

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Ezekiel

Introduction

MAIN THEME- The sovereignty and glory of the Lord. To announce God's judgment on Israel and other nations and to foretell the eventual salvation of God's people.

KEY VERSES-

Ezek 36:24-26

24 "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

BIOGRAPHY-

Very little is known of the personal history of Ezekiel. But enough information may be garnered from various Bible references to project a profile of this fascinating prophet. The name Ezekiel is written in Hebrew as Yehezqe'l, meaning "God strengthens." The prophet was truly a tower of strength in the midst of a defeated people. Also God made him strong to resist the opposition of hardhearted and rebellious Israelites.

If the phrase "thirtieth year" of 1:1 refers to Ezekiel's age at that time (593 B.C.), then he was born in 623 B.C., during the reign of King Josiah. Ezekiel was a child when the book of the Law was recovered in the course of renovating the Temple in 621 B.C. The years of his boyhood and youth were thus spent in the bright reformation period that followed that recovery. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was born of a priestly heritage. His father's name was Buzi, a priest possibly of the Zakok line. Ezekiel was married, but it is not known if he had any children. The darkest day of his life may have been when the Lord announced to him two tragic events: the siege of Jerusalem and the death of his beloved wife.

When Ezekiel was about eighteen years old (605 B.C.), the Babylonians made their first invasion into Judea, carrying away some captives, among whom was Daniel. Eight years later (597 B.C.), they came again, and this time Ezekiel was among the captives, which comprised the upper classes of Judah. Some of the exiles were incarcerated; others were made slaves; many were allowed to settle down in their own homes in various settlements of the exiles. It was of divine providence that Ezekiel was among those granted such liberties.

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His home was in Tel-abib, a principal colony of exiles near the city of Babylon. Tel-abib was located by the canal Chebar which flowed from the Euphrates fork above Babylon through Nippur, winding back into the Euphrates near Erech. Ezekiel's home was a meeting place where the Jewish elders often came to consult with him. It may be that his home was open to any of the exiles who wanted spiritual help.

Five years after his arrival in the strange land of Babylon, Ezekiel received his call to the prophetic office, to minister to the exiles in Babylonia. What he experienced and heard in this call is recorded in the first three chapters of his book. Twenty two years later, when Ezekiel was around fifty-two years old, he was still prophesying to the exiles. It is not known how much longer his ministry continued.

Ezekiel the prophet was strong and fearless. This is what God made him and this was his dominant characteristic. He had boundless energy, and a love for the simple, clear and direct. Though his disposition was firm, he had a shepherd's heart for his country-men. Ezekiel's book reveals that he was methodical, artistic, and a mystic. With a deeply introspective nature, he must have studied the message of God a great deal as it applied to himself and his brethren. He was truly a practical theologian, and for this he has been called "the first dogmatist of the Old Testament" and "the prophet of personal responsibility."

PROPHET'S MESSAGE-

Ezekiel stressed three points in his prophesying and preaching:

1. *It was sin which brought the people's judgment of exile.* Therefore, the people must repent and return to God.
2. *The exile would last for seventy years, even though false prophets were preaching an early return.* The people had a letter from Jeremiah which concurred with Ezekiel's preaching. The seventy-year captivity began in 605 B.C., with the first deportation of Jews. Before the Jews could return to Jerusalem, they must return to the Lord.
3. *There would be a future restoration of Israel, for a believing remnant.* The general impression of these consolatory messages was that this restoration was in the far-distant future. Most of the adults of Ezekiel's audience had no other hope than this, for seventy years of captivity precluded their returning to Jerusalem in their lifetime.

The tone of Ezekiel's preaching was austere and impressive, for the prophet constantly stressed the Lord's sovereignty and glory. The phrase "glory of the Lord" or its equivalent appears eleven times in the first eleven chapters of his book. The statement of God, "They shall know that I am the Lord," or its equivalent, appears about seventy times in the book.

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CONTENT AND METHOD-

1. *Style.* While it is true that most of the book of Ezekiel consists of the direct addresses of the Lord, the form and style in which those words were recorded is attributable to the writer Ezekiel. His style is very lofty. He has brought prose and poetry together in one composition. The book abounds with visions, parables, allegories, apocalyptic imagery, and various symbolic acts. Although the interpretations of some of its symbols are difficult, it is a singularly fascinating and interesting book. Ezekiel apparently had very methodical habits of recording events and dates. This seen especially in connection with the messages he received from God. There are eleven such dated messages in the book (1:1-2; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1; 32:17; 40:1).

2. *Visions.* Ezekiel is known as “The Prophet of Visions.” The very first verse of his book reads, “The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.” A vision in those days was a miraculous experience of a man of God on a special occasion, whereby God revealed truth to him in some pictorial and audible form. Visions were of all kinds, differing in such things as length, intensity, number of symbols, and whether the vision was perceived in the spirit (as in a dream) or by the conscious physical senses. There are six visions recorded in the book of Ezekiel:

- (1) Vision of the Cherubim - vision of God: Ezekiel's inaugural vision (1:4-28).
- (2) Vision of the Roll or Scroll (2:9-3:3).
- (3) Vision of the Plain (3:22-23).
- (4) Visions of Jerusalem
 - a) Four abominations in the Temple (8:1-18).
 - b) Inhabitants slain (9:1-11).
 - c) City destroyed by fire (10:1-22).
 - d) The Lord departs from the city (11:1-25).
- (5) Vision of Dry Bones (37:1-10).
- (6) Vision of the New Temple and Associated Scenes (40:1-48:35).

3. *Symbolic Actions.* Ezekiel, perhaps more than any other prophet, taught by symbolic actions, those strange things which God asked His prophets to do in order that His messages might impress the people vividly and intensely. God told Ezekiel, “I have set you as a sign to the house of Israel” (12:6). So his symbolic actions were revelatory signs. Some of the things he was commanded to do must have been extremely hard and trying. He was continually exposing himself to the jeers and scorn of the skeptical. But the symbolic acts produced the desired effect, at least upon the hearts of the serious-minded, causing them to ask what these things meant (12:9; 24:19; 37:18). This was the prophet's opportunity to explain their significance and drive home the application.

Following is a list of the main symbolic actions of Ezekiel:

- (1) Sign of the Brick- Jerusalem's siege and fall (4:1-3).
- (2) Sign of the Prophet's Posture- Discomforts of captivity (4:4-8).
- (3) Sign of Famine- Deprivations of captivity (4:9-17).

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- (4) Sign of the Knife and Razor- Utter destruction of the city (5:1-17).
- (5) Sign of House Moving- Removal to another land (12:1-7,17-20).
- (6) Sign of the Sharpened Sword- Judgment imminent (21:1-17).
- (7) Sign of Nebuchadnezzar's Sword- Babylon the captor (21:18-23).
- (8) Sign of the Smelting Furnace- Judgment and purging (22:17-31).
- (9) Sign of Ezekiel's Wife's Death- Blessings forfeited (37:15-27).
- (10) Sign of the Two Sticks- Reunion of Israel and Judah (37:15-17).

4. *Allegories.* Allegories in the Bible are stories intended to teach spiritual lessons. In Ezekiel the allegories have the same purpose as the symbolic actions. They differ in that the allegories teach by words; the symbolic actions teach by actual events. Below are listed the main allegories of Ezekiel:

- (1) The Vine (15:1-8).
- (2) The Faithless Wife (16:1-63).
- (3) The Two Eagles (17:1-21).
- (4) The Cedar (17:22-24).
- (5) The Two Women (23:1-49).
- (6) The Boiling Caldron (24:1-14).

5. *Apocalyptic Imagery.* Apocalyptic writing prophesies of things to come by means of much symbol and imagery. Daniel and Revelation are the two books of the Bible usually classified as apocalyptic. There are many resemblances between Ezekiel and the book of Revelation. Ezekiel contains many apocalyptic passages. Following are some examples:

- (1) Judgment on Idolatrous Israel (6:1-14).
- (2) Judgment on Israel is Near (7:5-12).
- (3) God Will Restore Israel (20:33-44).
- (4) Israel's Future Blessing (28:25-26).
- (5) God's Covenant of Peace (34:25-31).
- (6) Blessings on Israel (36:8-15, 33-36).
- (7) Israel Under Attack and Judgment on Their Enemies (38:1-23).
- (8) Israel's Enemies Destroyed (39:1-29).
- (9) The Healing Waters and Trees (47:1-12).

(excerpts taken from Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament).

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Outline

Part One: The Commission of Ezekiel (1:1-3:27)

- I. Ezekiel Sees the Glory of God (1:1-28)
- II. Ezekiel Is Commissioned to the Word of God (2:1-3:27)

Part Two: Judgment on Judah (4:1-24:27)

- I. Four Signs of Coming Judgment (4:1-5:17)
 - A. Sign of the Clay Tablet (4:1-3)
 - B. Sign of Ezekiel's Lying on His Side (4:4-8)
 - C. Sign of the Defiled Bread (4:9-17)
 - D. Sign of the Razor and Hair (5:1-4)
 - E. Explanation of the Signs (5:5-17)
- II. Two Messages of Coming Judgment (6:1-7:27)
 - A. Destruction Because of Idolatry (6:1-14)
 - B. Description of the Babylonian Conquest (7:1-27)
- III. Four-part Vision of Coming Judgment (8:1-11:25)
 - A. Vision of the Glory of God (8:1-4)
 - B. Vision of the Abominations in the Temple (8:5-18)
 - C. Vision of the Slaying in Jerusalem (9:1-11)
 - D. Departure of the Glory of God to the Threshold (10:1-8)
 - E. Vision of the Wheels and Cherubim (10:9-22)
 - F. Vision of the Twenty-five Wicked Rulers (11:1-12)
 - G. Promise of the Restoration of the Remnant (11:13-21)
 - H. Departure of the Glory of God from the Mount of Olives (11:22-25)
- IV. Signs, Parables, and Messages of Judgment (12:1-24:27)
 - A. Sign of Judah's Captivity (12:1-16)
 - B. Sign of Trembling (12:17-28)
 - C. Message against the False Prophets (13:1-23)
 - D. Message against the Elders (14:1-23)
 - E. Parable of the Vine (15:1-8)
 - F. Parable of Israel's Marriage (16:1-63)
 - G. Parable of the Two Eagles (17:1-24)
 - H. Message of Personal Judgment for Personal Sin (18:1-32)

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- I. Lament for the Princes of Israel (19:1-9)
- J. Parable of the Withered Vine (19:10-14)
- K. Message of Judgment on Jerusalem (20:1-24:27)

Part Three: Judgment on Gentiles (25:1-32:32)

- I. Judgment on Ammon (25:1-7)
- II. Judgment on Moab (25:8-11)
- III. Judgment on Edom (25:12-14)
- IV. Judgment on Philistia (25:15-17)
- V. Judgment on Tyre (26:1-28:19)
- VI. Judgment on Sidon (28:20-26)

- VII. Judgment on Egypt (29:1-32:32)

Part Four: Restoration of Israel (33:1-48:35)

- I. The Return of Israel to the Land (33:1-39:29)
 - A. The Appointment of Ezekiel as Watchman (33:1-33)
 - B. The Message to the Shepherds (34:1-31)
 - C. The Judgment of Edom (35:1-15)
 - D. The Prophecies Concerning Israel (36:1-37:28)
 - E. Prophecies Concerning Gog and Magog (38:1-39:29)

- II. The Restoration of Israel In the Kingdom (40:1-48:35)
 - A. The New Temple (40:1-43:27)
 - B. The New Worship (44:1-46:24)
 - C. The New Land (47:1-48:35)

(outline excerpts taken from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

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Lesson One - Chapters 1 -3
"Prophet's Call and Commission"

Today's Word -

Matt 19:26 ...With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Day One - Read chapter one. This section is Ezekiel's vision of God (part 1)

Ezekiel was one of the priests and he was carried captive to Chaldea with Jehoiachin. All his prophecies appear to have been delivered in that country, at some place north of Babylon. Their chief object appears to have been to comfort his brethren in captivity. He is directed to warn of the dreadful calamities coming upon Judea, particularly upon the false prophets, and the neighboring nations. Also, to announce the future restoration of Israel and Judah from their several dispersions, and their wonderful situation in their latter days, under the Messiah. Much of Christ will be found in this book, especially in the conclusion.

This first day is concerned with Ezekiel's vision of God, and of the angelic host. In verses 1-14, it is a delight and mercy to have the word of God brought to us, and a duty to pay attention to it diligently, when we are in affliction. The voice of God came in the fullness of light and power, by the Holy Spirit. These visions seem to have been sent to possess the prophet's mind with great and high thoughts of God. Also, it was intended to strike terror upon sinners and to speak comfort to those that feared God, and humbled themselves. In verses 4-14, is the first part of the vision, which represents God as attended and served by a vast company of angels, who are all his messengers, his ministers, doing his commandments. This vision would impress the mind with solemn awe and fear of the Divine displeasure, yet raise expectations of blessings. The fire is surrounded with a glory. Though we cannot search and find out God to perfection, yet we see the brightness around about it. The likeness of the living creatures came out of the midst of the fire; angels derive their being and power from God. They have the understanding of a man, and far more. A lion excels in strength and boldness. An ox excels in diligence and patience, and unwearied discharge of the work he has to do. An eagle excels in quickness and piercing sight, and in soaring high; and the angels, who excel man in all these respects, put on these appearances. The angels have wings; and whatever business God sends them upon, they lose no time. They stood straight, and firm, and steady. They had not only wings for motion, but hands for action. Many persons are quick, who are not active; they hurry about, but do nothing to purpose; they have wings, but no hands. But wherever the angels' wings carried them, they carried hands with them, to be doing what duty required. Whatever service they went about, they went every one straight forward. When we go straight, we go forward; when we serve God with one heart, we perform work. They turned not when they went. They made no mistakes; and their work needed not to be gone over again. They turned not from their business to bother with any other thing. They went wherever the Spirit of God would have them go. The prophet saw these living creatures by their own light, for their appearance was like burning coals of fire; they are seraphim, or "burners;" denoting the intensity of their love to God, and fervent zeal in his service. We may learn profitable lessons from subjects we cannot fully enter into or understand. But we should pay attention to the things which relate to our peace and duty, and leave the mysterious things to the Lord, to whom they alone belong. (from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

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Questions-

1. Where was Ezekiel living during the events of this chapter? (v.3)

2. What religious office was Ezekiel occupying at the beginning of his narrative? (v.3)
What office was God Calling Him to?

3. How did God communicate to Ezekiel when the Heavens were opened? (v.1)

4. Where did the Living Creatures come from? (v.4)

5. What were the four faces of the Living Creatures? (v.10)

6. These Living Creatures were also described in Rev. 4:6-9. What does this passage tell us about their duties?

7. This vision of God had a very transforming effect upon Ezekiel. How do you think his concept of God was altered or enhanced? (vv.26-28)

Memory Verse-

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This weeks memory verse is from the third chapter of Ecclesiastes. This promise reminds us that all our tasks are from God to work a wonderful purpose. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

Eccl 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time...

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to change my vision of God?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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James 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Day Two - Re-read chapter one. This is a continuation of Ezekiel's vision of God (part 2)

This second day we will explore the conduct of God's divine plan, (verses 15-25) and a revelation of the Son of man upon his heavenly throne (verses 26-28).

In verses 15-25, God's providence, represented by the wheels, produced changes. Sometimes one spoke of the wheel is uppermost, sometimes another; but the motion of the wheel on its own axis is regular and steady. We need not be unduly concerned, since; the wheels are turning round and will raise us in due time, while those who ignore and live in prosperity do not how soon they may be cast down. The wheel is near the living creatures; the angels are employed as ministers of God's providence. The spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels; the same wisdom, power, and holiness of God, that guide and govern the angels, they also order all events in this lower world. The wheel had four faces, denoting that the providence of God exerts itself in all parts. Look every way upon the wheel of providence, it has a face toward you. Their appearance and work were as a wheel in the middle of a wheel. This working of God's plan and His providence seem to us to be dark, unknowable, and unaccountable, yet are all wisely ordered for the best. The motion of these wheels was steady, regular, and constant. They went as the Spirit directed, therefore they did not return. We should not have to undo that by repentance which we have done wrong, if we followed the guidance of the Spirit. The rings, or rims of the wheels were so vast, that when put in motion the prophet was afraid to look upon them. The consideration of the height and depth of God's counsel should awe us. They were full of eyes round about. The motions of Providence are all directed by infinite Wisdom. All events are determined by the eyes of the Lord, which are in every place beholding the evil and the good; for there is no such thing as chance or fortune. The firmament above was a crystal, glorious, but terribly so. That which we take to be a dark cloud, is to God clear as crystal, through which he looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth. When the angels had roused a careless world, they let down their wings, that God's voice might be plainly heard. The voice of Providence is to open men's ears to the voice of the word. Sounds on earth should awaken our attention to the voice from heaven; for how shall we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaks from there in heaven.

In verses 26-28, the eternal Son, the second Person in the Trinity, who afterwards took the human nature, is here denoted. The first thing observed was a throne. It is a throne of glory, a throne of grace, a throne of triumph, a throne of government, a throne of judgment. It is good news to men, that the throne above the firmament is filled with One who appears, even there, in the likeness of a man. The throne is surrounded with a rainbow, the well-known emblem of the covenant, representing God's mercy and covenanted love to his people. The fire of God's wrath was breaking out against Jerusalem, but bounds should be set to it; he would look upon the bow, and remember the covenant. All the prophet saw was only to prepare him for what he was to hear. When he fell on his face, he heard the voice of One that spoke. God delights to teach the humble. Let sinners, then, humble themselves before him. And let believers think upon his glory, that they may be gradually changed into his image by the Spirit of the Lord.
(from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Questions-

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1. Many aspects of these Living Creatures had significance in Levitical terms (i.e. Likeness of man, but Cherubim in reality; burnished bronze, symbol of judgement). Why was this significant to Ezekiel?

