

# HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

**Ezekiel**  
Leader's Guide



# Hearing the Word      Ezekiel      Leader's Guide

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*Nigel Barge, August 2019*

## Scripture Quotations taken from

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## Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published by Inter Varsity Press  
The *New Bible Commentary* 21<sup>st</sup> century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP  
[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

# Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading



**LOOK** – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
  - a) What questions does it raise -  
*Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
  - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
  - a) the surrounding text
  - b) the Book of the Bible
  - c) the whole Bible
  - d) the place in the Bible Story



**LEARN** – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



**LISTEN** – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



**LIVE** – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God, (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace\*
  - c) Jesus / his salvation\*\*
- 2) What should I do?

\* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

\*\* The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).

Preachers might choose to cover it in two series, of 8 and 7 studies

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# Reading Prophecy in the Bible

Whatever we read, we adjust to its style. We approach a newspaper, a cookery book, a poem and a scientific report in different ways. We take into account the purpose for which it was written and the way the writer uses words.

Since the Bible has many styles – law, poetry, history, prophecy, *etc.* – we need to allow for the style if we are to discern what God is saying. Ezekiel is **prophecy**, mostly expressed in *prose*. To approach it properly, keep in mind the following principles:

## 1) In general – it is God's story

The Bible tells the story of God's dealings with humankind. After creation and 'the fall' in Genesis 1-3, the rest describes how he works out his unfolding plan to rescue humankind through Jesus. The Old Testament (OT) prepares for the coming and the death of Jesus. The New Testament (NT) describes the event and looks forwards to his return at the end of time. It is *all* about God. It follows that:

- a) Every part relates to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39). So as we read, we ask, 'what does this show about God? What is He doing?'
- b) Everything is relevant. In a movie, every scene plays some part in the overall story. Often the early stages of a film show things that make no sense until later. The Bible is the same. So as we read prophecy, often knowing the outcome already, we ask, 'what relevance has *this* part to the *main* story?'

## 2) In particular – 'follow the camera angle'

A film director focuses our attention on particular shots to tell 'his story'. In the same way the prophet is selective about what he tells us. He omits much general detail, only giving us items relevant to what he is trying to convey.

As we read we should therefore be asking the question – why is he telling me this, and in this particular way?

## 3) The nature of prophecy

The Bible uses the word 'prophet' to mean a person authorised by God to speak for him, and inspired by the Holy Spirit so that what *he* says, *God* says (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). God had made a covenant, or special agreement, with his people; he had a special concern to hold his people to it.

## 4) The scope of prophecy

To read prophecy we need a tri-focal lens! A text may be referring to the immediate time-frame, the coming of Jesus made flesh among us, or His coming as Judge at the end of time. The difficulty in reading prophecy is that these may all be included, but mixed up, apparently at random!

# Reading Ezekiel

## The Author

Ezekiel, son of Buzi, was a priest and probably the son of a priest. He was deported to Babylonia, almost certainly with Jehoiachin in 597BC (2 Kings 24:14-17) when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem after a brief siege. He was settled in the village of Tel Abib (3:15) by the river Chebar (or Kebar). He was married; his wife died at the time of Jerusalem's fall (24:18), but no children are mentioned.

## Date of writing

Ezekiel started prophesying in 593BC when he was aged thirty. He was the first prophet to give an orderly sequence of dates for his oracles. They spanned 22 years. After that we have no further mention of him.

## Historical setting

After the death of king Solomon the kingdom of Israel was split in two, with ten tribes in the north keeping the name Israel and two tribes in the south, named after one of them, Judah. Decline followed, first in the northern kingdom, with evil king after evil king choosing other gods. Their wicked habits included corruption, oppression of the poor, child sacrifices and cult prostitution. In vain the prophets Amos, Hosea and Isaiah protested, appealed and warned that God would judge. In 722BC Israel reached a point of no return when their capital Samaria fell to the Assyrians. They were deported, assimilated into the lives and religions of the countries to which they were exiled. To this day, their fate is unknown, their identity as God's people lost.

Initially Judah fared better, walking with God but then they started following the same pattern as Israel. Faith and morals steadily declined, despite the pleas of the prophets Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah and Jeremiah. Five of the last six kings are described as evil. Babylon began to invade; in 605BC Daniel and some others were deported. Further deportations followed in 597BC, taking King Jehoiakim, Ezekiel and his contemporaries. Finally, in 586BC Nebuchadnezzar broke through the walls of Jerusalem and torched the Temple. He took king and people the 1,400 miles to Babylonia, placing them in Jewish Prisoner of War colonies.

## The Message of Ezekiel

Ezekiel is the only 'exilic' prophet. He writes *as an exile* about God's reasons for the exile and his promises of rescue. He is very familiar with the Bible from Genesis to Jeremiah. E.g. compare Genesis 2:7 (creation of man) with Ezekiel 37 (dry bones) : God breathes, they live.

In much of Ezekiel ch. 38-48 the exaggeration and sometimes unreality of description, and frequency of the number 7, show we are to understand it as foretelling the future *symbolically* or expressing truths about God's power rather than predicting future events literally. For example:

- In ch. 45 Ezekiel prophesies the sacrificing of animals in the Messianic kingdom. But thanks to Jesus' death, 'there is no longer any sacrifice for sin' (Heb. 10.18). He is prophesying future worship, but expressed in OT thought-forms.
- In ch. 47 the river flowing from God's presence starts as a trickle and becomes ever deeper, apparently without any water being added; it heals the saltiness of the Dead Sea and brings new life. Ezekiel is telling us about God's healing grace, in language like Jesus uses in John 7:38 – 'rivers of living water will flow from the heart of those who believe in me.'

This is almost apocalyptic literature - but not quite. In apocalyptic literature (from a word meaning to unveil, i.e. uncover the spiritual powers behind events), God's intervention overthrows the structures of human society and government altogether, using angelic beings and supernatural cataclysms. Ezekiel's writing is more restrained. It is not always easy to understand. If we take it slowly however, use our imaginations and interpret the signs given as the writer intended, we need not be daunted.

### **The form of Ezekiel**

#### 1] Symbolic actions

*eg the building of a model Jerusalem (4:1ff), the shaving of his hair (5:1)*

#### 2] Prophetic words

*Eg 6:1; 13:1; 16:1 etc*

#### 3] Visions

Ezekiel has three visions that describe:

- 1) The reign of God (1:4-28)
- 2) The atrocities in Jerusalem leading to God's departure (8:1ff)
- 3) The return of God to Jerusalem (cf40-48)

### **The book has three main sections:**

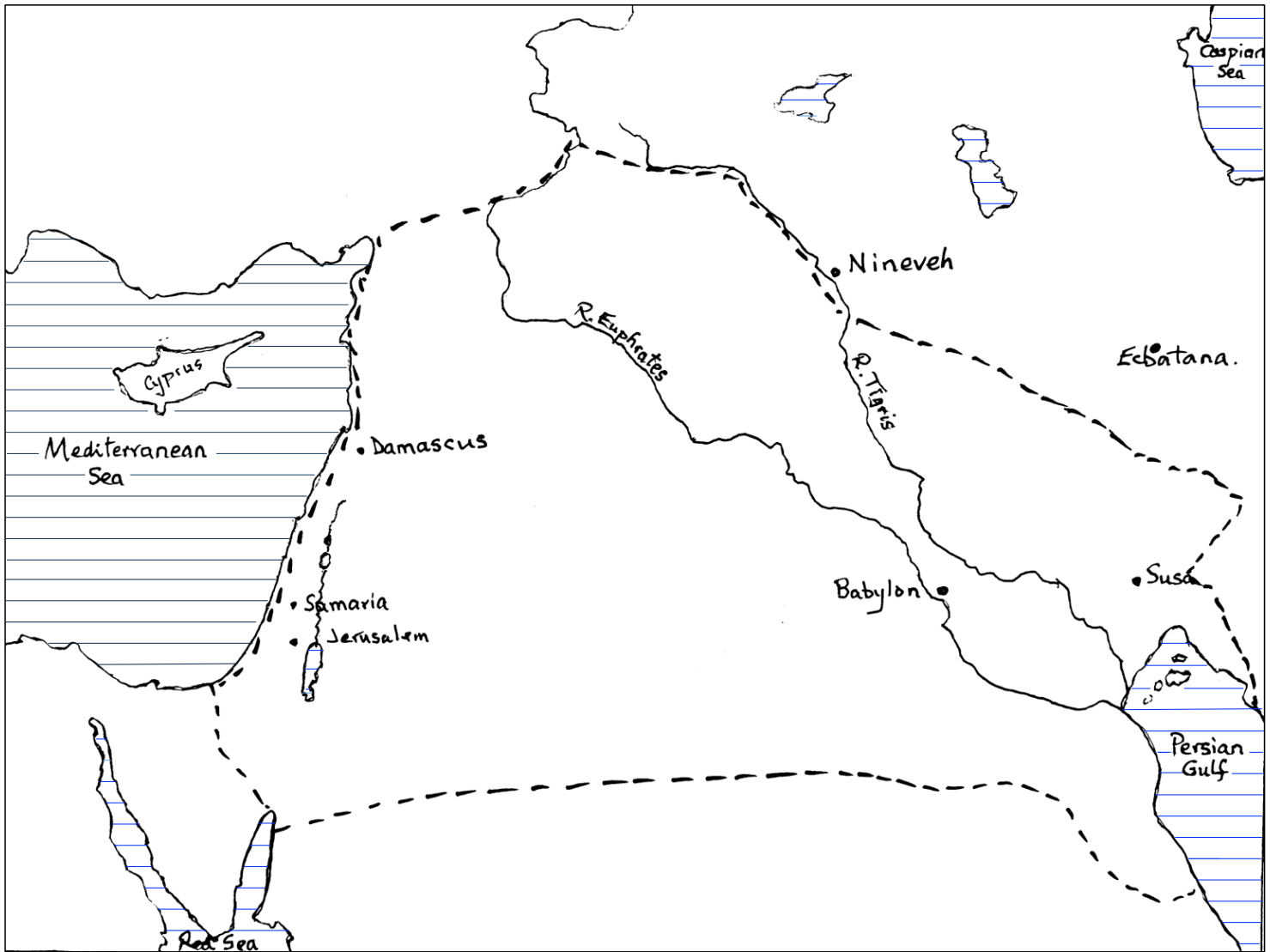
Chs 1-24, *before* Jerusalem fell, are prophecies of denunciation

