you this next week, if God wills. For those who cannot be with us, I look forward to a happy reunion in the future. May God be with you.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-M2soxGjfhQvj0oh0LWkNDM4plrjcFxbNtAKLaDQ_68/mobilebasic

Ezekiel 13

Verses 1-9: A condemnation familiar to all of the major prophets. Others claimed to be sent from God and prophesied lies. Ezekiel, like his predecessor Isaiah and his contemporary Jeremiah, condemns those who declare, "Thus says the Lord," to whom God has never revealed himself. God stands against these sowers of lies.

Verses 10-16: The NKJV fails to accurately convey the metaphor employed by God in these verses. The parable illustrates the misleading message of peace proclaimed by the peddlers of falsehood. Their message is like whitewashing an unstable wall. The collapse of Judah is inevitable and no attempt to say otherwise will alter God's intention.

Verses 17-23: More indications of how deeply paganism had penetrated into Judean society. God casts His gaze toward the women of Judah who had adopted pagan superstitions, practiced divination, and helped lead the people into such abominations as human sacrifice. Their ministry has grieved the righteous and emboldened the wicked.

Ezekiel 14

Verses 1-5: The leaders of the exiled Jews seek an audience with Ezekiel to inquire after God's will. God is insulted by their double-mindedness. He seeks a people of full-hearted devotion.

Verses 6-11: God urges both the false prophet and those who seek out the false prophets to repent.

Verses 12-20: God will not be deterred from His present course of action. Even if luminaries of faith (such as Noah or Job or Daniel) were present in Jerusalem and Judah, their righteousness would only be sufficient to deliver their own souls.

Verses 21-23: God comforts His people with the promise that He will not utterly destroy the nation. A small portion would be preserved for future posterity.

Ezekiel 15

Verses 1-8: God illustrates how Jerusalem's persistent unfaithfulness has made her utterly useless to Him.

Ezekiel 16

This chapter catalogues the sins of Jerusalem and offers a perspective as to how depraved she was in the eyes of God. From God's vantage point, Jerusalem sank to greater depths than her companion capital to the north, Samaria, and was guilty of a greater affront than Sodom and Gomorrah. I have heard it said, and believe it to be true, that Ezekiel 16 is among the saddest chapters in the entire Bible.

Ezekiel 17

Verses 1-15: Another parable that illustrates Jerusalem's current state of affairs and in particular highlights the futility of their rebellion.

Verses 16-21: Those who have led Jerusalem in this ill-advised course of action will be held accountable.

Verses 22-24: Once again, God ends a bleak message with a glimmer of hope. He will not utterly destroy His people, but will preserve a remnant that will rise from the ashes of captivity.

Ezekiel 18

Verses 1-2: The captives in Babylon were circulating a proverb that blamed their predicament on their forefathers.

Verses 3-20: God goes to great lengths to explain that He holds guilty individuals accountable for their own sins. The guilt for sin does not pass from one generation to the next. Nor is the righteousness of a father passed on to his children. This chapter is one of the most powerful arguments against the concept of original sin in the Bible.

Verses 21-24: A wicked man who repents will be forgiven and a righteous man who sins will be condemned.

Verses 25-29: God fails to see how his policy is unfair. He could destroy the wicked man who repents and yet He chooses to forgive. God is both just and a justifier.

Verses 30-32: He ends with a plea to turn from their wickedness.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, brother Wade!

July 7: Ezekiel 19-24 (John Morris)

Reading for July 7, 2017

EZEKIEL 19-24

CHAPTER 19

This chapter laments the end of three of Judah's kings, and the final fall of the nation. Vs. 4 describes the demise of Jehoahaz: "they brought him with chains to the land of Egypt" (2 Kings 23:33-34). Vs. 9 details the end of either Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin, each of whom was taken to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:6, 10). Vs. 14 speaks of the results of Zedekiah being deposed —no one left to rule in Jerusalem. With the removal of Zedekiah from the throne of David came the removal of Judah from the nations of men.

CHAPTER 20

The dating of the chapter indicates that Ezekiel has now been functioning in his prophetic office for two years, one month and five days (comp. 1:1-2). The chapter begins with elders of Israel approaching Ezekiel to inquire of the LORD. God makes it plain he will not be inquired of by these men when they are unfaithful men representing an unfaithful nation. God summarizes past and present unfaithfulness, reiterates the coming judgment on Judah, but also speaks to the nation's hopeful future after the purging. Vs. 45 begins a new section, and in the Hebrew Bible serves as the first verse of chapter 21 (a better arrangement than ours). Vss. 45-48 could be called The Parable of the Forest Fire. Ezekiel prophesies in highly figurative language "against the south," the entire nation of Judah viewed from the perspective of the Babylonians who will be arriving from the north. Interestingly, in vs. 49, we learn that the people don't like the figurative language. In chapter 21, God speaks plainly for them.