2. Ezekiel gives a description of a throne occupied with the likeness of a man. (also see Rev. 4:1-8) Who is he describing? (v.26)

3. What is the significance of the rainbow mentioned in verse 28?

4. Read Isaiah 6:1-5. What is similar in Ezekiel's and Isaiah's actions when they receive their visions of God?

5. Below are some of the symbols used in this chapter. Write down your impression of what they might mean.
 - a) Fire-
 - b) Spirit-
 - c) Wings-
 - d) Wheels-
 - e) Man-
 - f) Lion-
 - g) Ox-
 - h) Eagle-

Memory Verse-

Eccl 3:11

He has _____ everything beautiful in _____ time...

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to enlarge or amplify my vision of God?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Luke 1:4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

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Day Three - Read chapter two. This section is Ezekiel's call (Part 1).

In this section the prophet is directed in what he is to do, (verses 1-5), and encouraged to be resolute, faithful, and devoted (verses 6-10).

In verses 1-5, so that Ezekiel would not be lifted up with the abundance of the revelations, he is put in a mind that still he is a son of man, a weak, mortal creature. As Christ usually called himself the Son of man, it was also an honorable distinction. Ezekiel's posture showed reverence, but his standing up would be a posture of greater readiness and fitness for business. God will speak to us, when we stand ready to do what he commands us. As Ezekiel had not strength of his own, the Spirit entered into him. God is graciously pleased to work in us whatever he requires of us. The Holy Spirit sets us upon our feet, by inclining our wills to do our duty. Thus, when the Lord calls upon the sinner to awake, and attend to the concerns of his soul, the Spirit of life and grace comes with the call. Ezekiel is sent with a message to the children of Israel. Many might treat his message with contempt, yet they should know by the event that a prophet had been sent to them. God will be glorified, and his word made honorable, whether it be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death.

In verses 6-10, those who will do any thing serious in the service of God, must not fear men. Wicked men are as briars and thorns; but they are cursed, and their end is to be burned. The prophet must be faithful to the souls of those to whom he was sent. All who speak from God to others, must obey his voice. The discoveries of sin, and the warnings of wrath, should be matter of lamentation and despair. And those acquainted with the word of God, will clearly perceive it is filled with woe to impenitent sinners; and that all the precious promises of the gospel are for the repenting, believing servants of the Lord.
(from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Questions-

1. What term was used by God to address Ezekiel? (v.1)

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2. Give your ideas concerning God's command to Ezekiel to rise to his feet. (v.1)

3. Can we relate to Ezekiel's experience with the Holy Spirit? (v.2)

4. The Holy Spirit gave Ezekiel what type of help? (v.2)

5. In verse three, Ezekiel receives his first instructions. What was his charge?

6. In verse four, Ezekiel is told the role that he must assume. What is that role?

7. What would be the measure of Ezekiel's success? (vv.6-8)

Memory Verse-

Eccl 3:11

___ *has made* _____ *beautiful in its* _____...

Journal-

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1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the call upon Ezekiel's life?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Phil 2:14 Do all things without complaining and disputing,

Day Four - Re-read chapter two. This is a continuation of Ezekiel's call (Part 2).

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Questions-

1. How did God describe the people of Israel? (vv.4-5)

2. What did Ezekiel hear from God about the prospect of success for his mission? (vv.3-5)

3. What was the nature of the message that was given to Ezekiel? (vv.8-10)

4. What did God give Ezekiel as an encouragement for his mission? (v.5)

5. What did God warn Ezekiel not to fear? (v.6)

6. Have you ever confronted a hostile group with the Gospel?
If so, briefly describe your feelings:

Briefly describe their reactions:

Memory Verse-

Eccl 3:11

He _____ made _____ beautiful in _____ ...

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the call of God upon my own life?

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2. My response:

Today's Word-

Ps 119:97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Day Five - Read chapter three. This section is Ezekiel's commission (Part 1).

In this section we study the preparation of the prophet for his work, (verses 1-11) and his office, as that of a watchman, (verses 12-2) and the restraining and restoring of the prophet's speech (22-27).

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In verses 1-11, Ezekiel was to receive the truths of God as the food for his soul, and to feed upon them by faith, and he would be strengthened. Gracious souls can receive those truths of God with delight, which speak terror to the wicked. He must speak all that, and that only, which God spoke to him. How can we better speak God's mind than with his words? If disappointed as to his people, he must not be offended. The Ninevites were convicted by Jonah's preaching, when Israel was unhumbled and unreformed. We must leave this unto the Divine sovereignty, and say, Lord, your judgments are a great deep mystery. They will not regard the word of the prophet, for they will not regard the correction of God. Christ promises to strengthen him. He must continue earnest in preaching, whatever the success might be.

In verses 12-21, this mission made the holy angels rejoice. All this was to convince Ezekiel, that the God who sent him had power to bear him out in his work. He was overwhelmed with grief for the sins and miseries of his people, and overpowered by the glory of the vision he had seen. And however solitude, meditation, and communion with God may be sweet, the servant of the Lord must prepare to serve his generation. The Lord told the prophet he had appointed him a watchman to the house of Israel. If we warn the wicked, we are not chargeable with their ultimate judgment. Though such passages refer to the national covenant made with Israel, they are equally to be applied to the final state of all men under every dispensation. We are not only to encourage and comfort those who appear to be righteous, but they are to be warned, for many have grown high-minded and secure, have fallen, and even died in their sins. Surely then the hearers of the gospel should desire warnings, and even reproofs.

In verses 22-27, let us call ourselves forever indebted to the mediation of Christ, for the blessed transaction between God and man; and a true believer will say, I am never less alone than when without the presence of the Lord. When the Lord opened Ezekiel's mouth, he was to deliver his message boldly, to place life and death, the blessing and the curse, before the people, and leave them to their choice.

(from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Questions-

1. Ezekiel was given a scroll of God's Word to eat. Read Rev. 10:8-11 and compare Ezekiel's experience with that of John.
2. Why did John find the Word bitter in his stomach?

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3. After eating the scroll, where did God instruct Ezekiel to take His words? (v.10)

4. In verse fourteen, why did Ezekiel become so embittered?

5. Why did God make Ezekiel so hard-headed?

6. God gave Ezekiel another role in addition to that of a prophet. What was that role? (v.17)

7. Following the last question, what is the main task of that role? (Also see II Samuel 18:24-27 and II Kings 9:17-20).

Memory Verse-

Eccl 3:11

He has _____ beautiful in _____...

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to help me understand the difficulties of a prophet of God?

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2. My response:

Today's Word-

Ps 20:1 May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you;

Day Six - Re-read chapter three. This section is Ezekiel's commission (Part 2).

Questions-

1. What dire warning is given to Ezekiel concerning his conduct towards the House of Israel? (vv.18-19)

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2. What is meaning of the “stumbling block” in verse twenty?

3. The people had fallen into idolatry. Where could they return?

4. According to verse twenty seven, how was Ezekiel to start his ministry?

5. When was the prophet allowed to speak? (v.27)

6. Did God want Ezekiel to rebuke the people of Israel? (v.26)

7. Does this restriction upon Ezekiel have relevance to us today?

Briefly explain why.

Memory Verse-

Eccl 3:11

.....

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to help me understand the rewards of a prophet of God?

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2. My response:

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Lesson Two - Chapters 4 -7
"Prediction of Judgment"

Today's Word -

Hosea 12:6 So you, by the help of your God, return; observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually.

Day One - Read Ezekiel 4. This section announces the judgment of Jerusalem (part 1)
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In this section of the book, the city of Jerusalem and punishment for the sin of its inhabitants constitute the focus of the prophecies. Ezekiel is now among the captives in Babylon, but they still had Jerusalem upon their hearts and minds. These enactment prophecies, unusual as they were, had the purpose of calling attention to the coming disaster to Jerusalem. Two things are here represented to him in vision:

- 1) the fortifications that should be raised against the city; this is signified by the prophet's laying siege to the picture of Jerusalem (v. 1-3) and lying first on one side and then on the other side before it (v. 4-8);
- 2) the famine that should rage within the city; this is signified by his eating very coarse food, and confining himself to a little of it, so long as this typical representation lasted (v. 9-17).

Ezekiel's fellow exiles surely did not expect a second Babylonian invasion of Judah and a second siege of the city ending in its destruction. They could not be aware, as God was, of the increasing scheming on the part of the puppet king, Zedekiah, to declare independence from Babylon and break the existing treaty with its monarch (2Kings 25:20, 2Chron. 36:30). But even more important, they did not understand the extent of God's anger against His people. In reality, however, the first siege, capture, and exile of which they had been part (2Kings 25:10-16) was only a token of what was to follow.

God told him to take a clay tablet, that is, a flat block of moist clay not yet baked, and draw on it a map of Jerusalem. Presumably using clay and sticks, the prophet built replica siege works: ramps climbing to the tops of walls, close-by encampments of soldiers, and battering rams to pound against the gates. Ezekiel was told to add an iron plate to the usual features of the model. The plate constituted a barrier between his face and the city. This symbolized God, who was hiding His face from His people. The whole enactment prophecy is then a sign to the Israelites that God has rejected them and separated Himself from them.

The prophet must undertake a long, painfully slow enactment prophecy of lying on each side that lasted a total of 430 days, 390 of those days representing the years of Israel's punishment and 40 days representing the 40 years of Judah's punishment for iniquity. Ezekiel must add to his regimen of lying on his side the daily discipline of eating skimpy meals and drinking small amounts of water. This kind of famine is predicted in Deut. 28:52-57. This famine would require paltry food and drink portions, and these would contribute to the anxious dread that those under siege would experience.

(Notes excerpted from Matthew Henry's Commentary, Communicator's Commentary and Shepherd's Notes)

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Questions-

1. What was the writing tablet used in verse one?

2. What was drawn upon this tablet?

3. Why was Ezekiel told to put his face against an iron pan? (v.2)

4. What terrible event was predicted against the city of Jerusalem? (vv.1-9)

5. Why was Ezekiel told to lie upon each of his sides? (vv. 4-6)

6. The siege of Jerusalem was to last for two years and cause great famine. Why do these actions of Ezekiel seem to be so serious and prophetic?

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Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from chapter 18 of Proverbs. This promise reminds us of God's strength and how we are safe under His protection. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

Proverbs 18:10

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to help me understand the judgments of God?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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Studies in Ezekiel

1 John 3:18 "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Day Two - Re-read Ezekiel chapter 4. This is a continuation of the announcements of judgment and Ezekiel's enactments (part 2)

During the time the prophet was lying on his side, he took wheat, mixed it with other grains, and made bread. Normally, Israelites would use only wheat; mixing the wheat with coarser grains like barley was a sign of poverty and famine. Ezekiel weighed about eight ounces of bread and ate it during the time he was lying on his side for 390 days. The bread was to be baked over human waste. Animals dung was commonly used as fuel, but human dung would have defiled the food (Deut. 23:12-14). The water he drank was also measured – approximately one quart. This entire picture symbolized the scarcity of food because of the invasion of their land.

Questions-

1. The third sign of defiled bread was to have what significance to the people of Jerusalem? (vv.9-13)

2. These signs were used to predict judgment upon Jerusalem. Why was the destruction of Jerusalem predicted? (v.17)

2. To what part of this action does Ezekiel object and complain? (v. 12)

3. How does God relent to Ezekiel's complaint? (v. 15)

4. Why was Ezekiel instructed to be restrained with some type of device? (v. 8).

Memory Verse-

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Proverbs 18:10

"The name of the _____ is a strong tower; the _____ run to it and are safe."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the severity of God's judgments?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Hebrews 13:5 "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Day Three - Read Ezekiel chapter 5. This section contains more signs of judgment.

In this section the sign of the Shaven Head and Beard is given. God instructed Ezekiel to take a sharp sword. Using it as a barber's razor, he was to shave his head and beard. Then, in view of the people, Ezekiel burned one-third of his hair in the fire, struck one-third with the sword around the city and scattered one-third to the wind. But Ezekiel took a few strands of hair and bound them in the fold of his robe.

This acted parable is specifically interpreted in verse 12. One-third of the people of Jerusalem would die by the plague or famine; one-third would be killed by the invading Babylonian soldiers; and one-third would be scattered as they fled the devastated city. The few strands of hair in the fold of Ezekiel's garment represented the remnant that would be saved.

Verses 13 through 17 provide an amplified description of the judgment. Israel would be a symbol of warning to other nations. Through His judgments, God was displaying His wrath at sin and against Israel. The recurring phrase "I, the Lord, have spoken" reminded the people that judgment originated with God.

Questions-

1. What do the various bundles of hair represent? (vv. 1-4)

2. What sign of hope was presented by Ezekiel with some of these strands of hair?

3. What did the people of Jerusalem fail to do according to the Lord? (vv. 5-7)

4. In verse 10, the intensity of the famine is graphically described. What is the report of this situation?

5. What five judgments are mentioned in verse 17?

Memory Verse-

Proverbs 18:10

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"The _____ of the LORD is a strong _____; the righteous _____ to it and are _____."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the fate of Jerusalem?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Job 22:21 "Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; Thereby good will come to you."

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Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapter 6. More messages of judgment upon idolatrous Israel.

Ezekiel delivered two messages of judgment: “The word of the Lord came to me saying” (v. 1), and the phrase “you will know that I am the Lord” (v. 7,10). This illuminates the purpose of the judgments, it was to bring Israel to repentance and recognition of the Lord’s disciplinary action.

In announcing God’s judgment upon Israel, the prophet assumed God’s stern stance. Ezekiel set his face toward the mountains, hills, ravines, and valleys of Israel (v.3). The hills and valleys represented the places where the abominable idolatrous worship of Baal and Asherah took place. God announced that He would decimate the high places with the sword (v.3) and desecrate the bodies of the idolaters by leaving them unburied in front off their idols (v.5). When the altars were smashed and the people slain, they would know that the Lord had spoken in judgment (v.7).

Yet God promised to preserve a remnant that would be scattered among the nations (v.8). In another display of God’s displeasure against sinful Israel, Ezekiel clapped his hands and stamped his foot in a symbol of scorn. Ezekiel explained the meaning: the people would die because of their idolatry and none would escape God’s judgment.

Questions-

1. What was the Lord indicating by instructing Ezekiel to “set his face towards the mountains of Israel”? (v.1)

2. Why were the mountains or “high places” chosen for God’s scorn?

3. What does verse 5 describe about the sad fate of some of the children?

4. What was the primary reason for God’s sparing a remnant of Israel? (vv.8-10).

5. What is the purpose of God’s punishment towards Israel?

Memory Verse-

Proverbs 18:10

“The _____ of the _____ is a strong _____; the righteous _____ to it and are _____.”

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the reasons for God's wrath?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Romans 5:6 "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 7. This section describes the nearness of God's judgment.

In the seventh chapter, Ezekiel announced the impending and inevitable judgment by the fivefold use of "end" (vv.2,3,6). Judgment could no longer be averted; it was certain. Ezekiel piled up

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terms of doom; “an end has come...”(v.3), “Doom has come to you...”(v.7), and “The time has come...”(v.12). Ezekiel again explained the reason for the judgment: “your abominations” (vv.3,4,8,9), a reference to their immoral idolatry.

“The day” of judgment was about to blossom like a flower (v.10). “The rod has budded” referred to the growing evil and God’s use of Babylon as His instrument of judgment upon the idolatrous nation (v.10). Just as God had used Assyria to judge the Northern Kingdom, so now God would use Babylon to judge Judah and Jerusalem. With the unfolding judgment, normal social activity and commerce would cease; there would be no buying and selling (v.12).

Questions-

1. How much pity was God going to allow Israel? (v.4)

2. What was the nature of the abominations referred to in verses 3,4 & 8?

3. How was God going to judge the people of Jerusalem? (v.3)

4. What was the future of Israel’s prosperity according to verses 12 and 13?

5. How could the people of Jerusalem avert this disaster?

Memory Verse-

Proverbs 18:10

“The _____ of _____ is a _____; the _____ to it and _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to help me understand the inevitability of God’s judgment?

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2. My response:

Today's Word-

2 Timothy 2:24 "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,"

Day Six - Re-read Ezekiel chapter 7. This section is Part two of the nearness of God's judgment.

The residents of Jerusalem's belongings would become worthless since they would be confiscated by the Babylonians. With the coming invasion there would be no escape. Courage and morale would be gone in that day; "hands will hang limp, and all knees would become like water" (v.17). In that day they would mourn by putting on sackcloth and ashes and shave their heads. Wealth

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would be worthless; they would throw money into the streets as though it were filthy, it could buy no food (v.19). They had foolishly used their God-given finances to build idols (v.20).

The accumulated wealth of the people would be worthless since God would hand it over to the foreigners, the Babylonians (v.21). Furthermore, God would allow the Babylonians to “profane My secret place” (v.22), possibly a reference to the Holy of Holies, but probably a reference to the Temple itself. The Temple was the very place they had profaned with the introduction of idolatry. In 586 B.C. this prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed and burned the Temple (2 Kings 25:9).

