Ezekiel

The Complete Book

Chapters 1–48, Observation · Interpretation · Application

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

Ed Smith · Smith For Christ Publishing

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Ezekiel 1

The Throne Above the Storm: Glory by the River Chebar

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God met a priest with no temple in the worst place of his life. Before Ezekiel ever said a word, God showed him that His throne is not stuck in Jerusalem — it moves, it sees everything, and it rules over Babylon too. Seeing the glory put Ezekiel on his face, and that is where his ministry began.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 1 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.

8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

11 Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

15 Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.

16 The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.

18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.

20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

21 When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

22 And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

23 And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

24 And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.

25 And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Marked in the text

- **v1** the heavens were opened
- **v1** visions of God
- **v1** in the thirtieth year
- **v1** by the river of Chebar
- **v2** the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity
- **v3** The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel
- **v3** the hand of the LORD was there upon him
- **v4** a whirlwind came out of the north
- **v5** living creatures *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** four faces
- **v9** they went every one straight forward
- **v12** whither the spirit was to go, they went
- **v15** wheel *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** a wheel in the middle of a wheel
- **v18** full of eyes round about
- **v20** the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels
- **v24** as the voice of the Almighty
- **v26** the likeness of a throne
- **v26** the likeness as the appearance of a man
- **v28** the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain
- **v28** the likeness of the glory of the LORD
- **v28** I fell upon my face
- **v28** I heard a voice of one that spake

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 1:1 (KJV)

[1]Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that ▲ the heavens were opened, and I saw ▲ visions of God.

Setting

"Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (v1). Verse 2 fixes the date: "the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile" — about 593 BC. Ezekiel is a priest (v3) who was carried off to Babylon with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC. Jerusalem is still standing, the temple is still open, and false prophets are promising a quick return. Ezekiel is hundreds of miles away, sitting by a canal in Babylon, with no temple to serve in.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **the call in exile:** "the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (v1). "The word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest" (v3), "and there the hand of the LORD came upon him" (v3).
- v4 — **the storm:** "a storm wind was coming from the north" (v4), a great cloud and flashing fire, and in its midst "something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire" (v4).
- vv5–14 — **the four living beings:** "figures resembling four living beings" (v5); "they had human form" (v5). "Each of them had four faces and four wings" (v6) — "the face of a man," "the face of a lion," "the face of a bull," "the face of an eagle" (v10). "Each went straight forward" (vv9, 12); "wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go" (v12). They look "like burning coals of fire" (v13) and dart "like bolts of lightning" (v14).
- vv15–21 — **the wheels:** a wheel on the earth beside each being, "as if one wheel were within another" (v16), with rims "full of eyes round about" (v18). The wheels move and rise with the beings, "for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels" (vv20, 21).
- vv22–25 — **the expanse:** over their heads, "something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal" (v22). Their wings sound "like the sound of abundant waters," "like the voice of the Almighty" (v24). A voice comes from above the expanse (v25).
- vv26–28 — **the throne and the One on it:** "something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance" (v26), and on it "a figure with the appearance of a man" (v26), fire and "a radiance around Him" (v27). "As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day" (v28) — "Such

was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD" (v28). "I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking" (v28).

Repeated words

living beings (vv5, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22); four (vv5, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18); faces (vv6, 8, 9, 10, 11); wings (vv6, 8, 9, 11, 23, 24, 25); wheel / wheels (vv15, 16, 19, 20, 21); spirit (vv12, 20, 21); fire (vv4, 13, 27); appearance (vv5, 16, 26, 27, 28); went straight forward (vv9, 12).

Contrasts

a captive by a Babylonian canal (v1) ⟷ "the heavens were opened" (v1). A storm out of the north, the direction judgment would come from (v4) ⟷ the throne of God riding inside it (v26). Creatures with wings and faces (vv5–14) ⟷ the One above them all on the throne (v26). Wheels on the earth (v15) ⟷ a throne above the expanse (v26). The blaze of fire around Him (v27) ⟷ the rainbow of promise (v28). Ezekiel on his face (v28) ⟷ God speaking to him (v28).

Chapter theme (my words)

God met a priest with no temple in the worst place of his life. Before Ezekiel ever said a word, God showed him that His throne is not stuck in Jerusalem — it moves, it sees everything, and it rules over Babylon too. Seeing the glory put Ezekiel on his face, and that is where his ministry began.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 1:28 (KJV)

28 As the appearance of ★ the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of ▲ the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, ▮▮ I fell upon my face, and ★ I heard a voice of one that spake.

Real history (vv1–3)

Ezekiel gives a year, a month, a day and a place. Guzik stresses that the date anchors the vision in real history. He takes "the thirtieth year" as Ezekiel's age — the year a priest began to serve (Num 4:3). Others count thirty years from the finding of the Law under Josiah (622 BC). If Guzik is right, the year Ezekiel should have entered the temple, God opened heaven instead. Taylor, in Guzik: "The priest was commissioned as a prophet." Babylon took the Jews in three waves (605, 597 and 587/586 BC); Ezekiel went in the second, with Jehoiachin. The Chebar was a navigable canal near Babylon. Ezekiel's name, Guzik notes from Poole, "signifies either, the strength of God, or, strengthened by God" — and "the hand of the LORD" was on him (v3).

Out of the north (v4)

Babylon's armies would come down on Judah from the north (Jer 1:14). The storm, cloud and fire recall the pillar of cloud and fire and the burning bush (Exod 3:2; 13:21–22). Guzik's point: the vision told

Ezekiel that Yahweh ruled over Babylon and its gods. Feinberg, in Guzik: "The vision Ezekiel had at the time of his call never left him but influenced his thought continually."

The living beings (vv5–14)

In chapter 10 Ezekiel himself calls them cherubim (10:15, 20). Guzik traces cherubim through Scripture: guarding Eden (Gen 3:24), over the mercy seat on the ark, woven into the tabernacle and temple, and around the throne in Revelation 4. Alexander, in Guzik: "Certainly Ezekiel was acquainted with cherubim from his training in the temple." The four faces have been read many ways — as the four Gospels (common in medieval art), or as the tribal banners of Israel's camp. Guzik favors the view that they stand for the highest of creation: man, wild beast, domestic animal and bird. Smith, in Guzik: "The four represent all sentient creation." They never turn aside; they go "wherever the spirit was about to go" (v12). Guzik notes they are perfectly responsive — the very thing sinful people are not.

The wheels (vv15–21)

The picture is a throne-chariot. Wright, in Guzik: "Each wheel is composed of two wheels apparently at right angles to each other" — able to go any direction without turning. Wiersbe, in Guzik: "The wheels symbolize the omnipresence of God, while the eyes on their rims suggest the omniscience of God." This same chariot will leave the temple in chapters 10–11 and return in chapter 43.

The expanse and the voice (vv22–25)

Above the creatures is a crystal platform. The roar of their wings is "like the voice of the Almighty" (v24; compare Rev 1:15; 14:2). But the creatures are not the message; when the voice speaks from above, they stand still and drop their wings (v25).

The throne and the glory (vv26–28)

The vision builds from the bottom up and peaks at the throne. The blue stone recalls the pavement under God's feet at Sinai (Exod 24:10). Block, in Guzik, calls it "the most majestic throne one could imagine." Notice how careful Ezekiel is: "resembling," "appearance," "likeness" — he describes what God looked like, not God Himself. Taylor, in Guzik: "no form but the human form could conceivably have been used to represent the Deity." Many Christians see here a preview of the Son, who would take on real human flesh (John 1:14; Rev 1:13–16); Guzik notes Wright's suggestion along these lines while insisting the Incarnation was still needed. The rainbow (v28) recalls God's promise to Noah (Gen 9:13–16); Guzik says it shows God binding His sovereignty to His promises. Glory (*kabod*) is, in Block's words quoted by Guzik, "that quality which evokes a response of awe in the observer." Ezekiel's response is the right one: on his face, listening.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **Ezekiel — *Yechezqel* (H3168):** "God strengthens."
- **visions — *marʾah* (H4759):** a vision, a sight given by God.
- **exiles — *golah* (H1473):** the captivity, the community of exiles.
- **hand — *yad* (H3027):** hand; power — "the hand of the LORD" (v3).
- **storm — *seʿarah* (H5591):** a tempest, whirlwind.
- **glowing metal — *chashmal* (H2830):** a gleaming substance, amber or electrum.
- **living beings — *chayyah* (H2416):** living things, creatures.

- **spirit — *ruach* (H7307):** wind, breath, spirit.
- **wheel — *ʾophan* (H212):** a wheel.
- **rims — *gab* (H1354):** a curved thing — the felloe, rim of a wheel.
- **expanse — *raqiaʿ* (H7549):** a beaten-out platform, the firmament.
- **throne — *kisseʾ* (H3678):** a seat of honor, throne.
- **lapis lazuli — *sappir* (H5601):** a deep-blue precious stone.
- **likeness — *demuth* (H1823):** likeness, resemblance.
- **Almighty — *Shadday* (H7706):** the Almighty.
- **rainbow — *qesheth* (H7198):** a bow; the rainbow (Gen 9:13).
- **glory — *kabod* (H3519):** weight, honor, glory.

Cross-references

Gen 3:24; Gen 9:13–16; Exod 3:2; Exod 13:21–22; Exod 24:10; Exod 25:18–22; Num 4:3; 1 Kgs 22:19; 2 Kgs 24:10–16; Ps 18:10; Ps 139:7–12; Isa 6:1–5; Jer 1:14; Ezek 10:1–22; Ezek 43:2–5; Dan 7:9–10; John 1:14; John 12:41; 2 Cor 4:6; Rev 1:12–17; Rev 4:2–8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 1:9 (KJV)

9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

Command to obey — fall on my face and listen

Ezekiel's first act as a prophet was not to talk but to fall down and hear "a voice speaking" (v28). Before I write, teach or counsel anyone, I need to be on my face before God's glory and listening to His Word. Ministry that skips this step runs on my own steam.

Sin to confess — a God too small

The exiles thought God was stuck in Jerusalem and had forgotten them in Babylon. I do the same when I act as if God is present at church but absent at the job site, the courtroom or the hospital. I confess the shrunken view of God that makes me anxious and prayerless.

Warning to heed — the storm from the north

The vision came out of the north — the direction the judgment was coming from. Hard seasons are not outside God's rule; sometimes He rides in on the very storm I fear. I won't assume a hard providence means God has left. I'll ask what He is saying in it.

Promise to trust — the heavens opened by a canal in Babylon

God opened heaven to a captive, not to a king. For the man in a cell block, a treatment center or a halfway house, this is the promise: God can meet you right where you are — no temple, no title, no

freedom — and His eyes are on you (v18). You are not too far away for Him.

Example to follow — the living beings

They went "straight forward," without turning, wherever the spirit went (v12). That's what I want for the men I disciple and for myself: no double life, no detours back to the old haunts, just steady going where God leads, one straight step at a time.

Worship

Above the storm, above the creatures, above the expanse, there is a throne — and a rainbow around it. He sees everything and goes everywhere, and His glory puts the strongest man on his face. My God rules over Babylon.

Prayer

Lord God, You opened heaven to a captive by a canal. Open my eyes to Your glory where I am today. Make my view of You big again. Put me on my face, speak to me, and send me straight forward wherever Your Spirit leads. Meet the men I serve in their exile, and let them see Your throne. Amen.

Ezekiel 2

Stand on Your Feet: Sent to a Rebellious House

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God picks Ezekiel up off the ground, fills him with His Spirit and sends him to hard-faced people who probably won't listen. Ezekiel's job is not to get results but to say what God says — without fear, and without becoming rebellious himself. Before he speaks the Word, he has to take it in.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 2 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1]And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

[2]And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

[3]And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.

[4]For they are impudent children and stiffhearted . I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

[5]And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

[6]And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

[7]And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.

[8]But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

[9]And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein;

[10]And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

Marked in the text

- **v1** Son of man *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee
- **v2** the spirit entered into me
- **v2** set me upon my feet
- **v3** I send thee to the children of Israel
- **v3** a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me
- **v3** they and their fathers have transgressed against me
- **v3** even unto this very day
- **v4** impudent children
- **v4** Thus saith the Lord GOD
- **v5** rebellious *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear
- **v5** yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them
- **v6** be not afraid of them
- **v6** briers and thorns be with thee
- **v6** thou dost dwell among scorpions
- **v7** thou shalt speak my words unto them
- **v8** hear what I say unto thee
- **v8** Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house
- **v8** open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee
- **v9** a roll of a book
- **v10** written within and without

- **v10** ⚠ lamentations, and mourning, and woe

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 2:3 (KJV)

3 And he said unto me, ⇄ Son of man, ▲ I send thee to the children of Israel, to ⚠ a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: ⚠ they and their fathers have transgressed against me, ◷ even unto this very day.

Setting

Same day, same place as chapter 1: about 593 BC, by the river Chebar among the exiles in Babylon. Ezekiel has just seen the glory of the LORD and fallen on his face (1:28). Now the voice from the throne speaks to him. Jerusalem has not yet fallen; that is still about seven years away (586 BC). The exiles around him are hoping for a quick trip home, and God is about to send them a man with a very different message.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **stand up:** "Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!" (v1). "The Spirit entered me and set me on my feet" (v2), and Ezekiel hears Him speaking.
- vv3–5 — **the commission:** "I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people" (v3) who, with their fathers, have transgressed "to this very day" (v3). They are "stubborn and obstinate children" (v4). His message: "Thus says the Lord GOD" (v4). "Whether they listen or not — for they are a rebellious house — they will know that a prophet has been among them" (v5).
- vv6–7 — **don't be afraid:** "neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions" (v6), "nor be dismayed at their presence" (v6). "But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not" (v7).
- v8 — **don't be like them:** "do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you" (v8).
- vv9–10 — **the scroll:** "a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it" (v9). "It was written on the front and back," and on it were "lamentations, mourning and woe" (v10).

Repeated words

son of man (vv1, 3, 6, 8); rebellious / rebelled (vv3, 5, 6, 7, 8); whether they listen or not (vv5, 7); fear / be afraid (v6, three times); words (vv6, 7); speak / speaking (vv1, 2, 7, 8); sending (vv3, 4).

Contrasts

Ezekiel on his face (1:28) ⟷ "stand on your feet" (v1). A mere "son of man" (v1) ⟷ the Spirit who enters him (v2). Their words (v6) ⟷ "My words" (v7). "That rebellious house" (v8) ⟷ the prophet

who must not rebel (v8). Whether they listen or not (v5) ⟷ "they will know that a prophet has been among them" (v5). A sweet calling ⟷ a scroll of "lamentations, mourning and woe" (v10).

Chapter theme (my words)

God picks Ezekiel up off the ground, fills him with His Spirit and sends him to hard-faced people who probably won't listen. Ezekiel's job is not to get results but to say what God says — without fear, and without becoming rebellious himself. Before he speaks the Word, he has to take it in.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 2:2 (KJV)

2 And ▲ the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and ▲ set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

"Son of man" (v1)

This is the first of more than ninety times God calls Ezekiel "son of man." Taylor, in Guzik: "The phrase son of man is a Hebraism which emphasizes Ezekiel's insignificance or mere humanity." Ezekiel has seen the throne; now he is reminded he is only a man. Jesus took the same title for Himself, but His use draws on Daniel 7:13–14, where "One like a Son of Man" receives an everlasting kingdom — so on His lips it points both to His true humanity and to His glory.

Up on his feet (vv1–2)

God wanted a servant standing, not a man flattened on the ground. Trapp, in Guzik: "Oracles are for standers, not prostrate ones." Notice how it happens: God commands, and as He speaks, "the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet" (v2). Guzik's point is that the command came with the power to obey it, and that the Spirit worked through the word God spoke. McGee, in Guzik: "If God has called you to do a certain thing, He'll give you the power to do it."

Sent to rebels (vv3–5)

Judah still had a king and a temple, but the people were in rebellion — and had been, along with their fathers, for generations. "Rebellious people" (v3) translates a plural word, *goyim*, usually used of Gentile nations; Guzik cites Alexander that it refers to both Israel and Judah. "Stubborn and obstinate" is literally, as Taylor puts it in Guzik, "hard of face and firm of heart." Ezekiel has one message: "Thus says the Lord GOD" (v4) — not his opinion. Block, in Guzik, notes "the most serious charge that could be leveled against a true prophet was 'Yahweh has not sent you'." The phrase "rebellious house" runs through the book (more than a dozen times, Feinberg notes). Feinberg: "The greater the position of privilege, the greater the extent of disobedience."

Success is faithfulness (vv5, 7)

Twice God says "whether they listen or not." Ezekiel is not measured by the response. His vindication is that "they will know that a prophet has been among them" (v5) — and Block, in Guzik, says that

would come not through mass conversion but when his words came true. Guzik compares Paul's charge to preach "in season and out of season" (2 Tim 4:2).

Thistles, thorns and scorpions (vv6–7)

People would hurt him like thorns and sting him like scorpions. Poole, in Guzik, notes that the command not to fear is repeated so that Ezekiel would not forget it. "Dismayed" is strong — Taylor, in Guzik: "The verb here is a very strong word, meaning 'to be shattered'." Guzik argues that the vision of God's glory in chapter 1 is what would make Ezekiel able to face men's faces. When you have seen the throne, a scowl loses its power.

Don't become what you preach against (v8)

The prophet himself is tested first: "listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house" (v8). The first rebellion God guards against is in His own messenger.

The scroll (vv9–10)

A hand holds out a scroll. "Written on the front and back" was unusual — scrolls were normally written on one side. Feinberg, in Guzik: "the message of the Lord was so full of threatenings and woes that both sides had to be utilized." Block, in Guzik, says it implies "a complete message" — no room for Ezekiel to add his own. The content was "lamentations, mourning and woe" (v10): the message Israel most needed and would most resist. The eating comes in 3:1–3; Guzik sees it as a picture of taking God's Word fully inside before giving it out (compare Jer 15:16; Rev 10:9–10).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **son — *ben* (H1121):** son; "son of man" (*ben ʾadam*) — a mortal, a human being.
- **man — *ʾadam* (H120):** man, mankind.
- **Spirit — *ruach* (H7307):** wind, breath, Spirit.
- **sending — *shalach* (H7971):** to send, send out on a mission.
- **rebelled — *marad* (H4775):** to rebel, revolt (v3).
- **transgressed — *pashaʿ* (H6586):** to rebel, break away, transgress.
- **stubborn — *qasheh* (H7186):** hard, severe — "hard of face."
- **obstinate — *chazaq* (H2389):** strong, hard — "firm of heart."
- **Lord GOD — *ʾAdonay Yehovih* (H136 + H3069):** the sovereign Master, Yahweh.
- **listen — *shamaʿ* (H8085):** to hear, listen, obey.
- **rebellious — *meri* (H4805):** rebellion — "a house of rebellion" (vv5, 6, 8).
- **prophet — *nabiʾ* (H5030):** a spokesman for God.
- **dismayed — *chathath* (H2865):** to be shattered, terrified.
- **scorpions — *ʿaqrab* (H6137):** a scorpion.
- **scroll — *megillah* (H4039):** a roll, scroll.
- **lamentations — *qinah* (H7015):** a dirge, funeral song.

Cross-references

Exod 4:10–12; Num 11:25; 2 Chr 36:15–16; Ps 40:7–8; Isa 6:8–10; Jer 1:7–8, 17–19; Jer 15:16; Ezek 3:1–11, 26–27; Dan 7:13–14; Matt 10:16–20; Mark 2:10; Luke 10:16; Acts 26:16–18; 2 Cor 2:15–16; 2 Tim 4:2–5; Heb 4:12;

Rev 5:1; Rev 10:9–11.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 2:5 (KJV)

5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

Command to obey — "speak My words."

My job, whether I'm writing a book, building a study tool or sitting across from a man, is to say what God says, not what will be liked. "Thus says the Lord GOD" (v4) is my standard. I'll check my words against the scroll before I hand them out.

Sin to confess — measuring by results

I'm tempted to judge my ministry by who responds. God told Ezekiel twice, "whether they listen or not" (vv5, 7). I confess the pride and discouragement that come from keeping score. Faithfulness is my part; fruit is His.

Warning to heed — "do not be rebellious like that rebellious house."

It's easy to preach against rebellion and still hold back in my own heart. God dealt with the messenger first (v8). I'll ask where I've been stubborn and obstinate — hard of face, firm of heart — toward Him.

Promise to trust — the Spirit sets me on my feet

Ezekiel was on his face, and God's Spirit stood him up (v2). For the man who has fallen so many times he has stopped trying to get up — after a relapse, a sentence or a divorce — God's word comes with God's power. He doesn't only say "stand up"; He sets you on your feet.

Example to follow — courage among scorpions

Ezekiel was sent into briers, thorns and scorpions and told three times not to fear (v6). The men I disciple go back into neighborhoods, families and cell blocks full of stinging words and hard looks. Like Ezekiel, we stand because we have seen the throne. Their faces are not the final word; God's is.

Worship

He is the Lord GOD who speaks, who sends, and who gives His Spirit to weak men. He calls a mere son of man, stands him up and fills his mouth with His words. He is faithful even when His people are not.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I'm only a son of man. Stand me on my feet by Your Spirit. Keep me from the rebellion I see in others, and give me Your words to eat before I speak. Make me unafraid of faces and faithful whether people listen or not. And let the men I serve know that You have spoken among them. Amen.

Ezekiel 3

The Watchman: Eat the Word, Then Warn

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God's man has to eat the Word before he can speak it, and he needs a face harder than the people he is sent to. His job is to be a watchman: warn the wicked, warn the righteous, and leave the response with them — but if he stays silent, their blood is on his hands. And even the watchman speaks only when God opens his mouth.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 3 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

[2] So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

[3] And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and ★ it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

[4] And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

[5] For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel;

[6] Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

[7] But ⚠ the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are ⚠ impudent and hardhearted .

[8] Behold, ▲ I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

[9] ▲ As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

[10] Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

[11] And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

[12] Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, ▲ Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place.

[13] I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.

[14] So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and ⚠ I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but ▲ the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

[15] Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

[16] And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

[17] Son of man, ▲ I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them ⇄ warning from me.

[18] When I say unto the wicked, ⚠ Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not ⇄ warning, nor speakest to ⇄ warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but ⚠ his blood will I require at thine hand.

[19] Yet if thou ⇄ warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but ★ thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, ⚠ When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him ⇄ warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

21 Nevertheless if thou ⇄ warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is ⇄ warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

22 And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.

23 Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, ▲ the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.

24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.

25 But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them:

26 And ◷ I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover : for they are a rebellious house.

27 But when I speak with thee, ▲ I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▮▮ He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ▮▮ eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel
- **v3** ★ it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness
- **v4** ▮▮ speak with my words unto them
- **v7** ⚠ the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me
- **v7** ⚠ impudent
- **v8** ▲ I have made thy face strong against their faces
- **v9** ▲ As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead
- **v9** ▮▮ fear them not
- **v10** ▮▮ receive in thine heart
- **v12** ▲ Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place
- **v14** ⚠ I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit
- **v14** ▲ the hand of the LORD was strong upon me
- **v15** ◷ I sat where they sat
- **v15** ◷ seven days
- **v17** ▲ I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel
- **v17** ⇄ warn *(every occurrence)*
- **v18** ⚠ Thou shalt surely die
- **v18** ⚠ his blood will I require at thine hand
- **v19** ★ thou hast delivered thy soul
- **v20** ⚠ When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness
- **v21** ★ he shall surely live, because he is warned
- **v23** ▲ the glory of the LORD stood there
- **v26** ◷ I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth
- **v27** ▲ I will open thy mouth
- **v27** ▮▮ He that heareth, let him hear

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 3:7 (KJV)

7 But ⚠ the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are ⚠ impudent and hardhearted .

Setting

The call that began in chapter 1 continues, still about 593 BC among the exiles in Babylon. Ezekiel eats the scroll handed to him in 2:9–10, is carried by the Spirit to the exile settlement at Tel-abib on the river Chebar, and sits there stunned for seven days (v15). "At the end of seven days" (v16) God gives him a second charge: he is to be a watchman. The chapter closes with a third meeting with the glory on the plain (vv22–23) and strange restrictions on his movement and speech (vv24–27).

Structure

- vv1–3 — **eat the scroll:** "eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel" (v1). He eats it, "and it was sweet as honey in my mouth" (v3).
- vv4–11 — **sent to his own people:** "go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them" (v4). He is "not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language" (v5) — "yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me" (v7). They are "stubborn and obstinate" (v7), so God says, "I have made your face as hard as their faces" (v8). "Like emery harder than flint I have made your forehead" (v9). "Do not be afraid of them or be dismayed before them" (v9). First he must "take into your heart all My words which I will speak to you and listen closely" (v10).
- vv12–15 — **lifted and set down:** a great rumbling voice: "Blessed be the glory of the LORD in His place" (v12). Ezekiel goes "embittered in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of the LORD was strong on me" (v14). He comes to "the exiles who lived beside the river Chebar at Tel-abib" (v15) and sits "seven days where they were living, causing consternation among them" (v15).
- vv16–21 — **the watchman:** "I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel" (v17) — hear a word "and warn them from Me" (v17). If God says to the wicked, "You will surely die" (v18), and Ezekiel doesn't warn him, "his blood I will require at your hand" (vv18, 20). If he warns and the man won't turn, "you have delivered yourself" (v19). If a righteous man turns to iniquity and "I place an obstacle before him" (v20), he dies; if he is warned and doesn't sin, "he shall surely live because he took warning" (v21).
- vv22–27 — **glory on the plain, then silence:** "the glory of the LORD was standing there" (v23), and again "I fell on my face" (v23). The Spirit stands him up: "Go, shut yourself up in your house" (v24). "They will put ropes on you and bind you with them" (v25). "I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be mute" (v26). "But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth" (v27). "He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house" (v27).

Repeated words

son of man (vv1, 3, 4, 10, 17, 25); house of Israel (vv1, 4, 5, 7, 17); warn / warning (vv17, 18, 19, 20, 21); wicked (vv18, 19); righteous (vv20, 21); die (vv18, 19, 20); rebellious house (vv9, 26, 27); My words (vv4, 10); mouth (vv2, 3, 17, 26, 27).

Contrasts

foreigners who would listen (v6) ⟷ Israel who will not (v7). Their hard faces (v7) ⟷ Ezekiel's harder forehead (vv8–9). A scroll of woe (2:10) ⟷ sweet as honey in his mouth (v3). Ezekiel's bitterness (v14) ⟷ the hand of the LORD strong on him (v14). The wicked warned and saved (v19) ⟷ the righteous unwarned and fallen (v20). A watchman's open mouth (v17) ⟷ a tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth (v26). "He who hears" ⟷ "he who refuses" (v27).

Chapter theme (my words)

God's man has to eat the Word before he can speak it, and he needs a face harder than the people he is sent to. His job is to be a watchman: warn the wicked, warn the righteous, and leave the response with them — but if he stays silent, their blood is on his hands. And even the watchman speaks only when God opens his mouth.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 3:9 (KJV)

9 ▲ As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: ▮▮ fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

Eating the Word (vv1–3)

Guzik takes the eating as part of the vision, yet a real experience; the point is that God's message had to get all the way inside Ezekiel before it came out. Meyer, in Guzik: "It is possible to acquire an intellectual knowledge of the truth, while the heart is entirely unaffected." The surprise is the taste. A scroll of "lamentations, mourning and woe" (2:10) was sweet as honey, because it was God's will (Ps 119:103; Jer 15:16). Spurgeon, in Guzik: "If the word of God be not very sweet to me, have I an appetite?" John has the same experience — sweet in the mouth, bitter in the stomach (Rev 10:9–10).

Harder than they are (vv4–9)

A foreign nation, Guzik notes, might have listened — as Nineveh did for Jonah. Israel would not, because their quarrel was with God, not with the messenger (v7). Wright, in Guzik, calls v7 "one of the most dangerous verses in Scripture," because it can be used to blame hearers for our own poor delivery. God's answer to a hard people is a hard prophet. "Emery" (*shamir*) was the hardest stone known — harder than flint. Spurgeon, in Guzik: "Make your face like adamant if their hearts are like adamant." Fittingly, Ezekiel's name means "God strengthens."

Take it to heart first (vv10–11)

Before Ezekiel speaks to the exiles, he must "take into your heart all My words" (v10). Then he goes to his own people — "the exiles," his fellow captives — and speaks "whether they listen or not" (v11; compare 2:5, 7).

Bitter, but held (vv12–15)

The praise of v12 is heard over the roar of the wings and wheels from chapter 1. Then the Spirit carries Ezekiel off, and he goes "embittered in the rage of my spirit" (v14). Guzik lists possible reasons — his exile, the weight of the call, Israel's sin — and quotes Taylor that the Hebrew points to anger as the main emotion. Yet "the hand of the LORD was strong on me" (v14). At Tel-abib he sits seven days, stunned and silent among the exiles (v15). Taylor, in Guzik, notes that seven days was the period for consecrating a priest (Lev 8:33). Smith, in Guzik: "Those days of silence changed his attitude about his mission."

The watchman (vv16–21)

A watchman stood on the city wall and sounded the alarm when he saw an enemy coming (2 Sam 18:24–27; Ezek 33:1–6). Ezekiel is that man for Israel — but the warning comes "from Me" (v17), not from his own opinions. Guzik stresses that a watchman's work is faithful proclamation of God's word, not fault-finding. Four cases follow: the wicked, warned or not; the righteous who turns, warned or not. If Ezekiel is silent, "his blood I will require at your hand" (v18). Morgan, in Guzik: "If the wicked die in wickedness for lack of the prophetic word, the prophet is guilty of his blood." If he speaks and is ignored, he has "delivered" himself (v19). Paul applies the same principle: "I am innocent of the blood of all men" (Acts 20:26–27).

The righteous who turns (vv20–21)

Christians read this differently. Some (Arminian) see a real believer who falls away and is lost. Others (Reformed) see a person with outward righteousness who proves never to have been truly converted, or read it as covenant life and death in the land rather than eternal destiny. Guzik leans to the third reading: following Alexander, he takes "life" and "death" here as "physical, not eternal" — premature death under God's judgment — and does not use the passage to settle the eternal-security debate. On "I place an obstacle" (v20), Taylor, in Guzik: "it does not here indicate that God deliberately sets out to trip up the righteous." God tests; He doesn't entrap. Guzik's sober note: "One sin or a short season of sin can easily wipe out an otherwise good reputation."

Glory again, then silence (vv22–27)

On the plain, the same glory he saw by the Chebar appears, and down he goes again (v23). Wright, in Guzik, cites a wise man: "we should take ten looks at Christ to one at ourselves." Then come restrictions: shut in his house, bound with ropes, mute except when God speaks through him. Interpreters differ — a picture of how Israel would treat him (Trapp), of Israel's coming helplessness (Vawter and Hoppe), of God restraining His prophet until the right time (Wright, Taylor), or of God's silence toward a people who won't listen (Clarke). Guzik suggests a temporary muteness that pictured God's silence. It was lifted when news of Jerusalem's fall arrived (24:27; 33:21–22). "He who hears, let him hear" (v27) is the root of Jesus' own refrain (Matt 11:15; Rev 2:7).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **eat — *ʾakal* (H398):** to eat, consume, devour.
- **honey — *debash* (H1706):** honey.
- **sweet — *mathoq* (H4966):** sweet, pleasant.
- **forehead — *metsach* (H4696):** the brow, forehead.
- **emery — *shamir* (H8068):** a very hard stone; adamant, diamond.
- **flint — *tsor* (H6864):** flint, a hard sharp stone.
- **embittered — *mar* (H4751):** bitter, bitterness.
- **rage — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, anger, wrath.
- **Tel-abib — *Tel ʾAbib* (H8512):** "mound of the flood" or "hill of grain," an exile settlement on the Chebar.
- **consternation — *shamem* (H8074):** to be appalled, stunned, desolate.
- **watchman — *tsaphah* (H6822):** to look out, keep watch.
- **warn — *zahar* (H2094):** to admonish, warn, enlighten.
- **wicked — *rashaʿ* (H7563):** wicked, guilty.
- **iniquity — *ʿavon* (H5771):** iniquity, guilt, punishment for sin.
- **righteous — *tsaddiq* (H6662):** just, righteous.
- **obstacle — *mikshol* (H4383):** a stumbling block.
- **mute — *ʾalam* (H481):** to be bound, be dumb, speechless.

Cross-references

2 Sam 18:24–27; Ps 19:10; Ps 119:103; Isa 50:7; Isa 62:6; Jer 1:18; Jer 6:17; Jer 15:16; Jer 20:9; Ezek 18:24–26; Ezek 24:27; Ezek 33:1–9, 21–22; Jonah 3:5; Matt 11:15; Luke 1:20; Acts 20:26–27; 1 Cor 9:16; 2 Cor 4:2; Heb 13:17; James 5:19–20; Rev 2:7; Rev 10:9–10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 3:27 (KJV)

27 But when I speak with thee, ▲ I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▮▮ He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

Command to obey — "warn them from Me."

God made Ezekiel a watchman (v17), and every believer who loves someone in danger has a piece of that job. When a man I disciple is drifting toward the old crowd, the old bottle or the old lie, love doesn't stay quiet. I'll speak plainly, with God's words, and leave the response to him and to God.

Sin to confess — a silent watchman

I've seen danger coming in someone's life and said nothing — to keep the peace, to avoid looking judgmental, or because I was tired. God says that silence is not neutral (v18). I confess the times I kept my mouth shut when love required me to speak.

Warning to heed — the righteous can turn

"when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness" (v20) — years of faithfulness don't make me immune. Guzik's warning stings: one season of sin can wipe out a good name. Every man in recovery knows that long clean time doesn't mean you can stop watching. Neither can I.

Promise to trust — "the hand of the LORD was strong on me."

Ezekiel went bitter and angry, but God's hand held him (v14). For the man coming out of prison, angry at the system, his family or himself: your feelings don't cancel God's grip. He can carry you to Tel-abib, sit you down among hurting people, and use your silence to change you.

Example to follow — sitting where they sat

Before Ezekiel said a word, he sat seven days among the exiles (v15). I want to earn the right to speak by first sitting with men in their pain — in visiting rooms, recovery meetings and kitchens — before I start preaching at them.

Worship

"Blessed be the glory of the LORD in His place" (v12). His Word is sweet as honey. He makes weak men hard as flint, He opens and shuts mouths, and His hand is strong on His servants even when they are bitter.

Prayer

Lord, let Your Word go all the way down into me and taste sweet even when it is hard. Make my face firm against fear. Make me a faithful watchman for the men You've given me — never silent when love must speak, never speaking what You haven't said. Keep me from turning away, and hold me with Your strong hand. Amen.

Ezekiel 4

The Siege Acted Out: Bearing the Iniquity

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God told Ezekiel to preach with his whole body. A brick, an iron plate, a bed and a ration of dung-baked bread said what the exiles didn't want to hear: Jerusalem will not hold. Sin has a weight, and somebody has to carry it — and those days of judgment were measured out by God, a day for each year.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 4 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem:

2 And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about.

3 Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.

4 Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity.

5 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year .

7 Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it.

8 And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.

9 Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.

10 And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it.

11 Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink.

12 And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight.

13 And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.

14 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.

15 Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith.

16 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment:

17 That they may want bread and water, and be astonied one with another, and consume away for their ⇄ iniquity.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ⇄ son of man *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** ◷ the city, even Jerusalem
- **v2** ⚠ lay siege against it
- **v3** ◷ a wall of iron between thee and the city
- **v3** ▲ This shall be a sign to the house of Israel
- **v4** ▮▮ Lie thou also upon thy left side
- **v4** ⇄ iniquity *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** ⚠ thou shalt bear their iniquity
- **v5** ◷ three hundred and ninety days
- **v6** ◷ forty days
- **v6** ▲ I have appointed thee each day for a year
- **v7** ▮▮ set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem
- **v7** ◷ thine arm shall be uncovered
- **v8** ▲ I will lay bands upon thee
- **v9** ▮▮ make thee bread thereof
- **v10** ◷ twenty shekels a day
- **v11** ◷ water by measure
- **v12** ⚠ bake it with dung that cometh out of man
- **v13** ⚠ eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles
- **v14** ◷ Ah Lord GOD
- **v14** ◷ my soul hath not been polluted
- **v15** ★ I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung
- **v16** ▲ I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem
- **v17** ⚠ consume away for their iniquity

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 4:4 (KJV)

4 ▮▮ Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the ⇄ iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their ⇄ iniquity.

Setting

Ezekiel is a priest (1:3) living among the exiles by the river Chebar in Babylon. His call came "in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile" (1:2) — about 593 BC. Jerusalem is still standing, Zedekiah is on the throne, and the exiles expect to go home soon. God has just made Ezekiel a watchman and shut his mouth except when God gives him a word (3:17, 26–27). So his first message is not a sermon. It is a street drama — acted out in front of his neighbors.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **the toy siege:** "get yourself a brick" (v1) and draw Jerusalem on it. "Lay siege against it, build a siege wall" (v2), with ramps, camps and battering rams. Then set "an iron plate" between himself and the city and "set your face toward it" (v3). "This is a sign to the house of Israel" (v3).

- vv4–8 — **bearing the iniquity:** lie on the left side for Israel — "you shall bear their iniquity" (v4) — for "three hundred and ninety days" (v5); then on the right side to "bear the iniquity of the house of Judah" forty days, "a day for each year" (v6). Face the siege "with your arm bared" and "prophesy against it" (v7). "I will put ropes on you" so he cannot turn "until you have completed the days of your siege" (v8).
- vv9–12 — **siege bread:** "wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt" in one vessel — "make them into bread for yourself" (v9). Rations: "twenty shekels a day" of food (v10) and "the sixth part of a hin" of water (v11). Bake it as a barley cake "over human dung," in their sight (v12).
- vv13–15 — **the objection:** the LORD explains: the sons of Israel will "eat their bread unclean among the nations where I will banish them" (v13). Ezekiel cries out, "Ah, Lord GOD!" — "I have never been defiled" (v14); "nor has any unclean meat ever entered my mouth" (v14). God allows "cow's dung in place of human dung" (v15).
- vv16–17 — **the meaning:** "I am going to break the staff of bread in Jerusalem" (v16). They will eat bread by weight "with anxiety" and drink water by measure "in horror" (v16), "because bread and water will be scarce" (v17); they will "be appalled with one another and waste away in their iniquity" (v17).

Repeated words

iniquity (vv4, 5, 6, 17); siege / besiege (vv2, 3, 7, 8); days (vv4, 5, 6, 8, 9); bread (vv9, 13, 15, 16, 17); weight (vv10, 16); measure (vv11, 16).

Contrasts

Exiles hoping Jerusalem will rescue them ⟷ a brick-model Jerusalem under siege (vv1–2). An iron wall between the prophet and the city (v3) ⟷ the prophet bearing the city's iniquity on his own body (vv4–6). Israel's 390 (v5) ⟷ Judah's 40 (v6). Priestly purity — "I have never been defiled" (v14) ⟷ bread baked over dung (v12). Bread by weight (v16) ⟷ people wasting away (v17).

Chapter theme (my words)

God told Ezekiel to preach with his whole body. A brick, an iron plate, a bed and a ration of dung-baked bread said what the exiles didn't want to hear: Jerusalem will not hold. Sin has a weight, and somebody has to carry it — and those days of judgment were measured out by God, a day for each year.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 4:3 (KJV)

3 Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. ▲ This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.

Why act it out? (vv1–3)

Ezekiel's mouth was bound (3:26), so God gave him signs instead of speeches. The brick (soft clay, like a drawing tablet) became Jerusalem; the siege works were what Babylon would soon build. Guzik pictures it like a child with toy soldiers — something a crowd would stop and watch. The iron plate is the striking detail. Guzik reads it as a sign that God would not step in to save the city; Wiersbe, in Guzik, says it showed God could no longer look on the nation "with approval and blessing." Ezekiel set his face against it, standing in God's place. For the exiles who expected Jerusalem to stand, the drama was "a sure sign that it would not be so" (Guzik).

390 days and 40 days (vv4–6)

Ezekiel lies on his left side for Israel, then on his right for Judah. In Hebrew orientation (facing east), left is north (Israel) and right is south (Judah). The numbers have puzzled interpreters for centuries:

- **Years of Judah's kings** — Guzik says the best explanation "was stated by Wiersbe," who adds up the reigns of Judah's kings from Rehoboam to Zedekiah (about 394 years) and adjusts for Rehoboam's early faithful years to arrive "very close" to 390.
- **A period of punishment, not of sinning** — Feinberg, quoted by Guzik: "the period must not represent the time of Israel's sinning." On this view the numbers measure the years the people would bear the consequences.
- **Echoes of the exodus** — 390 + 40 = 430, the years Israel spent in Egypt (Exod 12:40); and forty days for forty years recalls the wilderness, "a day for each year" (Num 14:34). Many see a picture of a new bondage and a new wilderness before a new deliverance.

Guzik doesn't force a single answer. The main point is clear: the iniquity is real, it has been building a long time, and God has measured the punishment.

Did he lie there all day? (vv7–8)

Guzik says the lying was "presumably" on his bed at home, and not necessarily all day — the bread-making shows Ezekiel "was not *completely* inactive." He suggests the lying happened at a set time each day. Block suggests "several hours each day," and Feinberg: "It is not necessary to assume that Ezekiel was in the prone position day and night." The bared arm pictures readiness to act — Poole: the arm is "the stronger and more ready to act." The ropes show that the siege could not be shaken off; God Himself held Ezekiel to it (compare 3:25).

Siege bread (vv9–12)

A mix of six grains and legumes in one pot is what people eat when the storehouse is almost empty — you throw together whatever is left. Taylor, in Guzik, figures the twenty shekels at "almost exactly 8 ounces of bread per day" and the water at "a fraction over a pint." Poole: "Scarce enough to keep the man alive." The dung was fuel, not ingredient. Guzik notes the command concerns the fire, not the bread; Wright observes that in a siege the animals are eaten, so "only human excrement would be available for fuel." The picture is of exile — a life where keeping the Law's cleanness would be impossible (v13; compare Deut 23:12–14; Hos 9:3).

"Ah, Lord GOD!" (vv14–15)

Ezekiel was a priest, raised to keep himself clean (Lev 11; 22:8). He never protested lying on his side for over a year — but this was too much. Guzik: Ezekiel "had never so offensively broken Jewish dietary laws." God listened. He allowed cow's dung instead, and Guzik's summary is exact: "God allowed Ezekiel to lessen the offense, but not take it away." Meyer, in Guzik, says it is "quite permissible for us to go into the secret place of the Most High" with our complaints. God is not offended by an honest objection from an obedient servant.

The staff of bread broken (vv16–17)

"Staff of bread" means the bread a person leans on to live (Lev 26:26). When it breaks, people weigh every crumb with anxiety and stare at one another in horror. This came true in the siege of 588–586 BC (2 Kgs 25:3; Lam 4:4–10). The last words name the cause: they "waste away in their iniquity" (v17). Poole: "Thus their sins would bring them to extremest want and shame."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **brick — *lebenah* (H3843):** a clay brick or tile, soft enough to draw on.
- **siege — *matsor* (H4692):** a siege, a hemming in, distress.
- **battering rams — *kar* (H3733):** a ram; also a battering ram.
- **plate — *machabath* (H4227):** a flat iron griddle or pan used for baking.
- **sign — *oth* (H226):** a sign, signal, token.
- **iniquity — *avon* (H5771):** guilt, iniquity — both the wrong and the punishment it brings.
- **bear — *nasa* (H5375):** to lift, carry, bear (used of bearing guilt, Lev 16:22).
- **ropes — *aboth* (H5688):** a cord, rope, something twisted together.
- **spelt — *kussemeth* (H3698):** spelt, a coarse wheat.
- **dung — *gelel* (H1561):** dung, refuse.
- **cow's dung — *tsephia* (H6832):** cattle dung (used only here).
- **unclean — *tame* (H2931):** ceremonially defiled, impure.
- **staff — *matteh* (H4294):** a staff, rod; something leaned on.
- **horror — *shimmamon* (H8078):** appallment, stunned desolation.
- **waste away — *maqaq* (H4743):** to rot, dwindle, pine away.

Cross-references

Exod 12:40; Lev 16:21–22; Lev 26:26; Lev 26:39; Num 14:34; Deut 23:12–14; 2 Kgs 25:1–3; Isa 20:2–4; Isa 53:6; Isa 53:11; Jer 39:1–2; Lam 4:4–10; Ezek 3:25–27; Ezek 5:16; Ezek 12:11; Hos 9:3; Acts 10:14; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 4:7 (KJV)

7 Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it.

Command to obey — "make them into bread for yourself."

God asked Ezekiel to do something strange, humbling and long — and he did it, day after day. Obedience isn't always one big moment; sometimes it's 430 days of the same hard thing. I'll keep doing the small, unseen thing God has put in front of me today, even when no one understands it.

Sin to confess — iniquity has weight

Ezekiel lay down under the weight of a nation's sin. I can treat my sin as light — a habit, a slip, a mood. But God measured Israel's and Judah's iniquity in years. I'll stop calling my sin small, name it to God, and let Him show me how heavy it really is.

Warning to heed — the staff of bread breaks

The people in Jerusalem leaned on their city, their temple and their stockpile, and every one of those things failed. The men I walk with in recovery know this: the bottle, the pill, the hustle all promised to hold you up and then broke under you. Whatever I lean on other than God will one day break. I want to find that out on my knees, not in a siege.

Promise to trust — God measures the judgment

The days were counted — 390 and 40, not one more. Even God's discipline has limits He sets. And Ezekiel's sign points past itself to the One who would truly bear our iniquity: "the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him" (Isa 53:6). For a man doing time, the sentence feels endless. God knows the number of the days, and in Christ the debt of sin is paid in full.

Example to follow — "Ah, Lord GOD!"

Ezekiel obeyed, but he also told God honestly what troubled him — and God listened and adjusted. I don't have to fake it with God. I can bring Him my real objections, and still be the servant who does what He asks.

Worship

You are the God who sees the end from the beginning, who measures the days, who keeps Your word in judgment and in mercy. You listened to a troubled prophet. You laid our iniquity on Your Son.

Prayer

Lord GOD, show me the true weight of my sin, and thank You that Jesus carried it. Break every staff I lean on that isn't You. Give me Ezekiel's patience to obey in the long, hard places, and his honesty to tell You what I feel. Use my life as a sign to the men around me that You are real and Your word is true. Amen.

Ezekiel 5

This Is Jerusalem: Judgment Weighed to the Hair

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God shaved His people like a mourner shaves his head and weighed out their judgment to the hair. Jerusalem was placed at the center to show the nations what God is like — and instead she became worse than they were. More light brings more responsibility. Yet even here, a few hairs are tucked into the prophet's robe.

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 5 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

[2] Thou shalt burn with fire ⇄ a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take ⇄ a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and ⇄ a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and ▲ I will draw out a sword after them.

[3] Thou shalt also take thereof ★ a few in number, and ★ bind them in thy skirts.

[4] Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall ⚠ a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

[5] Thus saith the Lord GOD; ◷ This is Jerusalem: ▲ I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.

[6] And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the ⇄ nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for ⚠ they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.

[7] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the ⇄ nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the ⇄ nations that are round about you;

[8] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, ▲ I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the ⇄ nations.

[9] And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abomi ⇄ nations.

[10] Therefore ⚠ the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.

[11] Wherefore, ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because ⚠ thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abomi ⇄ nations, therefore will I also diminish thee; ▲ neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.

[12] ⇄ A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and ⇄ a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter ⇄ a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

[13] ▲ Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and ▲ I will be comforted: and they shall know that ⇄ I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

[14] Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the ⇄ nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by.

[15] So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the ⇄ nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. ⇄ I the LORD have spoken it.

16 When I shall send upon them ⚠ the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for their destruction, and which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread:

17 So will I send upon you ⚠ famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. ⇄ I the LORD have spoken it.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ▮ take thee a barber's razor
- **v1** ▮ take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair
- **v2** ⇄ a third part *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ▲ I will draw out a sword after them
- **v3** ★ a few in number
- **v3** ★ bind them in thy skirts
- **v4** ⚠ a fire come forth into all the house of Israel
- **v5** ◷ This is Jerusalem
- **v5** ▲ I have set it in the midst of the nations
- **v5** ⇄ nations *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ⚠ changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations
- **v6** ⚠ they have refused my judgments and my statutes
- **v8** ▲ I, even I, am against thee
- **v9** ⚠ because of all thine abominations
- **v10** ⚠ the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee
- **v11** ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD
- **v11** ⚠ thou hast defiled my sanctuary
- **v11** ▲ neither shall mine eye spare
- **v13** ▲ Thus shall mine anger be accomplished
- **v13** ▲ I will be comforted
- **v13** ⇄ I the LORD have spoken it *(every occurrence)*
- **v14** ◷ a reproach among the nations
- **v16** ⚠ the evil arrows of famine
- **v17** ⚠ famine and evil beasts

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 5:5 (KJV)

5 Thus saith the Lord GOD; ◷ This is Jerusalem: ▲ I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.

Setting

This chapter continues the sign-acts of chapter 4, still in the early years of Ezekiel's ministry among the exiles in Babylon (about 593 BC; 1:2). Ezekiel is still lying out his days of siege (4:4–8), and "when the days of the siege are completed" (v2) he performs one more sign. Then, for the first time in the book, God explains the signs in plain words: "This is Jerusalem" (v5).

Structure

- vv1–4 — **the hair sign:** "take a sharp sword" and use it as a barber's razor on head and beard; "Then take scales for weighing and divide the hair" (v1). "One third you shall burn in the fire" in the city, one third strike with the sword, one third "scatter to the wind; and I will unsheathe a sword behind

them" (v2). Keep "a few in number" and "bind them in the edges of your robes" (v3) — then throw some of those into the fire, and "a fire will spread to all the house of Israel" (v4).

- vv5–7 — **the charge:** "This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations" (v5). But "she has rebelled against My ordinances more wickedly than the nations" and they "have not walked in My statutes" (v6). They have not even lived up to the standards of the nations around them (v7).
- vv8–10 — **the sentence:** "Behold, I, even I, am against you" — judgment "in the sight of the nations" (v8). "I will do among you what I have not done, and the like of which I will never do again" (v9). "Fathers will eat their sons among you" (v10), and God will "scatter all your remnant to every wind" (v10).
- vv11–12 — **the oath and the thirds:** "as I live" — because "you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable idols," "My eye will have no pity" (v11). A third die by plague and famine, a third fall by the sword, a third are scattered with a sword behind them (v12).
- vv13–17 — **the wrath spent:** "Thus My anger will be spent," "I will be appeased," and "they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken in My zeal" (v13). Jerusalem becomes "a desolation and a reproach among the nations" (v14) — "a reproach, a reviling, a warning and an object of horror" (v15). "The deadly arrows of famine" (v16), "famine and wild beasts," plague, blood and the sword (v17). "I, the LORD, have spoken" (vv13, 15, 17).

Repeated words

nations (vv5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15); judgments (vv8, 10, 15); ordinances / statutes (vv6, 7); sword (vv1, 2, 12, 17); third (vv2, 12); scatter (vv2, 10, 12); famine (vv12, 16, 17); anger / wrath (vv13, 15); abominations (vv9, 11); "I, the LORD, have spoken" (vv13, 15, 17).

Contrasts

Set "at the center of the nations" (v5) ⟷ a reproach "among the nations" (v14). Given God's ordinances ⟷ worse than nations who never had them (vv6–7). Hair weighed exactly on scales (v1) ⟷ scattered to the wind (v2). The whole head shaved ⟷ "a few in number" bound in the robe (v3). God's sanctuary (v11) ⟷ detestable idols set in it (v11). "My eye will have no pity" (v11) ⟷ the remnant still kept (v3).

Chapter theme (my words)

God shaved His people like a mourner shaves his head and weighed out their judgment to the hair. Jerusalem was placed at the center to show the nations what God is like — and instead she became worse than they were. More light brings more responsibility. Yet even here, a few hairs are tucked into the prophet's robe.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 5:11 (KJV)

11 Wherefore, ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because ⚠ thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abomi ⇄ nations, therefore will I also diminish thee; ▲ neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.

The razor and the scales (vv1–2)

Guzik counts this as Ezekiel's fourth sign of judgment, after the three in chapter 4. Shaving the head and beard meant mourning and disgrace — Clarke, in Guzik: "*Cutting off the hair* was a sign of *mourning*." For a priest it was worse. Feinberg notes shaving was forbidden to priests (Lev 21:5) and "ordinarily meant the loss of priestly status and position." The razor is a sword — Block notes the word in Ezekiel always means a military weapon. Babylon's army would be God's razor (compare Isa 7:20). The scales show precision: Feinberg says "the judgment was a discriminating one," and Trapp, "God's judgments are just to a hair's weight." Some (Smith, Alexander) take "the center of the city" as the brick-model of 4:1.

The few hairs (vv3–4)

A handful is saved in the hem of the robe — a remnant. Clarke, in Guzik, identifies them with the few Jews left in the land after 586 BC under Gedaliah. Even some of those go into the fire (v4). Jeremiah records how that remnant was shattered by Gedaliah's murder and the flight to Egypt (Jer 41–44). The point stands both ways: God always keeps a remnant, and being part of it is no excuse for complacency.

"This is Jerusalem" (vv5–7)

The exiles hoped God would judge Babylon. Instead God points at His own city. Guzik notes Israel was central both geographically — between the great empires — and in God's plan of redemption. Wright, in Guzik, calls Jerusalem "the spiritual centre of the earth." But Wiersbe, in Guzik: "privilege involves responsibility and accountability." Jerusalem had the Law, the temple and the prophets, and still rebelled "more wickedly than the nations" (v6). Block, in Guzik: "Ezekiel's characterization of his people as more wicked than the nations is justified." Feinberg: "reckoning must be in proportion to spiritual knowledge and privileges enjoyed" (compare Luke 12:47–48; Amos 3:2).

"I, even I, am against you" (vv8–10)

Block, in Guzik, hears the language of a challenge to single combat. The judgment would be unique in Israel's history (v9); Guzik notes that later judgments, such as Jerusalem's fall to the Romans, equaled or surpassed it. Verse 10 is the most terrible line: parents and children eating one another. This was one of the covenant curses Moses had warned of (Lev 26:29; Deut 28:53–57). Clarke, in Guzik, ties its fulfillment to Lamentations 4:10 — compassionate women boiling their own children in the siege (also Lam 2:20).

The oath and the thirds (vv11–12)

God swears "as I live" — the living God against dead idols. The cause is named: they defiled His sanctuary with detestable idols (chapter 8 will show Ezekiel what this looked like). The three thirds of hair are now explained: plague and famine inside the walls, the sword at the walls, and scattering with the sword following the exiles (fulfilled in 2 Kgs 25; Jer 52).

God's zeal (vv13–17)

God's anger "will be spent" — it had been building through centuries of patience, and now it would run its course. "I will be appeased" (KJV "comforted") means God's justice will be satisfied. Taylor, in Guzik, notes the Hebrew word for zeal "covers both zeal and jealousy, as well as resentment and indignation." This is not petty temper; it is the jealous love of a husband betrayed (Exod 34:14). The four judgments of v17 — famine, wild beasts, plague and sword — are the covenant curses of Leviticus 26:22–26; Poole, in Guzik, links them to the "four sore judgments" of Ezekiel 14:21. Jerusalem would become "a warning" to the nations (v15): the city meant to display God's glory would now display His justice.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **sword — *chereb* (H2719):** a sword, a weapon of war.
- **razor — *taar* (H8593):** a razor; a knife or sheath.
- **scales — *mozen* (H3976):** a pair of balances.
- **third — *shelishi* (H7992):** a third part.
- **edges — *kanaph* (H3671):** a wing; the corner or hem of a garment.
- **rebelled — *marah* (H4784):** to be contentious, bitterly rebellious.
- **ordinances — *mishpat* (H4941):** a judgment, a just decision; God's rulings.
- **statutes — *chuqqah* (H2708):** a fixed decree, an engraved ordinance.
- **abominations — *toebah* (H8441):** something disgusting, detestable to God.
- **detestable idols — *shiqquts* (H8251):** a filthy, detestable thing; an idol.
- **pity — *chus* (H2347):** to have compassion, spare (the eye "pitying").
- **spare — *chamal* (H2550):** to spare, show mercy.
- **appeased — *nacham* (H5162):** to be comforted, eased; to relent.
- **zeal — *qinah* (H7068):** ardor, zeal, jealousy.
- **wrath — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, fury, rage.
- **reproach — *cherpah* (H2781):** disgrace, scorn.

Cross-references

Lev 21:5; Lev 26:22–33; Deut 4:5–8; Deut 28:53–57; 2 Kgs 25:1–21; Isa 7:20; Jer 41:1–3; Jer 43:4–7; Jer 52:4–16; Lam 2:20; Lam 4:10; Ezek 6:8; Ezek 14:21; Amos 3:2; Matt 11:21–24; Luke 12:47–48; Rom 2:17–24; Heb 10:26–31.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 5:1 (KJV)

[1]And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

Command to obey — walk in His statutes

Jerusalem's sin was not ignorance; it was refusal — "they have rejected My ordinances" (v6). God doesn't need me to know more as much as He needs me to walk in what I already know. Today I'll take one thing I know God has told me and actually do it.

Sin to confess — idols in the sanctuary

God's charge was that they "defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable idols" (v11). My body is His temple now (1 Cor 6:19). I'll ask Him to show me what I've set up in the place that belongs to Him — screens, approval, comfort, control — and I'll confess it by name.

Warning to heed — more light, more accountability

Jerusalem had more than the nations and did worse. I grew up around Bibles, sermons and church. That doesn't make me safer; it makes me more responsible. For the men I disciple who were raised in church and walked away: your past knowledge isn't a cushion. It's a call to come home now.

Promise to trust — a few hairs in the hem

Even in the worst judgment of Israel's history, God kept "a few in number" bound in the prophet's robe (v3). For the man who feels like his whole life has been shaved off and burned — family gone, freedom gone, name gone — God still keeps a remnant. He hasn't let go of the hem.

Example to follow — Ezekiel's costly obedience

A priest shaved his head, weighed his own hair and burned it in front of everybody. He let his body become the message. I want my life — my habits, my marriage, my work, the books and tools I build — to carry God's word, not just my words.

Worship

You are the living God who swears by Your own life. Your judgments are exact to the hair. Your zeal is a jealous love that will not share Your people with idols. And You keep a remnant.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I don't want to be a Jerusalem that had everything and despised it. Search my heart and clear the idols out of Your sanctuary. Keep me in the hem of Your garment, and keep the men I walk with there too. Thank You that Jesus took the fire of judgment for us, so that we could be kept. Amen.

Ezekiel 6

The Mountains of Israel: Idols Broken, a Remnant Remembers

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Israel filled God's mountains with altars to other gods, and God promised to fill those altars with the bones of the worshipers. The idols couldn't save anyone. But in exile a remnant would remember Him, see how deeply their unfaithfulness had wounded Him, and hate the sin they once loved. Through judgment and through mercy, they would know that He is the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 6 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

[2] Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,

[3] And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and ▲ I will destroy your high places.

[4] And ⚠ your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your ⇄ idols.

[5] And I will lay the dead carcases of the children of Israel before their ⇄ idols; and ⚠ I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

[6] In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your ⇄ idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.

[7] And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall ⇄ know that I am the LORD.

[8] ★ Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.

[9] And ★ they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because ▲ I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their ⇄ idols: and ★ they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

[10] And they shall ⇄ know that I am the LORD, and that ▲ I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.

[11] Thus saith the Lord GOD; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, ⚠ Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall ⚠ by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.

[12] He that is far off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: ▲ thus will I accomplish my fury upon them.

[13] Then shall ye ⇄ know that I am the LORD, when their slain men shall be among their ⇄ idols round about their altars, ◷ upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and ◷ under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their ⇄ idols.

[14] So will ▲ I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than ◷ the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and they shall ⇄ know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** set thy face toward the mountains of Israel
- **v3** hear the word of the Lord GOD
- **v3** I will destroy your high places
- **v4** your altars shall be desolate
- **v4** idols *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** I will cast down your slain men before your idols
- **v5** I will scatter your bones round about your altars
- **v6** your idols may be broken and cease
- **v7** know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v8** Yet will I leave a remnant
- **v9** they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations
- **v9** I am broken with their whorish heart
- **v9** their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols
- **v9** they shall lothe themselves
- **v10** I have not said in vain
- **v11** Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot
- **v11** Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel
- **v11** by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence
- **v12** thus will I accomplish my fury upon them
- **v13** upon every high hill
- **v13** under every green tree
- **v13** sweet savour to all their idols
- **v14** I stretch out my hand upon them
- **v14** the wilderness toward Diblath

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 6:9 (KJV)

9 And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

Setting

A new message begins: "And the word of the LORD came to me saying" (v1). Ezekiel is still in Babylon among the exiles, in the years before Jerusalem's fall (about 593–592 BC; compare 1:2 and 8:1). Chapters 4–5 aimed at the city of Jerusalem; now God turns Ezekiel's face to the countryside — the hills and valleys of the land where Israel worshiped idols on every hilltop. Here, for the first time in the book, comes the phrase Ezekiel will repeat for the rest of his ministry: "you will know that I am the LORD" (v7).

Structure

- vv1–3 — **against the mountains:** "set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them" (v2). God addresses mountains, hills, ravines and valleys: "I will destroy your high places" (v3).

- vv4–7 — **altars and bones:** "your incense altars will be smashed; and I will make your slain fall in front of your idols" (v4). "I will scatter your bones around your altars" (v5). Every city laid waste, every idol broken, "your works may be blotted out" (v6). "You will know that I am the LORD" (v7).
- vv8–10 — **the remnant remembers:** "I will leave a remnant" (v8). "Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations" (v9) — "how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me, and by their eyes which played the harlot after their idols" (v9). "They will loathe themselves in their own sight" (v9). They will know the LORD, and that "I have not said in vain that I would inflict this disaster on them" (v10).
- vv11–12 — **the lament:** "Clap your hand, stamp your foot," and say, "Alas, because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel" (v11) — they will fall by sword, famine and plague. Far or near or besieged, no one escapes (v12). "Thus will I spend My wrath on them" (v12).
- vv13–14 — **among their idols:** the slain lie among their idols "on every high hill," "under every green tree," and under every leafy oak — "the places where they offered soothing aroma to all their idols" (v13). "I will stretch out My hand against them" and make the land "more desolate and waste than the wilderness toward Diblah" (v14).

Repeated words

know that I am the LORD (vv7, 10, 13, 14); idols (vv4, 5, 6, 9, 13); altars (vv4, 5, 6, 13); sword (vv3, 8, 11, 12); slain (vv4, 7, 13); desolate (vv4, 6, 14); high places (vv3, 6); abominations (vv9, 11); famine / plague (vv11, 12).

Contrasts

Mountains of Israel, God's land (v2) ⟷ high places of idols on every hill (vv3, 13). "Soothing aroma" offered to idols (v13) ⟷ the stench of corpses before those idols (vv4–5). Their adulterous hearts (v9) ⟷ God's hurt heart (v9). Slain among the idols (v7) ⟷ a remnant that escapes (v8). Idolaters who forgot God ⟷ exiles who "remember Me among the nations" (v9). Loathing God's ways ⟷ loathing themselves (v9).

Chapter theme (my words)

Israel filled God's mountains with altars to other gods, and God promised to fill those altars with the bones of the worshipers. The idols couldn't save anyone. But in exile a remnant would remember Him, see how deeply their unfaithfulness had wounded Him, and hate the sin they once loved. Through judgment and through mercy, they would know that He is the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 6:3 (KJV)

3 And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.

Against the mountains (vv1–3)

Ezekiel prophesies to the landscape itself. The "high places" were hilltop shrines left over from Canaanite religion — Baal and Asherah worship that Israel never fully removed (1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 17:9–11). Block, in Guzik, says the word could mean "any open cultic installation, regardless of location," though "hilltops often served as sites on which cultic rituals were performed." Josiah had torn many down (2 Kgs 23:8–14), but after his death they came back. Wright, in Guzik, notes the ravines and valleys held the same kind of worship, even child sacrifice — the valley of Hinnom was one such place (Jer 7:31).

Bones before the idols (vv4–7)

God's punishment fits the crime. The people loved their altars; their corpses would lie in front of them. Bones defiled a holy place (2 Kgs 23:14, 16), so the idols would be polluted by their own worshipers' remains. Block, in Guzik: "this oracle announces that the time has come for Yahweh to clean house." Ezekiel's usual word for idols, *gillulim*, sounds like the word for dung used in 4:12–15 — many commentators hear a deliberate insult in it: "dung-gods."

"You will know that I am the LORD" (v7)

This is Ezekiel's signature phrase. Guzik notes this is its first use, and Smith, in Guzik, says it "occurs some sixty times in the book." In this chapter alone it appears four times (vv7, 10, 13, 14). God's goal in judgment is not just punishment but revelation: when everything else falls, people learn who He really is.

The remnant remembers (vv8–10)

Here the hope breaks through — the few hairs of 5:3 explained. God will leave survivors among the nations, and they will remember Him. Poole, in Guzik: they "shall consider and return, and seek me in their affliction." What they remember is striking: "how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts" (v9). The Hebrew verb (*shabar*) literally means "broken." Morgan, in Guzik: "God is represented as broken." The holy God is not a cold judge. Idolatry is adultery against a faithful Husband, and it wounds Him (compare Hos 1–3; 11:8; Eph 4:30). When the remnant sees that, they "loathe themselves" — Trapp, in Guzik: they "shall bleed inwardly, and blush outwardly." Poole notes that true repentance turns from all the abominations, not just some. Guzik traces a progression: remembrance, repentance, then restored relationship.

Clap and stamp (vv11–12)

Ezekiel is told to make a scene — hand and foot — to arrest attention and lament Israel's evil. Some read the gesture as scorn at the sin; most see grief and alarm. Feinberg, in Guzik, comments on the three judgments of sword, famine and plague. Verse 12 closes every exit: the far-off die of plague, the near fall by the sword, and those left in the besieged city starve. "Thus will I spend My wrath on them."

From the wilderness to Diblah (vv13–14)

"Every high hill" and "every green tree" is the standard description of idolatry everywhere (Deut 12:2; Jer 2:20). The "soothing aroma" — a phrase used of offerings pleasing to God (Lev 1:9) — had been given to idols. "Diblah" is otherwise unknown. Some manuscripts read "Riblah," and Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik, explain the difference as a scribal mix-up of the letters *d* and *r*, which look alike in Hebrew. Wiersbe, in Guzik, reads it as a north–south sweep — from the southern desert to Riblah in the north, like "from Dan to Beersheba." Riblah is where Nebuchadnezzar later judged Zedekiah and the leaders of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:6–7, 20–21). Poole: "God striketh hard when he stretcheth out his hand."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **mountains — *har* (H2022):** mountain, hill country.
- **high places — *bamah* (H1116):** an elevated place; a hilltop shrine.
- **altars — *mizbeach* (H4196):** a place of sacrifice.
- **incense altars — *chamman* (H2553):** sun-pillars or incense stands of pagan worship.
- **idols — *gillul* (H1544):** idols, literally things rolled — a contemptuous word, Ezekiel's favorite for idols.
- **slain — *chalal* (H2491):** pierced, fatally wounded.
- **leave a remnant — *yathar* (H3498):** to leave over, cause to remain.
- **escape — *palit* (H6412):** a fugitive, survivor.
- **remember — *zakar* (H2142):** to call to mind, bring back to remembrance.
- **hurt — *shabar* (H7665):** to break, shatter, crush.
- **adulterous / played the harlot — *zanah* (H2181):** to commit fornication, be unfaithful.
- **loathe — *qut* (H6962):** to loathe, feel disgust.
- **in vain — *chinnam* (H2600):** for nothing, without cause.
- **know — *yada* (H3045):** to know by experience.
- **desolate — *shamem* (H8074):** to be desolate, appalled.
- **Diblah — *Diblah* (H1689):** a place name; possibly Riblah.

Cross-references

Lev 1:9; Lev 26:30; Deut 12:2–3; 1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 17:9–11; 2 Kgs 23:8–16; 2 Kgs 25:6–7; Jer 2:20; Jer 3:6; Jer 7:31; Ezek 5:3; Ezek 20:43; Ezek 36:31; Hos 2:13–16; Hos 11:8; Luke 15:17–20; 2 Cor 7:10–11; Eph 4:30; 1 John 5:21.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 6:11 (KJV)

11 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.

Command to obey — "set your face."

God told Ezekiel to set his face against the places where idols stood. I need to set my face against the high places in my own life — the spots, the screens, the people and patterns where I keep going back to what replaces God. Josiah tore them down, and they came back when nobody kept watch. I'll name mine and keep watch.

Sin to confess — an adulterous heart

God doesn't call idolatry a mistake; He calls it adultery, and He says it broke Him (v9). I've given my love and trust to other things while saying I belong to Him. I'll confess it as betrayal of a Husband who has been faithful to me, not just as a rule I broke.

Warning to heed — the idol can't save you

The worshipers died in front of their altars, and the idols did nothing. Every man I've walked with in addiction knows that place: the thing you worshiped is right there when you hit bottom, and it can't lift you. Whatever I'm bowing to will be standing there useless on the day I need help.

Promise to trust — "I will leave a remnant."

In exile, far from home, the survivors would "remember Me among the nations" (v9). For the man in a cell or a treatment bed, far from where he thought his life would be — that is often exactly where God brings us to our senses (Luke 15:17). Remembering Him is the beginning of coming home, and He has not forgotten you.

Example to follow — the remnant's repentance

They didn't just regret the consequences; they loathed the sin itself, all of it (v9). Godly sorrow leads to repentance without regret (2 Cor 7:10). I want that kind of honesty — not managing my image, but hating what hurt God.

Worship

You are the LORD — the only God, who will not share Your glory with idols. Your heart can be grieved by our unfaithfulness, and still You leave a remnant and call us to remember You. Everything else will fall, and You will still be the LORD.

Prayer

LORD, forgive my adulterous heart. Show me my high places and give me courage to tear them down and keep them down. When I am far from home, make me remember You. Give the men I serve a

godly sorrow that leads them back to You, and let all of us know, by Your mercy and not only by Your judgment, that You are the LORD. Amen.

Ezekiel 7

The End Has Come: When Patience Runs Out

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God's patience is real, but it isn't endless. Judah kept saying "not yet," and God answered, "Now." When the end came, money couldn't buy a way out, soldiers couldn't fight, and leaders had no word — and even in judgment God's aim was that they would finally know that He is the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 7 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word

⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

[2] Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An ⇄ end, the ⇄ end is come upon the four corners of the land.

[3] Now is the ⇄ end come upon thee, and I will s⇄ end mine anger upon thee, and ▲ will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine ⚠ abominations.

[4] And ▲ mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine ⚠ abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ▲ ye shall know that I am the LORD.

[5] Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come.

[6] An ⇄ end is come, the ⇄ end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come.

[7] The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come , ◷ the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains.

[8] Now will I shortly ▲ pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine ⚠ abominations.

[9] And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine ⚠ abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ▲ ye shall know that I am the LORD that smiteth.

[10] Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; ⚠ the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded.

[11] ⚠ Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them shall remain, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither shall there be wailing for them.

[12] The time is come, the day draweth near: ◷ let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.

[13] For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life.

[14] They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; ⚠ but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.

[15] ◷ The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him.

[16] But ★ they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, ⚠ every one for his iniquity.

[17] All hands shall be feeble, and ⚠ all knees shall be weak as water.

[18] They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads.

19 They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: ⚠ their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is ⚠ the stumblingblock of their iniquity.

20 As for ◷ the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their ⚠ abominations and of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them.

21 And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it.

22 ▲ My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.

23 ▮▮ Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and ⚠ the city is full of violence.

24 Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled .

25 Destruction cometh; and ⚠ they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.

26 Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.

27 The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; ▲ and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⇄ end *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ⚠ abominations *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ▲ will judge thee according to thy ways
- **v4** ▲ mine eye shall not spare thee
- **v4** ▲ ye shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** ◷ the day of trouble is near
- **v8** ▲ pour out my fury upon thee
- **v9** ▲ the LORD that smiteth
- **v10** ⚠ the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded
- **v11** ⚠ Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness
- **v12** ◷ let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn
- **v14** ⚠ but none goeth to the battle
- **v15** ◷ The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within
- **v16** ★ they that escape of them shall escape
- **v16** ⚠ every one for his iniquity
- **v17** ⚠ all knees shall be weak as water
- **v19** ⚠ their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them
- **v19** ⚠ the stumblingblock of their iniquity
- **v20** ◷ the beauty of his ornament
- **v22** ▲ My face will I turn also from them
- **v23** ▮▮ Make a chain
- **v23** ⚠ the city is full of violence
- **v25** ⚠ they shall seek peace, and there shall be none
- **v27** ▲ and they shall know that I am the LORD

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 7:3 (KJV)

3 Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations.

Setting

Ezekiel is a priest living among the exiles by the river Chebar in Babylon (1:1–3). He was carried off with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC, and his call is dated to "the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile" (1:2), about 593 BC; the next dated oracle comes in the sixth year (8:1). Jerusalem is still standing under Zedekiah, and many — in the city and among the exiles — think the worst is over. Chapter 7 closes the first section of judgment oracles (chs. 4–7) and is addressed "to the land of Israel" (v2). In about seven years the Babylonians will burn the city (586 BC).

Structure

- vv1–4 — **the end has come:** "An end! The end is coming on the four corners of the land" (v2). "Now the end is upon you" (v3). "I will judge you according to your ways" (v3). "For My eye will have no pity on you, nor will I spare you" (v4) — "then you will know that I am the LORD" (v4).
- vv5–9 — **disaster, unique disaster:** "A disaster, unique disaster, behold it is coming!" (v5). The end "has awakened against you" (v6). "Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the land" (v7) — "tumult rather than joyful shouting on the mountains" (v7). "Now I will shortly pour out My wrath on you" (v8), and they will know "I, the LORD, do the smiting" (v9).
- vv10–13 — **the rod has budded:** "the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed" (v10). "Violence has grown into a rod of wickedness" (v11). Business means nothing now: "Let not the buyer rejoice nor the seller mourn" (v12), for no one will get his property back (v13).
- vv14–18 — **no one goes to battle:** "They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but no one is going to the battle" (v14). "The sword is outside and the plague and the famine are within" (v15). Survivors flee to the mountains mourning, "each over his own iniquity" (v16). Courage melts — "all knees will become like water" (v17) — and sackcloth, shame and shaved heads follow (v18).
- vv19–22 — **money fails, the sanctuary falls:** "They will fling their silver into the streets" (v19); "their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD" (v19), for "their iniquity has become an occasion of stumbling" (v19). "They transformed the beauty of His ornaments into pride" (v20) and made idols of it, so God gives it to foreigners (v21). "I will also turn My face from them" (v22), and robbers profane His secret place (v22).
- vv23–27 — **every human help fails:** "Make the chain, for the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence" (v23). God brings "the worst of the nations" (v24). "They will seek peace, but there will be none" (v25). "Disaster will come upon disaster and rumor will be added to rumor" (v26); prophet, priest and elders have nothing to give (v26). King, prince and people are overwhelmed: "According to their conduct I will deal with them" (v27).

Repeated words

end (vv2, 3, 6); abominations (vv3, 4, 8, 9, 20); ways (vv3, 4, 8, 9); pity (vv4, 9); wrath (vv8, 12, 14, 19); day (vv7, 10, 12, 19); violence (vv11, 23); know that I (am) the LORD (vv4, 9, 27).