CHAPTER 21

This word "sword" appears 16 times in this chapter. The sword is "sharpened," "polished," "made bright," "grasped," "drawn," and "at the ready." Because of national depravity, the sword of the LORD will come against Judah, and later against Ammon. Note how in vs. 21, we are given a glimpse into how Nebuchadnezzar (pre-Daniel 4) used pagan rituals to make important military decisions.

CHAPTER 22

In this chapter, God begins to call Jerusalem "the bloody city" (22:2; 24:6, 9). He uses the title three times, and it is one He used of only one other city in the Bible—murderous, Assyrian Nineveh (Nah. 3:1). Jerusalem has become a violent and vile place. There are sins of avarice and oppression, religious sins, sexual sins. Blood is on the people's hands, figuratively and literally. Punishment is deserved, and punishment is coming.

CHAPTER 23

The Parable of the Two Sisters. Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom) both had a history of spiritual adultery, turning to other nations and their gods. Judah watched Israel suffer for her sins, but instead of learning from her demise, decided to outdo her in pursuing sin! Very graphic language here concerning how God sees us when we turn to other gods (some modern examples: wealth, status, education, comfort, family, government, self, etc.). When God's own special people give their hearts to other gods, it's like a good man's wife making her bed for, and sharing it with, another man! Judah willfully persisted in her adultery for generations, and so finally, God let her have her lovers! But they didn't really love her. They were takers, not givers. The harsh treatment she received from them, sadly, she brought on herself.

CHAPTER 24

Jerusalem is likened to a pot filled with pieces of meat (the people). The pot is also full of scum, however (the people's sins)! People will be removed from Jerusalem (vs. 6), consumed within its walls (vs. 10), and finally, the polluted city itself will be destroyed (vs. 11) like the unclean house of a leper (Lev. 14:45).

Sometimes God commands very difficult things. Ezekiel is commanded to internalize his sorrow over his wife's death, and not engage in any of the normal expressions of emotional pain. When asked by the populous why he behaves so, he tells them his actions are prophetic. Judah is going to lose the things that are most precious to it—the temple, their stronghold, their children—and when they do, ordinary expressions of grief, either because of shock and/or circumstances will not take place (Jer. 16:6-7). In captivity, the people will have to mourn among themselves, and pine away in the awareness that they brought all this horror upon themselves (vs. 23).

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

John Morris: Thank you! As you said, very graphic language in the reading Friday. It's so important for us to avoid spiritual adultery. As always, thanks to you and Wade for teaching books of prophecy. It's a great blessing to have your knowledge in this study. Your details, overall history and spiritual application is greatly appreciated. I've gleaned much more than I would have by just reading it on my own. BTW... We sure missed your family at campout this year. Absolutely understand but wanted you to know how often we thought about each of you. Continued prayers for Amber's pregnancy. As always, Bethany was a delight. Thx for letting her attend w/Rick & Lynne. :-)

July 14: Ezekiel 25-30 (Wade Stanley)

Sorry for the late post today! I had an allergy/cold thing hit yesterday afternoon that led to a Benadryl fog for the morning. Nothing serious, just inconvenient with partly cloudy skies in the ol' grey matter.

Here are some notes for Ezekiel 25-30. I wrote some more extensive notes on Ezekiel 26 because it is a COOL prophecy. Hope all of it helps. Happy reading!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xUeNq2okbBUFTm7EIH9utfYVA7-GjUojJNLv0WNM5Bs/mobilebasic>

Ezekiel 25

Verses 1-7: God condemns Ammon for rejoicing over the desolation and captivity of Judah. Most likely carried out by Nebuchadnezzar per 21:18-20, but could also refer to the nomadic peoples to the east of Ammon.

Verses 8-11: Moving clockwise, God turns His gaze from the east of Judah to the south. Moab, like Ammon, rejoiced at Judah's downfall and would suffer the same punishment as her kinsmen to the northeast.

Verses 12-14: In Obadiah 10-14, God accuses Edom of aiding Babylon against Judah, thus earning God's condemnation.

Verses 15-17: The Philistines, Israel's ancient enemies who lived along the Mediterranean coast southwest of Judah, would also feel the fury of God's wrath. God calls them the Cherethites, most likely a reference to their origin on the island of Crete.

Ezekiel 26

Introduction: This prophecy commences nearly two years after the material in chapters 24-25. Ezekiel wrote this prophecy in either February or March, 586 B.C. Later that year, Jerusalem and Judah finally succumbed to Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 2: Tyre, like Ammon, Moab, and Edom before her, saw the downfall of Jerusalem as an opportunity for gain.