In another acted parable, Ezekiel made a long chain, symbolizing the captivity of the nation and their forced march to Babylon (v.23). The prophet continually held the nation's sins before them: “The land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence” (v.23). “Bloody crimes” suggests they had committed sins worthy of the death penalty. For this reason, the Babylonians would possess their houses, destroy the Temple, and inflict disaster upon them. Instead of peace, they would experience painful exile. But God was dealing with them equitably, “according to their conduct” (v.27).

Questions-

1. Why did the people of Jerusalem begin to blow the trumpet? (v.14)

2. What was the response to the trumpet call? (vv.14,17)

3. What is the fate for those who remain inside Jerusalem according to verse 15?

4. What is the stumbling block of iniquity described in verse 19?

Memory Verse-

Proverbs 18:10

“ _____; _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to help me understand about when mercy is no longer found?

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2. My response:

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Lesson Three - Chapters 8 - 11
"Reason for Judgment"

Today's Word -

John 10:3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."

Day One - Read Ezekiel 8. This section begins the visions of judgment in Jerusalem.
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Ezekiel had pronounced judgment upon the nation because of the people's sins. Now God transported Ezekiel in a vision from Babylon to Jerusalem so the prophet could see the abominable practices of the worshippers in Jerusalem and the ultimate judgment of God upon the idolaters.

The first 18 verses are concerned with a vision of the sins in the Temple. As Ezekiel was sitting with the elders of Judah, he saw the likeness of a man, illuminating with the appearance and brightness of fire. This was a theophany, an appearance of God in human form. The brilliance also suggested the shekinah glory of God. This is very similar to the vision of God described in chapter 1 of this book. Ezekiel was not physically taken to Jerusalem, he was supernaturally transported "in the Spirit". At the north gate of the inner court where the animals were brought for sacrificial offerings, Ezekiel saw the idol of jealousy, meaning it was an idol that provoked the Lord to jealousy. This may have been an idol of Asherah, the female fertility goddess, since King Manasseh of Judah had earlier placed an idol of Asherah in the Temple. The glory of God was there, but was soon to depart because of their idolatry.

(Commentary excerpted from Shepherd's Notes and Communicator's Commentary)

Questions-

1. What was the first thing that Ezekiel saw in this vision? (v.2)
2. Who does this fiery image represent?
3. Where is Ezekiel taken in this vision? (v.3)
4. What is the "image of Jealousy" described in verse 5?
5. Where was this image located in the Temple area? (v.5)

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Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from the third chapter of 2 Thessalonians. This promise reminds of the faithfulness of the Lord and how He will protect us. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

“But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the careless defilement of holy places?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Day Two – Re-read Ezekiel chapter 8. This section is a continuation of Ezekiel's vision of sins in the Temple.

In Ezekiel's vision, as he was digging through a hole in the Temple wall, he saw pictures of rodents and animals carved on the wall. This was further evidence of the idolatry that was being practiced there. The seventy elders present were not the Sanhedrin but leaders who represented the nation. These men were to uphold the Law for the people. They failed dramatically, instead leading the people into idolatry. Furthermore, the elders practiced their idolatry in the Temple as well as in their homes (v.12). At the entrance to the north gate of the Temple, probably the entrance to the outer court, Ezekiel saw women weeping for Tammuz. This was one more example of the idolatrous abominations prevalent in Jerusalem. At the inner court, the court of the priests, Ezekiel saw twenty-five men bowing down to the sun in the east (v.16). These men were priests, made up of the twenty-four courses plus the high priest. The Hebrew priests revealed their contempt for the Lord by turning their backs to Him in violation of God's Law. These groups are representative of the leadership of Judah, the women and the men, thus showing that all of Judean society was infected with idolatry. The severity of this sin demanded judgment (vv.17-18). God would deal with them in His wrath (v.18).

Questions-

1. What acts of idolatry did Ezekiel witness? (vv.10-16)

2. Who was the god Tammuz (v.14).

3. Why were the women weeping over this god? (v.14)

4. What is the significance of putting the branch to their nose? (v.17)

5. Were the people of Jerusalem able to seek God's mercy at this time? (v.18)

Memory Verse-

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2 Thessalonians 3:3

"But the _____ is faithful, who will _____ you and guard you from the _____ one."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the evil heart of man?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Revelation 22:4 "They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads."

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Day Three - Read Ezekiel chapter 9. This section is Ezekiel's vision of the executioners.

The relationship between chapters 8 and 9 is evident. Chapter 8 indicates the necessity of judgment and chapter 9 describes the judgment from God's point of view. God Himself summoned the executioners to judge idolatrous Jerusalem (v.1). The six men were angels, God's messengers of judgment (see Genesis 19:1). They came from the north, the direction from which the invading Babylonians will come (v.2). The man with a writing case was clothed in linen, symbolizing purity. He is understood to be the Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Christ. From its place above the cherubim in the Holy of Holies, the glory of God came to the threshold of the Temple. Since true worship had departed from the Temple, the glory of God was departing from there. From the threshold of the Temple, God commanded the man with the writing case to mark the people in Jerusalem who mourned over the idolatry (v.4). The other six men were instructed to go throughout the city and slaughter the people who did not have the mark. This judgment was indiscriminate; old, young, women and children. Ironically, the judgment began with the elders, the leaders who should have led the people in righteousness but who had led them astray (v.6). The bodies of the slain were strewn near the Temple, causing further defilement. Fearful that not even a remnant would be left, Ezekiel cried out in alarm at the slaughter (v.8). But the Lord explained the necessity of the judgment, the people had sinned greatly and the land was filled with sins deserving the death penalty. The people thought God did not see their sins and therefore judgment was essential. However, just because Ezekiel referred to the destruction of all the people (v.8) does not mean that everyone was slain. Throughout the Bible we see that God is able to save the righteous even as He pours out judgment upon the wicked.

Questions-

1. In this chapter, upon whom was the angel in linen supposed to put a mark? (vv.3-4)

2. Whom were the other six angels supposed to kill? (vv.5-6)

3. Were any people spared from the judgment of death?

4. How does God respond to Ezekiel's pleadings for mercy? (v.9)

Memory Verse-

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2 Thessalonians 3:3

“But the Lord is _____, who _____ establish you and _____ you from the evil _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the necessity of judgment?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts."

<p>Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapter 10. This section is a continuation of Ezekiel's vision and describes how the Lord will judge Jerusalem with fire.</p>

This vision in Chapter 10 relates to the vision of chapter 1. It is a reminder that judgment comes from the holy God of Israel. From the the glory of God in the Holy of Holies (v.1) came the command to the man in linen to scatter coals of fire over the city. The coals of fire come from "between the whirling wheels under the cherubim." This was continuing reminder that God was the One judging.

As the glory of God left the Holy of Holies, just before God's ultimate departure from the Temple, the brilliance of God's glory filled the Temple court (v.4). Then God commanded the man in linen to take the burning coals. The cherub handed the coals of fire to the man in anticipation of the judgment on Jerusalem. Historically, this judgment was fulfilled in 586 B.C. when King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians battered down the city walls and burned Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 25:8-10).

The glory of God departed from the threshold to the position above the cherubim. Then God mounted His throne-chariot for His departure from the city. The cherubim led the way out of the Temple to the eastern gate in preparation for the departure of the glory of God (v.19). The eastern gate was the departure gate for the Mount of Olives. God was about to withdraw His presence and blessing from Jerusalem and the nation .

Questions-

1. What do the coals scattered over the city represent? (v.2)
2. Why must God remove His presence from the Temple?
3. What was the purpose of God's throne-chariot? (v.19)
4. What created beings are always associated with God's throne?

Memory Verse-

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2 Thessalonians 3:3

“ _____ the Lord is _____, who will _____ you and _____ you from the _____ one.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the meaning of God's glory departing?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

2 Corinthians 4:18 “while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

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Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 11. This section is a continuation of Ezekiel's vision concerning the announcement of Jerusalem's destruction.

The Spirit of God brought Ezekiel to the eastern gate, to the twenty-five men who were the ruling elders of the nation's civil government. These were inferior leaders who had been left behind by the Babylonians during the first captivity. But in their self-importance, they somehow considered themselves part of the favored few. Like meat belonged in the boiling pot, they belonged to the land. Instead of giving godly advice, they were leading the nation astray, giving evil advice. They said the people in the land would not be taken captive and the people who were already in captivity would soon return. They thought they were safe in the city, but they were lying to themselves and to the people. The Lord reversed the faulty saying of the people by informing them that the slain who littered the streets of Jerusalem were the flesh in the caldron (v.7). The innocent people who had been killed would be the only ones who would remain in the city but the people who remained alive in the city, the pot, would be afforded no protection. The Babylonians would unleash their swords against them (vv.8,10). God would bring them out and those remaining alive would go into captivity (v.7). The city would not be a safe place, they would not be the "flesh", the "valuable ones" in the city. God was rendering judgment against them. When the Babylonians captured them, they would know that the Lord is God and that their sins had brought this calamity upon them (v.12). Arrogance, self confidence, and willful disobedience are the triple sins of these non-exiled Judeans of this portion of scripture.

Questions-

1. What type of evil advice was being given by the ruling elders?

2. What is the meaning of the proverb of the "boiling pot or caldron"? (v.3)

3. How did God contradict their proverb? (v.7)

4. What was the future of the ruling elders? (vv.8-9)

Memory Verse-

2 Thessalonians 3:3

"But _____ is _____, who _____ you _____ you _____ the evil _____."

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the deceptions of Judah's leaders?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Ezekiel 11:19 "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh,"

Day Six – Re-read Ezekiel chapter 11. This section describes Ezekiel's vision of the exile's restoration and the departure of the Glory of the Lord.

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A prophet in Israel had a twofold message: for the sinful people in the nation there was a message of judgment for sin; but for the righteous remnant in the land, a message of encouragement concerning the future. Ezekiel encouraged those captive in Babylon, as well as those of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) who had been taken captive into Assyria in 722 B.C. In verse 15, he refers to them as “the whole house of Israel”, and in verse 17, as all those who had been ridiculed by the remaining people in Jerusalem. God promised to bring them back from captivity in the future and to provide a sanctuary for them while they were in captivity. He also promised to give them a “new heart”, one that would follow after Him and keep His commandments.

The impending calamity about to fall on Jerusalem became evident with the departure of the glory of God from the city. The glory of God departed to the east, lingering on the Mount of Olives, almost as though waiting for the people to repent (v.23). Thus, having witnessed the idolatry of the people and the resulting destruction of Jerusalem in this vision, Ezekiel conveyed God's message to the exiles in Babylon.

Questions-

1. This vision of Ezekiel was given for the exiles to what foreign lands? (v.15)

2. What is meant by “sanctuary” in verse 16?

3. What does God promise the exiles when their captivity has ended? (v.17)

4. What will happen to their stony heart mentioned in verse 19.

Memory Verse-

2 Thessalonians 3:3

“ _____, _____.”

Journal-

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1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God as our sanctuary?

2. My response:

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Lesson Four - Chapters 12 -19
“Certainty of Judgment”

Today's Word -

Philippians 4:6 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”

Day One - Read Ezekiel 12 & 13. This section describes calamity and false prophets.
--

Chapter 12 – Signs of Judgment

Though the vision of God's glory had departed from the prophet, yet God's word comes to him still, and is sent by him to the people, and to the same purpose with which was revealed to him in the vision, namely, to set forth the terrible judgments that were coming upon Jerusalem, by which the city and temple should be entirely laid waste. Chapter 12 seems to provide a kind of new departure point, though not a new subject, where God requires His prophet yet another enactment prophecy by which he will dramatize the coming exile of Jerusalem. Thus, in a series of signs, messages and parables, Ezekiel continues his denunciation of the idolatry of the people, and prophesizes that the remaining people in Judah would be taken captive into Babylon. In this chapter there are three main sections and a brief discussion follows.

The Sign of the Luggage (vv.1-16). To impact the people with His message, the Lord instructed Ezekiel to pack his belongings and prepare his baggage for exile. The recurring phrase “in their sight” (vv.3,4,5,6) was designed to shock the people into the reality of the impending deportation to Babylon. In the evening Ezekiel was to go out through a hole he had dug in the wall (v.5) and go to “another place” (v.3). The people would understand the meaning of this since deportations had taken place earlier, in 605 B.C. and 597 B.C. Ezekiel was further instructed to cover his face so he couldn't see (v.6). The eventual blinding of Zezekiah (2 Kings 25:7) was thus predicted. While the acted parable is described in verses 1-7, the interpretation is given in verses 8-16. The sign concerned the prince (Zedekiah) in Jerusalem and the house of Israel in that city (v.10). Thus, the prophet, by removing his stuff, and quitting his lodgings, was a sign to show Zedekiah's flight out of Jerusalem in the utmost confusion while the Babylonians took the city.

The Sign of the Trembling Eater (vv.17-20). Ezekiel was instructed to tremble while eating his food and to shutter in fear while drinking his water. The interpretation of the sign is given in verses 19-20. The people in Jerusalem and Judah would tremble and shutter in fear while eating their food because the Babylonians would devastate the land and bring violence and famine in their invasion. The people would experience terror, and they would know the Lord was speaking. Since they will have no sense of hope of overcoming the siege, and will come to the horrible knowledge of their impending doom, then they will eat their meager rations not with confidence but with anxiety and dread.

Message of Impending Judgment (vv.21-28). False prophets had nurtured a spirit of skepticism among the people. They had coined the proverb, “The days are long and every vision fails,” suggesting the prophecies would not come true (for a New Testament parallel text see 2 Peter 3:3-4). Using flattering words (v.24), the false prophets were telling the people there would be no Babylonian invasion and no captivity in Babylon. But God promised to put an end to these false sayings. The days for captivity were drawing near and the prophecies of judgment concerning the Babylonian invasion would be fulfilled (v.23). The false visions, deceiving the people, would come to an end as would their divination.

In summary, through the acted parables of carrying the baggage through the hole in the wall and eating his food while trembling, Ezekiel portrayed the imminent captivity and enslavement to Babylon, King Zedekiah's blindness, and the terror in the land following the Babylonian invasion. God's Word would come true and soon.

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Questions-

1. According to the Lord, what actions of discernment had the people of Judah refused to do? (v.2 and also see Acts 28:26-27)

2. Why did Ezekiel pack his suitcases for travel? (vv.3-12)

3. Why was Ezekiel told to eat his bread with quaking and drink his water with trembling? (v.18)

4. What proverb was God disputing through the prophet Ezekiel? (vv.21-25)

Chapter 13 – Message Against the False Prophets

At the root of Israel's sin was the problem of false prophets and prophetesses. The false prophets had never been called of God; they spoke from their own imaginations and for their own material benefit. God had not spoken through them. The false prophetesses were witches who would be brought to judgment for leading the people in error.

Questions (continued) -

5. What was the triple judgment that God rendered against the false prophets? (vv.8-16)

6. What two physical aspects was God going to take away from the prophetesses? (vv.20-21)

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Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from the fourth chapter of Zechariah. This promise reminds us to not rely on our own strength but on God's through His Spirit. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

Zechariah 4:6

"... 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's anger towards false prophets?

2. My response:

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Today's Word -

Matthew 1:21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Day Two - Read Ezekiel chapter 14 & 15. This section covers the message against the elders and the parable of the vine.

Chapter 14 -

The elders came to Ezekiel for advice, but God revealed to Ezekiel that the elders were harboring idolatrous thoughts. The only remedy for their idolatrous thinking was repentance; turning from their idols. The idolatry in Jerusalem was so severe, so intense that judgment could not be averted; not even by the intercession of Noah, Daniel and Job.

Questions -

1. According to verse 5, what practice had estranged the elders from God?

2. What was Ezekiel's message to the idolatrous elders? (v.6)

3. What four possible judgments are mentioned in verses 13, 15, 17 & 19?

Chapter 15 – The Parable of the Vine

A vine is useful for only one thing; bearing grapes. Similarly, Israel was God's chosen people designed to bear the fruit of righteousness.

Questions (continued) -

4. According to verse 3, what functions are useless for the vine?

5. What is the significance of the charred vine? (See 2 Kings 25:9)

Memory Verse-

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Zechariah 4:6

"... 'Not by might nor by _____, but by My _____,' says the LORD of _____."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the necessity of repentance?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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John 6:58 "This is the bread which came down from heaven-- not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

Day Three - Read Ezekiel chapter 16. This section covers the parable of the faithless wife.

Chapter 16 –

In this parable of the adulterous wife, God reveals the faithlessness of Israel.

The Unwanted Child (vv.1-5)

Through this parable, Ezekiel made known to Jerusalem "her abominations" (v.2). Israel is pictured in her infancy as a Canaanite by birth. When no one cared for the nation, God took her up (vv.4-5). Instead of receiving normal care as a child, Israel was thrown "into the open field"; undoubtedly a reference to Israel's sufferings in Egypt (Exodus 1-12).

The Unwanted Child Claimed in Marriage (vv.6-14)

But God showed compassion on the suffering nation and made it live, probably a reference to Israel's phenomenal growth in Egypt. Israel became numerous in population, "like plants of the field" (v.7). When the Lord saw that she was a young woman, ready for marriage, He spread His skirt over her (v.8), symbolic of protection and care through marriage (Ruth 3:9). The Lord provided and cared for Israel, His wife (vv.9-14). He cleansed her (v.10); He clothed His bride in garments of a Queen (v.10); He gave her beautiful jewelry (vv.11-12); and the finest food (v.14). As a wayward child advancing to a queen, so God had exalted Israel from a patriarchal family to a nation well known among the Gentiles.