Chs 25-32, *around the time* Jerusalem fell, are oracles against other nations

Chs 33-48, *after* Jerusalem fell, are prophecies of hope. There will be salvation for God's people, victory over the enemies of God and his people, and finally a new temple, a new Torah (instructions about life & worship) and a new Eden

# Map

Extent of Babylonian empire in Ezekiel's day  
shown by the broken line - - -



# Chart: Dates and Content of the Writing Prophets

Date BC	Dominant world power	Kings of Israel
750	<b>800-626 ASSYRIA</b> Capital: Nineveh. Fell in 612 (750-732 <b>Damascus</b> was a minor power in area) 744-727 Tiglath-Pileser III	Capital: Samaria  793-753 Jeroboam II evil 753-2 Zechariah; Shallum evil? 752-742 Menahem evil 742-740 Pekahiah evil 740-732 Pekah evil 732-722 Hoshea evil
	726-722 Shalmanezer →  704-681 Sennacherib	<b>722 Samaria fell to Assyria</b> People of Israel (ten northern tribes) deported to Assyria
600	<b>626-538 BABYLONIA</b> Capital: Babylon. Fell in 538 (read how, in Daniel ch. 5)  605-562 Nebuchadnezzar	<i>Exile &amp; Captivity</i>
	Belshazzar (Daniel 5)	
500	<b>538-331 MEDO-PERSIA</b> Main capital: Susa  559-530 Cyrus (prob.= 'Darius the Mede' Dan.5:31, 6:28) 522-486 Darius the Great 486-465 Xerxes = Ahasuerus 465-424 Artaxerxes	
331	<b>331 GREECE:</b> Alexander the Great of Macedon	

Date BC	Kings of Judah	Prophets
750	Capital: Jerusalem	??date <b>Jonah</b> : to Nineveh* ??date <b>Obadiah</b> : vs Edom ??date <b>Joel</b> : Jerusalem / Last Days
	792-740 Uzziah( Azariah) good 740-735 Jotham good 735-716 Ahaz evil 716-687 Hezekiah good 687-642 Manasseh evil, repented 642-640 Amon evil 640-609 Josiah good	775-755 <b>Amos</b> (esp N; from S) 755-725 <b>Hosea</b> (esp N) 740-690 <b>Isaiah</b> (esp S) 740-690 <b>Micah</b> (esp S) *(?730ish <b>Jonah</b> warns Nineveh)
	609 Jehoahaz evil 609-598 Jehoiakim evil 597 Jehoiachin evil 597-586 Zedekiah evil	?635 <b>Zephaniah</b> (S) 627-585 <b>Jeremiah</b> (S) 620ish <b>Nahum</b> (vs Nineveh) ?610-600 <b>Habakkuk</b> (personal/S)
600	<b>586 Jerusalem fell to Babylonia.</b> People of Judah (two southern tribes) deported to Babylonia 586-538.  <b><i>Babylonian captivity/exile</i></b>	(586ish <b>Lamentations</b> ) 605-530 <b>Daniel</b> in Babylon's court then in Persia's (exiled in 605 with King Jehoiakim)  593-570 <b>Ezekiel</b> in Babylon (exiled in 597 with King Jehoiachin)
500	538 Cyrus encouraged the exiles to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 1.1)	Isaiah had predicted this: 44:28 - 45:6  520 <b>Haggai</b> 520-470 <b>Zechariah</b>  ?430s <b>Malachi</b>
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## Study 1

# Series A

## Ezekiel 1:1-28

### The Lord reigns everywhere – acknowledge Him

#### Background

Ezekiel in Hebrew means ‘God will strengthen’. The book is all written in the first person. Unlike the other OT prophets, Ezekiel gives dates for events.

Priests normally began their duties in the Temple at age 30. Here we see God calling Ezekiel instead to a prophetic ministry with a vision of reassurance.

Ezekiel’s vision of God is divided. ‘Above’ and ‘below’ the great ‘expanse’ (23,25) means Heaven and Earth. When speaking of earthly things, he describes the vision exactly as seen. In Heaven, however, pertaining to God, descriptions are qualified as being ‘like’. It shows God in each: on earth, all-seeing, all-knowing and all powerful; in heaven, utterly majestic and glorious. Throughout his ministry Ezekiel expresses this sense of awe and holy fear.

#### Word list

1	<i>exiles</i>	Jews who had been deported to Babylonia in 597BC
	<i>Kebar</i>	Babylonian river, location unknown ( <i>Heb: ‘a long time’</i> )
	<i>visions</i>	dreams in which God spoke to the prophet
2	<i>Jehoiachin</i>	king of Judah deported to Babylonia in 597BC
3	<i>word of the Lord</i>	most frequent phrase associated with OT prophets
4	<i>out of the north</i>	direction they had come from when being brought from Jerusalem to Babylon
12	<i>spirit</i>	Hebrew word <i>ruah</i> can mean (i) Spirit of God; (ii) wind which brought storm cloud from north; (iii) spirit within the living creatures; (iv) vital impulse or energy by which God from his throne acted upon them.
16	<i>chrysolite</i>	yellow jasper or topaz
24	<i>Almighty</i>	another Hebrew word <i>Shaddai</i> for the Lord
26	<i>sapphire</i>	or lapis lazuli, stone highly prized in ancient world
	<i>like that of a man</i>	Ezekiel is writing with great care, leading to 28b

#### Bible Connections

1	<i>rivers of Babylon</i>	<i>see also</i> Psalm 137:1
5	<i>4 faces and 4 wings</i>	<i>cf</i> Isaiah 6:2; <i>cf</i> 4 creatures, 4 wings: Rev 4:6b-8
22	<i>expanse sparkling like ice</i>	Same as ‘sea of glass like crystal’ in Rev 4:6a?
28	<i>fell face down in awe</i>	<i>cf</i> Peter in Luke 5:8

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

- 1 What is significance of 30<sup>th</sup> year?  
What is significance of Kebar river?
- 3 What does it mean 'the hand of the Lord was upon him'?
- 4 Why from the North?  
What does the lightening mean?
- 5 Why four living creatures?  
How was their appearance in the 'form of a man'?
- 7 What was the significance of straight legs/calf feet/burnished bronze?
- 8 Why hands of a man?  
Why faces on their wings?
- 9 What is the significance of each living creature not turning?
- 10 What did the faces of a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle represent?
- 12 How/where did the Spirit lead?
- 14 How 'back and forth' if they were going straight ahead?
- 18 Why were the wheel rims full of eyes?
- 20 What does it mean the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels?
- 20/21 Why does it repeat 'because the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels'?
- 22 What does the sparkling ice signify?
- 24 What do the wings signify – like the voice of the Almighty?
- 26 Why looked 'like' (cf 24)?
- 27 What is the significance of fire and light?
- 28 What does the rainbow signify?  
Why 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God'?  
Why did he fall face down?