Contrasts

God's long patience (implied) ⟷ "Now the end is upon you" (v3). Joyful shouting on the mountains ⟷ tumult on the mountains (v7). Aaron's rod that budded in blessing (Num 17) ⟷ a rod of arrogance and wickedness (vv10–11). A trumpet blown ⟷ no one going to battle (v14). Silver and gold trusted ⟷ silver flung into the streets (v19). The beauty of God's house ⟷ the images of their abominations (v20). Seeking peace ⟷ finding none (v25). A vision sought from the prophet ⟷ no word to be had (v26).

Chapter theme (my words)

God's patience is real, but it isn't endless. Judah kept saying "not yet," and God answered, "Now." When the end came, money couldn't buy a way out, soldiers couldn't fight, and leaders had no word — and even in judgment God's aim was that they would finally know that He is the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 7:4 (KJV)

4 And ▲ mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine ⚠ abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ▲ ye shall know that I am the LORD.

"An end!" (vv1–4)

Ezekiel speaks from Babylon to exiles who were sure Jerusalem would never fall. The word "end" falls like a hammer — Guzik quotes Morgan: "That is the message in its entirety – 'An end!'" It reaches "the four corners of the land" — all of it, no safe corner. God will judge "according to your ways": He is not arbitrary; He gives back what they chose. Guzik quotes Block that Ezekiel's urgency answers "the refusal to take the divine threats seriously." The refrain "then you will know that I am the LORD" runs through the chapter (vv4, 9, 27). Guzik stresses that the purpose is restoration, not only punishment: the judgment will teach them to know Yahweh as their covenant God.

The day dawns (vv5–9)

The short, breathless phrases picture the Babylonian army rushing in. "It has awakened against you" (v6) — Guzik notes a wordplay on waking, and cites Poole that God's vengeance "seems to slumber" but is now awake. The "doom" (vv7, 10) has dawned like a morning. The pagan festivals on the hilltops will turn to panic. "Abominations" here means chiefly idolatry. And God gives Himself a sobering name: "I, the LORD, do the smiting" (v9). Guzik notes that the judgment exposes the powerlessness of the idols so the people can return to the LORD.

The rod and the pride (vv10–13)

A rod that "budded" recalls Aaron's rod, which budded to show God's choice of Aaron (Num 17:8). Guzik quotes Block: "Ezekiel has hereby twisted what was originally a positive symbol of election and legitimate authority" into something else. What has blossomed now is arrogance, and violence has become a rod of wickedness. Guzik also notes the view (from Smith) that the rod is Babylon, God's rod of correction (compare Isa 10:5). Buying and selling are pointless: under the Jubilee a seller could hope to get his land back (Lev 25), but the exile will cancel that hope. Guzik observes that, unlike many prophecies, this one holds out no path to turn the judgment back — the time for that had passed.

Paralysis and shame (vv14–18)

The trumpet sounds, the army is ready, and no one moves (v14). Guzik quotes Morgan that paralysis comes first. Sword outside, plague and famine inside the walls (v15) — exactly what happened in the siege of 588–586 BC. "All knees will become like water" (v17) describes terror so complete that the body gives way (Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "weak as water"). The few who escape will mourn on the mountains like doves, "each over his own iniquity" (v16) — no longer blaming others.

Money fails (vv19–22)

Their gold "will become an abhorrent thing" (v19) — the word *niddah* is the language of ritual impurity. Wealth "will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD" (v19; compare Zeph 1:18; Prov 11:4). Worse, it "has become an occasion of stumbling" — their riches had led them into sin, since they melted down the beauty God gave them and made idols (v20). So God hands the very same treasure to "the foreigners" and "the wicked of the earth" (v21), and He turns His face away while robbers break into His "secret place" — the temple itself (v22). God would rather see His own house profaned than let it shelter idolatry.

Every human help fails (vv23–27)

"Make the chain" (v23) — a sign of captivity (Feinberg, in Guzik, links it to Jer 27:2). The land is "full of bloody crimes" — Guzik cites Block that this points to murderous judicial decisions, justice itself turned to bloodshed. God brings "the worst of the nations" (v24); Guzik notes the tension that God uses the wicked to correct His people (compare Hab 1:6, 13). They seek peace, a vision, the law, counsel — all at once, all too late (vv25–26; compare Jer 18:18). Wiersbe, in Guzik, identifies "the king" as Jehoiachin and "the prince" as Zedekiah (compare 12:10, 12). Everything ends with the refrain: "they will know that I am the LORD" (v27).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **end — *qets* (H7093):** an end, limit, the extremity of time.
- **abominations — *to'ebah* (H8441):** a detestable thing, especially idolatry.
- **pity — *chus* (H2347):** to look on with compassion, spare.
- **spare — *chamal* (H2550):** to spare, have compassion.
- **disaster — *ra'ah* (H7451):** evil, calamity, distress.
- **doom — *tsephirah* (H6843):** a turn of events; a crown or a morning — what dawns.
- **wrath — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, fury, burning anger (v8).
- **smiting — *nakah* (H5221):** to strike, wound, kill.

- **rod — *matteh* (H4294):** a staff, rod, tribe.
- **budded — *tsuts* (H6692):** to blossom, flourish.
- **arrogance — *zadon* (H2087):** pride, presumption.
- **violence — *chamas* (H2555):** violence, wrong, cruelty.
- **abhorrent thing — *niddah* (H5079):** impurity, a thing set apart as unclean.
- **stumbling — *mikshol* (H4383):** a stumbling block, an occasion of falling.
- **chain — *rattoq* (H7569):** a chain.
- **know — *yada*ʿ (H3045):** to know by experience.

Cross-references

Lev 25:13–16; Num 17:8; Deut 28:47–52; Prov 11:4; Isa 10:5; Jer 18:18; Jer 27:2; Lam 2:17; Hab 1:6, 13; Zeph 1:14–18; Amos 8:2; Matt 24:36–44; Luke 12:16–21; Rom 2:4–6; 2 Pet 3:9–10; Heb 10:31.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 7:16 (KJV)

16 But ★ they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, ⚠ every one for his iniquity.

Command to obey — "Make the chain."

God told Ezekiel to act out the captivity that sin was bringing. Sin always makes a chain; it just doesn't show you the chain at first. I'll look honestly at the habit I keep excusing and ask where it is leading. For the men I disciple, many already know what the chain feels like — the point is to see it while there is still time to turn, and to tell someone.

Sin to confess — "arrogance has blossomed."

Judah's pride didn't appear overnight; it budded, then blossomed (v10). I'll confess the small arrogance I've let grow — the attitude that says God's warnings are for other people and that I'll always have more time.

Warning to heed — "Now the end is upon you."

God is patient, but patience has an end (Rom 2:4–5). Judah thought "not yet" for years. Money couldn't buy them out, the army froze, the prophets had no word. I don't want to wait until disaster comes upon disaster to seek God. Today is the day to deal with Him (2 Cor 6:2).

Promise to trust — "you will know that I am the LORD."

Even in the hardest chapter, God's purpose is that His people would know Him. For the man in a cell or at the bottom of a relapse who feels the end has come: the end of your own way can be the beginning of knowing God. The survivors who mourned "each over his own iniquity" (v16) were the start of a remnant God would bring home.

Example to follow — Ezekiel's faithfulness

Ezekiel told the exiles what they did not want to hear, plainly, because God sent him and the people needed it. When I write, build or disciple, I want to tell the truth about sin and judgment — not to crush men, but to turn them to the God who still saves.

Worship

The LORD is just; He judges according to our ways. He is holy; He will not share His house with idols. And He is merciful; even His judgments aim at our knowing Him. Silver and gold can't deliver — but He can.

Prayer

LORD, You are patient, and You are holy. Show me the chain before it closes. Uproot the pride that has budded in me, and keep me from trusting money or my own strength. Let me turn to You while it is still today, and help me warn the men I serve with love. Make me know that You are the LORD. Amen.

Ezekiel 8

Behind the Wall: Abominations in God's House

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God takes Ezekiel on a tour of His own house and shows him what the leaders thought no one could see. Each room is worse than the last — an idol at the gate, elders in a secret chamber, women weeping for a pagan god, priests with their backs to the LORD. God's glory was still there, but the people had turned their backs on Him, and now He was about to leave.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 8 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that ▲ the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me.

[2] Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.

[3] And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in ▲ the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the ⚠ image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

[4] And, behold, ▲ the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.

[5] Then said he unto me, ⇄ Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this ⚠ image of jealousy in the entry.

[6] He said furthermore unto me, ⇄ Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great ⇄ abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, ⚠ that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but ◷ turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater ⇄ abominations.

[7] And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.

[8] Then said he unto me, ⇄ Son of man, Green dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.

[9] And he said unto me, Green Go in, and behold the wicked ⇄ abominations that they do here.

[10] So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and ⚠ all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.

[11] And there stood before them ◷ seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood ◷ Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.

[12] Then said he unto me, ⇄ Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do ⚠ in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, ⚠ The LORD seeth us not; ⚠ the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

[13] He said also unto me, ◷ Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater ⇄ abominations that they do.

[14] Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat ⚠ women weeping for Tammuz.

[15] Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O ⇄ son of man? ◷ turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater ⇄ abominations than these.

16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, ⚠ with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and ⚠ they worshipped the sun toward the east.

17 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O ⇄ son of man? ◷ Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the ⇄ abominations which they commit here? for ⚠ they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, ⚠ they put the branch to their nose.

18 Therefore will I also deal in fury: ▲ mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, ▲ yet will I not hear them.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ▲ the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me
- **v3** ▲ the visions of God
- **v3** ⚠ image of jealousy *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** ▲ the glory of the God of Israel was there
- **v5** ⇄ Son of man *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ⇄ abominations *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ⚠ that I should go far off from my sanctuary
- **v6** ◷ turn thee yet again *(every occurrence)*
- **v8** dig now in the wall
- **v9** Go in, and behold
- **v10** ⚠ all the idols of the house of Israel
- **v11** ◷ seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel
- **v11** ◷ Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan
- **v12** ⚠ in the dark
- **v12** ⚠ The LORD seeth us not
- **v12** ⚠ the LORD hath forsaken the earth
- **v14** ⚠ women weeping for Tammuz
- **v16** ⚠ with their backs toward the temple of the LORD
- **v16** ⚠ they worshipped the sun toward the east
- **v17** ◷ Is it a light thing
- **v17** ⚠ they have filled the land with violence
- **v17** ⚠ they put the branch to their nose
- **v18** ▲ mine eye shall not spare
- **v18** ▲ yet will I not hear them

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 8:6 (KJV)

6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.

Setting

"In the sixth year, on the fifth day of the sixth month" (v1) — the sixth year of Jehoiachin's exile, about September 592 BC, some fourteen months after Ezekiel's call (1:2). Ezekiel is in Babylon "sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me" (v1) when "the hand of the Lord GOD fell on me there" (v1). Chapters 8–11 are one long vision: Ezekiel is carried "in the visions of God to Jerusalem" (v3) and shown what is happening inside the temple while Zedekiah still reigns. His body stays in Babylon (11:24).

Structure

- vv1–4 — **taken to Jerusalem:** Ezekiel sees "a likeness as the appearance of a man" (v2), fiery and bright, as in chapter 1. The Spirit lifts him "between earth and heaven" and brings him "in the visions of God to Jerusalem" (v3), to the north gate of the inner court, where stood "the idol of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy" (v3). And yet "the glory of the God of Israel was there" (v4).
- vv5–6 — **abomination one, the idol at the gate:** north of the altar gate stands "this idol of jealousy at the entrance" (v5). "Son of man, do you see what they are doing … so that I would be far from My sanctuary?" (v6). "Yet you will see still greater abominations" (v6).
- vv7–13 — **abomination two, the elders in the dark:** Ezekiel finds "a hole in the wall" (v7), digs, finds a door, and is told, "Go in and see the wicked abominations that they are committing here" (v9). Creeping things, beasts and "all the idols of the house of Israel" are "carved on the wall all around" (v10). Before them stand "seventy elders of the house of Israel" with "Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan" among them, "each man with his censer in his hand" (v11). They do this "in the dark, each man in the room of his carved images" (v12), saying, "The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land" (v12).
- vv14–15 — **abomination three, weeping for Tammuz:** at the north gate of the LORD's house "women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz" (v14). "Yet you will see still greater abominations than these" (v15).
- vv16–18 — **abomination four, sun worship at the door of the temple:** in the inner court, between the porch and the altar, about twenty-five men stand "with their backs to the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east" (v16), "prostrating themselves eastward toward the sun" (v16). "Is it too light a thing for the house of Judah …?" (v17). "They have filled the land with violence and provoked Me repeatedly" (v17), and "they are putting the twig to their nose" (v17). "I indeed will deal in wrath … though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I will not listen to them" (v18).

Repeated words

abominations (vv6, 9, 13, 15, 17); greater abominations (vv6, 13, 15); son of man (vv5, 6, 8, 12, 15, 17); see / seen (vv6, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17); north (vv3, 5, 14); jealousy (vv3, 5); elders (vv1, 11, 12).

Contrasts

The elders of Judah sitting before God's prophet in Babylon (v1) ⟷ the elders of Israel bowing to carved images in Jerusalem (vv11–12). "The glory of the God of Israel was there" (v4) ⟷ an idol of jealousy at the gate (v5). Seventy elders with censers (v11) ⟷ the seventy elders of Moses' day who saw the God of Israel (Exod 24:9–10). "The LORD does not see us" (v12) ⟷ God showing Ezekiel every room. Done in the dark (v12) ⟷ done openly at the temple door (v16). Faces toward the sun ⟷ backs to the temple of the LORD (v16). They cry loudly (v18) ⟷ God will not listen (v18).

Chapter theme (my words)

God takes Ezekiel on a tour of His own house and shows him what the leaders thought no one could see. Each room is worse than the last — an idol at the gate, elders in a secret chamber, women weeping for a pagan god, priests with their backs to the LORD. God's glory was still there, but the people had turned their backs on Him, and now He was about to leave.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 8:3 (KJV)

3 And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in ▲ the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the ⚠ image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

The vision and the glory (vv1–4)

Ezekiel is transported "in the visions of God" (v3) — Guzik cites Feinberg: "That he did not actually leave Babylon is clear from Ezekiel 11:24." The figure of fire and brightness matches the figure with the appearance of a man on the throne in 1:26–27; many interpreters see here the LORD Himself, and some Christians see a preview of the Son. The vision is a guided tour with a purpose: the exiles in Babylon thought Jerusalem was still holy and safe, and God shows why it is not. Guzik organizes the four scenes by who is guilty: the king's gate (vv5–6), the leaders (vv7–13), the women (vv14–15) and the priests (vv16–18). Over it all, "the glory of the God of Israel was there" (v4) — He had not yet left, but chapters 10–11 will show Him going.

The idol of jealousy (vv3–6)

The word for idol (*semel*) is rare. Wright, in Guzik, connects it with Manasseh, who set a carved image in the temple (2 Kgs 21:7; 2 Chr 33:7, 15), and with Josiah's later cleansing (2 Kgs 23:6) — the sin had crept back. It "provokes to jealousy" because the LORD is a jealous God who will not share His people's

worship (Exod 20:5; Deut 32:16). Guzik notes Taylor's point that the north gate was the king's preferred entrance. The result is spelled out: these things drive God "far from My sanctuary" (v6).

The elders in the dark (vv7–13)

Ezekiel has to dig through a wall to see it — Guzik notes that seeing the true state of things can take real effort. Inside, the walls are carved with animals and idols. Guzik cites Feinberg: "The consensus of interpreters is that these were the animal cults of Egypt" — Judah was looking to Egypt for help against Babylon (17:15). Seventy elders echo the seventy whom Moses appointed (Num 11:16) — the men meant to lead Israel in the worship of the LORD. Jaazaniah son of Shaphan stands out because Shaphan was Josiah's faithful secretary (2 Kgs 22:8–12), and his other sons protected Jeremiah (Jer 26:24); Guzik cites Taylor calling him "the black sheep of a worthy family." Their excuse — "The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land" (v12) — mixes practical atheism with self-pity: God isn't watching, and He has abandoned us anyway. Guzik, citing Block, notes that the claim is false of the LORD but true of the idols they serve (Ps 115:4–7).

Weeping for Tammuz (vv14–15)

This verse needs care. Guzik: "This is the only mention of Tammuz in Ezekiel and the Old Testament," and he describes Tammuz as "a deity worshipped by many in neighboring nations, often with immoral or impure rites." From ancient Mesopotamian texts we know Tammuz as the Sumerian Dumuzi — a shepherd god and the lover of the goddess Inanna (Ishtar). In the myth he is taken down to the underworld, and he was mourned with ritual laments, tied to the seasons when the land dried up; the fourth Babylonian month bore his name, and the Jewish calendar still calls that month Tammuz (June–July). Jerome, translating the Latin Bible, identified him with the Greek Adonis. Two cautions keep us fair to the text:

- **What the text says:** women of Judah, at the LORD's own house, are grieving for a foreign god — giving their tears and devotion to a dead idol instead of the living God. That is the abomination, and it is "greater" than the one before because it brings pagan ritual into the LORD's house in broad daylight.
- **What the text does not say:** some popular teaching, especially Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons* (1858), makes Tammuz the son of Nimrod and Semiramis and traces Lent, the cross and other church customs back to his cult. The ancient sources don't support those links, and most historians and many evangelical scholars reject them. Whether Tammuz was believed to "rise" each year is debated among scholars. Believers can take the warning seriously — mixing pagan worship into God's house is deadly — without resting it on claims the evidence can't carry.

Note also that the vision is dated to the sixth month, not the month of Tammuz; scholars differ on whether the rite was kept at other times or whether the vision gathers typical scenes. Either way, the point stands.

Backs to the temple (vv16–18)

The worst scene is at the very door of the sanctuary, "between the porch and the altar" (v16) — the place where priests should weep before the LORD (Joel 2:17). About twenty-five men, likely priests (Guzik notes Alexander's suggestion: the twenty-four priestly courses plus the high priest), turn their backs on the temple and bow to the sun. God had forbidden exactly this (Deut 4:19; 17:3), and Josiah

had removed the horses and chariots of the sun (2 Kgs 23:11). Guzik quotes Wiersbe: "The idolatry of the seventy elders was hidden in the temple, but these men practiced their idolatry openly!" "Is it too light a thing …?" (v17) — they thought it was small; God did not. Idolatry went with violence in the land. "Putting the twig to their nose" is found only here, and its meaning is uncertain; Guzik lists the views — an insulting gesture (Block), a ritual gesture, perhaps imitating the Egyptian ankh or tied to plants sacred to Tammuz (Wright), or a scribal change meaning their "stench" in God's nose (Vawter and Hoppe). No one view is certain. The chapter ends with God's resolve: no pity, and no listening when they cry (v18; compare Prov 1:28; Isa 1:15).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **hand — *yad* (H3027):** the hand, power; here God's power taking hold of the prophet.
- **visions — *marʾah* (H4759):** a vision, a seeing.
- **idol — *semel* (H5566):** an image, statue.
- **jealousy — *qinʾah* (H7068):** zeal, jealousy — the ardor of covenant love.
- **provokes to jealousy — *qanaʾ* (H7065):** to be jealous, zealous.
- **glory — *kabod* (H3519):** weight, honor, splendor.
- **abominations — *toʿebah* (H8441):** something detestable, especially idolatry.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** a holy place.
- **carved images — *maskith* (H4906):** an image, carved figure, imagination.
- **censer — *miqtereth* (H4730):** a censer, incense pan.
- **forsaken — *ʿazab* (H5800):** to leave, abandon.
- **Tammuz — *Tammuz* (H8542):** a Mesopotamian god (Sumerian Dumuzi).
- **prostrating — *shachah* (H7812):** to bow down, worship.
- **twig — *zemorah* (H2156):** a branch, shoot.
- **violence — *chamas* (H2555):** violence, wrong.

Cross-references

Exod 20:3–5; Exod 24:9–10; Num 11:16; Deut 4:15–19; Deut 32:16; 2 Kgs 21:1–7; 2 Kgs 22:8–12; 2 Kgs 23:4–11; 2 Chr 33:7; Ps 94:7–9; Ps 115:4–8; Ps 139:11–12; Prov 1:28; Isa 29:15; Jer 7:9–11; Jer 26:24; Ezek 1:26–28; Ezek 10:18–19; Ezek 11:22–24; Joel 2:17; Rom 1:22–25; 1 Cor 10:14; 1 John 5:21.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 8:8 (KJV)

8 Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.

Command to obey — "Go in and see."

God made Ezekiel dig through the wall and look (vv8–9). I'll let God show me what is behind the walls of my own life — the rooms I keep locked. For the men I disciple, real recovery starts when a man stops managing the front room and lets God and a brother walk into the back rooms with him.

Sin to confess — "The LORD does not see us."

The elders acted as if no one was watching. Every secret sin says the same thing. I'll confess what I do "in the dark" (v12) as if God doesn't see — because He does (Ps 139:11–12; Heb 4:13).

Warning to heed — "Is it too light a thing?"

Judah thought its compromises were small. God called each one greater than the last. Sin escalates: the idol at the gate became priests with their backs to God. And I can weep for the wrong things — give my tears and passion to what can't save me. I'll ask what has my devotion that should belong to God alone (1 John 5:21).

Promise to trust — the glory was still there

Even with idols in every corner, "the glory of the God of Israel was there" (v4). God does not leave quickly; He shows, He warns, He waits. For the man who thinks he has gone too far for God to bother with him: He is still showing you the truth because He has not given up on you yet. Turn while He is near (Isa 55:6).

Example to follow — the elders who sat before the prophet

In Babylon, the elders of Judah came and sat before God's word (v1); in Jerusalem, the elders hid in the dark. I want to be the man who sits under the Word, not the man who hides from it — and to lead other men to sit there with me.

Worship

The LORD sees every room. He is a jealous God who will not share His glory with idols. He is holy, and His patience is not weakness. I turn my face toward His house, not away from it.

Prayer

LORD, You see what is done in the dark. Dig through the walls I have built and show me my hidden rooms. Forgive me for the idols I have tolerated and the tears I have spent on things that cannot save. Turn my face to You. Keep Your glory in my life, and make me a man who leads others into the light. Amen.

Ezekiel 9

Marked Before the Sword: Those Who Sigh and Groan

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Before judgment falls, God marks His own. The only thing that set the marked apart was that they grieved over the sin around them instead of joining in. Judgment starts at God's house, and the prophet who preached it falls on his face and begs for mercy — but the man in linen finishes his work, and not one marked person is lost.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 9 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning
Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

1 He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.

2 And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

3 And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side;

4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

6 Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

8 And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

10 And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

11 And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.

Marked in the text

- **v1** He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice
- **v1** his destroying weapon in his hand
- **v2** six men came from the way of the higher gate
- **v2** clothed with linen *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** inkhorn *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** stood beside the brasen altar
- **v3** the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub
- **v3** to the threshold of the house
- **v4** Go through the midst of the city
- **v4** set a mark upon the foreheads
- **v4** the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations

- **v5** ⚠ let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity
- **v6** ★ come not near any man upon whom is the mark
- **v6** begin at my sanctuary
- **v6** they began at the ancient men which were before the house
- **v7** Defile the house
- **v8** I fell upon my face
- **v8** wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel
- **v9** ⚠ The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great
- **v9** ⚠ the land is full of blood
- **v9** ⚠ The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not
- **v10** ▲ I will recompense their way upon their head
- **v11** I have done as thou hast commanded me

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 9:2 (KJV)

2 And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

Setting

Chapter 9 continues the vision that began "in the sixth year" of the exile (8:1), about September 592 BC. Ezekiel, still in Babylon, is being shown the temple in Jerusalem. He has just seen four "abominations" — the idol of jealousy, the seventy elders in the dark, the women weeping for Tammuz and the men worshipping the sun (ch. 8). Chapter 8 ended with God saying that when they cry in His ears "with a loud voice," He will not listen (8:18). Chapter 9 opens with God Himself crying out "with a loud voice" (v1) — for judgment. What Ezekiel sees in vision will happen in history when Babylon takes Jerusalem in 586 BC (2 Chr 36:17).

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the executioners come:** "He cried out in my hearing with a loud voice" (v1): "Draw near, O executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand" (v1). "Six men came from the direction of the upper gate which faces north" (v2), and with them "a certain man clothed in linen with a writing case at his loins" (v2). They "stood beside the bronze altar" (v2).
- v3 — **the glory moves:** "the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple" (v3).
- v4 — **the mark:** "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem" (v4), and "put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst" (v4).

- vv5–7 — **judgment begins at the sanctuary:** "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare" (v5). No one is exempt by age, "but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary" (v6). "So they started with the elders who were before the temple" (v6). "Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain" (v7).
- v8 — **the prophet intercedes:** "I fell on my face and cried out" (v8): "Alas, Lord GOD! Are You destroying the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out Your wrath on Jerusalem?" (v8).
- vv9–10 — **God's answer:** "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is very, very great" (v9); "the land is filled with blood and the city is full of perversion" (v9), for they say, "The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!" (v9). "My eye will have no pity nor will I spare" (v10); "I will bring their conduct upon their heads" (v10).
- v11 — **the report:** the man in linen returns: "I have done just as You have commanded me" (v11).

Repeated words

city (vv1, 4, 5, 7, 9); clothed in linen / writing case (vv2, 3, 11); mark (vv4, 6); pity / spare (vv5, 10); temple (vv3, 6, 7); midst (v4, three times).

Contrasts

The men who "sigh and groan" over sin (v4) ⟷ the elders who said "the LORD does not see" (8:12; 9:9). The man with a writing case (v2) ⟷ the six with weapons (v2). Marked and spared (v6) ⟷ unmarked and slain (vv5–6). God's glory on the cherub ⟷ God's glory at the threshold, getting ready to leave (v3). The house meant to be holy ⟷ "Defile the temple" (v7). Ezekiel on his face crying for mercy (v8) ⟷ God's settled answer, "very, very great" iniquity (v9). "I have done just as You have commanded me" (v11) ⟷ a people who did whatever they wanted.

Chapter theme (my words)

Before judgment falls, God marks His own. The only thing that set the marked apart was that they grieved over the sin around them instead of joining in. Judgment starts at God's house, and the prophet who preached it falls on his face and begs for mercy — but the man in linen finishes his work, and not one marked person is lost.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 9:1 (KJV)

1 ▲ He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.

The executioners (vv1–2)

God answers the elders' claim that He does not see (8:12) by calling for the executioners of the city (v1). Guzik takes them as angels — he cites Feinberg: "angels are frequently called men because of their

outward appearance" — and notes that Scripture sometimes links angels with places and nations (Dan 10:13, 20; 12:1). Whether the man in linen is a seventh figure or one of the six is debated; Guzik quotes Keil and Delitzsch taking him as their leader. Linen was the clothing of priests and heavenly beings (Lev 16:4; Dan 10:5; Rev 15:6). Some Christians see in the man in linen the Angel of the LORD, a preview of Christ the Priest who knows and marks His own; others see a high-ranking angel. The text does not say. They come from the north gate — where the idol stood (8:5) and the direction Babylon will come from — and stand by the bronze altar, the place of sacrifice; Guzik cites Clarke that the people are under sentence of divine justice.

The glory at the threshold (v3)

Ezekiel tracks the glory of God step by step: from the cherub to the threshold (9:3), then out to the east gate (10:18–19), then to the mountain east of the city (11:23). Guzik notes Feinberg's point that Ezekiel follows these movements through the book — and the glory returns in 43:2–5. God does not leave His house quickly or quietly. He moves to the door before He goes.

The mark (v4)

The word "mark" is *tav*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which in the script of Ezekiel's day was written like an X or a cross. Guzik reads it as a protective sign, like the Passover blood (Exod 12:13) and Rahab's scarlet cord (Josh 2:18); he quotes Block calling it a sign of hope. Jewish tradition and Christian tradition have read the letter in different ways. Early Christian writers such as Tertullian and Jerome saw the cross in it; Guzik cites Wright: "Without being superstitious we can rejoice in this anticipation of salvation through the death of Christ on the cross." The New Testament picks up the picture: God's servants are sealed on their foreheads before judgment (Rev 7:3; compare the beast's counterfeit mark, Rev 13:16), and "the Lord knows those who are His" (2 Tim 2:19). Notice who is marked: not the strongest or the most religious, but those who "sigh and groan" over the city's sin. Guzik quotes Trapp: "Let us mourn in time of sinning: so shall we be marked in times of punishing." Jeremiah, weeping in Jerusalem in these same years, is a living example (Jer 9:1; 13:17).

"Start from My sanctuary" (vv5–7)

The command is terrible, and Scripture records it really happened: Babylon "had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm" (2 Chr 36:17). Judgment starts with the elders standing before the temple — the same leaders of chapter 8. Guzik connects this with 1 Peter 4:17: "it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God." He cites Feinberg's point that God was most dishonored where He should have been most honored, and Wiersbe's that they had defiled God's house by their lives and would now defile it by their deaths. God orders His own temple defiled: a holy house that shelters idols is no longer holy to Him (Jer 7:4, 11, 14). Hard as the passage is, the mark comes first (v4): no one God marked was touched (v6).

The prophet on his face (vv8–10)

Ezekiel is left alone among the slain and falls down crying, "Alas, Lord GOD!" (v8) — the same cry he will raise again in 11:13. Guzik cites Taylor that behind his hard message Ezekiel had deep compassion. The question is honest: is anyone going to be left? God does not rebuke the prayer, but He explains: the iniquity is "very, very great," the land full of blood, the city full of perversion — and the people still say "the LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!" (v9; 8:12). Their own words are

quoted back as the charge. Guzik cites Block: since the righteous are already marked, the fate of the wicked is sealed. God brings "their conduct upon their heads" (v10) — He gives them what they chose.

"I have done just as You have commanded me" (v11)

The chapter ends not with the executioners but with the man in linen reporting that the marking is finished. Guzik cites Alexander that this assures Ezekiel not all of Judah had strayed, and Feinberg compares Jesus' words in John 17:4, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." The faithful were all counted and kept.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **executioners / those in charge — *pequddah* (H6486):** oversight, visitation, punishment.
- **destroying — *mashcheth* (H4892):** destruction.
- **shattering — *mappats* (H4660):** a smiting, shattering.
- **linen — *bad* (H906):** white linen, the priestly fabric.
- **writing case — *qeseth* (H7083):** a scribe's inkhorn.
- **glory — *kabod* (H3519):** weight, honor, splendor.
- **cherub — *kerub* (H3742):** a cherub, angelic guardian of God's presence.
- **threshold — *miphtan* (H4670):** a threshold, doorsill.
- **mark — *tav* (H8420):** a mark, the letter tav (written like an X or cross).
- **sigh — *ʾanach* (H584):** to sigh, groan.
- **groan — *ʾanaq* (H602):** to cry out, lament.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** a holy place.
- **remnant — *sheʾerith* (H7611):** a remainder, survivors.
- **perversion — *mutteh* (H4297):** perverseness, injustice.
- **conduct — *derek* (H1870):** a way, road, manner of life.

Cross-references

Gen 18:23–25; Exod 12:13, 23; Josh 2:18; 2 Chr 36:15–17; Ps 119:136; Jer 7:4–14; Jer 9:1; Ezek 8:12; Ezek 10:2–7; Ezek 10:18–19; Ezek 11:13, 23; Ezek 43:2–5; Mal 3:16–17; Matt 5:4; John 17:4; 2 Tim 2:19; 1 Pet 4:17; Rev 7:3; Rev 9:4; Rev 13:16; Rev 14:1.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 9:4 (KJV)

4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

Command to obey — "put a mark on the foreheads."

God's first order was not to strike but to mark. Before judgment, He finds His own. I want to be among those who "sigh and groan" over sin — beginning with my own — and not shrug at it. That is the mark of a heart God keeps (Matt 5:4).

Sin to confess — "the LORD does not see!"

The people said it twice (8:12; 9:9), and the second time God quoted it back as the charge. I'll confess the places where I've acted as if God doesn't see — and where I've stopped grieving over what grieves Him.

Warning to heed — "start from My sanctuary."

Judgment begins at God's house (1 Pet 4:17). Being close to the temple did not protect the elders; it made them first. Church attendance, Bible knowledge, a ministry title — none of that is the mark. I'll examine my heart before I examine anyone else's.

Promise to trust — "do not touch any man on whom is the mark."

God knows exactly who is His (2 Tim 2:19). In the worst day Jerusalem ever saw, not one marked man was overlooked. For the man in prison or in a broken home who feels lost in the crowd and forgotten: God's Man in linen knows your name and has marked you as His in Christ. "I have done just as You have commanded me" (v11) — His work of keeping His own is finished.

Example to follow — Ezekiel on his face

Ezekiel preached judgment without enjoying it. When it fell, he fell on his face and begged for the remnant (v8). That's the posture I want toward the men I disciple — and toward the ones who reject the message. Tell the truth plainly, then get on my face and pray for them.

Worship

The LORD is holy and sees everything. He does not judge in a hurry; His glory lingers at the threshold. He is just to give men their own conduct, and gracious to mark His own before the sword falls. In Christ the mark is the cross — and I am kept.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You see what is done in Your house and in my heart. Give me a heart that sighs and groans over sin instead of growing used to it. Thank You that You know and keep those who are Yours. Make

me faithful to finish what You command, and give me Ezekiel's compassion to fall on my face for the men I love. Amen.

Ezekiel 10

The Glory at the Threshold: Fire from the Throne

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God does not leave His house in a hurry. The glory steps from the cherub to the threshold, then to the east gate, as if He is lingering, giving one more chance. But the same holy presence that once filled the temple now sends fire on a city that has filled His house with idols. God's throne still rules, His purposes still go straight ahead — and His glory will not stay where it is despised.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 10 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1]Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the ⇄ cherubims there appeared over them as it were ▲ a sapphire stone, as the appearance of ▲ the likeness of a throne.

[2]And he spake unto the man ⇄ clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the ⇄ wheels, even under the cherub, and Green fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the ⇄ cherubims, and ⚠ scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight.

[3]Now the ⇄ cherubims stood ◷ on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and ▲ the cloud filled the inner court.

[4]Then ▲ the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and ◷ stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of ▲ the brightness of the LORD'S glory.

[5]And the sound of the ⇄ cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, ▲ as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.

[6]And it came to pass, that Green when he had commanded the man ⇄ clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the ⇄ wheels, from between the ⇄ cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the ⇄ wheels.

[7]And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the ⇄ cherubims unto the fire that was between the ⇄ cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was ⇄ clothed with linen: who took it, and went out.

[8]And there appeared in the ⇄ cherubims ◷ the form of a man's hand under their wings.

[9]And when I looked, behold the four ⇄ wheels by the ⇄ cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the ⇄ wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone.

[10]And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.

[11]When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went.

[12]And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the ⇄ wheels, were ▲ full of eyes round about, even the ⇄ wheels that they four had.

[13]As for the ⇄ wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel.

[14]And ◷ every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

[15]And the ⇄ cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw ◷ by the river of Chebar.

[16]And when the ⇄ cherubims went, the ⇄ wheels went by them: and when the ⇄ cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same ⇄ wheels also turned not from beside them.

[17]When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for ▲ the spirit of the living creature was in them.

18 Then ⚠ the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the ⇄ cherubims.

19 And the ⇄ cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the ⇄ wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of ◷ the east gate of the LORD'S house; and ▲ the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

20 This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel ◷ by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the ⇄ cherubims.

21 Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.

22 And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw ◷ by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: ★ they went every one straight forward.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ⇄ cherubims *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** ▲ a sapphire stone
- **v1** ▲ the likeness of a throne
- **v2** ⇄ clothed with linen *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ⇄ wheels *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ▮ fill thine hand with coals of fire
- **v2** ⚠ scatter them over the city
- **v3** ◷ on the right side of the house
- **v3** ▲ the cloud filled the inner court
- **v4** ▲ the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub
- **v4** ◷ stood over the threshold of the house
- **v4** ▲ the brightness of the LORD'S glory
- **v5** ▲ as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh
- **v6** ▮ when he had commanded the man
- **v8** ◷ the form of a man's hand
- **v12** ▲ full of eyes round about
- **v14** ◷ every one had four faces
- **v15** ◷ by the river of Chebar *(every occurrence)*
- **v17** ▲ the spirit of the living creature was in them
- **v18** ⚠ the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house
- **v19** ◷ the east gate of the LORD'S house
- **v19** ▲ the glory of the God of Israel was over them above
- **v22** ★ they went every one straight forward

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 10:2 (KJV)

2 And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight.

Setting

This chapter sits in the middle of one long vision (chapters 8–11). Ezekiel is an exile in Babylon, among the captives by the river Chebar, taken there with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC (1:1–3). The vision is dated in the sixth year of that exile, the sixth month, the fifth day (8:1) — about September 592 BC. Zedekiah still sits on the throne in Jerusalem, and the city still stands. In chapter 8 the Spirit carried Ezekiel to the temple and showed him its abominations; in chapter 9 the man clothed in linen marked those who grieved over the sin, and the executioners struck the rest. Now the fire falls and the glory begins to leave.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the throne and the coals:** above the cherubim Ezekiel sees "something like a sapphire stone, in appearance resembling a throne" (v1). God tells "the man clothed in linen" to "fill your hands with coals of fire" from between the cherubim and "scatter them over the city" (v2).
- vv3–5 — **the glory at the threshold:** "the cloud filled the inner court" (v3). "Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple," and "the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD" (v4). The sound of the wings is "like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks" (v5).
- vv6–8 — **fire handed over:** the man in linen "entered and stood beside a wheel" (v6). A cherub reaches into the fire and puts it into his hands, and he takes it and goes out (v7). Under their wings is "the form of a man's hand" (v8).
- vv9–17 — **the cherubim and the wheels:** four wheels, one beside each cherub, "like the gleam of a Tarshish stone" (v9), "as if one wheel were within another wheel" (v10). Bodies, wings and wheels are "full of eyes all around" (v12). The wheels are called "the whirling wheels" (v13). Each has four faces — "the first face was the face of a cherub," then a man, a lion and an eagle (v14). They are "the living beings that I saw by the river Chebar" (v15). They move as one, "for the spirit of the living beings was in them" (v17).
- vv18–19 — **the glory moves to the east gate:** "Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim" (v18). The cherubim rise and stand "at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house," and "the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them" (v19).
- vv20–22 — **"I knew":** these are the same beings Ezekiel saw at Chebar, "so I knew that they were cherubim" (v20). "Each one went straight ahead" (v22).

Repeated words

cherubim / cherub (vv1–9, 14–20); wheel / wheels (vv2, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19); glory (vv4, 18, 19); clothed in linen (vv2, 6, 7); fire / coals (vv2, 6, 7); living beings (vv15, 17, 20); the river Chebar (vv15, 20, 22); threshold (vv4, 18).

Contrasts

the glory filling the court (v4) ⟷ the glory leaving the threshold (v18). The throne above (v1) ⟷ the city about to burn below (v2). Fire that came from God's own presence (v7) ⟷ fire scattered in judgment over Jerusalem (v2). Beings that go "straight ahead" (v22) ⟷ a people who had turned every direction but God's. Ezekiel the exile sees the glory ⟷ the priests and elders in the temple court see nothing.

Chapter theme (my words)

God does not leave His house in a hurry. The glory steps from the cherub to the threshold, then to the east gate, as if He is lingering, giving one more chance. But the same holy presence that once filled the temple now sends fire on a city that has filled His house with idols. God's throne still rules, His purposes still go straight ahead — and His glory will not stay where it is despised.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 10:1 (KJV)

[1]Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the ⇄ cherubims there appeared over them as it were ▲ a sapphire stone, as the appearance of ▲ the likeness of a throne.

The throne above the cherubim (vv1–2)

Ezekiel sees again what he saw at the river Chebar in chapter 1: an expanse, a sapphire throne, and the living beings that carry it. Guzik notes that the man on the throne is only implied here. The point is clear without him — the King is present, and He is about to act. The man clothed in linen is the same figure who marked the faithful in chapter 9. Guzik takes him to be an angel, since angels are sometimes described as men in Scripture, and he notes how promptly the man obeys. Some readers see in him a picture of Christ, the great Priest dressed in linen who both marks His own and carries out judgment; Guzik does not press that view.

Fire from the throne (vv2, 6–7)

In chapter 9 the city's idolaters were struck; now Jerusalem itself will burn. Guzik: "Now we learn that Jerusalem will also be burnt, and the fire comes from the throne and glory of God itself." He links the coals to the Babylonian burning of Jerusalem in 586 BC, drawing on Feinberg, and notes Taylor's comparison of the city's fate to Sodom and Gomorrah. The same fire that purged Isaiah's lips (Isa 6:6–

7) falls here as judgment. God's holiness is one thing; whether it cleanses or consumes depends on whether we come to it in repentance.

The glory at the threshold (vv3–5)

The cloud of glory has a long history: the pillar in the wilderness, Sinai, the tabernacle, Solomon's temple (Exod 40:34–35; 1 Kgs 8:10–11), the mount of transfiguration, and Christ's return in the clouds. Guzik lists these and then points out the tragedy that only Ezekiel sees it. He quotes Wright: "The sad thing was that Ezekiel was evidently the only person who saw the glory of God." The worshipers of chapter 8 were in the very courts and missed it.

The cherubim and the wheels (vv9–17)

Ezekiel now names the "living beings" of chapter 1: they are cherubim (v20). Guzik explains that cherubim were everywhere in the temple — Solomon's great carved cherubim stood in the holy of holies (1 Kgs 6:23) — so here the name fits. The wheels show that God's throne is mobile; it was in Babylon with the exiles, and now it is in Jerusalem. McGee, in Guzik: "These wheels are in ceaseless activity and speak of the fact that God is busy." The eyes speak of a God who sees everything.

The face of a cherub (v14)

In 1:10 the four faces are man, lion, ox and eagle. Here the ox is replaced by "the face of a cherub." Guzik gives three explanations without choosing: the reason is simply unknown (Wright, Wiersbe); a cherub's face resembled an ox's (Alexander, Smith); or a copying error crept in (Taylor). The second view is common — the Hebrew *kerub* may be related to a word for a winged bull-like guardian known in the ancient world.

The glory leaves in stages (vv18–19)

Follow the movement: from the cherub to the threshold (v4), from the threshold to above the cherubim (v18), and to the east gate (v19). In the next chapter it goes out to the mountain east of the city (11:23). Guzik calls this a shocking movement away from the temple. He quotes Block: "The departure of the glory signals the end of a relationship that had existed for almost four centuries." Since Solomon's dedication, the glory had dwelt in that house. Now Israel would have a temple without God — and soon no temple at all. But Guzik also notes the hope: in chapter 43 the glory returns by way of the east gate (43:1–5).

Straight ahead (vv20–22)

The cherubim never veer. Feinberg, in Guzik, sees this as a picture that God's plans cannot be frustrated. Judah's kings plotted, its prophets lied, its priests compromised — and God's purpose moved straight forward.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **expanse — *raqia* (H7549):** a spread-out surface, the firmament.
- **sapphire — *sappir* (H5601):** a deep blue precious stone, sapphire or lapis lazuli.
- **cherub / cherubim — *kerub* (H3742):** a heavenly guardian creature attending God's throne.
- **linen — *bad* (H906):** fine white linen, the cloth of priestly garments.
- **whirling wheels — *galgal* (H1534):** a wheel, whirl, something that rolls.

- **wheel — *ophan* (H212):** a wheel.
- **coals — *gacheleth* (H1513):** burning coals, embers.
- **scatter — *zaraq* (H2236):** to toss, sprinkle, scatter.
- **cloud — *anan* (H6051):** cloud, the cloud of God's presence.
- **glory — *kabod* (H3519):** weight, honor, splendor.
- **threshold — *miphtan* (H4670):** the doorsill, threshold.
- **brightness — *nogah* (H5051):** radiance, shining.
- **Almighty — *Shadday* (H7706):** the all-sufficient, almighty God.
- **Tarshish stone — *tarshish* (H8658):** a precious gem, perhaps beryl or chrysolite.
- **living beings — *chay* (H2416):** living creatures.

Cross-references

Exod 25:18–22; Exod 40:34–35; 1 Sam 4:21–22; 1 Kgs 6:23; 1 Kgs 8:10–11; Ps 80:1; Ps 99:1; Isa 6:1–7; Ezek 1:4–28; Ezek 8:1–18; Ezek 9:1–11; Ezek 11:22–23; Ezek 43:1–5; Matt 23:37–38; Heb 12:28–29; Rev 4:6–8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 10:6 (KJV)

6 And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels.

Command to obey — "fill your hands."

The man in linen did not argue or delay; he went in, took what God gave him and went out (vv6–7). I want that kind of obedience — even when the task is hard and the message is heavy. When God hands me something to carry, my job is to take it and go.

Sin to confess — a house full of idols

The glory left because the temple had been crowded with other gods (ch 8). Paul says my body is now God's temple (1 Cor 6:19). I'll confess the things I've set up in the inner courts of my life — screens, approval, comfort, control — that compete with Him. For the man in recovery, the idol often has a name and a dealer; naming it is where freedom starts.

Warning to heed — glory can depart

God lingered at the threshold and at the gate, but He did leave. "Ichabod" — the glory has departed (1 Sam 4:21) — can be written over a church, a ministry or a life that keeps going through the motions after God has stepped out. I don't want to be like the worshipers in the court who never noticed. I'll keep short accounts with God.

Promise to trust — His purposes go straight ahead

"Each one went straight ahead" (v22). Kings fell, the city burned, but God's plan did not wobble — and the glory came back through the east gate (43:1–5), and finally came in the flesh in Jesus (John 1:14). For the man sitting in a cell or a halfway house who thinks God has left for good: He is still on the throne, He still sees, and He still finishes what He starts (Phil 1:6).

Example to follow — the one who saw

Ezekiel was an exile, far from the temple, yet he was the one who saw the glory. Being "out of position" doesn't keep a man from God. Some of the clearest sight of God I've seen has come from men behind bars or at the bottom. I want to keep my eyes open like Ezekiel, wherever God has placed me.

Worship

God Almighty, whose voice is like the thunder of the cherubim's wings. Your throne is above everything. Your eyes see all, Your wheels never stop, and Your glory is too holy to be treated lightly.

Prayer

Lord God, clear the idols out of the courts of my heart, so Your glory has room to dwell. Don't let me grow so used to religion that I miss Your presence leaving or arriving. Give me the quick obedience of the man in linen, and the open eyes of Ezekiel. Thank You that in Jesus Your glory came to stay with those who trust Him. Amen.

Ezekiel 11

A Heart of Flesh: The Glory Leaves the City

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The men who felt safest were closest to judgment, and the men who felt farthest from God were the ones He promised to meet. Religion, real estate and a good slogan could not protect Jerusalem's leaders. But to scattered, written-off exiles God promises Himself, a new spirit, and a heart of flesh in place of stone.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 11 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto ◷ the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate ◷ five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

2 Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that ⚠ devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city:

3 Which say, ⚠ It is not near; let us build houses: ⚠ this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh.

4 Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.

5 And ▲ the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for ▲ I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

6 ⚠ Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it.

8 Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD.

9 And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you.

10 Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ⇄ ye shall know that I am the LORD.

11 This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel:

12 And ⇄ ye shall know that I am the LORD: for ⚠ ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.

13 And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that ◷ Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make ⚠ a full end of the remnant of Israel?

14 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

15 Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ⚠ Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.

16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as ★ a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ★ I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and ★ I will give you the land of Israel.

18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the ⇄ detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

19 And ★ I will give them one heart, and ★ I will put a new spirit within you; and ★ I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and ★ they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

21 But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

22 Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

23 And ▲ the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.

24 Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.

25 Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.

Marked in the text

- **v1** the east gate of the LORD'S house
- **v1** five and twenty men
- **v2** devise mischief, and give wicked counsel
- **v3** It is not near; let us build houses
- **v3** this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh
- **v5** ▲ the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me
- **v5** ▲ I know the things that come into your mind
- **v6** Ye have multiplied your slain in this city
- **v10** ye shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ye have not walked in my statutes
- **v13** Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died
- **v13** a full end of the remnant of Israel
- **v15** Get you far from the LORD
- **v16** ★ a little sanctuary
- **v17** ★ I will even gather you from the people
- **v17** ★ I will give you the land of Israel
- **v18** detestable things *(every occurrence)*
- **v19** ★ I will give them one heart
- **v19** ★ I will put a new spirit within you
- **v19** ★ I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh
- **v20** That they may walk in my statutes
- **v20** ★ they shall be my people, and I will be their God
- **v23** ▲ the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city
- **v23** the mountain which is on the east side of the city

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 11:19 (KJV)

19 And ★ I will give them one heart, and ★ I will put a new spirit within you; and ★ I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

Setting

This is the last part of the temple vision that began in chapter 8 (dated about September 592 BC, 8:1). Ezekiel is in Babylon with the exiles taken in 597 BC along with King Jehoiachin; Zedekiah rules what is left of Judah. In Jerusalem, the people who were not deported have decided they are the favored ones and the exiles are the castoffs. Jeremiah was telling the same city the opposite: the good figs were the exiles, the bad figs were those left behind (Jer 24). Chapter 11 answers both groups — judgment for the proud in Jerusalem, a new heart for the scattered exiles — and ends with the glory leaving the city.

Structure

- vv1–4 — **the twenty-five men:** at "the east gate of the LORD's house which faced eastward" stand "twenty-five men," among them "Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people" (v1). "These are the men who devise iniquity and give evil advice in this city" (v2). Their slogan: "The time is not near to build houses. This city is the pot and we are the flesh" (v3). "Therefore, prophesy against them, son of man, prophesy!" (v4).
- vv5–12 — **the proverb turned against them:** "Then the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me" (v5). God says, "for I know your thoughts" (v5). "You have multiplied your slain in this city" (v6). The slain are the real flesh; the leaders will be brought out (v7). "You have feared a sword; so I will bring a sword upon you" (v8). "You will fall by the sword" at the border of Israel (v10). "Thus you will know that I am the LORD; for you have not walked in My statutes nor have you executed My ordinances" (v12).
- v13 — **Pelatiah dies:** as Ezekiel prophesies, "Pelatiah son of Benaiah died." Ezekiel falls on his face: "Alas, Lord GOD! Will You bring the remnant of Israel to a complete end?" (v13).
- vv14–21 — **hope for the exiles:** Jerusalem's residents tell the exiles, "Go far from the LORD; this land has been given us as a possession" (v15). God answers: "yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone" (v16). "I will gather you from the peoples … and I will give you the land of Israel" (v17). They will remove "all its detestable things and all its abominations" (v18). "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh" (v19), "that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them" (v20). "Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God" (v20). But for those whose hearts go after their idols, "I will bring their conduct down on their heads" (v21).
- vv22–25 — **the glory leaves the city:** the cherubim lift their wings (v22). "The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city" (v23). The Spirit brings Ezekiel "in a vision by the Spirit of God to the exiles in Chaldea" (v24). "Then I told the exiles all the things that the LORD had shown me" (v25).

Repeated words

city (vv2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 23); pot (vv3, 7, 11); flesh (vv3, 7, 11, 19); sword (vv8, 10); "you will know that I am the LORD" (vv10, 12); statutes / ordinances (vv12, 20); detestable things / abominations (vv18, 21); heart (vv19, 21); Thus says the Lord GOD (vv7, 16, 17); exiles (vv15, 24, 25).

Contrasts

"This city is the pot and we are the flesh" (v3) ⟷ "This city will not be a pot for you" (v11). The leaders' security inside the walls ⟷ the sword they feared coming for them (v8). Jerusalem's claim, "Go far from the LORD" (v15) ⟷ God Himself a sanctuary to those far away (v16). A heart of stone ⟷ a heart of flesh (v19). Ordinances of the nations (v12) ⟷ "My statutes" kept from a new heart (v20). The glory in the midst of the city ⟷ the glory on the mountain to the east (v23).

Chapter theme (my words)

The men who felt safest were closest to judgment, and the men who felt farthest from God were the ones He promised to meet. Religion, real estate and a good slogan could not protect Jerusalem's leaders. But to scattered, written-off exiles God promises Himself, a new spirit, and a heart of flesh in place of stone.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 11:5 (KJV)

5 And ▲ the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for ▲ I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

The twenty-five leaders (vv1–4)

These are not the twenty-five sun-worshipers of 8:16, who stood inside at the altar; these are civic leaders at the east gate, the place of public business. Guzik calls them "the wicked leaders of a wicked city." He notes this Jaazaniah has a different father from the one in 8:11, so he is likely a different man. Their saying in v3 is hard to translate. Guzik: "It seems better to regard the time is not near to build houses as a question, not a statement" — in effect, "Isn't it time to build houses?" — a boast that life is going on as usual and Babylon is no threat. Taylor, in Guzik, sees house-building as a picture of peaceful activity. The pot image means: Jerusalem's walls protect us like an iron pot protects the choice meat inside. They despised the exiles as scraps thrown out.

God reads their thoughts (vv5–12)

"I know your thoughts" (v5). God answers the proverb on their own terms. The only "flesh" safely in the pot is the people they killed — their slain fill the streets (vv6–7) through violence and injustice. As for the leaders, they will be dragged out of the pot. Guzik: "They wouldn't be protected in the caldron, they would be cooked – and then devoured!" They will be judged at the border of Israel (vv10–11).

Trapp, in Guzik, connects this to Riblah, in the far north, where Nebuchadnezzar killed Zedekiah's sons and Judah's officials after the city fell (2 Kgs 25:6–7, 18–21; Jer 52:10, 24–27). Their real crime: they followed the ways of the nations around them rather than God's statutes (v12).

Pelatiah's death (v13)

In the vision, as Ezekiel speaks, Pelatiah falls dead. Feinberg, in Guzik: "His death was a foretaste of what awaited the rest whom Ezekiel had warned." His name is commonly read as "the LORD rescues" or "the LORD preserves a remnant" — which makes his death all the more jarring. Ezekiel does not gloat. He falls on his face and cries out for the remnant (compare 9:8). A true prophet carries a hard message with a broken heart.

"Go far from the LORD" (vv14–16)

The people left in Jerusalem treated the exiles as excommunicated: you are far from the temple, so you are far from God, and the land is ours now. God reverses it. He did scatter them — but "I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone" (v16). Guzik: "The sense of little is not small, but of short season," and Feinberg agrees it is better read "for a little while." Block, in Guzik: "Here Yahweh promises to be for the exiles what the temple has heretofore been for them in Jerusalem." God was not confined to a building. He was with them by the canals of Babylon.

A new heart (vv17–21)

This is one of the first rays of hope in the book. God promises to gather, to give back the land, and to cleanse it of idols (vv17–18). Then He promises inner change: "one heart," "a new spirit," the heart of stone removed and a heart of flesh given (v19), so they will walk in His statutes (v20). Taylor, in Guzik, notes "one heart" may mean undivided devotion or the reunion of north and south. Guzik ties this to the new covenant of Jer 31:31–34 and to Ezek 36:26–27 and 37, and traces God's covenants from Abraham, Sinai and David to their completion in the New Covenant and the reign of the Messiah.

Christians read the fulfillment differently:

- **A future for national Israel** — many hold that God will literally regather Israel to the land and give the nation a new heart at Christ's return (Rom 11:26–27).
- **Fulfilled in the church** — others see the promise fulfilled in all who are born again by the Spirit, Jew and Gentile together (2 Cor 3:3; Heb 8:8–13).
- **Both** — the new heart is given now to every believer through Christ, with a fuller fulfillment for Israel still to come.

Guzik's page here links the promise to Israel's regathering and the Messiah's reign but does not settle the church question. What all agree on: a new heart is God's work, not man's reform project. And it is not universal — those whose hearts go after their idols will receive their own conduct on their heads (v21).

The glory on the mountain (vv22–23)

The glory, already at the east gate (10:19), rises from the city and stands on the mountain to the east — the Mount of Olives. Guzik: "We can imagine this as a pause to regret and sorrow over the departure." Compare Jesus weeping over Jerusalem from that same hill (Luke 19:41). Taylor, in Guzik, suggests the glory waited, perhaps in case of repentance, and observes, "No further movement is described." Jesus

later ascended from the Mount of Olives, and the angels promised He would come back the same way (Acts 1:11–12; Zech 14:4); the glory's return through the east gate comes in Ezek 43:1–5.

Back to Babylon (vv24–25)

The vision lifts. Ezekiel is back among the exiles and tells them everything. The vision of chapters 8–11 was not for Jerusalem's leaders, who would never hear it, but for the exiles — so they would stop envying Jerusalem and start trusting God.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **devise — *chashab* (H2803):** to plan, plot, think up.
- **iniquity — *aven* (H205):** trouble, wickedness, empty evil.
- **pot — *sir* (H5518):** a cooking pot, cauldron.
- **flesh — *basar* (H1320):** meat, body, human flesh.
- **sword — *chereb* (H2719):** sword, the instrument of war and judgment.
- **Pelatiah — *Pelatyah* (H6410):** "the LORD has delivered."
- **remnant — *sheerith* (H7611):** what is left over, the survivors.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** a holy place, sanctuary.
- **little — *meat* (H4592):** a little, a short while.
- **gather — *qabats* (H6908):** to gather, assemble.
- **detestable things — *shiqquts* (H8251):** disgusting things, idols.
- **abominations — *toebah* (H8441):** something abhorrent, especially idolatry.
- **heart — *leb* (H3820):** the inner person, mind, will.
- **new — *chadash* (H2319):** new, fresh.
- **spirit — *ruach* (H7307):** wind, breath, spirit.
- **stone — *eben* (H68):** stone.
- **statutes — *chuqqah* (H2708):** an engraved, fixed decree.

Cross-references

Deut 30:6; 2 Kgs 25:6–7; 2 Kgs 25:18–21; Ps 51:10; Jer 24:1–10; Jer 29:4–14; Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 8:16; Ezek 9:8; Ezek 18:31; Ezek 36:24–28; Ezek 43:1–5; Zech 14:4; Luke 19:41–44; John 3:3–8; Acts 1:9–12; 2 Cor 3:3; 2 Cor 5:17; Heb 8:8–13.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 11:17 (KJV)

17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ★ I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and ★ I will give you the land of Israel.

Command to obey — walk in His statutes

The new heart has a purpose: "that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them" (v20). God changes the heart so the feet follow. I won't treat grace as a substitute for obedience; it's the power for it.

Sin to confess — the false security of the pot

The leaders thought the walls would save them. I've had my own "pot" — a bank account, a reputation, a good track record — that I trusted more than God. Men in recovery know the line, "I've got this," and where it leads. I'll confess my walls and come out where God can reach me.

Warning to heed — despising the scattered

Jerusalem's people looked down on the exiles: "Go far from the LORD" (v15). The church can do that to the man with a record, the addict, the one who failed publicly. God took the exiles' side. If I look down on the men behind the walls or fresh out, I'm standing with Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, not with God.

Promise to trust — a heart of flesh

"I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh" (v19). I can't carve a new heart out of my own will. God does it. For the man whose heart has gone hard from years of using, hurting or being hurt — numb, cold, unable to cry or to care — this is the promise: God replaces stone with flesh. And for the man in a cell who feels far from every church, God says He will be a sanctuary for him right where he is (v16).

Example to follow — Ezekiel on his face

When judgment fell, Ezekiel didn't say, "They deserved it." He fell on his face and pleaded for the remnant (v13). I want to carry hard truth with a soft heart, and pray for the men I warn.

Worship

Lord GOD, You know every thought. You are a sanctuary in a far country. You make stone hearts into living ones, and You gather what was scattered. Your glory lingered over the city, unwilling to leave without one more look.

Prayer

Father, take out the stone in me — the places I've gone hard toward You and toward people — and give me a heart of flesh. Be a sanctuary to the men I serve who feel far from You, in prisons, rehabs and

empty rooms. Keep me from trusting walls, and teach me to walk in Your statutes from a new heart. Amen.

Ezekiel 12

The Exile's Baggage: No Word Delayed

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

People can stare at the truth and still not see it. God acted out the fall of Jerusalem in front of the exiles, named the king's escape and capture years ahead, and then dismantled the two excuses that keep people from repenting: "It'll never happen" and "It won't happen to me, not yet." God's patience is not a broken promise. When He speaks, it will be done.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 12 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning
Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

1 The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.

3 Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.

4 Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity.

5 Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby.

6 In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.

7 And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for captivity, and in the even I digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought it forth in the twilight, and I bare it upon my shoulder in their sight.

8 And in the morning came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,

9 Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou?

10 Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that are among them.

11 Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove and go into captivity.

12 And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with his eyes.

13 My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there.

14 And I will scatter toward every wind all that are about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them.

15 And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries.

16 But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

17 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

18 Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness;

19 And say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord GOD of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the land of Israel; They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, ⚠ because of the violence of all them that dwell therein.

20 And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

21 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

22 Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, ⚠ The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?

23 Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, ▲ The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision.

24 For there shall be ⚠ no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel.

25 For I am the LORD: I will speak, and ▲ the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD.

26 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

27 Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and ⚠ he prophesieth of the times that are far off.

28 Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⇄ a rebellious house *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ⚠ which have eyes to see, and see not
- **v3** ▮▮ prepare thee stuff for removing
- **v3** ⇄ in their sight *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ▲ it may be they will consider
- **v5** ▮▮ Dig thou through the wall
- **v6** ▲ for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel
- **v7** ▮▮ I did so as I was commanded
- **v9** ◷ What doest thou?
- **v10** ◷ This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem
- **v11** ◷ I am your sign
- **v12** ⚠ he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with his eyes
- **v13** ▲ My net also will I spread upon him
- **v13** ⚠ yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there
- **v15** ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** ★ I will leave a few men of them
- **v18** ▮▮ eat thy bread with quaking
- **v19** ⚠ because of the violence of all them that dwell therein
- **v22** ⚠ The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth
- **v23** ▲ The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision
- **v24** ⚠ no more any vain vision nor flattering divination
- **v25** ▲ the word that I shall speak shall come to pass
- **v27** ⚠ he prophesieth of the times that are far off
- **v28** ▲ There shall none of my words be prolonged any more

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 12:3 (KJV)

3 Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.

Setting

The chapter is undated, but it follows the temple vision of chapters 8–11 (about 592 BC). Ezekiel is in Babylon among the exiles deported with Jehoiachin in 597 BC. Back home, Zedekiah reigns as Babylon's vassal and is already leaning toward rebellion. False prophets in both places promise that the exile will be short and Jerusalem will stand. Ezekiel has just told the exiles everything he saw (11:25). Now God gives two acted-out signs and answers two popular sayings that let the people shrug off His word.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **a rebellious house:** "you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear" (v2).
- vv3–7 — **the sign of the exile's baggage:** "prepare for yourself baggage for exile" and move by day in their sight; "Perhaps they will understand though they are a rebellious house" (v3). In the evening, "Dig a hole through the wall in their sight and go out through it" (v5). "cover your face so that you cannot see the land, for I have set you as a sign to the house of Israel" (v6). "I did so, as I had been commanded" (v7).
- vv8–16 — **the meaning:** the exiles ask, "What are you doing?" (v9). "This burden concerns the prince in Jerusalem" (v10). "I am a sign to you … they will go into exile, into captivity" (v11). "The prince who is among them will load his baggage on his shoulder in the dark and go out" (v12). "I will also spread My net over him, and he will be caught in My snare," and he will be brought to Babylon, "yet he will not see it, though he will die there" (v13). "I will draw out a sword after them" (v14). "So they will know that I am the LORD when I scatter them among the nations" (v15). "But I will spare a few of them from the sword, the famine and the pestilence" so they can confess their abominations among the nations (v16).
- vv17–20 — **the sign of the trembling meal:** "eat your bread with trembling and drink your water with quivering and anxiety" (v18). So the people of Jerusalem will eat and drink, because their land will be stripped "on account of the violence of all who live in it" (v19). The cities will be laid waste (v20).
- vv21–25 — **the first proverb — "every vision fails":** the saying in Israel: "The days are long and every vision fails" (v22). God replaces it: "The days draw near as well as the fulfillment of every vision" (v23). "For there will no longer be any false vision or flattering divination" (v24). "For I the LORD will speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed" (v25).

- vv26–28 — **the second saying — "it's for later":** "The vision that he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies of times far off" (v27). God: "None of My words will be delayed any longer. Whatever word I speak will be performed" (v28).

Repeated words

rebellious house (vv2, 3, 9, 25); in their sight (vv3, 4, 5, 6, 7); baggage (vv3, 4, 6, 7, 12); exile (vv3, 4, 7, 11); sign (vv6, 11); wall (vv5, 7, 12); prince (vv10, 12); "the word of the LORD came to me" (vv1, 8, 17, 21, 26); "know that I am the LORD" (vv15, 16, 20); vision (vv22, 23, 24, 27); delayed (vv25, 28).

Contrasts

eyes to see ⟷ do not see (v2). Ezekiel covering his face (v6) ⟷ the prince who "will not see" Babylon though he dies there (v13). A prince slipping out in the dark (v12) ⟷ God's net already spread (v13). "Every vision fails" (v22) ⟷ "the fulfillment of every vision" (v23). "Times far off" (v27) ⟷ "in your days" (v25). Flattering divination (v24) ⟷ "whatever word I speak will be performed" (v25).

Chapter theme (my words)

People can stare at the truth and still not see it. God acted out the fall of Jerusalem in front of the exiles, named the king's escape and capture years ahead, and then dismantled the two excuses that keep people from repenting: "It'll never happen" and "It won't happen to me, not yet." God's patience is not a broken promise. When He speaks, it will be done.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 12:13 (KJV)

13 ▲ My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; ⚠ yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there.

A rebellious house (vv1–2)

The problem was not lack of information. They had the Law, the prophets, the temple's history, and now Ezekiel in their midst. Guzik: they "could have seen and heard – but they would not." Jesus used the same words for the crowds of His day (Mark 8:18; compare Isa 6:9–10). Spiritual blindness is willful before it becomes judicial.

The baggage and the hole in the wall (vv3–7)

Ezekiel packs the small bag of a deportee — Block, in Guzik, compares it to the sacks shown in Assyrian reliefs, holding only bare necessities. He sets it out by day, then at dusk digs through the wall of his house and slips out with his face covered. Guzik notes this contradicted the prophets promising a quick return. Feinberg, in Guzik: the digging "pictured the desperation with which they would seek

to escape." McGee, in Guzik, suggests Ezekiel "might have been somewhat of a ham actor." The point is that God made His warning impossible to miss. "Perhaps they will understand" (v3) — God still hoped.

The prince in Jerusalem (vv8–14)

The prince is Zedekiah. Feinberg, in Guzik: "The subject of the message was King Zedekiah, who was always spoken of by Ezekiel as prince, never king." Every detail came true in 586 BC. When the Babylonians broke through, Zedekiah fled by night through a gate between the walls (2 Kgs 25:4; Jer 39:4; Wright, in Guzik, points to this). The covered face pictures defeat and furtive flight; Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik, speak of "the instinctive furtiveness with which the defeated flee." He was caught on the plains of Jericho — God's net — and brought to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. There his sons were slaughtered before his eyes, his eyes were put out, and he was taken in bronze chains to Babylon (2 Kgs 25:5–7; Jer 39:5–7; 52:8–11). So he went to Babylon and died there, but never saw it (v13). Guzik observes that "the last sight King Zedekiah saw was the murder of his own sons." Clarke, in Guzik: "How accurate the prediction! and how exactly fulfilled!" The Jewish historian Josephus later wrote that Zedekiah refused to believe either Jeremiah or Ezekiel because their prophecies seemed to contradict each other — Jeremiah said he would be taken to Babylon (Jer 32:4–5), Ezekiel said he would not see it. Both were exactly right.

A few spared to testify (vv15–16)

God scatters the nation so that they will know He is the LORD. Guzik: "In the end, it was to reveal Himself to them, even if it were in His judgments." Even the survivors have a purpose — to confess among the nations that their own abominations brought this on them.

The trembling meal (vv17–20)

Ezekiel eats his ordinary bread and water while shaking. Block, in Guzik, notes that eating and drinking are "life at its most basic level"; trembling at the table means nothing is safe anymore. Wiersbe, in Guzik, notes the food would be scarce and possibly the last meal. The cause is named plainly: "the violence of all who live in it" (v19). Sin always costs more than it promises.

"Every vision fails" (vv21–25)

The proverb said: prophets have been warning for years and nothing has happened. Guzik: "The days are prolonged was actually an act of God's mercy." Feinberg adds that God's patience "was made an argument against His word." Block, in Guzik, observes that Ezekiel "skillfully" recasts their proverb: the days are not long — they are near. God also promises to silence the false prophets and their flattering divination (v24). Peter answers the same mockery in the last days: the Lord is not slow, He is patient, wanting all to come to repentance (2 Pet 3:3–9).

"It's for later" (vv26–28)

The second group doesn't deny Ezekiel speaks for God; they just push it into the distant future. Meyer, in Guzik: "They did not deny that he spoke the word of God; but comforted themselves." Morgan, in Guzik, sees both errors: "Either it mocks at the prophetic word, or says that fulfillment is postponed." Guzik, drawing on Spurgeon, warns that this delay excuse keeps many people, especially the young, from trusting God now. The answer for both groups is the same: "Whatever word I speak will be performed" (v28). Within six years Jerusalem fell.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **rebellious — *meri* (H4805):** rebellion, bitter defiance.
- **baggage — *keli* (H3627):** a vessel, article, gear.
- **exile — *golah* (H1473):** exile, the body of exiles.
- **dig — *chathar* (H2864):** to dig through, break in.
- **wall — *qir* (H7023):** a wall, the side of a house.
- **sign — *mopheth* (H4159):** a wonder, a sign or portent.
- **burden — *massa* (H4853):** a load; an oracle, a weighty prophetic message.
- **prince — *nasi* (H5387):** a leader, chief, prince.
- **net — *resheth* (H7568):** a net for catching game.
- **snare — *matsodah* (H4686):** a net, snare, stronghold.
- **trembling — *raash* (H7494):** quaking, shaking.
- **anxiety — *deagah* (H1674):** worry, care, fear.
- **proverb — *mashal* (H4912):** a saying, proverb, taunt.
- **vision — *chazon* (H2377):** a vision, revelation.
- **flattering — *chalaq* (H2509):** smooth, slippery, flattering.
- **delayed — *mashak* (H4900):** to draw out, prolong.

Cross-references

Deut 29:4; 2 Kgs 25:1–7; Isa 6:9–10; Jer 5:21; Jer 32:4–5; Jer 34:3; Jer 39:4–7; Jer 52:7–11; Ezek 4:16–17; Ezek 17:16–20; Hab 2:3; Matt 13:13–15; Mark 8:18; Luke 21:33; 2 Cor 6:2; Heb 3:13–15; 2 Pet 3:3–10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 12:5 (KJV)

5 Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby.

Command to obey — do it in their sight

"I did so, as I had been commanded" (v7). Ezekiel looked foolish digging through his own wall with his face covered, but he obeyed exactly and publicly. Sometimes God calls me to live out His truth where people can watch and wonder, "What are you doing?" (v9). That question is my opening to tell them.

Sin to confess — eyes that won't see

I can read Scripture and still not see what God is pointing at in my own life. "Eyes to see but do not see" (v2) describes selective blindness — the habit I won't look at, the relationship I won't name. I'll ask God to show me what I've refused to see.

Warning to heed — "later" is a lie

"The vision that he sees is for many years from now" (v27) is the voice of every postponed surrender. Men in addiction know it well: one more time, I'll quit Monday, I'll deal with it after I'm out. Zedekiah ran in the dark and ran straight into God's net. God's patience is mercy, not permission (2 Pet 3:9). Today is the day (2 Cor 6:2).

Promise to trust — His word will be performed

"For I the LORD will speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed" (v25). The same certainty that made the warnings come true makes the promises sure. The new heart of chapter 11 is just as certain as the fall of chapter 12. For the man who has heard a lifetime of broken promises from people, here is One whose word never fails.

Example to follow — a living sign

Ezekiel let his life become the sermon (vv6, 11). The men I disciple watch how I carry hardship and obedience more than they listen to what I say. In my books, my websites and my time with men, I want my life to say what my words say.

Worship

LORD, You see all and You say what You will do — and then You do it. Your net reaches every fugitive, and Your patience holds back judgment longer than we deserve. Not one word of Yours has ever failed.

Prayer

Lord, open my eyes and ears. Break the "later" in me and in the men I serve — let today be the day we turn. Make my life a sign that points to You. Thank You that every promise in Christ is as sure as every warning, and that Your patience is giving us room to repent. Amen.

Ezekiel 13

Whitewashed Walls: Prophets of Peace When There Is No Peace

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The most dangerous voice is the one that tells me what I want to hear and calls it God. These prophets painted over a cracked wall and called it safe, and the storm was already on its way. God tore down the whitewash so His people could see the truth — and He did it to rescue them.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 13 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning
★ Violet Promise / blessing
◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that ⚠ prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; ⚠ Woe unto the foolish prophets, that ⚠ follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

4 O Israel, thy prophets are ⚠ like the foxes in the deserts.

5 ⚠ Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in ◷ the day of the LORD.

6 They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and ⚠ the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.

7 Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken?

8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, ▲ I am against you, saith the Lord GOD.

9 And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: ⚠ they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ⇄ ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

10 Because, even because they have seduced my people, ⚠ saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with ⇄ untempered morter:

11 Say unto them which daub it with ⇄ untempered morter, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones , shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.

12 Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, ⚠ Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?

13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it.

14 So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with ⇄ untempered morter, and bring it down to the ground, so that ◷ the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ⇄ ye shall know that I am the LORD.

15 Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with ⇄ untempered morter, and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it;

16 To wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which ⚠ see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord GOD.

17 Likewise, thou son of man, Set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them,

18 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes , and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature ⚠ to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you?

19 And will ye pollute me among my people ⚠ for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?

20 Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make them fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly.

21 Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and ★ deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ⇄ ye shall know that I am the LORD.

22 Because with lies ye have ⚠ made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and ⚠ strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:

23 Therefore ★ ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ⇄ ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⚠ prophesy out of their own hearts
- **v2** ▮▮ Hear ye the word of the LORD
- **v3** ⚠ Woe unto the foolish prophets
- **v3** ⚠ follow their own spirit
- **v4** ⚠ like the foxes in the deserts
- **v5** ⚠ Ye have not gone up into the gaps
- **v5** ◷ the day of the LORD
- **v6** ⚠ the LORD hath not sent them
- **v8** ▲ I am against you
- **v9** ⇄ ye shall know that I am *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ⚠ they shall not be in the assembly of my people
- **v10** ⚠ saying, Peace; and there was no peace
- **v10** ⇄ untempered morter *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ⚠ Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?
- **v13** ▲ I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury
- **v14** ◷ the foundation thereof shall be discovered
- **v16** ⚠ see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace
- **v17** ▮▮ set thy face against the daughters of thy people
- **v18** ⚠ to hunt souls
- **v19** ⚠ for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread
- **v21** ★ deliver my people out of your hand
- **v22** ⚠ made the heart of the righteous sad
- **v22** ⚠ strengthened the hands of the wicked
- **v23** ★ ye shall see no more vanity

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 13:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that ⚠ prophesy out of their own hearts, 📖 Hear ye the word of the LORD;

Setting

Ezekiel is a priest living among the exiles in Babylon, taken there with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC. Chapter 13 has no date of its own, but it falls between the oracle dated in the sixth year of the exile (8:1, about 592 BC) and the one dated in the seventh year (20:1, about 591 BC). Zedekiah still reigns in Jerusalem, the city is still standing, and voices both in Jerusalem and among the exiles are promising that all will soon be well. In chapter 12 the people said the vision was delayed; now God turns on the prophets who fed that hope.