The Unfaithful Wife (vv.15-34)

In the imagery of the Lord as husband and Israel as His wife, the wife became unfaithful, committing adultery on the "high places" (v.16). In spite of the Lord's faithfulness, Israel spurned the Lord's lovingkindness and committed spiritual adultery. The depth of Israel's depravity is seen in the Lord's statement of lament and horror, "Woe, woe to you!" (v.23). Israel expanded her idolatry by raising pagan shrines on every street, enticing people to this sin. Instead of trusting the Lord as her King, Israel sought foreign alliances with Assyria, Egypt and even Babylon; a practice condemned by the prophets (see Isaiah 30:1-2,31:1-3). This was viewed as harlotry by the Lord since Israel had been betrothed to the Lord. In the continuing imagery, God reminded the nation that unlike the typical harlot who received wages, Israel bribed and paid her lovers. This is a reference to the tribute in money and material goods which Israel was forced to pay to the nations with whom it formed alliances.

The Punishment of the Wife (vv.35-43)

In judgment for her harlotry, God promised to bring Israel's lovers against her to expose her nakedness (v.37). The fulfillment of this judgment was realized in the Babylonian invasion under Nebuchadnezzar. This was designed to curb Israel's idolatry (v.41), a judgment that accomplished its purpose. When Israel returned from the captivity, the nation had been cured of idolatry.

The Enormity of the Wife's Sins (vv.44-52)

Israel's sin could be characterized by the proverb, "Like mother, like daughter" (v.44). The daughter was Jerusalem; the mother was the pagan Hittite (v.3) who gave birth to three immoral children: Jerusalem, Samaria and Sodom (vv.46,51). Just as her pagan mother and her sisters had been immoral, so Jerusalem was also immoral. Judah's sins exceeded them both. When compared with Judah's sins, Samaria and Sodom appeared righteous (see Jeremiah 3:11). Judah had received greater privileges, but greater privilege carries with it greater responsibility (see Matthew 10:15,11:24).

The Restoration of the Wife (vv.53-59)

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Along with the restoration of Samaria (Northern Kingdom) and Sodom, God promised to restore Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom. The hope of future restoration and blessing is a common theme of the prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Hosea. Although Sodom's destruction was complete, God promised to restore "Sodom with her daughters," referring to Sodom and the surrounding towns. Before Jerusalem's sin became evident, she disdained Sodom and her vices; but when Jerusalem's sin was uncovered she became a reproach to the women of Edom and Philistia. Jerusalem would bear the penalty of her abominations (v.58), realized in the Babylonian invasion.

The Renewal of the Covenant (vv.60-63)

Although Judah was chastened, the discipline was not permanent. God promised, "I will remember My covenant... I will establish an everlasting covenant with you" (v.60), again "I will establish My covenant with you" (v.62). The new covenant was the spiritual condition through which God would bless Israel in the future millennial kingdom. Through the new covenant, God would give Israel a new heart, inclining the nation to walk in God's ways (see chapter 36:25-27). That would be fulfilled in the future millennial kingdom; then they would know the Lord is God.

Questions-

1. Who was considered an unwanted child that was thrown in a field? (vv.1-5).
2. Who rescued this "child" from the neglect of these heathen nations? (vv.6-14).
3. Israel is accused of "spiritual harlotry" and in verse 33 they are given an even more scornful condemnation by the Lord. What is the worse condition described here?
4. In spite of these failings, what was the nature of God's covenant with Israel? (v.60).

Memory Verse-

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Zechariah 4:6

"... 'Not by _____ nor by _____, but by _____,' says the _____ of _____."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand "spiritual unfaithfulness"?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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2 Chronicles 15:2 "...The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you."

Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapter 17. This section concerns judgment & redemption.

Because of Israel's idolatry, God would judge the people by sending the mighty Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians against the Southern Kingdom. He took King Jehoiachin captive to Babylon in 597 B.C. and installed Zedekiah as a puppet king of Judah. When he rebelled by attempting to forge an alliance with Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah again. In 586 B.C. he took Zedekiah captive to Babylon.

The Parable of the Two Eagles (vv.1-21)

This parable reveals King Zedekiah's rebellion in seeking an alliance with Egypt instead of trusting in God. This parable is stated in verses 1-10, interpreted in verses 11-18, and applied in verses 19-21. The great eagle (v.3) symbolized the mighty king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. This great eagle took some seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil, referring to the establishment of Zedekiah as a vassal king. The other "great eagle" (v.7) referred to Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt (588-569 B.C.). Zedekiah rebelled and sought an alliance with Egypt to overthrow the yoke of Babylon, but the desperate act would fail (vv.7-10,15-17, also see 2 Chronicles 36:13 and Jeremiah 37:5-7). It has been suggested that the ultimate reason for God's judgment of Zedekiah and Judah was their broken covenant with Nebuchadnezzar.

The Parable of the Tender Twig (vv.22-24)

In a corollary of the preceding parable, the Lord announced the glorious future of Israel. This parable is messianic, envisioning Messiah's rule in Jerusalem. The humbled nation of Israel would be exalted under Messiah's rule, and all the people would know that the Lord had performed this.

Questions-

1. The "spreading vine of low stature" in verse 6 refers to what person?

2. The people of Israel had broken two covenants during the reign of King Zedekiah. What were they?

3. Who was the hope offered through the parable of the Tender Twig? (vv.22-24)

4. Who would find shelter in the shadow of the "Tender Twig"? (v.23).

Memory Verse-

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Zechariah 4:6

“... ' ___ by might ___ by power, ___ by ___ Spirit,' _____ the LORD ___ hosts.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand man's broken promises and God's eternal promises?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Psalm 37:4 “Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

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Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 18. This section is the principle of retribution for sin.

Ezekiel had been announcing judgment upon the nation, but the exiles were complaining that they were being judged for sin that was not of their doing. Ezekiel corrected their false idea by the following thesis: "The soul who sins will die" (v.4). Ezekiel reminded the people that they were suffering for their own sins. According to Ezekiel, the righteous man demonstrates his righteousness by adhering to the Mosaic Law, the Word of God.

This passage also includes the example of the wicked son, where the righteous man has an offspring who sheds innocent blood. He does not keep the precepts of the righteous father. What is the result? He will not benefit from the righteousness of the father, he will die for his own sin. The truth is obvious, the righteousness of the father is not transmitted to the son. The father will live because of his righteousness, and the wicked son will die because of his unrighteousness.

In a later example of the third generation, the son observes the wickedness of the father, and "does not do likewise" (v.14). What judgment is determined upon him? "he will surely live" (v.17). The important principle is that God judges people individually. In addition, the path of the righteous and the wicked are not unalterable. Ezekiel cited examples of those who would turn from their original state (v.21). Even further, God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked (see 1 Timothy 2:4, or 2 Peter 3:9).

Finally in this chapter, there is an exhortation to repentance. The call to a "new heart and a new spirit" is a call to salvation (see chapter 36:25-27) and is the Old Testament equivalent of John 3:3,5. If people repent, their sins will not be a stumbling block to them, but they will find life.

Questions-

1. What does the "sour grapes" represent in the proverb found in verse 2?

2. What does the phrase "the children's teeth set on edge" mean?

3. What is meant by "The soul who sins shall die" in verse 4?

4. Why does God invite the sinner to repentance? (v.32)

Memory Verse-

Zechariah 4:6

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“... 'Not _____ nor _____, but _____,' says _____ of _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the sins of many generations?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

2 Thessalonians 3:3 “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.”

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Studies in Ezekiel

Day Six - Read Ezekiel chapter 19. This section is a lamentation for the kings of Israel.

This chapter is an overview of the final kings of the Judean Kingdom, with Jehoahaz being taken captive to Egypt, and Jehoiachin and Zedekiah being taken captive, like chained animals, into Babylon. The glory of Israel's kingdom, established under David and Solomon, was snuffed out with the Babylonian captivity. The restoration of Israel's kingdom awaited the Messiah's return. The chapter is set in a mournful poetic style that is not readily noticeable in the English translation, however in Hebrew it reflects a very somber mood.

Jehoahaz is taken captive to Egypt (vv.1-4)

Set in metaphorical language, this chapter depicts the kings of Judah. The nation and the kingly line of Judah are portrayed as a lion (see Genesis 49:9 or Numbers 23:24, 24:9). The lioness probably refers to the nation that brought forth the kings, the lion cubs (v.2) are the kings in the Davidic line, and the lion that tore his prey (v.3) is King Jehoahaz.

Jehoiachin is taken captive to Babylon (vv.5-9)

An evil king who also reigned only three months (598-597 B.C.). He was put in a cage with hooks and taken captive into Babylon where he was subjected to humiliation as a public spectacle. After 37 years of imprisonment he was released and spent the remainder of his days in Babylon.

Zedekiah is taken captive to Babylon (vv.10-14)

Here the figure changes to King Zedekiah compared to a vine, a common metaphor for Israel (see chapters 15:1-5, 17:1-10). The "east wind" that dried up the uprooted vine suggested the Babylonian invasions (v.12). The branch that had been consumed by fire illustrated Zedekiah's capture and deportation to exile (see 2 Kings 25:1-12). This chapter is summarized by Ezekiel's reminder that "this is a lamentation" because of the collapse of the Judean Kingdom (v.14).

(Commentary excerpted from Shepherd's Notes)

Questions-

1. What does the public spectacle of humiliation and caged captivity demonstrated by the deportation of the Judean kings mean for the people of Israel?

2. Take these thoughts and please proceed to the journal activity on next page.

Memory Verse-

Zechariah 4:6

"... ' _____ , _____ , _____ ."

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand how sin takes us captive to another land?

2. My response:

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Lesson Five - Chapters 20 – 24
“Righteousness of Judgment”

Today's Word -

Psalm 145:20

“The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.”

Day One - Read Ezekiel 20. This section is Part One of a review of Israel's unfaithfulness.
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Israel's Rebellion in Egypt (vv.1-8)

About eleven months following their previous visit to Ezekiel (chapter 8:1), the elders came again seeking a revelation from the Lord. But because of their idolatrous practices, God refused to respond to the elders (vv.3,31), instead, the Lord instructed Ezekiel to speak a twofold message to them. He was to remind them of their sins and continuing rebellion (vv.4,8,13,21) and he was to review God's patience in drawing them to Himself (vv.9,14,21). In faithfulness, God rescued the Israelites from bondage in Egypt and swore to bring them into a land of abundance (v.6).

Israel's Rebellion in the Wilderness (vv.9-26)

In delivering Israel from bondage in Egypt, God was acting for the sake of His name (v.9). The surrounding nations would recognize His faithfulness and not profane His name. If God had destroyed Israel in the wilderness when they rebelled, the Egyptians would have accused the Lord of being unable to rescue the Israelites (v.9 and see Exodus 32:12 and Numbers 14:16). But in spite of the Lord's faithfulness and blessings to Israel, they rebelled (v.13). Israel deserved the wrath of God, but the Lord acted for the sake of His name and did not destroy the nation (vv.14,17). However, the adult rebels would not enter the Promised Land, but die in the wilderness.(see Numbers 14:20-30). To prevent His people from following the evil path of their fathers, the Lord warned the second generation, but they rebelled also (v.21).

Israel's Rebellion in the Land (vv.27-28)

But the rebellion extended even further and after the Lord brought them into the Promised Land, instead of worshipping God, they resorted to idolatry.

Questions-

1. What was God's response to the inquiry of the elders to Ezekiel? (v.3)
2. What did God command as part of His covenant with Israel in Egypt? (vv.7-8)
3. According to verse 12, why did God give the Sabbaths? (also see Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

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Questions (cont.)-

4. What is meant by "statutes that were not good" in verse 25?

Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from chapter 15 of the Gospel of John. This promise of God's love also encourages us to abide in that love. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

John 15:9

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand man's inclination to rebel against God?

2. My response:

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Today's Word -

1 Corinthians 2:9

"But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

Day Two – Re-read Ezekiel chapter 20. This section is Part Two of Israel's unfaithfulness.

Israel's Rebellion in Ezekiel's Day (vv.29-32).

The present generation would not escape God's indictment. Although the prophet had traced the history of Israel's idolatry and unfaithfulness in the past, Ezekiel demonstrated that Israel's pagan practices continued into the present. Yet the elders of Israel had the presumption to inquire of God. But He would not hear them (v.31). Instead, God would deal with their idolatry with discipline and judgment to eradicate their practices. He would be their God and King!

Revelation of God's Future Dealings (vv.33-44).

In a final act of God's disciplinary judgment on the nation, God promised He would bring them "into the wilderness of the peoples" (v.35). This referred to Israel's scattering among the gentile nations during the tribulation (also see Revelation 12:14). There, God would enter into judgment with Israel, making them "pass under the rod" (v.37), separating the godly from the wicked as a faithful shepherd watches over his sheep (also see Jeremiah 33:13). Israel on the future day would worship the Lord "on My holy mountain" (v.40).

Retribution on Apostate Israel (vv.45-49).

The sign of the forest fire parallels the sign of the drawn sword in the next chapter (21). Both signs dealt with the Babylonian invasion of Judah in 586 B.C. Ezekiel employed three words for the south in announcing the impending judgment. These were east, south and desert of the south. Thus, Ezekiel prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar would invade the land, which was to the south as he entered the land from the northeast where he would conquer Judah (desert of the south). The invasion is described as a fire that would consume the trees, both green and dry. This suggests that everyone in the land would be affected.

Questions-

1. Why did the Israelites want to be like the gentiles? (v.32).
2. Why did God take His people captive into the gentile nations? (v.35).
3. What were the four aspects of chastening that are described in verses 37-38?

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Questions (cont.)-

4. What promise is given in verse 41 that was finally fulfilled in this century?

Memory Verse-

Fill in the blanks from your memory;

John 15:9

"As the _____ loved Me, I also _____ loved you; _____ in My love."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's plan of discipline and restoration?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Ephesians 3:19

“to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Day Three - Read Ezekiel chapter 21. This section covers the Sign of the Drawn Sword.

Attributes of the Drawn Sword (vv.1-17).

This sign clarified and explained the signs of the previous chapter. The south was identified as Jerusalem and the fire was the sword of Nebuchadnezzar. To intensify the drama of the invasion, Ezekiel uttered a lament in poetic form, dramatizing this horrific event. The sharpened sword would expedite the slaughter and the polished sword would further incite fear among the people. The intensity of the invasion and slaughter is reflected in the phrase; “let the sword be doubled the third time” (v.14).

The Sword Against Jerusalem (vv.18-27).

To aid the invading Babylonians, the Lord instructed Ezekiel to sketch a road guiding the invading Nebuchadnezzar. Upon arriving at a fork in the road, Nebuchadnezzar would resort to divination to determine the right way, but God would control the divination, directing the king to Jerusalem (v.22). In their false security the Israelites refused to believe the invasion was coming (v.23). A glimmer of hope is given in the phrase, “Until he comes whose right it is” (v.27). This is a prophecy of Israel's future restoration under Messiah (see Genesis 49:10, Zechariah 14:1-14, and Matthew 24:29-31).

The Sword Against Ammon (vv.28-32).

Since the Ammonites aided Babylon in their destruction of Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:2), God would later bring the Babylonians against them (see chapter 25:1-7). Ezekiel warned the Ammonites not to be deceived by false assurances; they would take their place with the wicked already slain in Judah.

Questions-

1. Was the sword going to spare any in the prophecy given in this chapter? (v.3).

2. Why was Ezekiel instructed to sigh in verse 6?

3. Why did Ezekiel strike his thigh in verse 12?

4. What is the outcome of the profane prince and the humble righteous? (vv.25-27).

Memory Verse-

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Fill in the blanks from your memory;

John 15:9

"As the Father _____ Me, I _____ have loved ____; abide in __ love."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the outlook for the proud and profane?

2. My response:

Today's Word-
Proverbs 8:17

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"I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me."

Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapter 22. This section covers the Indictment of Judah for her sins.

Cause of Judgment (vv.1-12).

Jerusalem was labeled "the bloody city" (vv.2-4, 6, 9, 12-13; 24:6, 9) because of its violent crimes and because of child sacrifice to Molech. As a result, God would judge the city so it would be a city scorned by the nations (see vv.5-6 and Leviticus 26:33, Deuteronomy 28:64-68). Ezekiel specifically condemned the nation for its violation of the Mosaic Covenant by which it was bound to the Lord (vv.6-12). As a result of their sin, they had forgotten God and violated the heart of the Law (see Exodus 20:2-3)

Necessity of Judgment (vv.13-16)

In a gesture of divine displeasure at Israel's dishonesty and vile deeds, the Lord asked the nation whether it would endure His chastisement. His punishment was scattering among the nations, which was fulfilled in 586 B.C. and later in 70 A.D. The purpose was the nation's purification (v.15).

Purpose of Judgment (vv.17-22).

Because of sin, Israel was no better than dross (the waste material from refining ore). To purify the nation, God made Jerusalem a smelting pot in which He would remove the impurities and extract the precious metal of righteous lives.

The Objects of the Judgment (vv.23-31).

The cause of Israel's moral and spiritual depravity was the apostasy of Israel's leadership, and they, as well as the people themselves, would become the objects of God's judgment. First, God indicted the prophets. Instead of warning the people and calling them back to obedience to the covenant, they were guilty of murder and robbery (v.25). The priests also, who ought to have instructed the people, profaned God's sanctuary by failing to distinguish between holy and profane. The princes or magistrates were also guilty. Instead of administering justice, they were guilty of murder, dishonesty, and destruction of other people (v.27). Furthermore, the prophets were guilty of religious coverup by whitewashing their sins with lies in claiming that God had given them their message when He had not (v.28). But the people were also guilty, they had also violated the Law with oppression, robbery and wrongdoing the poor and foreigner. When the Lord searched, He was unable to find a righteous person who would intercede on behalf of the nation. No one to build up a wall of righteousness or stand in the spiritual gap to prevent national ruin. Therefore, God promised to pour out His wrath on the wayward and sinful nation.