What surprises or confuses you?

*How did the original hearers make head or tail of the vision?!*

## 2) The Context

- a) individual book,
- 26 like that of a man (8:22)

b) whole Bible,

- 1 At age 30, priests took on the full responsibilities of priesthood. (Nu. 4:3)  
By the river (cf Jewish and other women in Philippi, c 600 yrs later (Acts 16:13)  
Cf Moses & burning bush (Exodus 3:1,2); Isaiah in the Temple (Is 6:1ff)
- 3 The hand of the Lord (Exodus 9:3; Joshua 4:24; Isaiah 51:7)  
You are a royal priesthood. (1 Peter 2:9)  
Lo, I am with you... (Matthew 28:20)
- 4 out of the north. (Job 37:22; Jeremiah 6:1; 51:48)  
c.f. Magi from east (Matthew 2:1) – same place?  
God's concern for the nations (Psalm 67; Jonah 3:10; Matthew 28:19) -
- 7 burnished bronze (Revelation 2:18)  
Keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)
- 8 The father and I are one. (John 10:30) I only do what I see Father doing.  
(John 5:19)
- 9,12 straight ahead (10:22)
- 18 You know me, Lord. You see me and test my thoughts. (Jeremiah 12:3)  
Where can I go from your Spirit? (Ps 139:7)
- 21 All things work together for good ... (Romans 8:38)
- 22 cf Cherubim (1 Samuel 4:4)  
sea of glass / crystal (Revelation 4:6)
- 24 Almighty/ most powerful (cf Genesis 17:1)  
voice like rushing waters (Revelation 1:15)
- 26 God made man in His image. (Genesis 1:27)  
Word of God – was God... became flesh (John 1:1,14)
- 27 God lives in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16)
- 28 rainbow – 'never to destroy' (Gen 9:6; Rev 4:3; 10:1)  
Glory of the Lord OT – many refs e.g. (Ex 24:6) NT - 1 reference in NT  
(Luke 2:9)  
No man shall see the face of God and live. (Exodus 33:20)  
Seeing God demands worship. (John 20:28)  
fell face down c.f. the magi worshipped (Matthew 2:11)

c) Bible Story

Mankind has been separated from God by their sin.  
God had given them his requirements in the Law.

Following continuous disobedience, however, they have been exiled from the land God had given them.

## LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

### *Vision*

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 1    *30<sup>th</sup> year was when a priest began to serve in the Temple*  
     *Kebar signifies that they will be a 'long time' there.*
- 3    *'The hand of the Lord was upon him' means God had chosen him for a special task*
- 4    *North is the direction God appears from.*  
     *Lightening means that God is about*
- 5    *Four represents the view from every perspective.*  
     *Did 'form of a man' mean having a head, body, arms and legs?*
- 7    *The 'straight legs, calf feet, burnished bronze' were attempts to describe in earthly language the indescribable; the words do not necessarily have added significance.*
- 8    *Hands of a man i.e. capable of manipulation / construction.*  
     *Why faces on their wings? (NIV says 'faces and wings')*
- 9    *They were 'as one' (cf Father, Son and Holy Spirit*
- 10   *Man, lion, ox and eagle might represent leaders in creation (?)*
- 12   *The Spirit led where God willed*
- 14   *'Back and forth' just means constantly in motion.*
- 18   *The rims full of eyes because God sees / knows everything.*
- 20   *It means it functioned as one.*
- 21   *Sparkling ice signified holiness (?)*
- 24   *Perhaps 'wings sounding like the voice of the Almighty' means, 'awesomely loud'?!*
- 26   *Figure 'like a man' because we humans were made in God's image.*
- 27   *Fire and light suggest the purity and holiness of God.*
- 28   *The rainbow signifies the mercy of God (Genesis 9:12,13)*  
     *'Likeness', for no man could see the face of God and live.*  
     *He fell face down in worship – the only worthy response.*

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The original hearers were either able to interpret it, as this was a known form of literature, or it was hidden from them— to be understood later.*

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Five years into exile in Babylon God revealed himself to a priest, far from the Temple (1-3)*

*God appeared – Holy, all powerful (10), united in the Spirit (12, 19-21), all-seeing and all-knowing (18), above creation, ie the Creator (22).*

*A voice was heard (the Word i.e. Jesus) (25) A figure like / the image of a man was seen pure and holy. God's glorious appearance spoke of hope for Ezekiel, whose fitting response was worship (28).*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*God reveals Himself in creation as the hope for mankind, whose response is worship*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 28b**

*This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God.*

*When I saw it I fell face down ...*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*7,12,19 All 'movement' of creation is determined by the Spirit; God is in absolute control of all creation.*

*10 All power /authority belongs to God.*

*18 God is all seeing /all knowing.*

*22 God separates Himself by an opaque expanse between Heaven and earth.*

*23,24 God's voice is **heard** under the expanse (on earth.)*

*26 God is **seen** above the expanse (in Heaven.)*

b) His grace?

*I God reveals Himself to us.*

2     *God communicates with us.*

3     *God confers his power upon us.*

28     *God radiates 'hope' to mankind.*

c)   Jesus and His salvation?

25     *God communicates with man through His voice/the Word/Jesus.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

28     *Be hopeful - Look at Jesus and worship God.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Do not ‘mince’ His Word!

### Background

Ezekiel’s vision continues as God calls him and commissions him to be his messenger to the rebellious people, his ‘countrymen in exile.’ (v11)

‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says’ is the distinctive mark of all true spokesmen of the Lord, right from Moses’ time.

### Word List

- 2:1** *son of man* Hebrew phrase emphasising Ezekiel’s insignificance or mere humanity. It occurs over 90 times in Ezekiel.
- 2:3** *the Israelites* ie his fellow exiles in Babylon
- 2:4** *obstinate and stubborn* literally, ‘hard of face and firm of heart’
- 2:9** *on both sides of it* unusual feature: scrolls were usually inscribed only on the inside; may indicate the completeness of God’s plans.
- 3:16** *Watchman* sentinel, alert to warn of approaching danger
- 3:20** *righteous man* Hebrew *saddiq* was essentially one who showed by his good living his adherence to the ten commandments and the stipulations of the covenant
- stumbling block* Heb *miksol* means ‘occasion for stumbling’, literally or in an ethical sense
- die for his sin* may mean ‘liable to an early or violent death’ ie temporal reference

### Bible connections

- 2: 1** *Son of man* see Gen1:27-28. Phrase takes on special significance when referring to Christ see Daniel 7:13-14, Mark 2:28 etc.
- 2: 9** *both sides* compare Revelation 5:1
- 3: 3** *God’s words sweet as honey* see Jeremiah 15:16; cf Psalms 19:10; 119:103
- 3:15** *seven days* cf Ezra 9:4; Job 2:13; Acts 9:9
- 3:16** *watchman* see Habakkuk 2:1; Isaiah 56:10 cf 62:6; Jeremiah 6:17; Hosea 9:8
- 3:20** *accountable for his blood* principle expressed in Genesis 9:5f

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

- 1 Why did a /the Spirit come into him?
- 2 Why 'the Israelites' not 'Judah'?
- 3 To whom and where is he sending them?
- 5 How will they know that a prophet has been sent among them?
- 7 Why speak to them if they may fail to listen?
- 9 Why 'a hand'?
- 10 Why did it mean that it was 'written on both sides'?
- 3:1 Why eat the scroll?
- 3 Why did it taste sweet though its message was bitter?
- 5 Who was he a prophet to / for?
- 5/6 Why speak to them if they are so hard?
- 9 What does 'a forehead like flint' mean?
- 11 Who are 'the country men in exile'?
- 12 Why did the spirit lift him up?  
Why was the sound coming from behind him?
- 13 Why was there a sound from the wings and the wheels?
- 14 Why was he angry and bitter?  
What does 'the strong hand of the Lord' mean?
- 15 Where did he come from?  
Why seven days?  
Why was he overwhelmed?
- 17 What was the purpose of a watchman?
- 18 What is a 'wicked man'?  
How would he be 'accountable for his blood'?
- 19 What would he be saved from?
- 20 What is 'a righteous man'?

What surprises or confuses you?

Why was he commanded to stand, before God spoke to him?