Verses 3-6

- "And they": The many nations that come against Tyre
- Complete desolation
 - "shall destroy the walls...break down the towers"
 - "scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock"
 - "it shall be a place for spreading of nets"
- Great wealth is plundered
 - "it shall become plunder for the nations"
 - 27:12ff talks of Tyre's tremendous wealth
- "daughter villages" discussed in verse 8

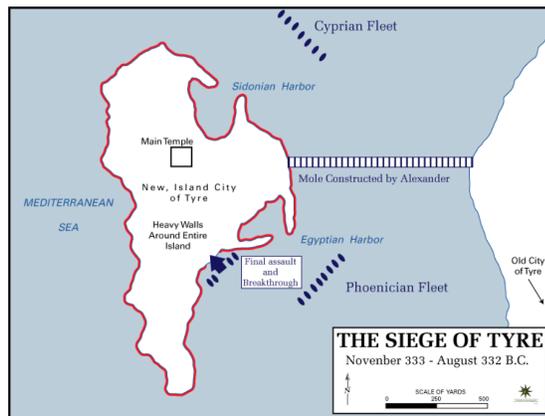
Verses 7-11

- Nebuchadnezzar the first to conquer Tyre; ancient historians disagree as to the length of the siege, anywhere from 5-13 years.
 - Ancient records are scarce
 - List of foreign kings in Babylon two years after the siege – Tyre's king at the head of list.
 - Verifying this through archaeology virtually impossible thanks to Alexander the Great
- "He will slay with the sword your daughter villages in the fields..."
 - NASB: "daughters on the mainland"
 - RSV: "daughters on the mainland"
 - ESV: "daughters on the mainland"
 - NIV: "settlements on the mainland"
 - Nebuchadnezzar's campaign was directed against mainland Tyre
- Babylonians had no naval power
 - "heap a siege mound"
 - "build a wall against you"
 - "raise a defense against you"
 - "direct his battering rams against your walls and with his axes he will break down your towers"

- After Nebuchadnezzar conquered the mainland, the city moved to an island just off the coast.

Verses 12-14: the second wave

- “They will...”
 - Multiple nations (see verse 3)
 - The destruction of Tyre was the work of more than one nation.
- Alexander the Great – 332 B.C.
 - Requested admittance to offer sacrifice to Hercules
 - The island city refused, inviting him to offer on the ancient altar in Old Tyre.
 - Insulted, ATG laid siege to the island
- Statements to notice
 - Verse 4: “make her like the top of a rock”
 - Verse 5: “a place for spreading nets”
 - Verse 12: “they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water”
 - Verse 14: “I will make you like the top of a rock”
 - Verse 14: “you shall be a place for the spreading nets”
 - ATG used the stones and timber from the old city of Tyre left from Nebuchadnezzar to build a mole out to the island city.



Verses 15-17: The Phoenician people, merchants without peer in the ancient world, would be brought to their knees. The reports of their downfall would ripple throughout the Mediterranean world.

Verses 18-21: Tyre would join the ranks of other pagan nations conquered by God, cast aside into the dustbin of history.

Ezekiel 27

Verses 1-2: God commands Ezekiel to lament the downfall of Tyre. Similar to the sentiments expressed by the angels concerning spiritual Babylon in Revelation 18.

Verses 3-11: God describes the majesty of the Tyrian ships and the military power the city was able to project across the Mediterranean.

Verses 12-24: An extensive list of the cities and peoples stretching from the Middle East to Asia Minor to southern Europe with whom Tyre conducted business.

Verses 25-36

- Tarshish: a Phoenician city whose exact location is unknown. Possibilities include:
 - Tartessus in southwestern Spain. This would be appropriate to the story, for it would have been difficult to sail any farther from Nineveh (book of Jonah).
 - The island of Sardinia. A ninth-century b.c. Phoenician inscription suggests the possible presence of Tarshish there.
 - Carthage in North Africa. This is supported by the Septuagint version of Ezekiel 27:12, which identifies Carthage with Tarshish (but there was also a Carthage in Spain).
 - Tarsus in Anatolia (modern Turkey). This city would later become the hometown of Paul.
- The trading partners of Tyre are described in a general state of mourning that eventually turns to scorn.

Ezekiel 28

Verses 1-5: Like the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14, the king of Tyre is a proud figurehead whose commercial wealth and military might have inflamed his heart. God resorts to sarcasm in order to help “bring him back to earth.”

Verses 6-10: God will bring other nations against Tyre to humble her.

Verses 11-19: Again, like the king of Babylon, this lamentation regarding the king of Tyre compares favorably with the characteristics of Satan. As I mentioned in my notes on Isaiah 14, I see these kings as archetypal figures, men whose wealth and power have brought them to the very pinnacles of human civilization. The pride that accompanies such accomplishments is reminiscent of Satan who fell through pride. The prince of this world influences world leaders.

Verses 20-24: Sidon was the companion city of Tyre.

Verses 25-26: God promises to return the captive Israelites to their homeland as He executes judgment on their neighboring enemies.

Ezekiel 29

Verses 1-7: God sets His sites upon Egypt, the oldest enemy of His people and the country to which they looked for protection against Babylon (notice verses 6-7). God also uses the imagery of a great sea monster to represent Pharaoh and his kingdom, imagery reminiscent of Job 40, Daniel 7, and Revelation 13.

Verses 8-16: The Egypt of Ezekiel’s day faced a similar fate to Ammon, Moab, and Philistia. However, God would not utterly destroy Egypt. A remnant would return, but Egypt would never rise to her former glory, a prediction that history confirms.