Questions-

1. What colorful description did the Lord give to the city of Jerusalem? (v.2).

2. What nation was considered unclean by the Lord? (v.24)

Questions (cont.)-

3. The prophets were accused of what offenses? (v.25)

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4. Why was the Lord seeking a man to build a wall and stand in the gap? (v.30)

Memory Verse-

Fill in the blanks from your memory;

John 15:9

“__ the Father ____ Me, I ____ have loved ____; abide in __ love.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's feelings toward bloody and unclean people?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

1 John 4:12

“No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.”

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 23. This section covers the Parable of the Two Sisters.

Likening the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) to two adulterous sisters, the Lord detailed their apostasy in violating the Mosaic Covenant which bound them to the Lord. He depicted their sinful alliances with foreign nations, who ultimately became the Lord's instruments of judgment.

The Harlotry of Samaria (vv.1-10).

The parable presents two sisters, daughter of the same mother (v.2), suggesting a common origin through Rachel. Israel (or Samaria) was born in Egypt, but this was also where they learned idolatry (Exodus 32:1-35). Samaria's sin was that they trusted in the political alliances with the Assyrians rather than placing its trust in the Lord (Hosea 5:13,7:11,8:9,12:1). But Israel's alliances led to its demise as the Assyrians took the Northern Kingdom captive into Assyria in 722 B.C. (v.10).

The Harlotry of Jerusalem (vv.11-35).

Although Oholibah saw the sin and tragedy of her sister, she did not learn; she exceeded her sister in sin, also lusting after the Assyrians. This was a reference to King Ahaz seeking an alliance with Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 16:5-10). Judah became defiled with their pagan alliance with Babylon and consequently became disgusted with that kingdom (v.17, Kings 24:1). Judah rebelled and sought help from Egypt (v.19), only increasing its immorality. The very nations that led Judah into idolatry would now become God's instruments of judgment against Judah. These invaders include the Babylonians, Chaldeans, Pekod (an Aramean tribe of farmers), Shoa (nomadic Arameans?), and Koa, along with the Assyrians (vv.23-24).

Judgment of Jerusalem and Samaria (vv.36-49).

Ezekiel pronounced judgment on Israel and Judah; they were guilty of adultery, murder, and idolatry. "On the same day..." (vv.38-39) suggests that the day they committed adultery and sacrificed their children to Molech was the very day they also entered the Temple and pretended to worship the Lord. Because of their continuation in sin, God pronounced sentence; righteous men (the Babylonians) would judge the nations.

Questions-

1. Sister Oholah was the name given to what group of people? (v.4)
2. Verse 6 suggests that the spiritual adultery or harlotry originated from what foreign land?
3. Why did the other sister, Oholibah (or Judah) become even more corrupt than her sister?

Questions (cont.)-

4. What type of hypocrisy did God condemn of the adulterous sisters in verses 38-40?

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Studies in Ezekiel

Memory Verse-

Fill in the blanks from your memory;

John 15:9

“As _____ loved __, I _____ loved ____; abide _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand man's hypocrisy towards God?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Mark 12:33

“And to love *Him* with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

Calvary Chapel of Vista

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Studies in Ezekiel

Day Six - Read Ezekiel chapter 24. This section covers the symbols of Jerusalem's destruction.

Because of Judah's continuing rebellion, the Lord announced, through the parable of the boiling pot, the destruction of Jerusalem. Like a fierce fire bringing the pot of flesh to a boil, so Nebuchadnezzar would assault the city in a fiery invasion, resulting in many inhabitants being slaughtered and others taken captive. When Ezekiel's wife died, Ezekiel refused all mourning, reflecting the response of the people when the sanctuary and the city would be destroyed.

The Parable of the Boiling Pot (vv.1-14).

The date surrounding this prophecy announcing "the name of the day, this very day" that Nebuchadnezzar began his assault on Jerusalem is very precise, January 1, 588 B.C. (see 2 Kings 25:1 or Jeremiah 52:4). Also, this parable was given to Ezekiel to underscore the Babylonian invasion. The parable is given in verses 3-5 and is interpreted in verses 6-14. The pot represented Jerusalem, the bloody city, that had rust that would not go away, representing the unbending stubbornness of the people. But now, the choice pieces of meat, representing the elite, proud people of Jerusalem, would be taken out of the city to captivity in Babylon (v.6). Two woes are pronounced on the doomed city. The first woe describes the guilt and punishment of the people of Jerusalem (vv.6-8). The second woe describes the intensity of the judgment (vv.9-14). The wood would be piled high, intensifying the heat; the meat in the pot would be boiled thoroughly (v.10). Then the empty pot would be set on the glowing coals to remove all its impurities in this smelting process (v.11). The point of the parable is explained in verses 13-14. God would be wearied no more.

The Sign of the Death of Ezekiel's Wife (vv.15-27).

In the most painful acted parable Ezekiel was to portray, the Lord informed Ezekiel that his wife would be taken from him "with a blow", suggestive of a sudden death. The Lord warned him not to resort to the customary mourning when his wife died. He was even to reject the sympathy of his friends (v.17) and keep his grief to himself. The meaning of this is stated in verses 19-24. The people wanted to know why Ezekiel wasn't mourning (v.19), but just like Ezekiel, the people would not mourn for the destruction of the sanctuary, but instead there would be opportunity for grief as they were led off into captivity.

Questions-

1. The announcement of the exact day of the Babylonian invasion given to Ezekiel is very precise and is verified by Jeremiah 52:4. Why is this significant?
2. What are the two woes of this chapter?

Questions (cont.)-

3. There are four "I will..." statements concerning judgment given by God in verse 14. What are they?

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4. What was God's instruction to Ezekiel when his wife died?

Memory Verse-

Fill in the blanks from your memory;

John 15:9

“ _____, _____; _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the life of sacrifice as a prophet?

2. My response:

(Commentary excerpted from Shepherd's Notes)

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Lesson Six - Chapters 25 - 32
"Judgment of Nations"

Today's Word -

Romans 8:2 "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

Day One - Read Ezekiel 25. This section contains prophecies against Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia.

Israel stands in a unique relationship to the Lord. Throughout history, those nations that vented hostility toward Israel have been judged by God.

Prophecy against Ammon: (vv.1-7)

God indicted the Ammonites for their derisive rejoicing when Nebuchadnezzar ransacked and destroyed the Temple and devastated the land of Judah, taking the people captive to Babylon (v.3). As punishment, God announced He would give the land to the "sons of the east", the Arabs who were descendants of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13-18).

Prophecy against Moab: (vv.8-11)

Exhibiting their hatred of Judah (see Numbers chapters 22-24), the Moabites ridiculed Judah's unique relationship to the Lord. Together with the Edomites, they declared that Judah was like other gentile nations (v.8). Because of their sin, God declared He would give their frontier cities, along with their people, to the Arabs (v.10). Five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, this prophecy was fulfilled (v.11).

Prophecy against Edom: (vv.12-16)

Because of their hostility toward Israel in encouraging Babylon's devastation of Jerusalem (Psalms 137:1), God pronounced punishment on Edom (vv.13-14). From the north to the south, they would be devastated, a prophecy that was fulfilled first when the Nabataeans occupied their territory and later when the Edomites became part of Idumea.

Prophecy against Philistia: (vv.15-17)

Because they sought to destroy Israel (v.15), God promised to destroy the Philistines along with the Cherethites (a synonym for the Philistines).

Questions-

1. What are the two main reasons that prompted God's judgments against these nations?

2. The desecration of the temple caused what reaction by the Ammonites? (v.3,6).

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Questions (cont.)-

3. What nation took pleasure in the sins of Judah?

4. What was the main error committed by Edom and Philistia? (v.12,15).

Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John. This promise is a statement of the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

John 8:36

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's reactions towards the enemies of Israel and His purposes?

2. My response:

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Today's Word -

Psalms 121:7-8 "The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; he shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore."

Day Two - Read Ezekiel chapters 26 & 27. This section contains prophecies and lamentations about Tyre.

The Destruction of Tyre: (26:1-21)

The great city of Tyre would be destroyed because it reveled in Jerusalem's destruction. Nebuchadnezzar, and later Alexander the Great, would assault the city, resulting in its obliteration. Since Tyre viewed Jerusalem as a rival in trade, they rejoiced at Jerusalem's destruction, especially since the traders formerly bound for Jerusalem would turn to Tyre for trade (v.2). Therefore, Tyre would be plundered of its wealth and destroyed (v.12). Silence would replace its songs (v.13). The Lord announced the desolation of Tyre in verses 19-21. He would judge the city resulting in a horrible and permanent destruction. The city would never be rebuilt.

The Lamentation about Tyre: (27:1-25)

Because of its commercial strength, Tyre became proud in its global, commercial position. Her traders were many, from around the world. But Tyre would ultimately be destroyed and her commercial enterprise would cease and along with it, many other nation's commerce. Tyre was situated at "the entrance to the sea," which was the harbors through which the merchants sailed.

Picturing Tyre as a ship, Ezekiel described Tyre's destruction. Her oarsmen were depicted bring Tyre into turbulent waters with an east wind, representative of King Nebuchadnezzar, bringing about its destruction and an end to its commerce (vv.26-28).

Questions-

1. Tyre was the capitol of what ancient nation?

2. According to chapter 26:3 & 4, what would be left of Tyre after God's judgment?

3. According to chapter 27:10 & 11, who protected the city and its walls?

4. What peoples will lament over the destruction of Tyre? (vv.29-32)

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Memory Verse-

John 8:36

"Therefore __ the Son makes ___ free, you shall be ____ indeed."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the weakness of a nation's wealth against God's judgment?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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John 8:32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Day Three - Read Ezekiel chapter 28. This section contains the fall of the King of Tyre.

Fall of the King of Tyre: (vv.1-19)

God commanded Ezekiel to declare the sin (vv.2-5) and resulting punishment (vv.6-10) of the king of Tyre. In absolute arrogance, the king sat enthroned in his fortress as though he was a god (v.2), similar to what the Antichrist will do one day (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4). The king exalted himself as God and considered himself wiser than Daniel, assuming that he had accumulated his wealth through his wisdom (vv.3-5). The king would come to an inglorious end, dying a violent death. In the presence of his slayer, his pride would vanish (v.9) and he would die like an uncircumcised barbarian. The language of these verses indicates that this description passed beyond the king of Tyre to a description of Satan, the power behind this king. (vv.12-15). This passage parallels Isaiah 14:12-17 describing Satan's high position as a preeminent angel prior to his fall. Satan is described here because he was the real source of power behind the king of Tyre.

Prophecy Against Sidon: (vv.20-26)

In His judgment of Sidon, God would be glorified just as He received glory in His judgments on Pharaoh (see Exodus 14:4,16-17). In His judgment, God promised to send various forms of destruction upon Sidon. They would know that God was judging (v.23). Israel's deliverance from this enemy merged into a picture of the future when all of their enemies would be subdued. In this future millennium, Israel would dwell in peace.

Questions-

1. According to verses 1-5, what was the great sin of the king of Tyre?

2. Why was Ezekiel commanded to take up mourning for the king of Tyre? (vv.11-19).

3. Who was the real object of lamentation in these passages?

4. What city was known as a "prickling briar or a painful thorn"? (v.24).

Memory Verse-

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John 8:36

"Therefore if ___ Son makes you ____, you shall ___ free indeed."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the tragedy and horror of Satan?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Isaiah 9:2 "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined."

Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapters 29 & 30. This section contains prophecies of the destruction and restoration of Egypt.

Egypt, the nation to which Israel turned for help because of Babylon's oppression of Israel, would be destroyed. Israel sinned in trusting in Egypt rather than in God; now God would remove the object of Israel's false trust by destroying Egypt. The focal point of Egypt's destruction would also be the great cities with their idolatrous worship centers. God would use Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to accomplish His divine judgment of Egypt.

The Destruction of Egypt: (29:1-12)

The prophecy against Egypt came in the tenth year (587 B.C.), the year following the invasion of Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 25:1). The prophecy is against Pharaoh Hophra, to whom King Zedekiah of Israel had appealed for help (see Jeremiah 37:7). Egypt's fall was designed as an object lesson: The Egyptians would know that the Lord is God and that Pharaoh's demise would prove he was not God (v.6). It was also a reminder and rebuke to Israel for the folly of trusting in Egypt instead of the Lord. Egypt could not help Israel in its hour of crisis when the Babylonians invaded. Only the Lord could sustain them.

The Restoration of Egypt: (29:13-16)

At the conclusion of Egypt's forty-year subjugation, the Egyptian nation would be restored to Pathros, in southern Egypt, where the nation had its beginnings. After that, Egypt would be a lowly kingdom; unable to lead other nations astray.

Nebuchadnezzar's Reward: (29:17-21)

For his labor in attacking Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar would be rewarded by having Egypt given to him by the Lord (vv.19-20).

Destruction of Egypt is Described: (30:1-26)

In verses 1-19 Ezekiel announced four undated oracles against Egypt and its allies, all beginning with, "Thus says the Lord God" (vv.2,6,10,13). There would be; a destruction of Egypt's power, a devastation of the Land, a devastation of the canals, and a destruction of the cities. Finally, there would be a dispersion of Egypt, where they would be scattered among the nations (v.23). This prophecy announced the impending destruction at the hands of the king of Babylon. But this prophecy also spans the ages, combining the historical judgment of Egypt with the future judgment of Egypt and the nations during the prophetic Day of the Lord in the tribulation.

Questions-

1. Who was pictured as a crocodile or monster in the Nile River? (29:3).

2. Who were the "fish of your rivers" described in chapter 29:4-5?

Questions (cont.)-

3. According to chapter 29:29, what were the wages of Nebuchadnezzar's army?

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4. There were two great sins in Egypt that God condemned. What were they? (30:6,13)

Memory Verse-

John 8:36

“_____ if the ___ makes you ____, you _____ be free _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the sad path that results from the pride of a great civilization?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Romans 6:22 “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”

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Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 31. This section contains an allegory of the Great Cedar addressed to Egypt.

Although Egypt prided itself on its glorious position, God reminded Egypt that it was no greater than Assyria, the mightiest of nations. Yet God judged Assyria, using the Babylonians as its destroyers. So Egypt itself would be judged.

The Distinction of Assyria: (vv.1-9)

Like the giant cedar, Assyria's domination spread over a vast area. This was an incomparable nation (v.8). So much so that other nations became jealous of Assyria's might and power (v.9).

The Downfall of Assyria: (vv.10-14)

Just as the towering cedars illustrated pride by their height, so Assyria was guilty of arrogance (v.10). For this reason, God would judge Assyria, delivering the nation into the hands of a despot, the mighty Nabopolassar, king of Babylon. This was fulfilled in 612 B.C. Assyria's punishment was according to its sin (v.11).

The Descent into Sheol: (vv.15-18)

The nations trembled in fear at Assyria's destruction and descent into Sheol, while the nations in Sheol were comforted by Assyria's demise as it shared their own fate (v.16). The application of the allegory is given in verse 18 in a question addressed to Egypt. To whom can Egypt liken itself? To which of the trees of Eden (i.e., the nations of the earth) can it liken itself? Is it equal to the greatest? Yet Egypt will also be judged and brought down to Sheol, where it share the fate of the other pagan nations.

Questions-

1. What nation was likened to "a cedar in Lebanon"? (v.3)
2. The "birds of the heavens" and "beasts of the field" refer to what? (v.6)
3. What was the sin of the Assyrians? (v.10)
4. According to verse 18, what nation was to be brought down to the depths of Sheol?

Memory Verse-

John 8:36

"_____ if the _____ you _____, you _____ be _____."

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand how even the mightiest nations will be brought down in subjection to God?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;"

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Day Six - Read Ezekiel chapter 32. This section contains a lamentation over Pharaoh and Egypt.

Although Egypt had achieved greatness, like a helpless crocodile in the river, Pharaoh would be captured and he and his people would descend to Sheol, the place of the departed dead. Here Pharaoh would see other past empires, destroyed and judged for their barbarous deeds. What are the possible reasons for this deep judgment of God? Perhaps it may look as far back as the book of Genesis, where we find in chapter 15:14, that God determined to judge Egypt for oppressing his people; and, though that was in part fulfilled in the plagues of Egypt and the drowning of Pharaoh, yet, in this destruction, here foretold, those old scores were reckoned for, and that was to have its full accomplishment. Or perhaps it may look as far forward as the book of the Revelation, where we find that the great enemy of the gospel-church, that makes war with the Lamb, is spiritually called Egypt, (see Revelation 11:8). And, if so, the destruction of Egypt and its Pharaoh was a type of the destruction of that proud enemy; and between this prophecy of the ruin of Egypt and the prophecy of the destruction of the antichristian generation there is some analogy. (from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Questions-

1. What is the definition of the place called "the Pit"?

2. What other nations would also be consigned to the Pit along with Egypt?

3. Why was there to be lamentation over Egypt? (v.15)

4. Can there be any analogy between ancient Egypt and modern United States?

Memory Verse-

John 8:36

“ _____, _____.”

Journal-

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1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the ultimate tragedy of the great nations?