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

2:1 stand up, cf fell face down (1:28)

2tThe Spirit (1:12) cf the spirit of the living creatures

3:11 Countrymen in exile (1:1)  
13 Sound of their wings (1:24)

b) individual book,

2:8 Open your mouth. (3:27; 16:63; 29:21)  
12 The spirit lifted me up (and brought me to....) (3:14; 8:3 11:1,24; 29:1)  
18 c.f. You will surely die ...accountable for their blood (33:8)  
20 c.f. The righteous deeds of the righteous are not remembered. (18:24)

c) whole Bible

2:2 Therefore since we have confidence... (Hebrews 10:19)  
The Spirit testifies that we are children of God. (Romans 8:16)  
Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)  
3 Ask the Lord of the harvest ... go I am sending you. (Luke 10:2,3)  
Go into all the world discipling all nations. (Matthew 28:19)  
4 stubborn hearts (Mark 2:4)  
6 Do not be afraid.... Abraham - (Gen 15:1) ; Isaac - (Genesis 26:24);  
Joshua - (Josh 1:9); Moses – (Numbers 21 :34); us – (Luke 12:32)  
authority to trample on scorpions. (Luke 10:19)  
10 Scroll with writing on both sides (Revelation 5:1)  
3:3 sweet as honey (Psalm 19:10)  
Taste and see that the Lord is good. (Psalm 34:8)  
14 the strong hand of the Lord (Deuteronomy 3:14; Isaiah 8:11)  
The next day they came down from the mountain... (9:37)  
Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. (Jon 4:1)  
15 'What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death?'  
(Romans 7:24)  
seven days (Genesis 2:2,3)  
17 watchman (Isaiah 21:11,12)

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

**2:1** The Spirit came into him to enable him to stand.

- 2 He was speaking to all of the 12 tribes exiled.  
 3 He is sending them to the exiles in Babylon.  
 5 They will know because he will speak the word of the Lord/ as the Lord speaks.  
 7 Speak to them because then they will have no excuse.  
 9 'A hand' because this was a message from God.  
 10 It was 'written on both sides' showing that there was no room for any other message.  
**3:1** overleaf/  
**3:1** 'Eat the scroll' symbolises the message becoming part of you.  
 3 It tasted sweet, since the Word of the Lord (whatever it is) is always 'good'.  
 5 He was to be a prophet to and for the people of Israel.  
 5/6 Speak to them as then they would be without excuse.  
 9 'A forehead like flint' means he will not be deflected.  
 11 'The country men in exile' are the two Southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin.  
 12 The spirit lifted him up to enable him to respond.  
 The sound was coming from behind him as he had been lifted up above.  
 The wheels and creatures to listen to God (?)  
 13 There was a sound from both the wings and the wheels as they were moving.  
 14 He was angry and bitter as he went, knowing people would not listen to him or God?  
 'The strong hand of the Lord' means he could not be refuted or resisted.  
 15 He came from the vision of God.  
 Seven is God's perfect number.  
 He was overwhelmed by the word of God and its rejection.  
 17 The purpose of a watchman was to warn of danger.  
 18 'Wicked man' is one who rejects God.  
 'Accountable for his blood' means he would die (?)  
 19 He would be saved from death.  
 20 A 'righteous man' is someone who does right in God's eyes.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?  
*To stand was a command of God, impossible for a human, unless enabled by the Spirit.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*God spoke to me (Ezekiel) and enabled me to hear. (1,2)*

*He instructed me, to 'Speak my Word to this rebellious people and do not be afraid of them.' (3-8).*

*He furnished me with the Word of God (2:9-3:3) for the unreceptive House of Israel. (4-8)*

*He conferred his authority on me. (10,11).*

*He took me, (I was reluctant, but the Spirit enabled me) from the awesome vision back to the recipients at Tel Abib by the Kebar river; I felt overwhelmed by God's task. (12-15).*

*In God's time, he gave the responsibility to speak his message to the wicked and the righteous of God's salvation. (16-21)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*God's mouthpieces must speak God's message of salvation whether people listen or not.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 7**

*You must speak my words to them whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*1 God wants to speak to us 'on our level'.*

*3 God commissions his people to speak his message.*

*5 God gives his authority to those he sends.*

*7 God commits people to speak His Word.*

b) His grace?

*2 The Spirit enables us to speak to God on the level.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*5 Do not fear anyone or anything in Jesus name.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

**2:3** *Be aware it is possible to rebel against God; don't do it!*

4 *Not be obstinate and stubborn with The Word of God.*

7 *Speak the Word of God whether (you feel) it will be accepted or not.*

8 *Not rebel against God myself, but absorb His Word and take it to heart.*

**3:1** *Take in the Word yourself before you offer it to others.*

2 *Taste and see that the Lord is good.*

4ff *Not be put off evangelising by 'negativity'.*

10 *Speak God's Word that He gives you.*

14 *Be prepared to return to my commission after an experience of God.*

15 *When daunted – seek God.*

17 *Do not 'mince' His Words.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Beware! Judgment is coming

### Background

Chapters 4-24 contain vivid denunciation, appeal and warning. Ch. 4 is an example of the dramatic ‘visual aids’ employed. Ezekiel is told to make a ‘model’ to symbolise what is going to happen to Jerusalem in 586BC. God would be bringing armies against Jerusalem to bring her to the ground.

Lying on his left side for 390 days and on right for 40 days symbolises the duration of the punishment Israel and Judah will endure for their sins. (390 = the time since Solomon’s dedication of the Temple? 40 yrs = the time in the wilderness after Egypt? 390 + 40 = 430 years – which parallels the time of captivity in Egypt (Exodus 12:40)?

Ezekiel is also put on ‘starvation rations’. Using human excrement as fuel was to indicate the defilement which would come on the exiles through being compelled to live and eat in a heathen environment. When Ezekiel protests that he at least has kept himself ritually clean, God graciously allows him to use cow dung instead. (NB ‘not so’ is the first time Ezekiel has spoken!)

### Word List

- |    |                           |  |
|----|---------------------------|--|
| 1  | <i>clay tablet</i>        | or ‘brick’, presumably fairly large  |
| 2  | <i>siege works</i>        | ‘fort’ in AV, ‘siege wall’ in RSV; Hebrew <i>dayeq</i> is a collective noun always in the singular <i>see</i> 2 Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 52:4 where it seems to mean a chain of towers around the besieged city. |
| 3  | <i>iron pan</i>           | probably large, saucer-shaped piece of metal used as griddle for baking bread  |
| 4  | <i>yourself</i>           | or ‘your side’   |
| 10 | <i>20 shekels</i>         | about 8ozs (200g)  |
| 11 | <i>one sixth of a hin</i> | about 1 pint (0.6litre)  |
| 12 | <i>barley cake</i>        | baked without yeast, fare of the poor  |
| 15 | <i>cow manure</i>         | a normal form of fuel in the East, even today  |

### Bible connections

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 1-3 | <i>symbolic actions</i>                     | <i>see eg</i> 1 Kings 11:30; 2 Kings 13:17; Isaiah 20:2-4; Jeremiah 13:1-11; Acts 21:10-11 |
| 4,6 | <i>day for each year</i>                    | <i>see also</i> Numbers 14:34; Daniel 9:24   |
| 14  | <i>found dead / killed by wild animal</i> , | i.e. with blood still in it (Lev 17:10-13)   |
|     |   | unclean meat <i>see</i> Lev 22:8; Deuteronomy 14:21  |
|     |   | <i>see also</i> 1 Corinthians 8:1f; <i>c.f.</i> Acts 10:14f                                |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

- 1 Where was Ezekiel?  
Who is watching him?
- 3 What does the iron pan represent?  
How will it be a sign?
- 4 How does he put the sin of Israel in His side?
- 5 When does 390 years go back to?
- 6 Why left side for Israel and right side for Judah?
- 7 When does 40 years for Judah go back to?
- 8 What does 'bare arms' represent?  
How will God tie him up with ropes?
- 9 How can he make bread if he is tied up?
- 10 Why '20' shekels of food?
- 11 Why 1/6 hin of water?
- 12 How would you eat a barley cake?  
Why bake it in the sight of the people?  
What does cooking over human excrement represent?
- 14 Why does he take eating dead or torn animals as examples of defilement?
- 15 Why does God let him use cow manure instead?  
Why will they be appalled at the sight of each other?

What surprises or confuses you?

- 15 Why does God let him use cow manure?
- 17 Why does God warn the exiles of Jerusalem's impending destruction?