Verses 17-21: The conquering of Egypt was Nebuchadnezzar’s reward for the long siege against Tyre that yielded little wealth in return.

Ezekiel 30

Verses 1-9: The fall of Egypt and her allies would serve as an object lesson to the surrounding Gentile nations. Note verse 8, “Then they will know that I am the Lord.” This was a lesson Egypt failed to learn some 900 years prior when Pharaoh withstood God all the way to the shores of the Red Sea.

Verses 10-12: Nebuchadnezzar would carry out God’s will. A fragmentary clay tablet says that Nebuchadnezzar attacked Thebes, the most prominent of all Egyptian cities, in 569 B.C.

Verses 13-19: Various Egyptian cities are listed to indicate how God would thoroughly defeat Egypt by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

Verses 20-26: Pharaoh Hophra lost to Nebuchadnezzar in 588 B.C. Ezekiel gives us the date of April 29, 587, indicating that this first victory precluded Nebuchadnezzar's ultimate triumph.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Regarding the typology of these rulers lifted up with pride, I appreciate the ESV following the Septuagint in Ezekiel 29:3 and 32:2 regarding Pharaoh as a dragon, which highlights the later descriptive language in Revelation:

"speak, and say, Thus says the Lord God:

'Behold, I am against you,
Pharaoh king of Egypt,
the great dragon that lies
in the midst of his streams,
that says, 'My Nile is my own;
I made it for myself.'"

The Septuagint also has a reference to Nebuchadnezzar as a dragon in Jeremiah,

"King Nabouchodonosor of Babylon has devoured me;

he has apportioned me;

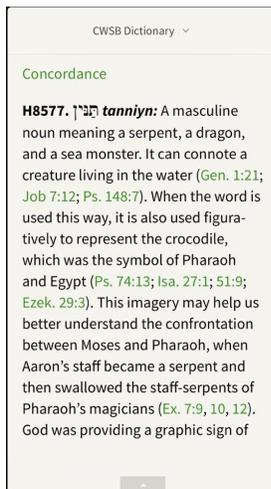
he has seized me, a slim vessel;

he has swallowed me like a dragon;

he has filled his belly with my delicacies."

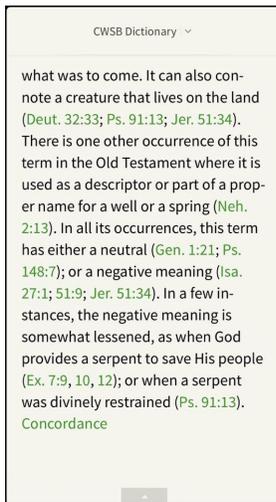
Comment:

Denise Waits:



Comment:

Denise Waits:



Comment:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Wade!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:
Ginger said she was going to bed last night to read the prophecy study in Ezekiel. When I finally came to bed she was asleep with her Bible on her lap. I woke her up and asked if she finished it. She said she only got through chapter 28. I asked her if she got too Tyred.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thank you, Wade. We sincerely appreciate your efforts with the study. Praying for your health.

July 21: Ezekiel 31-36 (John Morris)

Reading for June 21, 2017
EZEKIEL 31-36

Highlights.

CHAPTER 31

This chapter contains a prediction of the fall of Egypt to Babylon. It came about a month before Jerusalem's walls were penetrated by Nebuchadnezzar's armies (Jer. 39:2) (587 BC). Pharaoh is called to consider Assyria, fallen to Babylon 35 years before, as evidence of how pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

- 31:8: The Assyrian Empire is likened to a mighty cedar of Lebanon (vs. 3), one so great and grand that even the trees of Eden would not have towered above her, nor excelled her in beauty. The symbolism is reminiscent of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 4:10ff).
- 31:14: God cut down the strong, well-watered tree of Assyria so that other wealthy and richly resourced nations would learn to not exalt themselves in pride.
- 31:14-18: Note the repetition of "depths of the earth" (3x), "hell" (Sheol) (3x), and "the Pit" (2x). Each will be referenced again in chapter 32. Each seems to refer to what the New

Testament calls “Hades,” the realm of the dead. As men have an end, so also do the nations made up of them; therefore, no nation should think of itself more highly than it ought to think. Pharaoh needed to hear that...and so does America.

CHAPTER 32

- 32:1-2a: A little over a year and a half after the fall of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:2), Ezekiel is told to take up a prophetic lamentation, a dirge, for Pharaoh and Egypt. What follows expands upon what was revealed in the previous chapter.
- 32:2: Pharaoh is likened to a lion and “a monster in the seas” (NKJV) that enters rivers and muddies their waters with its feet. This second comparison was made three chapters earlier (29:3-4), and raises the question, “Just what kind of monster?” The Hebrew is “tannin” (#8577), appears throughout the Old Testament, and the KJV translators often rendered it “dragon.” An exhaustive list of the appearances of “tannin” in the Bible, along with an interesting discussion of its identity, can be found at <https://answersingenesis.org/dinosaurs/tannin-sea-serpent-dinosaur-snake-dragon-or-jackal/>
- 32:7-8: The figurative language of authorities being stripped of their power (see also Is.13:10; Joel 2:31).
- 32:17: The following prophecy came two weeks after the one just completed (32:1). Egypt will fall, and join Assyria (vs. 22), Elam (vs. 24), Meschech and Tubal (vs. 26), Edom (vs. 29), the princes of the north (vs. 30), and the Sidonians (vs. 30) in “the Pit” (vs. 28)/ “hell/Sheol” (vs. 21)/ “the depths (lower parts) of the earth” (vss. 18, 24).
- 32:31-32: These verses may be intended as irony. In death, Pharaoh will be “comforted” by the fact that he will not be alone, but in the company of those other nations who fell as he did.