2. My response:

(Notes excerpted from Shepherd's Notes)

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Lesson Seven - Chapters 33 - 34
"Recommission of the Prophet"

Today's Word -

John 14:13 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Day One - Read Ezekiel 33:1-9. This section contains the commission of the Watchman.

Chapters 33 & 34 mark the turning point in the book. When news of Jerusalem's destruction reached Ezekiel and the exiles, Ezekiel's restriction was removed so that he spoke freely to the people (see Ezekiel 33:22;3:26-27;24:27;29:21). Ezekiel warned the people of the false shepherds that led the nation astray and promised the coming of the true shepherd, the Messiah, who would shepherd His people in truth.

His Commission (33:1-9)

Ezekiel's call as a spiritual watchman of Israel is a repetition of 3:16-21. In this chapter, his call is repeated for emphasis and as a prelude to the message of comfort to follow (chaps. 33-48). The spiritual application of the watchman is given in verses 7-9. As a watchman warned a city's inhabitants against the danger of an enemy invasion, so God appointed Ezekiel as a spiritual watchman of Israel to warn the wicked. If they did not turn from their wicked ways, they would die in their sins; but the prophet would not be responsible (v.9). In Ezekiel's thought, to "live" meant to live physically in the land and inherit the promises of the millennial kingdom to come (see Ezekiel 37); to "die" meant exclusion from Messiah's coming kingdom.

Questions-

1. What is the meaning of the "sword upon the land" in verse 2?
2. Who was appointed watchmen over the people? (v.7)
3. According to verse 4, why would a man's blood be on his own hands?
4. How could the people's blood be on the hands of the watchman? (v. 6,8)

Memory Verse-

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This weeks memory verse is from the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Mark. This verse is an exhortation to the power of faith from the Lord. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

Mark 9:23

"...If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the importance of the call to repentance?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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Ephesians 3:20-21 "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

Day Two - Read Ezekiel chapter 33:10-20. This section contains the prophet's message.
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With the news of Jerusalem's destruction and their own plight in exile in a foreign country, the people despaired, crying out in anguish over their sins which had caused this dilemma (v.10). Confronting their despair, Ezekiel brought a message of comfort and hope (v.11). God did not desire their death; the solution was repentance. This repentance involved a return in obedience to the Mosaic Law. The Israelites were bound to God under the Mosaic covenant (see Exodus 19). For the Israelite, true repentance meant a return to obedience to the Mosaic Law. If a righteous man failed to repent and return, he would be judged; conversely, if a wicked man repented, his sins would not be held against him (vv.12-16). When the people objected that the Lord's way was unjust (v.17), Ezekiel reminded them of the Lord's justice in judging the people (v.20).

Questions-

1. According to verse 11, was there any hope for the people of Israel?
2. Would a righteous man be able to save himself from God's judgment? (v.12)
3. Was there any hope for the wicked? (vv.14-16)
4. According to verses 17-20, why did God consider Himself fair?

Memory Verse-

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Mark 9:23

"...If you can _____, all things are _____ to him who _____."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's fairness in judgment?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Matthew 17:20 "So Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

Day Three - Read Ezekiel chapter 33:21-33. This section describes Ezekiel's freedom to speak.

In January of 585 B.C., news of Jerusalem's destruction reached Ezekiel and the exiles. With this announcement, God removed the earlier restriction on Ezekiel, permitting him to move and minister freely among the people (v.22). Ezekiel addressed the poor remnant of Jews living in the land of Israel following the devastation by the Babylonians (vv.23-29). They were haughty, arguing that if Abraham alone could possess the land, surely they, who were many, could possess it (v.24). They assumed they would inherit the land because of their physical descent from Abraham; but without their obedience. However, Abraham obeyed God whereas they disobeyed Him. They ate meat with blood (see Leviticus 17:10), being guilty of the crimes that caused Jerusalem's destruction; idolatry (v.25). They also committed murder and adultery and trusted their swords instead of trusting God. God pronounced judgment on them (v.27). They would perish and the land would become desolate (vv.27-28), then they would realize that God had spoken (v.29). In verses 30-33, the Lord revealed the corrupt hearts of the people. They recognized that God had spoken to Ezekiel. They came and listened to his words, but inwardly they were filled with lustful desires. They had only a fleeting interest in Ezekiel's word; as though he were a singer of love songs. They did not practice obedience. But when Ezekiel's words came true, they would realize that Ezekiel had spoken the truth.

Questions-

1. What was the bad report that came from Jerusalem in verse 21?

2. Why did God open Ezekiel's mouth after the news from Jerusalem (vv.22-29).

3. What was false in the people's thinking in Jerusalem? (vv.23-29)

4. Were the people ready to heed the words of the prophet according to verses 30-33?

Memory Verse-

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Mark 9:23

"...If you ___ believe, all _____ are possible ___ him who believes."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the danger of hearing without obedience?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapter 34:1-10. This section contains a description of the false shepherds of Israel.

Under the metaphor of a shepherd and sheep, this chapter contrasts the false shepherds of Israel – the kings – with the true shepherd, the Messiah. The indictment against the false shepherds is announced in verses 1-6. They lavished wealth upon themselves at the expense of the people. They oppressed the people and were negligent in their responsibilities. Instead of caring for the people, they treated them harshly and scattered them (see 1 Kings 22:17). The judgment of the kings is described in verses 7-10. Before announcing judgment, Ezekiel reminded them of their sin (v.8). Now they would “hear the word of the Lord” in judgment (vv.7,9). No longer would the shepherds care for the sheep; referring to the termination of the Judean King’s rule. Pharaoh Neco imprisoned Jehoahaz (see 2 Kings 23:33); Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah captive to Babylon (see 2 Chronicles 36:6, 2 Kings 24:12, 25:7).

Questions-

1. Who were the false shepherds of Israel? (vv.1-10)

2. What were the seven sins of the false shepherds? (vv.2-4).
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)
 - f)
 - g)

3. What became of the people under the false shepherds? (vv.5-6)

4. According to verses 9 & 10, what was God’s judgment upon these false shepherds?

Memory Verse-

Mark 9:23

“... you can _____, all _____ are possible to _____ who _____.”

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the dangers of false rulers and leaders?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

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Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 34:11-24. This section contains a description of God's True Shepherd.

In contrast to the false shepherds of Israel, the Lord Himself promised to shepherd the people (vv.11-16). This promise was not fulfilled in the return from captivity in Babylon; they did not have the peace promised in these verses. This promise anticipated the re-gathering of Israel from the countries of the world at the end of the age and Messiah's protective rule over Israel in the future millennial kingdom. Before Messiah's rule in the millennial kingdom, He will judge the individual sheep (vv.17-22). He will judge the sheep, the goats, the fat, and the lean within Israel (vv.17,20). The rams and male goats likely refer to the false leaders who led the people astray. Within Israel, the righteous would be separated from the unrighteous to determine who would enter the millennial kingdom. In contrast to the false shepherds of Israel, the Lord would set one shepherd, David, over Israel (vv.23-24). One can understand "David" as a title of Messiah. It is the Lord who is the True Shepherd (v.11). In that future day in the millennial kingdom, Israel will be converted; they will know God and the Messiah who will teach them (vv.23-24).

Questions-

1. Who does "the servant David" refer to in verse 23?

2. The promises in this chapter were not fulfilled when the Israelites returned from Babylon. What reasons can be given for this?

1. What are some of the attributes of the True and Good Shepherd?

4. Who were the goats or fat sheep? (vv.20-22)

Memory Verse-

Mark 9:23

"...If ___ ___ believe, ___ things ___ possible ___ him ___ believes."

Journal-

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Studies in Ezekiel

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand about the quality of God's love and concern for His people?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Psalms 25:9-10 "The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."

Day Six - Read Ezekiel chapter 34:25-31. This section describes God's plan for His people.

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The true Shepherd was loving and caring towards His people. This is in contrast to the false shepherds. They were not only selfish but destructive. They were leaders who muddied the waters for others by raising unnecessary doubts, they taught false ideas, and destroyed the flock's spiritual nourishment by acting sinfully.

When Messiah returned to rescue Israel, He would establish a covenant of peace with them (vv.25-31). They would enjoy protection from harm (vv.25,28) as well as productive harvests because of seasonal showers (vv.26,27,29; see Isaiah 65:21-22; 30:23; Hosea 2:22; Joel 2:23; 3:18) Foreign powers would no longer enslave them (vv.27-28; see Zechariah 14:1-11). Israel would be converted and know the Lord (36:25-27; Zechariah 12:10-13:6; Romans 11:26-27).

Questions-

1. What are some of the future blessings promised to Israel?
Can you name at least a dozen mentioned in Chapter 34?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)
 - f)
 - g)
 - h)
 - i)
 - j)
 - k)
 - l)

2. Does this promise extend only to Israel in today's world? (see Romans 11).

Memory Verse-

Mark 9:23

“.....”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand about the glorious future of God's people?

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2. My response:

(Notes excerpted from Shepherd's Notes)

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Lesson Eight - Chapters 35 - 36
“Restoration of Israel”

Today's Word -

Psalms 106:3 “Blessed are those who keep justice, and he who does righteousness at all times!”

Day One - Read Ezekiel 35:1-6 also re-read chapter 25. This section covers the prophecy of Edom's coming destruction.

Edom, the archenemy of Israel and representative of the nation's hostility toward Israel, would be judged and destroyed for her hatred of Israel. It was promised, in the foregoing chapter, that when the time to favor Israel should come, especially the time for sending the Messiah and setting up his kingdom in the world, God would cause the enemies of His people to cease and the blessings and comforts of God's promises to abound. This chapter enlarges upon the former promise, concerning the destruction of the enemies of Israel; the next chapter upon the latter promise, the replenishing of Israel with blessings. Edom is the enemy prophesied against in this chapter. Since Edom's destruction had been foretold earlier (25:12-14), the repetition in this passage suggests Edom stood as representative of the nations of the world that afflicted Israel and would be judged because of their active persecution.

Questions-

1. Mount Seir represents what nation under judgment by the Lord? (v.1)

2. What was symbolic about Edom's judgment in this chapter?

3. What is meant by the phrase “hand of God” found in verse 3?

4. What are the two reasons for God's judgment found in verses 5 and 6?
 - a)
 - b)

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Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from chapter 24 of the Gospel of Matthew. This promise is the eternal nature and dependability of God's Word. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the fate of the enemies of God's people.?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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1 Peter 5:6 "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,"

Day Two - Read Ezekiel chapter 35:7-15. This section is a continuation of the judgment of Edom.
--

Edom's judgment is further described in verses 7-9. The land of Edom would become a wasteland, no longer profiting from caravans crossing its territory. Ultimately, Edom would cease to exist; a prophecy that was fulfilled in A.D. 70. Further reasons for Edom's destruction are given in verses 10-11. This nation was guilty of coveting the lands of Israel and Judah and of an intense hatred towards God's people (v.11). This was an act of aggression against the Lord Himself since He lived there (v.10). Thus, in judgment, God would make Himself known to Edom. Moreover, God was listening. He heard Edom reviling Israel (v.12) and speaking arrogantly against the Lord Himself (v.13). But God would make Edom a desolate wasteland. As Edom had rejoiced in the destruction of Israel, so others would rejoice over Edom's destruction (vv.14-15).

Questions-

1. The hills, valleys and ravines of Edom will be filled with what type of carnage? (v.8)
2. What two nations are referenced in verse 10?
3. Who will rejoice over the destruction and desolation of Edom (v.14)
4. What was repeated in this chapter for emphasis concerning how God would be remembered by these Edomite peoples?

Memory Verse-

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Matthew 24:35

"Heaven ___ earth will pass away, ___ My words will by ___ means pass away."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the sovereignty of God?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Day Three - Read Ezekiel chapter 36:1-8. This section contains the restoration of the land of Israel.
--

Israel's glorious conversion and re-population of the land of Israel in the future is detailed in these chapters. The mountains, hills, valleys, and cities would again be populated; but first God would regenerate the people of Israel in a spiritual sense.

Because Israel had experienced hostility and suffering at the hands of its enemies, God addressed the "mountains of Israel"; the land and the people with a prophecy of future blessing (v.1). The land that had suffered devastation would again be cultivated, but judgment would be leveled against the enemies of Israel; including Edom (v.5). Five times Ezekiel declared "therefore" emphasizing the enemies' destruction (vv.3-7). This first prophecy seems chiefly to relate to the temporal condition of the Jews, where their present deplorable condition is described with the triumphs of their neighbors; but it is promised that their grievances shall be all redressed and that in due time they shall be settled again in their own land, in the midst of peace and plenty.

Questions-

1. How has the mood of God's word changed in this chapter?
2. Why did Ezekiel prophesy to the "mountains of Israel"? (v.1)
3. The "ancient heights" of the Promised Land had fallen into the hands of Israel's enemies. What was the promise of God in verse 7 that would comfort the exiles in Babylon?
4. What further promise is given in the next verse?

Memory Verse-

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Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and _____ will pass _____, but My words will by no _____ pass away."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's compassion for His people?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Psalms 15:1-2 "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart"

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Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapter 36:9-15. This section continues the restoration of the land of Israel.

The general statement of Israel's future blessing is stated in verse 8, with an amplification in verses 9-15. It is significant that these prophecies were not fulfilled in the return from Babylon in 586 B.C. At that time, Israel continued to experience hostility from their enemies. But at the second advent of Christ and the establishment of the millennial kingdom, Israel would again know peace and prosperity in their land. The reason for Israel's blessing is stated in verse 9; God would be with them. He would subjugate their enemies and cause them to prosper. The people would return to the land and multiply (v.10). Their cities would be populated; their cattle would multiply (v.11) and their blessing would be unparalleled. Moreover, it would be a permanent peace; never again would they endure persecution and suffering at the hands of enemies (vv.14-15). The emphatic "no longer...any more...any longer" indicates Israel's permanent peace in the millennial kingdom under Messiah's rule (vv.14-15).

Questions-

1. The Lord uses what strong term of affirmation for His people in verse 9?

2. Would Israel's restoration be complete? (v.11)

3. What are the five promises for Israel given in verses 14 & 15?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)

4. Why were these promises not completely fulfilled with their return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity?

Memory Verse-

Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and _____ will pass away, but My _____ will by no _____ pass away."

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's affirmation and support of His people?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Ezekiel 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 36:16-27. This section covers the restoration of the people of Israel.

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Before describing Israel's future cleansing and conversion, the Lord reminded Israel of the reason for their captivity in Babylon and their dispersion among the nations (vv.16-21). They had defiled the Lord's land with their idolatry (vv.17-18 and compare with Leviticus 18:24-28 and 2 Kings 21:1-15); for this reason God poured out His judgment on them. They even profaned His name among the gentile nations (vv.21-22); yet the Lord had concern for His name – He refused to abandon Israel.

But God promised to vindicate His holy name which had been profaned among the nations (v.23); He would re-gather the Israelites and restore them to the Promised Land (v.24). As a testimony to the nations, the Lord would bring them back into their "own land" (v.24), promised to them by a covenant centuries earlier (see Genesis 15:18-21 and Deuteronomy 30:1-10).

The condition for Israel's future restoration and blessing in the land was their spiritual conversion (vv.25-32). God promised to sprinkle clean water on them (see Leviticus 15:21-22 & Numbers 17-19), a metaphor describing their cleansing from idolatry (v.25) but also their conversion and forgiveness (see Psalms 51:2-4,7-9). Through conversion they would receive a new heart, enabling them to fulfill the most basic command (see Deuteronomy 6:5). With the new heart, their rebellion would be removed. They would also receive a new human spirit as well as the indwelling Holy Spirit (vv.26-27).

Questions-

1. According to verse 17, how did the people of Israel defile their own land?
2. How did the Israelites profane the name of the Lord? (vv.20-21)
3. Because of this stain on God's name, what did He propose to do? (vv.22-24)
4. What else did God promise to the people of Israel to change their behavior and outlook?

Memory Verse-

Matthew 24:35

"_____ and _____ will _____ away, but _____ words _____ by no _____ pass _____."

Journal-

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1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the new heart we receive from the Lord?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Isaiah 58:10 "If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday."

Day Six - Read Ezekiel chapter 36:28-38. This section continues with the restoration of the people of Israel.

At the second advent of Christ, the Lord will remove Israel's suffering as the people are spiritually converted. Then God will bless them spiritually and materially as they re-populate the land of Israel and

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enjoy the bounty of the Lord's material blessings. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out. This was a non-repeatable experience, making provision for Israel's spiritual blessing (see Acts 2). However, Israel's appropriation of the Holy Spirit would occur at the second advent of Christ, when they repented (see Zechariah 12:10-14) and regenerated and converted. As a result, Israel would be inwardly motivated to obey the Lord (v.27) and walk in fellowship with Him (v.28), repudiating their former sinful life (v.31). Israel's blessings would overflow into the material realm in the millennium (vv.29-30).

In concert with Israel's spiritual blessings would be their material blessings in the land (vv.33-36). The restoration would be so thorough that the land would be likened to the Garden of Eden (v.35). Even the gentile nations would recognize that the Lord had done this (v.36). There would be no holocaust, no violence against Israel in that day; but Israel would see population explosion as the land and cities were re-populated like flocks of sheep filling the city on a feast day (vv.37-38).

Questions-

1. Who was to fulfill the new covenant that God was promising in verses 24-27?
2. The Lord said that Israel would be ashamed of what in their past? (v.32)
3. When would the Holy Spirit be poured out for Israel? (vv.26-27)
4. The restoration of Israel would result in their land becoming like what famous place in biblical history? (v.35)

Memory Verse-

Matthew 24:35

“ _____, _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's ultimate plan for Israel?