## 2) The Context

- a) surrounding passage,
  - 1 Go shut yourself up inside your house (3:24).
- b) whole Bible,
  - 1ff fools for Christ (1 Corinthians 4:10 cf 1 Cor 3:18; 2 Cor 11:10)
  - 3 This will be a sign – 2 x exactly in Scripture - sabbaths (Ex31:13)  
baby...clothes... lying in a manger (Lk2:12)
  - 4 He took our sin and bore our diseases (Matt 8:17/ Is 53:4)

*Jesus bore our sins (1 Peter 2:24)*

*5/6 40 – (Nu 32:13; cf Gen 7:4; Luke 4:2)*

*390 + 40 = 430 yrs — captivity (Ex 12:40)*

*9 bread – man does not live by bread alone (Deut. 8:3 / Matt 4:1-4)*

*12 outside the camp — cover up excrement (Deut 23:12-14)*

*15 Do not call anything impure that God has made clean (Acts 10:15)  
weak conscience (1 Cor 8:10)*

*17 appalled (Ezekiel 9:3)*

*They will waste away because of their sin (2 Chron 36:11-16; Acts 17:31)*

*d) Bible story*

*See study 1*

## **LEARN**

*1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?*

*1 Ezekiel was in his house. (3:24).*

*His fellow exiles are watching him?*

*3 The iron pan represents the barrier (created by sin) between God and the city.*

*It will be a sign that God will not come to their aid.*

*4 He puts the sin of Israel on himself as he acts as a sacrifice?*

*5 390 years goes back to Solomon's dedication of the Temple.*

*6 Left side for Israel and right side for Judah for Judah is pre-eminent.*

*7 40 is a long time determined by God.*

*8 'Bare arms' represents ready for action with excessive power.*

*God tied him up with ropes, figuratively.*

*9 He can still make bread as he is not tied up all the time.*

*10 '20' shekels of food?*

*11 1/6 hin. His water ration, about 1 pint (0.6 litre), at regular intervals.*

*12 You could eat a barley cake quickly – no yeast, so no need to wait for it to rise.*

*Bake it in the sight of the people because it was a sign to them.*

*Cooking over human excrement represents defilement.*

*14 Dead or torn animals had their life-blood in them and eating blood was forbidden.*

*15 They will be appalled at the sight of each other wasting away.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*15 God lets him cook over cow manure because he has a 'weak conscience'(?)*

*17 The message is for them and for us.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*God told Ezekiel to make a model of the siege of Jerusalem, being ignored by God. (1-3)*

*He told him to lie on his left and right side, signifying a sacrifice for the sin of Israel and Jerusalem, and to prophecy against her. (4-8)*

*He was to bake a poor man's loaf in haste, on human dung, showing the people that all food for exiles will be defiled. (9-13)*

*Ezekiel balked at that, so the Lord allowed him to use cow dung. (14,15)*

*God explained that Jerusalem would be besieged. Food and water would be scarce. Flesh would waste away, all because of their sin. (16,17)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*God controls all things and is prepared to act in judgement on His people's sin.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 16**

*16 He said to me 'son of man, I will cut off the supply of food to Jerusalem....They will waste away because of their sin'*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*3 God sometimes puts the equivalent of a solid 'metal pan' between himself and his people with their sin.*

*God communicates with people, sometimes by giving signs.*

*5 God keeps a record of all our sin.*

*16 God is prepared in judgement to cause His people pain.*

b) His grace?

*15 God accommodates our 'weaknesses'.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

4 *Jesus bore our sins.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 *Be prepared to be a 'fool for Christ'.*

4 *Receive the gift when someone is prepared to take your sin upon himself.*

7 *Prophesy / speak the Word of God with 'bare arms'. i.e. unimpeded.*

16 *Beware. God is prepared to act in judgement against your sin.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Study 4

## Ezekiel 10:18 – 11:25

### ‘Exiles’ – persist in hope in the Lord!

#### Background

The first vision (1:2-3:14) - shows God’s presence in Heaven and on Earth and comes to Ezekiel while he is in Babylon

For this second vision (8:1-11:24) - the Holy Spirit ‘takes’ Ezekiel to Jerusalem, to show him the idolatry that has been going on at the Temple.

In ch. 10 he is shown God’s glory departing from the Temple, but then pausing at the east gate (10:18-20).

In **ch 11** vv1-13 - Ezekiel stands at the east gate; God tells him He will punish the evil plotters in the city.

vv14-21 - The Lord promises that the exiles already in Babylon will, after their time of discipline, be brought back, by a gracious gift of God.

v23 - Ezekiel tells us the glory of the Lord left the city, and the Spirit brings Ezekiel back to Babylonia in his vision.

#### Word list

**10:19-22** *Cherubim* Hebrew plural of cherub. Normally used for the two carved figures in the most holy part of the Temple, ‘guarding’ the covenant box. Ezekiel is now using this term for the winged figures of ch 1:5-9 etc.

**11:1** *gate, that faces east* ie outside the sacred area, a place for public assembly  
*house of the Lord* the Temple in Jerusalem

**2** *Jaaḏaniah, Pelatiah* two leaders in the political pressure group

**3** *Will it not soon be time to build houses? or* This is not the time to build houses  
*...city is a cooking pot...* A popular proverb.

**7-12** *you* the repeated ‘you’ is emphatic

**13** *Pelatiah* meaning - ‘the Lord has delivered’ - (a remnant?)

**15** *blood relatives* or, ‘are in exile with you’

**16** *sanctuary* used of Temple ie Where God was present (8:6; 9:6)

**23** *mountain east of it* ie Mount of Olives

#### Bible Connections

**10:19** *Cherubim* Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-22, cf Heb 9:5; 1 Kings 6:26

**11:10** *die at the borders of Israel at Riblah* see 2 Kings 25:18-21

**14-25** *hope for the exiles* cf Jeremiah 24:7; 31:33; 32:39f

**24b** *vision went up from him* cf Genesis 17:22; 35:13

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

- 1 *'Then' = after what?*  
*Why facing 'east'?*  
*Why 'twenty-five' men?*
- 3 *What did they mean that it would soon be time to build houses?*  
*What did they mean - the city was a cooking pot and they were the meat?*
- 5 *Who was Ezekiel speaking to?*  
*Why if speaking to Jerusalem, does he say house of Israel?*
- 6 *Who have they killed?*  
*How did they kill them?*
- 10 *How will they know that he is the Lord?*
- 13 *How did he know that Pelatiah had died?*  
*Why did that news cause Ezekiel to fall down?*
- 15 *Who is it that is far away from the Lord?*
- 16 *Why 'therefore'?*
- 18 *When would they return?*  
*What are its 'vile images'?*
- 20 *When would they follow His decrees?*
- 23 *Why did the glory of the Lord stop on the mountain east of it?*
- 25 *Why did he tell the exiles?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 17 *Why did God choose to bless the exiles?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 11:1 *The Spirit lifted me up' (3:12; 8:3)*  
*25 men bowing to the sun in the East (8:16)*  
*leaders unaware that the Glory of the Lord had departed (10:18,19)*
- 20 *They will follow my decrees. (cf 20:16,19)*
- 22 *'The cherubim...' resumes the departure narrative. (10:18f)*

b) individual book,

- 13 *fell face down (before the Lord) (1:28; 9:8)*

- 16 A remnant shall be preserved. (5:3)  
Sanctuary cf The Temple (8:6; 9:6)
- 17 I will gather ... give you the land of Israel. (3:13; 36:24)
- 19 I will give them one heart ... (36:26)
- 23 The glory of the Lord returned from the east. (11:23)
- 24 Vision began. (8:1-4)

c) whole Bible,

- 1 The Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to..... the prophets (Amos 3:7)  
c.f. Samson unaware the Lord had left him (Judges 16:20)
- 2 The Lord knows our thoughts (Psalm 139:2)  
Why do the wicked prosper (Jeremiah 12:1; cf Ps73:12)
- 3 Complacency in the light of earlier prophecy (Jeremiah 21:8-10)  
Command for exiles to build houses (Jeremiah 29:5)
- 14ff The Lord will fulfil his purposes through the exiles (Jeremiah 24:1-10)
- 15 By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept (Psalms 137:1)
- 16 The Most High does not dwell in houses made by man (Acts 7:48; 17:24)  
I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world (1 Peter 2:11)
- 17 The hope is with the weak (1 Corinthians 1:26ff)  
Restoration = the gracious gift of God (Psalm 65:4; Lamentations 5:21)
- 19 New Spirit (John 14:17ff)
- 23 The glory of the Lord was seen in Jesus (John 1:14)

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

*Vision / prophecy*

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 1 After the Glory of the Lord had left the Temple and paused at the East gate.