Structure

- vv1–7 — **prophets God did not send:** Ezekiel must speak against those "who prophesy from their own inspiration" (v2). "Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing" (v3). "Your prophets have been like foxes among ruins" (v4). "You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel" (v5). They claim "The LORD declares," "when the LORD has not sent them" (v6–7).
- vv8–9 — **"I am against you":** God declares Himself their enemy (v8). "They will have no place in the council of My people, nor will they be written down in the register of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel" (v9).
- vv10–16 — **the whitewashed wall:** "they have misled My people by saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace" (v10). When the people build a wall, the prophets "plaster it over with whitewash" (v10). Rain, hailstones and "a violent wind will break out" (v11). When it falls, "Where is the plaster with which you plastered it?" (v12). God will bring it to the ground "so that its foundation is laid bare" (v14) — prophets who "see visions of peace for her when there is no peace" (v16).
- vv17–19 — **the women who hunt souls:** "set your face against the daughters of your people" (v17), who "sew magic bands on all wrists" and make veils "to hunt down lives" (v18), profaning God "for handfuls of barley and fragments of bread" (v19).
- vv20–23 — **God tears off the charms:** "Behold, I am against your magic bands" (v20). He will rescue His people (v21), because "you disheartened the righteous with falsehood" and "encouraged the wicked not to turn from his wicked way and preserve his life" (v22). "I will deliver My people out of your hand" (v23).

Repeated words

whitewash (vv10, 11, 14, 15); wall (vv5, 10, 12, 14, 15); plaster / plastered (vv10, 11, 12, 14, 15); peace (vv10, 16); falsehood (vv6, 8, 22); false vision(s) (vv7, 9, 23); lying (vv6, 7, 9, 19); divination(s) (vv6, 7, 9, 23); hunt

(vv18, 20, 21); "I am against" (vv8, 20); their own inspiration (vv2, 17); "you will know that I am the LORD / Lord GOD" (vv9, 14, 21, 23).

Contrasts

prophets of their own inspiration (v2) ⟷ the word of the LORD (v2). "The LORD declares" (v6) ⟷ "it is not I who have spoken" (v7). Standing in the breach (v5) ⟷ foxes among ruins (v4). "Peace!" (v10) ⟷ no peace (vv10, 16). A wall that looks finished ⟷ a foundation laid bare (v14). The righteous disheartened ⟷ the wicked encouraged (v22). Hunted lives (v18) ⟷ My people delivered (v23).

Chapter theme (my words)

The most dangerous voice is the one that tells me what I want to hear and calls it God. These prophets painted over a cracked wall and called it safe, and the storm was already on its way. God tore down the whitewash so His people could see the truth — and He did it to rescue them.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 13:8 (KJV)

[8]Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, ▲ I am against you, saith the Lord GOD.

Prophets from their own hearts (vv1–7)

Guzik notes that most of these prophets were promising a quick deliverance from Babylon and an early return from exile. It was the same message Hananiah preached in Jerusalem (Jer 28) and Ahab and Zedekiah preached among the exiles (Jer 29:21–23). Their source, Guzik says, was not necessarily demonic; it was their own desires and hopes. Feinberg, in Guzik: "The wish was father to the thought, and they spoke accordingly." The word "foolish" (*nabal*) means more than unintelligent — it is moral and spiritual dullness. Foxes (or jackals) among ruins add nothing and feed on destruction; Trapp, in Guzik, calls them "Cowardly, crafty, cruel, greedy." A true prophet runs into the breach in the wall when the enemy attacks (compare 22:30; Ps 106:23). These men stood back. "The day of the LORD" here is the coming fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Three exclusions (vv8–9)

God is "against" them. They lose their place in the council of God's people, their names in the register of Israel (compare Ezra 2:62), and their part in the return to the land. Block, in Guzik: "These three punishments strike at the heart of what it meant to be an Israelite."

The whitewashed wall (vv10–16)

The heart of their lie was "Peace!" when there was no peace (compare Jer 6:14; 8:11). Wright, in Guzik: they "never spoke of repentance." The picture is vivid: the people throw up a flimsy wall (*chayits*, used only here) and the prophets slap whitewash (*taphel*) on it so it looks solid. Feinberg, in Guzik: whitewash "is useless for strengthening insecure walls." The storm — rain, hail and wind — is God's

judgment through Babylon, and when the wall falls the builders and the plasterers fall with it. Guzik's point: a wall needs inspecting before the storm, because the storm will expose it. Wiersbe, in Guzik: "The counterfeit prophets gave the people a false hope, so God gave them no hope at all."

The women who hunt souls (vv17–19)

Israel had true prophetesses — Miriam, Deborah, Huldah — but Block, in Guzik, notes that Ezekiel won't even give these women the title. They sewed "magic bands" (*keseth*) and made "veils" (*mispachah*), apparently tools of sorcery; Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik, admit we can only guess exactly what they were. Wright reports that Jewish women in Babylon sold charms and spells. They "hunted" lives — trapping people through fear and superstition, promising life or death for a fee of barley and bread. Guzik puts part of the blame on the listeners: "If none of God's people listened to false prophets, there would be much fewer of them."

God's rescue (vv20–23)

God tears the bands from their arms and the veils from their heads, and sets His people free like birds released from a snare. The worst effect of their lies is in v22: they crushed the righteous and comforted the wicked, so the wicked saw no reason to repent. That is the opposite of God's word (18:23, 32; 33:11). And four times the chapter says the result will be that they "know that I am the LORD" — judgment that reveals God (vv9, 14, 21, 23).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **inspiration / heart — *leb* (H3820):** the heart, mind, inner self — their message came from inside them, not from God.
- **foolish — *nabal* (H5036):** senseless, morally and spiritually dull.
- **foxes — *shual* (H7776):** fox or jackal.
- **ruins — *chorbah* (H2723):** a waste, desolate place.
- **breaches — *perets* (H6556):** a break or gap in a wall.
- **wall (v5) — *gader* (H1447):** a stone wall, fence.
- **falsehood — *shav* (H7723):** emptiness, vanity, what is worthless.
- **lying — *kazab* (H3577):** a lie, deception.
- **divination — *qesem* (H7081):** pagan fortune-telling, forbidden in Deut 18:10.
- **council — *sod* (H5475):** a circle of close counsel, intimate fellowship.
- **flimsy wall — *chayits* (H2434):** a partition wall; used only in v10.
- **whitewash — *taphel* (H8602):** plaster; as an adjective, tasteless, worthless.
- **magic bands — *keseth* (H3704):** a band or fillet; only here (vv18, 20).
- **veils — *mispachah* (H4555):** a veil or long covering; only here (vv18, 21).
- **hunt — *tsud* (H6679):** to hunt, lie in wait, ensnare.
- **disheartened — *kaah* (H3512):** to make dejected, to break someone's spirit.

Cross-references

Deut 18:9–22; 1 Kgs 22:13–28; Ps 106:23; Isa 30:10; Jer 6:14; Jer 8:11; Jer 14:13–15; Jer 23:16–32; Jer 28; Jer 29:8–9, 21–23; Lam 2:14; Ezek 22:28–30; Mic 3:5–7; Matt 7:15–27; Matt 23:27; 2 Tim 4:3–4; 1 John 4:1.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 13:17 (KJV)

17 Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them,

Command to obey — "Listen to the word of the LORD" (v2)

The cure for false voices is the true word. I'll test every sermon, post, podcast and "word from the Lord" against Scripture (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11). That's why I build Bible-study tools at all — so men can open the Book and check for themselves.

Sin to confess — whitewash

I know how to put a fresh coat of paint on a cracked wall: a smile on Sunday, a good report when someone asks how I'm doing, a quick "I'm fine." I confess the places where I've plastered over sin instead of tearing it out. And I confess the times I've told a man "Peace" when I should have told him the truth in love.

Warning to heed — "Peace!" when there is no peace

In recovery, the most dangerous voice says, "One won't hurt," "You've got this handled," "You don't need the meeting." In prison it says, "God doesn't care what you did." Those voices sound kind and they lead to the storm. A real friend — and a real prophet — goes into the breach and says the hard thing. I want to be that man for the men I disciple, and I want them to be that for me.

Promise to trust — "I will deliver My people out of your hand" (v23)

God doesn't leave His people in the snare. For the man trapped by fear, superstition, a con, or a lie he's believed for years: God tears the bands off and lets the soul go free (Ps 124:7; John 8:32).

Example to follow — the man in the breach

Ezekiel stood where the false prophets wouldn't. Like him, I'll speak what God says, not what pays — no handfuls of barley, no flattery, no telling people what they want to hear. And I'll guard the righteous from discouragement while I refuse to comfort the wicked in their sin (v22).

Worship

The LORD speaks, and His word stands when every whitewashed wall comes down. He is against the lie and for His people. He rescues the hunted. He makes Himself known even through the storm.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You alone speak truth. Strip the whitewash off my life and build me on a foundation that holds. Make me deaf to voices that flatter and quick to the voice of Your word. Give me courage to stand in the breach for the men You've given me, and free every soul caught in the snare of a lie. Amen.

Ezekiel 14

Idols in the Heart: Noah, Daniel and Job

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

I can sit in the right chair, in front of the right preacher, holding the right Bible, and still have an idol on the throne of my heart. God won't play along with a divided heart — He goes after the heart itself. And nobody else's faith can stand in for mine: not Noah's, not Daniel's, not Job's.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 14 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, these men have ⚠ set up their idols in their heart, and put ⚠ the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: ▲ should I be enquired of at all by them?

4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his ⇄ idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his ⇄ idols;

5 ▲ That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their ⇄ idols.

6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your ⇄ idols; and ▮ turn away your faces from all your abominations.

7 For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his ⇄ idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

8 And ▲ I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ⇄ ye shall know that I am the LORD.

9 And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, ▲ I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

10 And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him;

11 That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but ★ that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

12 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,

13 Son of man, ⚠ when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and ▲ will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:

14 Though these three men, ⇄ Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

15 If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:

16 Though these three men were in it, ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.

17 Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:

18 Though these three men were in it, ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.

19 Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:

20 Though ⇄ Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

21 For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send ⚠ my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?

22 Yet, behold, ★ therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ★ ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it.

23 And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that ▲ I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ certain of the elders of Israel
- **v3** ⚠ set up their idols in their heart
- **v3** ⇄ idols *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ⚠ the stumblingblock of their iniquity
- **v3** ▲ should I be enquired of at all by them?
- **v5** ▲ That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart
- **v5** ⚠ they are all estranged from me through their idols
- **v6** Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols
- **v6** turn away your faces from all your abominations
- **v8** ▲ I will set my face against that man
- **v8** ⇄ ye shall know that I am the LORD
- **v9** ▲ I the LORD have deceived that prophet
- **v11** ★ that they may be my people, and I may be their God
- **v13** ⚠ when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously
- **v13** ▲ will break the staff of the bread thereof
- **v14** ⇄ Noah, Daniel, and Job *(every occurrence)*
- **v14** ◷ they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness
- **v16** ▲ as I live *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** ◷ they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters
- **v21** ⚠ my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem
- **v22** ★ therein shall be left a remnant
- **v22** ★ ye shall be comforted
- **v23** ▲ I have not done without cause all that I have done in it

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 14:3 (KJV)

3 Son of man, these men have ⚠ set up their idols in their heart, and put ⚠ the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: ▲ should I be enquired of at all by them?

Setting

Ezekiel is in Babylon among the exiles of 597 BC; Zedekiah reigns in a still-standing Jerusalem. The chapter isn't dated, but it sits between the oracles of the sixth year (8:1, about 592 BC) and the seventh (20:1, about 591 BC). Both of those dates also begin with elders sitting before Ezekiel — so this was a pattern. The exiles' leaders came to the prophet's house looking religious and wanting a word from God.

Structure

- vv1–5 — **idols in the heart:** "some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me" (v1). God tells Ezekiel, "these men have set up their idols in their hearts" and put "the stumbling block of their iniquity" before their faces. "Should I be consulted by them at all?" (v3). God will answer such a man Himself, "in view of the multitude of his idols" (v4), to "lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols" (v5).
- vv6–8 — **repent:** "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations" (v6). The same applies to the foreigner living in Israel (v7). "I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb" (v8).
- vv9–11 — **the deceived prophet:** if a prophet gives such a man the word he wants, "it is I, the LORD, who have prevailed upon that prophet" (v9). Both bear their guilt alike (v10), so that Israel "may no longer stray from Me." "Thus they will be My people, and I shall be their God" (v11).
- vv12–20 — **Noah, Daniel and Job:** when a land sins "by committing unfaithfulness," God may "destroy its supply of bread" (v13), send wild beasts (v15), the sword (v17) or plague (v19). "Even though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves" (v14). "As I live" (vv16, 18, 20), "they could not deliver either their sons or their daughters" (vv16, 18).
- vv21–23 — **the four judgments and the survivors:** "My four severe judgments against Jerusalem" (v21). Yet "survivors will be left in it" and will come to the exiles; "you will see their conduct and actions" and be comforted (v22), knowing "I have not done in vain whatever I did to it" (v23).

Repeated words

idols (vv3, 4, 5, 6, 7); heart / hearts (vv3, 4, 5, 7); man and beast (vv13, 17, 19, 21); deliver (vv14, 16, 18, 20); Noah, Daniel and Job (vv14, 20); "as I live" (vv16, 18, 20).

Contrasts

sitting before the prophet (v1) ⟷ idols set up in the heart (v3). Seeking a word from God ⟷ God setting His face against the seeker (v8). Estranged from Me (v5) ⟷ My people, and I their God (v11). The righteousness of three great men (v14) ⟷ unable to save even their sons and daughters (v16). Calamity on Jerusalem (v22) ⟷ comfort for the exiles (vv22–23).

Chapter theme (my words)

I can sit in the right chair, in front of the right preacher, holding the right Bible, and still have an idol on the throne of my heart. God won't play along with a divided heart — He goes after the heart itself. And nobody else's faith can stand in for mine: not Noah's, not Daniel's, not Job's.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 14:5 (KJV)

5 ▲ That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their ⇄ idols.

Idols behind the eyes (vv1–5)

These elders weren't bowing to statues in Ezekiel's living room. Their idols were "in their hearts" — set before their faces as a stumbling block, the thing they looked at and lived toward. Wiersbe, in Guzik, compares them to the Pharisees (Matt 15:8–9), and Guzik to Ananias and Sapphira: correct on the outside, divided within. McGee, in Guzik, likens it to "coming to church with a big Bible under your arm." Alexander, in Guzik: "No true direction can be given to those who have erected idols in their hearts." But God's purpose is not just to expose them. He answers so that He may "lay hold of" (*taphas*) their hearts — Wiersbe, in Guzik, says to "recapture" them. Judgment here is a rescue operation for the heart.

Repent (vv6–8)

The call is plain: turn from idols, turn your face from abominations. It reaches the foreigner too (v7); God's standard is the same for everyone in the community. The one who refuses, God will oppose personally — Trapp, in Guzik: "I will look him to death" — and make him a proverb, a byword for judgment.

The deceived prophet (vv9–11)

This is a hard passage. If an idol-hearted man goes looking for a prophet who will tell him what he wants, God may let that prophet be "prevailed upon" (*pathah*, enticed, deceived) and speak a false word — then judge both of them. Block, in Guzik: "Yahweh answers insincerity with insincerity." Compare Micaiah's vision in 1 Kgs 22:19–23 and Paul's warning in 2 Thess 2:10–12: those who refuse the truth are given over to the lie they prefer. God isn't the author of sin here; He is handing people over to what they chose (Rom 1:24). And the goal is gracious: that Israel would stop straying and be His people again (v11). Guzik observes that the exile did, in a real sense, cure Israel of open idolatry.

Noah, Daniel and Job (vv12–20)

Four judgments — famine, wild beasts, sword and plague — are pictured one at a time. Guzik calls them "Ezekiel's version of the four horsemen" (compare Rev 6:8). In each case even the most righteous intercessors could save only themselves. Wright, in Guzik: "a nation cannot shelter under the goodness of a few individuals." Noah saved his family through the flood, and Job interceded for his friends (Job 42:8) — but not here. Jerusalem was too far gone (compare Jer 15:1, where even Moses and Samuel could not turn God's heart toward the people).

Which Daniel?

Two main views. (1) Most conservative interpreters, and Guzik, take him to be Ezekiel's contemporary, the Daniel of the exile, whose wisdom and righteousness were already known (Dan 1–2); Feinberg, in Guzik: "Daniel's fame for wisdom and piety was already wide-spread in Ezekiel's day." (2) Some scholars point to the Hebrew spelling (*Dan'el*) and to a righteous king "Danel" in older Canaanite (Ugaritic) texts, and argue Ezekiel means an ancient hero like Noah and Job. Guzik holds to the biblical Daniel. Either way, Noah and Job are not Israelites — righteousness, not ancestry, is the point — and Clarke, in Guzik, insists Job was as real a person as Noah or Daniel.

Survivors who prove God right (vv21–23)

"How much more" Jerusalem, facing all four judgments at once. Yet some will survive and be brought to Babylon. Guzik notes that "conduct and actions" here are evil deeds: these survivors are not a godly remnant. Taylor, in Guzik: "So the remnant of the fugitives would be wicked men." When the exiles see them, they'll understand why the city fell — and that God did "not ... in vain" whatever He did. The comfort is the comfort of seeing that God is just.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **elders — *zaqen* (H2205):** an old man, a community leader.
- **idols — *gillulim* (H1544):** idols — a contemptuous word, possibly related to dung pellets; Ezekiel's favorite term for false gods.
- **stumbling block — *mikshol* (H4383):** something that trips a person up, an occasion of sin.
- **iniquity — *avon* (H5771):** guilt, perversity, crookedness.
- **consulted / inquire — *darash* (H1875):** to seek, consult, ask of God.
- **lay hold of — *taphas* (H8610):** to grasp, seize, take hold.
- **estranged — *zur* (H2114):** to be a stranger, turn aside, be alienated.
- **repent / turn — *shub* (H7725):** to turn back, return.
- **abominations — *toebah* (H8441):** something detestable to God.
- **proverb — *mashal* (H4912):** a saying, byword, example.
- **prevailed upon — *pathah* (H6601):** to entice, persuade, deceive.
- **unfaithfulness — *maal* (H4604):** treachery, breach of trust.
- **righteousness — *tsedaqah* (H6666):** right conduct, conformity to God's standard.
- **survivors — *peletah* (H6413):** an escaped remnant.
- **comforted — *nacham* (H5162):** to be consoled; also to be sorry, relent.
- **in vain — *chinnam* (H2600):** without cause, for nothing.

Cross-references

Gen 6:8–9; Deut 29:18–19; 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Kgs 22:19–23; Job 1:1; Job 42:8; Ps 66:18; Prov 28:9; Isa 29:13; Jer 15:1–2; Ezek 8:1; Ezek 20:1–3; Ezek 33:30–32; Dan 1:8; Dan 6:4; Matt 15:8–9; Acts 5:1–11; Rom 1:24; 2 Thess 2:10–12; 1 John 5:21; Rev 6:8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 14:6 (KJV)

6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

Command to obey — "Repent and turn away from your idols" (v6)

An idol is anything I set up in my heart in God's place — a substance, a person, money, approval, control. I'll name mine honestly before God and turn my face away from it, not just once but every time it shows up in front of my eyes. Turning my face is practical: delete the number, change the route, close the app, leave the room.

Sin to confess — church on the outside, idols on the inside

I can sit before the Word like those elders did and still be holding something back. I confess the places where I've asked God for direction while keeping a back room He isn't allowed into. He sees the heart (1 Sam 16:7).

Warning to heed — looking for the answer I want

If I go shopping for a word that lets me keep my idol, I'll find one — and it will be God's judgment, not His guidance (v9). Men in recovery know this: you can always find the friend who says, "You're fine." Men coming out of prison know it too: the old crew will always tell you what you want to hear. I'll seek counsel from people who love me enough to say no.

Promise to trust — "Thus they will be My people, and I shall be their God" (v11)

God's goal in all of this is relationship. He goes after my heart to win it back, not to throw it away. For the man who thinks he's too far gone, God's aim is the same: to lay hold of his heart and bring him home.

Example to follow — Noah, Daniel and Job

Each one stood righteous in a corrupt world: Noah in a violent generation, Daniel in a pagan palace, Job in the ashes. None of them could save anyone else by their own righteousness, and I can't either — my mother's faith or my pastor's won't stand in for mine. Only Christ's righteousness covers others (2 Cor 5:21). So I'll walk with God myself, and point men to the One who can save them.

Worship

The LORD sees past my face to my heart. He pursues the estranged. His judgments are never in vain, and everything He does has a cause. He is just, and He wants His people back.

Prayer

Lord GOD, search my heart and show me every idol I've set up there. Tear down what stands in Your place and lay hold of my heart again. Keep me from looking for words that flatter me, and give me friends who tell me the truth. Make me Yours, and be my God. Amen.

Ezekiel 15

The Useless Vine: Wood Fit Only for the Fire

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

A vine has one purpose — fruit. Its wood is too soft and crooked for anything else. When Israel stopped bearing fruit, the very thing they were proud of, being God's vine, left them good for nothing but the fire. Privilege without fruit is not safety.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 15 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions · Green Command / instruction · Sky Key repeated word · Rose Sin / warning · Violet Promise / blessing · Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

3 Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?

4 Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?

5 Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?

6 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

7 And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them.

8 And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** What is the vine tree more than any tree
- **v2** vine tree *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** among the trees of the forest
- **v3** Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work?
- **v3** will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?
- **v4** it is cast into the fire for fuel
- **v4** fire *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** the fire devoureth both the ends of it
- **v4** the midst of it is burned
- **v4** Is it meet for any work?
- **v5** when it was whole, it was meet for no work
- **v5** how much less shall it be meet yet for any work
- **v6** which I have given to the fire for fuel
- **v6** so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem
- **v7** I will set my face against them
- **v7** they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them
- **v7** ye shall know that I am the LORD
- **v8** I will make the land desolate
- **v8** because they have committed a trespass

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 15:4 (KJV)

4 Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?

Setting

Ezekiel is among the exiles in Babylon, still in the undated stretch between the sixth year (8:1, about 592 BC) and the seventh (20:1, about 591 BC). Jerusalem has already been through the fire twice — Nebuchadnezzar's first deportation (605 BC) and the one that took Ezekiel and King Jehoiachin (597 BC). Zedekiah reigns over what's left, and the people tell themselves that God's chosen vine could never be cut down. This short parable answers that.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **what is vine wood good for?** "How is the wood of the vine better than any wood of a branch which is among the trees of the forest?" (v2). "Can wood be taken from it to make anything, or can men take a peg from it on which to hang any vessel?" (v3).
- vv4–5 — **charred wood:** "If it has been put into the fire for fuel, and the fire has consumed both of its ends and its middle part has been charred, is it then useful for anything?" (v4). "Behold, while it is intact, it is not made into anything. How much less" after the fire has consumed it (v5).
- vv6–7 — **the meaning — Jerusalem:** "As the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (v6). "I set My face against them. Though they have come out of the fire, yet the fire will consume them. Then you will know that I am the LORD" (v7).
- v8 — **the reason:** "I will make the land desolate, because they have acted unfaithfully" (v8).

Repeated words

fire (vv4, 5, 6, 7); wood (vv2, 3, 6); anything (vv3, 4, 5); trees of the forest (vv2, 6); set My face against them (v7, twice).

Contrasts

the vine ⟷ the other trees of the forest (v2). Intact ⟷ charred (vv4–5). Useless before the fire ⟷ how much less after it (v5). Out of one fire ⟷ into another (v7). God's chosen vine ⟷ fuel for the fire (v6).

Chapter theme (my words)

A vine has one purpose — fruit. Its wood is too soft and crooked for anything else. When Israel stopped bearing fruit, the very thing they were proud of, being God's vine, left them good for nothing but the fire. Privilege without fruit is not safety.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 15:7 (KJV)

7 And ▲ I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one ⇄ fire, and another ⇄ fire shall devour them; and ⇄ ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them.

The vine and its people (vv1–2)

All through Scripture the vine stands for Israel — brought out of Egypt and planted by God (Ps 80:8–16), tended and expected to bear good grapes (Isa 5:1–7), "a choice vine" that turned wild (Jer 2:21; Hos 10:1). Ezekiel will use the vine again in chapters 17 and 19. Guzik suggests Ezekiel is answering a protest: surely God would spare His own vine? His answer is that Israel's privileged status brought greater accountability, not less. Block, in Guzik: "Grace places high demands on its recipients."

Good for nothing but fruit (vv2–3)

Notice what the parable never mentions — fruit. Morgan, in Guzik: "He makes no allusion to that which is always the chief idea in the use of that figure, its fruit." Guzik reads the silence as deliberate: Israel had no fruit to show. Without fruit, a vine is worse than an ordinary tree. Its wood can't frame a house, shape a tool, or even make a peg to hang a pot on. A vine exists for one thing.

Charred at both ends (vv4–5)

Throw vine wood into the fire and it's fuel. Pull it out half burned — ends gone, middle charred — and it's worth even less. Block, in Guzik: "Unlike metal, firing wood does not enhance its intrinsic value." Many see the burned ends as the judgments Judah had already suffered — the deportations of 605 and 597 BC — and the charred middle as Jerusalem itself, still standing but scorched. Wright, in Guzik: "God, the Divine Carpenter, has not been able to make anything out of the vine nation."

From one fire to another (vv6–7)

God now makes the point plain: the inhabitants of Jerusalem are that vine wood, given to the fire. "Though they have come out of the fire, yet the fire will consume them" — the survivors of the earlier invasions will not escape the final one in 586 BC. Guzik notes that the warning came in advance, so that when judgment fell the people would know the LORD had spoken. "I set My face against them" appears twice in one verse — the same phrase used against idolaters in 14:8.

Persistent unfaithfulness (v8)

The reason is given in one word-pair: they "acted unfaithfully" (Hebrew *maal maal*, literally "trespassed a trespass"). Guzik: "It wasn't only the sin of Israel that brought God's judgment, but their *persistent* sin." The land would be made desolate because the people had broken faith again and again.

The True Vine

Guzik links this chapter to Jesus' words in John 15:1–6: "I am the true vine." Where Israel failed to bear fruit, Christ does not fail. Morgan, in Guzik: "There can be no failure in Him Who is the True Vine."

Branches that abide in Him bear fruit; branches that don't are gathered and burned (John 15:6). Christians differ on how far John 15:6 speaks of losing salvation, of judgment on false professors, or of a fruitless believer's loss of reward — but all agree the call is to abide.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **vine — *gephen* (H1612):** a vine, grapevine.
- **wood — *ets* (H6086):** tree, wood, timber.
- **branch — *zemorah* (H2156):** a branch, twig, vine shoot.
- **forest — *yaar* (H3293):** a thicket, wood, forest.
- **make anything — *melakah* (H4399):** work, craftsmanship, useful labor.
- **peg — *yathed* (H3489):** a peg, tent pin, nail.
- **vessel — *keli* (H3627):** a utensil, pot, implement.
- **fuel — *oklah* (H402):** food — what the fire "eats."
- **consumed — *akal* (H398):** to eat, devour, burn up.
- **charred — *charar* (H2787):** to be scorched, burned.
- **intact — *tamim* (H8549):** whole, complete, sound.
- **inhabitants — *yashab* (H3427):** to sit, dwell, live.
- **desolate — *shemamah* (H8077):** a waste, devastation.
- **acted unfaithfully — *maal* (H4603):** to act treacherously, break faith.

Cross-references

Deut 32:32; Ps 80:8–16; Isa 5:1–7; Isa 27:2–6; Jer 2:21; Hos 10:1; Ezek 17:5–10; Ezek 19:10–14; Matt 3:10; Matt 21:33–43; Luke 13:6–9; John 15:1–8; Gal 5:22–23; Heb 6:7–8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 15:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, ⇄ What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is ◷ among the trees of the forest?

Command to obey — abide and bear fruit

Ezekiel's vine was useless without fruit, and Jesus says, "apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). My job isn't to impress God with how sturdy my wood is. It's to stay connected to Christ — in the Word, in prayer, in obedience — and let Him produce the fruit (Gal 5:22–23).

Sin to confess — leaning on privilege

Israel said, "We're God's vine — He won't burn us." I can say, "I was raised in church," "I've written books," "I lead a Bible study." I confess the times I've trusted my position instead of walking in faithfulness. Being chosen is a call to fruit, not a shield against discipline.

Warning to heed — out of one fire and into another

Some men walk out of one fire — an overdose, an arrest, a prison sentence — and think the danger is past, so they go right back to the same life. Ezekiel warns: if nothing changes, another fire is coming (v7). Surviving the first fire is a gift meant to turn me around, not permission to keep going.

Promise to trust — the True Vine never fails

Jesus is the vine Israel couldn't be. For the man who feels like charred, worthless wood — burned at both ends, good for nothing — Christ can graft him in and make him fruitful (John 15:5, 16). Usefulness doesn't depend on what the fire left of me; it depends on whom I'm connected to.

Example to follow — the vinedresser's patience

God gave Israel centuries of warning before the fire, and Jesus told of a vineyard owner who gave a fruitless tree one more year (Luke 13:6–9). I want to be patient with the men I disciple — digging around the roots, giving time — while still telling them the truth about the fire.

Worship

The LORD planted His vine and tended it with care. He is patient, but He is not mocked. He speaks before He acts, so that we may know He is the LORD. And in Christ He has given us a Vine that never fails.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I don't want to be wood without fruit. Keep me abiding in Jesus, the True Vine. Forgive me for trusting in my privileges instead of walking with You. Use the fires I've already come through to turn me, not harden me. And make my life — and the lives of the men I serve — fruitful for Your glory. Amen.

Ezekiel 16

The Foundling Bride: Grace Betrayed, Covenant Remembered

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God found Jerusalem dying in a field and said "Live!" He married her, washed her and crowned her — and she took His gifts and gave herself to idols, even her children. The judgment is as hard as the sin. But the last word is grace: God remembers the covenant she forgot and forgives what she cannot undo.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 16 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her ⇄ abominations,

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

4 And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.

5 None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast ◷ cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, ▲ I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.

8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and ▲ I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and ★ entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and ★ thou becamest mine.

9 ▲ Then washed I thee with water; yea, I throughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

10 I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen , and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for ▲ it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

15 But ⚠ thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the ⇄ harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.

16 And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the ⇄ harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.

17 Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,

18 And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.

19 My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord GOD.

20 Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou ⚠ sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter,

21 That ⚠ thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?

22 And in all thine ⇄ abominations and thy whoredoms ⚠ thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood.

23 And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (⚠ woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;)

24 That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street.

25 Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms.

26 Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.

27 Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way.

28 Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians , because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the ⇄ harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied.

29 Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.

30 ⚠ How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman;

31 In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an ⇄ harlot, in that thou scornest hire;

32 But as ⚠ a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!

33 They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.

34 And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.

35 Wherefore, O ⇄ harlot, hear the word of the LORD:

36 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy ⇄ abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;

37 Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.

38 And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.

39 And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare.

40 They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords.

41 And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the ⇄ harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.

42 So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and ▲ my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.

43 Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine ⇄ abominations.

44 Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, ◷ As is the mother, so is her daughter.

45 Thou art thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite.

46 And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters.

47 Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their ⇄ abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.

48 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.

49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, ⚠ pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, ⚠ neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

51 Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine ⇄ abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine ⇄ abominations which thou hast done.

52 Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.

53 When I shall bring again their captivity , the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them:

54 That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them.

55 When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.

56 For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride,

57 Before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of thy reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about.

58 Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine ⇄ abominations, saith the LORD.

59 For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.

60 Nevertheless ★ I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee ★ an everlasting covenant.

61 Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.

62 And I will establish my covenant with thee; and ▲ thou shalt know that I am the LORD:

63 That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, ★ when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⇄ abominations *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** cast out in the open field
- **v6** ▲ I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live
- **v8** ▲ I spread my skirt over thee
- **v8** ★ entered into a covenant with thee
- **v8** ★ thou becamest mine
- **v9** ▲ Then washed I thee with water
- **v14** ▲ it was perfect through my comeliness
- **v15** ⚠ thou didst trust in thine own beauty
- **v15** ⇄ harlot *(every occurrence)*
- **v20** ⚠ sacrificed unto them to be devoured
- **v21** ⚠ thou hast slain my children
- **v22** ⚠ thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth
- **v23** ⚠ woe, woe unto thee
- **v30** ⚠ How weak is thine heart
- **v32** ⚠ a wife that committeth adultery
- **v35** O harlot, hear the word of the LORD
- **v42** ▲ my jealousy shall depart from thee
- **v44** As is the mother, so is her daughter
- **v49** ⚠ pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness
- **v49** ⚠ neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy
- **v60** ★ I will remember my covenant with thee
- **v60** ★ an everlasting covenant
- **v62** ▲ thou shalt know that I am the LORD
- **v63** ★ when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 16:8 (KJV)

8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and ▲ I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and ★ entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and ★ thou becamest mine.

Setting

The chapter carries no date of its own; it falls between the oracles dated to 592 BC (8:1) and 591 BC (20:1). Ezekiel is among the exiles in Babylon, taken with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC. Back home Zedekiah sits on Judah's throne, and Jerusalem still believes it is safe. God tells Ezekiel to "make known to Jerusalem her abominations" (v2). He does it with the longest and most shocking parable in the book: the story of an abandoned baby girl whom God rescued, married and made a queen — and who became a prostitute. The imagery is blunt because the betrayal was. Jewish tradition treated it with caution; the Mishnah records that Rabbi Eliezer forbade its public reading as a prophetic lesson.

Structure

- vv1–7 — **the abandoned baby:** "Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite, your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite" (v3). No one cut her cord or washed her; "you were thrown out into the open field" (v5). "When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood, 'Live!'" (v6).
- vv8–14 — **the bride made a queen:** "so I spread My skirt over you … I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you … so that you became Mine" (v8). "I bathed you with water" (v9), clothed and crowned her; "You ate fine flour, honey and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty" (v13). "Then your fame went forth among the nations … for it was perfect because of My splendor" (v14).
- vv15–22 — **gifts turned into idols:** "But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame" (v15). God's clothes, gold, oil and bread go to idols (vv16–19). Worst of all, "you took your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured" (v20). "You slaughtered My children" (v21). Through it all, "you did not remember the days of your youth" (v22).
- vv23–34 — **worse than a harlot:** "Woe, woe to you!" (v23). Shrines on every street (vv24–25, 31); alliances with Egypt, Assyria and Chaldea (vv26–29). "How languishing is your heart" (v30). "You adulteress wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband!" (v32). She pays her lovers: "you give money and no money is given you" (v34).
- vv35–43 — **the verdict:** "Therefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD" (v35). "I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure" (v37); they will strip her, stone her and burn her houses (vv39–41). "I will judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged" (v38). Then "I will calm My fury against you and My jealousy will depart from you" (v42).

- vv44–52 — **her sisters, Samaria and Sodom:** "Like mother, like daughter" (v44). Sodom's guilt was "arrogance, abundant food and careless ease," and "she did not help the poor and needy" (v49); "they were haughty and committed abominations before Me" (v50). "Samaria did not commit half of your sins" (v51). "Bear your disgrace" (v52).
- vv53–63 — **the everlasting covenant:** "I will restore their captivity" (v53) — and hers. "I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you" (v60). "Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed" (v61). "You shall know that I am the LORD" (v62) — and she will "never open your mouth anymore … when I have forgiven you for all that you have done" (v63).

Repeated words

harlot (vv15, 16, 17, 26, 28, 30, 31, 35, 41); abominations (vv2, 22, 43, 47, 50, 51, 58); remember (vv22, 43, 60, 61, 63); the days of your youth (vv22, 43, 60); covenant (vv8, 59, 60, 61, 62); lovers (vv33, 36, 37); beauty (vv14, 15, 25); naked and bare (vv7, 22, 39); Sodom (vv46, 48, 49, 53, 55, 56); Samaria (vv46, 51, 53, 55); declares the Lord GOD (vv8, 14, 19, 23, 30, 43, 48).

Contrasts

thrown out in the field (v5) ⟷ "advanced to royalty" (v13). "Perfect because of My splendor" (v14) ⟷ "you trusted in your beauty" (v15). Children "borne to Me" (v20) ⟷ children sacrificed to idols (v20). A harlot is paid ⟷ she pays her lovers (v34). She did not remember (vv22, 43) ⟷ God will remember His covenant (v60). The covenant she broke (v59) ⟷ the everlasting covenant God will establish (v60). Her proud mouth (v56) ⟷ a mouth shut forever by forgiveness (v63).

Chapter theme (my words)

God found Jerusalem dying in a field and said "Live!" He married her, washed her and crowned her — and she took His gifts and gave herself to idols, even her children. The judgment is as hard as the sin. But the last word is grace: God remembers the covenant she forgot and forgives what she cannot undo.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 16:6 (KJV)

6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, ▲ I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

Born in a field (vv1–7)

Jerusalem was a Canaanite city long before David took it, and Israel's roots were nothing to boast about. Guzik notes the humble start; Taylor, in Guzik: "The statement is heavy with sarcasm, however, for the term 'Canaanite' was a byword for moral decadence." The newborn is left with the cord uncut,

unwashed, unsalted (an old custom of rubbing a newborn with salt), unswaddled — exposed to die, as unwanted babies were in the ancient world. Nobody pitied her. Then God "passed by" and spoke one word: "Live!" Guzik points to Deuteronomy 7:7–8 — God did not choose Israel because she was impressive, but because He loved her.

The marriage covenant (vv8–14)

"I spread My skirt over you" (v8) is the same gesture Ruth asked of Boaz (Ruth 3:9) — the edge of the garment spread over a woman as a pledge of marriage and protection. God swore an oath and made a covenant; this is Sinai pictured as a wedding (Exod 19:4–6; Jer 2:2). Then the washing, anointing, embroidered cloth, fine linen and jewels — Guzik notes that the materials echo the tabernacle. Under David and Solomon her fame went out among the nations (1 Kgs 10:1–9). But the key phrase is the last: her beauty was "perfect because of My splendor" (v14). Everything she had was a gift.

Gifts turned into idols (vv15–22)

"But you trusted in your beauty" (v15). That's where it began — not with the shrines, but with forgetting the Giver. Guzik calls this among the strongest rebukes in Scripture. Clothing became decorations for high places, gold became images, the oil and bread God gave were offered to idols. Then came the worst: children "borne to Me" were burned to Molech in the Valley of Hinnom — practiced by Kings Ahaz and Manasseh (2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6; Jer 7:31). God calls them "My children" (v21). The root failure is named twice: "you did not remember the days of your youth" (vv22, 43).

Worse than a harlot (vv23–34)

Feinberg, in Guzik: "The repeated woe is partly threat and partly lament." The "harlotry" is both spiritual and political. Judah built shrines "at the beginning of every street" (v31) and courted Egypt (v26), Assyria (v28; Ahaz in 2 Kgs 16:7–8) and Babylon (v29; Hezekiah's envoys in 2 Kgs 20:12–18) — trusting foreign powers and their gods instead of the LORD. Her heart was "languishing" — weak, sick, without will to resist (v30). And the irony: a prostitute is at least paid, but Judah paid her lovers, sending tribute and gifts to buy protection (vv33–34). She was not even getting what she sold herself for.

The judgment (vv35–43)

Under the Law, both adultery and murder carried the death penalty (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22; Num 35:16–21), and Judah was guilty of both. Her lovers — the very nations she trusted, along with those she hated — would strip, stone and burn her. That is what happened when Babylon took Jerusalem in 586 BC (2 Kgs 25:8–10). Alexander, in Guzik: "God takes his commitments in personal relationships seriously." God's jealousy is not petty envy; it's a faithful husband's love refusing to share His bride. And judgment has an end: "I will calm My fury against you" (v42).

Like mother, like daughter (vv44–52)

Jerusalem behaved like the Canaanites she came from. Her "older sister" Samaria (the northern kingdom, fallen to Assyria in 722 BC) and "younger sister" Sodom were bywords for judgment. Guzik follows Vawter and Hoppe: "elder" and "younger" refer to size and importance, not age. Sodom's guilt in v49 — pride, plenty, ease, and no help for the poor — is often misused to say Sodom's sin was only neglect. Guzik calls that "a clear and willful misunderstanding of the text"; these were "sins at the root

of the depravity described in Genesis 19, and in addition to that depravity." Note v50: "committed abominations before Me." Judah, with more light, was guiltier (vv51–52; compare Luke 12:48).

The everlasting covenant (vv53–63)

The chapter ends with a stunning turn: God will restore Sodom, Samaria and Jerusalem (vv53–55). Christians read this in different ways. Some take it as a literal future restoration of those regions and peoples; many see Samaria and Sodom as pictures of outsiders — the nations — brought into God's family through the gospel, given to Jerusalem "as daughters, but not because of your covenant" (v61; compare Isa 54:1–3; Acts 8:5–8). On the "everlasting covenant" (v60), most see the new covenant of Jer 31:31–34 and Ezek 36:25–27, fulfilled in Christ's blood (Luke 22:20; Heb 8:8–13). Some apply it wholly to the church; others, while seeing it fulfilled in Christ, also expect a future national turning of Israel (Rom 11:25–27). Guzik holds the second: he says "the idea of a God-provided atonement is an important aspect of the new covenant, already mentioned in Ezekiel 11:17–21," and quotes McGee that "God still has a future purpose with the nation Israel." The word for "forgiven" in v63 is *kaphar* — to make atonement. Grace leaves the forgiven with nothing to say in their own defense — and nothing to boast about (Rom 3:19, 27).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **abominations — *to'ebah* (H8441):** a detestable thing, especially idolatry.
- **live — *chayah* (H2421):** to live, be kept alive.
- **squirming — *bus* (H947):** to trample, kick about — the newborn thrashing in her blood.
- **skirt — *kanaph* (H3671):** a wing, the edge of a garment.
- **swore — *shaba'* (H7650):** to take an oath.
- **covenant — *berith* (H1285):** a binding agreement, here a marriage covenant.
- **beauty — *yophi* (H3308):** beauty, loveliness.
- **splendor — *hadar* (H1926):** majesty, honor, glory.
- **played the harlot — *zanah* (H2181):** to commit fornication; to be unfaithful to God.
- **harlotries — *taznuth* (H8457):** acts of prostitution, unfaithfulness.
- **languishing — *'amal* (H535):** to droop, be weak, sick.
- **jealousy — *qin'ah* (H7068):** zeal, ardor, a husband's jealous love.
- **lewdness — *zimmah* (H2154):** a wicked plan, shameful wickedness.
- **disgrace — *kelimmah* (H3639):** shame, humiliation.
- **everlasting — *'olam* (H5769):** forever, perpetual.
- **forgiven — *kaphar* (H3722):** to cover, make atonement.

Cross-references

Gen 19:4–11; Exod 19:4–6; Lev 20:10; Deut 7:7–8; Ruth 3:9; 2 Kgs 16:3, 7–8; 2 Kgs 21:6; Ps 106:35–39; Isa 1:21; Isa 54:5–8; Jer 2:2; Jer 3:6–11; Jer 7:31; Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 11:17–21; Ezek 23:1–49; Ezek 36:25–27; Hos 2:14–20; Luke 12:48; Luke 22:20; Rom 3:19; Rom 11:25–27; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 2:1–5; Eph 5:25–27; Jas 4:4; Rev 19:7–8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 16:60 (KJV)

60 Nevertheless ★ I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee ★ an everlasting covenant.

Command to obey — "hear the word of the LORD" (v35)

God speaks hard words to Jerusalem because He still wants her. I need to hear them as addressed to me — not to "those people." When the Word names my idols, I'll listen instead of defending myself. The men I disciple know how a hard truth spoken in love can be the first rope out of a pit.

Sin to confess — trusting the gift instead of the Giver

"You trusted in your beauty" (v15). Every good thing I have — my mind, my work, my family, my ministry — is "perfect because of My splendor" (v14). When I start leaning on the gift, the slide toward idols has already begun. I'll name what I'm tempted to trust in place of God, and give it back to Him.

Warning to heed — paying for what destroys you

Judah paid her lovers and got nothing back (v34). That's addiction exactly: a man pays with his money, his marriage, his health, his freedom — and the thing he serves never pays him back. The idol always costs more than it gives. And God calls spiritual adultery what it is (Jas 4:4).

Promise to trust — "I will remember My covenant" (v60)

She forgot; God didn't. For the man in a prison cell who thinks he's thrown his life into the open field for good: the God who said "Live!" over a dying baby still speaks life over the worst. He establishes an everlasting covenant and forgives "all that you have done" (v63) — through the blood of Jesus.

Example to follow — the God who passes by and stops

Everyone else walked past the baby in the field; God stopped, spoke life, washed her and clothed her. That's the pattern for me with the men nobody else wants to stop for. I want to be the one who stops.

Worship

I was the baby in the field — unwashed, unwanted, squirming in my own blood. He said "Live!" He spread His covering over me, washed me, and made me His. When I think of how I've repaid Him, I have nothing to say but thank You. He forgives all that I have done.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You found me in the field and said "Live!" Forgive me for trusting Your gifts instead of You, and for every idol I've fed with what You gave me. Remember Your covenant with me in Christ, and let me never forget the days when I was naked and bare. Make me faithful to You, my Husband and Redeemer, and make me quick to stop for the ones others pass by. Amen.

Ezekiel 17

Two Eagles and a Vine: The Broken Oath and the Tender Shoot

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Zedekiah gave his word under God's name and broke it, reaching for Egypt instead of trusting God. God says a broken oath is broken with Him, and no one escapes by it. But where human kings fail, God Himself will plant a tender shoot from David's line on His mountain — and it will become a cedar that shelters all kinds of people.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 17 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ◷ A great eagle with great wings, longwinged , full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and ◷ took the highest branch of the cedar:

4 He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he set it in a city of merchants.

5 He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree.

6 And it grew, and became ◷ a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

7 There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, ⚠ this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation.

8 ★ It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine.

9 Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ⚠ Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof.

10 Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, ◷ when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew.

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

12 ⚠ Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon;

13 And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a ⇄ covenant with him, and hath taken an ⇄ oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land:

14 That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping of his ⇄ covenant it might stand.

15 But ⚠ he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the ⇄ covenant, and be delivered?

16 ▲ As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose ⇄ oath he despised, and whose ⇄ covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die.

17 Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons:

18 Seeing he despised the ⇄ oath by breaking the ⇄ covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape.

19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely mine ⇄ oath that he hath despised, and my ⇄ covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head.

20 And ▲ I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me.

21 And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ▲ ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it.

22 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs ★ a tender one, and ★ will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent:

23 In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and ★ under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.

24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD ▲ have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and ★ have made the dry tree to flourish: ▲ I the LORD have spoken and have done it.

Marked in the text

- **v2** put forth a riddle, and speak a parable
- **v3** A great eagle with great wings
- **v3** took the highest branch of the cedar
- **v6** a spreading vine of low stature
- **v7** this vine did bend her roots toward him
- **v8** ★ It was planted in a good soil by great waters
- **v9** Shall it prosper?
- **v10** when the east wind toucheth it
- **v12** Say now to the rebellious house
- **v13** ⇄ covenant *(every occurrence)*
- **v13** ⇄ oath *(every occurrence)*
- **v14** by keeping of his covenant it might stand
- **v15** he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt
- **v15** shall he break the covenant, and be delivered?
- **v16** ▲ As I live, saith the Lord GOD
- **v18** he despised the oath by breaking the covenant
- **v19** ▲ mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken
- **v20** ▲ I will spread my net upon him
- **v21** ▲ ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it
- **v22** ★ a tender one
- **v22** ★ will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent
- **v23** ★ under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing
- **v24** ▲ have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree
- **v24** ★ have made the dry tree to flourish
- **v24** ▲ I the LORD have spoken and have done it

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 17:24 (KJV)

24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD ▲ have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and ★ have made the dry tree to flourish: ▲ I the LORD have spoken and have done it.

Setting

Like chapter 16, this oracle has no date of its own; it sits between 592 BC (8:1) and 591 BC (20:1). In 597 BC Nebuchadnezzar had taken King Jehoiachin, the royal family and Judah's leading men to Babylon — Ezekiel among them (2 Kgs 24:10–16). He set Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah on the throne, renamed him Zedekiah, and made him swear loyalty (2 Kgs 24:17; 2 Chr 36:13). Now Zedekiah is leaning toward Egypt. God tells Ezekiel to "propound a riddle and speak a parable" (v2) about two eagles and a vine — then explains it plainly to "the rebellious house" (v12).

Structure

- vv1–6 — **the first eagle:** a great eagle "came to Lebanon and took away the top of the cedar" (v3), carried it to "a land of merchants" and set it "in a city of traders" (v4). He took "some of the seed of the land" (v5) and planted it by abundant water, and it became "a low, spreading vine" (v6) with its branches turned toward him.
- vv7–10 — **the second eagle:** "another great eagle" appears, and "this vine bent its roots toward him" (v7), hoping he would water it — though it was already planted in good soil by abundant water (v8). "Will it thrive?" (v9). It will be pulled up by the roots, and it will wither "as soon as the east wind strikes it" — "wither on the beds where it grew" (v10).
- vv11–15 — **the riddle explained:** "Do you not know what these things mean?" (v12). The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and took her king and princes to Babylon (v12). He took one of the royal family and "made a covenant with him, putting him under oath" (v13), "that the kingdom might be in subjection" and that by "keeping his covenant … it might continue" (v14). "But he rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt" for horses and troops (v15). "Will he succeed? … Can he indeed break the covenant and escape?" (v15).
- vv16–21 — **the oath-breaker's end:** "As I live," Zedekiah will die in Babylon, in the land of the king "whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke" (v16). "Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company will not help him in the war" (v17). "Now he despised the oath by breaking the covenant" — after "he pledged his allegiance" (v18). God calls it "My oath which he despised and My covenant which he broke" (v19). "I will spread My net over him" (v20); his troops will fall by the sword or be scattered, "and you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken" (v21).
- vv22–24 — **God's own planting:** God Himself will take a sprig from the top of the cedar — "a tender one" — and "plant it on a high and lofty mountain" (v22), on the mountain heights of Israel. It will "become a stately cedar," and "birds of every kind will nest under it" (v23). "All the trees of the field

will know that I am the LORD; I bring down the high tree, exalt the low tree, dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will perform it" (v24).

Repeated words

eagle (vv3, 7); vine (vv6, 7, 8); thrive / succeed (vv9, 10, 15); wither (vv9, 10); cedar (vv3, 22, 23); Babylon (vv12, 16, 20); covenant (vv13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19); oath (vv13, 16, 18, 19); As I live (vv16, 19); I, the LORD / I am the LORD (vv21, 24).

Contrasts

a vine planted in good soil by abundant water (v8) ⟷ a vine reaching for another eagle (v7). Kept covenant, the kingdom continues (v14) ⟷ broken covenant, no escape (vv15, 18). Pharaoh's "mighty army" (v17) ⟷ God's net (v20). Nebuchadnezzar's planting, a low vine (vv5–6) ⟷ God's planting, a stately cedar (vv22–23). The high tree brought down ⟷ the low tree exalted (v24). A man's broken oath (v18) ⟷ God's word: "I have spoken, and I will perform it" (v24).

Chapter theme (my words)

Zedekiah gave his word under God's name and broke it, reaching for Egypt instead of trusting God. God says a broken oath is broken with Him, and no one escapes by it. But where human kings fail, God Himself will plant a tender shoot from David's line on His mountain — and it will become a cedar that shelters all kinds of people.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 17:16 (KJV)

16 ▲ As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose ⇄ oath he despised, and whose ⇄ covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die.

A riddle and a parable (vv1–2)

Guzik explains that it was a riddle because its meaning needed explaining, and a parable because it told a story illustrating spiritual and material truth. Trapp, in Guzik: "Riddles exercise the wit, and parables help the memory, and excite both attention and affection." God explains the picture (vv11–21) so that the rebellious house has no excuse.

The first eagle (vv3–6)

Guzik identifies the great eagle as Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. Lebanon's cedar stands for the house of David in Jerusalem — Solomon's palace was even called "the house of the forest of Lebanon" (1 Kgs 7:2). The top twig is Jehoiachin, carried off in 597 BC to Babylon, "a city of traders" (v4). The "seed of the land" is Zedekiah, a native prince. Nebuchadnezzar did not destroy Judah; he made it a "low, spreading vine" — humbled, but alive and well watered — as long as it stayed turned toward him.

The second eagle (vv7–10)

Guzik identifies the second eagle as Egypt; Feinberg, in Guzik, names Pharaoh Hophra, who came to the throne in 588 BC. Block, in Guzik, notes that the second eagle does nothing — the vine does all the reaching — and "the audience is left to reflect on the vine's ingratitude and stupidity." The vine had everything it needed (v8) and threw it away. The "east wind" (v10) is the hot desert wind off the east — Babylon would come from that direction, and the vine would wither where it stood.

The riddle explained (vv11–15)

In plain words: Nebuchadnezzar took the king and princes (v12), made a covenant with Zedekiah under oath (v13), and set terms that would keep Judah humble but alive (v14). Jeremiah urged the same course — submit to Babylon and live (Jer 27:12–17; 38:17–18). But Zedekiah sent envoys to Egypt for horses and troops (v15), against God's long-standing warning not to trust Egypt's horses (Deut 17:16; Isa 31:1). Guzik: "Fundamentally, Zedekiah was a covenant breaker, who ignored the promises of loyalty and submission."

"My oath which he despised" (vv16–21)

Zedekiah had sworn by the LORD's name (2 Chr 36:13). So when he broke his word to a pagan king, he broke it to God: "My oath ... My covenant" (v19). God holds people to their word even when it is given to an unbeliever (compare Josh 9:15–20; Ps 15:4). The history played out exactly. Hophra's army marched out, drew the Babylonians away briefly, and went home (Jer 37:5–11). Jerusalem fell in 586 BC. Zedekiah fled by night, was caught near Jericho, watched his sons killed at Riblah, had his eyes put out, and was taken in chains to Babylon, where he died (2 Kgs 25:4–7; Jer 52:11). He died in Babylon without seeing it — as Ezekiel had said (12:13). Morgan, in Guzik: "God is governing, and there is no escape from Him."

The tender twig (vv22–24)

Now God, not Nebuchadnezzar, takes a sprig from the cedar's top. Guzik reads the "tender one" as the Messiah; Feinberg, in Guzik: "The 'tender one' is the Messiah, the Son of David." The picture matches the "shoot" and "branch" from Jesse's stump (Isa 11:1; 53:2; Jer 23:5; Zech 6:12). Guzik: "Out of what was thought to be dead, God promised to bring wonderful and productive growth." Christians agree the passage points to Christ, but differ on the timing of the "stately cedar." Many see it in the growth of Christ's kingdom now — Jesus used the same picture of birds nesting in the branches (Matt 13:31–32). Others see its full fulfillment in a future reign on Mount Zion; Guzik quotes Wiersbe: "The 'high mountain' Ezekiel wrote about is probably Mount Zion, where Messiah will reign over His people." Both agree the kingdom shelters "birds of every kind" — people from every nation. Verse 24 echoes Hannah and Mary: God brings down the proud and lifts the lowly (1 Sam 2:7–8; Luke 1:52). Feinberg, in Guzik: "The chapter began with judgment and punishment; it ends with mercy and grace."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **riddle — *chidah* (H2420):** an enigma, a puzzling saying.
- **parable — *mashal* (H4912):** a proverb, comparison, allegory.
- **eagle — *nesher* (H5404):** an eagle or large bird of prey.
- **cedar — *ʾerez* (H730):** the cedar, especially of Lebanon.
- **treetop — *tsammereth* (H6788):** the top, crown of a tree.

- **young shoots — *yoneqeth* (H3127):** a sucker, young shoot.
- **vine — *gephen* (H1612):** a vine.
- **thrive — *tsalach* (H6743):** to prosper, succeed.
- **wither — *yabesh* (H3001):** to dry up, wither.
- **rebellious — *meri* (H4805):** rebellion, rebellious.
- **oath — *ʾalah* (H423):** an oath, a curse invoked on oneself.
- **despised — *bazah* (H959):** to despise, treat as worthless.
- **covenant — *berith* (H1285):** a treaty, binding agreement.
- **net — *resheth* (H7568):** a net for catching.
- **tender — *rak* (H7390):** tender, soft, young.
- **lofty — *talul* (H8524):** exalted, lofty.
- **stately — *ʾaddir* (H117):** majestic, noble, mighty.
- **flourish — *parach* (H6524):** to bud, sprout, bloom.

Cross-references

Deut 17:16; Josh 9:15–20; 1 Sam 2:7–8; 2 Kgs 24:10–20; 2 Kgs 25:4–7; 2 Chr 36:11–13; Ps 15:4; Ps 92:12–13; Isa 2:2–3; Isa 11:1; Isa 31:1; Isa 53:2; Jer 23:5–6; Jer 27:12–17; Jer 37:5–11; Jer 52:11; Ezek 12:13; Ezek 34:23–24; Dan 4:10–12; Zech 6:12; Matt 5:37; Matt 13:31–32; Luke 1:52; Jas 5:12.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 17:22 (KJV)

22 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs ★ a tender one, and ★ will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent:

Command to obey — keep your word (vv16–19)

Zedekiah swore in God's name and broke it when a better deal seemed to come along. Jesus says to let my yes be yes and my no be no (Matt 5:37). God hears every promise I make — to my wife, my clients, the men I meet with — as made before Him. I'll keep my word even when it costs me (Ps 15:4).

Sin to confess — reaching for Egypt

The vine was planted in good soil by abundant water and still bent its roots toward another eagle (vv7–8). I do that when I run to my own schemes, connections or money instead of trusting God in a hard place. I'll confess where I've been sending envoys to Egypt.

Warning to heed — the deal that doesn't save you

"Can he indeed break the covenant and escape?" (v15). For a man in recovery, Egypt looks like the old connection, the quick fix, the lie that gets him through the week. For a man inside, it's the shortcut

that seems smarter than doing his time with integrity. Pharaoh's mighty army didn't help Zedekiah (v17). The way out is not around God's word, but through it.

Promise to trust — the tender shoot

When David's line looked like a stump, God promised to plant a tender twig that would become a cedar (vv22–23) — and He did, in Jesus. "I bring down the high tree, exalt the low tree … and make the dry tree flourish" (v24). For the man who feels like dead, dry wood: God specializes in making the dry tree flourish.

Example to follow — the God who keeps His word

Zedekiah's word failed; God's never does: "I have spoken, and I will perform it" (v24). I want my words — in my writing, my business and my discipling — to reflect His faithfulness, not Zedekiah's.

Worship

He governs the eagles and the kings. Pharaoh's armies and Babylon's empire answer to Him. And He takes a tender shoot and makes it a cedar where people of every kind find shelter. I am one of those birds nesting in the branches of Christ.

Prayer

Lord, You keep every word You speak. Forgive me for the promises I've broken and for every time I've reached for Egypt instead of You. Make my yes mean yes. Thank You for Jesus, the tender shoot You planted on Your mountain. Bring down what is proud in me and make the dry places flourish. Amen.

Ezekiel 18

Sour Grapes:
Every Soul Is Mine — Repent and Live

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

No one gets to blame his father for his own sin, and no one is doomed by his father's sin either. Every soul belongs to God and answers to Him directly. God takes no pleasure in anyone's death; He calls every man, whatever his family or past, to turn and live.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 18 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word

⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1]The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

[2]What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, ⚠ The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

[3]As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ▲ ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

[4]Behold, ▲ all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: ⚠ the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

[5]But if a man be just, and Green do that which is lawful and right,

[6]And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

[7]And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, Green hath given his bread to the hungry, and Green hath covered the naked with a garment;

[8]He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from ⇄ iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

[9]Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, ★ he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

[10]If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things,

[11]And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife,

[12]⚠ Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,

[13]Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; ⚠ his blood shall be upon him.

[14]Now, lo, if he beget a son, that ◷ seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,

[15]That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife,

[16]Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

[17]That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; ★ he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

[18]As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his ⇄ iniquity.

19 Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the ⇄ iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. ◷ The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the ⇄ iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

21 But if the wicked will ⇄ turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, ★ they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

23 ▲ Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should re⇄ turn from his ways, and live?

24 But when the righteous ⇄ turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth ⇄ iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

25 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; ▲ Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

26 When a righteous man ⇄ turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth ⇄ iniquity, and dieth in them; for his ⇄ iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

27 Again, when the wicked man ⇄ turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

28 Because he considereth, and ⇄ turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

29 Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

30 Therefore ▲ I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and ⇄ turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so ⇄ iniquity shall not be your ruin.

31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and ▮▮ make you a new heart and a new spirit: for ▲ why will ye die, O house of Israel?

32 For ▲ I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore ⇄ turn yourselves, and live ye.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⚠ The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge
- **v3** ▲ ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel
- **v4** ▲ all souls are mine
- **v4** ⚠ the soul that sinneth, it shall die
- **v5** ▮▮ do that which is lawful and right
- **v7** ▮▮ hath given his bread to the hungry
- **v7** ▮▮ hath covered the naked with a garment
- **v8** ⇄ iniquity *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ★ he shall surely live
- **v12** ⚠ Hath oppressed the poor and needy
- **v13** ⚠ his blood shall be upon him
- **v14** ◷ seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like
- **v17** ★ he shall not die for the iniquity of his father
- **v20** ◷ The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father
- **v21** ⇄ turn *(every occurrence)*
- **v22** ★ they shall not be mentioned unto him

- **v23** ▲ Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?
- **v24** ⚠ when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness
- **v25** ▲ Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?
- **v30** ▲ I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways
- **v30** 📖 Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions
- **v31** 📖 make you a new heart and a new spirit
- **v31** ▲ why will ye die, O house of Israel?
- **v32** ▲ I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth
- **v32** 📖 wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 18:4 (KJV)

4 Behold, ▲ all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: ⚠ the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Setting

This oracle is also undated; it falls between 592 BC (8:1) and 591 BC (20:1). The exiles in Babylon, and the people still in Jerusalem, had a saying that explained their troubles: "The fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge" (v2). Jeremiah heard the same proverb back home (Jer 31:29). It meant: we are paying for our parents' sins — Manasseh's idolatry and the generations before us — so it's not our fault, and there's nothing we can do. God answers with an oath: "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore" (v3).

Structure

- vv1–4 — **the proverb rejected:** "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die" (v4).
- vv5–9 — **the righteous man:** "if a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness" (v5) — he does not "eat at the mountain shrines or lift up his eyes to the idols" (v6), does not defile his neighbor's wife (v6), does not oppress, "gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing" (v7), does not "lend money on interest or take increase" (v8), "walks in My statutes and My ordinances" — "he is righteous and will surely live" (v9).
- vv10–13 — **his violent son:** a son who robs, sheds blood and does none of these things, who "oppresses the poor and needy" (v12) — "he will surely be put to death; his blood will be on his own head" (v13).
- vv14–18 — **the grandson who chooses differently:** a son who "has observed all his father's sins" and "does not do likewise" (v14) — "he will not die for his father's iniquity, he will surely live" (v17). His father dies for his own iniquity (v18).

- vv19–20 — **the principle stated:** "Why should the son not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity?" (v19). Answer: "The person who sins will die" (v20). Neither bears the other's iniquity; "the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself" (v20).
- vv21–24 — **turning either way:** "if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed" he will surely live (v21); "All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him" (v22). "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked … rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?" (v23). But "when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness" and does evil, his past righteousness will not be remembered (v24).
- vv25–29 — **"not right":** they say, "The way of the Lord is not right" (v25). God: "Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?" (v25). The wicked man who turns "will save his life" (v27); because he "considered and turned away from all his transgressions," he will surely live (v28).
- vv30–32 — **the call:** "I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct … Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you" (v30). "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?" (v31). "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies … Therefore, repent and live" (v32).

Repeated words

surely live (vv9, 17, 19, 21, 28); turn (vv21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30); practices justice and righteousness (vv5, 21, 27); statutes (vv9, 17, 19, 21); iniquity (vv8, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 26, 30); transgressions (vv22, 28, 30, 31); the way of the Lord is not right (vv25, 29); pleasure (vv23, 32).

Contrasts

"The fathers eat the sour grapes" (v2) ⟷ "The soul who sins will die" (v4). The righteous father (vv5–9) ⟷ the violent son (vv10–13) ⟷ the grandson who "does not do likewise" (vv14–17). The wicked man turning to life (vv21–22) ⟷ the righteous man turning to death (v24). "The way of the Lord is not right" (v25) ⟷ "Is it not your ways that are not right?" (v25). Death that God takes no pleasure in (v32) ⟷ "repent and live" (v32).

Chapter theme (my words)

No one gets to blame his father for his own sin, and no one is doomed by his father's sin either. Every soul belongs to God and answers to Him directly. God takes no pleasure in anyone's death; He calls every man, whatever his family or past, to turn and live.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 18:30 (KJV)

30 Therefore ▲ I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and ⇄ turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so ⇄ iniquity shall not be your ruin.

The sour grapes proverb (vv1–3)

Guzik: "Just because the proverb was popular did not mean that it was true." Block, in Guzik, says the proverb "reflects a materialistic fatalism, a resignation to immutable cosmic rules of cause and effect." The exiles had a point to twist. God had said He visits "the iniquity of the fathers on the children" of "those who hate Me" (Exod 20:5), and Judah's fall was tied to Manasseh's sins (2 Kgs 24:3–4). Guzik suggests they twisted Exodus 20:4–6 into an excuse, missing that the punishment falls on generations who keep on hating God, while His lovingkindness goes to thousands who love Him. Generations suffer the *consequences* of their parents' choices; they don't carry their parents' *guilt* before God (Deut 24:16).

"All souls are Mine" (v4)

God owns every person — father and son alike — and deals with each directly. "The soul who sins will die." Does "die" mean physical death in the coming fall of Jerusalem, or eternal death? Some read the chapter mainly as covenant life and death in the land, since some righteous people did die in the siege. Guzik grants the physical side but concludes, "Ezekiel must have the eternal life and death of people primarily in mind." The NT applies the principle at the deepest level: "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23).

Three generations (vv5–18)

The righteous man is described by his conduct: no idol feasts on the hills, no adultery, no oppression, no greedy lending to the poor (Exod 22:25; Deut 23:19–20), bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, honest judgment. His son is a violent robber; he dies for his own sins (v13). The grandson "has observed all his father's sins" and chooses the other way (v14). Many see three of Judah's kings in this pattern: godly Hezekiah, wicked Manasseh, godly Josiah (though Josiah was actually Manasseh's grandson). Morgan, in Guzik: "Neither righteousness nor evil is hereditary."

Is this salvation by works?

No. The righteous man "walks in My statutes" (v9) — this is a man living inside God's covenant, whose life shows his faith, not a man earning his way. The law always pointed to faith (Hab 2:4; Gen 15:6). Guzik notes two exceptions to the "each bears his own" rule in Romans 5: Adam's guilt passed to all humanity, and Christ's righteousness passed to all who believe (Rom 5:12–19). And he adds, "Today we relate with God by a new and better covenant, but we still understand the heart of God's ancient law for today."

Turning either way (vv21–24)

The wicked man who turns is fully restored, not put on probation: "All his transgressions … will not be remembered against him" (v22; compare Ps 103:12; Isa 43:25). And "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked?" (v23). Guzik: "God is *not* sadistic and cruel, making repentance impossible because He loves to see humanity suffer." Taylor, in Guzik: "It is the Lord's longing and will and purpose that men should be saved." The reverse is also true: a righteous man who turns to evil cannot bank on his past (v24). Christians read v24 differently: some see it as proof that a believer can fall away; others say a true believer will persevere, and that those who finally turn away show their righteousness was never genuine (1 John 2:19), with the warning itself being one of God's means of keeping His people. Guzik lets the warning stand and quotes Wright that the verse "raises difficulties in the N.T. context of the final perseverance of the saints." Block, in Guzik: "People may not bank on a treasury of past good deeds."

"Not right" (vv25–29)

The people accuse God of being unfair — the Hebrew word means "not weighed out evenly." God turns the charge around: their ways are the crooked ones. They wanted to blame the past and still escape the consequences. God's way is perfectly even: each person is judged by his own way.

"Repent and live" (vv30–32)

The chapter ends in an altar call. "Repent and turn away" (v30) — the same Hebrew verb, *shub*, twice. "Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!" (v31). God commands what only He can give; He has already promised it (11:19) and will promise it again (36:26). Guzik ties the new heart to the new covenant. Command and promise meet in Christ: God calls us to turn, and gives the new heart that makes turning possible. "For why will you die?" (v31) is a Father's plea (compare 33:11; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 Tim 2:4).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **proverb — *mashal* (H4912):** a saying, proverb.
- **sour grapes — *boser* (H1155):** unripe, sour grapes.
- **set on edge — *qahah* (H6949):** to be blunt, dull.
- **soul — *nephesh* (H5315):** a living being, person, life.
- **righteous — *tsaddiq* (H6662):** just, righteous.
- **justice — *mishpat* (H4941):** judgment, what is right.
- **righteousness — *tsedaqah* (H6666):** right conduct, righteousness.
- **pledge — *chabol* (H2258):** a pledge taken for a loan.
- **interest — *neshek* (H5392):** interest, literally "a bite."
- **iniquity — *ʿavon* (H5771):** guilt, iniquity, its punishment.
- **transgressions — *pesha*ʿ (H6588):** rebellion, transgression.
- **turn / repent — *shub* (H7725):** to turn back, return.
- **pleasure — *chaphets* (H2654):** to delight in, take pleasure.
- **not right — *takan* (H8505):** to weigh, measure — "not even, not fair."
- **stumbling block — *mikshol* (H4383):** an obstacle, cause of falling.

- **new — *chadash* (H2319):** new, fresh.
- **spirit — *ruach* (H7307):** spirit, wind, breath.

Cross-references

Gen 15:6; Exod 20:5–6; Deut 24:16; 2 Kgs 14:6; 2 Kgs 24:3–4; Ps 51:10; Ps 103:12; Isa 43:25; Isa 55:7; Jer 31:29–34; Lam 5:7; Ezek 11:19–20; Ezek 33:10–20; Ezek 36:26–27; Hab 2:4; Luke 15:7; John 9:1–3; Acts 3:19; Rom 2:6; Rom 5:12–19; Rom 6:23; 2 Cor 5:10, 17; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 John 2:19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 18:7 (KJV)

7 And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

Command to obey — "Repent and live" (v32)

This is the command God loves to give. I don't need to clean myself up before I turn; I turn and He gives the new heart (v31; 36:26). I'll name one thing I need to turn from today, and turn — not tomorrow.

Sin to confess — blaming my father

The sour grapes proverb is alive and well: "My dad drank." "I grew up in that neighborhood." "That's just how our family is." My past shaped me, but it doesn't excuse me. I'll confess where I've used my story as a reason not to change.

Warning to heed — no bank account of past righteousness (v24)

Years of faithfulness don't give me permission to coast or slide. The righteous man who turns away cannot cash in his past. I need to keep turning toward God every day — and keep watch over my heart.

Promise to trust — the chain can be broken (vv14–17)

The grandson "observed all his father's sins" and "does not do likewise" (v14). For the men I disciple — sons of addicts, sons of prisoners, men who swore they'd never be like their fathers and became them anyway — this verse is a door. You are not doomed by your family. "All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him" (v22). In Christ, the cycle ends with you.

Example to follow — the God who takes no pleasure in death

"Why will you die?" (v31). God pleads. I want to reach men the same way — not with condemnation, but with a Father's plea to turn and live. When I sit with a man who has failed again, I want my words to sound like v32.

Worship

Every soul is His. He judges with perfect fairness, and still He has no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies. He commands a new heart and then gives it. His way is right; mine was crooked. Thank You, Lord, for not remembering my transgressions against me.

Prayer

Lord GOD, all souls are Yours, and mine is too. Forgive me for blaming others for my sin. Thank You that I'm not chained to my father's failures, and that my sons are not chained to mine. Give me the new heart and new spirit only You can give. Keep me turning to You every day. And use me to call other men to turn and live. Amen.

Ezekiel 19

Lament for the Princes: Lions Caged, a Vine Burned

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God has Ezekiel sing a funeral song over the kings of Judah while one of them is still on the throne. The lions learned to devour, and the nations caged them. The vine was rich and tall, and fire from its own branch burned it down. When leaders reject God's Word, the nation they lead pays for it — and the only thing left to do is weep.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 19 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,

[2] And say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions.

[3] And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men.

[4] The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.

[5] Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion.

[6] And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men.

[7] And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring.

[8] Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit.

[9] And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

[10] Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood , planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters.

[11] And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches.

[12] But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them.

[13] And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground.

[14] And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

Marked in the text

- **v1** lamentation *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** princes of Israel
- **v2** a lioness
- **v3** learned to catch the prey *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** it devoured men
- **v4** he was taken in their pit *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** the land of Egypt
- **v5** her hope was lost
- **v7** he laid waste their cities
- **v8** spread their net over him
- **v9** brought him to the king of Babylon
- **v9** no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel
- **v10** like a vine
- **v10** planted by the waters

- **v11** ⇄ strong rod *(every occurrence)*
- **v11** ★ the sceptres of them that bare rule
- **v12** ▲ plucked up in fury
- **v12** ⚠ the east wind dried up her fruit
- **v12** ⚠ the fire consumed them
- **v13** ◷ planted in the wilderness
- **v14** ⚠ fire is gone out of a rod of her branches
- **v14** ⚠ to be a sceptre to rule

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 19:12 (KJV)

12 But she was ▲ plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and ⚠ the east wind dried up her fruit: her ⇄ strong rods were broken and withered; ⚠ the fire consumed them.

Setting

Ezekiel is among the exiles in Babylon, taken there with King Jehoiachin in 597 B.C. This chapter carries no date of its own; it sits between the oracles dated to the sixth year of the exile (8:1) and the seventh (20:1), so about 592–591 B.C. Jerusalem is still standing, Zedekiah is on the throne, and the people at home and in exile still hope the house of David will rise again. God tells Ezekiel to sing a funeral song instead.

Structure

- v1 — **the assignment:** "take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel" (v1).
- vv2–4 — **the lioness and her first cub:** "What was your mother? A lioness among lions!" (v2). "She reared her cubs" (v2); one grows up, "And he learned to tear his prey; He devoured men" (v3). "Then nations heard about him" (v4); "He was captured in their pit, And they brought him with hooks To the land of Egypt" (v4).
- vv5–9 — **the second cub:** when she saw "That her hope was lost" (v5), "She took another of her cubs And made him a young lion" (v5). "He destroyed their fortified towers And laid waste their cities" (v7) "Because of the sound of his roaring" (v7). The nations "spread their net over him; He was captured in their pit" (v8). "They put him in a cage with hooks And brought him to the king of Babylon" (v9), so that "his voice would be heard no more On the mountains of Israel" (v9).
- vv10–11 — **the mother as a vine:** "like a vine in your vineyard, Planted by the waters" (v10). "It was fruitful and full of branches Because of abundant waters" (v10), with "strong branches fit for scepters of rulers" (v11); "its height was raised above the clouds" (v11).
- vv12–14 — **the vine uprooted:** "it was plucked up in fury; It was cast down to the ground" (v12), and "the east wind dried up its fruit" (v12). "Its strong branch was torn off So that it withered; The fire consumed it" (v12). "And now it is planted in the wilderness, In a dry and thirsty land" (v13). "And fire

has gone out from its branch" (v14), so that "there is not in it a strong branch, A scepter to rule" (v14). "This is a lamentation, and has become a lamentation" (v14).