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2. My response:

(Notes excerpted from Matthew Henry's Commentary, and Shepherd's Notes)

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Lesson Nine - Chapter 37
"Resurrection of Israel"

Today's Word -

Exodus 33:13-14 "Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people. And He said, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'"

Day One - Read Ezekiel 37:1-6. This section begins the vision of the dry bones.
--

At the return of Christ, the Jewish people will be re-gathered to the land from the foreign nations where they have been scattered. They will come back to the land in faith, believing in Jesus as the Messiah and living in obedience to Him throughout the millennium.

In this vision, Ezekiel saw the restoration of Israel and Judah as one nation, reunited under the Messiah's rule. This vision illustrated the promise that was given in chapter 36. In a vision reminiscent of 8:3 and 11:5,24, Ezekiel was transported to a valley filled with dry bones. The bones, depicting death, were very dry, revealing that perhaps they had been dead for a long time. These bones are a picture of the Jews in captivity, scattered and dead. Where a corpse might be brought back to life, these pathetic pile of bones were hopelessly dead. The future appeared bleak: "Can these bones live?" (v.3). The bones portrayed a nation of people, hence, "Can these people – this nation – be brought to life?" God alone knew the answer (v.3). He commanded Ezekiel to address the bones and announce their resurrection: thus God would do the impossible and not only clothe the bones with flesh, but restore life where it had been before. This would be a staggering proof of God's power and Being.

Questions-

1. Where was Ezekiel transported during this vision? (v.1).
2. What question did the Lord pose to Ezekiel about the many bones in the vision? (v.3).
3. How did the prophet Ezekiel respond to this question? (v.3)
4. What does his answer reveal about Ezekiel's concept of God's power?

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Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from chapter 6 of Romans. This promise reminds of the wonderful gift of eternal life provided by our Lord Jesus. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand about the restorative powers of God?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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Psalms 4:3 "But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the LORD will hear when I call to Him."

Day Two - Read Ezekiel chapter 37:7-10. This section continues the vision of the dry bones.

As Ezekiel prophesied over the bones at the Lord's instructions, he heard a rattling, and the dry bones began to come to life. They connected properly to each other; sinews, flesh, and skin covered the bones (v.8). God breathed the breath of life into the skeletons and they came to life. (vv.9,10 also Psalms 104:29-30 "*You hide Your face, they are troubled; you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.*").

What happens in this prophecy resembles the creation of man at the very beginning, with the exception that the Lord starts with dry bones rather than the dust of the earth. There are three phases; 1) scattered and dry bones, 2) flesh and skin were added to the bones to form lifeless bodies, and finally 3) they were made alive. So ultimately, this prophecy was a message of hope to a hopeless group of exiles. It is also a message of hope to us. And the source of the hope in both cases is the Spirit of God. We may be dead, and our hopes may have withered, but the Holy Spirit – who can breathe life into the dead, and who is the giver of life – He can revive hope as well.

Questions-

1. Why was Ezekiel speaking to these dead bones in the valley? (v.7)

2. What was missing from these corpses as the skin and muscle covered the bones? (v.8)

3. In verse 9, Ezekiel is told to prophesy over what other thing?

4. What is added to these lifeless bodies in verse 10?

Memory Verse-

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Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is _____, but the gift of God is _____ life in Christ _____ our Lord.

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the power of the Holy Spirit...?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Romans 6:23

For the ___ of sin is death, but the ___ of God is eternal ___ in Christ Jesus our ___.

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand how God frees us from our slavery?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Mark 11:24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

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Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapter 37:15-17. This section covers the symbol of the two sticks.

This symbolic act further developed the promise of chapter 36 and the vision of 37:1-14. Ezekiel was instructed to take two sticks, write "Judah" (being the leading tribe and representing the Southern Kingdom) on one and "Joseph" (who was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh the leading tribes and representing the Northern Kingdom) on the other (v.16). Then Ezekiel was to join them as one in his hand (v.17). An essential part of the action was that these sticks were to have these tribal names on them and so they were openly representational. They were joined in one hand which identified the two groups as joint members of a larger entity, the sons or tribes of Israel. The sticks might have a national significance in that they suggest the institution of monarchy that represents the nation.

Questions-

1. What was symbolic about the two sticks in verses 15-17?

2. Why was the name of Joseph written on one of the sticks? (v.16)

3. What other tribes joined Judah in constituting the Southern Kingdom?

4. What could be one of the implications with the joining of the two sticks? (v.17)

Memory Verse-

Romans 6:23

___ the wages of sin is ____, but the ___ of God is _____ life in Christ Jesus ___ Lord.

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand our oneness in the Lord?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Philippians 1:6 "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;"

Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 37:18-23. This section continues the symbol of the two sticks.

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The symbolism of the two sticks is explained in verses 18-23, particularly verses 21 & 22. God promised to re-gather the Israelites from the foreign nations and bring them as a unified nation, as one people, back into the land, never to be separated again. Although they had been divided as two nations since the death of Solomon (931 B.C.), at the return of Christ they would be united as one nation; moreover, they would be converted, and spiritually cleansed from their idolatry (v.23). This may communicate an obvious message to us, but the children of Israel needed an interpretation.

Their repatriation and reunion would be a realization of a truth that had long been hidden from view, the ideal of a re-united kingdom. The miracle the Lord would perform for Judah; He would also work for the Northern Kingdom. The re-gathering and re-unification promises have important implications for modern Israel and its somewhat threatened future.

Questions-

1. Why did the people of Israel need an interpretation of this symbolic act?

2. What was the necessary cleansing that would accompany the re-gathering? (v.23)

3. According to verse 22, what will the two kingdoms have in common?

4. How do the symbols of the dry bones and the two sticks connect with another?

Memory Verse-

Romans 6:23

___ the ___ of ___ is ____, ___ the ___ of ___ is ____ ___ in ____ ___ our ____.

Journal-

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1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's plan for Israel?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Ephesians 6:13 "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Day Six - Read Ezekiel chapter 37:24-28. This section covers the King of the reunited Israel.

After Israel is reunited in the land and spiritually alive, David would be king over them (v.24). Most believe that David is a messianic title of Jesus Christ. While others believe this will be the literal, historic

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David ruling over Israel in the millennium. That is possible. Probably it is better to understand “David” as a title of King or Messiah. David was a good king, but the Messiah would be the perfect King (see Revelation 17:14;19:16;21:1). It is the Lord Himself who will be Shepherd and King. Because of Israel’s conversion (36:25-27) and the Messiah’s rule over them, they will live in obedience to the Lord. The Israelites will live in the land “forever,” throughout the millennium, fulfilling the promise of the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant (see Genesis 12:1-3;13:14-18;15:12-21;28:13-15). God’s sanctuary will be among them; a reference to the millennial Temple (see ahead in Ezekiel 40-43). God’s glory will again dwell with Israel and He will be their only God. (see 10:18;11:23;43:4)

Questions-

1. Why is David mentioned in verse 24?

2. How long will this King reign over His people? (v.25).

3. What type of covenant was promised by the Lord in verse 26?

4. God’s dwelling place or tabernacle will be located in Israel during the Millennium. Why is this important to the people of the world? (v.28)

Memory Verse-

Romans 6:23

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand why God’s desire is to dwell with us?

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2. My response:

(Notes excerpted from Shepherd's Notes)

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Lesson Ten - Chapters 38 - 39
“Russia’s Invasion of Israel”

Today’s Word -

Jude 1:24 “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,”

Day One - Read Ezekiel 38:1-9. This section covers the attack upon Israel by Russia.

Chapters 38 and 39 form a unit, describing God’s intervention on behalf of Israel in establishing Israel in the land. A coalition of northern nations invaded Israel but were destroyed by God as they entered the land of Israel (see 38:17-39:8). Burial of the enemies’ dead took seven months (see 39:12), Israel was securely established in the land (see 39:25-29), and God’s Glory was manifested to the nations (see 39:21-24). These two chapters will show us that there is to be a singular event which God carefully maneuvers which will startle Israel into the recognition that God’s Hand is once again upon the Nation Israel, as it was so many years ago.

The great enemy who now appears is no longer Babylon, but "Gog", of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" (38:2). Much controversy has raged among the commentators as to the identity of this new enemy. Gesenius, one of the greatest of the Jewish authorities, identifies Gog as Russia, translating the words "chief prince" as more properly "the prince of Rosh" and Meshech and Tubal. Meshech and Tubal have been identified as ancient forms of the names Moscow and Tobolsk. Thus the great enemy of Israel in the last days is identified as Russia and her satellite nations.

Ezekiel pictured a massive invasion against Israel by a coalition of nations. When would the invasion take place? The context indicates the general time period must be future; at the end of the age. Ezekiel had described Israel’s future restoration (see 34:11-31;36:1-37:28), the nations that had persecuted Israel were to be judged (see 35:1-15;36:7;38:1-39:29), and the millennial blessings would follow (see 40:1-48:35). Ezekiel also identified the time as “in the latter years” (see 38:8) and “in the last days” (see 38:16).

Questions-

1. Who was Ezekiel instructed to prophesy against in verses 1 & 2?
2. Identify the modern-day countries which are identified as Elam and Cush (v.2)
3. How will the Lord entice or motivate the invaders to attack Israel? (v.4)

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Questions- (cont.)

4. What is the meaning of "latter days" found in verse 8?

Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from chapter 5 of the gospel of Matthew. This promise is the first of the Beatitudes and encourages us to humility. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

Matthew 5:3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's plan for the End Times.?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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John 12:26 "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor."

Day Two - Read Ezekiel chapter 38:10-17. This section continues the invasion of Israel.

While the invaders were responsible for their actions, they are seen as supernaturally drawn from their homelands, like wild beasts (v.4) to invade the land of Israel. Although Ezekiel described the invasion as with "horses and horsemen... wielding swords" (v.4), it is not necessary to suggest the final battle will be fought with horses. How would Ezekiel describe future warfare? Since he had no terminology for modern warfare, he would use the terminology of his time – horses and swords. These enemies come from the "remote parts of the north" (vv.6,15), modern Turkey and southern Russia – the nations surrounding the Black and Caspian Seas.

This prophecy shows how God is in control of the nations, how He will protect His people, and how He will bring the final victory of righteousness. In this prophecy we see that Gog will prepare a great army. He and his allies, with all of their troops, will come into the land of Israel like a storm cloud. But the Lord is orchestrating these events. He has put hooks into the jaws of Gog (v.4), and He is leading him where He wants him to go. Gog will make evil plans against Israel that include the invasion and plunder of a defenseless people without fortifications or ready defense. However, God knew of this plan even in the beginning and foretold of it through His prophets.

Questions-

1. In the midst of this prophecy, how does God indicate that He is in control?

2. In verse 8, what does this visitation refer to?

3. How does this prophecy describe the nature of this invasion? (v.9)

4. What is the state of Israel's defenses when this invasion takes place? (v.11)

Memory Verse-

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Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Matthew 5:3

"Blessed ___ the poor in spirit, ___ theirs is the kingdom ___ heaven."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's control of even His enemies?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Psalms 25:10 "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."

Day Three - Read Ezekiel chapter 38:18-23. This section describes the judgment on Gog.

As the invaders entered the land of Israel, God would cause a gigantic earthquake to occur that would cause all of life – fish, birds, animals, insects, and people to quake in fear at the judgment of God (v.20). Gog's survivors would panic and destroy one another (v.21). And, as in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, God would rain fire and brimstone in judgment on Israel's enemies (v.22; see Genesis 19:24). God would be magnified in judgment. Since God is holy, sin must be judged (v.23). Since Israel is dwelling in peace, and Gog has apparently deceived them, God is Israel's only source of help. He himself will deal with Gog and his armies. A terrifying war will break out suddenly with a shaking that will startle even the animals.

Many say that the battle Ezekiel described here will occur at the end of human history (Battle of Armageddon), but there are many differences between the events described here and those in Revelation 20. Regardless of when this battle will occur, the message is clear: God will deliver his people– no enemy can stand before His might and power.

Questions-

1. What will be the mood of God at the time of the invasion of Israel? (vv.18-19)

2. What catastrophic event will mark this invasion? (v.19)

3. Describe the surprising nature of God's defeat of the invading armies of Gog. (vv.21-22)

4. According the verse 23, what is the ultimate purpose of God's actions?

Memory Verse-

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Matthew 5:3

"Blessed are the _____ in spirit, for theirs is the _____ of heaven."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's anger toward unrighteousness?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Psalms 42:11 "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God."

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Studies in Ezekiel

Day Four - Read Ezekiel chapter 39:1-10. This section continues with the defeat of Gog.

A description of the invader's judgment and destruction is repeated for emphasis in verses 39:1-8. The defeat of the evil forces will be final and complete; they will be destroyed by divine intervention. God will destroy Gog on the mountains of Israel (vv.2,4). The repeated use of I emphasizes that God is the one who will destroy the invaders (vv.2-7). The invaders' weapons will be destroyed (v.3), and the mighty army will become food for predators (v.4). Not only will the invaders be destroyed, but the land of their origins – Magog – will also be destroyed (v.6). It will take seven years to destroy the vast amount of weapons that once belonged to this defeated army. God's name will be vindicated; and blasphemy against God will be terminated (v.7).

Because of this victory, God's name will be known throughout the world. His glory will be evident, and the nations will understand that He alone is in charge of human history. God will clearly show His love for His people by restoring them to their homeland. The nations will understand something of the righteousness and justice of God, for they will see that Israel went into captivity and was scattered because of their sin and then were restored because of God's love and mercy.

Questions-

1. What is being emphasized about God's judgment on Gog?

2. Why is this point emphasized?

3. How long will the people be burning Gog's weapons and equipment? (v.9)

4. What else will Israel inflict upon their enemies? (v.10)

Memory Verse-

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Matthew 5:3

“_____ are the _____ in spirit, for _____ is the kingdom of _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand God's victory for Israel?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

1 Peter 2:2-3 “as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

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Studies in Ezekiel

Day Five - Read Ezekiel chapter 39:11-20. This section describes the burial of Gog and His armies.

Gog and his hordes will be buried in “the Valley of Hamon-Gog”, a dead-end valley east of the Dead Sea (v.11). These armies coveted Israel – and they obtained a permanent place in Israel! So massive would the destruction be that it will take seven months just to bury the dead (v.12). People will scour the land, looking for the dead to be buried in the Valley of Hamon-Gog in order to cleanse the land from this defilement (vv.13-16; also see Numbers 35:33-34;5:2;9:6-7). Ezekiel 39:4 is further developed in 39:17-20, with language that is reminiscent of Revelation 19:17-18. The destruction and plunder of the invaders is described. In a reversal of roles, animals will feed on the invaders as the invaders become sacrifices eaten by animals.

Two themes are intertwined; God's total victory over His enemies, and the need to cleanse the land to make it holy. After the final battle, the burials must be completed in order for the land to be cleansed. The land would have been defiled by the unburied corpses. Those who would come in contact with the bodies out in the open would become ceremonially unclean (according to Numbers 19:14-16). Yet there will be so many that all kinds of birds will be called in order to help dispose of the bodies (vv.17-20). The message for the believer is an exciting one; with God on our side, we are assured of ultimate victory over His foes because God will fight on our behalf.

Questions-

1. Why will there be a thorough search for the remains of the enemy army? (vv.14-15)

2. How many people will be involved in the disposal of the dead? (v.13)

3. What will be the role of the animals of the field in this process?

4. What is ironic about this sacrificial meal?

Memory Verse-

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Matthew 5:3

“_____ the _____ in _____, for _____ is the _____ of _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the ironies of the End Times?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

1 Peter 2:4-5 "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

<p>Day Six - Read Ezekiel chapter 39:21-29. This section covers the restoration of Israel to their land and the return of God's glory.</p>

In judging Israel's enemies, God would be exalted, revealing His glory and holiness to the nations (v.21). Israel would be converted, knowing the Lord (v.22), and the gentile nations would recognize the holiness of God, that God sent Israel into exile because of their sin (v.23). But in that day, God would restore Israel's fortunes by re-gathering them from the nations of the world, delivering them from the tribulation, and bringing them back into the land for their blessing in the millennial kingdom (v.27).

Ezekiel pictured the end of the tribulation which concluded with Israel's repentance (see Zechariah 12:10-14 and Matthew 24:30) and appropriation of the Holy Spirit's blessing in the millennium (v.29 also see Isaiah 44:3 and Joel 2:28-29). God promises to pour out His Spirit on mankind. The early church believed this began to be fulfilled at Pentecost, when God's Holy Spirit came to live in all believers (see Acts 2:1-18).

Questions-

1. According to verse 21, what three things was God going to set before the nations?

2. What nation did God hide His face from in verse 23?

3. What are some of the promises made by God concerning the restoration of Israel?

4. According to verse 29, what was God going to pour out upon the house of Israel?

Memory Verse-

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Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Matthew 5:3

“ _____, _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the final destiny of Israel?

2. My response:

(Notes excerpted from Shepherd's Notes)

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Studies in Ezekiel

Lesson Eleven - Chapters 40-42 "Rebuilding the Millennial Temple"

Today's Word -

Romans 1:17 "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

Day One - Read Ezekiel 40:1-16. This section is Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple.
--

Following Israel's spiritual conversion and restoration to the land at the end of the tribulation period, Jesus Christ will return to rule in the millennial kingdom. Ezekiel was given a vision of the Temple that would be constructed for worship in the millennial kingdom. The glory of God will return to fill the Temple as a sign of fellowship with His regenerated people, Israel.