*'East' because that was the direction of Babylon (?)*

*'Twenty-five' men, cf different men, same number (8:16)*

3 *They presumed everything would be alright and they could therefore resume building.*

*It meant that they (the men) were the substantial influence in the city.*

5 *Ezekiel is speaking to leaders in Jerusalem.*

*He says 'House of Israel' when speaking to Jerusalem, as they were synonymous.*

6 *They have killed the innocent and weak(?)*

*They killed them by ignoring their needs.*

10 *They will then know that he is the Lord when they are driven out of the city and are killed at the border.*

13 *He knew that Pelatiah had died because the Spirit told him.*

*He fell down as he knew this was the first sign of the Lord's judgment.*

15 *The people of Jerusalem believed the exiles were the ones far away from the Lord.*

16 *'Therefore' is because the exiles are being dismissed by the people of Jerusalem.*

18 *They would return when the Lord determined.*

*'Vile images' are the things they worshipped instead of the living God.*

20 *When the Lord determined and brought them back.*

23 *The Lord's glory stopped on the mountain east of Jerusalem, showing the direction of travel and being evident to the people of Jerusalem.*

25 *He told the exiles since the message was for them.*

3) *How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?*

17 *He chose to bless the weakest / those who could do nothing to save themselves.*

4) *Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.*

*The Spirit lifted me up in Babylon and took me to the East gate of the Temple, where 25 leaders of the people had gathered who were confident of themselves and their future. (1-3).*

*The Spirit came upon me to prophesy to the house of Israel. The Lord said, 'Because you have killed your own people, I will put you to the sword, drive you out, and execute judgement on you at the border. Then you will know I am the*

*Lord for you have not followed my decrees but conformed to the nations around.'*  
(5-12)

*As I was prophesying, a leader died. The Lord assured me that, though the people of Jerusalem thought they were right with the Lord, it was through the exiles he would work. (13-16)*

*God said, 'I will return you to your land, Israel, removing all its idols. I will give them a heart of pure devotion to me, rejecting those devoted to idols.'*(17-21)

*The Lord's chariot left Jerusalem and stopped on a mountain to the east. The Spirit returned me to Babylon and I reported to the Exiles. (22-25)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*It will be through the 'exiles' that the Lord will restore the promises of Israel, but the idolatrous he will bring to destruction*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **11:20,21**

*Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my Laws. They will be my people and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*1 The Lord calls his prophets to be witnesses to His will.*

*2 The Lord knows our thoughts.*

*7 The Lord acts in judgment, using 'foreigners' against his people.*

*10,12 The Lord acts so that we should acknowledge he is all powerful.*

*13 The Lord is prepared to 'thole' great suffering amongst His people.*

*16 The Lord scatters his people in judgement.*

*20/21 The Lord will judge all idolatry*

b) His grace?

*17 The Lord gathers his people from their exile.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*19 Jesus gives an undivided heart and a new Spirit.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*1 Be willing and ready to be lifted by the Spirit.*

*3 Do not assume that prosperity indicates the Lord's favour.*

*5-12 Be prepared to speak the Word of the Lord in judgement.*

*13 Note – a word of judgement is costly and personal.*

*20/21 Be devoted to the Lord – not to vile images and detestable idols.*

*25 Tell today's 'exiles' (non-Christians) what the Lord shows you.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## For God's sake, believe in Jesus

### Background

“The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge,” was a common proverb in Israel (*see* Jeremiah 31:29). The people were saying God was unjust to send *them* to exile because of their *parents’* sins. (v25,29) The second commandment (Exodus 20:5) refers to the on-going effect of ancestral sins.

The chapter is important for vindicating God’s justice. Ezekiel says their complaint is pernicious because they were justifying themselves and accusing God of being unjust. It led to a spirit of fatalism and irresponsibility: you could shrug off any sense of personal sin.

Ezekiel’s concern here is to point out that in God’s eyes, people are individuals and treated as such; everyone will be responsible to God for his or her own conduct. He then gives three cases to illustrate the principle, at vv5,10,14.

### Word list

4	<i>soul</i>	Hebrew <i>nepes</i> represents the totality of a person or the life force in him
7	<i>return...pledge</i>	duty to return any article taken in pledge which was necessary for existence or well-being eg cloak at night
12,13, 24	<i>detestable acts</i>	‘abominations’
24	<i>commits sin</i>	<i>ie</i> persistent choice of evil

### Bible Connections

7	<i>returning a pledge</i>	<i>cf</i> Exodus 22:26; Deuteronomy 24:6; Amos 2:8
8	<i>usury forbidden on loans when someone is in distress</i>	<i>see</i> Deuteronomy 23:19f; Psalm 15:1,5a
23,32	<i>repent and live</i>	<i>cf</i> 2 Peter 3:9 <i>see also</i> Ezekiel 36:26

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

- 1 *What did Ezekiel mean 'the Word of the Lord came to me'?*  
*Who are 'you people'?*
- 2 *What did this proverb mean?*  
*Why were they quoting it?*
- 3 *What does the Lord mean by saying, 'as surely as I live'?*  
*Why would they no longer quote this proverb to Him?*
- 4 *Why does every soul belong to God?*
- 5 *What is a righteous man?*
- 6-9 *Why idolatry, adultery, theft?*
- 13 *What does his blood being 'on his own head' mean?*
- 20 *When will he die?*
- 21 *What is 'just and right'?*
- 24 *Why 'unfaithfulness'?*
- 25 *What does 'the way of the Lord' mean?*
- 29 *Who is 'the house of Israel'?*
- 30 *When will He judge?*
- 31 *What 'offences'?*  
*How do they 'get a new heart'?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 5-9 *seems to say that righteousness is possible by what you do or don't do ('works')*

## 2) The Context

- 1) surrounding passage,
  - 1 *the Word of the Lord came (17:1; 16:1; 15:1 ...)*
- 2) individual book,
  - 5 *righteous i.e. member of / conforming to the covenant community (3:20)*
  - 23 *I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. (33:11)*
  - 31 *a new heart (11:19; 36:26)*

- 3) whole Bible,

- 4 all who share the life breath (Genesis 2:7)  
sin causes death, living death (Genesis 2:17; 3:23-24) Eternal death (Revelation 20:14)  
transfer of guilt (Gen 3:12)
- 5 Will not the judge of all the earth do right? (Genesis 18:25)  
'If he is righteous...' - 'Works' follow faith. (James 2:18, 22)
- 6 lifted eyes to idols' (cf Psalm 121:1)
- 7 Give a pledge back before nightfall. (Exodus 22:26,27)
- 9 The righteous will live by faith. (Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38)
- 17 He hates what is evil and clings to what is good. (Romans 12:9)
- 19 Keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right (Genesis 18:9; 15:6)
- 20 The righteousness of the righteous means it will be credited to him. (Genesis 15:1)
- 22 Sins remembered no more (Isaiah 43:25)  
Cf the righteous will live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4)
- 24 cf persistence in salvation (Jn 10:28,29 cf Jn 6:37-40; Rom 8:30)
- 27 Turns away means repent. (Matthew 4:17)
- 29 The Lord does 'what is just and right' (Psalm 99:4)
- 30 There is a way that seems right to men but its way is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25)
- 31 The Work of God is to believe in the one whom He has sent. (John 6:29)
- 32 God desires all mankind to be saved. (1 Timothy 2:4)  
All have sinned –all freely justified by His grace. (Romans 3:23,24)

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 He means 'God spoke to me'.

'You people' are the Exiles.

- 2 The proverb means you inevitably follow the lifestyle of your father.  
They were quoting it as an excuse.
- 3 'As surely as I live' means the Lord was giving an absolute guarantee.  
They would no longer quote the proverb, as it was no longer true.
- 4 Every soul belongs to God since God created it.
- 5 A 'righteous man' here refers to a person who does the right things.
- 6-9 Idolatry, adultery and theft are listed as obvious, blatant sins.
- 13b 'His blood ..on his own head' means such a person will bring the just deserts of his actions on himself.
- 20 'He will die' means a spiritual death (?)
- 21 'Just and right' means keeping the commandments.
- 24 Sin is caused by 'unfaithfulness' to God.
- 25 'The way of the Lord' means the Lord's action / judgement.
- 29 'the house of Israel' means all the Hebrews.
- 30 He will judge them when Jerusalem falls.
- 31 'Offences' are idolatry, adultery and theft.  
You 'get a new heart' by believing in God's promise (?)