Repeated words

lamentation (vv1, 14); lion / lions (vv2, 3, 5, 6); cubs (vv2, 3, 5); tear his prey; devoured men (vv3, 6); nations (vv4, 8); captured in their pit (vv4, 8); hooks (vv4, 9); waters (v10); branch / branches (vv10, 11, 12, 14); scepter(s) (vv11, 14); fruit / fruitful (vv10, 12, 14); fire (vv12, 14); consumed (vv12, 14).

Contrasts

a lioness among lions (v2) ⟷ cubs caught in a pit and caged (vv4, 8–9). A roar that terrified the land (v7) ⟷ a voice heard no more on the mountains of Israel (v9). A vine planted by abundant waters (v10) ⟷ a vine planted in a dry and thirsty land (v13). Branches fit for scepters (v11) ⟷ not one strong branch left to rule (v14). The east wind from outside (v12) ⟷ the fire that went out from its own branch (v14).

Chapter theme (my words)

God has Ezekiel sing a funeral song over the kings of Judah while one of them is still on the throne. The lions learned to devour, and the nations caged them. The vine was rich and tall, and fire from its own branch burned it down. When leaders reject God's Word, the nation they lead pays for it — and the only thing left to do is weep.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 19:1 (KJV)

[1]Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,

A funeral song (v1)

The word "lamentation" (*qinah*) is a dirge, the song mourners sang over the dead. Guzik calls the chapter "the collection of two laments" and notes that it imitates a funeral dirge. Alexander, quoted in Guzik: "Ezekiel expressed the Lord's sadness over the Judean leadership's failure by chanting this elegy." The "princes of Israel" are Judah's last kings, the heirs of David. The startling thing is that the funeral is sung before the burial: Zedekiah still sits in Jerusalem, and many still expect him to throw off Babylon. Ezekiel 17 already warned that his rebellion would fail.

The lioness (v2)

The lion was Judah's emblem from the start: "Judah is a lion's whelp" (Gen 49:9). Guzik: "The lioness is best understood as Israel or Jerusalem itself." Some commentators read her more narrowly as a queen mother — Hamutal, the mother of both Jehoahaz and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 23:31; 24:18) — but the vine picture in vv10–14 fits best with the nation, or the royal house as a whole.

The first cub: Jehoahaz (vv3–4)

Guzik: "This refers to Jehoahaz, the son of King Josiah (also called Shallum in Jeremiah 22:10-12)." After Josiah died at Megiddo in 609 B.C., the people made Jehoahaz king. He reigned three months and "did evil in the sight of the LORD" before Pharaoh Neco took him to Egypt, where he died (2 Kgs 23:31–34). He "learned to tear his prey" — the language of a king who used his power to devour his own people instead of shepherding them (compare Ezek 22:25). The nations caught him the way hunters caught lions — with a pit, hooks and chains.

The second cub (vv5–9)

When the mother's "hope was lost," she raised another. Guzik: "This was King Jehoiachin of Judah, who reigned for three months before being exiled to Babylon" — taken in 597 B.C. with Ezekiel himself among the captives (2 Kgs 24:8–15). Some interpreters prefer Jehoiakim, who was bound for Babylon (2 Chr 36:6), or Zedekiah; but "brought him to the king of Babylon" (v9) fits Jehoiachin, and Guzik keeps Zedekiah for the vine section. The second lion was as cruel as the first: fortified towers destroyed, cities laid waste, the land "appalled" at his roar. Wiersbe, in Guzik: "these two kings of Judah thought themselves to be great leaders, but they ignored the Word of God." His roar was silenced; his "voice would be heard no more On the mountains of Israel."

The vine in its glory (vv10–11)

The picture shifts. Israel as God's vine is a familiar image (Ps 80:8–16; Isa 5:1–7; Ezek 15; 17). Guzik says the imagery recalls Israel's most glorious years under David and Solomon — well-watered, fruitful, with "strong branches fit for scepters of rulers." The royal line was meant to provide rulers, and it did.

The vine plucked up (vv12–13)

"Plucked up in fury" — this is God's anger at covenant-breaking. The east wind, the hot desert wind, is Babylon (compare 17:10). The vine is replanted "in the wilderness, In a dry and thirsty land." Guzik notes that Babylon was not a literal wilderness — it was rich, irrigated land — but it was a wilderness to the exiles.

Fire from its own branch (v14)

The deepest sorrow is here. Guzik: "This particular rod of her branches represents Zedekiah, who was king at the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C." And: "The worst damage to the vine came from one of her own branches." Zedekiah broke his oath to Nebuchadnezzar (17:15–19; 2 Kgs 24:20), and his rebellion brought the siege that burned Jerusalem. After him there was "not in it a strong branch, A scepter to rule." The Davidic throne fell empty — until the One "whose right it is" comes (21:27; Gen 49:10). The last line is a refrain: what Ezekiel sings as prophecy will be sung as history. Wiersbe, in Guzik: "Had the nation of Israel obeyed the Lord, it would have become and remained a mighty lion and a fruitful vine."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **lamentation — *qinah* (H7015):** a dirge, funeral song.
- **princes — *nasi* (H5387):** one lifted up; a leader, prince.
- **lioness — *labi* (H3833):** a lion, lioness.
- **lion — *ari* (H738):** a lion.

- **young lion — *kephir* (H3715):** a young lion in full strength.
- **cubs — *gur* (H1482):** a whelp, cub.
- **prey — *tereph* (H2964):** prey, torn food.
- **pit — *shachath* (H7845):** a pit, trap; also corruption.
- **hooks — *chach* (H2397):** a hook or ring through the nose or jaw.
- **hope — *tiqvah* (H8615):** a cord; expectation, hope.
- **net — *resheth* (H7568):** a net for catching game.
- **cage — *sugar* (H5474):** a cage, enclosure.
- **vine — *gephen* (H1612):** a vine.
- **branch — *matteh* (H4294):** a rod, staff, branch; also a tribe.
- **scepter — *shebet* (H7626):** a rod, scepter; also a tribe.
- **plucked up — *nathash* (H5428):** to pull up, uproot.
- **fury — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, rage, wrath.

Cross-references

Gen 49:9–10; 2 Kgs 23:31–34; 2 Kgs 24:8–20; 2 Kgs 25:1–7; 2 Chr 36:1–13; Ps 80:8–16; Isa 5:1–7; Jer 22:10–12; Jer 22:24–30; Ezek 15:1–8; Ezek 17:1–24; Ezek 21:25–27; Hos 10:1; John 15:1–6; Rev 5:5.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 19:10 (KJV)

10 Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood , planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters.

Command to obey — "take up a lamentation."

God told Ezekiel to weep over the leaders, not mock them or shrug. When I see a man wreck his life — a father, a pastor, a friend, a man I've walked with who went back out — I'm called to grieve before God, not gossip. A lament is honest about sin and still full of love.

Sin to confess — learning to devour

Both cubs "learned to tear" their prey. Nobody is born a predator; it's learned, one choice at a time. I'll confess where I've used strength, words or position to take from people instead of serve them. Many of the men I disciple learned to devour on the street or in the yard just to survive. The good news is that what was learned can be unlearned in Christ.

Warning to heed — fire from my own branch

The worst damage didn't come from Babylon; it came from inside the vine (v14). My biggest threat isn't the world out there; it's the pride, lust and stubbornness in here. For a man in recovery, the relapse rarely starts with the bottle — it starts with a rebellion in the heart he thought he could manage.

Promise to trust — the Lion of Judah

Ezekiel's song ends with no scepter left. But God's promise did not die: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah" (Gen 49:10). The throne waited for Jesus — "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome" (Rev 5:5). For the man who thinks his family line is cursed and his hope is lost (v5), the true King has come, and He doesn't devour; He lays down His life.

Example to follow — stay connected to the Vine

Judah was planted by abundant waters and still burned. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches" and "apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). My fruitfulness in writing, in building study tools, in discipling men, comes from abiding in Him, not from my own strength.

Worship

God is just: He plucks up in fury what rebels against Him. God is faithful: He kept a scepter for Judah through fire and exile and gave it to His Son. I worship the Lion who is also the Lamb.

Prayer

Lord God, give me a heart that weeps over sin instead of shrugging at it. Root out the fire in my own branches before it burns what You have planted. Keep me abiding in Jesus, the true Vine and the true King. And for the men who feel caged and silenced, let them hear the roar of the Lion of Judah who has overcome. Amen.

Ezekiel 20

For My Name's Sake: Rebellion, Mercy and the Rod

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Men came to ask God for a word while their hearts were still full of idols, and God answered with their own history: rebellion in Egypt, rebellion in the wilderness, rebellion in the land. Over and over He held back judgment for the sake of His name. He will not be used, and He will not let His people go — He will drag them through the wilderness, under the rod, and into the covenant, until they loathe their sin and know that He is the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 20 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the LORD, and sat before me.

2 Then came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ⚠ I will not be enquired of by you.

4 Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers:

5 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I am the LORD your God;

6 In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, ★ flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands:

7 Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

8 But they ⚠ rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

9 But I ▲ wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

10 Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness.

11 And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.

12 Moreover also I gave them ⇄ my sabbaths, ★ to be a sign between me and them, that they might ⇄ know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.

13 But the house of Israel ⚠ rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and ⇄ my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.

14 But I ▲ wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.

15 Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands;

16 Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted ⇄ my sabbaths: for ⚠ their heart went after their idols.

17 Nevertheless ▲ mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

18 But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols:

19 I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them;

20 And hallow ⇄ my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may ⇄ know that I am the LORD your God.

21 Notwithstanding the children ⚠ rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted ⇄ my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.

22 Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and ▲ wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth.

23 I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries;

24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted ⇄ my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols.

25 Wherefore I gave them also ⚠ statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live;

26 And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused ⚠ to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might ⇄ know that I am the LORD.

27 Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me.

28 For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out there their drink offerings.

29 Then I said unto them, What is the high place whereunto ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day.

30 Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations?

31 For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons ⚠ to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ⚠ I will not be enquired of by you.

32 And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, ⚠ We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.

33 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely ▲ with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:

34 And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.

35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.

36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD.

37 And I will cause you to ▲ pass under the rod, and I will bring you into ★ the bond of the covenant:

38 And I will ⚠ purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall ⇄ know that I am the LORD.

39 As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.

40 For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things.

41 ★ I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.

42 And ye shall ⇄ know that I am the LORD, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers.

43 And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.

44 And ye shall ⇄ know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, ★ not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

45 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

46 Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field;

47 And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour ◷ every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein.

48 And all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.

49 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, ⚠ Doth he not speak parables?

Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day
- **v3** ⚠ I will not be enquired of by you *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** ▲ In the day when I chose Israel
- **v6** ★ flowing with milk and honey
- **v7** ▮ Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes
- **v8** ⚠ rebelled against me *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ▲ wrought for my name's sake *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ⇄ my sabbaths *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ★ to be a sign between me and them
- **v12** ⇄ know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** ⚠ their heart went after their idols
- **v17** ▲ mine eye spared them
- **v25** ⚠ statutes that were not good
- **v26** ⚠ to pass through the fire *(every occurrence)*
- **v32** ⚠ We will be as the heathen
- **v33** ▲ with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm

- **v37** ▲ pass under the rod
- **v37** ★ the bond of the covenant
- **v38** ⚠ purge out from among you the rebels
- **v41** ★ I will accept you with your sweet savour
- **v44** ★ not according to your wicked ways
- **v47** ◷ every green tree in thee, and every dry tree
- **v49** ⚠ Doth he not speak parables

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 20:12 (KJV)

12 Moreover also I gave them ⇄ my sabbaths, ★ to be a sign between me and them, that they might ⇄ know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.

Setting

The text dates it: "in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth of the month" of Jehoiachin's exile (v1) — about August 591 B.C., some two years after Ezekiel's call (1:2) and five years before Jerusalem falls. "Certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me" (v1). God answers them with a history lesson instead of an oracle. (In Hebrew Bibles, vv45–49 begin chapter 21.)

Structure

- vv1–4 — **God refuses the elders:** "I will not be inquired of by you" (v3). "Make them know the abominations of their fathers" (v4).
- vv5–9 — **rebellion in Egypt:** "On the day when I chose Israel" (v5), God swore to bring them to a land "flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands" (v6). "Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of his eyes" (v7). "But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me" (v8). "But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations" (v9).
- vv10–17 — **rebellion in the wilderness, first generation:** "I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live" (v11). "I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them" (v12). "But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness" (v13), "for their heart continually went after their idols" (v16). "Yet My eye spared them rather than destroying them" (v17).
- vv18–26 — **rebellion in the wilderness, second generation:** "Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers" (v18). The children rebel too (v21). God swears to scatter them (v23) and gives them "statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live" (v25); they "caused all their firstborn to pass through the fire" (v26).

- vv27–32 — **rebellion in the land, and now in exile:** high places on every hill (vv28–29): "What is the high place to which you go?" (v29). The exiles defile themselves the same way (vv30–31) and secretly plan, "We will be like the nations … serving wood and stone" (v32).
- vv33–38 — **a second exodus with judgment:** "with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you" (v33). "There I will enter into judgment with you face to face" (v35). "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant" (v37); "I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me" (v38).
- vv39–44 — **restored worship:** "Go, serve everyone his idols" (v39) — but "My holy name you will profane no longer with your gifts and with your idols" (v39). "For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel" they will serve Him (v40). "As a soothing aroma I will accept you" (v41). "You will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done" (v43) — and know Him "when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds" (v44).
- vv45–49 — **the forest fire:** against the forest of the south, God will kindle a fire: "it will consume every green tree in you, as well as every dry tree; the blazing flame will not be quenched" (v47). "All flesh will see that I, the LORD, have kindled it" (v48). Ezekiel: "Is he not just speaking parables?" (v49).

Repeated words

rebelled (vv8, 13, 21); for the sake of My name / for My name's sake (vv9, 14, 22, 44); statutes (vv11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25); sabbaths (vv12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 24); wilderness (vv10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 35, 36); idols (vv7, 8, 16, 18, 24, 31, 39); know that I am the LORD (vv12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44); as I live (vv3, 31, 33); inquire / inquired (vv1, 3, 31).

Contrasts

"I chose Israel" (v5) ⟷ "they rebelled against Me" (vv8, 13, 21). Statutes by which a man will live (v11) ⟷ statutes by which they could not live (v25). "I will pour out My wrath" (vv8, 13, 21) ⟷ "I acted for the sake of My name" (vv9, 14, 22). "We will be like the nations" (v32) ⟷ "I shall be king over you" (v33). Gifts that defiled them (v26) ⟷ a people accepted "as a soothing aroma" (v41). Dealt with "not according to your evil ways" (v44) ⟷ a fire that takes the green tree and the dry (v47).

Chapter theme (my words)

Men came to ask God for a word while their hearts were still full of idols, and God answered with their own history: rebellion in Egypt, rebellion in the wilderness, rebellion in the land. Over and over He held back judgment for the sake of His name. He will not be used, and He will not let His people go — He will drag them through the wilderness, under the rod, and into the covenant, until they loathe their sin and know that He is the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 20:37 (KJV)

37 And I will cause you to ▲ pass under the rod, and I will bring you into ★ the bond of the covenant:

God refuses the elders (vv1–4)

This is the third time elders sit before Ezekiel (8:1; 14:1). God's answer is blunt: "As I live ... I will not be inquired of by you" (v3). They wanted guidance without repentance — a word from God while keeping their idols (14:3). Guzik dates the visit: "This took place some two years after the prophecies of Ezekiel 1-3 (Ezekiel 1:2)." Instead of a prediction, God makes Ezekiel a prosecutor: "Will you judge them...?" (v4).

Egypt (vv5–9)

God chose Israel and lifted His hand in an oath — the language of swearing (Exod 6:8). Guzik ties the oath to the covenant with Abraham. Exodus never records Israel worshiping Egypt's idols in so many words, but Ezekiel reveals what was underneath (compare Josh 24:14). God could have destroyed them in Egypt; He acted for His name instead. Block, quoted in Guzik: "The divine reputation depends on the fate and welfare of his people."

The wilderness (vv10–26)

God gave life-giving law — "if a man observes them, he will live" (v11; Lev 18:5). Alexander, in Guzik: "It is not a reference to eternal salvation by works." The point is that God's law is the path of blessed life for a redeemed people (compare Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12). The Sabbath was the covenant sign (Exod 31:13), and they trampled it. The pattern repeats: rebellion, wrath deserved, mercy for His name, and a generation dying in the desert (Num 14:26–35). Then the children did the same.

"Statutes that were not good" (vv25–26)

This verse troubles readers. God did not give Israel evil laws at Sinai. Guzik explains that God handed Israel over to the consequences of the idolatry they chose — including living under the laws and customs of other nations — and he cites Feinberg, who describes it as a judicial sentence. It is the same pattern as Romans 1, where "God gave them over" (Rom 1:24, 26, 28). The darkest example is child sacrifice — "all their firstborn" passed through the fire (v26; Jer 7:31; Ps 106:37–38). When people refuse God's good statutes, He lets them have the deadly ones they want.

The land and the exile (vv27–32)

In Canaan they saw every high hill and leafy tree and made them altars (v28). God's wordplay in v29 mocks the "high place" (*bamah*). Then He turns to the men in front of Ezekiel: you are doing the same thing (vv30–31). Guzik notes that the elders' attitude mirrored their fathers' — they wanted to be like the Gentiles. "We will be like the nations" (v32) was the secret plan: settle down in Babylon and blend in. God says it will not happen.

A second exodus (vv33–38)

"I shall be king over you" (v33) — whether they like it or not. The phrase "mighty hand … outstretched arm" is exodus language (Deut 4:34), but now with "wrath poured out." God will bring them into "the wilderness of the peoples" (v35) to judge them face to face, as He did their fathers. "Pass under the rod" (v37) is a shepherd's picture — the sheep pass one by one under the staff to be counted and sorted (Lev 27:32). The rebels are purged and will not enter the land (v38). Guzik sees "a partial fulfillment" in the return from Babylon and "a greater and more perfect fulfillment in the millennial age."

Restoration on the holy mountain (vv39–44)

Verse 39 is a jolt of irony: go ahead, serve your idols — but stop dragging My name into it. Then the promise: on God's holy mountain the whole house of Israel will serve Him, and He will accept them "as a soothing aroma" (v41). Christians read vv33–44 three main ways: (1) fulfilled in the return from Babylon and the rebuilt temple; (2) a future national restoration and conversion of Israel, often tied to the millennial kingdom; (3) fulfilled spiritually as God gathers His people, Jew and Gentile, into Christ. Guzik says the worship promise "was fulfilled when the temple was rebuilt under Ezra and Zerubbabel," applies the return to the land also to 1948, and looks to a greater fulfillment in the millennium; he does not identify these verses with the church. All agree on the heart of it: true restoration ends in self-loathing over sin (v43) and wonder at grace — "not according to your evil ways" (v44).

The forest fire (vv45–49)

Ezekiel faces south — toward Judah, which lay to the south as invaders came from the north. The fire will take "every green tree … as well as every dry tree" (v47). Guzik: "The judgment would be so complete that it would burn both the green tree and the dry tree." Jesus used the same picture on the road to the cross (Luke 23:31). Ezekiel's complaint (v49) shows the people dismissing him as a storyteller. Guzik: "Their failure to understand was willful and would be judged." Chapter 21 explains the parable plainly.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **inquire — *darash* (H1875):** to seek, consult, inquire of.
- **abominations — *to'ebah* (H8441):** a detestable thing, especially idolatry.
- **detestable things — *shiqquts* (H8251):** a filthy, disgusting thing; an idol.
- **idols — *gillulim* (H1544):** idols; possibly "dung-gods," a contemptuous word Ezekiel uses often.
- **rebelled — *marah* (H4784):** to be contentious, rebellious.
- **statutes — *chuqqah* (H2708):** a fixed decree, ordinance.
- **ordinances — *mishpat* (H4941):** a judgment, legal decision, justice.
- **sabbaths — *shabbath* (H7676):** a day of rest.
- **sign — *'oth* (H226):** a sign, mark, pledge.
- **sanctifies — *qadash* (H6942):** to set apart, make holy.
- **profaned — *chalal* (H2490):** to pollute, defile, treat as common.
- **high place — *bamah* (H1116):** a raised place of worship.

- **rod — *shebet* (H7626):** a rod, staff, scepter.
- **bond — *masoreth* (H4562):** a bond, fetter.
- **purge — *barar* (H1305):** to purify, sift out.
- **soothing — *nichoach* (H5207):** pleasing, restful (of an aroma).
- **loathe — *quṭ* (H6962):** to feel disgust, loathe.
- **parables — *mashal* (H4912):** a proverb, parable, byword.

Cross-references

Exod 6:6–8; Exod 20:8–11; Exod 31:13–17; Lev 18:5; Lev 27:32; Num 14:26–35; Deut 4:34; Josh 24:14; Neh 9:16–31; Ps 106:6–48; Isa 48:9–11; Jer 7:31; Ezek 8:1; Ezek 14:1–5; Ezek 36:22–32; Hos 2:14–20; Luke 23:31; Rom 1:24–28; Rom 10:5; Rom 11:25–27; Gal 3:12; 1 Cor 10:1–12; 1 Pet 4:17.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 20:6 (KJV)

6 In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, ★ flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands:

Command to obey — "Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of his eyes" (v7)

The idols started with the eyes. I'll name what I keep looking at that pulls my heart away — screens, money, approval — and get rid of it, not manage it. The men I disciple know this battle well; a recovery that keeps the old phone numbers and the old routes home is not a recovery.

Sin to confess — asking God for a word while keeping my idols

The elders sat politely before the prophet with idols in their hearts (v3; 14:3). I can open my Bible for guidance while refusing to deal with the sin God already put His finger on. I'll confess that before I ask Him for anything else.

Warning to heed — "We will be like the nations" (v32)

The exiles' secret plan was to blend in and stop being different. That's the quiet drift that ruins men — not one big rebellion but a slow decision to be like everybody else. And God says, "I shall be king over you" (v33). He loves me too much to let me go.

Promise to trust — "for My name's sake."

Four times God says He acted for His name, not because Israel deserved it (vv9, 14, 22, 44). My hope rests there too. He deals with me "not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds" (v44). For a man walking out of prison who thinks his record decides his future, God's name is a stronger reason than his record.

Example to follow — pass under the rod

The Shepherd counts His sheep one by one (v37). I want to let Him examine me — not avoid the rod but walk under it — and to shepherd the men God gives me with the same patient, personal care, one man at a time.

Worship

God chose a rebellious people and kept His oath to them for generation after generation. He is holy, and He will prove Himself holy in the sight of the nations (v41). He accepts sinners like a soothing aroma — because of His Son, the true offering.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I don't want to come to You with idols in my heart. Show me what my eyes are chasing, and help me cast it away. Thank You that You have dealt with me for Your name's sake and not according to my ways. Make me Yours, under Your rod and in Your covenant, and let the men I walk with find the same mercy. Amen.

Ezekiel 21

The Sword Unsheathed: Until He Comes Whose Right It Is

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The parable becomes a plain word: God's own sword is out of its sheath, and it won't go back until Jerusalem falls. A pagan king shakes arrows at a crossroads, but God is steering him. The last son of David on the throne loses his crown — yet God makes a promise in the rubble: the crown waits for the One whose right it is.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 21 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,

3 And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee ⚠ the righteous and the wicked.

4 Seeing then that I will cut off from thee ⚠ the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north:

5 That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: ▲ it shall not return any more.

6 Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins; and Green with bitterness sigh before their eyes.

7 And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and ⚠ every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord GOD.

8 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD; Say, A sword, a sword ⚠ is sharpened, and also furbished:

10 It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree.

11 And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled : this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer.

12 Green Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh.

13 Because it is a trial, and what if the sword contemn even the rod? it shall be no more, saith the Lord GOD.

14 Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and Green smite thine hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers.

15 I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their heart may faint, and their ruins be multiplied: ah! it is made bright, it is wrapped up for the slaughter.

16 Go thee one way or other, either on the right hand, or on the left, whithersoever thy face is set.

17 I will also smite mine hands together, and ▲ I will cause my fury to rest: I the LORD have said it.

18 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

19 Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the way to the city.

20 Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites , and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced.

21 For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver.

22 At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering rams against the gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort.

23 And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken.

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand.

25 And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,

26 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

27 I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

28 And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites , and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword is drawn: for the slaughter it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering:

29 Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of them that are slain, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity shall have an end.

30 Shall I cause it to return into his sheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity.

31 And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, and skilful to destroy.

32 Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no more remembered: for I the LORD have spoken it.

Marked in the text

- **v2** set thy face toward Jerusalem
- **v3** Behold, I am against thee
- **v3** sword *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** the righteous and the wicked *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** it shall not return any more
- **v6** with bitterness sigh before their eyes
- **v7** every heart shall melt
- **v9** is sharpened, and also furbished
- **v10** it contemneth the rod of my son
- **v12** Cry and howl, son of man
- **v14** smite thine hands together
- **v17** I will cause my fury to rest
- **v19** appoint thee two ways
- **v21** stood at the parting of the way
- **v21** to use divination
- **v21** he looked in the liver
- **v23** he will call to remembrance the iniquity
- **v25** profane wicked prince of Israel

- **v26** ▲ Remove the diadem, and take off the crown
- **v26** ▲ exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high
- **v27** ▲ overturn, overturn, overturn
- **v27** ★ until he come whose right it is
- **v28** ◷ concerning the Ammonites
- **v32** ⚠ thou shalt be no more remembered

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 21:3 (KJV)

3 And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my ⇄ sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee ⚠ the righteous and the wicked.

Setting

This chapter follows straight on from the forest-fire parable of 20:45–49 (in Hebrew Bibles those verses open chapter 21), so it belongs to the same period — about 591 B.C., in the seventh year of the exile. Zedekiah reigns in Jerusalem and is drifting toward rebellion against Babylon, with neighbors like Ammon as partners (Jer 27:3). The people called Ezekiel a teller of parables (20:49); now God drops the picture and names the weapon: a sword.

Structure

- vv1–7 — **the sword drawn:** "Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem" (v2). "Behold, I am against you; and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off from you the righteous and the wicked" (v3). "It will not return to its sheath again" (v5). Ezekiel must "groan with breaking heart and bitter grief, groan in their sight" (v6) — "Because of the news that is coming"; "every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble" and "all knees will be weak as water" (v7).
- vv8–17 — **the song of the sword:** "A sword, a sword sharpened And also polished!" (v9), "Sharpened to make a slaughter" (v10). "Cry out and wail, son of man; for it is against My people, it is against all the officials of Israel" (v12). "For there is a testing" (v13). "prophesy and clap your hands together; and let the sword be doubled the third time" (v14). "I will also clap My hands together, and I will appease My wrath; I, the LORD, have spoken" (v17).
- vv18–23 — **the king at the fork in the road:** "make two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to come" (v19) — one to "Rabbah of the sons of Ammon," one to Jerusalem (v20). "For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way … to use divination; he shakes the arrows, he consults the household idols, he looks at the liver" (v21). "Into his right hand came the divination, 'Jerusalem'" (v22), with orders "to set battering rams against the gates" (v22). To the people it looks like "a false divination" (v23), "But he brings iniquity to remembrance" (v23).
- vv24–27 — **the crown removed:** "Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered" (v24). "And you, O slain, wicked one, the prince of Israel, whose day has come, in the time of the

punishment of the end" (v25). "Remove the turban and take off the crown; this will no longer be the same. Exalt that which is low and abase that which is high" (v26). "A ruin, a ruin, a ruin, I will make it. This also will be no more until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him" (v27).

- vv28–32 — **the sword turns on Ammon:** "concerning the sons of Ammon and concerning their reproach" — "A sword, a sword is drawn, polished for the slaughter" (v28). Their prophets "see for you false visions" and "divine lies for you" (v29). "In the place where you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you" (v30). "I will blow on you with the fire of My wrath" (v31). "You will be fuel for the fire … You will not be remembered, for I, the LORD, have spoken" (v32).

Repeated words

sword (vv3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 19, 20, 28); sheath (vv3, 4, 5, 30); sharpened (vv9, 10, 11); polished (vv9, 10, 11, 28); the righteous and the wicked (vv3, 4); melt (vv7, 15); clap … hands together (vv14, 17); divination / divine (vv21, 22, 23, 29); remembered / remembrance (vv23, 24, 32); I, the LORD, have spoken (vv17, 32).

Contrasts

the forest fire of the parable (20:47) ⟷ the sword of the plain word (21:3). The righteous ⟷ the wicked, cut off together in the same judgment (vv3–4). The king of Babylon's arrows and livers (v21) ⟷ the LORD who has spoken (v17). The turban and crown removed (v26) ⟷ "He comes whose right it is" (v27). "Exalt that which is low" ⟷ "abase that which is high" (v26). Israel has a future King (v27) ⟷ Ammon "will not be remembered" (v32).

Chapter theme (my words)

The parable becomes a plain word: God's own sword is out of its sheath, and it won't go back until Jerusalem falls. A pagan king shakes arrows at a crossroads, but God is steering him. The last son of David on the throne loses his crown — yet God makes a promise in the rubble: the crown waits for the One whose right it is.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 21:26 (KJV)

26 Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: ▲ exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

God's sword against His own land (vv1–5)

Ezekiel set his face south in 20:46; now he names the target plainly — Jerusalem, the sanctuaries, the land of Israel (v2). The fire that took "every green tree … as well as every dry tree" (20:47) becomes a sword that cuts off "the righteous and the wicked" (v3). How does that square with Ezekiel 18, where each man dies for his own sin? Guzik reads this as temporal judgment, not final judgment: "When God's judgment came against the nation, it would not be against specific individuals." Smith, quoted in Guzik: "In temporal judgments, however, both often suffer equally." Godly men like Ezekiel and Daniel

went into exile too; but their eternal standing was never in doubt (compare 9:4–6). And the sword "will not return to its sheath again" (v5) — this is settled.

The groaning prophet (vv6–7)

God doesn't want a cold messenger. Guzik: "God did not want Ezekiel to be an unemotional messenger of judgment." Ezekiel groans in public, with a breaking heart, so that people will ask why — and then he tells them. The news will turn the strongest men to water; Vawter and Hoppe, quoted in Guzik, take "weak as water" as "a euphemism for the loss of bladder control in moments of terror."

The song of the sword (vv8–17)

This is a fierce, almost chant-like poem: sharpened, polished, glittering, handed to the slayer. Verses 10 and 13 are among the hardest in Ezekiel to translate. "The rod of My son" most likely refers to the scepter of Judah's king — the royal line God once called His son (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7). The sword despises that scepter. Guzik on v13: "God's sword of judgment had no regard for his right to reign, for Zedekiah's scepter." "Doubled the third time" (v14) signals blow after blow; Clarke, in Guzik, notes, "Nebuchadnezzar came against Judea THRICE." Both prophet and God "clap" their hands (vv14, 17) — a gesture of anger and finality. God's wrath will come to rest only when it has done its work.

The fork in the road (vv18–23)

Ezekiel draws a map with a signpost. Nebuchadnezzar marches west to put down the revolt and must choose: Rabbah of Ammon or Jerusalem. He uses three kinds of pagan divination: shaking arrows (Block, in Guzik: "shaking two inscribed arrows and then drawing one as one draws a lot"), consulting household idols (teraphim), and reading the liver of a sacrificed animal. The lot falls on Jerusalem. Feinberg: "The king thought he was deciding by the help of his gods, but God was determining the course of his action." The people in Jerusalem will dismiss it as a false omen (v23) — they had sworn oaths to Babylon and now trusted their alliances — but God uses even a pagan's superstition to bring their sin to remembrance (Prov 16:33; 21:1).

The profane prince (vv24–27)

Guzik identifies "the prince of Israel (probably Zedekiah)." He broke his oath to Nebuchadnezzar (17:13–19; 2 Chr 36:13). His end came in 586 B.C.: he fled, was captured, watched his sons killed, was blinded and taken to Babylon (2 Kgs 25:4–7). "Remove the turban and take off the crown" (v26): the word for turban is the one used elsewhere for the high priest's headdress, so some see both priestly and royal glory falling together; Feinberg says "the crown, of course, belonged to the king." "Exalt that which is low and abase that which is high" states the principle God always works by (1 Sam 2:7–8; Luke 1:52).

"Until He comes whose right it is" (v27)

The threefold "a ruin" is as strong as Hebrew can be. Yet the sentence ends in promise: the crown will be "no more" — until One comes to whom it belongs. Most interpreters, including the commentators Guzik cites (Alexander, McGee, Wright), hear Genesis 49:10 — "The scepter shall not depart from Judah … Until Shiloh comes" — and see Jesus, the Son of David. Wright, in Guzik: "Ezekiel 21:27 is one of the great Messianic promises of the O.T., although it is often overlooked." A minority reads "right" (*mishpat*, often "judgment") as meaning until the one comes to whom the judgment is given — Nebuchadnezzar, God's appointed judge. Even so, the larger flow of Scripture points beyond Babylon:

no son of David reigned again until the angel told Mary, "the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32).

Ammon (vv28–32)

Ammon may have laughed when the lot fell on Jerusalem (compare 25:3, 6), but the sword turns on them too. Their own diviners promised safety (v29). Unlike Israel, Ammon is given no future: "You will not be remembered" (v32). Clarke, in Guzik: "This prophecy against them was fulfilled about five years after the taking of Jerusalem." Taylor, in Guzik: "no prospect of restoration, no continuance in succeeding generations, no memorial, not even a memory." The difference between Israel and Ammon is not that Israel was better — it is God's covenant promise.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **sword — *chereb* (H2719):** a sword, any cutting weapon.
- **sheath — *taʿar* (H8593):** a sheath; also a razor.
- **groan — *ʾanach* (H584):** to sigh, groan.
- **melt — *masas* (H4549):** to dissolve, melt, lose courage.
- **sharpened — *chadad* (H2300):** to be sharp, sharpen.
- **polished — *maraṭ* (H4803):** to polish, burnish, make bare.
- **rod — *shebet* (H7626):** a rod, scepter; a tribe.
- **divination — *qesem* (H7081):** an oracle, divination.
- **arrows — *chets* (H2671):** an arrow.
- **household idols — *teraphim* (H8655):** family idols used for divination.
- **liver — *kabed* (H3516):** the liver, the "heavy" organ.
- **prince — *nasi* (H5387):** a leader, prince.
- **turban — *mitsnepheth* (H4701):** a turban, especially the high priest's.
- **crown — *ʿatarah* (H5850):** a crown, wreath.
- **ruin — *ʿavvah* (H5754):** an overthrow, ruin.
- **right — *mishpat* (H4941):** justice, judgment, rightful claim.
- **indignation — *zaʿam* (H2195):** fury, indignation.
- **fuel — *ʾoklah* (H402):** food; fuel for fire.

Cross-references

Gen 49:10; 1 Sam 2:7–8; 2 Sam 7:12–16; 2 Kgs 25:1–7; 2 Chr 36:11–13; Ps 2:7; Prov 16:33; Prov 21:1; Isa 9:6–7; Jer 22:30; Jer 23:5–6; Jer 27:1–11; Ezek 9:4–6; Ezek 17:11–21; Ezek 25:1–7; Luke 1:32–33; Luke 1:52; Heb 4:12; Jas 4:10; Rev 19:11–16.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 21:27 (KJV)

27 I will ▲ overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, ★ until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

Command to obey — "groan in their sight" (v6)

God wanted His messenger's heart broken over judgment before his mouth spoke it. When I warn a man about where his sin is taking him, I want to do it with grief, not with a pointed finger. The men I disciple can tell the difference between someone who is disgusted with them and someone who is heartbroken for them.

Sin to confess — broken oaths

Zedekiah's undoing was a broken promise (17:13–19). I'll confess the commitments I've made and quietly dropped — to God, to my wife, to the men who count on me. A man's word is part of his witness.

Warning to heed — the sword doesn't go back in the sheath

There is a point where judgment is settled (v5). Grace is real, but so is the day of which God says, "Behold, it comes" (v7). For the man still flirting with the old life, the time to turn is today, before the consequences come that can't be undone in this life.

Promise to trust — "until He comes whose right it is."

When every crown in Jerusalem lay in the dust, God still had a King in mind. Jesus has the right to rule — "the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). For the man who feels like his life is "a ruin, a ruin, a ruin," the One whose right it is can rule even there and rebuild.

Example to follow — the low exalted

"Exalt that which is low and abase that which is high" (v26). God lifts the humble and brings down the proud. I want to take the low place on purpose: "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you" (Jas 4:10). That's where I want to meet the men coming out of prison and recovery — not above them, beside them.

Worship

God rules over kings and their crossroads; "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD" (Prov 21:1). He is holy enough to draw His sword against His own city and faithful enough to keep a throne for His Son through the ruins.

Prayer

Lord GOD, give me a heart that groans over sin and a mouth that warns with tears. Help me keep my word. Thank You that no superstition, no king and no crossroads is outside Your hand. Jesus, You are

the One whose right it is — take the crown in every part of my life, and in the lives of the men I walk with. Amen.

Ezekiel 22

No One in the Gap:
The Bloody City and the Furnace

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Jerusalem had forgotten God, and everything else came apart — families, courts, worship, money, leadership. From the palace to the pulpit to the street, no one was clean. God was ready to melt the whole city in His furnace, and the saddest line in the chapter is that He looked for one man to stand in the gap and found none.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 22 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

[2] Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge ⚠ the bloody city? yea, Green thou shalt shew her all her abominations.

[3] Then say thou, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD, The city ⚠ sheddeth blood ⇄ in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself.

[4] Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries.

[5] Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous and much vexed.

[6] Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to ⇄ shed blood.

[7] In thee have they ⚠ set light by father and mother: ⇄ in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed ⚠ the fatherless and the widow.

[8] Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast ⚠ profaned my sabbaths.

[9] In thee are men that carry tales to ⇄ shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: ⇄ in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.

[10] In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution.

[11] And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter.

[12] In thee have they taken gifts to ⇄ shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and ⚠ hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD.

[13] Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy ⇄ dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been ⇄ in the midst of thee.

[14] Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? ▲ I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it.

[15] And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and ★ will consume thy filthiness out of thee.

[16] And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and ▲ thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

[17] And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

[18] Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become ⇄ dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, ⇄ in the midst of the furnace; they are even the ⇄ dross of silver.

[19] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become ⇄ dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

20 As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you.

21 Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted ⇄ in the midst thereof.

22 As silver is melted ⇄ in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted ⇄ in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have ▲ poured out my fury upon you.

23 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

24 Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in ◷ the day of indignation.

25 There is ⚠ a conspiracy of her prophets ⇄ in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows ⇄ in the midst thereof.

26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have ⚠ put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

27 Her princes ⇄ in the midst thereof are ⚠ like wolves ravening the prey, to ⇄ shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get ⇄ dishonest gain.

28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered morter, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, ⚠ when the LORD hath not spoken.

29 The people of the land have used oppression , and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

30 And ▲ I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and ▮▮ stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: ◷ but I found none.

31 Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⚠ the bloody city
- **v2** ▮▮ thou shalt shew her all her abominations
- **v3** ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD
- **v3** ⇄ in the midst *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ⚠ sheddeth blood
- **v6** ⇄ shed blood *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** ⚠ set light by father and mother
- **v7** ⚠ the fatherless and the widow
- **v8** ⚠ profaned my sabbaths
- **v12** ⚠ hast forgotten me
- **v13** ⇄ dishonest gain *(every occurrence)*
- **v14** ▲ I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it
- **v15** ★ will consume thy filthiness out of thee
- **v16** ▲ thou shalt know that I am the LORD
- **v18** ⇄ dross *(every occurrence)*
- **v18** ◷ in the midst of the furnace
- **v22** ▲ poured out my fury upon you
- **v24** ◷ the day of indignation
- **v25** ⚠ a conspiracy of her prophets
- **v26** ⚠ put no difference between the holy and profane
- **v27** ⚠ like wolves ravening the prey
- **v28** ⚠ when the LORD hath not spoken
- **v30** ▲ I sought for a man among them
- **v30** ▮▮ stand in the gap
- **v30** ◷ but I found none

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 22:3 (KJV)

3 Then say thou, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD, The city ⚠ sheddeth blood ⇄ in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself.

Setting

Ezekiel is among the exiles in Babylon. This chapter carries no date of its own; it belongs to the run of messages that began "in the seventh year" (20:1), about 591 B.C., during the reign of Zedekiah, Judah's last king. Jerusalem is still standing, and many there believe it cannot fall. Within a few years Nebuchadnezzar's army will lay siege to it (24:1–2). The chapter holds three messages, each opening with "the word of the LORD came" (vv1, 17, 23).

Structure

- vv1–5 — **the bloody city:** "will you judge the bloody city? Then cause her to know all her abominations" (v2). She is "a city shedding blood in her midst" (v3). "You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed" (v4), and the nations near and far will mock her (vv4–5).
- vv6–12 — **the charge sheet:** "the rulers of Israel, each according to his power," have shed blood (v6). "They have treated father and mother lightly within you," oppressed the alien, and wronged "the fatherless and the widow" (v7). "You have despised My holy things and profaned My sabbaths" (v8). Slander, idol feasts, incest and adultery (vv9–11), bribes, interest and extortion (v12) — and beneath them all, "you have forgotten Me," declares the Lord GOD (v12).
- vv13–16 — **God strikes His hand:** "I smite My hand at your dishonest gain" (v13). "Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong in the days that I will deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken and will act" (v14). He will scatter them among the nations, and "I will consume your uncleanness from you" (v15).
- vv17–22 — **the furnace:** "the house of Israel has become dross to Me" (v18). "Because all of you have become dross" (v19), God will gather them into Jerusalem like metal into a furnace and melt them (vv19–21), and "you will know that I, the LORD, have poured out My wrath on you" (v22).
- vv23–29 — **every class corrupt:** "a land that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation" (v24). Prophets "like a roaring lion tearing the prey" (v25). "Her priests have done violence to My law" and made "no distinction between the holy and the profane" (v26). Princes "like wolves tearing the prey" (v27). Prophets who "smeared whitewash for them," saying "Thus says the Lord GOD," "when the LORD has not spoken" (v28). And "the people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery" (v29).

- vv30–31 — **no one in the gap:** "I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one" (v30). So "I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads" (v31).

Repeated words

blood / bloody / bloodshed (vv2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 27); in you / within you / among you (vv6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13); profane (vv8, 16, 26); dross (vv18, 19); furnace (vv18, 20, 22); gather (vv19, 20, 21); melt (vv20, 21, 22); wrath (vv20, 21, 22, 31); indignation (vv24, 31); prey (vv25, 27); lives (vv25, 27).

Contrasts

the holy city (Isa 52:1) ⟷ "the bloody city" (v2). Princes who should protect the weak ⟷ princes who shed blood "each according to his power" (v6). Silver ⟷ dross (v18). Prophets who say "Thus says the Lord GOD" ⟷ "the LORD has not spoken" (v28). The holy ⟷ the profane, the unclean ⟷ the clean (v26). A whole nation searched ⟷ "I found no one" (v30).

Chapter theme (my words)

Jerusalem had forgotten God, and everything else came apart — families, courts, worship, money, leadership. From the palace to the pulpit to the street, no one was clean. God was ready to melt the whole city in His furnace, and the saddest line in the chapter is that He looked for one man to stand in the gap and found none.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 22:30 (KJV)

30 And ▲ I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and 🧱 stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: ⏱ but I found none.

The bloody city (vv1–5)

God asks Ezekiel to act as prosecutor — to "judge" Jerusalem by making her know her abominations. Block, quoted by Guzik, notes that Ezekiel seems to have borrowed the phrase "bloody city" from Nahum's description of Nineveh (Nah 3:1); Guzik: "Jerusalem seemed as bad as Nineveh!" Feinberg, quoted by Guzik, says the plural form of "blood" "points to numerous acts of bloodshed." Jerusalem had the Word, the prophets and the temple, so she was held to a higher standard than the nations — who would now mock her.

The charge sheet (vv6–12)

The northern kingdom had fallen over a century earlier, yet God still calls Judah's leaders "the rulers of Israel." They used power to kill — Feinberg, in Guzik, speaks of judicial murders, citing 2 Kgs 21:16 and 24:4 — the innocent blood Manasseh shed. The list walks through the Ten Commandments: parents dishonored (Exod 20:12), the alien, orphan and widow crushed (Exod 22:21–22), holy things and

sabbaths despised, idols on the mountains, adultery and incest (Lev 18; 20), bribes and interest charged to a brother (Exod 22:25; Deut 23:19). Wiersbe, in Guzik, notes that honoring parents carried the promise of long life in the land — and now Judah would lose the land. Alexander, in Guzik, puts his finger on the root: "you have forgotten Me" (v12). Every broken relationship flowed from a broken relationship with God.

God's clenched hand (vv13–16)

Striking the hand was a gesture of anger and finality (see 21:17). God asks the princes whether their hearts can endure and their hands stay strong when He acts. Poole, in Guzik, calls the Babylonians God's "weapons of war." Scattering would purge the uncleanness from the land, and through judgment they would "know that I am the LORD" (v16). Trapp, in Guzik: "Thou shalt know me by my punishments."

The furnace (vv17–22)

Israel had been God's treasure; now she is dross — Block, in Guzik: "the waste produced in the extraction of silver from ore." When Babylon came, people fled into Jerusalem for safety, but they were being gathered into the furnace. Clarke, in Guzik: "the most violent must be resorted to," since milder means had failed. Yet Guzik finds hope even here: a refiner doesn't fire up the furnace for nothing — something precious is still in the ore. Morgan, in Guzik, says the fire is the only way the dross is destroyed and the silver recovered (compare Mal 3:2–3).

Every class guilty (vv23–29)

The land is "not cleansed or rained on" — no blessing, only drought and judgment. The prophets conspired like a roaring lion, devouring lives and wealth; Feinberg, in Guzik, says they were "directly responsible for the multiplication of widows" by urging war with false promises. The priests, whose job was to teach the difference between holy and common (Lev 10:10–11; Deut 33:10), stopped teaching it — and God Himself was profaned among them. The princes were wolves. The prophets whitewashed a cracked wall (13:10–16) with "Thus says the Lord GOD" when God had said nothing. And the ordinary people followed their leaders into oppression.

Standing in the gap (vv30–31)

The picture is a broken city wall with one soldier filling the breach. God sought an intercessor like Abraham (Gen 18:22–33) or Moses, who "stood in the breach before Him" (Ps 106:23) — and found none (compare Jer 5:1). Guzik says God still looks for such men, and the problem is how rare they are. Taylor, in Guzik, says a nation without godly leadership "must surely be on the way out." Guzik sees the final answer in Jesus — the one Man who stands in the gap and always lives to make intercession (Heb 7:25). Because no one stood, the wrath fell, and Judah reaped her own way.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **bloody / blood — *dam* (H1818):** blood, especially blood shed in violence; plural *damim*, bloodguilt.
- **abominations — *to'ebah* (H8441):** something detestable, especially idolatry.
- **become guilty — *'asham* (H816):** to offend, be guilty, bear guilt.
- **idols — *gillulim* (H1544):** idols — a contemptuous word, "dung-gods."
- **profane — *chalal* (H2490):** to pollute, treat as common.

- **forgotten — *shakach* (H7911):** to forget, ignore, cease to care.
- **dishonest gain — *betsaʿ* (H1215):** profit taken by violence or fraud.
- **interest — *neshek* (H5392):** interest on a loan; literally a "bite."
- **dross — *sig* (H5509):** the scum and slag skimmed off molten metal.
- **furnace — *kur* (H3564):** a smelting furnace.
- **melt — *natak* (H5413):** to pour out, melt.
- **wrath — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, burning anger.
- **indignation — *zaʿam* (H2195):** fury, God's settled anger against sin.
- **whitewash — *taphel* (H8602):** plaster, untempered mortar — a cover over a weak wall.
- **wall — *gader* (H1447):** a stone wall, fence.
- **gap — *perets* (H6556):** a breach, a break in a wall.

Cross-references

Gen 18:22–33; Exod 20:12; Exod 22:21–25; Exod 32:11–14; Lev 10:10–11; Lev 18:6–20; Deut 23:19; 2 Kgs 21:16; 2 Kgs 24:4; Ps 106:23; Isa 1:21–25; Jer 5:1; Ezek 13:10–16; Nah 3:1; Mal 3:2–3; Acts 7:52; 1 Tim 2:1–5; Heb 7:25; 1 Pet 1:6–7.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 22:2 (KJV)

2 Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge ⚠ the bloody city? yea, 📖 thou shalt shew her all her abominations.

Command to obey — "stand in the gap."

God was looking for one man (v30). I can't fix my nation, but I can stand in prayer for my family, my church and the men God has put in front of me. For a man fresh out of prison or newly sober, one brother who keeps praying for him by name may be the wall that holds. I'll keep a list and pray it.

Sin to confess — forgetting God

Under all of Jerusalem's sins sat one: "you have forgotten Me" (v12). My worst seasons didn't start with a big sin; they started when I let God slide to the edges. I'll confess where I've been busy with books, websites and work and have forgotten the Lord who gave them.

Warning to heed — whitewash

The prophets smeared whitewash on a cracked wall and called it peace (v28). It's easy to tell a struggling man what he wants to hear. In recovery work especially, cheap comfort kills. I need to speak truth in love — and refuse to say "Thus says the Lord" when the Lord has not spoken.

Promise to trust — the Refiner's fire

The furnace was judgment, but a refiner only fires up the furnace when there is silver in the ore (vv18–22; Mal 3:3). For the man whose life has melted down — arrest, divorce, relapse — God has not thrown him away. The fire is meant to burn off the dross, not the man (1 Pet 1:6–7).

Example to follow — the Man in the gap

No one stood in the gap in Ezekiel's day, but Jesus did. He stood between God's wrath and me, and He "always lives to make intercession" (Heb 7:25). I want to follow Him — to put myself between a hurting man and the enemy's lies, and to carry him to God in prayer.

Worship

The LORD has spoken and He will act. He sees every widow and orphan, every bribe and every lie. He is holy, and He will not be profaned forever. And He is the Refiner who sits by the fire, watching for His image in the silver.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I don't want to forget You. Search me and show me the dross. Keep me from whitewashing sin in myself or in the men I serve. Make me a man who builds up the wall and stands in the gap — for my home, my church and the men You have given me — and thank You that Jesus stands in the gap for me. Amen.

Ezekiel 23

Two Sisters:
The Cost of Spiritual Adultery

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God took Israel as His own, and she went looking for other lovers — first Egypt, then Assyria, then Babylon — trusting armies and idols instead of Him. Jerusalem watched her sister destroyed for it and did worse. The lovers she chased became the men who stripped her. Sin always promises a lover and ends as a tyrant, and the root of it all is forgetting God and throwing Him behind our back.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 23 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1]The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

[2]Son of man, there were ◷ two women, the daughters of one mother:

[3]And they committed ⇄ whoredoms in Egypt; they committed ⇄ whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity.

[4]And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and ▲ they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; ◷ Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.

[5]And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she ⇄ doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours,

[6]Which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses.

[7]Thus she committed her ⇄ whoredoms with them, with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she ⇄ doted: with all their idols she defiled herself.

[8]Neither left she her ⇄ whoredoms brought from Egypt: for in her youth they lay with her, and they bruised the breasts of her virginity, and poured their whoredom upon her.

[9]Wherefore ▲ I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians , upon whom she ⇄ doted.

[10]These discovered her nakedness: they took her sons and her daughters, and slew her with the sword: and she became famous among women; for they had executed judgment upon her.

[11]And when her sister Aholibah saw this, ⚠ she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she, and in her ⇄ whoredoms more than her sister in her ⇄ whoredoms.

[12]She ⇄ doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men.

[13]Then I saw that she was defiled, that they took both one way,

[14]And that she increased her ⇄ whoredoms: for ⚠ when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion,

[15]Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity:

[16]And ⚠ as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she ⇄ doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea.

[17]And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them.

[18]So she discovered her ⇄ whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then ▲ my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister.

19 Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

20 For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses.

21 Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth.

22 Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side;

23 The Babylonians , and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them: all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses.

24 And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments.

25 And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.

26 They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels.

27 Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more.

28 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated:

29 And they shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labour, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

30 I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols.

31 Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand.

32 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much.

33 Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria.

34 Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

35 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

36 The LORD said moreover unto me; Son of man, wilt thou judge Aholah and Aholibah? yea, declare unto them their abominations;

37 That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them.

38 Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths.

39 For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house.

40 And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments,

41 And satest upon a stately bed, and a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil.

42 And a voice of a multitude being at ease was with her: and with the men of the common sort were brought Sabeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads.

43 Then said I unto her that was old in adulteries, Will they now commit whoredoms with her, and she with them?

44 Yet they went in unto her, as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot: so went they in unto Aholah and unto Aholibah, the lewd women.

45 And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands.

46 For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled.

47 And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire.

48 Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness.

49 And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** two women, the daughters of one mother
- **v3** whoredoms *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** they were mine
- **v4** Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah
- **v5** doted *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers
- **v11** she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she
- **v14** when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall
- **v16** as soon as she saw them with her eyes
- **v18** my mind was alienated from her
- **v19** calling to remembrance the days of her youth
- **v22** I will raise up thy lovers against thee
- **v25** I will set my jealousy against thee
- **v27** Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee
- **v31** Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister
- **v31** cup *(every occurrence)*
- **v35** thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back
- **v36** declare unto them their abominations
- **v37** blood is in their hands
- **v38** they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day
- **v39** in the midst of mine house
- **v48** that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness
- **v49** ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 23:4 (KJV)

4 And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and ▲ they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; ◷ Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.

Setting

Like chapter 22, this message has no date of its own; it closes the series that began "in the seventh year" (20:1), about 591 B.C., while Zedekiah ruled in Jerusalem. Ezekiel tells an allegory of two sisters — Samaria (the northern kingdom, already destroyed by Assyria in 722 B.C.) and Jerusalem (Judah, still standing). The language is blunt and sexual on purpose. God uses the shame of adultery to show how He feels about His people chasing other gods and other powers.

Structure

- vv1–4 — **two sisters:** "there were two women, the daughters of one mother" (v2). "They played the harlot in their youth" in Egypt (v3). "Their names were Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister. And they became Mine" (v4). "Samaria is Oholah and Jerusalem is Oholibah" (v4).
- vv5–10 — **Oholah and Assyria:** "Oholah played the harlot while she was Mine; and she lusted after her lovers, after the Assyrians" (v5) — "all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding on horses" (v6). She defiled herself with their idols (v7) and never left the ways of Egypt (v8). So "I gave her into the hand of her lovers" (v9), and they killed her (v10).
- vv11–21 — **Oholibah does worse:** her sister saw it all, "yet she was more corrupt in her lust than she" (v11). First Assyria (v12); then "she saw men portrayed on the wall," images of the Chaldeans (v14), and "When she saw them she lusted after them" and sent messengers to Babylon (v16). Defiled, she turned from them (v17), "then I became disgusted with her, as I had become disgusted with her sister" (v18). "Yet she multiplied her harlotries, remembering the days of her youth" in Egypt (vv19–21).
- vv22–35 — **the lovers turned enemies:** "I will arouse your lovers against you" (v22) — Babylon and her allies from every side (vv23–24). "I will set My jealousy against you" (v25). They will strip her (vv26, 29), and God will end "your harlotry brought from the land of Egypt" (v27). "You have walked in the way of your sister; therefore I will give her cup into your hand" (v31) — the cup of horror and desolation, "the cup of your sister Samaria" (v33). The root: "Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back" (v35).
- vv36–49 — **the verdict in plain words:** "Will you judge Oholah and Oholibah?" (v36). "They have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands" — idols and child sacrifice (v37). "They have defiled My sanctuary on the same day and have profaned My sabbaths" (v38); after killing their children for idols, "they entered My sanctuary on the same day to profane it" (v39). They dressed up for their lovers and set God's own incense and oil on the table (vv40–44). Righteous men will judge them as

adulteresses (v45); stoning, sword and fire follow (vv46–47). "Thus I will make lewdness cease from the land" (v48), and "you will know that I am the Lord GOD" (v49).

Repeated words

harlot / harlotry / harlotries (vv3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 27, 29, 30, 35, 44); lusted (vv5, 7, 9, 12, 16, 20); lovers (vv5, 9, 22); Egypt / Egyptians (vv3, 8, 19, 21, 27); youth (vv3, 8, 19, 21); disgusted / alienated (vv17, 18, 22, 28); lewdness / lewd (vv21, 27, 29, 35, 44, 48, 49); cup (vv31, 32, 33).

Contrasts

"they became Mine" (v4) ⟷ "she lusted after her lovers" (v5). Lovers ⟷ the same men as attackers (vv9, 22). Oholibah saw her sister's ruin (v11) ⟷ she did worse anyway. Dressed up and painted for lovers (v40) ⟷ stripped and left naked (vv26, 29). Children killed for idols ⟷ the same day in God's sanctuary (v39). Desire through the eyes (vv14, 16) ⟷ disgust afterward (v17).

Chapter theme (my words)

God took Israel as His own, and she went looking for other lovers — first Egypt, then Assyria, then Babylon — trusting armies and idols instead of Him. Jerusalem watched her sister destroyed for it and did worse. The lovers she chased became the men who stripped her. Sin always promises a lover and ends as a tyrant, and the root of it all is forgetting God and throwing Him behind our back.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 23:9 (KJV)

9 Wherefore ▲ I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians , upon whom she ⇄ doted.

Why this language? (vv1–4)

This is one of the most graphic chapters in the Bible, and it is meant to be. Guzik calls the language "admittedly coarse" — meant to shock and to show God's disgust, never for entertainment. He warns that its rare use here "should never be used to justify any kind of regular use in the pulpit or even everyday conversation." Like chapter 16, it pictures the covenant as a marriage and idolatry as adultery (Jer 3:6–11; Hos 1–3). Guzik admits it "is not a perfect illustration," since God did not have two wives; the point is two halves of one people, both unfaithful. The names come from *ʾohel*, "tent": Block, in Guzik, gives "Oholah suggesting 'her own tent,' and Oholibah 'my tent in her.'" Samaria set up her own shrines (1 Kgs 12:28–33); Jerusalem had God's own temple in her midst — and was still unfaithful. Their unfaithfulness reached back to Egypt (20:7–8; Josh 24:14).

Oholah and Assyria (vv5–10)

The "lovers" are foreign powers and their gods. Israel's kings paid Assyria for protection — Jehu to Shalmaneser III, Menahem and Hoshea later (2 Kgs 15:19–20; 17:3–4). Wiersbe, in Guzik: "Samaria had no true faith in the living God, so she looked to the Assyrians to help her." Taylor, in Guzik, notes the

pull of "the dashing gallants of the Assyrian cavalry regiments." Guzik says there was nothing spiritual in the attraction — it was "purely on a fleshly, materialistic basis." Then God handed her over to her lovers (v9). Guzik, following Feinberg: "the source of sinful pleasure becomes the source of punishment." Assyria destroyed Samaria in 722 B.C. (2 Kgs 17:5–18).

Oholibah does worse (vv11–21)

Judah had a front-row seat to Samaria's fall and copied it. Ahaz bought Assyria's help and even copied an altar from Damascus (2 Kgs 16:7–16), against Isaiah's warning (Isa 7). Then came Babylon: Hezekiah showed his treasures to Babylonian envoys (2 Kgs 20:12–19), and Judah's later kings bounced between Babylon and Egypt (2 Kgs 24:1, 20; Jer 37:5–7; Ezek 17:15). Trapp, in Guzik, on the men portrayed on the wall: "Here began the mischief" — it started with the eyes. Guzik notes the sexual images are "accurate as a spiritual illustration" and may also reflect actual sexual rites in Babylonian worship. Feinberg, in Guzik, explains the crude picture in v20: "In Egyptian hieroglyphics the horse represents a lustful person" — it stands for Egypt's military power.

The lovers become the enemy (vv22–35)

Block, in Guzik: "Those who had previously come to her to make love, now come from all sides to make war." Pekod, Shoa and Koa were peoples from the east within Babylon's empire. Cutting off nose and ears (v25) was a known punishment among ancient armies. Guzik's point is that these nations never loved Judah; they wanted what they could take. Wright, in Guzik: "Sex without love only too often ends in frustration and hatred." The "cup" is God's wrath (Ps 75:8; Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15–17) — Judah would drink the same cup as Samaria. And v35 names the root: they forgot God and threw Him behind their back (compare 1 Kgs 14:9).

The verdict in plain words (vv36–49)

Now God drops the picture and names the real sins: idolatry, bloodshed, and children "passed through the fire" to Molech (2 Kgs 21:6; Jer 7:31) — and then, the same day, worship at the temple. Feinberg, in Guzik, stresses the audacity of it. They set God's own incense and oil before their idols (v41). Poole, in Guzik: "Like a decayed harlot, madest up thy defects with paint." The sentence for adultery and murder under the Law — stoning and fire — will fall through Babylon's siege (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22). The goal is that lewdness will cease and they will "know that I am the Lord GOD" (v49).

Spiritual adultery today

The New Testament keeps the picture: friendship with the world is adultery against God (Jas 4:4), and the church is a bride being kept pure for Christ (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25–27). Most read this chapter first as history — Israel and Judah's alliances and idols — and then as a warning to every believer whose heart wanders.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **Oholah — *ʾOholah* (H170):** "her tent" — Samaria.
- **Oholibah — *ʾOholibah* (H172):** "my tent is in her" — Jerusalem.
- **tent — *ʾohel* (H168):** a tent, dwelling; used of the tabernacle.
- **played the harlot — *zanah* (H2181):** to commit fornication; to be unfaithful to God.
- **harlotries — *taznuth* (H8457):** acts of prostitution, unfaithfulness.

- **lusted — *ʿagab* (H5689):** to have inordinate desire, to dote on.
- **lovers — *ʾahab* (H157):** to love; as a participle, lovers.
- **disgusted / alienated — *yaqaʿ* (H3363):** to be torn away, wrenched apart.
- **lewdness — *zimmah* (H2154):** a wicked plan, shameful conduct.
- **jealousy — *qinʾah* (H7068):** zeal, jealousy — God's burning claim on what is His.
- **cup — *kos* (H3563):** a cup; often the cup of judgment.
- **forgotten — *shakach* (H7911):** to forget, ignore.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** the holy place, God's temple.
- **defiled — *tameʾ* (H2930):** to be or make unclean.

Cross-references

Exod 20:3–5; Exod 34:14–16; Lev 20:10; Josh 24:14; 1 Kgs 12:28–33; 2 Kgs 16:7–16; 2 Kgs 17:5–18; 2 Kgs 20:12–19; 2 Kgs 21:6; Ps 75:8; Isa 7:1–9; Isa 30:1–3; Isa 51:17; Jer 3:6–11; Jer 25:15–17; Ezek 16:1–63; Hos 2:5–7; Matt 5:28; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25–27; Jas 4:4; 1 John 2:15–17.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 23:27 (KJV)

27 ★ Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more.

Command to obey — "you will know that I am the Lord GOD."

The whole chapter aims at one thing: that God's people would know Him as their only Lord (v49). I'm called to be faithful to Him alone — no other lovers, no other savior. For me that means one heart, one Master, and a daily turning back to Him before anything else gets my trust.

Sin to confess — forgetting God and throwing Him behind my back

Verse 35 is the root of everything in this chapter. I confess the times I've trusted money, people, my own plans or my own strength instead of the Lord — and the times I've treated Him as something to put behind me while I did what I wanted.

Warning to heed — it starts with the eyes

"When she saw them she lusted after them" (v16). Trapp was right: "Here began the mischief." The men I disciple know this battle — pornography, the old crowd, the bottle on the shelf. What we look at, we start to want, and what we want, we send messengers to. Matt 5:28 is not overkill; it is mercy. The lovers we chase will turn on us (v22). Addiction always promises love and ends as a master.

Promise to trust — God's jealousy is for me

"I will set My jealousy against you" (v25) sounds only like a threat, but God's jealousy means He will not share me with anything that is destroying me. He is a jealous God because He is a faithful Husband (Exod 34:14). For the man who has wandered far, that same jealous love is what brings him home — Christ is keeping a bride, not discarding one (Eph 5:25–27).

Example to follow — learn from your sister

Oholibah watched her sister fall and did worse (v11). I've watched men fall — friends, leaders, men in the program. God means their ruin as a warning (1 Cor 10:11–12). I want to learn from another man's cup without having to drink it myself.

Worship

The Lord GOD is holy and jealous for His people. He sees what we do in the dark and what we bring into His house in the daylight. He is faithful when we are faithless, and His goal even in judgment is that we would know Him.

Prayer

Lord GOD, forgive me for forgetting You and putting You behind my back. Guard my eyes and my heart from other lovers. Break the pull of the things that promise love and end in chains — for me and for the men I walk with. Keep me faithful to You alone, and make me a man who knows that You are the Lord. Amen.

Ezekiel 24

The Rusted Pot:
The Siege Begins and the Desire of His Eyes

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The day the siege began, God told Ezekiel to mark the calendar. Jerusalem was a rusted pot that no amount of scrubbing had cleaned, so the fire would burn hot until the rust was gone. Then God took Ezekiel's wife — the desire of his eyes — and told him not to mourn, so the exiles would understand: the temple they loved and trusted was about to be taken just as suddenly. It's the hardest assignment any prophet ever carried, and Ezekiel obeyed the next morning.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 24 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

3 And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it:

4 Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones.

5 Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein.

6 Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.

7 For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust;

8 That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.

9 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great.

10 Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned.

11 Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed.

12 She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire.

13 In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.

14 I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

15 Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.

18 So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

19 And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?

20 Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.

22 And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.

23 And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.

24 Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

25 Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters,

26 That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears?

27 In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month
- **v2** write thee the name of the day
- **v2** the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day
- **v3** the rebellious house
- **v3** Set on a pot
- **v6** Woe to the bloody city
- **v6** scum *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** she set it upon the top of a rock
- **v12** She hath wearied herself with lies
- **v13** because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged
- **v14** I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it
- **v14** according to thy ways, and according to thy doings
- **v16** the desire of thine eyes
- **v16** neither shalt thou mourn nor weep
- **v18** at even my wife died
- **v18** I did in the morning as I was commanded
- **v19** Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us
- **v21** I will profane my sanctuary
- **v21** the desire of your eyes
- **v24** Ezekiel is unto you a sign
- **v24** ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD
- **v27** shall thy mouth be opened
- **v27** they shall know that I am the LORD

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 24:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

Setting

This is one of the most exact dates in Ezekiel: "in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month" (v1) — counted from King Jehoiachin's exile, so about January 588 B.C. Far away in Babylon, Ezekiel is told to write it down, because "The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day" (v2). The same day is recorded in 2 Kings 25:1, Jeremiah 39:1 and 52:4. The siege will last until the city falls in 586 B.C. This chapter closes the first half of Ezekiel — the judgment on Jerusalem — before the oracles against the nations (chs. 25–32).

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the day the siege began:** "write the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day" (v2).
- vv3–5 — **the cooking pot:** "Speak a parable to the rebellious house" (v3): "Put on the pot, put it on and also pour water in it" (v3). Fill it with the choice pieces and bones and boil it hard (vv4–5).
- vv6–8 — **the rusted pot:** "Woe to the bloody city, to the pot in which there is rust and whose rust has not gone out of it!" (v6). Empty it piece after piece, "without making a choice" (v6). "For her blood is in her midst; she placed it on the bare rock" (v7) — uncovered — so God has set her blood on the bare rock too, for vengeance (v8).
- vv9–14 — **burn the pot empty:** "I also will make the pile great" (v9). Heap on the wood, boil away the meat, burn the bones (v10), then set the empty pot on the coals so that "its rust consumed" (v11). "She has wearied Me with toil, yet her great rust has not gone from her" (v12). "Because I would have cleansed you, yet you are not clean," she will not be cleansed "until I have spent My wrath on you" (v13). "I, the LORD, have spoken; it is coming and I will act. I will not relent, and I will not pity and I will not be sorry" (v14).
- vv15–18 — **the death of Ezekiel's wife:** "I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not mourn and you shall not weep" (v16). "Groan silently; make no mourning for the dead" (v17). "So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. And in the morning I did as I was commanded" (v18).
- vv19–24 — **the sign explained:** "Will you not tell us what these things that you are doing mean for us?" (v19). God answers: "I am about to profane My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the delight of your soul" (v21), and their children will fall by the sword. They will not mourn either; "you will rot away in your iniquities and you will groan to one another" (v23). "Thus Ezekiel will be a sign to you" (v24).
- vv25–27 — **the survivor and the opened mouth:** on the day the city falls, a survivor will come with the news (vv25–26). "On that day your mouth will be opened to him who escaped, and you will

speak and be mute no longer" (v27).

Repeated words

day (vv2, 25, 26, 27); woe to the bloody city (vv6, 9); pot (vv3, 5, 6); rust (vv6, 11, 12); cleansed / clean (v13); desire of your / their eyes (vv16, 21, 25); mourn / mourning (vv16, 17, 23); sign (vv24, 27); know that I am the Lord (vv24, 27).

Contrasts

a pot of choice meat (vv4–5) ⟷ a pot burned empty to get the rust off (v11). Blood left on the bare rock (v7) ⟷ blood that should have been covered with dust (Lev 17:13). "I would have cleansed you" ⟷ "you are not clean" (v13). Ezekiel's wife, the desire of his eyes (v16) ⟷ the temple, the desire of theirs (v21). A prophet forbidden to mourn (vv16–17) ⟷ a people too stunned to mourn (vv22–23). A mute prophet ⟷ a mouth opened (v27).

Chapter theme (my words)

The day the siege began, God told Ezekiel to mark the calendar. Jerusalem was a rusted pot that no amount of scrubbing had cleaned, so the fire would burn hot until the rust was gone. Then God took Ezekiel's wife — the desire of his eyes — and told him not to mourn, so the exiles would understand: the temple they loved and trusted was about to be taken just as suddenly. It's the hardest assignment any prophet ever carried, and Ezekiel obeyed the next morning.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 24:14 (KJV)

14 I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

The date that changed everything (vv1–2)

Guzik calls this date "nation-changing and life-changing" and compares it to how people remember 9/11. Ezekiel in Babylon is told the very day the siege began hundreds of miles away — proof, once the news came, that God had spoken through him. The exiles later kept a fast in the tenth month to remember it (Zech 8:19). Jerusalem's people had been saying they were the meat in the pot — safe and choice (11:3). God takes their own picture and turns it.

The pot and its rust (vv3–8)

Wright, in Guzik: "Jerusalem is the cooking pot, and its people are the meat that is to be cooked." Block, in Guzik, suggests the bones used as fuel may be human. The KJV's "scum" is better "rust" — Feinberg, in Guzik: "Some translate the word as 'scum,' but 'rust' is correct." The rust is the city's corruption — bloodshed and oppression soaked into the metal. Taking the pieces out "without making a choice" (v6) means no one is singled out to be spared; everything comes out. And the blood is "on the

bare rock" (v7): the Law said to cover spilled blood with dust (Lev 17:13), but Jerusalem shed innocent blood openly, without shame. So God leaves it uncovered as a witness against her (compare Gen 4:10).

Burned empty (vv9–14)

The cooking fire becomes a funeral pyre. When the meat is gone, the empty pot itself is set on the coals until the rust melts away. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "no regeneration, only total destruction" — for that generation. Verse 13 is the heartbreak: "I would have cleansed you, yet you are not clean." Block, in Guzik, ties this to the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, which never reached the heart (2 Kgs 23:25–27). So God says plainly in v14: He will not relent, pity or be sorry. God will judge them "according to your deeds" (v14) — and Guzik notes that their ways and deeds brought the judgment, just as the Sinai covenant warned (Deut 28:15).

"The desire of your eyes" (vv15–18)

This is the only time we learn Ezekiel was married. Guzik says the phrase "touchingly" shows how dear she was; Poole, in Guzik, says it "certainly refers to the amiableness of her disposition." God tells him beforehand that she will die "with a blow" — suddenly. He may not do the public rites of mourning: loud wailing, uncovered head, bare feet, covered lip, the meal brought by neighbors (v17; compare Jer 16:5–7). Feinberg, in Guzik: "He was not forbidden to sorrow, for even our Lord wept at the grave of Lazarus" — only the outward display was forbidden. He was to "groan silently." Then the most painful verse in the book: she died in the evening, and the next morning he did as he was commanded. Trapp, in Guzik: "conjugal love must give place to our love to him." Guzik adds that this was a unique calling, not a pattern for how believers should grieve.

The sign explained (vv19–24)

By now the exiles expect meaning in Ezekiel's actions (v19). God answers: just as the prophet's wife was taken suddenly, so the temple — "the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes" — would be profaned and destroyed, and the children left in Jerusalem would die. Guzik: "As Ezekiel's wife suddenly died, so the sanctuary would suddenly and soon perish." The people had an "irrational and dangerous confidence in the mere existence of the temple" (Jer 7:4). When the news came, the shock would be too deep for ordinary mourning — Smith, in Guzik: "a grief which is beyond tears." They would waste away in their sins and groan to one another.

The opened mouth (vv25–27)

Since his call, Ezekiel had been unable to speak except when God gave him a message (3:26–27). That would end when a survivor arrived with the news — which happened some months after the city fell (33:21–22). After that, Guzik says, Ezekiel's ministry turned toward hope. Smith, in Guzik: "This prophet who previously had been so negative would become at that time the great encourager." God and His prophet would both be vindicated: "they will know that I am the LORD" (v27).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **laid siege — *samak* (H5564):** to lean upon, lay hold of — here, to press against a city.
- **parable — *mashal* (H4912):** a proverb, parable, comparison.
- **rebellious — *meri* (H4805):** rebellion, bitterness.
- **pot — *sir* (H5518):** a cooking pot, cauldron.

- **rust — *chelʾah* (H2457):** rust, corrosion (KJV "scum").
- **filthiness — *tumʾah* (H2932):** uncleanness, moral impurity.
- **cleansed — *taher* (H2891):** to be clean, pure; to purify.
- **relent — *paraʿ* (H6544):** to let go, let loose.
- **be sorry — *nacham* (H5162):** to be sorry, relent, change one's mind.
- **desire — *machmad* (H4261):** a delight, a precious thing.
- **blow — *maggephah* (H4046):** a stroke, plague, sudden blow.
- **mourn — *saphad* (H5594):** to wail, lament, beat the breast.
- **groan — *ʾanaq* (H602):** to sigh, groan.
- **pride — *gaʾon* (H1347):** excellency, majesty; also arrogance.
- **sign — *mopheth* (H4159):** a sign, wonder, object lesson.
- **mute — *ʾalam* (H481):** to be bound, dumb, silent.

Cross-references

Gen 4:10; Lev 17:13; Deut 28:15; 2 Kgs 23:25–27; 2 Kgs 25:1–10; Jer 7:4–14; Jer 16:5–7; Jer 39:1; Jer 52:4; Ezek 3:26–27; Ezek 11:3–11; Ezek 33:21–22; Zech 8:19; Matt 10:37; Luke 14:26; John 11:35; 1 Thess 4:13; Heb 12:5–11.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 24:16 (KJV)

16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee ⇄ the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet ▮▮ neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

Command to obey — "I did as I was commanded."