CHAPTER 33

- 33:7-9: God revisits what He said to Ezekiel in 3:17-19. Something for us to take to heart. Evangelism is not a failure when no one listens; evangelism is a failure when no one preaches. Failure to share the good news is rooted in a lack of faith and love, and without faith and love, how will we deliver our souls?
- 33:10-11: These are words of despair, the words of the captives in Babylon after Jerusalem’s fall. Feeling the crushing weight of their guilt, and seeing now its far-reaching consequences, they wonder to Ezekiel, “how can we live?” Is there any hope? Are we ourselves to die in God’s judgment as so many of our countrymen have? They felt forsaken, hopeless, and desperate. But God, who is rich in mercy, assures them that He does not take pleasure in the death of sinners, but desires that all repent and live! (2 Pet. 3:9)
- 33:12-16: The past is not what matters. It’s all prologue. What matters is NOW.
- 33:17-20- “The way of the Lord is not fair.” A repeated refrain in Ezekiel’s day (18:25, 29). Good thing God is “not fair” by some men’s standards. None of us is good enough to get into heaven on his/her own merits (Eph. 2:8-9), and each one of us has EARNED hell (Rom. 6:23). I’m thankful for God’s sense of fairness.
- 33:21-22: The prophecy in 24:25-27 is fulfilled.

CHAPTER 34

- 34:2-6: The leaders of the people were not concerned with the welfare of the people. The people were a means to line their own pockets and/or fill their own stomachs. “Fleece the flock” was their motto. And the nation had suffered on every level because of it. Here, btw, we have a great description of the business of a shepherd/pastor/elder: feed the flock, strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring back what was driven away, seek what was lost.

- 34:15: Compare Ps. 23:2

- 34:23-24: Unquestionably Messianic. Jesus is called David, as elsewhere (Jer. 30:9; Hos. 3:5, et al.), just as John the Baptist was called Elijah (Mal. 4:5; Mt. 17:11-13).

CHAPTER 35

- 35:2: This prophecy against Mount Seir is against Edom. The last verse of the chapter reveals that, as does the rest of Scripture (Gen. 36:9; Josh. 24:4). Mount Seir, situated in Edom, stands for the entire nation.

- 35:5, 10-11: The Edomites had an “ancient hatred” for Israel which may have been rooted in Jacob supplanting Esau, “stealing” his birthright, receiving the blessing, and finally, receiving the Promised Land. Edom wanted that land (see 35:10). Amos tells us Edom’s “anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever” (Amos 1:11). Edom had revealed this anger and hatred toward Israel in the days of the exodus (Num. 20:18-21), and he had showed it yet again by aiding the Babylonians in taking Jerusalem (vs. 5) (Obadiah 10-14?) and rejoicing in its fall (Ps. 137:7).

CHAPTER 36

- 36:1-15: Ezekiel prophesies to the actual land of Israel (the mountains, the hills, the rivers, the valleys, etc.). Edom has its sights on you, hoping to possess you (35:10; 36:2), but you shall continue to belong to Israel (vs. 8). There is no future for the other nations (vs. 7), including Edom (Mal. 1:3-5), but the Promised Land will once again be plowed and populated by Israel (vss. 9-12). When these things come to pass, the land, itself, will be vindicated of the derogatory things said about it during the captivity (vss. 13-15).

- 36:24-27: We read these same promises back in 11:17-20. God will bring back the captives to the Promised Land, cleanse them of their idolatry, and give them a tender heart to obey Him. Vs. 27, however, looks to a time beyond the return, when the Spirit of God, received at baptism, will dwell in the hearts of Christians, working in them “to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:13).

- 36:31: A description of godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:9-10).

<https://answersingenesis.org/dinosaurs/tannin-sea-serpent-dinosaur-snake-dragon-or-jackal/>

Comment:

Butch O’Neal:

Thank you, brother John!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you so much, John Morris! I was able to complete the reading last night but had not read your post or link until now. Very interesting reads. Your notes and summaries are extremely helpful. The study on prophecy has been the most challenging for me. However, I think I like allegories. I'm getting used to them anyways :-). I really appreciate having your and Wade's knowledge to point me to history. I wish I studied scripture more when I was younger. Now it's a goal for the rest of my life, Lord willing.