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

5 Righteousness is the action that follows belief.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

The Lord says don't blame parents. Every soul is made by me and accountable to me (1-4).

'Like father, like son' is not inevitable (5-18).

God will judge all people according to their actions (21-24).

How dare you call me unjust – It is you who are unjust (25-29).

Therefore Israel, note – I take no pleasure in death. Repent and live (30-32).

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

God desires everyone to turn from their own sin and be saved from death.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **18:32**

*For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord. Repent and live!*

## **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*3 God is the source of all life.*

*9 The Lord declares who will live.*

*17 God will hold man accountable for their own sins.*

*20 God has decreed how man must live.*

*23/32 God takes no pleasure in the death of anyone.*

*30 God will not look on sin.*

*32 God wants all men to be saved.*

b) His grace?

*23 God is prepared to save all who believe (keep His decrees).*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*25 Jesus will judge the earth justly*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*1 Listen to the Word of God.*

*3 When the Lord speaks – listen.*

*4 Acknowledge that I belong to God.*

*9 Note the way a righteous man lives.*

*13 Note the wages of sin is death.*

*25 Don't argue with God or question his integrity.*

*30-32 Repent, get a new heart, and live!*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

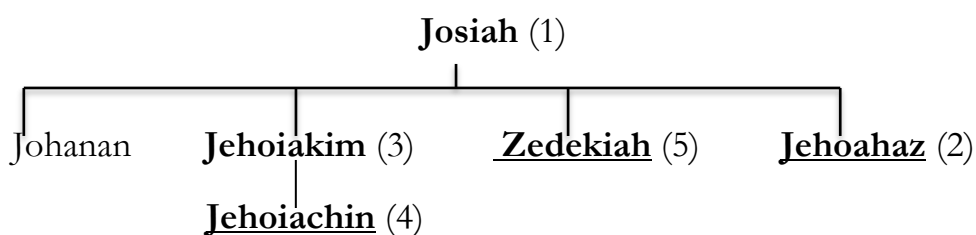
## Acknowledge your sin

### Background

This poem is Ezekiel's first use of a *qina*, a 'dirge', 'elegy' or 'lamentation'. It has a distinctive mournful rhythm, in which the two members of the couplet are of unequal length. It is very hard to echo it in an English translation.

The subjects of his lament are the three, related kings of Judah in the 23 years before the Babylonians captured Jerusalem:

- v 4 Jehoahaz, last son of Josiah, who was taken captive to **Egypt** in 609BC by Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23:33) and eventually died there as Jeremiah foretold. (Jer. 22:10-12; Shallum was another name for him.)
- v 9 Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, (therefore grandson of Josiah) who was exiled to **Babylon** in 597BC (2 Kings 24:8-15; 25:27-30)
- v14 Zedekiah, also a son of Josiah who was the last of the Davidic line of rulers and exiled to **Babylon**. This ended the dynasty.



**Bold = Kings.** 1-5 = the order in which they became King

Underline = Kings exiled (ie those mentioned in ch 19)

For all their prowess and renown, these men fell victims to the judgment of God on their lives. (2 Kings 23:32; 24:9, 19)

*Lions* were common in Palestine until shortly after the Crusades. Hebrew had five different words to describe them, three of which are used in v2.

### Word list

- 1 *princes* Hebrew *nasi*, a general term for rulers.
- 2 *lioness* ie the nation who mothered these kings.
- 9 *cage* Hebrew *sugar* = an animal's cage, or a neck-band with which lines of prisoners were roped together.
- 10 *mother like a vine* ie the nation of Israel, previously pictured as a lioness.

### Bible Connections

1 *lion* 1:10; cf Gen 49:9//Rev 5:5; Mic 5:8; 1 Kings 10:19f

10 *vine and vineyard* see 15:1-6; Isaiah 5:1-7; cf Matt 21:33-41; John 15:1-8

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Who are the princes of Israel?*  
*To whom is He speaking, when He says, 'your...'?*
- 2 *Who was their mother?*
- 3 *What did it mean that he tore prey and devoured men?*
- 4 *Who were the nations?*  
*When did they lead him with hooks to Egypt?*
- 5 *What was her hope?*
- 7 *Whose towns did he break down?*  
*Where was 'the land'?*
- 8 *Which nations came against him?*
- 12 *Why was it uprooted in fury*  
*Who uprooted it*  
*Why the 'east' wind?*
- 13 *Where is it planted?*
- 14 *What else might you use a lament for?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*(1,19) Why does He repeat that this is a lament?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

14 *lamentation — repentance enjoined on exiles (18:31,32)*

b) individual book,

4,9 *hooks (29:4; 38:4)*

c) whole Bible,

- 1 *lament — David for Jonathan (2 Sam 1:17ff); Book of Lamentations.*  
*'Repent.' (Mk 1:15)*
- 4 *the nations (Ps 2:1; 115:2)*
- 10 *like a vine (Gen 49:10; Is 5:1-7)*  
*planted by water (Ps 1:3)*

*11,14 sceptre (Gen 49:10)*

*earthly riches appealing (Luke 12:13-21)*

*12 destructive east wind (Gen 41:6; Is 27:8; Jon 4:8)*

*13 in a dry and thirsty land (where there is no water) (Ps 63:1)*

*14 fire coming from the branches cf Zedekiah's foolish rebellion (Jeremiah 38:17-18)*

*lament leading to repentance c.f. 'Godly sorrow' (2 Cor 7:10)*

*conviction (John 16:8)*

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 1 The princes of Israel were the Kings.  
You are the people of Israel.*
- 2 Mother was a general description for Israel.*
- 3 It meant he was powerful and successful in imposing himself on others.*
- 4 The nations was a general description for foreigners to Israel.  
They lead him with hooks to Egypt c 603 BC(?)*
- 5 Her hope was that her child would be a successful king over Israel.*
- 7 He tore down the towns of his enemies amongst his own people(?)  
'The land' was the land of Israel.*
- 8 'The nations' refers to Babylon.*
- 12 it was uprooted in fury as Israel had rebelled against Babylon.  
Nebuchadnezzar uprooted it.  
'East' wind is destructive.*
- 13 It is planted in Babylon.*
- 14 You might use it objectively as a thing of interest – for other.s  
Lamentation is feeling sorry (a motive) and repentance is an action.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*He repeats this is a lament (1,14) to emphasise that this is the 1<sup>st</sup> step of a response to God for sin (i.e. conviction).*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Israel, mourn for your king who was taken into captivity in Egypt. (1-4)*

*Mourn for your king who was taken into captivity in Babylon. (5-9)*

*Mourn for the end of the line of Kings. (10-14b)*

*This is a lament for the dead –the end of the line of Kings – It is not just a sad poem. (14c)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Sin is to be acknowledged and repented of.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*This lament is to be used as a lament. (14)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*I the Lord commands a lament / repentance for sin.*

*14 The Lord expects people to lament their sin.*

b) His grace?

*I The Lord warns us of the consequences of sin.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

**Now underline the application of the Main Point.**

2) What should I do?

*I glory comes to nothing.*

*14 Lament because of your sin.*

**Now underline the application of the Main Point.**

## Study 7

## Ezekiel 24:1-27

### Devastation? – but know God is in control!

#### Background

Jeremiah had spoken God's Word to Israel to 'serve the King of Babylon and live' (Jeremiah 27:7). Ignoring God, Zedekiah made alliances with Egypt and surrounding kings instead.

That provoked Nebuchadnezzar to return to Jerusalem. The date in v1 is normally given as 15 January 588 BC; the same date is given in 2 Kings 25:1, Jeremiah 52:4, when he began his final siege of Jerusalem. Zechariah says (8:19) it became a fast day for the exiles, commemorating the fall of the holy city.

v3-5, 'the song of the cooking pot' could well have been a household cooking song, rather like "Polly put the kettle on". Turning it into a message was a typically prophetic way of speaking.

v6-8 and v9-14 are two oracles dependent on each other & on the poem v3-5.

Typical Jewish mourning rites included noisy sighs like groaning, removing headwear and covering the head in dust and ashes, sandals taken off in times of distress, covering lips (compulsory for lepers) and eating funeral meals.

v27 indicates a turning point in Ezekiel's task. His prophecies of doom will no longer be needed. He can now become a shepherd and watchman for his people, working to build up a new community, a new Israel.

The 4 pillars of Israel's traditional faith are about to be destroyed – the Land. The Temple, the Davidic Kingship and the Covenant.