Ezekiel buried his wife in the evening and obeyed God in the morning (v18). I can't imagine that cost. Most of what God asks of me is far smaller, and I still drag my feet. I want a heart that says "yes, Lord" the next morning — especially on the hard mornings.

Sin to confess — rust that won't come off

"I would have cleansed you, yet you are not clean" (v13). God has worked on me over and over — sermons, friends, hard seasons — and some of the rust is still there because I've let it stay. I confess the sins I keep scrubbing at the surface instead of bringing to the cross.

Warning to heed — trusting the building

Judah trusted the temple — "the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes" (v21) — more than the God of the temple. I can do that with my church, my ministry, my tools and books. For the men I disciple, it can be the program, the meeting or the sponsor. Good things become idols when they take God's place, and God can take them away to get our eyes back on Him.

Promise to trust — the mouth will be opened

Ezekiel's long silence ended, and his message turned to hope (v27; ch. 33–37). The worst news is not the last word with God. For the man sitting in a cell who thinks his story is over, the same God who let Jerusalem fall later gave Ezekiel the valley of dry bones (37:1–14). After judgment comes restoration for those who turn to Him.

Example to follow — grief that still obeys

Ezekiel wasn't forbidden to sorrow, only to make a public show — he groaned silently (v17). Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:35). I want to grieve honestly as a believer, "not grieve as do the rest who have no hope" (1 Thess 4:13), and keep doing the next right thing. Men in recovery and men coming home from prison carry a lot of losses; they need to see a man who can grieve and still obey.

Worship

The LORD knows the very day. He sees what happens in Jerusalem from Babylon. His word comes to pass exactly. He is holy enough to burn away the rust, and faithful enough to open the mouth of His prophet again with hope.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You know the day and the hour of everything in my life. Burn away the rust in me that I've refused to let You clean. Keep me from trusting anything — even good things — more than You. When loss comes, help me grieve honestly and still do as You command in the morning. And use my life as a sign that points people to You. Amen.

Ezekiel 25

Gloating Neighbors:
Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God judged His own people first, but He did not forget the nations who cheered when they fell. Mocking, gloating and revenge against God's people are sins against God Himself. Every "because" in this chapter ends the same way: they will know that He is the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 25 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 ▲ The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites , and prophesy against them;

3 And say unto the Ammonites , Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, ⚠ Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity;

4 Behold, therefore I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk.

5 And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couchingplace for flocks: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

6 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast ⚠ clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and ⚠ rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel;

7 Behold, therefore I will ▲ stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

8 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, ⚠ the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen;

9 Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Bethjeshimoth, Baalmeon, and Kiriathaim,

10 Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites , and will give them in possession, that the Ammonites ⚠ may not be remembered among the nations.

11 And ▲ I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

12 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by ⚠ taking vengeance, and ⚠ hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them;

13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also ▲ stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.

14 And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom ★ by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and ▲ they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.

15 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for ⚠ the old hatred;

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will ▲ stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will ▲ cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast.

17 And I will execute ▲ great vengeance upon them with ▲ furious rebukes; and they shall ⇄ know that I am the LORD, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ▲ The word of the LORD came
- **v2** ▮ set thy face against the Ammonites
- **v3** ▮ Hear the word of the Lord GOD
- **v3** ⚠ Aha, against my sanctuary
- **v3** ◷ when they went into captivity
- **v4** ◷ men of the east *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** ◷ Rabbah a stable for camels
- **v5** ⇄ know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ⚠ clapped thine hands
- **v6** ⚠ rejoiced in heart with all thy despite
- **v7** ▲ stretch out mine hand *(every occurrence)*
- **v8** ⚠ the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen
- **v10** ⚠ may not be remembered among the nations
- **v11** ▲ I will execute judgments upon Moab
- **v12** ⚠ taking vengeance
- **v12** ⚠ hath greatly offended
- **v14** ★ by the hand of my people Israel
- **v14** ▲ they shall know my vengeance
- **v15** ⚠ the old hatred
- **v16** ▲ cut off the Cherethims
- **v17** ▲ great vengeance
- **v17** ▲ furious rebukes

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 25:3 (KJV)

3 And say unto the Ammonites , ▮ Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, ⚠ Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, ◷ when they went into captivity;

Setting

Chapter 24 ended with the siege of Jerusalem beginning (24:1–2), the death of Ezekiel's wife, and his silence until a fugitive would bring news of the city's fall (24:26–27). That news does not arrive until 33:21. In between, chapters 25–32 turn from Judah to the nations around her — Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt. Chapter 25 is undated and covers the four nearest neighbors in four short oracles. The words of v3 look at the fall of Jerusalem as already done: the sanctuary profaned, the land desolate, Judah gone into exile.

Structure

- vv1–7 — **Ammon:** "set your face toward the sons of Ammon and prophesy against them" (v2). The charge: "Because you said, 'Aha!' against My sanctuary when it was profaned," against the land, and

"against the house of Judah when they went into exile" (v3). The sentence: "I am going to give you to the sons of the east for a possession" (v4); "I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels" (v5). A second charge: "Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the scorn of your soul against the land of Israel" (v6). "I have stretched out My hand against you" (v7).

- vv8–11 — **Moab and Seir:** they say, "the house of Judah is like all the nations" (v8). God will open Moab's flank, its border cities (v9), to the sons of the east along with Ammon (v10). "Thus I will execute judgments on Moab, and they will know that I am the LORD" (v11).
- vv12–14 — **Edom:** "Because Edom has acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has incurred grievous guilt" (v12). God will cut off man and beast from it (v13). "I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel" (v14), and "they will know My vengeance" (v14).
- vv15–17 — **Philistia:** they acted in revenge "with scorn of soul to destroy with everlasting enmity" (v15). God will "cut off the Cherethites and destroy the remnant of the seacoast" (v16). "I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes" (v17).

Repeated words

Because (vv3, 6, 8, 12, 15); know that I am the LORD (vv5, 7, 11, 17); vengeance / revenge (vv12, 14, 15, 17); stretch out My hand (vv7, 13, 16); cut off (vv7, 13, 16); sons of the east (vv4, 10); the house of Judah (vv3, 8, 12).

Contrasts

Ammon's "Aha!" over God's sanctuary (v3) ⟷ God's hand stretched out against Ammon (v7). "Judah is like all the nations" (v8) ⟷ God's judgments showing He is the LORD (v11). Edom taking its own vengeance (v12) ⟷ God laying His vengeance on Edom (v14). Everlasting enmity (v15) ⟷ a remnant of the seacoast destroyed (v16). Judah's neighbors gloating at her fall ⟷ every one of them falling under the same hand.

Chapter theme (my words)

God judged His own people first, but He did not forget the nations who cheered when they fell. Mocking, gloating and revenge against God's people are sins against God Himself. Every "because" in this chapter ends the same way: they will know that He is the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 25:14 (KJV)

14 And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom ★ by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and ▲ they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.

Why the nations now? (25:1)

Ezekiel has spent twenty-four chapters warning Judah. Now, with Jerusalem under siege, he turns to the nations. Guzik says God had not forgotten the pagan nations, and quotes Wiersbe: "the destruction of Jerusalem wasn't just a punishment of the Jews; it was also a warning to the Gentiles." Feinberg, in Guzik, applies the principle of 1 Pet 4:17–18 — if judgment begins with the household of God, the nations will not escape it. Placing these oracles here also tells the exiles that Judah's fall is not the end of the story: the God who disciplined them still rules the world.

Ammon (vv1–7)

Ammon descended from Lot (Gen 19:38) and lived east of the Jordan; its capital Rabbah survives in the name of modern Amman. Their sin was gloating. They cried "Aha!" when the temple was profaned (v3), and clapped and stamped with contempt when Israel fell (v6). Ammon had been involved in plots against Babylon (21:20 shows Nebuchadnezzar choosing between Rabbah and Jerusalem), and after the fall its king Baalis sent the man who murdered Gedaliah (Jer 40:14; 41:1–2). Wright, in Guzik, notes that Ammon took advantage of Babylon's victory to seize land. The "sons of the east" (v4) are the desert peoples beyond the Jordan; Feinberg, in Guzik, lists Bedouin, Ishmaelites or Babylonians as proposals. Clarke, in Guzik, cites Josephus that Nebuchadnezzar attacked Ammon and Moab about five years after Jerusalem fell, though Scripture does not record it. Ammon vanished as a nation; Feinberg says Ammon and Moab were eventually absorbed by the Arabs.

Moab and Seir (vv8–11)

Moab, also from Lot (Gen 19:37), had opposed Israel since Balak hired Balaam (Num 22). Seir is Edom's mountain country. Their taunt — "the house of Judah is like all the nations" (v8) — denied that Israel was God's chosen people. Guzik grants that Judah's conduct gave them reason to say it, but their gloating made them guilty. Block, in Guzik, calls the taunt "a direct assault on Yahweh himself." The three towns of v9 guarded Moab's northern plateau — "the glory of the land." Taylor, in Guzik, notes the Nabateans later overran Ammon and Moab and ended their independent existence.

Edom (vv12–14)

Edom, Esau's descendants, should have been Judah's brother. Instead, when Babylon struck, Edom cheered and helped (Ps 137:7; Lam 4:21–22; Obadiah 10–14). The Hebrew piles up the idea: vengeance taken with vengeance — Feinberg, in Guzik, calls it unrelieved, unabated revenge. God's answer: "I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel" (v14). Commentators quoted by Guzik (Wright, Clarke) point to the Maccabean era, when John Hyrcanus subdued Edom (Idumea) about 109

B.C. and had the Idumeans circumcised. Some interpreters also see a future fulfillment, since Edom stands in the prophets for the nations hostile to God (Isa 63:1–6; Amos 9:12); the commentators Guzik quotes rest on the historical fulfillment.

Philistia (vv15–17)

The Philistines were Israel's oldest enemy on the coast, from the judges through David. Their sin was "everlasting enmity" (v15) — hatred nursed for centuries. There is a word play: God will "cut off" (*karath*) the Cherethites (*Kerethim*). Feinberg, in Guzik, brings out the wordplay: "cut off the cutters off." Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik, observe that Philistia is the only nation in the chapter whose punishment names no human agent — God acts directly.

"They will know that I am the LORD."

Every oracle ends on God's self-revelation (vv5, 7, 11, 17; v14 "they will know My vengeance"). Morgan, in Guzik: "Here is the one purpose of Jehovah in His dealings with all nations." Feinberg, in Guzik, notes all four nations showed hostility to Israel and ignored God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:3). Feinberg, in Guzik, also connects the chapter to Matt 25, where the nations are judged by how they treated the Lord's people.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **Aha — *heʾach* (H1889):** an exclamation of gloating, a jeer.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** a holy place, the temple.
- **profaned — *chalal* (H2490):** to pollute, defile, treat as common.
- **exile — *golah* (H1473):** captivity, the body of exiles.
- **east — *qedem* (H6924):** the east, the front; the peoples of the eastern desert.
- **clapped — *machaʾ* (H4222):** to strike the hands together.
- **stamped — *raqaʿ* (H7554):** to stamp, beat down.
- **scorn — *sheʾat* (H7589):** contempt, malice.
- **judgments — *shephet* (H8201):** acts of judgment, penalties.
- **taking vengeance — *naqam* (H5358):** to avenge, take revenge.
- **vengeance — *neqamah* (H5360):** vengeance, retribution.
- **incurred grievous guilt — *ʾasham* (H816):** to offend, be guilty.
- **enmity — *ʾeybah* (H342):** hostility, hatred.
- **cut off — *karath* (H3772):** to cut, cut off, destroy.
- **wrathful — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, rage, fury.
- **rebukes — *tokechah* (H8433):** correction, punishment.
- **know — *yadaʿ* (H3045):** to know, come to recognize by experience.

Cross-references

Gen 12:3; Gen 19:36–38; Num 22:1–6; Deut 23:3–6; Ps 83:4–8; Ps 137:7; Prov 24:17–18; Jer 40:14; Jer 48–49; Lam 4:21–22; Ezek 21:20; Ezek 35:1–15; Amos 1:6–15; Obadiah 10–15; Zeph 2:8–11; Matt 25:40; Rom 12:19; 1 Pet 4:17–18.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 25:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites , and prophesy against them;

Command to obey — "Hear the word of the Lord GOD!" (v3)

Even the pagan nations were summoned to listen. I'll hear this chapter as God speaking to me about the way I react when others fall. Scripture says it plainly: "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls" (Prov 24:17). For the men I disciple — men who have been hurt, betrayed, sometimes testified against — this is hard. But the word is the same for them as for me: don't cheer at anyone's ruin.

Sin to confess — gloating

Ammon clapped and stamped over Judah's ruin (v6). I'll confess the quiet satisfaction I've felt when someone who wronged me got what was coming. That "Aha!" in my heart is the same sin, just quieter. God saw Ammon's heart; He sees mine.

Warning to heed — revenge

Edom and Philistia took vengeance with "everlasting enmity" (v15). Old hatred doesn't stay old; it keeps acting. In prison and on the street, revenge feels like justice and grudges get handed down. God's word is: "Never take your own revenge" (Rom 12:19). Vengeance belongs to Him, and He is very good at it (v14).

Promise to trust — they will know that I am the LORD

The God who disciplined Judah did not abandon her to her mockers. He stood up for His people when they were at their lowest. For the man who feels mocked and finished — whose family, neighbors or record say he's "like all the rest" — God has not forgotten him. The last word belongs to the LORD, not to the people laughing.

Example to follow — leave justice with God

Judah did nothing in this chapter; God did it all. I want to follow that pattern: when I've been wronged, I'll take it to God, pray for my enemies, and trust Him to make it right in His way and time.

Worship

The LORD rules the nations, not just Israel. He sees every gloating heart, defends His people, and will make Himself known. His justice is sure, and His judgments are right.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You see the nations and You see my heart. Forgive me for every "Aha!" I've felt at someone else's fall. Take the old hatred out of me and out of the men I walk with. Teach us to leave vengeance with You, to pray for those who hurt us, and to rest in knowing that You are the LORD. Amen.

Ezekiel 26

Greedy Tyre:
Scraped to Bare Rock

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Tyre saw Jerusalem's ruin as a business opportunity. God answered with wave after wave of judgment until the proud city was scraped down to bare rock. Profit at someone else's expense is not success; God is against the greed that cheers another's fall.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 26 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And it came to pass ◷ in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, ⚠ Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: ⚠ I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:

3 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, ▲ as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

4 And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her ⇄ like the top of a rock.

5 It shall be a place for the ◷ spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: ▲ for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

6 And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD.

7 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus ◷ Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.

8 He shall ⚠ slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

9 And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

10 By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

11 With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

12 And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall ◷ lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.

13 And ▲ I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.

14 And I will make thee ⇄ like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; ⚠ thou shalt be built no more: ▲ for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

15 Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?

16 Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: ⚠ they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee.

17 And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, ⚠ How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it!

18 Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.

19 For thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee;

20 When I shall bring thee down with ⚠ them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and ★ I shall set glory in the land of the living;

21 I will make thee a terror, and ⚠ thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, ⚠ yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month
- **v2** ⚠ Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people
- **v2** ⚠ I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste
- **v3** ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus
- **v3** ▲ as the sea causeth his waves to come up
- **v4** like the top of a rock *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** spreading of nets
- **v5** ▲ for I have spoken it
- **v6** they shall know that I am the LORD
- **v7** Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings
- **v8** ⚠ slay with the sword
- **v12** lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water
- **v13** ▲ I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease
- **v14** ⚠ thou shalt be built no more
- **v14** ▲ for I the LORD have spoken it
- **v16** ⚠ they shall clothe themselves with trembling
- **v17** ⚠ How art thou destroyed
- **v19** ▲ When I shall make thee a desolate city
- **v20** ⚠ them that descend into the pit
- **v20** ★ I shall set glory in the land of the living
- **v21** ⚠ thou shalt be no more
- **v21** ⚠ yet shalt thou never be found again

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 26:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, ⚠ Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: ⚠ I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:

Setting

"Now in the eleventh year, on the first of the month" (v1) — the eleventh year of King Jehoiachin's exile, about 587/586 BC. The month is not named. Jerusalem fell in the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year (Jer 39:2), and Tyre's gloating in v2 sounds like a reaction to that news. Tyre was the great Phoenician sea power on the coast north of Israel, with a city on the mainland and a fortress-city on an island just offshore. Chapters 26–28 are Ezekiel's longest set of oracles against a single foreign city.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **Tyre's "Aha":** "because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken'" (v2) — "I shall be filled, now that she is laid waste" (v2).
- vv3–6 — **wave after wave:** "Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves" (v3). "I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock" (v4). "She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken" (v5).
- vv7–11 — **Nebuchadnezzar's siege:** "I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings" (v7), with siege wall, ramp and large shield (v8), battering rams and axes (v9), dust, noise, hoofs and sword (vv10–11).
- vv12–14 — **"they" finish the work:** "Also they will make a spoil of your riches" (v12) and "throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water" (v12). "So I will silence the sound of your songs" (v13). "I will make you a bare rock … You will be built no more, for I the LORD have spoken" (v14).
- vv15–18 — **the coastlands tremble:** the princes of the sea step down from their thrones; "they will clothe themselves with trembling" (v16) and lament, "How you have perished" (v17).
- vv19–21 — **down to the pit:** "When I make you a desolate city" (v19), "I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit" (v20) — "but I will set glory in the land of the living" (v20). "I will bring terrors on you and you will be no more; though you will be sought, you will never be found again" (v21).

Repeated words

walls (vv4, 8, 9, 10, 12); towers (vv4, 9); sword (vv6, 8, 11); nations (vv3, 5); a bare rock (vv4, 14); spreading of nets (vv5, 14); spoil (vv5, 12); no more (vv13, 14, 21); coastlands (vv15, 18); tremble / trembling (vv16, 18); the pit (v20, twice); declares / thus says the Lord GOD (vv3, 5, 7, 14, 15, 19, 21).

Contrasts

"I shall be filled" (v2) ⟷ "I will scrape her debris from her" (v4). Tyre counting on the sea (v17) ⟷ God bringing nations "as the sea brings up its waves" (v3) and the deep covering her (v19). The sound of songs and harps (v13) ⟷ princes sitting on the ground trembling (v16). Down to the pit (v20) ⟷ glory in the land of the living (v20). A renowned city (v17) ⟷ "you will never be found again" (v21).

Chapter theme (my words)

Tyre saw Jerusalem's ruin as a business opportunity. God answered with wave after wave of judgment until the proud city was scraped down to bare rock. Profit at someone else's expense is not success; God is against the greed that cheers another's fall.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 26:3 (KJV)

3 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, ▲ as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

Why Tyre gloated (vv1–2)

Guzik describes Tyre as a wealthy commercial power; Taylor, in Guzik, notes it was famous for its glassware and dyed materials. It had been Israel's friend — Hiram supplied David and Solomon (2 Sam 5:11; 1 Kgs 5:1–12) — but later Tyre sold Israelites as slaves (Amos 1:9; Joel 3:4–6). Jerusalem was "the gateway of the peoples," controlling inland trade routes. With it gone, trade would flow through Tyre: "I shall be filled." Guzik says the gloating was driven by greed, and quotes Vawter and Hoppe: "Jerusalem's fall enhanced Tyre's control over commerce in the eastern Mediterranean." Morgan, in Guzik: "God is against any nation whose life has become so materialized by commercial prosperity." Compare Prov 17:5 — whoever rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.

Many nations like waves (vv3–6)

Tyre lived by the sea; God would judge it with "waves" of nations. Guzik traces them: Nebuchadnezzar's siege of about 13 years (c. 586–573 BC), the Persians, Alexander the Great (332 BC), Antiochus III, Rome, and finally the Saracens in the fourteenth century AD. "Tyre" (*Tsor*) means "rock," so "a bare rock" (v4) is a word play: the rock-city scraped down to bare rock. Her "daughters" on the mainland (v6) are her dependent towns.

Nebuchadnezzar (vv7–11)

This is the first time Ezekiel names him — "king of kings" (v7), the emperor over subject kings (compare Dan 2:37). The siege equipment is exactly what a land army would use. Guzik notes that Nebuchadnezzar took the mainland city after 13 years but could not take the island fortress. Ezekiel

himself later says Nebuchadnezzar's army labored hard against Tyre without getting wages for it (29:17–20).

"They" — the later waves (vv12–14)

The pronoun shifts from "he" (vv7–11) to "they" (v12). Guzik reads this as the later invaders, above all Alexander. To reach the island, Alexander's army built a causeway from the ruins of the old mainland city, literally throwing its stones, timber and debris into the water (v12) — just as Ezekiel prophesied, Guzik says. Feinberg, in Guzik, reports that Edward Robinson saw marble columns lying under the water off Tyre's shore.

"You will be built no more" (v14)

Christians answer the obvious question — there is a city called Tyre today — in more than one way. Guzik notes that the Saracens destroyed the city so thoroughly that its remains are hard to find, and that modern Tyre is not on the same site; he also observes that God delayed the final judgment for centuries, and that Jesus ministered in the region of Tyre (Matt 15:21; Mark 7:24–31). Others read "built no more" as the end of Tyre as the proud sea power it was, or apply it to the scraped-bare mainland city. Either way, the Tyre that gloated over Jerusalem is gone.

The princes of the sea (vv15–18)

Tyre's trading partners step off their thrones and put on "trembling" like a garment (v16). Guzik notes that the funeral lament is used here in a satirical way. Clarke, in Guzik, notes how strong Tyre was: Alexander despaired of taking it without filling in the arm of the sea.

Down to the pit (vv19–21)

"The pit" (*bor*) is a cistern or dungeon, and by extension the realm of the dead. Block, in Guzik: it "refers primarily to a cistern in which rainwater is trapped and stored." The "lower parts of the earth" are not geography but the place of the dead. Against that darkness God says: "I will set glory in the land of the living" (v20) — His purposes stand among His people. Meyer, in Guzik, contrasts v21 — "though you will be sought, you will never be found again" — with Jer 50:20, where Israel's sins are searched for and not found, because God has pardoned them.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **Tyre — *Tsor* (H6865):** "rock," the Phoenician island city.
- **Aha — *heʾach* (H1889):** a jeer of triumph.
- **gateway — *deleth* (H1817):** a door, gate.
- **laid waste — *charab* (H2717):** to be dried up, desolate, ruined.
- **waves — *gal* (H1530):** a heap; a wave or billow.
- **scrape — *sachah* (H5500):** to sweep or scrape away.
- **bare rock — *tsechiach* (H6706):** a glaring, sun-baked, bare surface.
- **nets — *cherem* (H2764):** a fishing net (same spelling as "devoted thing").
- **king of kings — *melek* (H4428):** king — doubled for supreme rank.
- **spoil — *shalal* (H7998):** plunder, booty.
- **built — *banah* (H1129):** to build, rebuild.

- **trembling — *charadah* (H2731):** fear, anxiety, trembling.
- **lamentation — *qinah* (H7015):** a dirge, funeral song.
- **pit — *bor* (H953):** a cistern, dungeon, grave.
- **terrors — *ballahah* (H1091):** sudden terror, destruction.

Cross-references

2 Sam 5:11; 1 Kgs 5:1–12; Ps 28:3–5; Prov 17:5; Isa 23:1–18; Jer 47:4; Jer 50:20; Ezek 27:1–36; Ezek 28:1–19; Ezek 29:17–20; Joel 3:4–8; Amos 1:9–10; Zech 9:2–4; Matt 11:21–22; Matt 15:21–28; Luke 12:15; Rev 18:9–19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 26:20 (KJV)

20 When I shall bring thee down with ⚠ them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and ★ I shall set glory in the land of the living;

Command to obey — "Behold, I am against you" (v3)

That is a sentence I never want God to say over me. I'll take it as a command to check what I'm building on. If my security is in my business, my income or my connections, I'll put it back where it belongs. Jesus said, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed" (Luke 12:15).

Sin to confess — profiting from someone's ruin

Tyre looked at Jerusalem's collapse and thought, "I shall be filled" (v2). I'll confess every time I've seen someone else's loss as my opening — a competitor's failure, a rival's fall, a brother's stumble. Greed wears business clothes, but God calls it by name.

Warning to heed — the walls will not hold

Tyre had towers, an island fortress, and the whole sea around it. God brought wave after wave until it was bare rock (vv3–4). Many of the men I disciple once built their lives on hustle, dealing or a reputation on the street; some of them watched it all go down in one raid or one sentence. What a man builds without God will not stand. Better to let it go now than to watch it thrown into the sea.

Promise to trust — "I will set glory in the land of the living" (v20)

Tyre went down to the pit, but God's glory remains among the living. For the man who feels like he's already in the pit — locked up, sober and scared, or out with nothing — God has not stopped working. And unlike Tyre, whose ruin "will never be found again," the sins of God's forgiven people are sought and not found (Jer 50:20).

Example to follow — the God who keeps His word

"For I the LORD have spoken" (v14). God's word against Tyre was fulfilled over centuries, wave by wave. I want to be a man who believes God's promises the same way — even when the fulfillment takes longer than I want.

Worship

The LORD stirs up nations like the sea stirs up waves. Kings are His instruments, proud cities fall at His word, and not one thing He has spoken fails. He sets glory in the land of the living.

Prayer

Lord GOD, guard my heart from greed and from cheering at anyone's fall. Tear down whatever I've built apart from You before it takes me down with it. Lift the men I serve out of the pit and set Your glory in their lives. You have spoken, and Your word will stand. Amen.

Ezekiel 27

The Shipwreck of Tyre: Lament for the Proud Ship

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Tyre was the finest ship on the sea — beautiful, rich, well crewed, and sure of herself. One east wind sent it all to the bottom. A life built on wealth and reputation, with God left off the manifest, is one storm away from the deep.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 27 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus;

3 And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.

4 Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty.

5 They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee.

6 Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim.

7 Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee.

8 The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots.

9 The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers : all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.

10 They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness.

11 The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect.

12 Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.

13 Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market.

14 They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules.

15 The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony.

16 Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate.

17 Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants: they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm.

18 Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool.

19 Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market.

20 Dedan was ⇄ thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots.

21 Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these were they ⇄ thy merchants.

22 The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were ⇄ thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold.

23 Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were ⇄ thy merchants.

24 These were ⇄ thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise.

25 The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and ⚠ thou wast replenished, and made very glorious ⇄ in the midst of the seas.

26 Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: ▲ the east wind hath broken thee ⇄ in the midst of the seas.

27 Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers , and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas ◷ in the day of thy ruin.

28 The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots.

29 And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land;

30 And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and ⚠ shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes:

31 And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and ◷ gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.

32 And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, ⇄ What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?

33 When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; ◷ thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise.

34 In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall.

35 All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and ⚠ their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in their countenance.

36 The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; ⚠ thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt be any more .

Marked in the text

- **v2** take up a lamentation for Tyrus
- **v3** ◷ situate at the entry of the sea
- **v3** ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD
- **v3** ⚠ I am of perfect beauty
- **v4** ⇄ in the midst of the seas *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** ⚠ thy builders have perfected thy beauty
- **v7** ◷ Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt
- **v8** ◷ thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots
- **v11** ⚠ they have made thy beauty perfect
- **v12** ⇄ thy merchant *(every occurrence)*
- **v13** ⚠ they traded the persons of men
- **v17** ⚠ Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants
- **v25** ⚠ thou wast replenished, and made very glorious
- **v26** ▲ the east wind hath broken thee
- **v27** ◷ in the day of thy ruin
- **v30** ⚠ shall cry bitterly

- **v31** gird them with sackcloth
- **v32** What city is like Tyrus
- **v33** thou didst enrich the kings of the earth
- **v35** their kings shall be sore afraid
- **v36** thou shalt be a terror

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 27:3 (KJV)

3 And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.

Setting

This chapter continues the oracle against Tyre that began in 26:1 (the eleventh year, about 587/586 BC). Chapter 26 announced Tyre's fall; chapter 27 is a funeral song for it. Ezekiel pictures the proud sea-city as a magnificent merchant ship, lists the nations that traded with her from Spain to Arabia, and then sinks the ship in a storm. God is named only in the opening verses — "Thus says the Lord GOD" (v3) — and the rest of the chapter is commerce and catastrophe.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **the dirge and the boast:** "take up a lamentation over Tyre" (v2), the city "who dwells at the entrance to the sea, merchant of the peoples to many coastlands" (v3). "O Tyre, you have said, 'I am perfect in beauty'" (v3).
- vv4–11 — **the glorious ship:** "Your borders are in the heart of the seas; your builders have perfected your beauty" (v4). Planks of fir from Senir, a mast of Lebanon cedar, oars of Bashan oak, ivory decks, an embroidered Egyptian linen sail (vv5–7). Rowers from Sidon and Arvad, Tyre's own wise men as pilots, caulkers from Gebal (vv8–9). Soldiers from Persia, Lud and Put hung their shields on her walls; "they perfected your beauty" (vv10–11).
- vv12–24 — **the trading world:** Tarshish with silver, iron, tin and lead (v12); Javan, Tubal and Meshech paying "with the lives of men and vessels of bronze" (v13); horses from Beth-togarmah (v14); "Judah and the land of Israel, they were your traders" with wheat, honey, oil and balm (v17); Damascus, Arabia, Kedar, Sheba and many more (vv18–24).
- vv25–27 — **the shipwreck:** "you were filled and were very glorious in the heart of the seas" (v25). "The east wind has broken you in the heart of the seas" (v26). All her wealth, crew and soldiers sink "on the day of your overthrow" (v27).
- vv28–36 — **the world mourns:** the sailors come ashore, "cry bitterly," throw dust on their heads, shave their heads and put on sackcloth (vv29–31). Their lament: "Who is like Tyre" (v32). "You

enriched the kings of earth" (v33) — now the coastlands are appalled (v35), and "you will cease to be forever" (v36).

Repeated words

beauty (vv3, 4, 11); the heart of the seas (vv4, 25, 26, 27); pilots (vv8, 27, 28, 29); coastlands (vv3, 6, 7, 15, 35); lamentation (vv2, 32); merchandise, wares, traders and customers in nearly every verse of vv12–24.

Contrasts

"I am perfect in beauty" (v3) ⟷ "you will cease to be forever" (v36). Built by the best hands of many nations (vv5–11) ⟷ broken by one east wind (v26). "Very glorious in the heart of the seas" (v25) ⟷ sunk "into the heart of the seas" (v27). Enriching the kings of earth (v33) ⟷ kings "horribly afraid" (v35). A full ship's manifest (vv12–24) ⟷ no mention of God in it.

Chapter theme (my words)

Tyre was the finest ship on the sea — beautiful, rich, well crewed, and sure of herself. One east wind sent it all to the bottom. A life built on wealth and reputation, with God left off the manifest, is one storm away from the deep.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 27:26 (KJV)

26 Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: ▲ the east wind hath broken thee ⇄ in the midst of the seas.

A lament for the living (vv1–3)

A *qinah* was a funeral song, sung for the dead. Ezekiel sings it while Tyre is still at the height of its power — the funeral is certain because God has spoken (26:14). Block, in Guzik, notes that the verb "dwells" (v3) carries the sense of sitting enthroned: Tyre ruled the seas. Her sin is in her own words: "I am perfect in beauty" (v3). Wiersbe, in Guzik, observes that "merchant" and "merchandise" are used twenty-one times in this chapter, "because Tyre was a mercantile city."

The ship of state (vv4–11)

Guzik explains the central picture: Tyre as a magnificent ship, each part standing for some part of its power. The best materials of the known world built her — fir from Senir (Mount Hermon), cedar from Lebanon, oak from Bashan, ivory inlaid from the coastlands of Cyprus, a sail of Egyptian embroidered linen, coverings of blue and purple. The best people crewed her: oarsmen from Sidon and Arvad, master pilots from Tyre itself, caulkers from Gebal (Byblos), and a mercenary army from Persia, Lud (Lydia) and Put (Libya). Trapp, in Guzik, says Tyre is "fitly here compared to a goodly ship, and her desolation to a dismal shipwreck."

The manifest (vv12–24)

The trade list reaches from Tarshish (likely southern Spain) to Asia Minor, Armenia, Syria, Arabia and Mesopotamia — much of the world of Genesis 10. Clarke, in Guzik, says the records are as orderly "as they could have been in a European custom-house." Two details stand out. First, human beings were cargo: Javan, Tubal and Meshech paid "with the lives of men" (v13). Clarke, in Guzik: "The bodies and souls of men were bought and sold in those days." Guzik calls this a violation of God's law and of the dignity of people made in His image, and connects it with Amos's earlier rebuke of Tyre for delivering up whole populations (Amos 1:9–10). Second, Judah and Israel were on the list (v17) — God's people were business partners with the city that would gloat over Jerusalem's fall. Guzik notes that God is absent from the whole list; Tyre cared only for business.

The east wind (vv25–27)

The ship is fully loaded — "filled" (v25) — and sails into deep water. Then "the east wind has broken you" (v26). The east wind was the hot, violent wind off the desert, and in the prophets a picture of judgment, often meaning Babylon. God isn't named here, but Guzik points to Ps 48:7 — God breaks the ships of Tarshish with an east wind. Everything goes down together: riches, wares, sailors, pilots, soldiers (v27). Morgan, in Guzik, on Tyre's commercial pride: "There is nothing more calculated to destroy a people."

The world mourns (vv28–36)

The sailors of every other ship come ashore and grieve with every sign of mourning — dust, ashes, shaved heads, sackcloth (vv30–31). Feinberg, in Guzik, notes that shaving the head for the dead was forbidden to Israel (Deut 14:1). Block, in Guzik, likens Tyre's sinking to a "Titanic" of the seas. Taylor, in Guzik, sees the kings' fear as self-interested — they mourn their lost profits. Wiersbe, in Guzik, sees this lament as a preview of the fall of "Babylon the great" in Rev 18, where merchants and sea captains weep over another great trading city in almost the same words. Block, in Guzik: "The Lord of history always has the last word." Feinberg, in Guzik: "riches without God are unable to satisfy the heart of man."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **lamentation — *qinah* (H7015):** a dirge, funeral song.
- **merchant — *rakal* (H7402):** to go about as a trader; a merchant.
- **coastlands — *ʾiy* (H339):** a coast, island, distant shore.
- **perfect — *kalil* (H3632):** complete, entire, whole.
- **beauty — *yophi* (H3308):** beauty, loveliness.
- **builders — *banah* (H1129):** to build.
- **pilots — *chobel* (H2259):** a sailor, ship's helmsman (from the word for rope).
- **traders — *sachar* (H5503):** to travel about as a merchant, trade.
- **merchandise — *maʿarab* (H4627):** goods for exchange, wares.
- **wealth — *hon* (H1952):** riches, substance.
- **east wind — *qadim* (H6921):** the east; the scorching desert wind.
- **heart — *leb* (H3820):** the heart, the midst.

- **overthrow — *mappeleth* (H4658):** a fall, ruin.
- **cry bitterly — *mar* (H4751):** bitter, bitterly.
- **terrified — *ballahah* (H1091):** terror, sudden destruction.

Cross-references

Gen 10:2–7; Deut 14:1; 1 Kgs 10:22; Ps 48:7; Ps 49:6–12; Prov 11:28; Prov 23:4–5; Isa 23:1–18; Ezek 26:1–21; Ezek 28:1–19; Amos 1:9–10; Jonah 1:3–4; Matt 6:19–21; Mark 8:36; Luke 12:16–21; 1 Tim 6:9–10; Jas 4:13–16; Rev 18:9–19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 27:2 (KJV)

2 Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus;

Command to obey — "take up a lamentation" (v2)

God told Ezekiel to grieve over a proud, pagan city. I'll obey that by refusing to cheer at anyone's shipwreck — and by grieving honestly over the things I've built without God. Some lamentations need to be sung over my own plans before the storm comes.

Sin to confess — "I am perfect in beauty."

Tyre's boast (v3) was pride dressed in success. I'll confess the times I've looked at what I've built — my work, my books, my tools, my reputation — and taken quiet credit that belongs to God. Pride doesn't usually sound loud; it sounds like satisfaction.

Warning to heed — one east wind

Tyre had the best wood, the best crew, the best soldiers, and the richest customers. One wind broke it all (v26). Many of the men I disciple know this firsthand — a life that looked solid until one arrest, one relapse, one phone call sank it. What we build without God can't survive the storm, and a man in recovery has to take God's warning seriously: the old life always sinks.

Promise to trust — the Lord of the wind

The same God who sent the east wind is the One Jesus showed Himself to be on the Sea of Galilee, when He rebuked the wind and the sea and they obeyed (Mark 4:39–41). Meyer, in Guzik: "O mariner! See to it that Christ is on board." For the man whose life has already gone under, Christ is still the Lord of the storm, and He doesn't abandon those who call to Him.

Example to follow — honest trade

Tyre bought and sold "the lives of men" (v13). I want everything I sell and every deal I make to honor people made in God's image. And I want to lay up treasure in heaven rather than on earth (Matt 6:19–21).

Worship

The LORD rules the seas and the winds. The richest cities of the world are in His hand, and He brings down the proud. He alone is perfect in beauty, and He has the last word over history.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You see what I'm building and what I'm trusting. Break my pride before it breaks me. Keep me from treating people as cargo or success as security. Be on board in my life and in the lives of the men I serve — and when the east wind blows, hold us fast in Christ. Amen.

Ezekiel 28

The Fall of the Proud King: Tyre, Sidon and a Gathered Israel

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Pride says "I am a god" — and behind every proud throne stands the first proud rebel. God tears down the one who lifts himself up, whether a merchant king or the anointed cherub. But He gathers His humbled people and lets them live in safety, so that everyone will know He alone is the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 28 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

3 Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:

4 With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures:

5 By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:

6 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God;

7 Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.

8 They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.

9 Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee.

10 Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

18 ⚠ Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more .

20 Again ⇄ the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it,

22 And say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and ▲ I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her.

23 For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD.

24 And there shall be ★ no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

25 ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ★ When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob.

26 And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, ★ they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD their God.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ⇄ The word of the LORD came *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ⚠ thine heart is lifted up
- **v2** ⚠ I am a God, I sit in the seat of God
- **v2** ◷ yet thou art a man, and not God
- **v3** ◷ wiser than Daniel
- **v4** ⇄ wisdom *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** ⚠ thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches
- **v7** ▲ I will bring strangers upon thee
- **v8** ⚠ bring thee down to the pit
- **v12** ▮▮ take up a lamentation
- **v12** ◷ perfect in beauty
- **v13** ◷ Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God
- **v14** ⇄ the anointed cherub that covereth
- **v15** ⚠ till iniquity was found in thee
- **v16** ⚠ filled the midst of thee with violence
- **v16** ▲ I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God
- **v17** ⚠ Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty
- **v18** ⚠ Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries
- **v22** ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon
- **v22** ▲ I will be glorified in the midst of thee
- **v22** ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v24** ★ no more a pricking brier
- **v25** ★ When I shall have gathered the house of Israel
- **v26** ★ they shall dwell with confidence

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 28:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ⚠ thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, ⚠ I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; ◷ yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

Setting

This chapter closes Ezekiel's long oracle against Tyre (chs 26–28), dated "in the eleventh year" (26:1) — about 587/586 BC, the year Jerusalem fell. Tyre was the great Phoenician sea-trading city, built mostly on an island off the coast, and it had cheered Jerusalem's fall as a chance for more business (26:2). Nebuchadnezzar would besiege it for thirteen years (about 586–573 BC). Chapter 28 has no new date. It moves from Tyre's ruler (vv1–19) to its sister city Sidon (vv20–24), and ends with a promise to Israel (vv25–26).

Structure

- vv1–5 — **the prince who says "I am a god":** "say to the leader of Tyre … 'Because your heart is lifted up And you have said, "I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods"'" (v2). God answers: "Yet you are a man and not God" (v2). He is "wiser than Daniel" (v3), and his wisdom has made him rich — "your heart is lifted up because of your riches" (v5).
- vv6–10 — **brought down by strangers:** "Because you have made your heart Like the heart of God" (v6), God will bring strangers, "the most ruthless of the nations" (v7), who will "defile your splendor" (v7) and "bring you down to the pit" (v8). "Will you still say, 'I am a god,'" in front of the man who kills you? (v9). "You will die the death of the uncircumcised" (v10).
- vv11–15 — **a lament over the king of Tyre:** "take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre" (v12). "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty" (v12). "You were in Eden, the garden of God" (v13), covered in precious stones. "You were the anointed cherub who covers" (v14); "You were on the holy mountain of God" (v14). "You were blameless in your ways … Until unrighteousness was found in you" (v15).
- vv16–19 — **the fall:** "By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned" (v16). "I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God" (v16). "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor" (v17). "I cast you to the ground" (v17). "You profaned your sanctuaries" (v18). Fire from within consumes him: "you will cease to be forever" (v19).
- vv20–24 — **against Sidon:** "Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, And I will be glorified in your midst" (v22). Pestilence and sword come (v23), and Israel will have no more "a prickling brier or a painful thorn" from its scornful neighbors (v24).
- vv25–26 — **Israel gathered and safe:** "When I gather the house of Israel" (v25), they will live in the land God gave "My servant Jacob" (v25). "They will live in it securely" — building houses, planting

vineyards (v26). "Then they will know that I am the LORD their God" (v26).

Repeated words

Thus says the Lord GOD (vv2, 6, 12, 22, 25); wisdom (vv4, 5, 7, 12, 17); heart (vv2, 5, 6, 8, 17); trade (vv5, 16, 18); beauty (vv7, 12, 17); splendor (vv7, 17); strangers (vv7, 10); they will know that I am the LORD / the Lord GOD (vv22, 23, 24, 26).

Contrasts

"I am a god" (v2) ⟷ "you are a man and not God" (v2). The seat of gods (v2) ⟷ the pit (v8). Blameless from creation (v15) ⟷ unrighteousness found (v15). The holy mountain of God (v14) ⟷ cast to the ground (v17). Wisdom (v12) ⟷ wisdom corrupted (v17). Tyre's sanctuaries (v18) ⟷ God manifesting His holiness (vv22, 25). Israel scattered and scorned (vv24–25) ⟷ Israel living securely (v26).

Chapter theme (my words)

Pride says "I am a god" — and behind every proud throne stands the first proud rebel. God tears down the one who lifts himself up, whether a merchant king or the anointed cherub. But He gathers His humbled people and lets them live in safety, so that everyone will know He alone is the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 28:22 (KJV)

22 And say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and ▲ I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her.

The prince of Tyre (vv1–5)

The "leader" (Hebrew *nagid*) of Tyre was probably Ithobaal II, whom Guzik notes Feinberg identifies (Josephus calls him Ithobalus). Ancient kings often claimed divine status, and Tyre thought of itself as untouchable — an island fortress "in the heart of the seas." Taylor, in Guzik, says Tyre saw itself as "all-powerful, superhuman and virtually eternal." "Wiser than Daniel" (v3) is sarcasm: Daniel, then serving in Babylon, was famous for wisdom (Dan 1:20; 2:48). Guzik stresses that God doesn't condemn his skill or his money. Block, in Guzik: "Significantly, the prophet castigates him neither for his shrewdness nor for his amassed wealth." The sin is what wealth did to his heart — it was "lifted up" (v5). Taylor, in Guzik, contrasts Daniel as "a classic example of a man whose head was not turned by his success."

The strangers (vv6–10)

The "strangers" are the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, the "most ruthless of the nations" (compare 30:11). Nebuchadnezzar's thirteen-year siege wore Tyre down (29:18), and later Alexander the Great destroyed the island city in 332 BC. The point of vv9–10 is exposure: a "god" bleeds like any man. Feinberg, in Guzik: "Claims of deity and superhuman powers would mean nothing to the

invaders." To "die the death of the uncircumcised" (v10) meant a shameful death, outside God's covenant people. Wiersbe, in Guzik: "World leaders who ignore the Lord and act as if they are gods will all be exposed and judged."

Who is the king of Tyre? (vv11–19)

The lament suddenly uses language far beyond any human king — Eden, a cherub, the holy mountain, stones of fire, created blameless. Christians read it three main ways:

- **The human king in poetic dress** — Ezekiel uses Eden and temple imagery as royal hyperbole to mock the king's self-image (the view of many modern commentators).
- **An Adam figure** — the king is pictured as a new Adam who was placed in Eden and fell.
- **Satan behind the king** — the language points past the man to the spiritual power driving him, as Isaiah 14 does with the king of Babylon.

Guzik holds the third view: "The power behind the prince of Tyre – the true king of Tyre – was Satan himself." He rejects the Adam reading because Adam was never "the anointed cherub." Morgan, in Guzik, calls the passage "the most graphic and illuminating portrayal of Satan to be found in the whole Bible." Wright, in Guzik, sees "a blend of the king of Tyre and his master." Either way, the lesson holds: the same pride runs from the first rebel to the proud human ruler.

The fall (vv15–19)

He was "blameless" (*tamim*, complete, whole) until "unrighteousness was found" in him (v15). Guzik: "Satan's sin was prompted by *pride*" — a heart lifted up "because of your beauty" (v17; compare 1 Tim 3:6). Trade bred violence (v16), and Tyre's many temples were profaned (v18). Guzik traces several stages in Satan's fall: cast from glory as profane (here; Luke 10:18), later losing access to heaven (Rev 12:7–9), confined to the pit (Rev 20:1–3), and finally the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). The fire comes "from the midst of you" (v18) — sin carries its own destruction inside it.

Sidon (vv20–24)

Sidon, Tyre's older neighbor about twenty miles up the coast, was the home of Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians (1 Kgs 16:31) — Clarke, in Guzik, draws that link. By Ezekiel's day it was a smaller power. God says He will be "glorified" (*kabad*) and will "manifest My holiness" (*qadash*) in her — His judgments show who He is. Block, in Guzik, notes that Nebuchadnezzar's court records list the king of Sidon among his subjects. For Israel this means relief: no more "prickling brier" (v24) — the word *sallon* appears elsewhere only in 2:6, where Ezekiel himself sat among briers and thorns.

Israel gathered (vv25–26)

In the middle of eight chapters of judgment on the nations (chs 25–32), God pauses to promise His own people a future. Views differ on fulfillment: some see it completed in the return from Babylon; some apply it spiritually to the church; others expect a future, literal regathering of Israel. Guzik holds that the return from exile was a partial fulfillment, with "a greater and perfect fulfillment to come," and he says the regathering "reached a significant milestone in 1948." He rejects Trapp's view that the promise is conditional: "Yet such a condition is nowhere mentioned in this and similar promises."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **leader — *nagid* (H5057):** a ruler, prince, one in front.

- **lifted up — *gabah* (H1361):** to be high, haughty, proud.
- **god — *el* (H410):** god, mighty one.
- **wisdom — *chokmah* (H2451):** skill, wisdom.
- **trade — *rekullah* (H7404):** merchandise, trading — used only in Ezekiel (26:12; 28:5, 16, 18).
- **strangers — *zur* (H2114):** foreigners, outsiders.
- **splendor — *yiphah* (H3314):** brightness, beauty.
- **uncircumcised — *arel* (H6189):** outside the covenant; a shameful death.
- **lamentation — *qinah* (H7015):** a funeral dirge.
- **perfection — *toknith* (H8508):** pattern, measure, proportion.
- **cherub — *kerub* (H3742):** a guardian angelic being near God's throne.
- **anointed — *mimshach* (H4473):** anointing, or outspread (wings); found only here.
- **blameless — *tamim* (H8549):** complete, whole, without blemish.
- **unrighteousness — *avlah* (H5766):** injustice, wickedness.
- **profane — *chalal* (H2490):** to defile, treat as common.
- **brier — *sallon* (H5544):** a thorn, prickle.
- **securely — *betach* (H983):** safety, confidence.

Cross-references

Gen 3:1–5; 1 Kgs 16:31; Isa 14:12–15; Isa 23:1–18; Ezek 26:1–27:36; Ezek 29:17–18; Dan 1:20; Prov 16:18; Matt 11:21–22; Luke 10:18; Acts 12:21–23; 1 Tim 3:6; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5–8; Rev 12:7–9; Rev 18:9–19; Rev 20:10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 28:12 (KJV)

12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

Command to obey — "take up a lamentation."

God told Ezekiel to sing a funeral song over a proud king (v12). God doesn't gloat over the fall of the proud; He grieves it. I want to weep, not cheer, when proud people crash — and to warn them while there is still time.

Sin to confess — a heart lifted up

The prince's success turned his head (v5). Every time a book sells, a site launches, or a man I've walked with stands strong, I'm tempted to sit in "the seat of gods." I'll confess the quiet pride that takes credit for what God has done, and say plainly: I am a man and not God (v2).

Warning to heed — the fire from within

God brought fire "from the midst of you" (v18). Sin doesn't need an outside enemy to destroy me — it burns from the inside. Many of the men I disciple know this firsthand: the addiction that promised power and pleasure turned into the fire that consumed home, job and freedom. The warning isn't only for kings. Pride and sin always end in ashes.

Promise to trust — "They will live in it securely."

God promises to gather the scattered and let them build houses and plant vineyards (v26). For a man walking out of prison or out of rehab with nothing, this is the heart of God: He restores, He plants, He gives a place to live in safety. The briers and thorns that mocked you will not have the last word (v24).

Example to follow — Daniel, not the prince

The prince thought he was "wiser than Daniel" (v3), but Daniel was the one whose head was never turned by success. I want to be like the real Daniel — gifted, trusted, honored, and still on my knees.

Worship

You alone are God. You sit on the true throne. You cast down the proud and gather the humble. You will be glorified, and the nations will know that You are the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I am a man and not God. Search my heart for every place where it is lifted up because of my gifts or my work. Keep me from the pride that brought down the anointed cherub. Gather the scattered men I serve, plant them, and let them live securely in You. Be glorified in my life. Amen.

Ezekiel 29

The Monster in the Nile: Egypt, the Broken Reed

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Pharaoh claimed to own and even create the river that made him. God hooked him like a crocodile and laid him on the sand. Every false support Israel leaned on — Egypt most of all — splintered in their hands. God alone is Creator, Owner and the One worth leaning on, and He uses even pagan armies to do His work.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 29 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt:

3 Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.

4 But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.

5 And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven.

6 And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

7 When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee.

9 And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it.

10 Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia.

11 No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.

12 And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

13 Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered:

14 And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom.

15 It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.

16 And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

17 And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

18 Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it:

19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

20 I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD.

21 In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** In the tenth year, in the tenth month
- **v2** set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt
- **v3** Thus saith the Lord GOD *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt
- **v3** the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers
- **v3** My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself
- **v4** I will put hooks in thy jaws
- **v6** shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** a staff of reed to the house of Israel
- **v7** when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest
- **v8** I will bring a sword upon thee
- **v9** desolate *(every occurrence)*
- **v10** from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia
- **v11** forty years *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations
- **v13** will I gather the Egyptians
- **v15** It shall be the basest of the kingdoms
- **v16** it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel
- **v17** in the seven and twentieth year
- **v18** yet had he no wages
- **v19** it shall be the wages for his army
- **v20** because they wrought for me
- **v21** the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth
- **v21** I will give thee the opening of the mouth

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 29:3 (KJV)

3 Speak, and say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, ⚠ the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, ⚠ My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.

Setting

"In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth of the month" (v1) — January 587 BC. Babylon's army has surrounded Jerusalem for a year, and King Zedekiah is hoping Egypt will rescue him (Jer 37:5–8). Ezekiel, among the exiles in Babylon, turns to Egypt. This chapter opens four chapters of oracles against Egypt (chs 29–32). The second oracle (vv17–21) is dated "in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first of the month" (v17) — spring 571 BC, the latest date in the book, set here because it finishes the Egypt theme.

Structure

- vv1–5 — **the great monster in the Nile:** "set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt" (v2). "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, The great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers, That has said, 'My Nile is mine, and I myself have made it'" (v3). "I will put hooks in your jaws" (v4), drag him and his clinging fish onto dry land, and "abandon you to the wilderness" (v5) as food for beasts and birds.
- vv6–7 — **a staff made of reed:** Egypt will know the LORD "because they have been only a staff made of reed to the house of Israel" (v6). When Israel grabbed it, it splintered and tore their hands; "when they leaned on you, You broke" (v7).
- vv8–12 — **forty years of desolation:** "I will bring upon you a sword" (v8). Because Pharaoh said, "The Nile is mine, and I have made it" (v9), the land will be desolate "from Migdol to Syene and even to the border of Ethiopia" (v10). "It will not be inhabited for forty years" (v11). "I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations" (v12).
- vv13–16 — **restored, but lowly:** "At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians" (v13). "I will turn the fortunes of Egypt" (v14), but "there they will be a lowly kingdom" (v14). "It will be the lowest of the kingdoms, and it will never again lift itself up above the nations" (v15). Egypt will "never again be the confidence of the house of Israel" (v16).
- vv17–20 — **Egypt as Babylon's wages:** Nebuchadnezzar "made his army labor hard against Tyre; every head was made bald and every shoulder was rubbed bare" (v18), "but he and his army had no wages from Tyre" (v18). So God gives him Egypt: "it will be wages for his army" (v19), "because they acted for Me" (v20).
- v21 — **a horn for Israel:** "On that day I will make a horn sprout for the house of Israel, and I will open your mouth in their midst. Then they will know that I am the LORD" (v21).

Repeated words

Thus says the Lord GOD (vv3, 8, 13, 19); know that I am the LORD / the Lord GOD (vv6, 9, 16, 21); Nile (vv3, 9); desolate / desolation (vv9, 10, 12); forty years (vv11, 12, 13); scatter / scattered (vv12, 13); wages (vv18, 19).

Contrasts

"My Nile is mine, and I myself have made it" (v3) ⟷ the God who drags the monster out of its river (v4). A great monster (v3) ⟷ a lowly kingdom (vv14–15). A staff to lean on (v6) ⟷ a reed that breaks and wounds (v7). No wages from Tyre (v18) ⟷ Egypt as wages (v19). Egypt lowered (v15) ⟷ Israel's horn sprouting (v21).

Chapter theme (my words)

Pharaoh claimed to own and even create the river that made him. God hooked him like a crocodile and laid him on the sand. Every false support Israel leaned on — Egypt most of all — splintered in their hands. God alone is Creator, Owner and the One worth leaning on, and He uses even pagan armies to do His work.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 29:4 (KJV)

4 But ▲ I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.

The monster in the Nile (vv1–5)

The Pharaoh was Hophra (Greek Apries), named in Jeremiah 44:30. Guzik notes that the date fell, in Feinberg's words, "a year and two days after Nebuchadnezzar had invaded Jerusalem" — that is, after the siege began (2 Kgs 25:1). The "great monster" (*tannim*) is a crocodile, the lord of the Nile. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "Egyptian prayers encouraged the pharaoh to be a crocodile to his enemies." Pharaoh's boast is the heart of the chapter. Morgan, in Guzik: "Here Pharaoh is represented, not as worshipping the River, but claiming to possess it, and to have created it." Feinberg answers: "Actually, instead of his making the river, the river made him, for without it the land would have been a desert." Morgan again: "all forgetfulness of God amounts at last to self-deification." God will hook the crocodile and drag it out with the fish clinging to its scales — Feinberg sees the fish as Pharaoh's followers who fall with him. Left unburied in the open field (v5) was the deepest shame for a king who built a grand tomb.

A staff made of reed (vv6–7)

This is the reason God judges Egypt in relation to Israel. Egypt had promised help again and again and failed every time (compare Isa 30:1–7; 36:6). In 588 BC Hophra's army did march, and the Babylonians

briefly lifted the siege (Jer 37:5–11) — but Egypt pulled back and Jerusalem fell. Taylor, in Guzik, calls it "little more than a token foray on the Egyptians' part." Poole, in Guzik: Judah's sin was trusting Egypt, and Egypt's sin was breaking its promises. A reed staff looks like support, but when you put your weight on it, it splinters and drives into your hand.

Forty years of desolation (vv8–12)

"From Migdol to Syene" (v10) meant all Egypt, north to south — Block, in Guzik, compares it to Israel's "from Dan to Beer-sheba." Nebuchadnezzar did invade Egypt around 568 BC, and Feinberg cites Berosus that he took Egyptian captives to Babylon. But the forty years are debated. Feinberg, in Guzik, admits "no such forty-year period is known in Egyptian history." Some therefore read the number as a round figure for a generation of judgment (like Israel's forty years in the wilderness). Feinberg, however, notes that nothing in the context signals a shift from literal to figurative language. Guzik does not claim a specific fulfillment.

Restored, but lowly (vv13–16)

Egypt is the only foreign nation in Ezekiel promised a restoration (Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik). Pathros (v14) is Upper Egypt, the south. But Egypt would never again be a world power. Feinberg, in Guzik, traces its decline under the Persians, the Ptolemies and Rome. History bears it out: after Ezekiel's day, Egypt was ruled by foreign powers for centuries. God's goal is stated in v16: Israel must stop trusting Egypt, because every time they looked to it, it brought their iniquity to mind.

Babylon's wages (vv17–20)

Seventeen years later, God speaks again. Nebuchadnezzar's thirteen-year siege of Tyre (about 586–573 BC) rubbed his soldiers' heads bald from helmets and their shoulders raw from carrying siege materials. Tyre did finally submit, but Clarke, in Guzik, says the Tyrians escaped by sea with their wealth, so there was little plunder. Taylor: "the rewards of the siege were not commensurate with the effort involved." Some critics claim this shows Ezekiel's Tyre prophecy (ch 26) failed. Alexander, in Guzik, answers that God executed His word through Babylon, and complete fulfillment need not come in one siege — Alexander the Great later finished the job. Guzik: "There was a real sense in which Nebuchadnezzar and the armies of Babylon worked for God as His instruments of judgment." God pays His debts — even to a pagan king (compare Isa 45:1; Jer 25:9).

A horn for Israel (v21)

A "horn" in Scripture is strength and power (1 Sam 2:1; Ps 92:10). Psalm 132:17 uses similar words — "I will cause the horn of David to spring forth" — and some read v21 as messianic. Guzik notes that parallel but judges that the context here is Israel's restoration; Alexander, in Guzik, says it "must refer to the strength and encouragement that Israel was to receive," not to Messiah. "I will open your mouth" (v21) recalls Ezekiel's long silence (3:26–27; 24:27; 33:22): when these words came true, the exiles would finally recognize him as a true prophet.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **monster — *tannin* (H8577):** a sea or river monster, serpent, crocodile.
- **Nile — *yeor* (H2975):** the Nile, a river or stream.
- **hooks — *chach* (H2397):** a hook, ring for the nose or jaw.

- **staff — *mishenah* (H4938):** a support, walking stick.
- **reed — *qaneh* (H7070):** a reed, stalk, cane.
- **desolation — *shemamah* (H8077):** a waste, devastation.
- **waste — *chorbah* (H2723):** a ruin, desolate place.
- **scatter — *puts* (H6327):** to disperse, be scattered.
- **lowly — *shaphal* (H8217):** low, humble, base.
- **confidence — *mibtach* (H4009):** the object of trust, a refuge.
- **iniquity — *avon* (H5771):** guilt, perversity.
- **labor — *abodah* (H5656):** work, service.
- **wages — *sakar* (H7939):** hire, pay, reward.
- **horn — *qeren* (H7161):** a horn; strength, power.
- **sprout — *tsamach* (H6779):** to spring up, grow, bud.

Cross-references

Exod 5:2; 2 Kgs 18:21; 2 Kgs 25:1; Ps 20:7; Ps 118:8–9; Ps 132:17; Prov 16:5; Isa 30:1–7; Isa 31:1–3; Isa 36:6; Isa 45:1; Jer 17:5–8; Jer 25:9; Jer 37:5–11; Jer 44:30; Ezek 3:26–27; Ezek 24:27; Ezek 33:22; Luke 1:69; 1 Cor 3:6–7.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 29:21 (KJV)

21 In that day will I cause ★ the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and ★ I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they ⇄ shall know that I am the LORD.

Command to obey — "set your face against Pharaoh."

God told Ezekiel to face the most powerful king of his day and speak the truth (v2). I'm not called to fear the big names, the big money or the big platforms. I'm called to set my face toward God's word and say what He says.

Sin to confess — "My Nile is mine."

Pharaoh said he owned and made the river that made him (v3). I do the same when I talk about "my" business, "my" books, "my" ministry as if I built them. I'll confess every time I've forgotten that the river came from God, and give Him back ownership.

Warning to heed — the staff made of reed

Egypt looked strong, but when Israel leaned on it, it broke and tore their hands (vv6–7). The men I disciple know reed staffs: the drink, the drug, the gang, the girlfriend, the hustle — each promised support and each splintered. Anything I lean on in place of God will eventually break and wound me.

Promise to trust — "I will make a horn sprout."

In the middle of Israel's ruin, God promised new strength (v21). For the man in a cell or a halfway house who feels like his strength is gone, God can make it sprout again. What looks dead can bud.

Example to follow — Ezekiel's patience

Ezekiel waited years for his words to come true and for people to recognize them as God's (v21). Faithful ministry often means speaking now and waiting a long time for fruit. I'll keep teaching, writing and building, and leave the timing to God.

Worship

You made the Nile, the seas and every river. You hold the crocodile kings on Your hook. You pay even pagan armies their wages, and You never break when I lean on You. You are the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You alone are Creator and Owner. Forgive me for calling Your gifts "mine." Break my grip on every reed staff I've leaned on, and teach me to lean my whole weight on You. Make strength sprout again in the men I serve, and open my mouth to speak Your word faithfully. Amen.

Ezekiel 30

The Day of the LORD on Egypt: Pharaoh's Broken Arm

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The day of the LORD came to Egypt — its idols, its cities, its allies and its king. God broke Pharaoh's arm and put His own sword in Babylon's hand. Whoever is strong, God made strong; whoever is broken, no one can bind up but Him.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 30 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, prophesy and say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day!

3 For the day is near, even ◷ the day of the LORD is near, ◷ a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

4 And ⚠ the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.

5 Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the ⇄ sword.

6 Thus saith the LORD; ⚠ They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and ⚠ the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the ⇄ sword, saith the Lord GOD.

7 And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted.

8 And ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and ⚠ when all her helpers shall be destroyed.

9 In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships ⚠ to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh.

10 ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease ▲ by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon.

11 He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their ⇄ swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.

12 And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: ▲ I the LORD have spoken it.

13 ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.

14 And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and ▲ will execute judgments in No.

15 And ▲ I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No.

16 And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph shall have distresses daily.

17 The young men of Aven and of Pibeseth shall fall by the ⇄ sword: and these cities shall go into captivity.

18 At Tehaphnehes also ◷ the day shall be darkened , when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity.

19 Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD.

20 And it came to pass ◷ in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed , to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword.

22 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand.

23 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

24 And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand: but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man.

25 But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt.

26 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** Thus saith the Lord GOD *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** Howl ye, Woe worth the day
- **v3** the day of the LORD is near
- **v3** a cloudy day
- **v4** the sword shall come upon Egypt
- **v4** sword *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** They also that uphold Egypt shall fall
- **v6** the pride of her power shall come down
- **v8** they shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v8** when all her helpers shall be destroyed
- **v9** to make the careless Ethiopians afraid
- **v10** by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon
- **v12** I the LORD have spoken it
- **v13** I will also destroy the idols
- **v14** will execute judgments in No
- **v15** I will pour my fury upon Sin
- **v18** the day shall be darkened
- **v20** in the eleventh year, in the first month
- **v21** I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt
- **v21** it shall not be bound up to be healed
- **v22** I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand
- **v24** I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon
- **v24** put my sword in his hand
- **v26** I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 30:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, prophesy and say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▮▮ Howl ye, Woe worth the day!

Setting

The first oracle (vv1–19) has no date of its own and continues the series against Egypt that began in 29:1 (January 587 BC). The second (vv20–26) is dated "in the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh of the month" (v20) — spring 587 BC, a few months before Jerusalem's wall was breached (Jer 39:2). Pharaoh Hophra had marched to help Zedekiah, and the Babylonians briefly lifted the siege to deal with him (Jer 37:5–11). Then Egypt went home. Ezekiel says God has already broken Pharaoh's arm.

Structure

- vv1–5 — **the day of the LORD on Egypt:** "Wail, 'Alas for the day!'" (v2). "For the day is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, A time of doom for the nations" (v3). "A sword will come upon Egypt" (v4), and her allies — Ethiopia, Put, Lud and others — fall with her (v5).
- vv6–9 — **her supporters fall:** "those who support Egypt will fall And the pride of her power will come down" (v6). "They will know that I am the LORD, when I set a fire in Egypt And all her helpers are broken" (v8). Messengers go out in ships "to frighten secure Ethiopia" (v9).
- vv10–12 — **Nebuchadnezzar as God's instrument:** "I will also make the hordes of Egypt cease By the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon" (v10) — "The most ruthless of the nations" (v11). "I will make the Nile canals dry" (v12). "I the LORD have spoken" (v12).
- vv13–19 — **city by city:** "I will also destroy the idols And make the images cease from Memphis" (v13). "I will put fear in the land of Egypt" (v13). Pathros, Zoan, Thebes (v14), Sin, "The stronghold of Egypt" (v15), On and Pi-beseth (v17), and Tehaphnehes, where "the day will be dark When I break there the yoke bars of Egypt" (v18). "Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt, And they will know that I am the LORD" (v19).
- vv20–26 — **Pharaoh's broken arms:** "I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, behold, it has not been bound up for healing" (v21). God "will break his arms, both the strong and the broken; and I will make the sword fall from his hand" (v22). "I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand" (v24), while Pharaoh groans like "a wounded man" (v24). "When I scatter the Egyptians among the nations … then they will know that I am the LORD" (v26).

Repeated words

Thus says the Lord GOD (vv2, 10, 13, 22); know that I am the LORD (vv8, 19, 25, 26); sword (vv4, 5, 6, 11, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25); day (vv2, 3, 9, 18); fire (vv8, 14, 16); arm / arms (vv21, 22, 24, 25); Pharaoh (vv21, 22, 24, 25); king of Babylon (vv10, 24, 25); desolate (vv7, 12, 14); execute judgments (vv14, 19); scatter (vv23, 26).

Contrasts

"the pride of her power" (v6) ⟷ "the pride of her power will cease" (v18). Egypt's helpers (v8) ⟷ helpers broken (v8). "Secure Ethiopia" (v9) ⟷ frightened Ethiopia (v9). The arms of Pharaoh broken (vv21–22) ⟷ the arms of the king of Babylon strengthened (vv24–25). Pharaoh's sword falls from his hand (v22) ⟷ God puts "My sword" in Babylon's hand (v24). A bright day for Israel's hope ⟷ "a day of clouds" (v3) and darkness at Tehaphnehes (v18).

Chapter theme (my words)

The day of the LORD came to Egypt — its idols, its cities, its allies and its king. God broke Pharaoh's arm and put His own sword in Babylon's hand. Whoever is strong, God made strong; whoever is broken, no one can bind up but Him.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 30:21 (KJV)

21 Son of man, ▲ I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, ⚠ it shall not be bound up to be healed , to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the ⇄ sword.

"The day of the LORD is near" (vv1–5)

In the prophets, "the day of the LORD" is any time God steps into history to judge — and each one points ahead to the final Day (Joel 2:1–2; Zeph 1:14–16; 1 Thess 5:2). Here it is a near, historical judgment on Egypt. Guzik doesn't call v3 an end-times prophecy; he treats it as Egypt's judgment and quotes Wright that such past judgments become "patterns of the final Day." Wiersbe, in Guzik, notes the irony: Israel once left Egypt guided by God's bright cloud, but now Egypt would sit under a dark one. To prophesy this against Egypt — ancient, rich, proud — took courage. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "It was either outrageous delusion or great faith that led the prophet to utter this oracle of judgment against Egypt."

Her helpers fall (vv5–9)

Egypt relied on allies and hired soldiers from Cush (Ethiopia), Put (Libya), Lud and others. Feinberg, in Guzik, suggests some of the peoples listed in v5 were probably foreign mercenaries in Egypt's army. The point: if Egypt was Judah's reed staff (29:6–7), Egypt's own supporters were reeds too. Clarke, in Guzik, pictures Nebuchadnezzar's ships going up the Nile and striking terror into "secure Ethiopia" — people who thought they were too far away to be touched.

Nebuchadnezzar, God's sword (vv10–12)

God names the instrument: Nebuchadnezzar. Taylor, in Guzik, argues the foreign armies are God's agents, because His word sets the events in motion. "I the LORD have spoken" (v12) is the guarantee.

Nebuchadnezzar did invade Egypt around 568 BC. Clarke, in Guzik, explains that the "Nile canals" were the irrigation channels drawn off the river — dry them up and Egypt dies.

City by city (vv13–19)

Ezekiel walks the map of Egypt. The standard identifications: Memphis (Noph) — the old capital; Pathros — Upper (southern) Egypt; Zoan — Tanis in the Delta; Thebes (No) — the great southern religious center; Sin — Pelusium, the border fortress, "the stronghold of Egypt"; On (Aven) — Heliopolis, city of the sun god; Pi-beseth — Bubastis; Tehaphnehes — Tahpanhes, the border city where Jeremiah was later taken by the Jews who fled to Egypt (Jer 43:7–9). God's judgment falls first on the idols (v13) — the gods that were supposed to protect them. McGee, in Guzik, describes Memphis's ruins and says God "did exactly what He said He was going to do." "There will no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt" (v13) is borne out in history: from the Persian conquest (525 BC) on, Egypt was ruled for centuries by foreign powers.

Pharaoh's broken arm (vv20–22)

The flexed arm was a well-known Egyptian symbol of royal power, and Alexander, in Guzik, notes that Hophra took the title "possessed of a muscular arm." God says: I have already broken it — likely Hophra's failed attempt to relieve Jerusalem (Jer 37:5–11) — and no one will splint it (v21). Morgan, in Guzik: "Many were still looking to Egypt in hope of help from her." Guzik: "God wanted Jerusalem and Judah to know that Egypt had no power, no strength to help her." Then God breaks "both the strong and the broken" (v22). Hophra's end came about 570 BC: Taylor, in Guzik, says he was killed in a civil war after a disastrous Libyan campaign set off a revolt under Ahmose — just as Jeremiah had said, God handed him over to his enemies (Jer 44:30).

Two kings, one God (vv23–26)

The same God weakens one king and strengthens another. Babylon doesn't hold its own sword — God calls it "My sword" (vv24–25). Morgan, in Guzik: both monarchs were "completely in His power." Pharaoh's groaning "implies that Pharaoh himself will be killed" (Block, in Guzik). And all of it has one goal, repeated four times: "they will know that I am the LORD" (vv8, 19, 25, 26).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **wail — *yalal* (H3213):** to howl, lament loudly.
- **alas — *hahh* (H1929):** ah! — a cry of grief.
- **day — *yom* (H3117):** day, time.
- **near — *qarob* (H7138):** near, at hand.
- **clouds — *anan* (H6051):** cloud, cloud mass.
- **helpers — *azar* (H5826):** to help, support.
- **hordes — *hamon* (H1995):** multitude, crowd, wealth.
- **idols — *gillulim* (H1544):** idols — literally "dung things."
- **images — *elil* (H457):** worthless things, idols.
- **wrath — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, fury.
- **yoke bars — *motah* (H4133):** a pole, yoke.
- **arm — *zeroa* (H2220):** arm, strength, power.

- **strengthen — *chazaq* (H2388):** to make strong, harden.
- **groan — *naaq* (H5008):** to groan.
- **scatter — *puts* (H6327):** to disperse.

Cross-references

Exod 6:6; Exod 15:6; Ps 20:7–8; Ps 89:10; Isa 19:1–4; Isa 31:1–3; Isa 51:9; Jer 37:5–11; Jer 43:7–13; Jer 44:30; Jer 46:13–26; Joel 2:1–2; Zeph 1:14–16; Luke 1:51–52; Rom 13:1; 1 Thess 5:2–3.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 30:3 (KJV)

3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

Command to obey — "Wail."

God told Ezekiel to cry "Alas for the day!" (v2). Judgment isn't entertainment. When I read of God's day of reckoning, I'm meant to feel its weight and warn the people I love while it is still "near" and not yet here.

Sin to confess — trusting the strong arm

Judah looked at Pharaoh's muscular arm instead of God's outstretched arm (Exod 6:6). I confess the times I've trusted a client, a contract, a bank balance or a connection more than the Lord. Those arms can be broken in a day (v21).

Warning to heed — "secure Ethiopia."

Ethiopia felt safe because it was far away (v9). Many of the men I disciple once felt the same: "It won't catch up with me." Then the knock came. False security is the most dangerous kind. If I'm living in a sin I think is out of God's reach, the day is near.

Promise to trust — God strengthens arms

God broke Pharaoh's arms and strengthened Babylon's (v24). He decides whose arm is strong. For the man coming out of prison with no résumé and no support, this matters: the God who breaks proud arms also strengthens weak hands (Isa 35:3). Your strength isn't in your own arm — it's in His.

Example to follow — Ezekiel's courage

Ezekiel, an exile with no army, pronounced doom on the oldest empire on earth. He spoke because God had spoken (v12). When I write, teach or counsel, I want that same confidence — not in my voice, but in God's word.

Worship

You are the LORD of the day. You rule over Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar alike. You break the arm of the proud and strengthen whom You will. Every idol falls before You, and in the end, all will know that You are the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, forgive me for trusting strong arms that are not Yours. Break my false security before Your day breaks it for me. Strengthen the weak hands of the men I serve, and let them lean on Your outstretched arm. Give me Ezekiel's courage to speak Your word plainly. Amen.

Ezekiel 31

The Fallen Cedar: Pride Brings Down the Tallest Tree

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God tells Pharaoh to look at Assyria — the tallest tree in the forest, fed by deep waters, sheltering the nations — and then look at the stump. God made it great; pride brought it down. Egypt is no taller than Assyria was, and it will fall the same way. Height is a gift from God, never a fortress against Him.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 31 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] And it came to pass ◷ in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that ▲ the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

[2] Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; ⇄ Whom art thou like in thy greatness?

[3] Behold, ◷ the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a ⇄ shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.

[4] ★ The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field.

[5] Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.

[6] All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his ⇄ shadow dwelt all great nations.

[7] Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for ★ his root was by great waters.

[8] The cedars in the ⇄ garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the ⇄ garden of God was like unto him in his beauty.

[9] ▲ I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the ⇄ trees of Eden, that were in the ⇄ garden of God, ⚠ envied him.

[10] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and ⚠ his heart is lifted up in his height;

[11] ▲ I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: ▲ I have driven him out for his wickedness.

[12] And ⚠ strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his ⇄ shadow, and have left him.

[13] Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches:

[14] Green To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for ⚠ they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with ◷ them that go down to the pit.

[15] Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave ▲ I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him.

16 ▲ I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the ⇄ trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

17 They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his ⇄ shadow in the midst of the heathen.

18 To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the ⇄ trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the ⇄ trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: ⚠ thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. ◷ This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ in the eleventh year, in the third month
- **v1** ▲ the word of the LORD came unto me
- **v2** ⇄ Whom art thou like in thy greatness
- **v3** ◷ the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon
- **v3** ⇄ shadow *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** ★ The waters made him great
- **v7** ★ his root was by great waters
- **v8** ⇄ garden of God *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ▲ I have made him fair
- **v9** ⇄ trees of Eden *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ⚠ envied him
- **v10** ⚠ his heart is lifted up in his height
- **v11** ▲ I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen
- **v11** ▲ I have driven him out for his wickedness
- **v12** ⚠ strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off
- **v14** ▮▮ To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height
- **v14** ⚠ they are all delivered unto death
- **v14** ◷ them that go down to the pit
- **v15** ▲ I caused a mourning
- **v16** ▲ I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall
- **v18** ⚠ thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised
- **v18** ◷ This is Pharaoh and all his multitude

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 31:9 (KJV)

9 ▲ I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the ⇄ trees of Eden, that were in the ⇄ garden of God, ⚠ envied him.