July 28: Ezekiel 37-42 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning friends. It is with great regret that I offer the following very brief commentary on Ezekiel 37-42. The past two weeks have been quite busy, especially the past seven days. Frankly, I have run out of time and can offer a few sparse comments. Hopefully what I have to say will help you.

We are entering the most challenging portion of Ezekiel and, arguably, the most challenging portion of all the prophetic books in the Bible. Charles, Steven, John, or others, feel free to chime in if you are so inclined and have the time to do so.

Ezekiel 37: A prophecy about the restoration of the nation of Israel (see verse 11). By His power, God would breathe life into the exiled nation and unite all of the tribes. Verses 24ff are Messianic.

Ezekiel 38-39: In all likelihood, this prophecy forecasts the triumphant victory led by the Maccabees over the forces of Antiochus Epiphanes. Daniel also speaks to this victory in chapters 8 and 11.

Ezekiel 40-42: Ezekiel is carried by vision to view and tour a new temple dedicated to God. The dimensions and general design rule out the possibility that this was an actual blueprint for a rebuilt temple. The scale and scope of the temple are conveyed to instill a sense of confidence that the temple which now lies in shambles will one day be rebuilt. It is also possible that God intends to point our attention to the temple which His Son, the descendent of David, would build.

Happy reading my friends! May God go with you!

Comment:

Janet Gordon Gentry:

Thanks, Wade. Hope everything is well with you and yours. We are looking forward to the day you bring your family out with you!

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, brother Wade!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Wade! I appreciate your work and perspective on this! In regards to chapters 38 and 39, I would concur with you that the gist pertains to the situation of Antiochus Epiphanes, who is also referred to by Daniel in chapters 8 - 11. regarding the latter, I have always had a sense of duality, and/or multifaceted presentation regarding Daniels reference. that is, there he (Daniel) was after the fact of Antiochus Epiphanes, and yet, he was forecasting events both of the destruction of Jerusalem and, the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ. This is the sense of Jesus reference also in (Matthew 24) where he cannot be literally speaking Antiochus Epiphanes, since that event came long before . . .but he is using the imagery so as to be analogous to the previous event, but actually forecasting an upcoming event, that is, the destruction of Jerusalem. below appears a very good article i found on the subject. In light of this discussion, i would be very interested in the thoughts of others regarding this:

Replies:

Steven Wright:

If a group of Christians sat down to list perplexing passages, it wouldn't take long for someone to mention Matthew 24:15-16: "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

The reasons for uncertainty are easy to list. What is an abomination? What abomination does Jesus have in mind? One that belongs to his generation, or one from the last days? What is the connection between the prophecies of Daniel and Jesus? Who is "the reader," and what should he or she understand? In what sense should readers "flee to the mountains"? Should they obey literally or metaphorically?

As always, the first step is to read the text in literary, cultural, historical, and canonical contexts. Then we analyze the structure of the passage and do the necessary lexical and grammatical work. We begin with the key phrase, "abomination of desolation."

The term "abomination" (Hebrew *toevah* and *siqqus*) appears more than 100 times in the Old Testament and just a few times in the New Testament. An abomination is normally a great sin, commonly worthy of death. Readers immersed in current debates about sexual ethics may first think an abomination is a sexual sin. Indeed, Scripture calls sexual sins like adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality abominations (e.g., Leviticus 18:22, 29-30). But more often throughout the Bible "abomination" refers to major covenant violations, especially idolatry (in Deuteronomy alone, see 7:25, 13:6-16, 17:2-5, 18:9-12, 27:15, 32:16). In the historical books, "abomination" always describes idolatry, often with child sacrifice (1 Kings 11:7, 2 Kings 23:13). Abomination also refers to idolatry in the prophets, including Daniel 9 and 11. (Daniel uses *siqqus*, a term that always appears in connection with idolatry.)

The interpretation of Daniel 9-11 is difficult and disputed, but it does have some fixed points, and the nature of the abomination that causes desolation is one of them. Daniel 9:26-27 refers to a prince who will destroy the city (Jerusalem) along with its temple and sacrifices, "and on the wings of abominations shall come one who makes desolate."

Two chapters later there is another reference to an "abomination" in connection to the temple: "forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate" (11:31).

Scholars generally agree that the first reference of these prophecies is the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes IV, who ruled Palestine from 175-64 B.C. Antiochus treated Israel with such violence and contempt that they rebelled against him. When he came to

suppress the rebellion, his forces entered the temple, stopped the regular sacrifices, set up an idol of or altar for Zeus, and apparently offered swine there as a sacrifice. This is an abomination because it is idolatry, and it brings desolation because it defiles the holy place at the heart of Israel. This act was the abomination “of” desolation, the abomination “causing” desolation.

Larger Structure

Having surveyed the original meaning of “abomination of desolation” in Daniel, we now to turn Matthew 24:15-16, first looking at the larger structure of Matthew 24. These verses come in the context of the Olivet Discourse, which begins with Jesus telling his disciples that the temple will be destroyed (24:1-2). The disciples then asked Jesus to explain: “When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?” (24:3).