Ezekiel's vision begins by being transported to a "very high mountain" and seeing something like a city. The Lord then takes him to the gateway of this structure, which is the new temple, and hands him over to an angel who will be his guide through this temple. The guide takes Ezekiel and begins measuring the eastern gate of the temple area. This gate has particular significance for two reasons; first, as we will see, the glory of the Lord returns through the eastern gate, second, the eastern gate will be shut (or sealed up) as it is today - a fact with prophetic significance.

Questions

1. What was Ezekiel's destination in this vision?
2. Who is the man mentioned in verse 3?
3. What were the objects in his hand? (v.3)
4. What was the purpose of these instruments?

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Studies in Ezekiel

Memory Verse-

This weeks memory verse is from the first chapter of James. This promise reminds us that our faith in action will yield patience in our lives. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

James 1:3

“knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the new temple in Jerusalem?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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Studies in Ezekiel

Psalms 71:5-6 "For You are my hope, O Lord GOD; you are my trust from my youth. By You I have been upheld from birth; you are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You."

Day Two - Read Ezekiel 40:17-49. This section is continuation of the description of the Temple.

Passing through the east gateway, Ezekiel and his guide enter the outer court, which is situated on the lower terrace (v.17). Here around the court are thirty chambers upon the pavement. At the four corners are the people's kitchens. The details for the north and south gates correspond to those for the eastern gate, with the specific mention of seven steps up to the platform (vv.22,26). The inner court is located about 100 cubits to the interior of the outer gates (v.19) on a platform eight steps higher than the outer court (vv.31,34,37). It appears that all the gates are identical. The point is that the way to God is controlled and guarded. Those who come into this new temple must be true worshippers. The indistinguishable nature of the gates point out the perfection of the new temple. In the same way, the recurrence of the square shape in the temple (the gate chambers, the inner court, the entire temple complex) indicates the perfection of this temple. In verses 39-42 we find that the Mosaic system will be restored with the reinstating of the levitical liturgy and the various offerings. There will be an altar and sacrifices offered in this millennial temple, as well as music and singers.

Questions

1. How many gateways were seen leading into the temple area?

2. What were the gateways called?

3. Palm trees were located upon the gateways leading to which court?

4. The priests who were the sons of Zadok had what specific responsibility? (v.46).

Memory Verse-
James 1:3

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Studies in Ezekiel

“knowing ____ the testing of ____ faith produces patience.

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to enlarge or amplify my vision of of the new temple?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Studies in Ezekiel

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

<p>Day Three - Read Ezekiel 41:1-12. This section is a description of the Sanctuary and inner rooms of the Temple.</p>

Within the inner court is the temple structure proper. The Sanctuary or Holy Place is located near the front of the temple. It is apparent that these areas are set aside for the holiness of God. Beyond the Sanctuary, lies the inner room or Most Holy Place. Actually, the Most Holy Place was the innermost room in the temple. (In Solomon's temple, this was where the ark of the covenant was kept and where God's glory was said to dwell. This room was entered only once a year by the high priest, who performed a ceremony to atone for the nation's sins.) There were numerous chambers that surrounded the temple in tiers that were three stories high. There was also a large room at the rear of the temple with no mention of its purpose.

Questions

1. What building dominated the inner court?
2. Where was the Sanctuary located in the Temple?
3. How many chambers surrounded the main Temple structure.
4. What was the function of the building at the western end of the Temple?

Memory Verse-
James 1:3

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Studies in Ezekiel

“ _____ that the testing of your _____ produces patience.

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the geography of the Temple?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Psalms 31:24 "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the LORD."

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Day Four - Read Ezekiel 41:13-26. This section is a continuation of the description of the Temple area.

The Temple was measured as a square with 100 cubits (or approximately 170 feet) on each side. (This included some of the courtyard on the north and south side). Inside the structure, the Most Holy Place, the Sanctuary, and the outer vestibule were paneled with a very costly black wood. The windows were recessed and covered with a lattice. The walls of the Temple were carved with likenesses of the two-faced cherubims alternating with palm trees. The cherubims bore the face of a man and the face of a lion which look toward the palm trees on either side. In front of the Most Holy Place is an altar-like table of wood, possibly for showbread. There are double doors for the two interior rooms. These are also carved the cherubims and palm trees. It is interesting to note that these rooms appear to be somewhat different to the description of the interior of Solomon's Temple. The palm trees are interesting, because they were widely used by Solomon in his Temple. According to the Song of Solomon, palm trees were intended to mean beauty (Song of Solomon 7:7). In Psalm 92:12-14 they were intended to convey fruitfulness. They also symbolized salvation and victory (Revelation 7:9). Also, they appear in the Palm Sunday presentation of Jesus Christ as King, with regal glory as seen in John 12:13.

Questions

1. What was the approximate size of the Temple?

2. What were the two images carved on the walls of the Temple?

3. What was the description of the altar? (v.22)

4. Describe the doors of the Temple.

Memory Verse-

James 1:3

"knowing _____ the _____ of your faith _____ patience.

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Studies in Ezekiel

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the symbolic design of the Temple?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

1 Corinthians 13:13 "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Day Five - Read Ezekiel 42:1-20. This section describes the Chambers for the Priests.

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The buildings containing the priest's chambers are located, it seems, at the northern and southern edges of the inner court about mid-section of the temple yard. The chambers on both sides appear to be the same in detail and use. The chambers within this structure are three stories high, or in three rows on terraces descending to the outer court. These chambers were used by the priests for eating the holy offerings, for storing them until they are baked in the kitchens, and for storing the priestly garments when the priests were not on duty.

The overall dimension of the Temple area is a square, 500 cubits (approximately 285 yards) on each side. The purpose of the surrounding wall is to make a separation between the holy and the common of the secular world on the outside. Ezekiel's restored temple is not a blueprint, but a vision that stresses the purity and spiritual vitality of the ideal place of worship and those who will worship there.

Questions

1. The chambers of the priests were used for what purpose?

They were used for storing the offerings and the priestly garments.

2. Locate the priest's chambers by describing the major rooms that were adjacent to it.

Memory Verse-

James 1:3

"_____ that the _____ of your _____ ."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to help me understand the difficulties of translating a vision to a concrete object promised by God?

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2. My response:

Today's Word-

Proverbs 4:18 "But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day."

Day Six - Review Ezekiel chapters 40-42. This is a review of the descriptions of Ezekiel's Temple.

Ezekiel provides a detailed description of a temple - but what temple did he describe? Several interpretations have been suggested:

1) It is Solomon's Temple, given to encourage the people. Problem; the description and dimensions do not fit Solomon's Temple.

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2) It is Zerubbabel's Temple, built when the Jews returned from Babylon. Problem; the details do not correspond, further, the glory of God returns to Ezekiel temple (43:4) but does not return to Zerubbabel's Temple.

3) It refers to the Church. Problem; this is allegorical interpretation which forces a hidden or mystical meaning on the ordinary meaning of these words. That interpretation could be considered suspect, since it abandons the literal-grammatical-historical method of interpretation.

4) It is the Millennial Temple. This view best fits the context as well as the meaning of the words themselves. After Israel is converted and restored to the land, a temple will be built for Israel's worship of a holy God during the Millennium.

Questions

1. Which of the four descriptions do you think fit the Temple of Ezekiel?
What are your reasons?

2. Read Revelation 11:1-2.
Are there any similarities between John's vision of the Temple and that of Ezekiel's?

Memory Verse-

James 1:3

“ _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to help me understand the purposes of Ezekiel's Temple?

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2. My response:

Commentary Notes excerpted from Shepherd's Notes

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Studies in Ezekiel

Lesson Twelve - Chapters 43-48
"Return of the Glory of the Lord"

Today's Word -

Psalms 112:1 "Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments."

Day One - Read Ezekiel Chapter 43. This section is the return of God's glory to the Temple.
--

In this chapter, God's glory returns to the Temple. This reverses the negative cast of the prophecies in this book and serves as a fitting end for all the passages dealing with the blessings reserved for the restored remnant. All true believers should long for that moment when God's name will finally be glorified and He will live among His people forever.

Ezekiel saw in a vision the glory of the Lord coming from the east and then entering the Temple through the east gate. Just as it was completely devastating when God's glory departed (11:23) from the Temple, so it was overwhelming awe and joy beyond expression when Ezekiel saw God's glory return. God's departure from the city had been a signal for the destruction of the city and the Temple. Now for God to return, His conditions had to be met: idolatry had to be removed. Some commentators feel these verses indicate that Ezekiel was commanding the people of his day to build this Temple according to the designs and regulations that the angelic architect had given. But the people never repented, the conditions were not met, so the fulfillment was postponed. The basic law of God's Temple was holiness. In all He does, God is holy, perfect, and blameless. This vision was simultaneously flashing back to Mount Sinai and forward to Mount Calvary. When the people returned from exile, they would seek forgiveness through the sacrificial system instituted by Moses and brought to the Temple during the reign of Solomon. Christ's death made the Temple sacrifices no longer necessary.

Questions

1. What promise does God make in verses 7-9?
2. What conditions are placed on God's promise?
3. In verse 27, what happens on the eighth day?
4. What is a New Testament parallel to the eighth day?

Memory Verse-

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Studies in Ezekiel

This weeks memory verse is from the fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians. This promise reminds us to pray and rejoice always and we will be in God's will. Repeat the passage several times a day and by the end of the week you will have committed it to memory.

1Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the return of God to His people?

2. My response:

Today's Word -

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Studies in Ezekiel

1 Samuel 15:22 "Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."

Day Two - Read Ezekiel Chapter 44. This section is a description of the duties of the priests.

In the millennial Temple, the descendants of Zadok will minister as priests, offering memorial sacrifices, commemorating the atonement of Christ. These sacrifices are not propitiatory and are different from the sacrifices under the Mosaic Law. Considerable discussion has been evoked by the institution of sacrificial offerings in Ezekiel's vision. What is the meaning of these animal sacrifices? Is this a reversion to the Old Testament Levitical system? Several things should be noted:

- 1) These sacrifices are not propitiatory. Animal sacrifices could never take away sins (see Hebrews 10:4).
- 2) These sacrifices are memorial. They are a reminder of the completed atoning work of Jesus Christ. Just as believers in the church age celebrate the Lord's Supper by looking back to Calvary, so millennial worshipers will offer sacrifices as a memorial looking back to the completed work at Calvary.
- 3) These sacrifices are not a reinstatement of the Levitical system. Although there are similarities with the Levitical system, there are also differences. The Temple does not have the same dimensions; also absent is the ark of the covenant, the tables of the Law, Aaron's rod, the mercy seat, the high priest, the veil, the showbread, the lampstand, and the feasts of Pentecost and Atonement. In view of these differences, these sacrifices cannot be a reinstatement of the Levitical system.

Questions

1. Many people speak of verses 1-2 as being fulfilled prophecy. Do you agree with this interpretation? Why?

2. In verses 6-9, what does the Lord criticize the children of Israel for?

3. What promise is given to the Levites who strayed from the Lord? (vv.10-11)

4. What is forbidden to these sinful Levites? (vv.12-14)

Memory Verse-
1Thessalonians 5:16-18

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*“Rejoice _____, pray without _____, in everything give _____; for this is the _____
of God in Christ _____ for you.”*

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the tragedy of the errant priests?

2. My response:

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Today's Word-

2 Peter 1:5-8 "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Day Three - Read Ezekiel Chapter 45. This section is a discussion of the Holy District of Jerusalem and various regulations for the feasts.

Ezekiel's vision of the land is actually a set of instructions to apportion the land. The twelve tribes were to divide the land, with each tribe getting in equal portion. However, before any of the tribes were considered, the portion of the land set apart for God and the Temple was dealt with. In this order we are reminded of the presenting of firstfruits and tithes – the Lord receives His portion first. By asking us to acknowledge Him first, God is insuring that we will remain open to the flow of life which He provides.

Notice that the prince is given a section of land which is much larger than the holy district, and with that land comes the instruction that the prince must not oppress the people (v.8). When Ezekiel describes the actual allotment of the land, we find that the Holy District is in the center of the land, and the Sanctuary is in the center of the Holy District. Just as God wants us to put Him first, likewise, He should be central in our lives.

There is a discussion on the keeping of the feasts. The conditions and regulations for the offerings are described in detail in Leviticus chapters 1-7. The Passover was an annual seven-day feast instituted by God so that His people would remember when He brought them out of slavery in Egypt.

Questions

1. What is the first district in the land to be apportioned? (v.1-5)

2. Is the allotment of land to the prince larger or smaller than the Holy District? (v.6)

3. What commands does the Lord give to the prince? (vv.9-17)

4. What are the religious duties of the prince? (v.17)

Memory Verse-

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1Thessalonians 5:16-18

“_____ always, _____ without ceasing, in _____ give thanks; _____ this is the will of _____ in Christ Jesus _____ you.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the role of the prince?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

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Isaiah 2:3 "Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; he will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Day Four - Read Ezekiel Chapter 46. This section is a discussion of the manner of worship in the Temple.

In this chapter, Ezekiel continued to describe various aspects of daily worship. While allowing for diversity in worship, God prescribed order and continuity. This continuity gave a healthy rhythm to the spiritual life of His people.

The east gate of the inner court, shut during the six working days, is to be open on the Sabbath (v.1). The prince will worship at the threshold, the people will worship at the outside entrance. The prince will provide burnt, cereal and optional offerings. The prince will worship with them as one of the ordinary people. The people will enter at one gate and exit at another to provide orderly flow in the Temple area.

The prince can give land to his heirs, but can only temporarily give land to servants or others (possibly given back at year of Jubilee). On the topic of preparation of sacrificial meals, kitchens would be used by the priests to prepare these meals for the people. These would be located on the four corners of the outer court. There, the Levites would serve the people.

Questions

1. Which gateway to the inner court would be open only on one day of the week? (v.1)

2. Who was restricted from entering and exiting from different gateways in the Temple?

3. Who will make offerings for the new moon? (v.6)

4. What protection did the people have concerning their property? (v.18)

Memory Verse-
1Thessalonians 5:16-18

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Studies in Ezekiel

“Rejoice _____, pray _____ ceasing, in _____ give thanks; _____ this is _____ will of God _____ Christ _____ for _____.”

Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to better understand the style of worship in the Temple?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Psalms 32:7 “You are my hiding place; you shall preserve me from trouble; you shall surround me with songs of deliverance.”

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Day Five - Read Ezekiel Chapter 47. This section describes the river from the Temple and the boundaries of the land.

In the millennium, Israel will be restored to the land, exemplified by the healing river that flows from God's throne. Israel was promised the land under the Abrahamic Covenant (see Genesis 12:1-3;15:12-21). This covenant was unconditional – its fulfillment was based on God's promise alone. The Palestinian Covenant (see Deuteronomy 30:1-10) reaffirmed the promise of Israel's unconditional future restoration. This chapter details the divisions and geographical changes in the land.

River from the Temple: Although there are similarities between this event and Revelation 22, they are distinct. Revelation 22 refers to the eternal state; Ezekiel 47 refers to the millennium. At the entrance of the Temple, Ezekiel saw a river coming from beneath the Temple threshold, flowing eastward (v.1). The river expanded as it flowed toward the Dead Sea, and brought healing wherever it flowed (vv.7-9), similar to the leaves of Revelation 22:2.

Boundaries of the land: Regenerated and restored Israel will inherit the land in the millennium. It will be divided equally among the tribes, with Joseph receiving a double portion through his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Questions

1. What is the ultimate destination of the water that flowed from the Temple? (v.8)

2. What is the amazing property of this river? (v.9)

3. Which of the twelve tribes will receive a double portion of the land? (v.13)

4. What will be the western boundary of Israel? (v.20)

Memory Verse-

1Thessalonians 5:16-18

“_____ always, _____ without _____, in _____ give _____; for _____ is _____ will _____ God _____ Christ _____ for _____.”

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Journal-

1. What does this lesson offer to help understand the healing mercies of the Lord?

2. My response:

Today's Word-

Romans 8:38-39 "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Calvary Chapel of Vista
Men's Bible Fellowship
Studies in Ezekiel

Day Six - Read Ezekiel Chapter 48. This is a review of the divisions of the land and features of the millennial city.

The twelve tribes will receive their portions of the land in the millennium, the Temple and Jerusalem being central in the land. Most significant of all, the Lord will be present with His converted people to bless them. This chapter contains more detail about the second division of the land that was shattered with the dispersal of Israel, but is now possible with the recent re-gathering of this nation.

The millennial city will have twelve gates, three on each side; each gate being named after a tribe of Israel. The gates on the north side of the city – closest to the Temple- will be named after Reuben (the firstborn), Judah (the kingly/messianic tribe), and Levi (the priestly tribe) (v.31). The eastern gates will be named after Joseph, Benjamin and Dan; the southern gates for Simeon, Issachar and Zebulun; the western gates for Gad, Asher and Naphtali.

The circumference of the city will be 18,000 cubits – nearly six miles. The name of the city will be “Yahweh-Shammah”, meaning “The Lord Is There”, emphasizing the Lord’s preeminence and presence in millennial Jerusalem.

Questions

1. The Holy District will be set reserved for what persons? (vv.9-12)

2. Why were the Levites forbidden to sell or exchange their land? (v.14)

3. What prominent feature will be at the center of the Holy District? (v.21)

4. What is the new name for Jerusalem? (v.35)

Memory Verse-

1Thessalonians 5:16-18

“ _____, _____, _____; _____
_____.”

Journal-

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1. What does this lesson offer to help me understand the glory of God's everlasting presence?

2. My response:

Commentary Notes excerpted from Shepherd's Notes