Setting

"In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me" (v1) — the eleventh year of Jehoiachin's exile, about June 587 BC. Jerusalem is under Babylonian siege

and will fall in a few weeks (Jer 39:2). Many in Judah still hope Egypt will save them. God sends Ezekiel to Egypt's king, almost certainly Pharaoh Hophra (Jer 44:30), with a question and a parable.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the question:** "Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his hordes, 'Whom are you like in your greatness?'" (v2).
- vv3–9 — **the great cedar:** "Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon with beautiful branches and forest shade, and very high, and its top was among the clouds" (v3). "The waters made it grow, the deep made it high" (v4). "All great nations lived under its shade" (v6). "No tree in God's garden could compare with it in its beauty" (v8). God says, "I made it beautiful" — and "all the trees of Eden, which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it" (v9).
- vv10–14 — **the cedar cut down:** because "its heart is haughty in its loftiness" (v10), "I will give it into the hand of a despot of the nations … According to its wickedness I have driven it away" (v11). "Alien tyrants of the nations have cut it down and left it" (v12). Birds and beasts now live on its ruin (v13), "so that all the trees by the waters may not be exalted in their stature" (v14). "they have all been given over to death, to the earth beneath … with those who go down to the pit" (v14).
- vv15–17 — **the fall into Sheol:** "On the day when it went down to Sheol I caused lamentations" (v15). "I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall" (v16). The trees of Eden are "comforted in the earth beneath" (v16). Its allies "also went down with it to Sheol" (v17).
- v18 — **the point for Pharaoh:** "To which among the trees of Eden are you thus equal in glory and greatness? Yet you will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth beneath." "So is Pharaoh and all his hordes!"

Repeated words

greatness (vv2, 7, 18); branches (vv3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13); boughs (vv5, 6, 8, 12); shade (vv3, 6, 12, 17); waters (vv4, 5, 7, 14, 15); top among the clouds (vv3, 10, 14); beautiful / beauty (vv3, 7, 8, 9); garden of God / God's garden (vv8, 9); trees of Eden (vv9, 16, 18); Lebanon (vv3, 15, 16); Sheol (vv15, 16, 17); pit (vv14, 16); earth beneath (vv14, 16, 18).

Contrasts

a cedar with its top among the clouds (v3) ⟷ a trunk lying in the ravines (v12). Nations living under its shade (v6) ⟷ peoples going down from its shade and leaving it (v12). "I made it beautiful" (v9) ⟷ "its heart is haughty in its loftiness" (v10). Envied by the trees of Eden (v9) ⟷ lying with them in the earth beneath (v16). Egypt's glory and greatness (v18) ⟷ Egypt among the uncircumcised (v18).

Chapter theme (my words)

God tells Pharaoh to look at Assyria — the tallest tree in the forest, fed by deep waters, sheltering the nations — and then look at the stump. God made it great; pride brought it down. Egypt is no taller than Assyria was, and it will fall the same way. Height is a gift from God, never a fortress against Him.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 31:1 (KJV)

[1]And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

A question to a proud king (vv1–2)

This is the fifth of Ezekiel's seven oracles against Egypt (chs 29–32), given about two months after the one in 30:20 and, Guzik notes, roughly a month before Jerusalem's final fall. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "In the allegory of the tree, Ezekiel helps Judah to see its fate from a more universal perspective." Judah is not the only nation under judgment, and Egypt is not the savior Judah hoped for.

The cedar of Lebanon (vv3–9)

Who is the tree? Some older writers (Poole, Trapp, Clarke) think of the ancient Assyria of Nimrod and Babel; Guzik calls that unlikely. Some read the Hebrew not as "Assyria" but as a kind of tree (Morgan's view), so that the whole chapter describes Egypt itself; Guzik calls that a remote possibility. Guzik's view is the plain one: God describes Assyria while speaking to Egypt. Block, in Guzik: "The context requires a symbol of imperial greatness with which Egypt could be compared." The example was fresh: Nineveh fell to the Babylonians and Medes in 612 BC, and Assyria's last forces were finished off within a few years. Wiersbe's logic, in Guzik: "if Babylon can conquer Assyria, Babylon can conquer Egypt." The water imagery fits Egypt too. Alexander, in Guzik: "Egypt, of course, equally prided herself in her unending supply of Nile water." Like Assyria, Egypt offered shade to smaller nations — and some in Jerusalem were hiding under it. Notice v9: "I made it beautiful." Block's point, in Guzik, is that the tree's glory was not its own doing.

The despot and the lumberjacks (vv10–12)

The charge is pride: it "set its top among the clouds, and its heart is haughty in its loftiness" (v10). So God gives it "into the hand of a despot of the nations" (v11). Guzik identifies this with Nebuchadnezzar — the same king God will now send against Egypt. Wright, in Guzik, detects "the Satanic impulse to pride" (compare 28:17). Block pictures rough lumberjacks who drop the tree and leave it broken across the hills and ravines. Note who is acting: "I have driven it away" (v11). Babylon swings the axe, but God judges.

A lesson for every tree (vv13–14)

Birds and beasts that once nested in the branches now perch on the fallen trunk (v13). God's purpose is stated plainly — "so that all the trees by the waters may not be exalted in their stature" (v14). Feinberg, in Guzik: "God had an educative purpose in the fall of Assyria: to teach the nations the folly of striving for earthly might." And all of them, however tall, "have all been given over to death" (v14). Taylor, in Guzik: "Death is the great equalizer and the surest antidote to an excess of ambition."

Down to Sheol (vv15–17)

Sheol is the realm of the dead. God dries up the deep that fed the tree and makes Lebanon mourn (v15). Guzik suggests the held-back rivers may also point to Egypt's canals failing when the Nile ran low. The nations quake (v16) because if Assyria can fall, so can they. The other "trees of Eden" — kingdoms already in the grave — are "comforted" (v16): the great one has joined them. Block, in Guzik: "No matter how high and mighty a tree may have been during its earthly existence, in death all are equal." Its allies, those who "lived under its shade," go down with it (v17). This is poetic imagery of judgment and death, not a detailed map of the afterlife; the fuller picture comes later in Scripture (Luke 16:19–31; Rev 20:13–14).

"So is Pharaoh" (v18)

The question of v2 returns. Whichever tree Pharaoh compares himself to, he will fall like it. Egypt will lie "in the midst of the uncircumcised, with those who were slain by the sword." Smith, in Guzik: "Since the Egyptians practiced circumcision, to spend eternity with those who were uncircumcised would be the ultimate humiliation." Feinberg adds that the Egyptians were obsessive about burial, which made this fate even more shameful. Guzik's conclusion: the chapter speaks of Assyria, but it is aimed at Egypt.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **hordes — *hamon* (H1995):** a multitude, crowd, tumult.
- **greatness — *godel* (H1433):** magnitude, greatness; often of pride.
- **Assyria — *Ashshur* (H804):** Assyria, the empire centered on Nineveh.
- **cedar — *erez* (H730):** the cedar, strongest and tallest of trees.
- **branches — *anaph* (H6057):** a branch, bough.
- **clouds — *aboth* (H5688):** something interwoven — thick foliage, clouds.
- **beautiful — *yapheh* (H3303):** fair, lovely.
- **jealous — *qana* (H7065):** to be jealous, envious.
- **haughty — *rum* (H7311):** to be high, lifted up; to exalt oneself.
- **despot — *ayil* (H352):** a ram; figuratively a strong leader, mighty one.
- **wickedness — *resha* (H7562):** wickedness, guilt.
- **Sheol — *sheol* (H7585):** the underworld, the grave.
- **pit — *bor* (H953):** a pit, cistern; the grave.
- **quake — *raash* (H7493):** to shake, tremble.
- **comforted — *nacham* (H5162):** to be consoled; to be sorry.
- **uncircumcised — *arel* (H6189):** uncircumcised; outside the covenant, unclean.

Cross-references

Gen 2:8–10; Ps 1:3; Ps 37:35–36; Ps 92:12; Prov 16:18; Isa 2:12–13; Isa 10:12–19; Isa 14:9–15; Isa 31:1–3; Jer 2:18; Jer 44:30; Ezek 17:22–24; Ezek 28:17; Ezek 32:18–32; Dan 4:10–17; Nah 3:18–19; Matt 13:31–32; Luke 1:52; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 31:14 (KJV)

14 To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.

Command to obey — "do not be exalted."

God cut down Assyria "so that all the trees by the waters may not be exalted in their stature" (v14). I'm meant to learn from someone else's fall instead of repeating it. Whatever God has grown in me — a ministry, a skill, a business, books — I'll keep my top out of the clouds and humble myself under His hand (1 Pet 5:6).

Sin to confess — forgetting who made me tall

"I made it beautiful," God said (v9). Assyria forgot, and its heart grew haughty (v10). I confess the times I've taken credit for what God gave — the gifts, the opportunities, the people who helped. Every inch of growth came from waters I didn't dig.

Warning to heed — the shade of the wrong tree

Judah wanted to rest under Egypt's shade, and the nations who "lived under its shade" went down to Sheol with Assyria (v17). The men I disciple know this. The crew, the dealer, the gang, the man with money and connections — big trees offer shade, and when they fall they take everyone under them down too. I want to point men to a better shelter.

Promise to trust — God brings down the high tree

Assyria looked untouchable; God dropped it in a day. For the man in prison who feels crushed by powers bigger than he is — systems, enemies, his own past — God is still the One who says, "I bring down the high tree, exalt the low tree" (Ezek 17:24). No power is too tall for God to deal with.

Example to follow — learn from the stump

God put Assyria's fall on display for the nations to learn from (vv13–14). In recovery, men learn from other men's stories — the ones who went back out and didn't make it, and the ones who stayed humble and lived. I'll tell those stories honestly, including my own, so another man doesn't have to fall to learn.

Worship

The Lord GOD plants the cedars and waters them. He makes them beautiful and He cuts them down. The nations quake at His judgments, and death levels every king. He alone is high and lifted up.

Prayer

Lord GOD, everything good in my life is a tree You planted and watered. Keep my heart from growing haughty in its height. When I'm tempted to trust the shade of a powerful man instead of You, turn me back. Make me low enough to be safe in Your hands, and let the men I serve find shelter in Christ, the tree that never falls. Amen.

Ezekiel 32

The Monster in the Net: Egypt's Funeral Song

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God writes Pharaoh's funeral song while Pharaoh is still alive. The king who saw himself as a lion is really a thrashing crocodile muddying the river, and God will haul him out in His net. Then Ezekiel walks us through the graveyard of empires — Assyria, Elam, Meshech, Edom, Sidon — every one of them once feared, every one now lying in shame. Pharaoh's only comfort will be that he has company.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 32 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And it came to pass ◷ in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, take up a ⇄ lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, ⚠ Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and ⚠ troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.

3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net.

4 Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee.

5 And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height.

6 I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimmest, even to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee.

7 And when I shall put thee out, ▲ I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.

8 All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD.

9 I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known.

10 Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee, ▲ when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they shall tremble at every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall.

11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; ◷ The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.

12 By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall, the terrible of the nations, all of them: and ⚠ they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed.

13 I will destroy also all the beasts thereof from beside the great waters; neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them.

14 Then will I make their waters deep, and ★ cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD.

15 When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, ▲ then shall they know that I am the LORD.

16 This is the ⇄ lamentation wherewith they shall ⇄ lament her: the daughters of the nations shall ⇄ lament her: they shall ⇄ lament for her, even for Egypt, and for all her multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

17 It came to pass also ◷ in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

18 Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.

19 Whom dost thou pass in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised.

20 They shall fall in the midst of them that are slain by the sword: she is delivered to the sword: draw her and all her multitudes.

21 The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

22 Asshur is there and all her company: his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword:

23 Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living.

24 There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit.

25 They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of them that be slain.

26 There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living.

27 And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

28 Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shalt lie with them that are slain with the sword.

29 There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which with their might are laid by them that were slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit.

30 There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain; with their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit.

31 Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord GOD.

32 For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that are slain with the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month
- **v2** lament *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt
- **v2** Thou art like a young lion of the nations
- **v2** troubledst the waters with thy feet
- **v3** I will therefore spread out my net over thee
- **v7** I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark

- **v10** ▲ when I shall brandish my sword before them
- **v11** ◷ The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee
- **v12** ⚠ they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt
- **v14** ★ cause their rivers to run like oil
- **v15** ▲ then shall they know that I am the LORD
- **v17** ◷ in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month
- **v18** ▮▮ wail for the multitude of Egypt
- **v18** ◷ them that go down into the pit
- **v19** ⚠ Whom dost thou pass in beauty
- **v19** ⇄ uncircumcised *(every occurrence)*
- **v20** ⇄ slain by the sword *(every occurrence)*
- **v22** ◷ Asshur is there and all her company
- **v23** ◷ land of the living *(every occurrence)*
- **v24** ⚠ borne their shame *(every occurrence)*
- **v27** ⚠ their iniquities shall be upon their bones
- **v31** ◷ Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted
- **v32** ▲ For I have caused my terror in the land of the living

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 32:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, take up a ⇄ lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, ⚠ Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and ⚠ troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.

Setting

Two dated oracles close Ezekiel's prophecies against Egypt. The first: "In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first of the month" (v1) — about March 585 BC. The second: "In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth of the month" (v17); no month is named, and Guzik notes that most agree it is the same month, two weeks later. Jerusalem has already fallen (33:21 reports the news reaching the exiles). Judah's hope in Egypt has failed, and Egypt is still standing — and likely proud of it.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **a funeral song for a living king:** "Son of man, take up a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him, 'You compared yourself to a young lion of the nations, yet you are like the monster in the seas'" (v2). He "muddied the waters with your feet and fouled their rivers" (v2).
- vv3–8 — **the monster caught and darkness falls:** "Now I will spread My net over you with a company of many peoples" (v3). "I will leave you on the land; I will cast you on the open field" (v4). "I will also make the land drink the discharge of your blood" (v6). "And when I extinguish you, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars" (v7); "All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you and will set darkness on your land" (v8).
- vv9–10 — **the nations tremble:** "I will make many peoples appalled at you ... when I brandish My sword before them" (v10). They "tremble every moment, every man for his own life, on the day of

your fall" (v10).

- vv11–16 — **the sword of Babylon:** "The sword of the king of Babylon will come upon you" (v11). "They will devastate the pride of Egypt, and all its hordes will be destroyed" (v12). "Then I will make their waters settle and will cause their rivers to run like oil" (v14). "Then they shall know that I am the LORD" (v15). "This is a lamentation and they shall chant it" (v16).
- vv17–21 — **Egypt sent down to the pit:** "Son of man, wail for the hordes of Egypt and bring it down … to the nether world, with those who go down to the pit" (v18). "Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down and make your bed with the uncircumcised" (v19). The mighty "speak of him and his helpers from the midst of Sheol" (v21).
- vv22–30 — **the nations already there:** "Assyria is there and all her company; her graves are round about her" (v22). Elam (vv24–25), Meshech and Tubal (vv26–27), Edom (v29), "the chiefs of the north, all of them, and all the Sidonians" (v30). Each once "spread terror in the land of the living" (v23); each now "bore their disgrace with those who went down to the pit" (v24).
- vv31–32 — **Pharaoh's cold comfort:** "These Pharaoh will see, and he will be comforted for all his hordes slain by the sword" (v31). "Though I instilled a terror of him in the land of the living, yet he will be made to lie down among the uncircumcised" (v32).

Repeated words

lamentation (vv2, 16); hordes (vv12, 16, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32); sword / swords (vv10, 11, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32); uncircumcised (vv19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32); pit (vv18, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30); terror (vv23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 32); land of the living (vv23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 32); graves (vv22, 23, 25, 26); disgrace (vv24, 25, 30); Sheol (vv21, 27).

Contrasts

"a young lion of the nations" (v2) ⟷ "the monster in the seas" caught in God's net (vv2–3). Muddied, fouled rivers (v2) ⟷ rivers that "run like oil" (v14). Shining lights (v8) ⟷ darkness on the land (v8). Terror "in the land of the living" (v23) ⟷ disgrace in the pit (v24). "Whom do you surpass in beauty?" (v19) ⟷ "make your bed with the uncircumcised" (v19). Pharaoh's terror (v32) ⟷ "I instilled a terror of him" — God gave it and God ends it.

Chapter theme (my words)

God writes Pharaoh's funeral song while Pharaoh is still alive. The king who saw himself as a lion is really a thrashing crocodile muddying the river, and God will haul him out in His net. Then Ezekiel walks us through the graveyard of empires — Assyria, Elam, Meshech, Edom, Sidon — every one of them once feared, every one now lying in shame. Pharaoh's only comfort will be that he has company.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 32:3 (KJV)

3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net.

Lion or crocodile? (vv1–2)

The "lamentation" (*qinah*) is a funeral dirge, sung here in advance. Pharaoh "compared yourself to a young lion of the nations" — that was his self-image. God says he's really "the monster in the seas" (*tannim*), the same word used for Pharaoh in 29:3. Wright, in Guzik, contrasts Pharaoh's regard for himself as a lion with what he really is — a crocodile thrashing about and stirring up mud. Some interpreters also hear an echo of the ancient sea-dragon of chaos that God subdues (compare Isa 51:9). Egypt was the second power of the age, behind only Babylon, which had beaten it at Carchemish in 605 BC.

The net and the darkness (vv3–8)

A crocodile is caught with a net and dragged onto dry land, where it dies and the birds and beasts feed (vv3–6). Guzik cites Poole that Hophra's soldiers left dead in the Libyan deserts literally fulfilled this. The blood watering the land recalls the first plague on Egypt (Exod 7:19), and the darkness recalls the ninth (Exod 10:21–23). "When I extinguish you" (v7) speaks of death — putting out a light. Alexander, in Guzik, notes the point for Egypt: its sun gods would be shown powerless. The language of darkened sun, moon and stars is used across the prophets for the fall of nations and for the Day of the LORD (Isa 13:10; Joel 2:10; Matt 24:29).

The nations tremble (vv9–10)

When God brandishes His sword, kings far away shake "every man for his own life" (v10). If Egypt can fall, anyone can.

The sword of Babylon (vv11–16)

God names His instrument: "The sword of the king of Babylon" (v11). Guzik notes that skeptics question whether Babylon ever conquered Egypt, since secular confirmation is thin. He cites Feinberg's answer that the silence of Greek historians like Herodotus proves nothing and that Egyptians covered up their disasters; Feinberg adds, "Some consider the prophecy as completely fulfilled." Historically, Hophra was overthrown by his own general Amasis after a failed campaign in Libya, and a Babylonian text records Nebuchadnezzar campaigning against Egypt in his 37th year (about 568 BC). With the monster gone, the waters "settle" and the rivers "run like oil" (v14) — no more feet stirring up the mud. "This is a lamentation and they shall chant it" (v16): the nations will sing Egypt's funeral song.

Down to the pit (vv17–21)

Two weeks later comes the seventh and last oracle against Egypt. Ezekiel is told to "wail for the hordes of Egypt and bring it down" (v18) — the prophet's word itself sends Egypt down. "Whom do you surpass in beauty?" (v19) answers the question of 31:2. In Sheol, Egypt must "make your bed with the

uncircumcised" — a disgrace for a people who practiced circumcision and obsessed over proper burial.

The graveyard of empires (vv22–30)

Ezekiel tours the underworld like a cemetery: Assyria (vv22–23); Elam, east of Babylon (vv24–25); Meshech and Tubal in the far north (vv26–27); Edom (v29); the chiefs of the north and the Sidonians (v30). Guzik notes the uncertainty about Meshech and Tubal; Feinberg lists Hittite and Scythian identifications others have proposed. The refrain repeats: they "spread terror in the land of the living" (v23) and now bear "their disgrace with those who went down to the pit" (v24). Even the warriors buried with honor, swords under their heads, cannot escape: "the punishment for their iniquity rested on their bones" (v27).

What does this teach about the dead?

Christians read this vision in two main ways. Some take it as poetic imagery — a dramatic way of saying that the proud nations are dead and disgraced — and caution against building a detailed doctrine of the afterlife from it. Others see in it real teaching that the dead are conscious and that judgment follows death (compare Luke 16:23; Heb 9:27). Guzik holds both together: the passage is poetic and reflects the Old Testament's limited view of the afterlife, yet it shows the dead in Sheol as conscious and aware of their standing. Trapp, in Guzik, links it to the rich man in Luke 16:23.

Pharaoh "comforted" (vv31–32)

Pharaoh will see the others and "be comforted" (v31) — the grim consolation of not being alone in ruin. Wright, in Guzik: "This is the only consolation Pharaoh can find." Clarke, in Guzik, notes that the king who claimed to be a god will lie among "the vulgar dead." And the last word belongs to God: "I instilled a terror of him in the land of the living" (v32). Even Pharaoh's power to frighten was on loan from God.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **lamentation — *qinah* (H7015):** a dirge, funeral song.
- **young lion — *kephir* (H3715):** a young, strong lion in its prime.
- **monster — *tannin* (H8577):** a sea monster, dragon, serpent; here likely the crocodile.
- **muddied — *raphas* (H7515):** to trample, foul water by stamping in it.
- **net — *resheth* (H7568):** a net for catching animals.
- **darken — *qadar* (H6937):** to be dark, to mourn.
- **appalled — *shamem* (H8074):** to be desolate, stunned, horrified.
- **pride — *gaon* (H1347):** majesty, pride, arrogance.
- **hordes — *hamon* (H1995):** a multitude, crowd, tumult.
- **sword — *chereb* (H2719):** a sword; war.
- **uncircumcised — *arel* (H6189):** outside the covenant; unclean.
- **pit — *bor* (H953):** a pit, cistern; the grave.
- **terror — *chittith* (H2851):** dread, terror — used only in Ezekiel (26:17; 32:23–32).
- **disgrace — *kelimmah* (H3639):** shame, humiliation.
- **iniquity — *avon* (H5771):** guilt, iniquity, its punishment.

- **comforted — *nacham* (H5162):** to be consoled; to be sorry.

Cross-references

Exod 7:19; Exod 10:21–23; Job 41:1–2; Ps 74:13–14; Isa 13:10; Isa 14:9–11; Isa 27:1; Isa 51:9; Jer 46:13–26; Ezek 26:19–21; Ezek 29:3–5; Ezek 31:15–18; Joel 2:10; Matt 24:29; Luke 12:20; Luke 16:22–26; Heb 9:27; Rev 20:12–15.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 32:18 (KJV)

18 Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.

Command to obey — "take up a lamentation."

God told Ezekiel to wail over Egypt (vv2, 18) — Judah's broken ally, not a friend. God doesn't call me to gloat over the fall of the proud, but to grieve. When a man I know loses everything because of his pride, my first response should be tears and prayer, not "I told you so."

Sin to confess — the lion I imagine myself to be

Pharaoh "compared yourself to a young lion," but God saw a crocodile muddying the water (v2). I confess the gap between how I see myself and how God sees me. Where have I been stirring up mud — in my home, my work, my relationships — while telling myself I'm strong?

Warning to heed — terror in the land of the living, shame in the pit

Every nation in this graveyard was feared once (v23). Then came the grave, where swords under the head mean nothing and "the punishment for their iniquity rested on their bones" (v27). Many men I disciple once ran the yard or the block. Reputation, fear and toughness don't go past the grave. "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb 9:27).

Promise to trust — God settles the waters

After the monster is taken, God says, "I will make their waters settle" (v14). For the man whose life has been churned to mud — addiction, chaos, violence, the noise of his own thrashing — God can still the water. He catches the monster we can't, including the one inside us (Isa 27:1).

Example to follow — Ezekiel's faithful word

Ezekiel delivered a hard, unpopular message to the most powerful king in the region, from a refugee camp in Babylon. He didn't soften it. When I write, teach or sit across from a man, I want to speak God's truth plainly — the bad news of judgment so that the good news of Christ makes sense.

Worship

The Lord GOD spreads His net over kings. He darkens the stars and stills the rivers. He gives power and takes it back, and every nation will know that He is the LORD. I worship the God who holds the keys of death and Hades (Rev 1:18).

Prayer

Lord GOD, You see me as I really am. Strip away the lion I pretend to be, and stop me from muddying the waters around me. Give me tears for the proud who are falling, and courage to warn them while they are still in the land of the living. Thank You that in Christ I don't have to go down to the pit in shame. Amen.

Ezekiel 33

The Watchman on the Wall: Turn and Live

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God sets a watchman on the wall and makes him responsible to sound the alarm — and makes every hearer responsible to respond. To men who feel they are rotting away in their sins, God swears by His own life that He takes no pleasure in their death: turn and live. Then the city falls, the prophet's mouth opens, and God exposes two kinds of people who still don't get it — the ones claiming promises while living in sin, and the ones who love to hear sermons but never obey them.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 33 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

[2] Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their ⇄ watchman:

[3] If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, Green he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

[4] Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, ⚠ his blood shall be upon his own head.

[5] He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But ★ he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

[6] But if the ⇄ watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the ⇄ watchman's hand.

[7] So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a ⇄ watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and Green warn them from me.

[8] When I say unto the wicked, ⚠ O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

[9] Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

[10] Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, ◷ how should we then live?

[11] Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ▲ I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Green turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for ⚠ why will ye die, O house of Israel?

[12] Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.

[13] When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; ⚠ if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

[14] Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

[15] If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16 ★ None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

17 Yet the children of thy people say, ⚠ The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.

18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

19 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

20 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, ▲ I will judge you every one after his ways.

21 And it came to pass ◷ in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, ◷ The city is smitten.

22 Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and ▲ my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.

23 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

24 Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, ⚠ Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance.

25 Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and ⇄ shall ye possess the land?

26 Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and ⇄ shall ye possess the land?

27 Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence.

28 For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through.

29 ▲ Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed.

30 Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD.

31 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and ⚠ they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

32 And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

33 And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that ◷ a prophet hath been among them.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⇄ watchman *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ▮▮ he blow the trumpet, and warn the people
- **v4** ⚠ his blood shall be upon his own head
- **v5** ★ he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul
- **v6** ⚠ his blood will I require at the watchman's hand
- **v7** ▲ I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel

- **v7** warn them from me
- **v8** O wicked man, thou shalt surely die
- **v10** how should we then live
- **v11** I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked
- **v11** turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways
- **v11** why will ye die, O house of Israel
- **v13** if he trust to his own righteousness
- **v16** None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him
- **v17** The way of the Lord is not equal
- **v20** I will judge you every one after his ways
- **v21** in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month
- **v21** The city is smitten
- **v22** my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb
- **v24** Abraham was one, and he inherited the land
- **v25** shall ye possess the land *(every occurrence)*
- **v29** Then shall they know that I am the LORD
- **v31** they hear thy words, but they will not do them
- **v33** a prophet hath been among them

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 33:11 (KJV)

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Setting

Chapter 33 is the hinge of Ezekiel. Chapters 1–24 warned Jerusalem; chapters 25–32 judged the nations; now the news arrives: "Now in the twelfth year of our exile, on the fifth of the tenth month, the refugees from Jerusalem came to me, saying, 'The city has been taken'" (v21). From here (chs 33–48) Ezekiel's message turns toward restoration. Before the news comes, God renews Ezekiel's call as watchman (compare 3:16–21) and ends the muteness He imposed back in 3:26–27 and 24:27.

Structure

- vv1–6 — **the watchman's duty:** "If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman" (v2), "and he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows on the trumpet and warns the people" (v3), whoever ignores it — "his blood will be on his own head" (v4). "But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life" (v5). If the watchman stays silent, "his blood I will require from the watchman's hand" (v6).
- vv7–9 — **Ezekiel the watchman:** "Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me" (v7). "O wicked man, you will surely die" (v8). "But you have delivered your life" (v9).
- vv10–11 — **"how then can we survive?":** the exiles say, "Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?" (v10). God answers with an

oath — "As I live!" — and a plea: "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?" (v11).

- vv12–20 — **turning either way:** "The righteousness of a righteous man will not deliver him in the day of his transgression" (v12). If a wicked man "turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness" (v14), "None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him" (v16). The people say, "The way of the Lord is not right" (vv17, 20). God: "I will judge each of you according to his ways" (v20).
- vv21–22 — **"The city has been taken":** "the hand of the LORD had been upon me in the evening," and "my mouth was opened and I was no longer speechless" (v22).
- vv23–29 — **the survivors' false claim:** those in the ruins say, "Abraham was only one, yet he possessed the land; so to us who are many the land has been given as a possession" (v24). God lists their sins and asks twice, "Should you then possess the land?" (vv25, 26). Sword, beasts and pestilence will reach them (v27); "the pride of her power will cease" (v28).
- vv30–33 — **hearers, not doers:** the exiles say, "Come now and hear what the message is which comes forth from the LORD" (v30). They "hear your words, but they do not do them" (v31). "You are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument" (v32). "So when it comes to pass — as surely it will — then they will know that a prophet has been in their midst" (v33).

Repeated words

watchman (vv2, 6, 7); sword (vv2, 3, 4, 6, 26, 27); trumpet (vv3, 4, 5, 6); warn / warns / warned / warning (vv3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9); blood (vv4, 5, 6, 8, 25); wicked (vv8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 19); turn / turns (vv9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19); live — survive (vv11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19); die (vv8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 27); righteousness (vv12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19); "The way of the Lord is not right" (vv17, 20); "Should you then possess the land?" (vv25, 26); desolation and a waste (vv28, 29).

Contrasts

the watchman who warns (v3) ⟷ the watchman who stays silent (v6). The righteous who turns to sin (v18) ⟷ the wicked who turns to righteousness (v19). "Rotting away in them" (v10) ⟷ "turn from his way and live" (v11). "Abraham was only one" (v24) ⟷ "we who are many" — yet living nothing like Abraham (vv25–26). A mouth shut for years (v22) ⟷ a mouth opened. Hearing (v31) ⟷ doing.

Chapter theme (my words)

God sets a watchman on the wall and makes him responsible to sound the alarm — and makes every hearer responsible to respond. To men who feel they are rotting away in their sins, God swears by His own life that He takes no pleasure in their death: turn and live. Then the city falls, the prophet's mouth opens, and God exposes two kinds of people who still don't get it — the ones claiming promises while living in sin, and the ones who love to hear sermons but never obey them.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 33:7 (KJV)

7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

The watchman on the wall (vv1–6)

In the ancient world a city's safety depended on the man posted on the wall. When he saw an army coming, he blew the *shophar* (ram's-horn trumpet). If people heard and ignored it, their death was their own fault — "his blood will be on his own head" (v4). If the watchman saw and stayed silent, God would hold him responsible (v6). Guzik notes this "was a great assurance to Ezekiel and Jeremiah because they warned many but few listened." He also warns modern "watchmen" against distorting the calling by focusing on "the examination of supposed error more than the proclamation of God's truth."

Ezekiel's commission renewed (vv7–9)

This repeats 3:17–21 almost word for word. Ezekiel's message was to come "from My mouth" (v7) — not from political analysis. Guzik calls "O wicked man, you will surely die" the main message of Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The watchman is accountable for faithfulness, not results: if he warns and they refuse, "you have delivered your life" (v9). Paul echoes this at Ephesus: "I am innocent of the blood of all men" (Acts 20:26).

God's heart (vv10–11)

Jerusalem's fall is about to be confirmed, and the exiles despair: "we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?" (v10). Guzik hears an accusation of unfairness in the question. God's answer is an oath — "As I live!" — and a plea: "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live" (v11; compare 18:23, 32). Guzik notes the statement is made first about judgment in this life on Judah and Jerusalem, but because it is rooted in God's character, "it applies to God's eternal judgments" too (compare 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9).

The changed life (vv12–20)

The exiles were fatalists: we're stuck with our past. God says no. A man's past righteousness won't protect him if he turns to sin, and a man's past wickedness won't condemn him if he truly turns (vv12–16). The repentant man must show it — restore the pledge, pay back what he stole, walk in God's statutes (v15) — and then "None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him" (v16). Guzik stresses that God's pronouncements of life or death are not irreversible.

Does this teach that salvation can be lost?

Christians read vv12–20 in different ways. Many take "live" and "die" here mainly as physical life and death under the coming judgment on Judah. Some (often Arminian) see a warning that a believer can turn away and perish. Others (often Reformed) note v13's man "so trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity" — trusting his own record, not God — and hold that true faith perseveres, so a turning away shows faith was never real (1 John 2:19). Guzik frames the passage around fatalism and

God's fairness rather than eternal security, and applies the principle through James 2:14–17: real faith is proven by works.

"The way of the Lord is not right" (vv17–20)

The people accuse God of unfairness. God turns it back: "it is their own way that is not right" (v17). He judges "each of you according to his ways" (v20) — individually, by the direction of a man's life now.

The news and the opened mouth (vv21–22)

"The city has been taken." Guzik notes this came about seven years after Ezekiel's first prophecies (1:2–3). The date raises a question: by the usual reckoning Jerusalem fell in the fourth month of the eleventh year (Jer 39:2; 52:5–6), which would make this report a year and a half late. Some explain it by different ways of counting the years (placing the fall in 586 BC, so the news took about five months — compare Ezra's four-month journey, Ezra 7:9); a few Hebrew and Greek manuscripts read "eleventh year." Either way, the evening before the refugee arrived, God opened Ezekiel's mouth, fulfilling 24:25–27. The man who had been silent for judgment now speaks for restoration.

The survivors' false claim (vv23–29)

Back in Judah, the people left in the ruins reasoned: if one man, Abraham, got the land, surely we many will keep it (v24). Guzik points to Jeremiah 40–44 for who these survivors were. But they ate meat with blood in it, worshiped idols, shed blood, relied on the sword, committed abominations and adultery (vv25–26). "Should you then possess the land?" Guzik: they had not escaped judgment, only delayed it. God had promised the land's future to the exiles who would return, not to those who stayed and kept sinning (11:14–17). Abraham's promise never belonged to people who would not walk in Abraham's faith (John 8:39).

Hearers, not doers (vv30–33)

Ezekiel had become popular. People talked about him by the walls and in doorways and came to "hear what the message is" (v30). But "they hear your words, but they do not do them" (v31); "their heart goes after their gain." He was like "a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice" (v32) — good entertainment. Guzik: when the prophecies came true, they would know "that a prophet has been in their midst" (v33) — he was never just an inspirational speaker.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **watchman — *tsophe* (H6822):** a lookout, sentinel; one who watches closely.
- **trumpet — *shophar* (H7782):** a ram's-horn trumpet used for alarms.
- **warn — *zahar* (H2094):** to admonish, enlighten, warn.
- **blood — *dam* (H1818):** blood; bloodguilt.
- **require — *baqash* (H1245):** to seek, demand, hold accountable.
- **wicked — *rasha* (H7563):** guilty, wicked, ungodly.
- **pleasure — *chaphets* (H2654):** to delight in, take pleasure.
- **turn — *shub* (H7725):** to turn back, return, repent.
- **righteousness — *tsedaqah* (H6666):** right living, justice.
- **not right — *takan* (H8505):** to weigh, measure; "not right" = not measuring up.

- **refugees — *palit* (H6412):** an escapee, fugitive.
- **speechless — *alam* (H481):** to be bound, mute.
- **possession — *morashah* (H4181):** an inheritance, possession.
- **abominations — *toebah* (H8441):** a detestable thing, especially idolatry.
- **lustful desires — *agabim* (H5690):** passionate desire, lust.
- **gain — *betsa* (H1215):** profit, unjust gain.

Cross-references

Gen 9:4; Isa 21:6–12; Isa 55:7; Jer 6:17; Jer 39:1–9; Jer 40–44; Ezek 3:16–27; Ezek 18:21–32; Ezek 24:25–27; Hos 9:8; Matt 3:9; Matt 7:24–27; Luke 6:46; John 8:39; Acts 20:26–27; 1 Tim 2:4; Heb 13:17; Jas 1:22–25; Jas 2:14–17; 2 Pet 3:9.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 33:3 (KJV)

3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

Command to obey — "give them warning from Me."

God made Ezekiel a watchman (v7), and every believer who loves people carries a piece of that wall. When I see the sword coming for a man — relapse, violence, a return to the old crew — I have to blow the trumpet, lovingly and plainly. My job is faithfulness; his response is his (v9).

Sin to confess — hearing without doing

"They hear your words, but they do not do them" (v31). I write about the Word, build tools for studying it, and teach it. That makes this my danger: enjoying the song and not obeying it. I confess the places where I've heard God clearly and haven't moved. "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (Jas 1:22).

Warning to heed — claiming promises while living in sin

The survivors quoted Abraham while eating blood and worshiping idols (vv24–26). Some men I meet quote "God's got me" or "once saved, always saved" while living however they want. God's promises are real, but they are not a shield for rebellion. "Should you then possess the land?"

Promise to trust — "turn and live."

For the man who says, "I'm rotting away in my sins — how can I survive?" (v10), God swears by His own life: "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live" (v11). The man in prison, the man fresh out, the man on his fourth try at sobriety — his past does not have the final word. When he turns, "None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him" (v16). In Christ that promise has a cross under it (1 John 1:9).

Example to follow — Ezekiel's silence and speech

Ezekiel kept quiet when God said be quiet and spoke when God opened his mouth (v22). He kept preaching to people who treated him as entertainment. I want that kind of faithfulness — speaking only what God gives, and still speaking when it seems no one is really listening.

Worship

The Lord GOD lives, and He swears by His own life that He wants sinners to live. His ways are right even when mine are not. He keeps His word in judgment and in mercy, and every word He speaks comes to pass.

Prayer

Lord GOD, thank You that You take no pleasure in the death of the wicked — including me. Make me a faithful watchman for the men You put on my wall: give me courage to warn and love enough to stay. Keep me from being only a hearer. And for every man who thinks he is rotting away in his sins, let him hear You say, "Turn back, turn back" — and live. Amen.

Ezekiel 34

The Shepherd Who Comes: God Seeks His Scattered Flock

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God's flock was scattered because the men who should have cared for them only cared for themselves. So God fires the shepherds and takes the job Himself — searching for the lost, binding up the broken, and setting His own Shepherd over them. The bad leaders don't get the last word; the good Shepherd does.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 34 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, prophesy against the ⇄ shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the ⇄ shepherds; Woe be to the ⇄ shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the ⇄ shepherds feed the flocks?

3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but ⚠ with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

5 And ⚠ they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and ⚠ none did search or seek after them.

7 Therefore, ye ⇄ shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

8 ▲ As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my ⇄ shepherds search for my flock, but the ⇄ shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

9 Therefore, O ye ⇄ shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the ⇄ shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the ⇄ shepherds feed themselves any more; for ★ I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, ▲ I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered ◷ in the cloudy and dark day.

13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and ★ will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

15 ★ I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

16 ▲ I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and ▲ will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but ⚠ I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

17 And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, ▲ I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats.

18 Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?

19 And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle.

21 Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and ⚠ pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad;

22 Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.

23 And ★ I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even ▲ my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.

25 And I will make with them ★ a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods .

26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; ★ there shall be showers of blessing.

27 And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

28 And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and ★ none shall make them afraid.

29 And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

30 Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD.

31 And ▲ ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⇄ shepherds *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ⚠ Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves
- **v2** should not the shepherds feed the flocks
- **v4** ⚠ with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them
- **v5** ⚠ they were scattered, because there is no shepherd
- **v6** ⚠ none did search or seek after them
- **v8** ▲ As I live, saith the Lord GOD
- **v10** ▲ Behold, I am against the shepherds
- **v10** ★ I will deliver my flock from their mouth
- **v11** ▲ I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out
- **v12** in the cloudy and dark day
- **v13** ★ will bring them to their own land
- **v15** ★ I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down
- **v16** ▲ I will seek that which was lost
- **v16** ▲ will bind up that which was broken
- **v16** ⚠ I will destroy the fat and the strong
- **v17** ▲ I judge between cattle and cattle
- **v21** ⚠ pushed all the diseased with your horns
- **v23** ★ I will set up one shepherd over them

- **v23** ▲ my servant David
- **v25** ★ a covenant of peace
- **v26** ★ there shall be showers of blessing
- **v28** ★ none shall make them afraid
- **v31** ▲ ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 34:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, prophesy against the ⇄ shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the ⇄ shepherds; Woe be to the ⇄ shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the ⇄ shepherds feed the flocks?

Setting

Ezekiel is an exile in Babylon. The chapter before ends with the news he had waited years to hear: "The city has been taken" (33:21) — Jerusalem has fallen to Nebuchadnezzar. With the judgment complete, Ezekiel's message turns from doom to hope, and chapters 34–37 are oracles of restoration. Chapter 34 is not dated; it begins with who is to blame for the scattered flock — Israel's leaders.

Structure

- vv1–6 — **woe to the shepherds:** "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?" (v2). "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool" (v3). "The broken you have not bound up … nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them" (v4). The sheep were "scattered for lack of a shepherd" (v5), and "there was no one to search or seek for them" (v6).
- vv7–10 — **God against the shepherds:** "As I live" (v8). "Behold, I am against the shepherds" (v10). God will take His flock out of their hands — "I will deliver My flock from their mouth" (v10).
- vv11–16 — **God Himself the Shepherd:** "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out" (v11). He will gather them from the places they were scattered "on a cloudy and gloomy day" (v12), bring them home, and "feed them in a good pasture" (v14). "I will lead them to rest" (v15). "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick" — but the fat and the strong He will destroy; "I will feed them with judgment" (v16).
- vv17–22 — **judgment between sheep:** "I will judge between one sheep and another" (v17). Some sheep eat the good pasture and trample the rest, drink the clear water and muddy what's left — "Is it too slight a thing for you" (v18). God will judge "between the fat sheep and the lean sheep" (v20), because they "thrust at all the weak with your horns" (v21). "I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey" (v22).
- vv23–24 — **one shepherd:** "I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David … he will feed them himself and be their shepherd" (v23). "My servant David will be prince among them" (v24).

- vv25–31 — **a covenant of peace:** God will make "a covenant of peace" (v25), remove the wild beasts, and send "showers of blessing" (v26). He will have "broken the bars of their yoke" (v27); "no one will make them afraid" (v28). He will give them "a renowned planting place" (v29). "The sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God" (v31).

Repeated words

shepherd(s) (vv2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 23); feed (vv2, 3, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 23); My flock / My sheep (vv6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 31); scattered (vv4, 5, 6, 12, 16, 21); seek / search (vv6, 8, 11, 16); judge (vv17, 20, 22); prey (vv8, 22, 28); declares the Lord GOD (vv8, 15, 30, 31).

Contrasts

shepherds who feed themselves (v2) ⟷ the Shepherd who feeds His flock (v15). "There was no one to search or seek for them" (v6) ⟷ "I Myself will search for My sheep" (v11). The broken not bound up (v4) ⟷ "bind up the broken" (v16). Ruled "with force and with severity" (v4) ⟷ "I will lead them to rest" (v15). Fat sheep that trample (v18) ⟷ lean sheep that are pushed aside (v20). A prey to every beast (v5) ⟷ "no one will make them afraid" (v28).

Chapter theme (my words)

God's flock was scattered because the men who should have cared for them only cared for themselves. So God fires the shepherds and takes the job Himself — searching for the lost, binding up the broken, and setting His own Shepherd over them. The bad leaders don't get the last word; the good Shepherd does.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 34:16 (KJV)

16 ▲ I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and ▲ will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but ⚠ I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

The shepherds of Israel (vv1–6)

In the ancient Near East "shepherd" was a common title for a ruler. Guzik notes that it covers civil leaders like Joshua and David as well as spiritual leaders, and Ezekiel's word includes both — the kings, princes, priests and prophets who led Judah into ruin. Jeremiah had charged them the same way (Jer 23:1–4). Block, in Guzik: "the shepherd holds office for the sake of the ruled." These shepherds reversed it. They took the milk, the wool and the meat and gave nothing back. Guzik says it is right for a flock to support its shepherds (1 Cor 9:7–14), but never at the flock's expense, and that the main way a shepherd feeds the flock is by teaching God's Word. Feinberg, in Guzik, says they had "but one objective in mind" — their own pleasure.

What a shepherd is supposed to do (v4)

The charge is a job description in reverse: strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring back the strays, seek the lost. Instead they ruled "with force and with severity" — the very thing Jesus forbade His leaders (Matt 20:25–28; 1 Pet 5:2–3). Notice God keeps calling them "My flock" and "My sheep." Guzik warns leaders against treating God's people as their own possession. Smith, in Guzik: the shepherds were "both unfaithful and unconcerned."

God against the shepherds (vv7–10)

"As I live" is an oath. God will "demand" His sheep from their hand — they will answer for every one (Heb 13:17; Jas 3:1). The destruction of Jerusalem and the exile were, in part, God removing these shepherds.

"I Myself will search" (vv11–16)

This is the heart of the chapter. God does not merely appoint better managers; He comes Himself. The "cloudy and gloomy day" (v12) is the day of Jerusalem's fall. The promises are concrete — gathering from the nations, bringing them to their own land, feeding them on the mountains of Israel. Guzik sees this as partly fulfilled in the return from Babylon, with a larger, final fulfillment still ahead; he calls the 1948 State of Israel "an important milestone" but says the promise is "yet to be completely fulfilled," and quotes Feinberg that the promises should not be spiritualized away. Many other Christians read the gathering as fulfilled spiritually in Christ gathering His people from every nation (John 10:16; 11:52). Either way, Jesus picks up this very language: "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10; Luke 15:4–7). When He says, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11), He is claiming the role God reserves for Himself here. Note too: the Shepherd who heals also judges — "the fat and the strong I will destroy" (v16).

Judgment within the flock (vv17–22)

Not all the blame belongs to the leaders. Some sheep were bullies — eating the best, trampling the rest, muddying the water, shoving the weak aside with shoulder and horn. Guzik says the sheep bear responsibility too, and applies it to church members who consider themselves mature yet make life hard for others. Taylor, in Guzik: the flock "will in fact be purified" of bad members as well as bad leaders (compare Matt 25:31–33).

"My servant David" (vv23–24)

David had been dead about four hundred years. Most interpreters take "David" to mean the Messiah, the Son of David — the one Shepherd (John 10:16; Heb 13:20; Jer 23:5–6; Hos 3:5). Guzik grants that this is the common view but prefers a literal reading: David himself ruling Israel as prince under the Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom. "If God did not intend David, He would not have said it." He notes David is called "prince" (*nasi*) rather than king. Either way, the promise is one shepherd over one flock, appointed by God.

A covenant of peace (vv25–31)

Guzik ties this covenant to the new covenant and the coming Kingdom (Isa 2; Jer 23). Block, in Guzik: *shalom* "signifies much more than the absence of hostility or tension." Safety from wild beasts, rain in its season, fruitful trees, broken yokes, no more shame among the nations — it is Eden language, and Guzik reads it as a future Millennial reality; Feinberg, in Guzik, adds that the refreshings of the Spirit

are often compared to a shower (Acts 3:19–20). The chapter ends where it began, with the flock — but now they are "the sheep of My pasture," and they are "men" (v31). God is not talking about animals; He is talking about people He has made, and He is their God.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **shepherd / feed — *raʿah* (H7462):** to pasture, tend, feed; as a noun, a shepherd. The same word does both jobs in this chapter.
- **flock / sheep — *tson* (H6629):** small cattle, sheep and goats, a flock.
- **woe — *hoy* (H1945):** ah! alas! — a cry of grief and doom.
- **fat — *cheleb* (H2459):** the fat, the best portion.
- **strengthened — *chazaq* (H2388):** to make firm, strengthen.
- **healed — *rapha* (H7495):** to heal, make whole.
- **bound up — *chabash* (H2280):** to bind, bandage a wound.
- **broken — *shabar* (H7665):** to break, shatter.
- **lost — *ʾabad* (H6):** to wander away, perish, be lost.
- **sought / seek — *baqash* (H1245):** to seek, look for.
- **search — *darash* (H1875):** to seek with care, inquire, require.
- **scattered — *puts* (H6327):** to be dispersed, scattered.
- **dominated — *radah* (H7287):** to rule, have dominion, tread down.
- **prince — *nasi* (H5387):** one lifted up; a chief, prince.
- **peace — *shalom* (H7965):** completeness, welfare, peace.

Cross-references

Num 27:16–17; Ps 23:1–6; Ps 100:3; Isa 40:11; Jer 23:1–6; Hos 3:5; Zech 11:4–17; Matt 9:36; Matt 18:12–14; Matt 20:25–28; Matt 25:31–33; Luke 15:4–7; Luke 19:10; John 10:11–16; Acts 20:28–29; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 1 Pet 5:2–4.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 34:10 (KJV)

10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the ⇄ shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the ⇄ shepherds feed themselves any more; for ★ I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

Command to obey — "Should not the shepherds feed the flock?"

(v2). Anyone God puts in charge of people is a shepherd — a father, a pastor, a boss, a sponsor, a man who disciples other men. The question is whether I'm feeding them or feeding off them. When I sit

across from a man, I'm there for his good, not my reputation. I'll feed him the Word, not my opinions.

Sin to confess — using people

The shepherds ate the fat and wore the wool. I confess the times I've looked at people for what they could do for me — my projects, my image, my comfort. And I confess being a fat sheep: grabbing the best, crowding out the weak, muddying the water for others.

Warning to heed — God will require His sheep

"I will demand My sheep from them" (v10). Every man God sends me is His, not mine. I will answer for how I treated him. Leaders who rule "with force and with severity" will meet a God who is against them.

Promise to trust — "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken."

(v16). This is for the man who thinks he has wandered too far — the addict who relapsed again, the man in a cell who thinks nobody is coming. Somebody is coming. "I Myself will search for My sheep" (v11). The Good Shepherd goes after the one (Luke 15:4) and binds up what is broken.

Example to follow — the Shepherd who comes Himself

God didn't send a memo; He came. Jesus left the ninety-nine. I want to follow that: make the visit, answer the call, sit with the man who is sick and broken, go looking for the one who stopped showing up.

Worship

The LORD is my shepherd. He searches, gathers, feeds, heals and leads me to rest. He judges with justice, makes a covenant of peace, and calls me His own. "I am your God," declares the Lord GOD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You are the Shepherd I need. Thank You for coming after me when I was lost. Bind up what is broken in me, and make me a faithful under-shepherd — feeding, not using; seeking, not ruling. Give me Your heart for the men who are scattered and afraid, and bring them home to You. In the name of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Amen.

Ezekiel 35

Mount Seir:
The LORD Was There

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Edom nursed a grudge for a thousand years, kicked his brother when he was down, and then tried to take his land. But the land was never empty — the LORD was there. Hatred, envy and gloating come back on the one who carries them, and God hears every word spoken against His people.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 35 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1]Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

[2]Son of man, set thy face against ⇄ mount Seir, and prophesy against it,

[3]And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O ⇄ mount Seir, ▲ I am against thee, and ▲ I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee ⇄ most desolate.

[4]I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and ▲ thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

[5]Because ⚠ thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword ◷ in the time of their calamity, ◷ in the time that their iniquity had an end:

[6]Therefore, ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and ⚠ blood shall pursue thee: sith ⚠ thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee.

[7]Thus will I make ⇄ mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth.

[8]And I will fill his mountains with his slain men: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword.

[9]⚠ I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return : and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

[10]Because thou hast said, ⚠ These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; ★ whereas the LORD was there:

[11]Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do ⚠ according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and ▲ I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee.

[12]And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that ▲ I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate , they are given us to consume.

[13]Thus ⚠ with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: ▲ I have heard them.

[14]Thus saith the Lord GOD; ◷ When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.

[15]⚠ As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O ⇄ mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and ▲ they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ⇄ mount Seir *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ▲ I am against thee
- **v3** ▲ I will stretch out mine hand against thee
- **v3** ⇄ most desolate
- **v4** ▲ thou shalt know that I am the LORD
- **v5** ⚠ thou hast had a perpetual hatred
- **v5** ◷ in the time of their calamity
- **v5** ◷ in the time that their iniquity had an end

- **v6** ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD
- **v6** ⚠ blood shall pursue thee
- **v6** ⚠ thou hast not hated blood
- **v9** ⚠ I will make thee perpetual desolations
- **v10** ⚠ These two nations and these two countries shall be mine
- **v10** ★ whereas the LORD was there
- **v11** ⚠ according to thine anger, and according to thine envy
- **v11** ▲ I will make myself known among them
- **v12** ▲ I have heard all thy blasphemies
- **v13** ⚠ with your mouth ye have boasted against me
- **v13** ▲ I have heard them
- **v14** ◷ When the whole earth rejoiceth
- **v15** ⚠ As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel
- **v15** ▲ they shall know that I am the LORD

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 35:3 (KJV)

3 And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O ⇄ mount Seir, ▲ I am against thee, and ▲ I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee ⇄ most desolate.

Setting

Jerusalem has fallen (33:21), and Ezekiel has just promised that God Himself will shepherd and restore His scattered flock (ch 34). But one question hangs in the air: what about the neighbors who cheered Judah's ruin and moved in to take the land? Chapter 35 answers with a word against "Mount Seir" — the mountain country of Edom, south and east of the Dead Sea, home of Esau's descendants. Ezekiel has already spoken briefly against Edom (25:12–14). This fuller oracle clears the ground for chapter 36, where God speaks to the mountains of Israel.

Structure

- vv1–4 — **God against Mount Seir:** "set your face against Mount Seir" (v2). "Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out My hand against you and make you a desolation and a waste" (v3). "You will know that I am the LORD" (v4).
- vv5–9 — **ancient hatred and bloodshed:** "Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end" (v5). "As I live," God will give Edom over to bloodshed — "since you have not hated bloodshed," bloodshed will pursue you (v6). Its mountains will be filled with its slain (v8). "I will make you an everlasting desolation and your cities will not be inhabited" (v9).
- vv10–13 — **greed and boasting:** Edom said, "These two nations and these two lands will be mine" — "although the LORD was there" (v10). God will repay "according to your anger and according to your envy" (v11). "I, the LORD, have heard all your revilings" against the mountains of Israel: "They are laid

desolate; they are given to us for food" (v12). "And you have spoken arrogantly against Me … I have heard it" (v13).

- vv14–15 — **joy turned back:** "As all the earth rejoices, I will make you a desolation" (v14). "As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you" (v15) — "Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it."

Repeated words

desolation / desolate / waste (vv3, 4, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15); know that I am the LORD (vv4, 9, 15; compare v12); against (vv2, 3, 11, 12, 13); Mount Seir (vv2, 3, 7, 15); as I live (vv6, 11); sword (vv5, 8); bloodshed (v6, four times); rejoice (vv14, 15).

Contrasts

Edom's "everlasting enmity" (v5) ⟷ Edom's "everlasting desolation" (v9). "These two lands will be mine" (v10) ⟷ "although the LORD was there" (v10). Edom's anger and envy (v11) ⟷ God repaying "according to" them (v11). Edom rejoicing over Israel's ruin (v15) ⟷ all the earth rejoicing over Edom's (v14). Edom's arrogant words (v13) ⟷ "I have heard it" (v13).

Chapter theme (my words)

Edom nursed a grudge for a thousand years, kicked his brother when he was down, and then tried to take his land. But the land was never empty — the LORD was there. Hatred, envy and gloating come back on the one who carries them, and God hears every word spoken against His people.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 35:6 (KJV)

6 Therefore, ▲ as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and ⚠ blood shall pursue thee: sith ⚠ thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee.

Who is Edom? (vv1–4)

Edom descends from Esau, Jacob's twin brother (Gen 25:23–30; 36:8–9). Mount Seir was their rugged homeland. Alexander, in Guzik, traces the long record of hostility — under Saul, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaz — and notes that "Edom had sought to block Israel's first entrance into the Promised Land" (Num 20:14–21). Guzik observes that "against" is repeated four times in three verses, like a drumbeat. Why does this oracle sit here, among promises of restoration? Guzik suggests it answers the obvious question: how can Israel be restored while hostile neighbors like Edom remain? God will deal with them first.

Everlasting enmity (vv5–9)

The grudge went back to the womb, when the twins struggled (Gen 25:22); Clarke, in Guzik, traces the rivalry to that beginning. It came to a head when Babylon took Jerusalem in 586 BC: Edom cheered,

cut off fugitives and handed survivors over (Ps 137:7; Lam 4:21–22; Obad 10–14). Block, in Guzik, says Edom's guilt lay in hunting down and killing the fugitives. "At the time of the punishment of the end" (v5) means Edom struck when God's judgment on Judah was at its height. The punishment fits the crime: they loved bloodshed, so bloodshed would chase them. Poole, in Guzik: "Edom's sin was perpetual hatred, and Edom's punishment shall be perpetual desolations." Guzik also cautions that while God may judge a nation's sins, believers must not hold onto ancient hatred toward peoples.

History bears it out

Within a few centuries the Nabataeans had taken over Edom's homeland, and Edomites drifted into southern Judea, which came to be called Idumea. Herod the Great was an Idumean. After the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70, the Edomites disappear from history as a people. Feinberg, in Guzik: "The main cities were Petra and Teman, which now lie in ruins," and "The prediction has been literally fulfilled."

"These two lands will be mine" (vv10–13)

Most take "two nations … two lands" to be Israel and Judah — the northern kingdom long gone, the southern kingdom just emptied. Guzik notes that some read it as Edom and Judah. Either way, Edom thought the land was there for the taking. Block, in Guzik, points to archaeological evidence (an Arad letter, a seal from Aroer) of Edomite pressure in the south. But they forgot one thing: "the LORD was there" (v10). Even after the glory left the temple (11:23), the land remained His. Morgan, in Guzik: "He is still there; and whosoever may covet it cannot hold it, for He will dispossess them." Edom's anger, envy and hatred would be measured back to them (Matt 7:2). Their boasting against Israel's mountains was boasting against God, and He says twice, "I have heard" (vv12–13).

The gloater judged (vv14–15)

Edom rejoiced over Israel's desolation; the whole earth will rejoice over Edom's. Obadiah made the same charge: "Do not gloat over your brother's day" (Obad 12). Guzik applies the chapter to modern hostility toward Israel; that is his own application, not something the text itself names. Some Christians also see Edom here as a type of every enemy of God's people (Isa 34; 63:1–6). The goal of it all is in the refrain: "you will know that I am the LORD."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **Seir — *Seʿir* (H8165):** "rough, hairy" — the mountain range of Edom (compare Esau, the hairy man, Gen 25:25).
- **Edom — *ʾEdom* (H123):** "red" — Esau's other name (Gen 25:30).
- **desolation — *shemamah* (H8077):** a devastation, a waste.
- **waste — *meshammah* (H4923):** a horror, an object of astonishment.
- **everlasting — *ʿolam* (H5769):** long duration, perpetual.
- **enmity — *ʾebah* (H342):** hostility, hatred.
- **calamity — *ʾed* (H343):** disaster, ruin.
- **bloodshed — *dam* (H1818):** blood; shed blood, bloodguilt.
- **pursue — *radaph* (H7291):** to chase, hunt down.
- **possess — *yarash* (H3423):** to take possession, dispossess.

- **envy — *qinʾah* (H7068):** jealousy, zeal, envy.
- **hatred — *sinʾah* (H8135):** hatred.
- **revilings — *neʾatsah* (H5007):** contempt, blasphemy.
- **spoken arrogantly — *gadal* (H1431):** to make great; to magnify oneself.
- **rejoice — *samach* (H8055):** to be glad, rejoice.

Cross-references

Gen 25:22–34; Gen 27:41; Num 20:14–21; Ps 137:7; Prov 24:17–18; Isa 34:5–15; Jer 49:7–22; Lam 4:21–22; Ezek 25:12–14; Amos 1:11–12; Obad 1–21; Mal 1:2–4; Matt 7:2; Rom 12:19; Heb 12:16–17.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 35:10 (KJV)

10 Because thou hast said, ⚠ These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; ★ whereas the LORD was there:

Command to obey — "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls"

(Prov 24:17). Edom threw a party over his brother's ruin. When a man who hurt me goes down — arrested, exposed, broke, relapsed — the flesh wants to say, "He had it coming." God says don't. I'll pray for him instead, and leave the judging to the One who hears everything (Rom 12:19).

Sin to confess — the long grudge

Edom carried "everlasting enmity" (v5) for generations. I confess the old grudges I still feed — family wounds, betrayals, people I've quietly written off. A grudge is a prisoner I keep in my own heart, and I end up doing the time.

Warning to heed — bitterness comes back around

"Since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you" (v6). What I sow, I reap. For the men I walk with — on the yard, on the street, in the family feud — the cycle of payback never ends with the other guy. It ends with the man who carries it. Unforgiveness doesn't protect me; it pursues me.

Promise to trust — "the LORD was there."

(v10). Edom looked at an empty, ruined land and thought it was up for grabs. It wasn't — God was there. When my life looks like a ruin and the enemy is already measuring it for himself, the LORD is still there. He hears every word spoken against His people: "I have heard it" (v13).

Example to follow — let God answer

Israel never fights Edom in this chapter. God does all the speaking and all the repaying. When I'm wronged, I want to follow that pattern: tell God the truth, refuse revenge, and wait for Him to make it right.

Worship

The LORD lives. He sees the hatred no one else notices, He hears every boast, and He keeps watch over a land that looks abandoned. He judges with justice and makes Himself known. He is the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You hear everything. Search my heart for any old grudge and pull it out by the root. Keep me from gloating when others fall, and give me grace to pray for the ones who hurt me. When my life looks desolate, remind me that You are there. Make Yourself known through me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ezekiel 36

A New Heart:
For My Holy Name's Sake

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Israel gave God's name a black eye among the nations, and God's answer was not to give up on them but to change them from the inside. He washes them, gives them a new heart, puts His own Spirit in them, and rebuilds the ruins until they look like Eden. He does it for His name — which is the only reason a man like me has any hope.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 36 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD:

2 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, ⚠ Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession:

3 Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people:

4 Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about;

5 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely ▲ in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.

6 Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame.

8 But ye, O mountains of Israel, ★ ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.

9 For, ▲ behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown:

10 And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded:

11 And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and ★ will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ▲ ye shall know that I am the LORD.

12 Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men.

13 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations;

14 Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD.

15 Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD.

16 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, ⚠ they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.

18 Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and ⚠ for their idols wherewith they had polluted it:

19 And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.

20 And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, ⚠ they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.

21 But ▲ I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had ⇄ profaned among the heathen, whither they went.

22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have ⇄ profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.

23 And ▲ I will sanctify my great name, which was ⇄ profaned among the heathen, which ye have ⇄ profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and ★ will bring you into your own land.

25 ★ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 ★ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and ★ I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And ★ I will put my spirit within you, and 👥 cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ★ ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

30 And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.

31 Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ⚠ shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.

32 Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: 👥 be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

33 Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

34 And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

35 And they shall say, This land that was desolate ★ is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.

36 Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: ▲ I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.

37 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

38 As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD
- **v2** Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession
- **v5** in the fire of my jealousy
- **v8** ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit
- **v9** behold, I am for you
- **v11** will do better unto you than at your beginnings
- **v11** ye shall know that I am the LORD
- **v17** they defiled it by their own way and by their doings
- **v18** for their idols wherewith they had polluted it
- **v20** they profaned my holy name
- **v20** profaned *(every occurrence)*
- **v21** I had pity for mine holy name
- **v22** I do not this for your sakes
- **v23** I will sanctify my great name
- **v24** will bring you into your own land
- **v25** Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean
- **v26** A new heart also will I give you
- **v26** I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh
- **v27** I will put my spirit within you
- **v27** cause you to walk in my statutes
- **v28** ye shall be my people, and I will be your God
- **v31** shall lothe yourselves in your own sight
- **v32** be ashamed and confounded for your own ways
- **v35** is become like the garden of Eden
- **v36** I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 36:11 (KJV)

11 And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Setting

Jerusalem lies in ruins (33:21), and Edom has claimed the empty land for itself (ch 35). Now God turns and speaks to the land itself: "O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD" (v1). Chapter 35 was against Mount Seir; chapter 36 is for the mountains of Israel. The chapter has two halves — the renewal of the land (vv1–15) and the renewal of the people (vv16–38) — and at its center is one of the great new-covenant promises of the Old Testament.

Structure

- vv1–7 — **the enemy's taunt answered:** the enemy said, "Aha!" and "The everlasting heights have become our possession" (v2). God has spoken "in the fire of My jealousy" against the nations and against all Edom (v5). The nations that insulted Israel will bear their own insults (vv6–7).

- vv8–15 — **the mountains revived:** "you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel" (v8). "Behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you" (v9). Cities rebuilt, people multiplied — God "will treat you better than at the first" (v11). The land once called "a devourer of men" (v13) will bereave its people no more (vv13–15).
- vv16–21 — **why Israel was scattered:** "they defiled it by their ways and their deeds" (v17). "I poured out My wrath on them" for bloodshed and idols (v18) and scattered them (v19). In exile "they profaned My holy name," because the nations said, "These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land" (v20). "But I had concern for My holy name" (v21).
- vv22–32 — **a new heart for His name's sake:** "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name" (v22). "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name" (v23). God will gather them and "bring you into your own land" (v24). "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean … from all your filthiness and from all your idols" (v25). "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (v26). "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes" (v27). "You will be My people, and I will be your God" (v28). Then "you will loathe yourselves in your own sight" for past sins (v31). "I am not doing this for your sake" (v32).
- vv33–38 — **Eden restored:** "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities" the cities will be rebuilt (v33). "This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden" (v35). "I, the LORD, have spoken and will do it" (v36). "This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: I will increase their men like a flock" (v37), and the waste cities will "be filled with flocks of men" (v38).

Repeated words

holy name / My great name (vv20, 21, 22, 23); profaned (vv20, 21, 22, 23); nations (vv3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 36); desolate / waste (vv3, 4, 10, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38); know that I am the LORD (vv11, 23, 38); for your sake (vv22, 32); insults (vv6, 7, 15).

Contrasts

the enemy's "Aha!" (v2) ⟷ "Behold, I am for you" (v9). A land that devours men (v13) ⟷ a land filled with flocks of men (v38). Israel profaned His name (v20) ⟷ God vindicates His name (v23). Filthiness and idols (v25) ⟷ clean water and a clean people (v25). A heart of stone ⟷ a heart of flesh (v26). "Not for your sake" (vv22, 32) ⟷ "you will be My people" (v28). A desolate land ⟷ "the garden of Eden" (v35).

Chapter theme (my words)

Israel gave God's name a black eye among the nations, and God's answer was not to give up on them but to change them from the inside. He washes them, gives them a new heart, puts His own Spirit in them, and rebuilds the ruins until they look like Eden. He does it for His name — which is the only reason a man like me has any hope.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 36:5 (KJV)

5 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely ▲ in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.

The mountains addressed (vv1–7)

Ezekiel had once prophesied against the mountains of Israel because of their idol shrines (ch 6). Now he prophesies to them with hope. Guzik notes the focus here is on the land itself, not only the people. The enemy, especially Edom (v5), had claimed the land with glee and contempt. God answers in the fire of His jealousy — not petty envy but zeal for what is His. Trapp, in Guzik: "Jealousy is hot as hell." God lifts His hand in an oath (v7): the mockers will carry their own shame.

Better than at the first (vv8–15)

The mountains will grow branches and fruit "for they will soon come" (v8) — the land is told to get ready for its people. Guzik cites Israel's agricultural growth since 1948 as "a mere beginning" of greater fruitfulness. The land's old reputation as a devourer of men goes back to the spies' report (Num 13:32); God will end that reputation and the nations' reproach.

Why they were scattered (vv16–21)

Israel defiled the land the way ritual impurity defiles (Lev 18:24–28). Feinberg, in Guzik, says the "blood" likely means murder, judicial violence and child sacrifice. Then, in exile, they profaned God's name just by being there: the nations looked at the refugees and concluded that their God could not protect His own people. Alexander, in Guzik, makes this point — exile made the nations think Israel's God was weak.

For My holy name's sake (vv22–23)

This is the hinge of the chapter. God says plainly that He is not acting because Israel deserves it. Guzik says the restoration is "not only for the sake of Israel but even more so for His holy name." Taylor, in Guzik: "He wants his name to be great, so that the nations may regard him not as an ineffective tribal god." That is good news: if my rescue rested on my record, I'd have no hope. It rests on His name (Ps 23:3; Isa 48:9–11).

Clean water, a new heart, His Spirit (vv24–28)

God's order is gather, cleanse, renew. The sprinkling of clean water draws on the Law's purification rites (Num 19:17–19; Ps 51:7). Guzik does not call it baptism; he sees a true cleansing accomplished by Christ's death, and he calls John 3:5 — "born of water and the Spirit" — "the likely connection Jesus had in mind" (compare 1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:5). Wright, in Guzik: "the Ezekiel promise was about to be fulfilled." The new heart and new spirit are a heart transplant — stone out, flesh in. Guzik says this

works "from the inside out" rather than from the outside in (2 Cor 5:17). And God puts "My Spirit" within them so that obedience flows from the inside (Rom 8:4, 9). This is the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31–34 by another name; Block, in Guzik: "what Jeremiah attributes to the divine Torah, Ezekiel ascribes to the infusion of the divine ruah."

Who receives it?

Christians differ. Many (covenant and amillennial readers) see the promise fulfilled in Christ and His church — Jew and Gentile together receiving the Spirit, with the land promise widened to the renewed earth. Others (dispensational and premillennial readers) see it inaugurated in the church but awaiting a future, national fulfillment for Israel (Rom 11:26–27). Guzik holds the second: the new covenant was inaugurated by Christ (Luke 22:20) but is "not yet complete" until these promises to Israel are fulfilled, probably at Christ's return. He calls removing the land promises "a plain and serious error," and quotes Block that restricting fulfillment to the church is "to annul the hope" of the prophet.

Remembering, and Eden restored (vv29–38)

Grace doesn't make sin trivial — renewed people "loathe" their old ways (v31). Wiersbe, in Guzik: true believers are "ashamed of themselves" over past disobedience. Then the ruins become like the garden of Eden (v35), and the nations recognize the LORD's work (v36). The chapter closes with prayer: God will let Israel ask Him for what He has already promised (v37). Spurgeon, in Guzik: "we must plead and enquire, or else the increase will be withheld." The waste cities will be full of people, like Jerusalem's streets crowded with flocks at the feasts (v38).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **jealousy — *qinʾah* (H7068):** zeal, ardor, jealousy for what belongs to one.
- **holy — *qodesh* (H6944):** holiness, set-apartness.
- **name — *shem* (H8034):** name, reputation, character.
- **profaned — *chalal* (H2490):** to defile, pollute, treat as common.
- **vindicate the holiness — *qadash* (H6942):** to sanctify, show oneself holy.
- **sprinkle — *zaraq* (H2236):** to toss, sprinkle, as in the rites of cleansing.
- **clean — *taher* (H2891):** to be pure, clean.
- **filthiness — *tumʾah* (H2932):** uncleanness, defilement.
- **idols — *gillulim* (H1544):** idols — related to a word for dung; Ezekiel's favorite term of contempt.
- **new — *chadash* (H2319):** new, fresh.
- **heart — *leb* (H3820):** the inner man, mind, will, heart.
- **spirit / Spirit — *ruach* (H7307):** breath, wind, spirit.
- **stone — *ʾeben* (H68):** a stone.
- **loathe — *qut* (H6962):** to feel disgust, loathe.
- **ask — *darash* (H1875):** to seek, inquire of, ask.

Cross-references

Lev 18:24–28; Num 19:17–19; Deut 30:6; Ps 23:3; Ps 51:7–10; Isa 48:9–11; Jer 24:7; Jer 31:31–34; Jer 32:39–40; Ezek 11:19–20; Ezek 37:14; Joel 2:28–29; Zech 12:10–13:1; John 3:3–8; John 7:37–39; Rom 2:28–29; Rom

8:4–9; Rom 11:26–27; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 3:3; 2 Cor 5:17; Titus 3:5; Heb 8:8–12; Heb 10:22.

03 Application
HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 36:26 (KJV)

26 ★ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and ★ I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Command to obey — "Be ashamed and confounded for your ways"

(v32). God's grace doesn't ask me to pretend my past was fine. It asks me to own it — to call it what it was — and then receive what I didn't earn. The men I walk with in recovery call that a fearless inventory. I'll do it honestly, and then rest in grace, not in my record.

Sin to confess — a heart of stone

Before God touched me, my heart was hard — toward Him, toward my wife, toward people who needed me. Some stone is still there. I confess where I've gone cold and stopped feeling what God feels, and I ask Him to finish the transplant.

Warning to heed — my life carries His name

Israel profaned God's name just by how they lived among the nations (v20). People judge Jesus by the men who wear His name. The men I disciple are watched by their families, cellmates and coworkers. So am I. How I live either honors His name or drags it through the mud.

Promise to trust — "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you"

(v26). This is the promise I hand every man who says, "I can't change." He's right — he can't. But God can. He washes "from all your filthiness and from all your idols" (v25), and He puts His own Spirit inside to make a man walk in His ways (v27). The addiction, the record, the shame — none of it is too dirty for the clean water God provides in Christ.

Example to follow — ask Him

God promised to do it, and then said He would let His people ask Him to do it (v37). Promises are meant to be prayed. I'll take what God has said and bring it back to Him by name: "You said You would give a new heart — give it to this man."

Worship

God acts for His holy name. He washes the unclean, raises the ruined, puts His Spirit within, and turns wastelands into Eden. He has spoken, and He will do it. He is the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I don't deserve anything You've done for me — You did it for Your name. Wash me clean. Take out what is stone and give me a heart of flesh. Fill me with Your Spirit so I can walk in Your ways.

Use my life to honor Your name, and do this same miracle in the men You've given me to love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ezekiel 37

Dry Bones Live:
One Stick, One Shepherd

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God took Ezekiel to the deadest place imaginable and asked if it could live. The Word put the bones together, but only the Breath of God made them stand. A people who said "our hope has perished" are raised, reunited under one Shepherd, cleansed, and given God's own presence forever.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 37 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning
Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

4 Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

9 Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

13 And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,

14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

15 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?

19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.