The disciples probably thought they were asking one question. The fall of Jerusalem, Jesus' return, and the end of the age were one complex event in their minds. It may seem to us that they asked three questions:

1. When will the temple fall?
2. What is the sign of Jesus' return?
3. What is the sign of the close of this age?

But a close reading shows that Jesus heard and answered two questions. Evangelical scholars will disagree about how much of this passage is devoted to each question, but they generally agree that 24:3-35 mostly refers to events leading up to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. The segment ends with Jesus promising “this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place” (24:35). A generation normally lasts 40 years in Scripture, and Jerusalem and its temple did fall within 40 years, as Jesus said. So his core prediction was fulfilled by AD 70. (Space forbids that I address double and partial fulfillments of elements of 24:3-35. The interested reader may consult orthodox commentaries.) Then, in 24:36, Jesus starts to speak exclusively about “that day”—that is, the last day.

In 24:4-14, the Jesus is preparing his disciples for events—most of them extremely difficult—that will take place in their lifetime. These troubles are not signs of the end; the disciples must be ready to “stand firm” through them (24:4-8, 13). Then he says, “When you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation . . . '—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

This prophecy makes sense only with reference to the fall of Jerusalem. It cannot possibly apply to Jesus' return. When he comes it will be pointless for an unbeliever to try to flee. And a believer will not want to flee. For the same reason, the following command not to go back to get a cloak and the woe for nursing mothers who must flee cannot refer to Jesus' return. But they make perfect sense if Jesus predicts that another abomination of desolation, like Antiochus Epiphanes of Daniel, is coming. Indeed, that abomination did come in Roman form in AD 70. The Roman armies were always an abomination because they carried with them idolatrous images of the emperor, whom they worshiped. And those armies brought desolation because their commander leveled the city and entered the holy of holies, defiling it.

The line “let the reader understand” (24:15) means that those who read Matthew—which would have been written before AD 70—must be ready to flee when they see Roman armies besieging Jerusalem. Indeed, the parallel account in Luke 21 makes this point explicit: “when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies . . . flee to the mountains” (Luke 21:10-24). In fact, many Christians did flee, sparing their lives, when they saw Rome's armies coming. Eusebius, the first great historian of the church, says that when the Romans fell upon Jerusalem, “the church at Jerusalem . . . left the city, and moved to a town called Pella.”^[1] So Jesus, ever the Good Shepherd, told the first Christians how to survive those most harrowing years of the church's infancy.

A wise preacher dealing with this passage may find particular value in focusing on this point. When Jesus gives instruction concerning future events, his purpose is not to

satiating our curiosity or answer all of our speculative questions. Instead, his purpose is to protect and guide and instruct his people. Jesus gave relatively little attention to the question "When?" and much toward the question "How shall we live faithfully?" Preaching on such texts today should be shaped by Jesus' concern for the welfare and endurance of his church.

[1] Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, trans. Christian Cruse (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1955), 86-87.

Dan Doriani serves as vice president of strategic academic projects and professor of theology and ethics at Covenant Theological Seminary. He previously served as senior pastor of Central Presbyterian Church in Clayton, Missouri.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Yes, 37:24ff is messianic, except I would start that messianic segment in v.15. The two sticks/one Israel prophecy is often cited by LDS missionaries going door to door, but this is to be understood in the context of Christ's redemptive work (John 10:16, Ephesians 2:13-22). The one King is Jesus, who is signified by David (just as John the Baptist was "the Elijah who was to come" Matt 17:10-13, see Acts 2:29-36). We know the covenant in v26 was established by Jesus through his blood (Matt 26:27-28, Heb 8:7ff). We also have Paul citing Ezekiel 37:23b, 27 in 2 Cor 6:16 in reference to Christians and the church. The language of King and Israel and land and covenant is to be understood in the context of the Christ and his kingdom.

Ch 38-39 likely has reference, initial fulfillment, in the intertestamental period of Israel's history, as suggested by Wade Stanley and Steven Wright above, but there are aspects of this prophecy that are referenced or echoed in Revelation as the nations reject Jesus and are hostile toward his people (Christians, the church, see Revelation 20:8-9). Neither this prophecy nor John's later visions provide a timetable or roadmap of history, but do emphasize the broad hostility of deluded nations toward the Lamb and his called chosen people, and affirm that deliverance does not come through political process or force of arms but only through God's intervention. The ingathering described in 39:25-29 must have begun on the day of Pentecost, considering v29 (see Peter's proclamation of the outpouring of the Spirit as specific fulfillment of prophecy in Acts 2).

The Great Temple and its services and circumstances in 40-48 has enough in common with the language describing the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 (and considering Heb 9-10) that I believe we are looking at two perspective views of the same thing which has partial fulfillment in the church but ultimate fulfillment in the presence of God. There is an emphasis in both a grandeur of scale and structure, and holiness of usage that is far beyond human experience and capacity. Giving God his due was a message for Ezekiel's generation, and John's, and ours.