21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

22 And ★ I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

23 ⚠ Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and ▲ will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and ★ they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

26 Moreover ★ I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and ★ will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall know that ▲ I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ▲ The hand of the LORD was upon me
- **v1** the valley which was full of bones
- **v2** ⚠ they were very dry
- **v3** ⇄ can these bones live
- **v3** ▲ O Lord GOD, thou knowest
- **v4** O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD
- **v5** ★ I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live
- **v5** ⇄ breath *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ▲ ye shall know that I am the LORD
- **v7** So I prophesied as I was commanded
- **v8** ⚠ but there was no breath in them
- **v9** Come from the four winds, O breath
- **v10** ★ stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army
- **v11** ⚠ Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost
- **v12** ★ I will open your graves
- **v14** ★ shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live
- **v14** ▲ I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it
- **v17** join them one to another into one stick
- **v22** ★ I will make them one nation
- **v23** ⚠ Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols
- **v23** ▲ will cleanse them
- **v24** ★ they all shall have one shepherd
- **v26** ★ I will make a covenant of peace with them
- **v26** ★ will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore
- **v28** ▲ I the LORD do sanctify Israel

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 37:1 (KJV)

1 ▲ The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

Setting

The news has reached the exiles in Babylon: "The city has been taken" (33:21). Jerusalem and the temple are gone (586 BC), and the northern kingdom was swept away by Assyria more than a century before. Ezekiel, a priest taken captive with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC, speaks to people who feel like a graveyard. Chapter 36 promised a new heart and God's Spirit within (36:26–27); chapter 37 shows that promise in a picture. The vision is not dated.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **the valley of bones:** "The hand of the LORD was upon me" (v1), and He "set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones" (v1) — "and lo, they were very dry" (v2). God asks, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel answers, "O Lord GOD, You know" (v3).
- vv4–6 — **prophesy to the bones:** "O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD" (v4). "I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life" (v5) — sinews, flesh, skin and breath, "and you will know that I am the LORD" (v6).
- vv7–8 — **bodies without breath:** "So I prophesied as I was commanded" (v7). "There was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone" (v7). Flesh and skin cover them, "but there was no breath in them" (v8).
- vv9–10 — **prophesy to the breath:** "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man" (v9). "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life" (v9). "They came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army" (v10).
- vv11–14 — **the vision explained:** "these bones are the whole house of Israel" (v11). They say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off" (v11). God answers: "I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people" (v12). "I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life" (v14). "I, the LORD, have spoken and done it" (v14).
- vv15–20 — **two sticks made one:** one stick "For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions," the other "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions" (v16). "Join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand" (v17). The people ask, "Will you not declare to us what you mean by these?" (v18). God: "they will be one in My hand" (v19).
- vv21–23 — **one nation, cleansed:** God will gather Israel from the nations (v21). "I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them" (v22). "They

will no longer defile themselves with their idols" (v23). "I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them" (v23).

- vv24–28 — **David, the covenant, the sanctuary:** "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd" (v24). "David My servant will be their prince forever" (v25). "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them" (v26). God "will set My sanctuary in their midst forever" (v26). "My dwelling place also will be with them" (v27). "The nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel" (v28).

Repeated words

bones (vv1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11); breath (vv5, 6, 8, 9, 10); Spirit (vv1, 14); prophesy / prophesied (vv4, 7, 9, 10, 12); graves (vv12, 13); one stick (vv16, 17, 19); know that I am the LORD (vv6, 13, 28); David (vv24, 25); forever (vv25, 26, 28); sanctuary (vv26, 28).

Contrasts

very dry bones (v2) ⟷ an exceedingly great army (v10). Bodies with flesh but "no breath in them" (v8) ⟷ "the breath came into them" (v10). "Our hope has perished" (v11) ⟷ "I will open your graves" (v12). Two sticks, two kingdoms (v16) ⟷ "one in My hand" (v19). Defiled by idols (v23) ⟷ cleansed and "My people" (v23). Many failed kings ⟷ "one shepherd" (v24). A temple destroyed (33:21) ⟷ "My sanctuary in their midst forever" (v26).

Chapter theme (my words)

God took Ezekiel to the deadest place imaginable and asked if it could live. The Word put the bones together, but only the Breath of God made them stand. A people who said "our hope has perished" are raised, reunited under one Shepherd, cleansed, and given God's own presence forever.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 37:3 (KJV)

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, ⇄ can these bones live? And I answered, ▲ O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

The valley (vv1–3)

This was a vision — "the hand of the LORD" and "the Spirit of the LORD" carried Ezekiel there. Feinberg, in Guzik: "The mention of the hand of the Lord indicates prophetic ecstasy and inspiration." Taylor, in Guzik, notes the valley is "the same word as the 'plain' in Ezekiel 3:22," where Ezekiel had seen God's glory. The bones are unburied and very dry — long dead, a scene of disgrace. Block, in Guzik: "Ezekiel knew how important was the proper treatment of human corpses." For a priest, a field of corpses was unclean ground. God's question exposes the impossible; Ezekiel's answer, "O Lord GOD, You know," is neither doubt nor bluster — it puts the matter in God's hands.

The Word, then the Breath (vv4–10)

Ezekiel is told to preach to bones — a ridiculous assignment unless God is in it. Spurgeon, in Guzik: "If we want revivals, we must revive our reverence for the Word of God." The bones rattle and assemble, sinews and flesh and skin come — but no breath. Guzik sees restoration coming in stages. Then a second command: prophesy to the breath. The Hebrew *ruach* means breath, wind and spirit, and the chapter uses all three (vv1, 5, 9, 14). Guzik reads the two steps as preaching followed by prayer. Meyer, in Guzik: "When you have done your best, and have failed of the highest results, prophesy to the Spirit." Morgan, in Guzik: "There is no hope for humanity in man." The scene echoes Genesis 2:7 — a body formed first, then God's breath, then life.

"Our hope has perished" (vv11–14)

God interprets the vision Himself: the bones are "the whole house of Israel" — north and south — and they have said their hope is gone. God answers their words directly: He will open their graves, bring them home, and put His Spirit within them (36:27). Wright, in Guzik: "The resurrection that follows does not refer directly to individual resurrection from death." Guzik agrees the passage is "undeniably" about Israel's national restoration, though resurrection language is the picture God chose (compare Dan 12:2). Christians apply it differently. Many dispensational readers see Israel's modern regathering as the bones coming together, with the breath — national faith in Messiah — still to come (Zech 12:10; Rom 11:26). Many amillennial readers see the return from Babylon as a first fulfillment and the church's new birth by the Spirit as its fullness (John 3:5–8; Eph 2:1–5). Guzik expects a future fulfillment for Israel in "the very last days," saying that "any fair examination of Israel's history must confess that it has not yet happened."

Two sticks (vv15–20)

Israel had been split since Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12), roughly 350 years. Judah was the southern kingdom; "Joseph" and "Ephraim" stand for the northern tribes. Clarke, in Guzik: "Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, was an Ephraimite." Guzik notes the northern kingdom had been conquered by Assyria about 150 years earlier, yet God still counts it. He rejects both the "lost ten tribes" theory and the Mormon reading. Smith, in Guzik: "Certainly no basis exists in this text for the strange Mormon teaching that the sticks refer to two scrolls." The sticks are tribes, and God's hand makes them one. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "Despite the prophet's words and various attempts, the divisions between north and south remained" — which is why this looks beyond the return under Cyrus.

One king, one Shepherd, one covenant (vv21–28)

God promises gathering, unity, cleansing from idols, and "one king." "My servant David" lived four centuries earlier, so most commentators see the Messiah, the Son of David (Jer 23:5; 30:9; Luke 1:32–33; John 10:11, 16). Guzik notes that view but holds that the reference is "most appropriately seen" as David himself, raised and ruling under Christ in the Millennial Kingdom. The "covenant of peace" (v26) is the new covenant; Guzik calls it "the covenant that never ends" and links it to Hebrews 13:20. Block, in Guzik, describes this peace as "a state of harmony and equilibrium." The sanctuary in their midst forever prepares for the temple vision of chapters 40–48. Smith, in Guzik: "The restoration of the sanctuary is the climax of all that this prophet had to say." Christians differ here too: some expect a literal millennial temple, others see the promise fulfilled in Christ who "dwelt among us" (John 1:14) and

in God dwelling with His people (2 Cor 6:16; Rev 21:3). Either way the goal is the same — God with His people. Alexander, in Guzik: "Then all nations would see that it was the Lord who made Israel holy."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **bones — *ʿetsem* (H6106):** bone; also substance, the self.
- **dry — *yabesh* (H3002):** to be dried up, withered.
- **prophesy — *naba*ʾ (H5012):** to speak or preach as God's spokesman.
- **breath / wind / Spirit — *ruach* (H7307):** breath, wind, spirit — the key word of the vision.
- **sinews — *gid* (H1517):** a tendon, sinew.
- **rattling — *raʿash* (H7494):** a shaking, quaking, commotion.
- **come to life — *chayah* (H2421):** to live, revive, be restored to life.
- **army — *chayil* (H2428):** strength, a force, an army.
- **hope — *tiqvah* (H8615):** hope, expectation — literally a cord.
- **cut off — *gazar* (H1504):** to cut, sever, divide.
- **graves — *qeber* (H6913):** a grave, burial place.
- **stick — *ʿets* (H6086):** wood, a piece of wood.
- **shepherd — *roʿeh* (H7462):** to tend, pasture; a shepherd.
- **peace — *shalom* (H7965):** wholeness, well-being, peace.
- **everlasting — *ʿolam* (H5769):** long duration, forever.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** a holy place, sanctuary.
- **dwelling place — *mishkan* (H4908):** a dwelling, the tabernacle.

Cross-references

Gen 2:7; 1 Kgs 12:16–20; Ps 104:30; Isa 26:19; Jer 23:5–6; Jer 30:9; Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 34:23–25; Ezek 36:24–28; Dan 12:2; Hos 3:5; Hos 13:14; Zech 12:10; Luke 1:32–33; John 3:5–8; John 5:25; John 10:11, 16; John 20:22; Acts 2:1–4; Rom 8:11; Rom 11:26–27; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:1–5, 14–16; Heb 13:20; Rev 21:3.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 37:5 (KJV)

5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, ★ I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

Command to obey — "Prophesy to the breath"

(v9). Ezekiel did two things: he spoke God's Word to dead bones, and he called on the Spirit to breathe. I can teach a man the Bible until he knows all the right answers and still find "no breath in them" (v8). My job is to keep doing both — speak the Word faithfully and pray for the Spirit without quitting.

Sin to confess — "Our hope has perished."

I've said it in my own way about my own valleys, and I've thought it about men I love — this one is too far gone, this marriage is over, this addiction will win. That is unbelief dressed up as realism. I confess it and answer God's question the way Ezekiel did: "O Lord GOD, You know."

Warning to heed — bodies without breath

The bones came together and looked like men, but they were still dead (v8). A man can clean up, get sober, show up to church, quote verses — and still not have new life. So can I. Reformation is not resurrection. Only God's Spirit makes the dead live.

Promise to trust — "I will open your graves"

(v12). I've sat across from men who say, "We are completely cut off" — men in a prison yard, men just released with nothing, men who have burned every bridge. God's answer is not a pep talk. It's resurrection: "I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life" (v14). No valley is too dry and no man too dead.

Example to follow — Ezekiel's obedience

"So I prophesied as I was commanded" (v7). It looked foolish to preach in a graveyard. He did it anyway, and then did it again. I'll keep writing, building tools and sitting with men when it looks like nothing is moving, because the rattling starts when God's Word is spoken.

Worship

The Lord GOD raises the dead. He breathes life where there is none. He gathers the scattered, makes the divided one, cleanses the defiled, and gives them one Shepherd forever. He has spoken, and He has done it.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You know whether these bones can live. Breathe on me again. Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on the men I walk with — the ones in recovery, the ones behind bars, the ones who say their hope is gone. Open their graves, put Your Spirit within them, and make them stand. Make us one under Jesus, our one Shepherd. Amen.

Ezekiel 38

Gog of Magog:
The Last Assault

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

When God's people are finally at peace, the biggest coalition yet comes to swallow them. But Gog never had the upper hand — God put the hooks in his jaws and led him to the place of his own ruin. The point of the whole war is that the nations will know the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 38 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Ma gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

4 And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:

5 Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:

6 Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.

7 Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

8 After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.

9 Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:

11 And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,

12 To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

13 Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?

14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?

15 And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:

16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

17 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?

18 And it shall come to pass at the same time when ⇄ Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that ▲ my fury shall come up in my face.

19 For in my jealousy and ▲ in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day ◷ there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

20 So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, ▲ shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

21 And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: ⚠ every man's sword shall be against his brother.

22 And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, ▲ an overflowing rain, and great hailstones , fire, and brimstone.

23 ▲ Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and ▲ they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** Son of man, set thy face against Gog
- **v2** ⇄ Gog *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Gog
- **v4** ▲ put hooks into thy jaws
- **v7** Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself
- **v8** ◷ After many days thou shalt be visited
- **v8** ◷ in the latter years
- **v8** ★ they shall dwell safely all of them
- **v9** ⚠ come like a storm
- **v10** ⚠ thou shalt think an evil thought
- **v11** ⚠ I will go up to the land of unwalled villages
- **v12** ⚠ To take a spoil, and to take a prey
- **v14** ★ when my people of Israel dwelleth safely
- **v15** ◷ out of the north parts
- **v16** ◷ it shall be in the latter days
- **v16** ▲ that the heathen may know me
- **v16** ▲ when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog
- **v18** ▲ my fury shall come up in my face
- **v19** ▲ in the fire of my wrath have I spoken
- **v19** ◷ there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel
- **v20** ▲ shall shake at my presence
- **v21** ⚠ every man's sword shall be against his brother
- **v22** ▲ an overflowing rain, and great hailstones
- **v23** ▲ Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself
- **v23** ▲ they shall know that I am the LORD

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 38:8 (KJV)

8 After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.

Setting

The oracle is not dated. Chapter 37 ended with Israel raised, reunited and living under "a covenant of peace" with God's sanctuary in their midst (37:26). Chapters 38–39 now picture one last enemy coming against that restored people — and God destroying him — before the temple vision of chapters 40–48. The time marker is "after many days" and "the latter years" (v8). The enemy is "Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" (v2).

Structure

- vv1–3 — **God against Gog:** "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" (v2). "Behold, I am against you, O Gog" (v3).
- vv4–7 — **God draws him out:** "I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out" with horses, horsemen and a great company (v4). Allies: "Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them" (v5); "Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north" (v6). "Be prepared, and prepare yourself" (v7).
- vv8–9 — **the time and the target:** "After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword" — gathered from many nations, "and they are living securely, all of them" (v8). "You will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land" (v9).
- vv10–13 — **Gog's evil plan:** "thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil plan" (v10): "I will go up against the land of unwalled villages" (v11), "to capture spoil and to seize plunder" (v12) from a people "who live at the center of the world" (v12). "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish" ask whether he has come for spoil (v13).
- vv14–17 — **God's purpose:** "On that day when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it?" (v14). Gog comes from "the remote parts of the north" (v15). "It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog" (v16). "Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through My servants the prophets of Israel" (v17)?
- vv18–23 — **God's fury and Gog's ruin:** "My fury will mount up in My anger" (v18). "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel" (v19). All creation shakes at His presence; mountains fall (v20). "Every man's sword will be against his brother" (v21). Pestilence, blood, "a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone"

(v22). "I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD" (v23).

Repeated words

Gog (vv2, 3, 14, 16, 18); Thus says the Lord GOD (vv3, 10, 14, 17); declares the Lord GOD (vv18, 21); many peoples (vv6, 9, 15, 22); living securely (vv8, 11, 14); like a cloud covering / to cover the land (vv9, 16); on that day (vv10, 14, 18, 19); north (vv6, 15); spoil / plunder (vv12, 13); sanctified / sanctify (vv16, 23); know (vv14, 16, 23).

Contrasts

Gog's plan (v10) ⟷ God's hooks in his jaws (v4). "I will go up" (v11) ⟷ "I will bring you against My land" (v16). Unwalled villages, living securely (v11) ⟷ a vast army like a storm (v9). Gog comes to take spoil (v12) ⟷ God comes in fury (v18). A cloud covering the land (v9) ⟷ hailstones, fire and brimstone falling on him (v22). Gog's great company (v4) ⟷ every man's sword against his brother (v21). The nations' armies gathered ⟷ the nations knowing that He is the LORD (v23).

Chapter theme (my words)

When God's people are finally at peace, the biggest coalition yet comes to swallow them. But Gog never had the upper hand — God put the hooks in his jaws and led him to the place of his own ruin. The point of the whole war is that the nations will know the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 38:16 (KJV)

16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Who is Gog? (vv1–3)

Gog appears nowhere else as a person in the Old Testament; Guzik calls him a "wholly new and strange enemy." Morgan, in Guzik: "It is a new confederacy and antagonism." Magog was a son of Japheth (Gen 10:2), and Alexander, in Guzik, places Magog "as the land of the Scythians, a mountainous region around the Black and Caspian seas." Meshech and Tubal, also sons of Japheth, "refer to geographical areas or countries in eastern modern Turkey" (Alexander, in Guzik). The Hebrew *rosh* can be read as "chief" (KJV, "chief prince") or as a place name, "Rosh" (NASB). Many have linked Rosh with Russia. Feinberg, in Guzik: "There have been many writers who connected the name Rosh with the Russians, but this is not generally accepted today." Guzik says "the only direct evidence of this is the similar sound of the names," though it "matches what we do know." Wiersbe, in Guzik: "This doesn't rule out the participation of modern Russia, since it is located in the north." Block, in Guzik, sees these

northern peoples as "perfect symbols of the archetypal enemy, rising against God and his people." Guzik calls historical identifications such as Antiochus IV "extremely unlikely."

The allies (vv4–7)

The coalition comes from every direction: Persia (modern Iran) to the east, Ethiopia (Hebrew *Cush*) to the south, Put (usually Libya) to the west, Gomer and Beth-togarmah from the north. Alexander, in Guzik, suggests Gomer is "probably the ancient Cimmerians"; Block, in Guzik, calls it "a wild tribe living in the fog-bound region north of the Black Sea." Togarmah is often linked with the Armenians. Notice who is really in charge: God turns Gog about, puts hooks in his jaws and brings him out (v4). Guzik: whatever Gog's motives, "the ultimate reason is that God said He would *compel* Gog to come against Israel." Ancient conquerors led captives with hooks (compare Isa 37:29) — God treats the mightiest army like a captive animal.

When? (vv8–9, 14–17)

"After many days" and "the latter years" (v8) and "the last days" (v16) point to the end of the age. Feinberg, in Guzik: "No student of prophecy can afford to overlook this phrase." The invasion comes after Israel is regathered and "living securely." Christians read this in several ways:

- **A literal future invasion** (dispensational premillennial) — placed before, in the middle of, or at the end of the seven-year tribulation; the end-of-tribulation view links Ezekiel 39:17–20 with Revelation 19:17–18.
- **After the millennium** — because Revelation 20:7–9 names "Gog and Magog" gathering against "the beloved city."
- **Symbolic of the final assault of evil** (many amillennial readers) — the last great rebellion against God's people, crushed at Christ's return.

Guzik lists four timings — before, in the middle of, or at the end of the tribulation, or after the millennium — and does not choose: "the information is not complete enough for much certainty among several options," and "this may be a case where the specific fulfillment of the prophecy is not truly understood until its fulfillment."

Gog's evil plan (vv10–13)

God's sovereignty doesn't erase Gog's guilt. The thoughts are his own: "you will devise an evil plan" (v10). He sees a people without walls, bars or gates, prosperous and at peace, and wants their goods. Smith, in Guzik: "Gog calculated that the attack against the people of God would be relatively easy and extremely profitable." "The center of the world" (v12) — literally "navel" — Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: it "is Jerusalem, which this text conceives as being more than a political capital." Sheba and Dedan, says Feinberg in Guzik, "were Arab peoples"; the merchants of Tarshish ask about the loot. Taylor, in Guzik: "They are typical of those who will not initiate wrong-doing, but are eager to cash in on the proceeds."

Spoken of before (v17)

No earlier prophet names Gog, so God means the prophets who foresaw a final assault on His people and His victory over the nations (for example Joel 3; Isa 66:15–16; Zech 14). Wright, in Guzik: "we must somehow link this chapter with Joel 3 and Zechariah 14."

God's fury (vv18–23)

God's anger rises "in My zeal" — jealous love for His people and His name. Then come earthquake, terror throughout creation, panic in Gog's ranks, disease, blood, and judgment from the sky like Sodom's (Gen 19:24). Wright, in Guzik: "The invaders are destroyed by earthquake (cf. Zechariah 14:4-5), by violent distrust of one another." Alexander, in Guzik: Gog's armies "would become so confused that they would slay one another." Poole, in Guzik: "Each single was dreadful, but all meet in the destruction of Gog." Israel never fires a shot. The purpose is stated three ways: God will magnify, sanctify and make Himself known (v23).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **Gog — *Gog* (H1463):** the leader of the final northern coalition.
- **Magog — *Magog* (H4031):** a son of Japheth; his land and people.
- **Rosh / chief — *roʾsh* (H7218):** head, chief; read by some as a place name.
- **Meshech — *Meshech* (H4902):** a son of Japheth; a people of Asia Minor.
- **Tubal — *Tubal* (H8422):** a son of Japheth; a people of Asia Minor.
- **hooks — *chach* (H2397):** a hook or ring put in the nose or jaw.
- **latter — *ʾacharith* (H319):** the end, the latter part, the last days.
- **securely — *betach* (H983):** safety, security, confidence.
- **unwalled villages — *perazah* (H6519):** open country, a village without walls.
- **spoil — *shalal* (H7998):** booty, plunder.
- **center — *tabbur* (H2872):** the navel; the highest or central point.
- **fury — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, burning anger.
- **zeal — *qinʾah* (H7068):** jealousy, zeal, ardor.
- **earthquake — *raʿash* (H7494):** a shaking, quaking.
- **brimstone — *gophrith* (H1614):** sulfur, brimstone.
- **sanctified — *qadash* (H6942):** to be set apart, shown to be holy.

Cross-references

Gen 10:2–3; Gen 19:24; Ps 2:1–6; Ps 46:1–10; Isa 37:29; Isa 66:15–16; Ezek 37:26–28; Ezek 39:1–29; Dan 11:40–45; Joel 3:1–2, 9–16; Zech 12:2–9; Zech 14:2–5; Matt 24:21–22; 1 Thess 5:3; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 16:14–21; Rev 19:17–21; Rev 20:7–10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 38:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

Command to obey — "Be prepared"

(v7). God said it to Gog with irony — prepare all you like, you're walking into My hands. But the word cuts the other way for me. The attack came when Israel was "living securely." The men I disciple know this: relapse rarely comes in the crisis; it comes when life finally settles down. I'll stay watchful in the good seasons.

Sin to confess — devising an evil plan

Gog looked at people who couldn't defend themselves and saw something to take (vv10–12). I confess the times I've sized people up for what I could get — time, money, comfort, approval. And I confess standing by like the merchants of Tarshish, not starting the wrong but glad to profit from it (v13).

Warning to heed — no one fights God and wins

Gog had the biggest army in the world and never got a battle. Earthquake, his own men's swords and fire from heaven did the work (vv19–22). Whatever proud plan I'm carrying, God can turn it on my own head. Better to surrender now than be hooked by the jaw later.

Promise to trust — "I am against you, O Gog"

(v3). God fights for His people. For a man in a prison yard surrounded by threats, for a man in recovery who feels the old life closing in from every side like "a cloud covering the land" — the enemy is real, but God's hook is in his jaw. The battle belongs to the LORD.

Example to follow — rest in God's sovereignty

Israel did nothing in this chapter but live in the land God gave them. I don't have to understand every detail of the end times to trust the God who holds them. Guzik admits the timing isn't clear; I can be humble about the details and certain about the outcome.

Worship

The Lord GOD rules the nations. He leads armies with hooks, shakes the earth by His presence, and defends His people in His zeal. He will magnify Himself and sanctify Himself, and every nation will know that He is the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You are sovereign over every army and every enemy. Keep me watchful when life is calm and humble when I think I'm strong. Guard the men I walk with from the enemy that comes like a storm. Turn back every plan against them. Be glorified in our weakness, and make Yourself known through what You do for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ezekiel 39

Gog Destroyed:
His Face No Longer Hidden

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The enemy that came to plunder becomes firewood, graves and food for the birds, and God's holy name is made known. Then God explains everything — Israel went into exile because of their own sin, not because He was weak. And the last word is mercy: no one left behind, His face no longer hidden, His Spirit poured out.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 39 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

2 And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel:

3 And ▲ I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.

4 ⚠ Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.

5 Thou shalt fall upon the open field: ▲ for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

6 And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and ▲ they shall know that I am the LORD.

7 ▲ So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my ⇄ holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, ▲ the Holy One in Israel.

8 Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken.

9 And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves , and the spears, and they shall Amber burn them with fire seven years:

10 So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and ★ they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD.

11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it Amber The valley of Hamongog.

12 And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, Green that they may cleanse the land.

13 Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord GOD.

14 And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search.

15 And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamongog.

16 And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land.

17 And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.

18 Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

19 And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you.

20 Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.

21 And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.

22 So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward.

23 And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword.

24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.

25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;

26 After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.

27 When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations;

28 Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.

29 Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** Behold, I am against thee, O Gog
- **v3** I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand
- **v4** Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel
- **v5** for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD
- **v6** they shall know that I am the LORD
- **v7** So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel
- **v7** holy name *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** I will not let them pollute my holy name any more
- **v7** the Holy One in Israel
- **v9** burn them with fire seven years
- **v10** they shall spoil those that spoiled them
- **v11** The valley of Hamongog
- **v12** that they may cleanse the land
- **v17** gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice
- **v21** I will set my glory among the heathen
- **v22** shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward
- **v23** went into captivity for their iniquity

- **v23** ⚠ because they trespassed against me
- **v23** ⚠ therefore hid I my face from them
- **v25** ★ Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob
- **v25** ★ have mercy upon the whole house of Israel
- **v25** ▲ will be jealous for my holy name
- **v26** ⚠ After that they have borne their shame
- **v29** ★ Neither will I hide my face any more from them
- **v29** ★ I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 39:7 (KJV)

7 ▲ So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my ⇄ holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, ▲ the Holy One in Israel.

Setting

Chapter 39 continues the oracle against Gog from chapter 38 without a new date or heading. Taylor, in Guzik: "The overthrow of Gog and his forces is here retold in different language and in fuller detail." Chapter 38 showed the invasion and God's fury; chapter 39 shows the aftermath — the weapons, the graves, the feast for the birds — and ends by looking back on the exile and forward to Israel's full restoration. It closes the section of restoration prophecies (chs 33–39) before the temple vision (chs 40–48).

Structure

- vv1–8 — **Gog defeated:** "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" (v1). God will "take you up from the remotest parts of the north" (v2), then "strike your bow from your left hand and dash down your arrows from your right hand" (v3). "You will fall on the mountains of Israel" (v4), given "as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field" (v4). "I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety" (v6). "My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore" (v7). "Behold, it is coming and it shall be done ... That is the day of which I have spoken" (v8).
- vv9–10 — **the weapons burned:** Israel burns the weapons — "for seven years they will make fires of them" (v9) — and needs no wood from the forests. "They will take the spoil of those who despoiled them and seize the plunder of those who plundered them" (v10).
- vv11–16 — **the burial:** a burial ground in "the valley of those who pass by east of the sea," and "they will call it the valley of Hamon-gog" (v11). "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land" (v12). It brings Israel renown "on the day that I glorify Myself" (v13). Search teams "constantly pass through the land" (v14); anyone who sees a bone "will set up a marker by it" (v15). "And even the name of the city will be Hamonah" (v16).

- vv17–20 — **the feast for the birds:** "Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice" — "a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood" (v17). "You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth" (v18). "You will be glutted at My table with horses and charioteers" (v20).
- vv21–24 — **why the exile happened:** "I will set My glory among the nations" (v21). "The house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God from that day onward" (v22). The nations will know "the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and I hid My face from them" (v23). "According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I dealt with them" (v24).
- vv25–29 — **mercy and the Spirit:** "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name" (v25). "They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery" (v26). "I will leave none of them there any longer" (v28). "I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel" (v29).

Repeated words

declares the Lord GOD (vv5, 8, 10, 13, 20, 29); know that I am the LORD (vv6, 7, 22, 28); holy name (vv7, 25); nations (vv7, 21, 23, 27, 28); seven (vv9, 12, 14); bury / burying / buried (vv11, 12, 13, 14, 15); cleanse (vv12, 14, 16); sacrifice (vv17, 19); hid / hide My face (vv23, 24, 29).

Contrasts

Gog's bow and arrows (v3) ⟷ weapons used as firewood (v9). Plunderers (38:12) ⟷ plundered (v10). Gog came for spoil ⟷ Gog gets a grave (v11). A feast of sacrifice — but the nations are the sacrifice (v17). Israel exiled for treachery (v23) ⟷ restored by mercy (v25). "I hid My face from them" (vv23–24) ⟷ "I will not hide My face from them any longer" (v29). His name profaned ⟷ "I will be jealous for My holy name" (v25).

Chapter theme (my words)

The enemy that came to plunder becomes firewood, graves and food for the birds, and God's holy name is made known. Then God explains everything — Israel went into exile because of their own sin, not because He was weak. And the last word is mercy: no one left behind, His face no longer hidden, His Spirit poured out.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 39:25 (KJV)

25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; ★ Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and ★ have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my ⇄ holy name;

Gog disarmed (vv1–8)

God repeats the sentence against Gog and adds detail. He leads Gog out and then knocks the weapons from his hands. Clarke, in Guzik: "The bow is held by the left hand; the arrow is pulled and discharged by the right." Feinberg, in Guzik: "They fail, as always, to take God into account." Unburied bodies were a mark of disgrace. Fire also falls on Magog and on the distant "coastlands" — Guzik says these are far-off regions, not a specific modern nation, and rejects speculation about the United States. The goal is God's name: Block, in Guzik: "The Gog debacle will demonstrate once and for all the holiness of Yahweh." "It is coming and it shall be done" (v8) speaks of the future as already certain.

Seven years of firewood (vv9–10)

The amount of abandoned equipment is so vast it fuels Israel for seven years. Guzik reads this as a picture of the size of the defeat. Feinberg, in Guzik: "The plunderers will be plundered and the robbers will be robbed." Wiersbe, in Guzik: "These are not the weapons of a modern army, but Ezekiel used language the people could understand." Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "It will be the final battle, whose conclusion will make armaments obsolete." Readers differ on how literally to take the details. Those who expect a literal future invasion take the numbers as real; others read the seven years and seven months as symbols of completeness — a total, final victory. Either way, Israel lifts no sword.

Seven months of burial (vv11–16)

Corpses defile the land (Num 19:11–16; Deut 21:23), so the land must be cleansed. The scale is enormous. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "Their work will take seven months, so immense were Gog's forces." Guzik describes an organized work — full-time crews, search teams and markers over bones. "Hamon-gog" means "the multitude of Gog," and Wiersbe, in Guzik, connects "Hamonah" to "horde" and suggests it may be a headquarters for the cleanup. The location is given only as "the valley of those who pass by east of the sea," and Guzik offers no further identification.

God's sacrificial feast (vv17–20)

The image is turned upside down: usually people eat from a sacrifice offered to God; here God invites the birds and beasts, and the proud armies are the sacrifice. The leaders and warriors are slaughtered "as though they were rams, lambs, goats and bulls" (v18). Wright, in Guzik: "But every Israelite had watched the blood flowing at the sacrifices." John uses this image for the aftermath of Christ's return in Revelation 19:17–21, and he names Gog and Magog again after the thousand years (Rev 20:7–9). Guzik suggests John may be borrowing Ezekiel's imagery as examples for those events rather than declaring them the direct fulfillment. Premillennial readers see one or more literal future battles; amillennial

readers see Ezekiel 38–39 and Revelation 19–20 describing the same final defeat of evil at Christ's return.

Why the exile happened (vv21–24)

The battle is a lesson for both Israel and the nations. Israel will know the LORD "from that day onward" (v22). The nations will understand that Babylon's victory in 586 BC did not mean Israel's God had lost. Poole, in Guzik: "they shall see it was not impotence in Israel's God, but iniquity in Israel's people." God "hid His face" — withdrew His protection — because they "acted treacherously" against Him (Deut 31:17–18).

Mercy and the Spirit (vv25–29)

"Now" turns from the far future back to the hope of Ezekiel's hearers and beyond. God restores out of mercy and zeal for His name, not their merit. Meyer, in Guzik: "We must never overlook the literal significance of this promise." NASB reads "They will forget their disgrace" (v26), while KJV reads "borne their shame" — the Hebrew can be read either way; both point to shame dealt with. Morgan, in Guzik: "repentance for past failure would be profound, even in the day of restoration." God will leave no exile behind (v28). And the final promise: no more hidden face, because "I will have poured out My Spirit" (v29; 36:27; 37:14). Guzik ties this to Israel's coming salvation (Rom 11:26) and notes, citing Taylor, that the tense speaks of something so certain it is described as done. Christians also see a first outpouring at Pentecost (Joel 2:28–29; Acts 2:16–18).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **bow — *qesheth* (H7198):** a bow for shooting arrows.
- **arrows — *chets* (H2671):** an arrow.
- **predatory bird — *ʿayit* (H5861):** a bird of prey.
- **coastlands — *ʾi* (H339):** coast, island, distant lands.
- **profaned — *chalal* (H2490):** to pollute, treat as common.
- **Holy One — *qadosh* (H6918):** holy, sacred, set apart.
- **weapons — *nesheq* (H5402):** arms, armor, weapons.
- **multitude (Hamon-gog) — *hamon* (H1995):** a crowd, multitude, tumult.
- **bury — *qabar* (H6912):** to bury.
- **cleanse — *taher* (H2891):** to be clean, purify.
- **sacrifice — *zebach* (H2077):** a slaughtered sacrifice.
- **glory — *kabod* (H3519):** weight, honor, glory.
- **hid — *sathar* (H5641):** to hide, conceal.
- **mercy — *racham* (H7355):** to have compassion, love deeply.
- **disgrace — *kelimmah* (H3639):** shame, reproach, disgrace.
- **poured out — *shaphak* (H8210):** to pour out, spill.

Cross-references

Num 19:11–16; Deut 21:23; Deut 31:17–18; Ps 46:8–10; Ps 76:3; Isa 2:4; Isa 54:7–8; Jer 30:10–11; Ezek 36:22–27; Ezek 37:14; Joel 2:28–29; Zech 12:10; Acts 2:16–18; Rom 11:25–27; Eph 1:13–14; Rev 19:17–21; Rev 20:7–10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 39:29 (KJV)

29 ★ Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for ★ I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

Command to obey — cleanse the land

(v12). Israel didn't just win; they spent seven months cleaning up, marking every bone until it was buried. Victory over an old enemy still leaves debris. In recovery, the men I walk with have to clear out the stash, the phone numbers, the old routes home. I have cleanup of my own to finish too. I'll keep at it until the land is clean.

Sin to confess — treachery against God

God says plainly why Israel went into exile: "for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me" (v23). I can't blame my hard seasons all on others or on God's weakness. Some of what I went through I brought on myself. I confess it without excuses.

Warning to heed — the God who hides His face

God withdrew His protection from people who kept walking away from Him (vv23–24). That's sobering. Sin has consequences — prison, broken homes, wasted years — and the men I serve know it. I won't treat God's patience as permission.

Promise to trust — "I will not hide My face from them any longer"

(v29). This is the promise for the man who thinks God has turned His back on him forever. God's last word is mercy: He restores, gathers, leaves no one behind (v28), and pours out His Spirit. For the man in a cell who believes he's too far gone, God's face is turned toward him in Jesus.

Example to follow — let God fight

Israel never lifted a weapon in this battle; they only picked up the pieces. When I'm tempted to fight every battle in my own strength, I'll remember who knocked the bow out of Gog's hand. My part is to trust and obey.

Worship

The Lord GOD makes His holy name known. He disarms the proud, turns weapons into firewood, and sets His glory among the nations. He disciplines with justice, restores with mercy, and pours out His Spirit. He is the Holy One in Israel.

Prayer

Holy One, thank You that You fight battles I could never win. Forgive my treachery and my excuses. Help me finish the cleanup in my own life, and help the men I walk with clear out every trace of the old enemy. Turn Your face toward us. Pour out Your Spirit on us, and make Your holy name known through our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ezekiel 40

The Measured Temple: God Claims His Dwelling

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Fourteen years after the temple burned, God took Ezekiel on a careful tour of a new one. Every wall, gate and step was measured because God was claiming it as His own. The ruins were not the end of the story — God already had the plans drawn for the place where He would dwell with His people again.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 40 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither.

2 In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south.

3 And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate.

4 And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.

5 And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.

6 Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and measured the threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad; and the other threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad.

7 And every little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers were five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within was one reed.

8 He measured also the porch of the gate within, one reed.

9 Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and the posts thereof, two cubits; and the porch of the gate was inward.

10 And the little chambers of the gate eastward were three on this side, and three on that side; they three were of one measure: and the posts had one measure on this side and on that side.

11 And he measured the breadth of the entry of the gate, ten cubits; and the length of the gate, thirteen cubits.

12 The space also before the little chambers was one cubit on this side, and the space was one cubit on that side: and the little chambers were six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side.

13 He measured then the gate from the roof of one little chamber to the roof of another: the breadth was five and twenty cubits, door against door.

14 He made also posts of threescore cubits, even unto the post of the court round about the gate.

15 And from the face of the gate of the entrance unto the face of the porch of the inner gate were fifty cubits.

16 And there were narrow windows to the little chambers, and to their posts within the gate round about, and likewise to the arches: and windows were round about inward: and upon each post were palm trees.

17 Then brought he me into the outward court, and, lo, there were chambers, and a pavement made for the court round about: thirty chambers were upon the pavement.

18 And the pavement by the side of the gates over against the length of the gates was the lower pavement.

19 Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate unto the forefront of the inner court without, an hundred cubits eastward and northward.

20 And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north, he measured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof.

21 And the little chambers thereof were three on this side and three on that side; and the posts thereof and the arches thereof were after the measure of the first gate: the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

22 And their windows, and their arches, and their palm trees, were after the measure of the gate that looketh toward the east; and they went up unto it by seven steps; and the arches thereof were before them.

23 And the gate of the inner court was over against the gate toward the north, and toward the east; and he measured from gate to gate an hundred cubits.

24 After that he brought me toward the south, and behold a gate toward the south: and he measured the posts thereof and the arches thereof according to these measures.

25 And there were windows in it and in the arches thereof round about, like those windows: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

26 And there were seven steps to go up to it, and the arches thereof were before them: and it had palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts thereof.

27 And there was a gate in the inner court toward the south: and he measured from gate to gate toward the south an hundred cubits.

28 And he brought me to the inner court by the south gate: and he measured the south gate according to these measures;

29 And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to these measures: and there were windows in it and in the arches thereof round about: it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.

30 And the arches round about were five and twenty cubits long, and five cubits broad.

31 And the arches thereof were toward the utter court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof: and the going up to it had eight steps.

32 And he brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures.

33 And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, were according to these measures: and there were windows therein and in the arches thereof round about: it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.

34 And the arches thereof were toward the outward court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it had eight steps.

35 And he brought me to the north gate, and measured it according to these measures;

36 The little chambers thereof, the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, and the windows to it round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

37 And the posts thereof were toward the utter court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it had eight steps.

38 And the chambers and the entries thereof were by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering.

39 And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering.

40 And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, were two tables; and on the other side, which was at the porch of the gate, were two tables.

41 Four tables were on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables, whereupon they slew their sacrifices.

42 And the four tables were of hewn stone for the burnt offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice.

43 And within were hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables was the flesh of the offering.

44 And without the inner gate were the chambers of the singers in the inner court, which was at the side of the north gate; and their prospect was toward the south: one at the side of the east gate having the prospect toward the north.

45 And he said unto me, This chamber, whose prospect is toward the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house.

46 And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him.

47 So he measured the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar that was before the house.

48 And he brought me to the porch of the house, and measured each post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side: and the breadth of the gate was three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side.

49 The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits; and he brought me by the steps whereby they went up to it: and there were pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.

Marked in the text

- **v1** the five and twentieth year of our captivity
- **v1** the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten
- **v1** the hand of the LORD was upon me
- **v2** In the visions of God
- **v2** a very high mountain
- **v3** like the appearance of brass
- **v3** gate *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears
- **v4** set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee
- **v4** declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel
- **v5** measured *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** a wall on the outside of the house round about
- **v6** the gate which looketh toward the east
- **v16** palm trees *(every occurrence)*
- **v17** the outward court
- **v22** seven steps
- **v31** had eight steps

- **v38** ⚠ where they washed the burnt offering
- **v39** ⚠ the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering
- **v44** ★ the chambers of the singers
- **v46** ★ the sons of Zadok
- **v46** ▲ which come near to the LORD to minister unto him
- **v47** ▲ the altar that was before the house
- **v49** 🕐 pillars by the posts

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 40:1 (KJV)

[1]In 🕐 the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in 🕐 the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day ▲ the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither.

Setting

"In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was taken" (v1) — about 573 BC. Jerusalem has been a ruin for fourteen years. The temple is ashes. The last time Ezekiel saw it in a vision (chapters 8–11), it was full of idols and the glory of God was leaving by the east. Now, after the promises of new hearts, dry bones and a cleansed land (chapters 36–39), "the hand of the LORD was upon me" (v1) one more time — and this vision is about a temple. It runs to the end of the book (chapters 40–48).

Structure

- vv1–4 — **the guide and the charge:** "In the visions of God" Ezekiel is set "on a very high mountain," and to the south is "a structure like a city" (v2). There stands a man "whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze," with "a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand" (v3). "Son of man, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and give attention to all that I am going to show you ... Declare to the house of Israel all that you see" (v4).
- v5 — **the wall:** "a wall on the outside of the temple all around" (v5), measured with a rod of six long cubits.
- vv6–16 — **the east gate:** "Then he went to the gate which faced east" (v6). Up the steps, through the threshold, past three guardrooms on each side, into the porch. Windows all around, and "palm tree ornaments" on the side pillars (v16).
- vv17–19 — **the outer court:** "Then he brought me into the outer court" (v17); "thirty chambers faced the pavement" (v17). A hundred cubits from the outer gate to the inner one (v19).
- vv20–27 — **the north and south gates:** built to the same measurements as the east gate, "reached by seven steps" (v22; also v26). No west gate is described.

- vv28–37 — **the inner gates:** south, east and north, each matching the outer gates but raised higher — "its stairway had eight steps" (v31; also vv34, 37).
- vv38–43 — **the tables for sacrifice:** a chamber "there they rinse the burnt offering" (v38), and eight tables for slaying "the burnt offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering" (v39), with four tables of hewn stone for the tools (v42).
- vv44–47 — **singers and priests:** "chambers for the singers in the inner court" (v44). One chamber is for the priests who "keep charge of the temple" (v45), another for those over the altar: "the sons of Zadok, who from the sons of Levi come near to the LORD to minister to Him" (v46). The inner court is a hundred cubits square, and "the altar was in front of the temple" (v47).
- vv48–49 — **the porch of the temple:** side pillars, a stairway, and "columns belonging to the side pillars" (v49).

Repeated words

measured (vv5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, 28, 32, 35, 47, 48); palm tree ornaments (vv16, 22, 26, 31, 34, 37); brought me (vv1, 2, 3, 17, 28, 32, 35, 48); steps (vv6, 22, 26, 31, 34, 37); gate / gateway (all through the chapter).

Contrasts

the city taken and the temple burned (v1) ⟷ a temple measured out in the visions of God (v2). The glory leaving by the east gate (11:23) ⟷ the tour beginning at the gate which faced east (v6). Seven steps up to the outer gates (v22) ⟷ eight steps up to the inner gates (v31) — the nearer to the altar, the higher. Ezekiel watching (v4) ⟷ the man doing all the measuring (v5). Exile in Babylon (v1) ⟷ the land of Israel (v2).

Chapter theme (my words)

Fourteen years after the temple burned, God took Ezekiel on a careful tour of a new one. Every wall, gate and step was measured because God was claiming it as His own. The ruins were not the end of the story — God already had the plans drawn for the place where He would dwell with His people again.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 40:2 (KJV)

2 ▲ In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon ◷ a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south.

The date and the guide (vv1–4)

Guzik notes this is one of the last dated prophecies in the book, more than a decade after the earlier oracles; Morgan, in Guzik: "These visions were given to the prophet some twelve years after the latest of those already considered." If Ezekiel counted by the religious calendar, the tenth of the first month

was the day Israel chose the Passover lamb (Exod 12:3). Clarke, quoted by Guzik, takes the high mountain as "Mount *Moriah*, the mount on which Solomon's temple was built." The bronze man is, in Guzik's view, "likely an angelic being"; Clarke allowed that some see "a personal appearance of our blessed Lord." Guzik observes that the guide's command — see, hear, give attention, declare (v4) — means the details matter; a purely symbolic temple would not need such care. Alexander, in Guzik: "This vision, then, would be an encouragement that the Lord would complete his purposes for the nation."

What is this temple? — the main views

Chapters 40–48 are among the hardest in the Bible, and Christians read them in different ways. Guzik, following Taylor's categories, lists four:

- **Literal prophetic** — a blueprint the returning exiles were meant to build. But Wright, in Guzik: "It does not correspond to the one that was built after the return, nor to Herod's Temple."
- **Symbolic Christian** — a picture of the church, Christ's people as God's temple (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19–22). Feinberg says this view was "favored by the church Fathers and the Reformers," but judges it "entirely too subjective and would mean nothing for either Ezekiel or his contemporaries." Smith, on the other side: "The best approach is to see these chapters as illustrative of spiritual truths."
- **Dispensational** — a real temple in Christ's millennial kingdom on earth.
- **Apocalyptic** — mythic imagery of God's presence. Vawter and Hoppe: "Ezekiel 40–48 replace the conventional prophecies of Ezekiel 33–37 with imagery that is primarily mythic."

Guzik's own view: "the best approach is to regard this temple as real, yet to be fulfilled" — a millennial temple. Many faithful believers instead see the vision fulfilled in Christ and His church and finally in the new creation, where John "saw no temple" because God and the Lamb are its temple (Rev 21:22). Whatever view I hold, the message to the exiles is the same: God has not given up on dwelling with His people.

The measuring (vv5–27)

The rod was about ten feet long, using the long cubit (Taylor: "Ezekiel is using the long cubit for all his measurements"). Wiersbe, in Guzik: "To measure property is symbolic of claiming it for yourself." Poole notes "the standard is not put into his hand" — Ezekiel watches; God sets the measure. The tour starts at the east gate, the very direction the glory left (11:23) and will return (43:1–5). The gates were massive, fortified towers with guardrooms; Vawter and Hoppe: "In antiquity, gates to cities or to important buildings were elaborate structures in their own right." Poole thought the chambers were "for the priests and Levites to lodge in." Wright: "We cannot find a spiritual significance in every measurement, but we note the symmetry of the temple." Guzik notes there is no west gate.

The inner court (vv28–37)

The inner gates sit higher — eight steps instead of seven. Holiness rises as one approaches God's presence. Palm trees, an echo of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:29), decorate every gate.

The sacrifices (vv38–43)

This is the hard question: why animal sacrifices after the cross (Heb 10:10–14)? Guzik answers that Old Covenant sacrifices never took away sin (Heb 10:4); they pointed to Christ. In his view, these offerings

are not a return to atonement by animals but memorials, and "God *does* sanction memorials and ceremonial remembrance of the work of Jesus on the cross" — much as the Lord's Supper does. Feinberg: "Just as the Lord's Supper now detracts not one iota from the glory of the work of Calvary." Block, in Guzik, explains that purification offerings "functioned only to decontaminate sacred objects and places." Alexander adds that other prophets also speak of sacrifices in the coming kingdom (Isa 56:6–7; Jer 33:18; Zech 14:16–21). Those who read the temple symbolically answer instead that the offerings were God's way of describing perfect worship in terms the exiles understood, fulfilled in Christ's once-for-all sacrifice.

Singers and the sons of Zadok (vv44–47)

Worship includes song. The priests who "keep charge of the temple" (v45) were, Block argues, guards — "While scholars commonly assume that cultic service is involved, this is probably incorrect." The altar belongs to "the sons of Zadok" (v46), the faithful priestly line from Solomon's day (1 Kgs 2:35). Wiersbe, in Guzik: "The name Zadok means 'righteous.'" Ezekiel will explain in chapter 44 why they alone come near: they stayed faithful when Israel went astray (44:15). At the center of the court stands the altar (v47) — the way to God still runs through sacrifice.

The porch and the pillars (vv48–49)

Two pillars flank the entrance, as Jachin and Boaz stood before Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 7:21).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **exile — *galuth* (H1546):** captivity, the exiles as a group.
- **visions — *marʾah* (H4759):** a vision, a sight given by God.
- **bronze — *nechosheth* (H5178):** copper, bronze.
- **measuring rod — *qaneh* (H7070):** a reed, a measuring rod.
- **cubit — *ʾammah* (H520):** a cubit, a forearm's length.
- **measured — *madad* (H4058):** to measure, stretch out a line.
- **gate — *shaʿar* (H8179):** a gate, gateway.
- **guardroom / little chamber — *taʾ* (H8372):** a chamber, guardroom.
- **side pillar — *ʾayil* (H352):** a pillar, jamb, projecting post.
- **porch — *ʾulam* (H197):** a porch, vestibule.
- **palm tree — *timorah* (H8561):** a palm-tree ornament.
- **court — *chatser* (H2691):** an enclosure, courtyard.
- **steps — *maʿalah* (H4609):** a step, stairway; a going up.
- **burnt offering — *ʿolah* (H5930):** an offering that goes up, wholly burned.
- **guilt offering — *ʾasham* (H817):** a trespass or guilt offering.
- **keep charge — *shamar* (H8104):** to guard, keep watch.
- **minister — *sharath* (H8334):** to serve, minister.

Cross-references

Exod 12:3; Exod 25:8–9; 1 Kgs 2:35; 1 Kgs 6:29; 1 Kgs 7:21; Isa 2:2–3; Isa 56:6–7; Jer 33:18; Ezek 11:23; Ezek 43:1–5; Ezek 44:15; Zech 2:1–5; Zech 14:16–21; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19–22; Heb 10:4; Heb 10:10–14;

Rev 11:1; Rev 21:15–22.

03 Application
HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 40:4 (KJV)

4 And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.

Command to obey — "see with your eyes, hear with your ears."
The guide told Ezekiel to give attention to everything and then declare it (v4). God's Word is full of details I'm tempted to skim — like these measurements. I'll slow down, look closely, and then pass on what I see. That's what inductive study is: see, hear, pay attention, declare.

Sin to confess — despising the details
I want the dramatic chapters and skip the ones that read like a builder's plans. But God put every cubit there on purpose. I confess the impatience that treats parts of His Word as boring, and I ask for a heart that loves all of it (Ps 119:18).

Warning to heed — fourteen years of ruins
Ezekiel waited fourteen years after the city fell before this vision came. The men I walk with often think fourteen months of sobriety or fourteen days out of prison should fix everything. God works on His timetable, not ours. Don't quit in the ruins; the plans are already drawn.

Promise to trust — God measures what He claims
The measuring rod meant God was claiming the place as His. When the Lord lays His measure on a broken life, He is saying, "This is Mine, and I will build here." To the man whose life looks like burned-out Jerusalem: God has not walked away from the site.

Example to follow — the sons of Zadok
Of all the priests, these were the ones allowed to come near to the LORD to minister to Him (v46). Their name means "righteous," and they stayed faithful when others didn't. I want to be that kind of man — and to raise up men who stay faithful when everyone around them drifts.

Worship
Every gate faces the center, and at the center is the altar. Every step rises toward His presence. God does not leave His people in ruins; He builds, and He builds to dwell with them. Blessed be the God who measures every cubit and keeps every promise.

Prayer

Lord God, You took a man who had watched Your temple fall and showed him a new one. Open my eyes to see, my ears to hear, and my heart to give attention to everything You show me. Lay Your measuring rod on my life and claim it as Yours. Raise up faithful men who come near to You to minister. And bring the men I serve out of the ruins into Your presence. Amen.

Ezekiel 41

The Holy Place: The Table Before the LORD

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God brought Ezekiel right up to the door of the most holy place and told him what was inside. The walls were strong, the rooms were ordered, and everything was carved with cherubim and palm trees — God's holy presence and God's life side by side. At the heart of it stood a table before the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 41 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Afterward he brought me to the temple, and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, which was the breadth of the tabernacle.

2 And the breadth of the door was ten cubits; and the sides of the door were five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side: and he measured the length thereof, forty cubits: and the breadth, twenty cubits.

3 Then went he inward, and measured the post of the door, two cubits; and the door, six cubits; and the breadth of the door, seven cubits.

4 So he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he said unto me, ▲ This is the most holy place.

5 After he measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the breadth of every side chamber, four cubits, round about the house on every side.

6 And the side chambers were three, one over another, and thirty in order; and they entered into the wall which was of the house for the side chambers round about, that they might have hold, but they had not hold in the wall of the house.

7 And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers: for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house: therefore the breadth of the house was still upward, and so increased from the lowest chamber to the highest by the midst.

8 I saw also the height of the house round about: the foundations of the side chambers were a full reed of six great cubits.

9 The thickness of the wall, which was for the side chamber without, was five cubits: and that which was left was the place of the side chambers that were within.

10 And between the chambers was the wideness of twenty cubits round about the house on every side.

11 And the doors of the side chambers were toward the place that was left, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south: and the breadth of the place that was left was five cubits round about.

12 Now the building that was before the separate place at the end toward the west was seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about, and the length thereof ninety cubits.

13 So he measured the house, an hundred cubits long; and the separate place, and the building, with the walls thereof, an hundred cubits long;

14 Also the breadth of the face of the house, and of the separate place toward the east, an hundred cubits.

15 And he measured the length of the building over against the separate place which was behind it, and the galleries thereof on the one side and on the other side, an hundred cubits, with the inner temple, and the porches of the court;

16 The door posts, and the narrow windows, and the galleries round about on their three stories, over against the door, cieled with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows were covered;

17 To that above the door, even unto the inner house, and without, and by all the wall round about within and without, by measure.

18 And it was made with ⇄ cherubims and ⇄ palm trees, so that a ⇄ palm tree was between a ⇄ cherub and a ⇄ cherub; and every ⇄ cherub had two faces;

19 So that ★ the face of a man was toward the ⇄ palm tree on the one side, and ▲ the face of a young lion toward the ⇄ palm tree on the other side: it was made through all the house round about.

20 From the ground unto above the door were ⇄ cherubims and ⇄ palm trees made, and on the wall of the temple.

21 The posts of the temple were squared, and the face of the sanctuary; the appearance of the one as the appearance of the other.

22 ▲ The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and he said unto me, ★ This is the table that is before the LORD.

23 And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors.

24 And the doors had two leaves apiece, two turning leaves; two leaves for the one door, and two leaves for the other door.

25 And there were made on them, on the doors of the temple, ⇄ cherubims and ⇄ palm trees, like as were made upon the walls; and there were thick planks upon the face of the porch without.

26 And there were narrow windows and ⇄ palm trees on the one side and on the other side, on the sides of the porch, and upon the ⇄ side chambers of the house, and thick planks.

Marked in the text

- **v1** he brought me to the temple
- **v1** ⇄ measured *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** Then went he inward
- **v4** ▲ This is the most holy place
- **v5** ⇄ side chamber *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** three, one over another, and thirty in order
- **v7** so increased from the lowest chamber to the highest
- **v12** the separate place at the end toward the west
- **v13** an hundred cubits long
- **v16** cieled with wood round about
- **v18** ⇄ cherub *(every occurrence)*
- **v18** ⇄ palm tree *(every occurrence)*
- **v18** ▲ every cherub had two faces
- **v19** ★ the face of a man
- **v19** ▲ the face of a young lion
- **v22** ▲ The altar of wood was three cubits high
- **v22** ★ This is the table that is before the LORD
- **v23** the temple and the sanctuary had two doors
- **v24** two turning leaves
- **v25** ★ cherubims and palm trees, like as were made upon the walls

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 41:18 (KJV)

18 And it was made with cherubims and palm trees, so that a palm tree was between a cherub and a cherub; and every cherub had two faces;

Setting

The tour continues in the same vision of the twenty-fifth year of the exile (40:1). Ezekiel has passed through the outer gates and the inner court and stands at the porch of the temple itself (40:48–49). Now the guide takes him into the building where God dwells. Ezekiel was a priest who never got to serve in Solomon's temple; in this vision he is brought inside.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the nave:** "Then he brought me to the nave" (v1) — the holy place — and the guide measures its entrance and its length and width.
- vv3–4 — **the inner room:** "Then he went inside" (v3). The guide measures the inner room, twenty cubits by twenty, and says, "This is the most holy place" (v4). Ezekiel watches from the doorway.
- vv5–11 — **the side chambers:** "The side chambers were in three stories" (v6), thirty in each story, resting on ledges rather than cut into the temple wall. They "were wider at each successive story" (v7). The walls are thick and the foundation is raised a full rod (v8).
- v12 — **the western building:** "The building that was in front of the separate area" (v12) at the west — seventy cubits wide and ninety long, with walls five cubits thick.
- vv13–15 — **the overall measure:** the temple is a hundred cubits long, and the separate area with its building another hundred (v13); the front is a hundred cubits wide (v14).
- vv16–20 — **the paneling and carvings:** thresholds, windows and galleries "were paneled with wood all around" (v16). "It was carved with cherubim and palm trees," and "every cherub had two faces" (v18) — "a man's face toward the palm tree on one side" and "a young lion's face toward the palm tree on the other side" (v19), from the floor to above the entrance (v20).
- vv21–22 — **the wooden altar:** "The altar was of wood, three cubits high" (v22). The guide says, "This is the table that is before the LORD" (v22).
- vv23–26 — **the doors:** "The nave and the sanctuary each had a double door" (v23), each with two swinging leaves (v24), carved with cherubim and palm trees like the walls (v25), with a wooden threshold at the porch.

Repeated words

measured (vv1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 15); side chambers (vv5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 26); cherub / cherubim (vv18, 20, 25); palm tree(s) (vv18, 19, 20, 25, 26); a hundred cubits (vv13, 14, 15); door / doors / doorway (vv3, 11, 23, 24, 25); wood (vv16, 22, 25).

Contrasts

the guide went into the most holy place (v3) ⟷ Ezekiel stayed outside. The nave, forty cubits long (v2) ⟷ the most holy place, a perfect square (v4). Stone walls of great thickness (vv5, 9) ⟷ wood paneling and carvings inside (v16). The man's face (v19) ⟷ the young lion's face (v19). An altar (v22) ⟷ called a "table" (v22). The temple burned in 586 BC ⟷ a temple carved with life and guarded by cherubim.

Chapter theme (my words)

God brought Ezekiel right up to the door of the most holy place and told him what was inside. The walls were strong, the rooms were ordered, and everything was carved with cherubim and palm trees — God's holy presence and God's life side by side. At the heart of it stood a table before the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 41:19 (KJV)

19 So that ★ the face of a man was toward the ⇄ palm tree on the one side, and ▲ the face of a young lion toward the ⇄ palm tree on the other side: it was made through all the house round about.

Into the nave (vv1–2)

The guide brings Ezekiel into the holy place. Guzik treats this as a real room with real dimensions; it is the same size as the holy place of Solomon's temple, forty cubits by twenty (1 Kgs 6:2, 17). As a priest, Ezekiel could stand here.

The most holy place (vv3–4)

Then the guide went in alone. Guzik explains why Ezekiel didn't follow: he was a priest but not the high priest, and only the high priest could enter the most holy place, once a year (Lev 16:2; Heb 9:7). The room is twenty cubits square — the same as in Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:20). Notice what is *not* described: no ark, no mercy seat, no veil. When the glory returns in chapter 43, God Himself fills the house. For Christians this room carries great weight: the veil that kept men out was torn when Christ died, and the way into the holy place is now open through His blood (Matt 27:51; Heb 10:19–22).

The side chambers (vv5–11)

Three stories of thirty rooms wrap around the temple. Wright, in Guzik: "The description of the side rooms (Ezekiel 41:5-11) is difficult to follow." The rooms rest on ledges, so no beam is driven into the temple wall itself — as in Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:6). Guzik cites scholars who think these rooms stored tithes, gifts and temple vessels. Block, in Guzik: "The massiveness of the walls is remarkable; both inside and outside walls are thicker than the width of the rooms." Guzik's conclusion: "Ezekiel did not see a spiritual building, but a carefully engineered and strongly built structure."

The western building and the overall plan (vv12–15)

A large building fills the western end, behind the temple. Its use isn't given. The temple and its yard each measure a hundred cubits — a pattern of order and completeness. Those who hold a literal view, like Guzik, see in this precision a real building yet to stand in Jerusalem. Those who read the vision symbolically see the perfect order of God's dwelling with His people, fulfilled in Christ and the new creation (John 2:19–21; Rev 21:16).

Cherubim and palm trees (vv16–20)

The walls are paneled in wood and carved from floor to ceiling, like Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:29). Here each cherub has two faces, a man and a young lion. In chapter 1 the living beings had four faces (1:10; compare 10:14 and Rev 4:7); Guzik notes that only two of the four are shown here. A flat carving may simply show the two faces turned toward the palms. Block, in Guzik: "In these figures aspirations of life and prosperity (palm) and security (cherubim) coalesce." Cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life in Eden (Gen 3:24); the palm trees picture fruitfulness and life. In this temple, the guardians and the life stand side by side.

"The table that is before the LORD" (vv21–22)

A wooden altar, three cubits high — too small for animal sacrifice. Guzik identifies it as the altar of incense standing in the holy place, picturing the prayers of God's people (Ps 141:2; Rev 8:3–4). Others take it as the table of showbread, since the guide calls it a "table," and some see both ideas joined in one piece. Either way, it stands "before the LORD" — a place of fellowship and prayer in His presence.

The doors (vv23–26)

Double doors, each with two folding leaves, carved like the walls. Guzik argues that this level of detail points to a literal temple. Trapp, quoted by Guzik, applies the doors spiritually: "Understand hereby the means of grace, and ministers dispensing the same, whereby souls are brought home to Christ." Jesus said, "I am the door" (John 10:9).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **nave / temple — *hekal* (H1964):** a palace, temple; the holy place.
- **most holy — *qodesh* (H6944):** holiness, a holy thing; doubled, "holy of holies."
- **side chamber — *tsela*ʿ (H6763):** a side, rib; a side room.
- **wall — *qir* (H7023):** a wall.
- **separate area — *gizrah* (H1508):** a separate place, an enclosed yard.
- **galleries — *ʾattiq* (H862):** a ledge, terrace, gallery.
- **paneled — *sachiph* (H7824):** paneled, overlaid (used only here).
- **cherub — *kerub* (H3742):** a cherub, guardian of God's holiness.
- **palm tree — *timorah* (H8561):** a palm-tree ornament.
- **young lion — *kephir* (H3715):** a young, strong lion.
- **altar — *mizbeach* (H4196):** an altar, a place of offering.
- **table — *shulchan* (H7979):** a table.
- **door — *deleth* (H1817):** a door, a leaf of a door.

Cross-references

Gen 3:24; Exod 25:23–30; Exod 30:1–8; Lev 16:2; 1 Kgs 6:2–6; 1 Kgs 6:20; 1 Kgs 6:29–35; Ps 92:12–13; Ps 141:2; Ezek 1:10; Ezek 10:14; Matt 27:51; John 2:19–21; John 10:9; Heb 9:3–7; Heb 10:19–22; Rev 4:7; Rev 8:3–4; Rev 21:16.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 41:22 (KJV)

22 ▲ The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and he said unto me, ★ This is the table that is before the LORD.

Command to obey — come in through the open door

Ezekiel had to stand outside the most holy place. I don't. Jesus has opened the way, and I'm told to "draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb 10:22). I'll stop living at the doorway and come in — daily, honestly, boldly.

Sin to confess — treating holy things lightly

God told Ezekiel exactly where he could stand and where he couldn't. I confess that I sometimes rush into God's presence casually, or let the open door make me careless about holiness. Access is free, but it was bought with blood.

Warning to heed — strong walls, empty room

This temple had thick walls and beautiful paneling — but its whole meaning depended on God being in it. A man can rebuild the outside of his life — a job, an apartment, a clean record — and still leave the inner room empty. For the men I disciple: sobriety and good habits are walls; Christ has to be in the center.

Promise to trust — life and guarding together

Cherubim and palm trees on every wall: God's holiness guarding, God's life growing. The righteous "will flourish like the palm tree" (Ps 92:12). To the man who feels his life is dead wood, God carves life into the very walls of His house — and He guards what He plants.

Example to follow — the table before the LORD

At the center of the holy place stood a small wooden altar, "the table that is before the LORD" (v22). My life needs that same center: a place of prayer and fellowship before Him every day, more important than anything else in the house.

Worship

Holy, holy, holy — a room no man could enter, and now a door flung open by the blood of Jesus. He is the God whose presence fills the most holy place, guarded by cherubim, surrounded by life. I worship

Him at the open door.

Prayer

Lord, thank You that I don't have to stand outside. Through Jesus' blood I come into Your presence. Make my heart a holy place where You are at the center. Let my prayers rise like incense before You. Carve Your life into me, guard what You plant, and draw the men I serve through the open door into Your presence. Amen.

Ezekiel 42

Holy Chambers:
The Wall Between Holy and Common

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God measured a line around His house and put a wall on it to separate the holy from the common. His priests ate holy food in holy rooms and changed their clothes before they went back out to the people. In a nation that had blurred every line, God was drawing the line again.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 42 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Then ◷ he brought me forth into the utter court, ◷ the way toward the north: and he brought me into the chamber that was over against the separate place, and which was before the building toward the north.

2 Before the length of an hundred cubits was the north door, and the breadth was fifty cubits.

3 Over against the twenty cubits which were for the inner court, and over against the pavement which was for the utter court, was ◷ gallery against gallery in three stories.

4 And before the ⇄ chambers was a walk of ten cubits breadth inward, a way of one cubit; and their doors toward the north.

5 Now the upper ⇄ chambers were shorter: for the galleries were higher than these, than the lower, and than the middlemost of the building.

6 For they were in three stories, but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts: therefore the building was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground.

7 And the wall that was without over against the ⇄ chambers, toward the utter court on the forepart of the ⇄ chambers, the length thereof was fifty cubits.

8 For the length of the ⇄ chambers that were in the utter court was fifty cubits: and, lo, before the temple were an hundred cubits.

9 And from under these ⇄ chambers was the entry on the east side, as one goeth into them from the utter court.

10 The ⇄ chambers were in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, over against the separate place, and over against the building.

11 And the way before them was like the appearance of the ⇄ chambers which were toward the north, as long as they, and as broad as they: and all their goings out were both according to their fashions, and according to their doors.

12 And according to the doors of the ⇄ chambers that were toward the south was a door in the head of the way, even the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one entereth into them.

13 Then said he unto me, The north ⇄ chambers and the south ⇄ chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy ⇄ chambers, where ▲ the priests that approach unto the LORD ★ shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and ⚠ the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; ▲ for the place is holy.

14 When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court, but there ▮ they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; ▲ for they are holy; and ▮ shall put on other garments, and ▮ shall approach to those things which are for the people.

15 Now ◷ when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward ◷ the gate whose prospect is toward the east, and measured it round about.

16 He measured the east side with ⇄ the measuring reed, ⇄ five hundred reeds, with ⇄ the measuring reed round about.

17 He measured the north side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.
18 He measured the south side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed.
19 He turned about to the west side, and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed.
20 He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.

Marked in the text

- **v1** he brought me forth into the utter court
- **v1** the way toward the north
- **v3** gallery against gallery in three stories
- **v4** chambers *(every occurrence)*
- **v13** they be holy chambers
- **v13** the priests that approach unto the LORD
- **v13** shall eat the most holy things
- **v13** the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering
- **v13** for the place is holy
- **v14** they shall lay their garments wherein they minister
- **v14** for they are holy
- **v14** shall put on other garments
- **v14** shall approach to those things which are for the people
- **v15** when he had made an end of measuring the inner house
- **v15** the gate whose prospect is toward the east
- **v16** five hundred reeds *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** the measuring reed *(every occurrence)*
- **v20** He measured it by the four sides
- **v20** it had a wall round about
- **v20** to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation
WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 42:13 (KJV)

13 Then said he unto me, The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place is holy.

Setting

The same vision of the twenty-fifth year of the exile (40:1) continues. Ezekiel has seen the gates, the courts, the altar and the inside of the temple (chapters 40–41). Now the guide leads him back out to the priests' buildings beside the temple, and then outside the whole complex to measure its outer

wall. This chapter finishes the measuring of the temple area; in the next one, the glory of God returns (43:1–5).

Structure

- vv1–9 — **the north chambers:** "Then he brought me out into the outer court" (v1), toward the north, to a block of chambers facing the separate area. They rise with "gallery corresponding to gallery in three stories" (v3). A walkway runs in front of them (v4). The upper rooms are smaller than the lower ones (vv5–6). An entrance on the east leads in from the outer court (v9).
- vv10–12 — **the south chambers:** a matching block on the south side (v12; NASB reads "toward the east" in v10), built into the wall of the court, with the same size, exits and doors as those on the north (vv11–12).
- vv13–14 — **holy chambers for holy priests:** "The north chambers and the south chambers … they are the holy chambers where the priests who are near to the LORD shall eat the most holy things" (v13). There they lay the grain offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering, "for the place is holy" (v13). The priests leave their ministry garments there, "for they are holy," and "put on other garments" before they "approach that which is for the people" (v14).
- vv15–19 — **the outer wall measured:** "Now when he had finished measuring the inner house" (v15), the guide takes Ezekiel out by the east gate and measures each side — east, north, south, west — "five hundred reeds" (v16).
- v20 — **the purpose of the wall:** "He measured it on the four sides" (v20); it had a wall all around, five hundred long and five hundred wide, "to divide between the holy and the profane" (v20).

Repeated words

chambers (vv1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13); holy (vv13, 14, 20); measured (vv15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20); five hundred (vv16, 17, 18, 19, 20); north / south / east / west (vv1, 11, 12, 13, 16–19).

Contrasts

the holy chambers (v13) ⟷ the outer court where the people are (v14). Holy garments for ministry (v14) ⟷ other garments for going out to the people (v14). The inner house (v15) ⟷ the great outer wall (v20). The holy ⟷ the profane (v20). Before the exile priests made "no distinction between the holy and the profane" (22:26) ⟷ here a wall is built to keep that line clear.

Chapter theme (my words)

God measured a line around His house and put a wall on it to separate the holy from the common. His priests ate holy food in holy rooms and changed their clothes before they went back out to the people. In a nation that had blurred every line, God was drawing the line again.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 42:14 (KJV)

14 When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they are holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people.

The priests' chambers (vv1–12)

Three tiers of rooms stand north and south of the temple, facing the separate area. Guzik notes the careful, ordered design: "There was nothing about this structure that was haphazard." The upper stories are smaller because the galleries take space from them. Block, in Guzik, on rooms like these: "Such storage space housed ritual equipment, votive gifts, and the revenue taken in by the temple."

Eating the most holy things (v13)

Under the Law, the priests ate their share of the grain, sin and guilt offerings in a holy place (Lev 6:16, 26; 7:6). Their portion was how God provided for them (Num 18:9–10; 1 Cor 9:13). Trapp, in Guzik: "Ministers must eat as well as others; they are not of the chameleon kind – cannot live upon the air." Guzik sees more than a paycheck in it: "This was a meal of fellowship between God and man." Block, in Guzik: "The grain offering (minha) represented a gift or tribute to deity, consisting of grain or flour."

Changing garments (v14)

The priests' ministry clothes stayed in the holy chambers. Wright, in Guzik: "The priests must wear special clothes when they are functioning as priests in the temple (Ezekiel 42:14)." Ezekiel will give the reason in chapter 44: so they do not "transmit holiness to the people with their garments" (44:19). The clothes were not magic; the point was that holy service and ordinary life must not be blurred. The priests did not hide in the holy rooms — they changed and went out to the people (v14).

The outer wall (vv15–20)

The guide goes out by the east gate and measures all four sides. The Hebrew reads five hundred "rods" (reeds); some ancient versions and modern translations read five hundred *cubits* (about 850 feet a side). Guzik takes it as rods — an area of almost a square mile — and says the support for "cubits" is "small." Alexander, in Guzik: "No good reason appears to reject the term 'rod' in these verses." Feinberg: "The entire area was much too large for Mount Moriah where Solomon's and Zerubbabel's temples stood." Guzik: "This is a large area, much larger than the present temple mount," and he connects it to the reshaping of the land in the millennial age (compare Zech 14:4, 10). Those who read the vision symbolically see in the perfect square the completeness and holiness of God's dwelling, as in the cube-shaped city of Revelation 21:16.

"To divide between the holy and the profane" (v20)

This is the point of the whole wall. Block, in Guzik: "They are not constructed to keep enemy forces out, if by these forces one means human foes of Israel." The danger was not armies but defilement. Judah's priests had erased the line (22:26), and God's glory had left (chapters 8–11). Now the line is restored so that God can come back and dwell. Wiersbe, in Guzik, notes that this temple has no court of the Gentiles with a separating wall (compare Eph 2:14) — the separation here is between holy and common, not between Jew and Gentile. In Christ the wall of hostility between peoples is torn down, but the call to holiness is not (1 Pet 1:15–16; 2 Cor 6:16–17).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **outer — *chitson* (H2435):** outer, outward, external.
- **chamber — *lishkah* (H3957):** a room, chamber, hall.
- **gallery — *ʾattiq* (H862):** a ledge, terrace, gallery.
- **holy — *qodesh* (H6944):** holiness, a holy thing, a holy place.
- **near — *qarob* (H7138):** near, close at hand.
- **grain offering — *minchah* (H4503):** a gift, tribute, grain offering.
- **sin offering — *chattath* (H2403):** sin; a sin offering.
- **guilt offering — *ʾasham* (H817):** a trespass or guilt offering.
- **garments — *beged* (H899):** clothing, a garment.
- **minister — *sharath* (H8334):** to serve, minister.
- **reed / rod — *qaneh* (H7070):** a reed, measuring rod.
- **wall — *chomah* (H2346):** a wall of protection, a city wall.
- **divide — *badal* (H914):** to separate, make a distinction.
- **profane — *chol* (H2455):** common, ordinary, not holy.

Cross-references

Lev 6:16; Lev 6:26; Lev 10:10; Num 18:9–10; Ezek 22:26; Ezek 43:1–5; Ezek 44:19; Ezek 44:23; Zech 14:4; Zech 14:10; Zech 14:20–21; Matt 5:13–16; 1 Cor 9:13; 2 Cor 6:16–17; Eph 2:14; 1 Pet 1:15–16; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 21:16; Rev 21:27.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 42:20 (KJV)

20 He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.

Command to obey — keep the line between holy and common

The wall was built "to divide between the holy and the profane" (v20). God gave His priests the same job: to teach the difference (Lev 10:10; Ezek 44:23). I'll be honest about where I've let that line blur — in what I watch, how I talk, what I laugh at — and put the wall back up.

Sin to confess — blurred lines

Judah's priests made no distinction between holy and common, and God's glory left. I confess the ways I've treated holy things as ordinary and ordinary things as if they don't matter to God. I ask Him to make me clean and set apart again.

Warning to heed — no wall, no presence

The wall wasn't to keep enemies out; it was to keep defilement out. The men I disciple in recovery know this better than anyone: you build walls — no old phone numbers, no old haunts, no "just one" — not because you're weak in theory but because the line keeps the life. Tear the wall down and the glory leaves.

Promise to trust — a holy meal with God

The priests who were "near to the LORD" ate the most holy things in His house (v13). Guzik calls it a meal of fellowship between God and man. In Christ I am part of a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9), and He has set a table for me. For the man who has eaten at the table of shame for years, God invites him to eat in His house.

Example to follow — change clothes and go to the people

The priests didn't stay in the holy rooms; they changed and went out to "approach that which is for the people" (v14). Time in God's presence is meant to send me back out. I want to come from prayer and the Word into the cell block, the meeting room, the phone call — set apart, but sent.

Worship

God is holy, and He draws the line. He measures every side and walls it in, not to keep me out but to make a place where He can dwell. He feeds His priests at His own table. Holy is the LORD, and blessed are those He brings near.

Prayer

Holy God, You drew a line around Your house to divide the holy from the common. Draw that line in my life again. Forgive me where I've blurred it. Feed me at Your table, set me apart for Your service,

and then send me out to the people. Help the men I walk with to build walls that guard their freedom, and fill their lives with Your presence. Amen.

Ezekiel 43

The Glory Returns:
The Altar and the Law of the House

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The God who walked out of His defiled house comes back — the same way He left — and fills it with glory. But He comes back to a holy house, built around an altar where blood is shed and sin is dealt with. The road home to God's presence always runs through shame for sin, cleansing by blood, and then those words every prodigal longs to hear: "I will accept you."

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 43 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east:

2 And, behold, ▲ the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and ▲ his voice was like a noise of many waters: and ▲ the earth shined with his glory.

3 And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and ◷ I fell upon my face.

4 And the ⇄ glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.

5 So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the ⇄ glory of the LORD filled the house.

6 And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me.

7 And he said unto me, Son of man, ▲ the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, ★ where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, ⚠ by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places.

8 In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, ⚠ they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore ▲ I have consumed them in mine anger.

9 Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcases of their kings, far from me, and ★ I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.

10 Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, ⚠ that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.

11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

12 ⇄ This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about ◷ shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

13 And these are the measures of the altar after the cubits: The cubit is a cubit and an hand breadth; even the bottom shall be a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about shall be a span: and this shall be the higher place of the altar.

14 And from the bottom upon the ground even to the lower settle shall be two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle even to the greater settle shall be four cubits, and the breadth one cubit.

15 So the altar shall be four cubits; and from the altar and upward shall be four horns.

16 And the altar shall be twelve cubits long, twelve broad, square in the four squares thereof.

17 And the settle shall be fourteen cubits long and fourteen broad in the four squares thereof; and the border about it shall be half a cubit; and the bottom thereof shall be a cubit about; and his stairs shall look toward the east.

18 And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon.

19 And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering.

20 And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it.

21 Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary.

22 And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse it with the bullock.

23 When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish.

24 And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the LORD.

25 Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish.

26 Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves .

27 And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east
- **v2** his voice was like a noise of many waters
- **v2** the earth shined with his glory
- **v2** glory *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** I fell upon my face
- **v5** the glory of the LORD filled the house
- **v7** the place of my throne
- **v7** where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever
- **v7** by their whoredom
- **v8** they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations
- **v8** I have consumed them in mine anger
- **v9** Now let them put away their whoredom
- **v9** I will dwell in the midst of them for ever
- **v10** that they may be ashamed of their iniquities
- **v10** let them measure the pattern
- **v11** write it in their sight
- **v12** This is the law of the house
- **v12** shall be most holy
- **v17** his stairs shall look toward the east
- **v19** a young bullock for a sin offering
- **v20** thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it
- **v25** Seven days
- **v27** upon the eighth day
- **v27** I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 43:2 (KJV)

2 And, behold, ▲ the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and ▲ his voice was like a noise of many waters: and ▲ the earth shined with his glory.

Setting

This chapter sits in Ezekiel's last great vision (chs 40–48), dated "in the twenty-fifth year of our exile" — fourteen years after Jerusalem fell (40:1), about 573 BC. A man with a measuring rod has walked Ezekiel through a new temple (chs 40–42). Years earlier Ezekiel watched God's glory leave the old temple by the east gate and stop over the mountain east of the city (10:18–19; 11:22–23). Now, at that same east gate, he watches it come back.

Structure

- vv1–5 — **the glory returns:** Ezekiel is brought to "the gate facing toward the east" (v1), and "the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory" (v2). It looks like the visions of judgment and of the river Chebar, and "I fell on my face" (v3). The glory enters by the east gate (v4); "the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house" (v5).
- vv6–9 — **God claims His house:** a voice speaks from the house (v6): "the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever" (v7). Israel "will not again defile My holy name … by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings" (v7). They had built their palace threshold next to His, "with only the wall between Me and them" (v8). "So I have consumed them in My anger" (v8). "Now let them put away their harlotry … and I will dwell among them forever" (v9).
- vv10–12 — **shown so they will be ashamed:** "describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the plan" (v10). If they are ashamed, show them its design, statutes and laws, and write it down so they will do them (v11). "This is the law of the house: its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy" (v12).
- vv13–17 — **the altar measured:** the cubit is "a cubit and a handbreadth" (v13). Base, two ledges, the hearth, four horns (vv13–16), a square of twelve by twelve cubits on top (v16), and "its steps shall face the east" (v17).
- vv18–27 — **the altar consecrated:** "These are the statutes for the altar on the day it is built" (v18). The Levitical priests of Zadok's line, "who draw near to Me to minister to Me," receive "a young bull for a sin offering" (v19). Blood goes on the horns, corners and border: "thus you shall cleanse it and make atonement for it" (v20). Goats, bulls and rams without blemish follow (vv21–25). "For seven days they shall make atonement for the altar and purify it" (v26). Then, "on the eighth day and onward," the priests offer the people's burnt and peace offerings — "and I will accept you," declares the Lord GOD (v27).

Repeated words

glory (vv2, 4, 5); east (vv1, 2, 4, 17); My holy name (vv7, 8); dwell … forever (vv7, 9); harlotry (vv7, 9); ashamed (vv10, 11); law of the house (v12, twice); sin offering (vv19, 21, 22, 25); without blemish (vv22, 23, 25); seven days (vv25, 26); atonement (vv20, 26); declares the Lord GOD (vv19, 27).

Contrasts

the glory leaving by the east gate (10:19; 11:23) ⟷ the glory returning by the east gate (v4). Kings' palaces built wall-to-wall with God's house (v8) ⟷ the whole mountaintop most holy (v12). "I have consumed them in My anger" (v8) ⟷ "I will dwell among them forever" (v9). Defiled by harlotry and corpses (v7) ⟷ cleansed by blood on the altar (v20). Seven days of atonement (v26) ⟷ the eighth day: "I will accept you" (v27).

Chapter theme (my words)

The God who walked out of His defiled house comes back — the same way He left — and fills it with glory. But He comes back to a holy house, built around an altar where blood is shed and sin is dealt with. The road home to God's presence always runs through shame for sin, cleansing by blood, and then those words every prodigal longs to hear: "I will accept you."

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 43:7 (KJV)

7 And he said unto me, Son of man, ▲ the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, ★ where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, ⚠ by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places.

The glory comes home (vv1–5)

This is the high point of the whole book. In chapters 8–11 Ezekiel saw idolatry in the temple and watched the glory leave, step by step. Now it returns by the same east gate. The "many waters" sound matches what Ezekiel heard in chapter 1 (1:24) and what John heard from the risen Christ (Rev 1:15). Guzik traces the cloud of glory through Scripture — the Exodus, the tabernacle, the Mount of Transfiguration, the ascension and Christ's return (Exod 40:34–35; Luke 9:34–35; Acts 1:9; Rev 1:7). He also notes the difference in pace: the glory left slowly and reluctantly, but it fills the house at once. Ezekiel's response is the same as every other time he met the glory — face down (1:28; 3:23). Guzik cites Feinberg's argument that the temple rebuilt after the exile cannot be what Ezekiel saw, because the glory is never said to have filled it.

The place of My throne (vv6–9)

God calls the house the place of His throne and of the soles of His feet — language that echoes Solomon's dedication (1 Kgs 8:12–13, 27). Guzik ties the promise to dwell among Israel "forever" to the

millennial kingdom. Two sins had defiled the old temple. First, "harlotry" — idolatry, the spiritual adultery Ezekiel has exposed all through the book (chs 8, 16, 23). Second, "the corpses of their kings" — probably the royal tombs or memorial monuments near the temple, though some take it to mean dead idols. Solomon's palace complex sat right beside the temple, so that only a wall separated the throne of Judah's kings from the throne of God (v8). Guzik notes that in this new temple the dividing line is not Jew and Gentile but holy and common. God will not share the space.

Shown so they will be ashamed (vv10–12)

The purpose of all these measurements is moral, not architectural. Seeing what God intended was meant to make Israel ashamed of what they had made of it. God's grace — a new house, a returned glory — is what breaks the heart. And the one rule over everything: "This is the law of the house" (v12). Guzik sums it up: "the whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy." Block, in Guzik, calls the section beginning here (43:12–46:24) "The New Torah" — the priestly instruction that had failed in Ezekiel's day (7:26).

The altar (vv13–17)

Guzik takes the long cubit as about 20.5 inches (40:5). The altar is huge — stepped, with horns on its corners, the place of refuge and atonement (Exod 29:12; 1 Kgs 1:50). Guzik notes that its steps face east, so the priest climbs facing west toward the sanctuary — and that steps at all set aside the old rule of Exodus 20:26. For him, the altar at the center of the vision points to the cross and the finished work of Jesus.

Seven days, then the eighth (vv18–27)

The consecration follows the pattern of Aaron's ordination (Exod 29; Lev 8): blood on the horns, a sin offering, seven days of atonement, and on the eighth day the regular worship begins. Only the priests of Zadok's line serve (v19; 44:15) — the line that stayed faithful when others strayed. The goal of it all is the last line: "I will accept you" (v27).

How should Ezekiel's temple be read?

Christians differ.

- **A plan for the returned exiles** — a blueprint they could have built if they had repented (vv10–11), never carried out.
- **A symbolic picture** — of the church, of Christ, or of the new creation (compare Rev 21–22, where there is no temple), with the measurements teaching God's holiness and order.
- **A literal future temple** — built in the millennial reign of the Messiah. This is Guzik's view. He notes that "there is no command to build" it, so it will be "God's doing and not man's."

The hardest question is the sacrifices, since Hebrews says Christ offered Himself once for all (Heb 10:10–14). Guzik answers that "Animal sacrifices were never actually effective for the cleansing of sin" — they looked forward to the cross, and in the millennium they would look back to it as memorials, much like the Lord's Table. He cites Wiersbe, who sees them as acts of devotion and fellowship. Those who read the temple symbolically see the sacrifices as Ezekiel describing perfect worship in the only terms his hearers knew.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **glory — *kabod* (H3519):** weight, honor, splendor — the visible presence of God.
- **east — *qadim* (H6921):** the east, the direction of sunrise.
- **throne — *kisse'* (H3678):** a seat of honor, a royal throne.
- **dwell — *shakan* (H7931):** to settle, abide, tabernacle — the root behind "Shekinah."
- **defile — *tame'* (H2930):** to make unclean, pollute.
- **harlotry — *zenut* (H2184):** fornication; here spiritual unfaithfulness, idolatry.
- **corpses — *peger* (H6297):** a carcass, a dead body.
- **ashamed — *kalam* (H3637):** to be humiliated, put to shame.
- **plan — *toknit* (H8508):** a measure, pattern, proportion.
- **law — *torah* (H8451):** instruction, teaching, law.
- **altar — *mizbeach* (H4196):** a place of sacrifice.
- **horns — *qeren* (H7161):** horn; the raised corners of the altar.
- **sin offering — *chatta't* (H2403):** sin; also the offering for sin.
- **make atonement — *kaphar* (H3722):** to cover, atone, make reconciliation.
- **accept — *ratsah* (H7521):** to be pleased with, accept favorably.

Cross-references

Exod 20:26; Exod 29:12, 35–37; Exod 40:34–35; Lev 8:33–35; 1 Kgs 8:10–13, 27; 2 Chr 5:13–14; Ps 99:1–5; Isa 6:1–5; Ezek 1:24, 28; Ezek 10:18–19; Ezek 11:22–23; Ezek 44:1–2; Zech 14:4; John 1:14; Rom 12:1; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 1:6; Heb 10:10–14; Heb 13:10–12; Rev 1:15; Rev 21:3, 22.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 43:9 (KJV)

9 Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcases of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.

Command to obey — "Now let them put away their harlotry … far from Me"

(v9). God promised to come back and dwell — but He told Israel to clear out the idols first. There is a part I play. Whatever I keep built right up against God's house, separated by only a thin wall, has to go. For the men in recovery I walk with, that means the phone numbers, the stash, the old crowd. "Far from Me" means really gone.

Sin to confess — living wall-to-wall with God

Judah's kings built their palace right next to God's house and treated the two as the same thing. I can do that — keep my own kingdom running inches from my worship, and call it all holy. I confess the places where my "palace" sits too close to His throne.

Warning to heed — the glory can leave

Ezekiel watched the glory of God walk out of a temple full of religious people. Going through the motions near God is not the same as having God. I don't want a ministry, a home or a heart that still has the building but has lost the glory.

Promise to trust — "I will accept you"

(v27). After the blood, after the seven days, God says it plainly. That is the word I bring to the man just out of prison who thinks his family, his church and his God are done with him. In Christ the atonement is finished (Heb 10:14), and the Father says, "I will accept you" — not because the man is clean on his own, but because the blood has been applied.

Example to follow — Ezekiel on his face

Every time Ezekiel saw the glory, he fell down (v3). He didn't analyze it first, or explain it, or take notes. He worshiped. Before I measure and teach and write about God, I want to bow before Him.

Worship

The God of Israel comes with a voice like many waters, and the earth shines with His glory. He chooses to dwell among His people forever. He is holy, and He makes a way for unclean people to come near and be accepted.

Prayer

Lord GOD, fill Your house — fill me — with Your glory. Show me the idols I've kept close and give me the courage to put them far away. Thank You that Jesus is my altar and my atonement, and that because of His blood You say to me, "I will accept you." Let the men I serve hear that word and believe it. Amen.

Ezekiel 44

The Shut Gate: Who May Come Near

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

In God's house, nearness is the reward of faithfulness. The Levites who led Israel into idolatry are forgiven enough to keep serving, but not trusted to stand at the altar. The sons of Zadok, who stayed true when everyone else drifted, get the best thing God can give: God Himself. Faithfulness in the dark seasons shapes what my service looks like later.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 44 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; ◷ and it was shut.

2 Then said the LORD unto me; ◷ This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; ▲ because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

3 It is for the prince; the prince, ★ he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

4 Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, ▲ the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face.

5 And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, Green mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.

6 And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, ⚠ let it suffice you of all your abominations,

7 In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers , ⚠ uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and ⚠ they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.

8 And ⚠ ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my ⇄ charge in my sanctuary for yourselves.

9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger , uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.

10 And ⚠ the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; ⚠ they shall even bear their iniquity.

11 Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having ⇄ charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.

12 Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and ⚠ caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.

13 And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but ⚠ they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

14 But I will make them keepers of the ⇄ charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the ⇄ charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, ★ they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:

16 They shall enter into my sanctuary, and ★ they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my ⇄ charge.

17 And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

18 They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat.

19 And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

20 Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads.

21 Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court.

22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.

23 And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.

25 And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves.

26 And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days.

27 And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD.

28 And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: ★ I am their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: ★ I am their possession.

29 They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs.

30 And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, ★ that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.

31 The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ and it was shut
- **v2** ◷ This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened
- **v2** ▲ because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it
- **v3** ★ he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD
- **v4** ▲ the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD
- **v5** mark well
- **v6** ⚠ let it suffice you of all your abominations
- **v7** ⚠ uncircumcised in heart
- **v7** ⚠ they have broken my covenant

- **v8** ⚠ ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things
- **v8** ⇄ charge *(every occurrence)*
- **v10** ⚠ the Levites that are gone away far from me
- **v10** ⚠ they shall even bear their iniquity
- **v12** ⚠ caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity
- **v13** ⚠ they shall bear their shame
- **v14** ★ I will make them keepers of the charge of the house
- **v15** ★ the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary
- **v15** ★ they shall come near to me to minister unto me
- **v16** ★ they shall come near to my table
- **v17** ▮▮ they shall be clothed with linen garments
- **v21** ▮▮ Neither shall any priest drink wine
- **v23** ▮▮ they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane
- **v28** ★ I am their inheritance
- **v28** ★ I am their possession
- **v30** ★ that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 44:2 (KJV)

2 Then said the LORD unto me; ◷ This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; ▲ because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

Setting

The vision of the new temple continues (chs 40–48; dated 573 BC, 40:1). In chapter 43 the glory of the LORD came back through the east gate and filled the house. Now Ezekiel is led back to that gate and finds it shut. The rest of the chapter answers the question "Who may come near?" — and it answers by looking back at who failed in Ezekiel's day and who stayed faithful.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **the shut gate:** Ezekiel is brought to the outer gate of the sanctuary "which faces the east; and it was shut" (v1). "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD God of Israel has entered by it" (v2). Only the prince "shall sit in it as prince to eat bread before the LORD," entering and leaving by the porch (v3).
- vv4–9 — **foreigners in God's house:** by the north gate Ezekiel sees "the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD, and I fell on my face" (v4). God tells him to "mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears" (v5). "Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel" (v6): they brought in foreigners "uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh" to serve in His sanctuary, and "they made My covenant void" (v7). "You have not kept charge of My holy things yourselves" (v8). No such foreigner will enter (v9).
- vv10–14 — **the Levites who strayed:** "the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray … shall bear the punishment for their iniquity" (v10). "Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary" as

gatekeepers and servants (v11). They "became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel" (v12), so they will not serve as priests, "but they will bear their shame" (v13). "Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the house" (v14).

- vv15–16 — **the sons of Zadok:** the priests "who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me" (v15). "They shall come near to My table" (v16).
- vv17–27 — **how the priests live:** linen, not wool, nothing "which makes them sweat" (vv17–18); a change of clothes before going out to the people (v19); trimmed hair (v20); "Nor shall any of the priests drink wine" in the inner court (v21); marriage rules (v22). They "teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (v23). They judge disputes and keep God's feasts and sabbaths (v24). Rules for touching the dead and for cleansing (vv25–27).
- vv28–31 — **God is their portion:** "I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no possession in Israel — I am their possession" (v28). They eat the offerings and receive the firstfruits, "to cause a blessing to rest on your house" (vv29–30). No meat that died on its own or was torn (v31).

Repeated words

sanctuary (vv1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16, 27); charge (vv8, 14, 15, 16); went astray (vv10, 15); iniquity (vv10, 12); come near (vv13, 15, 16); minister (vv11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 27); inner court (vv17, 21, 27); linen (vv17, 18); declares the Lord GOD (vv12, 15, 27).

Contrasts

a gate shut to everyone (v2) ⟷ a gate the LORD has entered (v2). Foreigners set to keep charge of the sanctuary (v8) ⟷ priests who kept charge themselves (v15). Levites who went astray and bear their shame (vv10, 13) ⟷ Zadokites who stayed faithful and come near (v15). Serving the people before idols (v12) ⟷ standing before God (v15). No possession in Israel ⟷ "I am their possession" (v28).

Chapter theme (my words)

In God's house, nearness is the reward of faithfulness. The Levites who led Israel into idolatry are forgiven enough to keep serving, but not trusted to stand at the altar. The sons of Zadok, who stayed true when everyone else drifted, get the best thing God can give: God Himself. Faithfulness in the dark seasons shapes what my service looks like later.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 44:4 (KJV)

4 Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, ▲ the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face.

The shut gate (vv1–3)

Guzik says the gate is shut because it is "a gate especially reserved for God Himself." The King came home through it, and no one else walks where He walked. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "Since God will never leave the temple again, the gate will remain closed." Guzik notes that this gate belongs to "a temple compound yet to come" — the sealed Golden Gate in today's Jerusalem wall is not its fulfillment. He also mentions that some have used this verse to argue for Mary's perpetual virginity, a reading Clarke called precarious.

Who is the prince? (v3)

The prince (*nasi*) appears often in chapters 44–48. Christians hold different views:

- **The Messiah Himself.** But the prince offers a sin offering "for himself" (45:22) and has sons (46:16), which is hard to say of Christ.
- **David raised up** to rule under the Messiah (34:23–24; 37:24–25; Jer 30:9; Hos 3:5). Guzik says, "This ruler is likely David."
- **A human ruler or civil leader** in Israel, distinct from the priests.

Whoever he is, the prince does not walk through the gate; Guzik notes that he may sit in the gate's vestibule in fellowship with the LORD and eat bread there.

Foreigners and a broken covenant (vv4–9)

Seeing the glory again, Ezekiel falls on his face (v4). Then God names the sin: Israel's priests let uncovenanted outsiders — uncircumcised in flesh and heart — do the work of God's house. Wright, in Guzik, suggests laziness or bribery as the motive; Alexander notes the old Near Eastern habit of using foreign captives as temple servants. The issue is not ethnicity but covenant. A heart that is uncircumcised — untouched by God — has no place serving in His house (Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4). Guzik connects God's command to "mark well" who enters with Revelation's picture of who may enter the holy city (Rev 21:7–8; 22:14–15; compare 21:27).

The Levites demoted (vv10–14)

These Levites led the people in idol worship — likely at the high places Josiah later shut down, where priests were not allowed to serve at the altar in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:8–9). God swore an oath against them (v12). They will bear their shame, yet God still gives them a place: guarding gates, slaughtering sacrifices, serving the people. Guzik says this discipline shows the vision "does not belong to the eternal realm, but to the millennial period." Mercy and consequences stand side by side.

The sons of Zadok (vv15–16)

Zadok was the priest who stood with David and with Solomon when Adonijah tried to take the throne, and Solomon made him chief priest (2 Sam 15:24; 1 Kgs 1:32–39; 2:35). His line kept charge of the sanctuary when others wandered. Wright, in Guzik: "The new priesthood is confined to the line of Zadok." Guzik applies it: believers are now a priesthood (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6), and service must be first to God — "to minister to Me" — before it is to people.

Holy living for holy service (vv17–27)

Linen keeps the priests from sweating — nothing of human labor and strain in God's presence. Holy garments stay inside so holiness is not carried out as a show (v19). No wine before ministry recalls Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1–11). The heart of the job is teaching: helping people see the difference between holy and common, clean and unclean (v23; Lev 10:10–11; Mal 2:7). Alexander, in Guzik, notes that people enter the Millennium in natural bodies, so rules about the dead fit a setting where people still die (Isa 65:20).

God as their inheritance (vv28–31)

Like Aaron and the Levites in the Law (Num 18:20), the priests own no land. God Himself is their share, and the people's offerings feed them. On the firstfruits that bring "a blessing to rest on your house" (v30), Guzik quotes Trapp: "Tithe and be rich. See Malachi 3:10."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **shut — *sagar* (H5462):** to close, shut up.
- **prince — *nasi* (H5387):** one lifted up; a chief, leader, prince.
- **foreigner — *nekar* (H5236):** foreignness; *ben-nekar*, a son of a foreign land.
- **uncircumcised — *ʿarel* (H6189):** uncircumcised; figuratively, closed off, unresponsive to God.
- **charge — *mishmereth* (H4931):** a watch, guard, duty, obligation.
- **went astray — *taʿah* (H8582):** to wander, err, go astray.
- **iniquity — *ʿavon* (H5771):** perversity, guilt, the punishment of guilt.
- **stumbling block — *mikshol* (H4383):** a cause of stumbling, an offense.
- **shame — *kelimmah* (H3639):** disgrace, reproach, humiliation.
- **minister — *sharath* (H8334):** to serve, attend, minister.
- **linen — *pishteh* (H6593):** flax, linen.
- **profane — *chol* (H2455):** common, unholy.
- **inheritance — *nachalah* (H5159):** a possession, heritage, portion.
- **possession — *ʾachuzzah* (H272):** a holding, property.
- **blessing — *berakah* (H1293):** a blessing, gift, benefit.

Cross-references

Lev 10:1–11; Lev 21:1–15; Num 18:20; Deut 10:8–9, 16; 1 Sam 2:35; 2 Sam 15:24; 1 Kgs 1:32–39; 1 Kgs 2:35; 2 Kgs 23:8–9; Ps 16:5; Ps 73:26; Jer 4:4; Lam 3:24; Ezek 34:23–24; Ezek 37:24–25; Ezek 43:1–5; Hos 3:5; Mal 2:7; Mal 3:10; Rom 2:29; 1 Cor 9:13; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; Rev 21:27; Rev 22:14–15.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 44:15 (KJV)

15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the ⇄ charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, ★ they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:

Command to obey — "Mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears"

(v5). God told Ezekiel to pay close attention to who could come near and how. I want to pay that kind of attention to holiness — not skim it. In my own study and in the men I teach, I want to help us "discern between the unclean and the clean" (v23), because a lot of what we call harmless isn't.

Sin to confess — letting others keep my charge

Israel handed the work of God's house to people who didn't know Him (v8). I can hand off what God gave me to guard — my own walk with Him, the spiritual leadership of my home — to someone else, or to nobody. I confess where I've let others carry what was mine to keep.

Warning to heed — a stumbling block to others

The Levites didn't just sin; they "became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel" (v12). When a leader falls, people fall with him. The men I disciple are watching me. My compromise would never stay private.

Promise to trust — "I am their inheritance … I am their possession"

(v28). The priests had no land, but they had God. Many of the men I work with walk out of prison with nothing — no house, no car, sometimes no family willing to take them. God's word to them is the same one He gave the priests: He is their portion (Ps 16:5; Lam 3:24). When everything else is gone, a man who has God is not poor.

Example to follow — the sons of Zadok

They "kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray" (v15). They stayed faithful when it wasn't popular, and God remembered it for generations. I want to be that man in the dark season, not just the good one.

Worship

The LORD God of Israel has entered His house, and no one else walks through that gate. He fills His house with glory. He is the inheritance of His people, and He is enough.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You alone came through that gate. Teach me to mark well what You call holy. Forgive me where I've been careless with what You trusted me to keep, or where I've made it easier for others to

stumble. Make me faithful when others drift, and let me find in You my inheritance and my possession. Give the men I love that same treasure. Amen.

Ezekiel 45

Holy Land, Honest Rulers: The Prince and the Feasts

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

When God sets up His kingdom, He starts at the center — His holy house — and works out to the land, the city, the ruler, the market scale and the feast calendar. Nothing is outside His concern. The leaders who used to grab and crush now give and serve. Holiness in worship and honesty in business go together.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 45 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about.

2 Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred in length, with five hundred in breadth, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof.

3 And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanctuary and the most holy place.

4 The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the LORD: and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary.

5 And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth, shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers.

6 And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy portion: it shall be for the whole house of Israel.

7 And a portion shall be for the prince on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy portion, and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy portion, and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward: and the length shall be over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border.

8 In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.

9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD.

10 Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath.

11 The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer.

12 And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.

13 This is the oblation that ye shall offer; the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley:

14 Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, ye shall offer the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, which is an homer of ten baths; for ten baths are an homer:

15 And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, ▲ to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD.

16 ▮ All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel.

17 And ▮ it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make ⇄ reconciliation for the house of Israel.

18 Thus saith the Lord GOD; ◷ In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and ▮ cleanse the sanctuary:

19 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court.

20 And so thou shalt do the seventh day of the month ⚠ for every one that erreth, and for him that is simple: ★ so shall ye reconcile the house.

21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ◷ ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

22 And upon that day ⚠ shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering.

23 And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering.

24 And he shall prepare a meat offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah.

25 ◷ In the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ▮ ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land
- **v1** ◷ This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about
- **v3** ◷ in it shall be the sanctuary and the most holy place
- **v4** ★ which shall come near to minister unto the LORD
- **v6** ★ it shall be for the whole house of Israel
- **v7** ◷ a portion shall be for the prince
- **v8** ★ my princes shall no more oppress my people
- **v9** ⚠ Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel
- **v9** ▮ remove violence and spoil
- **v9** ▮ execute judgment and justice
- **v9** ▮ take away your exactions from my people
- **v10** ▮ Ye shall have just balances
- **v15** ▲ to make reconciliation for them
- **v15** ⇄ reconciliation *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** ▮ All the people of the land shall give this oblation
- **v17** ▮ it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings
- **v18** ◷ In the first month, in the first day of the month
- **v18** ▮ cleanse the sanctuary
- **v20** ⚠ for every one that erreth, and for him that is simple
- **v20** ★ so shall ye reconcile the house

- **v21** ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days
- **v22** shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering
- **v25** In the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 45:9 (KJV)

9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD.

Setting

Still in Ezekiel's temple vision (chs 40–48; 573 BC, 40:1). Chapter 44 settled who may come near God's house. Chapter 45 moves outward to the land around it — a holy district for the LORD, land for the priests, the Levites, the city and the prince — and then to the prince's duties: honest rule, honest measures, and providing the offerings for Israel's feasts. Chapters 47–48 finish dividing the land among the tribes.

Structure

- vv1–5 — **the holy district:** when the land is divided, "you shall offer an allotment to the LORD, a holy portion of the land," 25,000 long and 20,000 wide; "It shall be holy within all its boundary round about" (v1). In it a 500-square plot holds "the sanctuary, the most holy place" (vv2–3). The priests live there — "the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to the LORD" (v4) — and the Levites have an equal strip beside it (v5).
- vv6–8 — **the city and the prince:** a strip for the city, and "it shall be for the whole house of Israel" (v6). The prince's land runs out on both sides (v7), "so My princes shall no longer oppress My people" (v8).
- vv9–12 — **a charge to the rulers:** "Enough, you princes of Israel; put away violence and destruction, and practice justice and righteousness. Stop your expropriations from My people," declares the Lord GOD (v9). "You shall have just balances, a just ephah and a just bath" (v10), with fixed standards for every measure and weight (vv11–12).
- vv13–17 — **the people's offering:** a set share of wheat, barley, oil and sheep "to make atonement for them" (vv13–15). "All the people of the land shall give to this offering for the prince in Israel" (v16). The prince provides the offerings "at the feasts, on the new moons and on the sabbaths ... to make atonement for the house of Israel" (v17).
- vv18–20 — **cleansing the sanctuary:** on the first day of the first month, "a young bull without blemish and cleanse the sanctuary" (v18), with blood on the doorposts, the altar ledge and the inner

gate (v19); again on the seventh day "for everyone who goes astray or is naive; so you shall make atonement for the house" (v20).

- vv21–25 — **two feasts:** "you shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days" (v21); "the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a bull for a sin offering" (v22), plus daily offerings for seven days (vv23–24). "In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month," the same for seven days (v25).

Repeated words

holy (vv1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7); allotment (vv1, 6, 7); possession (vv5, 6, 8); prince (vv7, 16, 17, 22); princes (vv8, 9); atonement (vv15, 17, 20); sin offering (vv17, 19, 22, 23, 25); seven days (vv21, 23, 25); Lord GOD (vv9, 15, 18).

Contrasts

princes who oppress (v8) ⟷ a prince who provides (v17). Violence and destruction ⟷ justice and righteousness (v9). Rulers who take the people's land (v9) ⟷ a prince with his own land, given by God (vv7–8). Crooked weights ⟷ "just balances" (v10). The people give to the prince (v16) ⟷ the prince gives for the people (v17).

Chapter theme (my words)

When God sets up His kingdom, He starts at the center — His holy house — and works out to the land, the city, the ruler, the market scale and the feast calendar. Nothing is outside His concern. The leaders who used to grab and crush now give and serve. Holiness in worship and honesty in business go together.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 45:15 (KJV)

15 And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, ▲ to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD.

The LORD's portion first (vv1–5)

Before the tribes get their land (ch 48), God's share comes off the top — an "allotment" (*terumah*), the same word used for a contribution lifted up and set apart to God. The units are not stated in Hebrew; most take them as long cubits (as NASB supplies), making the district roughly eight miles long. The KJV, following the Hebrew, reads the width as ten thousand; NASB follows the Greek Old Testament with twenty thousand, counting the priests' and Levites' strips together. Guzik: "The temple (and Jerusalem) will be in the special district for Yahweh." He cites Feinberg, who calls this detail "the strongest and most irrefutable argument against taking these chapters in an allegorical" sense —

though readers who take the vision symbolically see the perfect squares and borders as a picture of God's ordered, holy presence among His people (compare Rev 21:16).

A city for everyone (v6)

Guzik: "The city of Jerusalem itself will be the heritage of all Israel, not any one particular tribe." No tribe can claim the city of God as its own.

No more oppression (vv7–9)

The prince receives land on purpose, so he won't need to take anyone else's. Guzik: "The period of time connected to Ezekiel's temple will be a time of righteousness and just rulership among God's leaders." Feinberg, in Guzik, points to Ahab taking Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21; Mic 2:1–2). Ezekiel's own generation knew this well — Jeremiah condemned King Jehoiakim for building his palace with unpaid labor (Jer 22:13–17). So God turns from the future to the present: "Enough, you princes of Israel" (v9). Guzik says the vision of coming righteousness could move the leaders of Ezekiel's own day to act now. As for who the prince is, Guzik holds he is likely David (34:23–24; 37:25); others see a human ruler of Israel, and a few see the Messiah — though here the prince offers a sin offering for himself (v22).

Honest scales (vv10–12)

God gives fixed standards for the ephah (dry measure), the bath (liquid measure), the homer, the shekel and the mina. Guzik: "God cares greatly about simple honestly and integrity among men" (Lev 19:35–36; Prov 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23; Mic 6:10–11). Cheating on weights was a common sin of Israel's merchants and rulers (Amos 8:5).

The people's offering, the prince's duty (vv13–17)

Every Israelite gives a fixed share — roughly a sixtieth of grain, a hundredth of oil, one sheep in two hundred — to the prince, and the prince provides the public sacrifices for the whole nation. Guzik cites Alexander, who calls these rituals "picture-lessons and reminders" of Christ's finished work, not means of atonement in themselves. Those who read the temple symbolically see the same truths — a people united in worship around atonement — described in the terms Ezekiel's hearers knew.

Cleansing and feasts (vv18–25)

The new year opens with cleansing the sanctuary — a rite not found in Moses' law, as Clarke noted (cited by Guzik). It covers those who sin by straying or naivety, not those who sin in open rebellion (compare Lev 4:2; Num 15:27–31). Then come Passover and Unleavened Bread (v21) and, on the fifteenth of the seventh month, the feast Moses called Booths or Tabernacles (v25; Lev 23:34). Some feasts of the Law are missing here, notably the Day of Atonement. Guzik cites Alexander, who says there is no special Day of Atonement in the millennium because that day found its full fruition in Christ's atonement on the cross. Passover remains — the remembrance of redemption by the blood of a lamb (Exod 12; 1 Cor 5:7).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **allotment — *terumah* (H8641):** a contribution, something lifted off and set apart, a heave offering.
- **holy — *qodesh* (H6944):** holiness, set-apartness.
- **possession — *ʾachuzzah* (H272):** a holding, property.
- **prince — *nasi* (H5387):** a chief, leader, prince.

- **oppress — *yanah* (H3238):** to oppress, maltreat, wrong.
- **violence — *chamas* (H2555):** violence, wrong, cruelty.
- **destruction — *shod* (H7701):** ruin, havoc, plunder.
- **justice — *mishpat* (H4941):** judgment, justice, right ruling.
- **righteousness — *tsedaqah* (H6666):** right conduct, righteousness.
- **expropriations — *gerushah* (H1646):** an expulsion, dispossession.
- **just — *tsedeq* (H6664):** right, honest, accurate.
- **balances — *moznayim* (H3976):** scales, a pair of balances.
- **atonement — *kaphar* (H3722):** to cover, atone, make reconciliation.
- **goes astray — *shagah* (H7686):** to err, wander, sin by mistake.
- **naive — *pethi* (H6612):** simple, open-minded, easily led.
- **Passover — *pesach* (H6453):** the Passover feast and lamb.

Cross-references

Exod 12:1–20; Lev 4:2; Lev 19:35–36; Lev 23:5–8, 33–36; Num 15:27–31; Num 18:20–24; Num 36:7–9; Deut 25:13–16; 1 Kgs 21:1–19; Prov 11:1; Prov 16:11; Prov 20:10, 23; Isa 9:6–7; Jer 22:13–17; Jer 23:5–6; Ezek 34:23–24; Ezek 37:25; Ezek 48:8–22; Amos 8:4–6; Mic 2:1–2; Mic 6:10–11; Zech 14:16; 1 Cor 5:7–8; Heb 9:23; Rev 21:16.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 45:1 (KJV)

[1]Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about.

Command to obey — "Put away violence and destruction, and practice justice and righteousness"

(v9). God didn't wait for the future kingdom to demand this; He said "Enough" to the leaders of Ezekiel's own day. I run a business and lead in ministry. Where I hold any power — over clients, over people who depend on me — I'll use it to give, not to take.

Sin to confess — a crooked scale

God cares about the ephah and the bath. I confess the small dishonesties I let slide — the padded hours, the half-true word, the corner cut because no one would know. For the men coming out of the hustle life, this is where new faith gets tested first: honest money, honest work, a just scale.

Warning to heed — power that oppresses

Israel's princes had land, but they kept grabbing more (v8). Power without God always reaches for what isn't its own. Any leader — a father, a boss, a man with some authority on a cellblock — can become a small oppressor. I have to watch for that in myself.

Promise to trust — atonement for the straying and the naive

(v20). God made provision for "everyone who goes astray or is naive." Many of the men I disciple were led into sin young and simple, before they knew what they were doing. God doesn't excuse sin, but He has made a way to cover it. In Christ, the One who is our Passover (1 Cor 5:7), there is cleansing for the man who wandered and the man who was led.

Example to follow — a prince who provides

The prince takes the people's offerings and turns them into worship for the whole nation (v17). That's leadership the way God designs it — receiving in order to give. I want to lead my home and the men God sends me that way.

Worship

The LORD claims the first and the center. He is holy, and He is just — down to the last shekel. He makes atonement for His people, and He keeps the Passover memory alive forever.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You care about my worship and about my scale. Take the first and best of my life as holy to You. Root out any dishonesty in my business and any desire to use power for myself. Thank You for atonement for those who stray, and for Jesus, our Passover Lamb. Make me a leader who gives, and let the men I serve see justice and righteousness in how I live. Amen.

Ezekiel 46

The Prince and the Gate: Morning by Morning

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God puts order into worship — when to come, how to enter, what to bring, where to eat — and He puts limits on power. The ruler worships beside his people, enters and leaves with them, and is forbidden to take what is theirs. Worship is daily, every morning, and no one leaves it the same way he came in.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 46 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east ◷ shall be shut the six working days; but ◷ on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in ◷ the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

2 And the ⇄ prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and Green he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.

3 Likewise Green the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate ▲ before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.

4 And the burnt offering that the ⇄ prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day shall be six lambs ⇄ without blemish, and a ram ⇄ without blemish.

5 And the meat offering shall be an ephah for a ram, and the meat offering for the lambs ★ as he shall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.

6 And in the day of the new moon it shall be a young bullock ⇄ without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram: they shall be ⇄ without blemish.

7 And he shall prepare a meat offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and for the lambs according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah.

8 And when the ⇄ prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of that gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof.

9 But when the people of the land shall come before the LORD in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: Green he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it.

10 And the ⇄ prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth.

11 And in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.

12 Now when the ⇄ prince shall prepare ★ a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the LORD, one shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth one shall shut the gate.

13 Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt offering unto the LORD of a lamb of the first year ⇄ without blemish: thou shalt prepare it ⇄ every morning.

14 And thou shalt prepare a meat offering for it ⇄ every morning, the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; a meat offering continually by Green a perpetual ordinance unto the LORD.

15 Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meat offering, and the oil, ⇄ every morning for a continual burnt offering.

16 Thus saith the Lord GOD; If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it shall be their possession by inheritance.

17 But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them.

18 Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.

19 After he brought me through the entry, which was at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north: and, behold, there was a place on the two sides westward.

20 Then said he unto me, This is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, where they shall bake the meat offering; that they bear them not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people.

21 Then he brought me forth into the utter court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and, behold, in every corner of the court there was a court.

22 In the four corners of the court there were courts joined of forty cubits long and thirty broad: these four corners were of one measure.

23 And there was a row of building round about in them, round about them four, and it was made with boiling places under the rows round about.

24 Then said he unto me, These are the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people.

Marked in the text

- **v1** Thus saith the Lord GOD
- **v1** shall be shut the six working days
- **v1** on the sabbath it shall be opened
- **v1** the day of the new moon
- **v2** prince *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** he shall worship at the threshold of the gate
- **v3** the people of the land shall worship
- **v3** before the LORD
- **v4** without blemish *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** as he shall be able to give
- **v9** he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in
- **v10** the prince in the midst of them
- **v12** a voluntary burnt offering
- **v13** every morning *(every occurrence)*
- **v14** a perpetual ordinance unto the LORD
- **v16** inheritance *(every occurrence)*
- **v17** the year of liberty
- **v18** shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression
- **v18** that my people be not scattered every man from his possession
- **v20** the trespass offering and the sin offering
- **v20** to sanctify the people
- **v24** the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 46:1 (KJV)

1 ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

Setting

This is the seventh of the last nine chapters of Ezekiel (40–48), one long vision given "in the twenty-fifth year of our exile" (40:1) — about 573 BC, fourteen years after Jerusalem fell. The glory of the LORD has returned to the new temple (43:1–5), and chapters 44–46 set the order of worship there. Chapter 45 assigned the prince his land and his offerings; chapter 46 tells how he and the people come and go, what they offer and when, how the prince's land may be passed on, and where the sacrifices are cooked.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **the east gate of the inner court:** "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'The gate of the inner court facing east shall be shut the six working days'" (v1), but opened on the sabbath and the new moon. "The prince shall enter by way of the porch of the gate from outside" (v2); the priests offer his sacrifices while "he shall worship at the threshold of the gate," and "the gate shall not be shut until the evening" (v2). "The people of the land shall also worship" at that doorway on sabbaths and new moons (v3).
- vv4–8 — **sabbath and new moon offerings:** "six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish" on the sabbath (v4), with grain and oil (v5); a young bull, six lambs and a ram at the new moon (vv6–7). The prince goes in and out by the same porch (v8).
- vv9–11 — **the feasts:** at the appointed feasts, "he who enters by way of the north gate to worship" leaves by the south, and the reverse. "No one shall return by way of the gate by which he entered" (v9). And "the prince shall go in among them" (v10). Grain offerings are set for the feasts (v11).
- v12 — **the prince's freewill offering:** when the prince brings a "freewill offering," "the gate facing east shall be opened for him," and "the gate shall be shut after he goes out" (v12).
- vv13–15 — **the daily offering:** "a lamb a year old without blemish" (v13), offered "morning by morning" (vv13–15) with grain and oil, "by a perpetual ordinance" (v14), "for a continual burnt offering" (v15).
- vv16–18 — **the prince's land:** "If the prince gives a gift out of his inheritance" to a son, "it shall belong to his sons" (v16); a gift to a servant lasts only "until the year of liberty" and then returns (v17). "The prince shall not take from the people's inheritance," "thrusting them out of their possession"; "he shall give his sons inheritance from his own possession so that My people will not be scattered" (v18).
- vv19–24 — **the kitchens:** near the "holy chambers for the priests" (v19): "This is the place where the priests shall boil the guilt offering" and the sin offering and bake the grain offering, so as not to

bring them out and "to transmit holiness to the people" (v20). In the four corners of the outer court are small courts, "forty cubits long and thirty wide" (v22). "These are the boiling places where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifices of the people" (v24).

Repeated words

gate (vv1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 12, 19); prince (vv2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18); sabbath(s) (vv1, 3, 4, 12); new moon(s) (vv1, 3, 6); worship (vv2, 3, 9); without blemish (vv4, 6, 13); morning (vv13, 14, 15); inheritance (vv16, 17, 18); possession (vv16, 18); boil / boiling places (vv20, 23, 24).

Contrasts

the gate shut six working days ⟷ opened on the sabbath and new moon (v1). The prince at the threshold ⟷ the people at the doorway (vv2–3). Enter by the north ⟷ leave by the south (v9). A gift to a son that stays ⟷ a gift to a servant that returns at the year of liberty (vv16–17). A prince who gives from his own land ⟷ a prince who takes the people's land (v18). Holy offerings kept in the inner kitchens ⟷ the people's sacrifices cooked in the outer court (vv20, 24).

Chapter theme (my words)

God puts order into worship — when to come, how to enter, what to bring, where to eat — and He puts limits on power. The ruler worships beside his people, enters and leaves with them, and is forbidden to take what is theirs. Worship is daily, every morning, and no one leaves it the same way he came in.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 46:3 (KJV)

3 Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.

What is this temple? (overview)

Christians read Ezekiel 40–48 in three main ways. (1) A literal future temple in the millennial kingdom, with real sacrifices — Guzik's view; he treats the detailed instructions here as evidence of a literal fulfillment. (2) A symbolic picture of true worship, fulfilled in Christ and His people and finally in the new creation (compare Rev 21:22) — the common amillennial and Reformed reading. (3) A pattern offered to the returning exiles (43:10–11) that Israel never fully carried out. Whichever view we hold, the chapter's point is plain: God dwells with His people, and He sets the terms of how they draw near.

The east gate and the prince (vv1–3)

The outer east gate is shut for good because the glory of the LORD entered by it (44:1–2). This chapter is about the inner east gate, shut on working days and open on sabbaths and new moons. The prince does not perform priestly service; he stands at the threshold while the priests offer his sacrifices — the line King Uzziah crossed and was struck with leprosy for (2 Chr 26:16–21). Block, in Guzik: "This

vantage point enables him, as guardian and patron of the cult, to observe the cultic activity of the priests." Who is the prince? Guzik identifies him only as God's appointed ruler of Israel in that day. Many note he cannot be Christ Himself, since he offers a sin offering for himself (45:22) and has sons (46:16); others see him as a Davidic ruler serving under the Messiah.

Offerings and the sabbath (vv4–8)

Guzik notes that the sabbath here is tied to sacrifice, not only rest, and cites Feinberg that the sabbath burnt offering is larger than the Mosaic requirement (compare Num 28:9). Trapp, in Guzik, on why the sabbaths were given: "That the people may see Christ in the glass of the ceremonies, and call upon his name." Notice that the grain offering with the lambs is left to what the worshiper is able to give (vv5, 7, 11) — God sets a floor, not a ceiling, on generosity.

Through the gate and out the other side (vv9–11)

At the great feasts the crowds were huge, and one-way traffic kept order. But it also preaches: no one turns around and walks back out the way he came. The prince comes and goes with the people (v10). Guzik draws from Wiersbe that the prince will not isolate himself from the people on feast days, and he cites Meyer on Jesus leading His people by going before them (John 10:4).

The freewill offering (v12)

Not every offering is commanded. When the prince chooses to give, the gate opens for him — then shuts after him. Guzik sees this detail as one more sign that the vision is meant literally.

Morning by morning (vv13–15)

The Mosaic law had a lamb at morning and at evening (Exod 29:38–42; Num 28:3–8). Here only the morning is named; Poole, in Guzik, takes the evening offering as implied. How can sacrifices return after the cross (Heb 10:10–14)? Guzik holds that these offerings are memorials looking back to Christ's finished work, as Morgan says, rather than pointing forward the way the Mosaic sacrifices did. Those who read the vision symbolically answer that the sacrifices are the language Ezekiel's hearers understood for perfect, unbroken worship, fulfilled in Christ.

The prince may not take (vv16–18)

The prince may give land to his sons for good. A gift to a servant goes back at "the year of liberty" — the jubilee (Lev 25:10–13). And the prince may never seize the people's land, as Ahab took Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21) and as Israel's princes had done (45:8–9; compare 1 Sam 8:14). Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "The prophet did not want royal property to grow at the expense of ordinary citizens." God's concern is stated: "so that My people will not be scattered" (v18).

The kitchens (vv19–24)

Ezekiel is shown two kinds of kitchens. In the priests' area, the most holy offerings are cooked so they are not carried out "to transmit holiness to the people" (v20; compare 44:19) — holiness here is treated as something that must be handled God's way. In the four corners of the outer court the Levites cook the people's sacrifices, so families can eat their peace offerings before the LORD (Deut 12:7). Guzik notes that meals were part of worship and fellowship, and cites Taylor that the church has sometimes separated the spiritual and the social.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **prince — *nasi*ʾ (H5387):** one lifted up; a leader, chief, ruler.
- **gate — *sha*ʿ*ar* (H8179):** gate, entrance.
- **threshold — *miphtan* (H4670):** threshold, sill of a doorway.
- **worship — *shachah* (H7812):** to bow down, prostrate oneself.
- **sabbath — *shabbath* (H7676):** a day of rest, cessation.
- **new moon — *chodesh* (H2320):** new moon, month.
- **without blemish — *tamim* (H8549):** complete, whole, sound.
- **freewill offering — *nedabah* (H5071):** a voluntary gift, offered willingly.
- **burnt offering — ʿ*olah* (H5930):** that which goes up; a whole offering.
- **continual — *tamid* (H8548):** continually, regularly.
- **ordinance — *chuqqah* (H2708):** statute, fixed decree.
- **inheritance — *nachalah* (H5159):** an inherited possession, portion.
- **possession — ʾ*achuzzah* (H272):** a possession, holding of land.
- **liberty — *deror* (H1865):** freedom, release.
- **boil — *bashal* (H1310):** to boil, cook.

Cross-references

Exod 29:38–42; Lev 25:10–13; Num 28:3–10; Deut 12:7; 1 Sam 8:14; 1 Kgs 21:1–16; 2 Chr 26:16–21; Ps 5:3; Lam 3:22–23; Ezek 44:1–3; Ezek 45:8–9; Ezek 45:17; John 10:4; Rom 12:1; Heb 10:10–14; Heb 13:15; Rev 21:22.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 46:2 (KJV)

2 And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.

Command to obey — "No one shall return by way of the gate by which he entered"

(v9). I can't come into God's presence and walk back out unchanged. The men I disciple come in through the gate of a broken life — a cell, a detox bed, a divorce. When they meet God, they don't go back out the same door. Neither should I after an hour in the Word.

Sin to confess — taking what isn't mine

The prince was forbidden to grab the people's land (v18). Power wants more. I confess the times I've used influence, position or a stronger personality to take what belonged to someone else — their time,

their credit, their voice — and I ask God to make me a giver from my own possession.

Warning to heed — holiness isn't casual

God told the priests exactly where to cook the holy offerings (v20). He hasn't changed. I don't get to handle holy things — His Word, His table, His name — carelessly or on my own terms.

Promise to trust — "the year of liberty"

(v17). God built release into the law: what was given away would come home. For the man who has lost years to addiction or a sentence, God's heart still bends toward restoration. And "so that My people will not be scattered" (v18) tells me God cares about families staying on their ground.

Example to follow — the prince among them

The prince didn't watch the feast from a balcony; he went in and out with the crowd (v10). Leading men means walking with them, not above them — the same gate, the same crowd, the same worship.

Worship

The LORD is worthy every morning. He is holy, and He sets the way to approach Him. He protects the small from the powerful, gives release to the bound, and spreads a table for His people in His own house.

Prayer

Lord GOD, meet me morning by morning. Don't let me leave Your presence the way I came in. Keep me from taking what is not mine, and make me generous from what You've given me. Let me lead the men You've given me from among them, not above them. Thank You for the year of liberty — bring the scattered home. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ezekiel 47

The River from the Sanctuary: Everything Will Live

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Life flows out of the place where God lives. It starts small, gets deeper the farther it goes, and heals everything it touches — even the Dead Sea. Only what refuses the river stays salt. And the God who gives the river also makes room in the land for the outsider.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 47 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, ▲ waters issued out from under the threshold of the house Amber eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

[2] Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

[3] And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; Amber the waters were to the ankles.

[4] Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; Amber the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; Amber the waters were to the loins.

[5] Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was ★ a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, ★ waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

[6] And he said unto me, Green Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

[7] Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were ★ very many trees on the one side and on the other.

[8] Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and Amber go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be Sky healed.

[9] And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be Sky healed; and ★ every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

[10] And it shall come to pass, that ★ the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

[11] But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be Sky healed; ⚠ they shall be given to salt.

[12] And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, ★ whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: ★ it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because ▲ their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and ★ the leaf thereof for medicine.

[13] ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Amber Joseph shall have two portions.

[14] And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which ▲ I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for Sky inheritance.

15 And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad;

16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran.

17 And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side.

18 And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side.

19 And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward.

20 The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west side.

21 So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel.

22 And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an ⇄ inheritance unto you, and to ★ the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you ★ as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have ⇄ inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.

23 And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his ⇄ inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ▲ waters issued out from under the threshold of the house
- **v1** ◷ eastward
- **v3** ◷ the waters were to the ankles
- **v4** ◷ the waters were to the knees
- **v4** ◷ the waters were to the loins
- **v5** ★ a river that I could not pass over
- **v5** ★ waters to swim in
- **v6** ▮▮ Son of man, hast thou seen this?
- **v7** ★ very many trees
- **v8** ◷ go down into the desert
- **v8** ⇄ healed *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ★ every thing shall live whither the river cometh
- **v10** ★ the fishers shall stand upon it
- **v11** ⚠ they shall be given to salt
- **v12** ★ whose leaf shall not fade
- **v12** ★ it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months
- **v12** ▲ their waters they issued out of the sanctuary
- **v12** ★ the leaf thereof for medicine
- **v13** ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD
- **v13** ◷ Joseph shall have two portions
- **v14** ▲ I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers
- **v14** ⇄ inheritance *(every occurrence)*
- **v22** ★ the strangers that sojourn among you
- **v22** ★ as born in the country among the children of Israel
- **v23** ▮▮ there shall ye give him his inheritance

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 47:12 (KJV)

12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, ★ whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: ★ it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because ▲ their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and ★ the leaf thereof for medicine.

Setting

The temple vision that began "in the twenty-fifth year of our exile" (40:1), about 573 BC, now turns from rules of worship to life flowing out of God's house. Ezekiel's guide — the man with the measuring line (40:3) — brings him back to the door of the temple. Ezekiel is a priest in exile by a Babylonian canal; Jerusalem is in ruins and the Dead Sea lies lifeless below it. What he sees next is a river where no river had ever run, and then the borders of a land divided among all twelve tribes.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the source:** "water was flowing from under the threshold of the house" toward the east (v1), south of the altar, and trickling out on the south side of the outer east gate (v2).
- vv3–6 — **deeper and deeper:** every thousand cubits the man measures and leads Ezekiel through — "water reaching the ankles" (v3), "water reaching the knees," "water reaching the loins" (v4), until it is "a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in" (v5). "Son of man, have you seen this?" (v6).
- vv7–12 — **everything lives:** "very many trees" on both banks (v7). "These waters go out toward the eastern region" (v8) into the sea, and "the waters of the sea become fresh" (v8). "Every living creature which swarms" will live, "there will be very many fish," and "everything will live where the river goes" (v9). Fishermen spread nets "from Engedi to Eneglaim" (v10). But the swamps and marshes are "left for salt" (v11). Fruit trees grow on both banks: "their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing" (v12).
- vv13–14 — **the land promised:** the land is divided among the twelve tribes; "Joseph shall have two portions" (v13). Each tribe shares equally, "for I swore to give it to your forefathers" (v14).
- vv15–20 — **the four borders:** north from the Great Sea toward Hamath and Damascus (vv15–17); east along the Jordan to the eastern sea (v18); south from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh and the brook of Egypt (v19); west, the Great Sea (v20).
- vv21–23 — **room for the outsider:** the land is divided by lot for Israel and for "the aliens who stay in your midst" who raise children there; they are to be treated as "native-born" (v22). Whatever tribe he lives among, "there you shall give him his inheritance" (v23).

Repeated words

water / waters (vv1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 19); river (vv5, 6, 7, 9, 12); fresh (vv8, 9, 11); trees (vv7, 12); live / living (v9, three times); tribes (vv13, 21, 22); inheritance (vv13, 14, 22, 23).

Contrasts

a trickle at the threshold (v1) ⟷ a river too deep to cross (v5). Ankles ⟷ swimming (vv3–5). The Dead Sea ⟷ "very many fish" (vv8–9). Fresh water ⟷ marshes "left for salt" (vv9, 11). Trees that wither ⟷ leaves that never wither and fruit every month (v12). The alien on the outside ⟷ the alien counted as native-born with an inheritance (vv22–23).

Chapter theme (my words)

Life flows out of the place where God lives. It starts small, gets deeper the farther it goes, and heals everything it touches — even the Dead Sea. Only what refuses the river stays salt. And the God who gives the river also makes room in the land for the outsider.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 47:1 (KJV)

[1]Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, ▲ waters issued out from under the threshold of the house ◷ eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

A river from God's house (vv1–2)

Jerusalem never had a river; its water came from the Gihon spring and cisterns. Here the water comes out of the sanctuary itself, past the altar. Guzik stresses that it comes from God's house, not from a palace or a marketplace. Taylor, in Guzik: "Blessing, fertility and water are almost interchangeable ideas in the Old Testament." The image runs through the Bible: the river out of Eden (Gen 2:10), the river that makes glad the city of God (Ps 46:4), living waters from Jerusalem (Joel 3:18; Zech 14:8), and the river of the water of life in the new Jerusalem (Rev 22:1–2).

Literal, spiritual, or both?

Guzik reads this as a literal river in Messiah's coming kingdom, linking it with Joel 3:18 and Zechariah 14:8, and he faults commentators who spiritualize it away; yet he also draws spiritual lessons from it. He says it isn't the same as the river in Revelation, which, as Alexander (in Guzik) notes, flows from the throne of God. Many other Christians — especially amillennial and Reformed readers — see the river as a picture of the life of the Spirit flowing from God's presence through Christ and His church to the nations, finally fulfilled in the new creation. Jesus' words about rivers of living water from within the believer (John 7:37–39) stand behind both readings.

Deeper and deeper (vv3–6)

No streams join it, yet the river keeps rising — Guzik calls the increase miraculous. Four thousand cubits (well over a mile) take Ezekiel from ankles to over his head. Guzik uses the depths as a call to move from shallow faith to a deeper life led by the Spirit. Meyer, in Guzik: "We need the ankle-depths of walking to be exchanged for the knee-depths of praying." The guide's question, "Son of man, have you seen this?" (v6), presses Ezekiel to take it in.

The Dead Sea healed (vv7–11)

The Dead Sea is one of the saltiest bodies of water on earth; nothing lives in it. Ezekiel sees it turned fresh, swarming with fish, with fishermen working from Engedi on its western shore to Eneglaim (its location is uncertain). Guzik sees literal fulfillment in the coming age and also a picture of the gospel's present work, and he notes that God cares about His creation (Rom 8:19–22). The swamps "left for salt" (v11) may preserve salt for use, as Guzik suggests; others see a sober note that what will not receive the river stays as it was. Guzik faults commentators who spiritualize these details, calling Clarke's reading "an overly-spiritualized approach."

Trees of healing (v12)

Fruit every month and leaves that never wither — because "their water flows from the sanctuary." This echoes the tree of life (Gen 2:9) and points ahead to the tree of life in Revelation 22:2, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. The blessed man of Psalm 1 is a tree planted by streams of water whose leaf does not wither (Ps 1:3; compare Jer 17:7–8).

The land and its borders (vv13–20)

God marks real borders for the twelve tribes, largely matching Numbers 34:1–12. Joseph gets two portions because Ephraim and Manasseh count as two tribes (Gen 48:5), keeping the number at twelve once Levi is set apart to the sanctuary. Each tribe shares equally, grounded in God's oath to the patriarchs (Gen 12:7; 15:18). Guzik takes these as literal millennial borders, says exact locations can't be fixed because geography will change before then; Alexander, in Guzik, adds that this is not the eternal state, since there is still a sea (Rev 21:1). Readers who take the vision symbolically see in the borders the certainty of God's promise and its fulfillment in Christ, the true heir (Gal 3:16, 29).

The alien as native-born (vv21–23)

The Law already told Israel to love the stranger (Lev 19:33–34), but here the resident alien who settles and raises a family receives an inheritance of land like a born Israelite. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik, note that "Ezekiel goes far beyond the Torah's legislation," and Taylor, also in Guzik, reads it as proselytes who fully join Israel's life. It anticipates the gospel, in which Gentiles who were strangers become fellow citizens (Eph 2:12, 19).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **water — *mayim* (H4325):** water, waters.
- **threshold — *miphtan* (H4670):** threshold, sill.
- **river — *nachal* (H5158):** a stream, torrent, wadi.
- **swim — *sachu* (H7813):** swimming; water deep enough to swim.
- **become fresh — *rapha*ʾ (H7495):** to heal, make whole, repair.

- **live — *chayah* (H2421):** to live, revive, keep alive.
- **fish — *dagah* (H1710):** fish.
- **salt — *melach* (H4417):** salt.
- **leaf — *ʿaleh* (H5929):** leaf, foliage.
- **wither — *nabel* (H5034):** to fade, wither, decay.
- **healing — *terupah* (H8644):** remedy, medicine.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** holy place, sanctuary.
- **inheritance — *nachalah* (H5159):** inherited portion, possession.
- **alien — *ger* (H1616):** sojourner, resident foreigner.
- **native-born — *ʾezrach* (H249):** one born in the land, a native.

Cross-references

Gen 2:9–10; Gen 48:5; Lev 19:33–34; Num 34:1–12; Ps 1:3; Ps 36:8–9; Ps 46:4; Isa 35:6–7; Isa 56:3–7; Jer 17:7–8; Joel 3:18; Zech 14:8; John 4:14; John 7:37–39; Rom 8:19–22; Gal 3:29; Eph 2:12–19; Rev 21:1; Rev 22:1–2.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 47:5 (KJV)

5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was ★ a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, ★ waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

Command to obey — "Son of man, have you seen this?"

(v6). The guide wouldn't let Ezekiel walk past what God was doing. I'm called to stop and look — to see where God's life is moving and to step in deeper. I won't stay at the ankles when He's leading me into water over my head.

Sin to confess — staying in the shallows

Ankle-deep faith is comfortable: I can still stand on my own. I confess where I've kept God at a depth I could control. Going deeper means losing my footing and being carried.

Warning to heed — "left for salt"

(v11). The river healed everything it reached, but the marshes stayed salt. Some men sit right next to the river — in chapel, in a meeting, in a Bible study — and never let it in. I've been that man. Being near the water isn't the same as being changed by it.

Promise to trust — "everything will live where the river goes"

(v9). The Dead Sea is the hardest case on the map, and God makes it teem with life. For the man who thinks addiction or a prison number has made him dead water, this is the word: no life is too salty for the river that flows from God's house.

Example to follow — make room for the outsider

God gave the alien an inheritance like the native-born (v22). In our study groups the newcomer, the man just released, the one with nothing, should be treated as family — not as a guest on probation.

Worship

From the LORD's house flows a river that deepens, heals and gives life. His trees never wither; their fruit never fails; their leaves heal. He keeps His oath to the fathers, and He makes room at His table for strangers.

Prayer

Lord GOD, lead me out past my depth. Let Your river flow into the dead places in me and in the men I serve, and make them live. Don't let any of us stay salt beside the water. Make me a tree planted by Your stream, with leaves that bring healing to others. And make my heart wide toward the stranger, as Yours was toward me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ezekiel 48

The LORD Is There:
Every Tribe a Place, Every Tribe a Gate

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Every tribe gets a place, every tribe gets a gate, and God's house sits at the center of it all. Ezekiel's book began with exiles far from home and the glory leaving the city; it ends with a city whose very name is "The LORD is there." That's the whole point of the land, the temple and the city — God with His people.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 48 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] Now ⇄ these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; ★ a portion for Dan.

[2] And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Asher.

[3] And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Naphtali.

[4] And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Manasseh.

[5] And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Ephraim.

[6] And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Reuben.

[7] And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, Amber a portion for Judah.

[8] And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand reeds in breadth, and in length as one of the other parts, from the east side unto the west side: and ▲ the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it.

[9] Green The oblation that ye shall offer unto the LORD shall be of five and twenty thousand in length, and of ten thousand in breadth.

[10] And for them, even for the priests, shall be this ⇄ holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand in length, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and ▲ the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof.

[11] It shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; ★ which have kept my charge, ⚠ which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

[12] And this oblation of the land that is offered shall be unto them ▲ a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

[13] And over against the border of the priests the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length shall be five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand.

[14] And Green they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firstfruits of the land: ▲ for it is holy unto the LORD.

[15] And the five thousand, that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a profane place for the city, for dwelling, and for suburbs: and Amber the city shall be in the midst thereof.

[16] And these shall be the measures thereof; the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred.

17 And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty.

18 And the residue in length over against the oblation of the holy portion shall be ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward: and it shall be over against the oblation of the holy portion; and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that serve the city.

19 And they that serve the city shall serve it ★ out of all the tribes of Israel.

20 All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the ⇄ holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city.

21 And ◷ the residue shall be for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the ⇄ holy oblation, and of the possession of the city, over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for the prince: and it shall be the ⇄ holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house shall be in the midst thereof.

22 Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince.

23 As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side unto the west side, ◷ Benjamin shall have a portion.

24 And by the border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west side, Simeon shall have a portion.

25 And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar a portion.

26 And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun a portion.

27 And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad a portion.

28 And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be even from Tamar unto the waters of strife in Kadesh, and to the river toward the great sea.

29 ★ This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, ▲ saith the Lord GOD.

30 And these are the goings out of the city on the north side, four thousand and five hundred measures.

31 And ★ the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi.

32 And at the east side four thousand and five hundred: and three gates; and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, ★ one gate of Dan.

33 And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun.

34 At the west side four thousand and five hundred, with their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali.

35 It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, ▲ The LORD is there.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ⇄ these are the names of the tribes
- **v1** ★ a portion for Dan
- **v7** ◷ a portion for Judah
- **v8** ▲ the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it
- **v9** ▮▮ The oblation that ye shall offer unto the LORD
- **v10** ⇄ holy oblation *(every occurrence)*

- **v10** ▲ the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof
- **v11** ★ which have kept my charge
- **v11** ⚠ which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray
- **v12** ▲ a thing most holy
- **v14** ▮▮ they shall not sell of it, neither exchange
- **v14** ▲ for it is holy unto the LORD
- **v15** ◷ the city shall be in the midst thereof
- **v19** ★ out of all the tribes of Israel
- **v21** ◷ the residue shall be for the prince
- **v23** ◷ Benjamin shall have a portion
- **v29** ★ This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance
- **v29** ▲ saith the Lord GOD
- **v31** ★ the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel
- **v32** ★ one gate of Dan
- **v35** ▲ The LORD is there

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 48:1 (KJV)

[1]Now ⇄ these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; ★ a portion for Dan.

Setting

This is the last chapter of the temple vision dated "in the twenty-fifth year of our exile" (40:1), about 573 BC, and the last chapter of the book. Ezekiel's ministry began with the glory of God appearing to an exile by the river Chebar (ch 1); he watched that glory leave the temple and the city (chs 10–11) and return to a new temple (43:1–5). Chapter 47 set the outer borders of the land. Now the land is divided among the tribes, the holy district is laid out, and the city receives its twelve gates and a new name.

Structure

- vv1–7 — **seven tribes north:** "Now these are the names of the tribes" (v1). From the northern border southward, in east–west strips: "Dan, one portion" (v1), then Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben and Judah (vv2–7).
- vv8–12 — **the holy allotment and the priests:** next to Judah lies "the allotment which you shall set apart," with "the sanctuary shall be in the middle of it" (v8). "The allotment that you shall set apart to the LORD" (v9) belongs to the priests, the sons of Zadok, "who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the sons of Israel went astray" as the Levites did (v11). It is "a most holy place" (v12).
- vv13–14 — **the Levites' land:** a strip of equal size beside the priests. "They shall not sell or exchange any of it," "for it is holy to the LORD" (v14).

- vv15–20 — **the city:** the remaining strip is "for common use for the city" (v15), with the city in its middle, a square of 4,500 cubits on each side (v16) and open land around it (v17). Its farmland feeds the city's workers (v18). "The workers of the city, out of all the tribes of Israel" shall cultivate it (v19). "The whole allotment shall be 25,000 by 25,000 cubits" (v20).
- vv21–22 — **the prince's land:** what remains on both sides of the holy allotment and the city belongs to the prince, between Judah and Benjamin (vv21–22).
- vv23–29 — **five tribes south:** "As for the rest of the tribes" (v23): Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun and Gad (vv23–27), with Gad's southern border at Tamar and Meribath-kadesh (v28). "This is the land which you shall divide by lot" (v29).
- vv30–35 — **the gates and the name:** twelve gates, three on each side, "named for the tribes of Israel" (v31): Reuben, Judah, Levi (north); Joseph, Benjamin, Dan (east); Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun (south); Gad, Asher, Naphtali (west) (vv31–34). "The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, 'The LORD is there'" (v35).

Repeated words

tribes (vv1, 19, 23, 29, 31); allotment (vv8, 9, 10, 12, 18, 20, 21); holy (vv10, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21); sanctuary (vv8, 10, 21); city (vv15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 30, 31, 35); gate(s) (vv31, 32, 33, 34); prince (vv21, 22).

Contrasts

the sons of Israel and the Levites "went astray" ⟷ the sons of Zadok "kept My charge" (v11). The holy allotment that may not be sold (v14) ⟷ land "for common use" (v15). Northern tribes ⟷ southern tribes, with the sanctuary between them (vv1–29). Dan, first to fall into idolatry ⟷ Dan, first in the list and given a gate (vv1, 32). The glory gone from the city (chs 10–11) ⟷ "The LORD is there" (v35).

Chapter theme (my words)

Every tribe gets a place, every tribe gets a gate, and God's house sits at the center of it all. Ezekiel's book began with exiles far from home and the glory leaving the city; it ends with a city whose very name is "The LORD is there." That's the whole point of the land, the temple and the city — God with His people.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 48:10 (KJV)

10 And for them, even for the priests, shall be this ⇄ holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand in length, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and ▲ the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof.

The tribes in their places (vv1–7, 23–29)

The land is cut into parallel strips running from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, seven north of the holy district and five south of it. Unlike Joshua's division, no tribe settles east of the Jordan. The sons of Jacob's wives' maidservants — Dan, Asher, Naphtali and Gad — are placed at the far ends, while Judah and Benjamin sit on either side of the holy allotment. Feinberg, in Guzik, describes them as "Judah and Benjamin, the tribes which remained faithful to the Davidic dynasty." Dan is missing from the tribal list in Revelation 7; Guzik notes that many connect this with Dan's early idolatry (Judg 18:30–31) and sees Dan's place here, first on the list, as a demonstration of God's grace.

The holy allotment (vv8–14)

At the center is a square district, 25,000 cubits on each side (v20), holding the land of the priests, the land of the Levites and the city. The priests are the sons of Zadok, rewarded for faithfulness when others went astray (44:15). The land is holy to the LORD, "this choice portion of land" (v14) — the Hebrew word is *reshith*, the first and best — and it may not be sold or traded. What belongs to God isn't for bargaining.

The city and its workers (vv15–20)

The city sits in a strip "for common use," not inside the holy district, and is about a mile and a half square — Wright, in Guzik: "about a mile and a half square." Its workers come "out of all the tribes of Israel" (v19), so the city belongs to the whole nation, not one tribe. Guzik takes the measurements literally and quotes Feinberg that such detail is "inexplicable, if all the statements are to be taken symbolically." The prince's land frames the holy district on east and west (vv21–22), so he is provided for and need not take the people's land (45:8; 46:18).

How should we read it?

As with chapters 40–47, Christians differ. Guzik reads the whole division literally, as the arrangement of the land in Messiah's millennial kingdom, citing Feinberg, who compares the detail to the instructions for the tabernacle. Others see an idealized picture of a restored people ordered around God's presence, fulfilled in Christ and consummated in the new Jerusalem, whose twelve gates also bear the names of the tribes of Israel (Rev 21:12–13). Guzik notes the likeness to Revelation 21 but says the two are not identical.

Twelve gates (vv30–34)

In the gates Levi has its own gate and Joseph's two tribes count as one, so the twelve gates bear the names of Jacob's twelve sons. Guzik cites Block that ancient city walls usually had only one gate, and Feinberg that the gates symbolize unity. A city with twelve gates is a city built for entering.

"The LORD is there" (v35)

Hebrew *Yahweh Shammah*. Guzik connects it to the glory leaving the temple in chapters 10–11 and returning in chapter 43, and to God dwelling with His people in Revelation 21:3; with Wiersbe, he lists it among the seven compound names of the LORD. The book that opened with a priest in exile seeing God's glory in a foreign land closes with God's presence as the name of the city. The story of the Bible moves the same way: from Eden, to the tabernacle, to the temple, to Immanuel — God with us (Matt 1:23) — to the new Jerusalem, where God Himself dwells among His people.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **tribe — *shebet* (H7626):** a rod, staff; by extension a tribe.
- **allotment — *terumah* (H8641):** a contribution, offering, portion set apart.
- **sanctuary — *miqdash* (H4720):** holy place, sanctuary.
- **holy — *qodesh* (H6944):** holiness, a holy thing, set apart.
- **charge — *mishmereth* (H4931):** a watch, duty, obligation kept.
- **go astray — *taʿah* (H8582):** to wander, err, go astray.
- **sell — *makar* (H4376):** to sell.
- **exchange — *mur* (H4171):** to change, exchange.
- **choice portion — *reshith* (H7225):** beginning, first, best part; firstfruits.
- **common — *chol* (H2455):** common, profane, not holy.
- **city — *ʿir* (H5892):** a city, town.
- **inheritance — *nachalah* (H5159):** inherited portion, possession.
- **gate — *shaʿar* (H8179):** gate, entrance.
- **name — *shem* (H8034):** name, renown, character.
- **there — *shammah* (H8033):** there, thither — as in *Yahweh Shammah*.

Cross-references

Gen 49:1–28; Num 34:1–12; Josh 14:1–5; Judg 18:30–31; Ps 46:4–5; Ps 132:13–14; Isa 60:14; Jer 3:17; Ezek 10:18–19; Ezek 11:22–23; Ezek 43:1–7; Ezek 44:15; Zech 2:10–11; Matt 1:23; John 1:14; John 14:23; 2 Cor 6:16; Rev 7:4–8; Rev 21:2–3; Rev 21:12–13; Rev 22:3–4.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 48:11 (KJV)

[11] It shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; ★ which have kept my charge, ⚠ which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

Command to obey — "they shall not sell or exchange any of it"

(v14). What is holy to the LORD isn't up for trade. My time with Him, my marriage, my integrity, the ministry He's given me — I won't sell them for convenience or swap them for something that looks better this week. A man in recovery learns that the one thing he can't trade away is his sobriety, his first allegiance; my first allegiance is to the Lord.

Sin to confess — going astray with the crowd

The sons of Zadok "did not go astray when the sons of Israel went astray" (v11). It's easy to drift when everyone drifts. I confess where I've let the crowd around me set my standard instead of God's charge.

Warning to heed — faithfulness shows up later

The sons of Zadok's faithfulness was remembered generations later; so was the unfaithfulness of others (44:10–15). What I do in the dark years matters in the bright ones. For a man doing time, the choices he makes in the cell will be remembered on the outside.

Promise to trust — "The LORD is there"

(v35). The book that began in exile ends with God's presence. For the man who thinks God left him in a prison yard, a detox ward or a dark apartment, this is the last word: God's goal is to be with His people. In Christ He is already with me (Matt 28:20), and one day the whole city will bear His name.

Example to follow — a gate for every tribe

Even Dan, the first to fall into idolatry, has a gate (v32). God made room for every tribe. When I build tools, write books and gather men, I want to build with many gates — a way in for every man, whatever his story.

Worship

The LORD keeps His promises to the last tribe and the last border. He sets His sanctuary at the center of His people. He remembers the faithful, makes room for the failed, and names His city by His own presence: The LORD is there.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You are the point of everything — the land, the temple, the city. Be at the center of my life. Keep me from going astray with the crowd and from trading what is holy. Open Your gates wide to the men I serve, and let each one find his place among Your people. Thank You that in Jesus You are with us now, and that one day we'll live where Your name is "The LORD is there." Amen.