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Thank you Charles!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thanks, Wade! Your work abounds for the Lord and His kingdom. We have prayed for the college bible study this week @ Smart Road. Thanks for your, Charles and Steves feedback on

today's assigned chapters. I'm sure marc and I weren't the only ones singing this song while studying tonight! 😊

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=mVoPG9HtYF8>

“Delta Rhythm Boys-Dry Bones”

August 4: Ezekiel 43-48 (John Morris)

Reading for August 4, 2017 (tomorrow)

EZEKIEL 43-48

Posting a day early. Headed to Denver, this morning, for Jefferson Avenue’s “Colorado August Meeting.” Have time to post just a few remarks which I hope can be helpful.

As was indicated, last week, these last chapters of Ezekiel are dedicated to a lengthy, detailed, and highly figurative depiction of the coming kingdom of God, seemingly both in its earthly and eternal glory. In our minds, the two phases may be very distinct, but to Him “who inhabits eternity” (Is. 57:15), perhaps not so much. Similar overlap occurred in the latter chapters of Isaiah.

Ezekiel 40-48 is the second of three great architectural visions in the Bible. The first was the pattern of the tabernacle Moses beheld on the mountain (Ex. 25:40), the third the New Jerusalem which John saw coming down out of heaven in Rev. 21-22. The similarities between Ezekiel and John’s visions are several and striking, and interestingly, both were set on high mountains from which to get the best view (Ezek. 40:2; Rev. 21:10).

On a macro level, the vision highlights a few overarching truths. (1) In the future kingdom of God, worship will be central. (2) God will dwell among His people. (3) Life-giving blessings will flow from the presence of God (43:1-12 is my favorite part of the vision). (4) God has a well-thought out plan for the future of His people.

CHAPTER 43

- 43:1-5: Nineteen years earlier, Ezekiel had witnessed the glory of the LORD leaving the temple by the eastern gate (8:1; 10:18-19; 11:22-23). Now he sees God returning! This marks a new beginning in God’s dealings with His people.
- 43:7: The temple tour proceeded in silence, except for five occasions (40:45; 41:4, 22; 42:13; 43:7). The first four times, Ezekiel’s heavenly tour guide was the one who spoke. This last time, God speaks. He says His house will be holy (1 Pet. 1:16).
- 43:13-27: Highlighting the importance of worship in terms Ezekiel and his hearers could relate to, an elaborate altar and its proper use is described.

CHAPTER 44

- 44:3: Our introduction to “the prince,” a recurring figure throughout the remainder of the prophecy. Almost certainly fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the “Prince of Peace” (cf. 34:24; 37:25).
- 44:6-27: Purity of priesthood and worship is emphasized.

CHAPTER 45

• 45:1-8: As in the days of Joshua, once again the land is divided by lot into inheritance, though only a “holy” portion (vss. 1-4), a portion for the Levites (vs. 5), a portion for “the city,” and a section for the prince are mentioned here. Later, in chapter 48, the remainder of the land will be divided. More importance is given to symmetry than to geographic realities, indicating to us the symbolic nature of the vision.

• 45:9-25: More on worship, which gives me pause. This prophecy is fulfilled in those who “worship Him in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24). God is looking for people like this (Jn. 4:23). Is worship the priority for me it ought to be?

CHAPTER 46

• 46:9: Requiring the worshippers to exit via the opposite gate made for orderly flow of traffic. But perhaps it also teaches us that worship should change us, that we should leave the experience different than when we came.

CHAPTER 47

• 47:1-12: John saw a “pure river of water of life...proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1). Here, Ezekiel sees something very similar, an ever-deepening, life-giving river flowing SE from the temple (God’s presence), all the way to the Dead Sea, whose waters it heals. It gives life wherever it goes, though some locations remain unchanged (vs. 11), perhaps indicative of those who refuse the life that is found in Christ Jesus. Note the similarities between vs. 12 and Rev. 22:2.

• 47:13-21: Here, the boundaries of the land are given. In chapter 48, the division of the land will be the subject.

• 47:22-23: In the future, Gentiles will have an inheritance with Jews in “the Holy Land” (Zech. 2:12). See Eph. 2:11ff.

CHAPTER 48

• 48:1-29: A new allotment of the Promised Land is described. The entire territory of Israel is to be divided into twelve parallel portions running from east to west. Unlike in the days of Joshua, even Reuben, Gad, and all of Manasseh are located within the borders of the Promised Land.

• 48:30-35: As if to set us up for Rev. 21-22, the vision ends with a brief description of the city. Like the New Jerusalem John saw, this one has twelve gates (cf. Rev. 21:21). The city’s most outstanding quality, though? “THE LORD IS THERE” (cf. Rev. 21:3).

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother John! Good travels and good meeting!

Comment:

Butch O’Neal:

Thank you, brother John!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Why do we meet with the church? Because the Lord is there!

Replies:

Denise Waits:

Matthew 18:20 (CSB)

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them.”

Comment:

Steven Dallas Thompson:

Denise Waits, I like your comment.