#### Word list

3	<i>parable</i>	or allegory
6	<i>deposit</i>	probably a rusty scum
	<i>piece by piece</i>	<i>ie</i> indiscriminately
7	<i>on the bare rock</i>	<i>ie</i> not covered by earth in burial, still visible
16	<i>the delight of your eyes</i>	your wife, and my sanctuary (21,25)
17	<i>turban</i>	normal headdress of a priest like Ezekiel
21	<i>my sanctuary</i>	<i>ie</i> the Temple in Jerusalem ('the delight of your eyes')
26	<i>a fugitive</i>	Hebrew is really <i>the fugitive</i> see 33:21

#### Bible Connections

- 3-5 *song of the cooking pot* cf Jeremiah's vision of a boiling pot Jer. 1:13f.  
6-8 *blood crying out for vengeance* cf Genesis 4:10; Job 16:18; Isaiah 26:21.  
15-17 *mourning rites* cf Mark 5:38; Joshua 7:6; 2 Samuel 15:30; Jer. 16:5-13.

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

- 1 *Why this specific day?*
- 2 *Why should he record this very day?*
- 4,5 *Why the detail about the stew?*
- 6 *Who is 'the city of bloodshed'?*  
*What are 'the encrusted deposits'?*
- 7 *What is wrong with the blood being in her midst?*
- 8 *Whose wrath was stirred up?*
- 9 *What does he mean 'I too will pile the wood high'?*
- 12 *How have the heavy deposits not been removed?*
- 13 *How does her impurity amount to lewdness?*
- 14 *Who is the 'you' who will be judged?*
- 16 *What did he mean by 'the delight of your eyes'?*
- 18 *What did he speak to the people about in the morning before his wife died?*
- 19 *Why did he wait for them to ask him about the relevance to them?*
- 20 *Why the house of Israel?*
- 23 *Why were they not to mourn or weep?*
- 24 *How would they then know that he was the Lord?*
- 26 *Why tell them that a fugitive would come and tell them the news?*
- 27 *His starting to speak again would be a sign to them – of what?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 3 *Why did he speak to them in a parable?*

## 2) The Context

- a) surrounding passage,
- 6 *city of bloodshed (22:2)*  
*'This is what the sovereign Lord says,' occurs 62 times in Ezekiel*
- 13 *lewdness (23:21, 27, 29, 35, 48, 49)*  
*I tried to cleanse cf (2 Ki 18:4 - 22:2; Hezekiah; 2 Ki 22—23; Isaiah 6:5*
- 27 *(they) will know that I am the Lord (54 times in Ezekiel)*

b) individual book,

- 13 lewdness – sexual immorality with Egypt (23:21,27,29,35,48,49)
- 14 judged according to actions (18:30)
- 21 God will desecrate – they had defiled ((5:11; 23:38f)
- 24 ‘Ezekiel’ is named only here and (1:3). (Jeremiah is named 129 times in his book!)

c) whole Bible,

- 1 9<sup>th</sup> year, 10<sup>th</sup> month, 10<sup>th</sup> day = start of siege of Jerusalem (cf 2Ki 25:1)
- 2 ‘I have told you now before it happens so ... you may believe.’ (Jn 14:29)
- 3 reason for parables – that they may not understand (Luke 8:10)
- 7,8 eat no blood / the life is in the blood (Leviticus 7:26,27; 17:11)
- 8 nothing that is hidden will not be disclosed (Luke 12:2)
- 14 retributive justice (Job 4:8; Hosea 10:12,13)  
God has set a time for judgement. (Acts 17:31; Heb 9:27)  
God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor 5:21)  
Being in anguish he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was like drops of blood falling on the ground. (uLek 22:44)
- 16 The Lord gives and takes away (Job 1:21)  
Cf Christian grief (1Thess 4:13; Phil 1:23; 1Thess 5:10; Rev 7:16; 14:13)  
Cf Follow me; Let the dead bury the dead. (Matthew 8:22; cf Luke 9:60)  
Job’s children die. (Job 1:18,19)
- 23 Waste away ... your sins (acknowledgement of their complicity (c.f. Leviticus 26:39)
- 25 ‘stronghold’ – applied to the Temple (Daniel 11:31)
- 27 They will know that I am the Lord. Exodus 6:7; 7:5 etc)  
mouth be opened (3:26; cf Zechariah – Luke 1:20)

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 This specific day was the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar’s final siege.

- 2 He wanted them to record this very day so that when – months later – news of this event reached them in Babylon, they would see that God knew / had told Ezekiel / was in control.
- 4,5 The detail about the stew was a common song(?)
- 6 Jerusalem was the ‘the city of bloodshed’(?)  
 ‘The encrusted deposits’ are all that are left after the pot is burnt out.
- 7 Blood should have been drained out of the meat before cooking.
- 8 God’s wrath was stirred up. (13,14)
- 9 He meant that God would bring ‘heat’ to bear on the pot / Jerusalem.
- 12 The deposits have been burnt off(?)
- 13 ‘Lewdness’ refers to the people deserting the Lord to follow Egypt’s gods, whose worship involved sexually immoral behaviour.
- 14 The ‘you’ who will be judged means Jerusalem.
- 16 ‘the delight of your eyes’ is that which you take pride in.
- 18 We are not told what he spoke to the people about in the morning before his wife died. It was probably the cooking pot illustrations that God had given (3-14). God wanted Ezekiel to continue ‘business as usual’, even so close to her imminent death.
- 19 He may have waited for them to ask, to be sure they were listening to the next bit.
- 20 Israel means the people of God.
- 23 They were not to mourn or weep for the focus was to be not on their human loss but on the affront to God.
- 24 They would know that he was the Lord and He was all they had.
- 26 Predicting the fugitive’s arrival again shows God knows all, the beginning from the end, and is in control.
- 27 His speaking would be a sign that the Lord God had a purpose for them.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

He spoke to them in a parable (3)

- a) either to give an illustration (shed light on), or
- b) to hide the meaning.

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*On the day the siege of Jerusalem started, God spoke to His rebellious people, Israel (1-3)*

*What started out as a choice stew (4,5) became a burnt-out, worthless stew of impure meat (with blood in it (6-8)). Such was Jerusalem – a pot that would not come clean. Therefore, they would now be judged (9-14).*

*God told Ezekiel his wife would die, but he was not to mourn her ritually. (15-18)*

*When the people asked him to explain, he said God was about to desecrate his sanctuary in Jerusalem. They would feel the same intense pain of loss as Ezekiel, but they were not to express it outwardly. They were not to mourn for Jerusalem – but for their sins (19-24).*

*Ezekiel, when he got news confirming the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, would be released to speak the Word of God (25-27).*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Finally, judgement will come; I will desecrate my sanctuary and you will see that I am supreme.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 24b**

*‘When this happens, you will know that I am the sovereign Lord’.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

**3** *God reveals Himself through his Word (cf 6,9,14,15,27)*

**8** *God exposes our sin.*

**13** *Sin not repented of arouses God’s wrath.*

**14** *God is patient but will act to judge sin.*

**16** *God may act to remove something very good from our lives.*

**21** *God is prepared to ‘desecrate his sanctuary’.*

**24** *God acts that we might know He is the sovereign Lord.*

**26** *God knows the future.*

b) His grace?

*13 God would like us to be made clean / forgiven*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*14 God the Father did not have pity on God the Son when he carried our sin.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*2 Follow the Lord's instructions to the letter.*

*14 Speak the Word – boldly and completely.*

*15ff Be prepared to lose earthly things in His service.*

*19 Be prepared under God to give account for my actions.*

*24 Read God's signs - He is **THE** Lord*

*27 Only speak for God when God opens my mouth.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

# Study 8

# Ezekiel 28:1-26

## Discern Satan's work and fate

### Background

Chs 4-24 God warns Jerusalem that its fall is imminent (24:25-27)

Chs 25-32 God gives oracles against the surrounding nations with an interesting structure: 97 verses either side of 28:24-26.

Chs 26 – 28 God deals with the cities of Tyre and Sidon and promises a land for His people.

Around 590 BC when Ezekiel was prophesying, Tyre was a strong seafaring, trading nation. The city has two parts, one on the mainland and the other on a seemingly impregnable rock about 1 mile off the coast, from which it gets its name.

Tyre thought it could profit from the fall of Jerusalem (26:2) but God tells Ezekiel He'll use Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, for them too: just after Jerusalem fell, Neb. captured Tyre's land-base after a 13 years' siege. (585-572 BC). The island base was destroyed 270 years later, 322 BC, when Alexander built a causeway out to it.

### Outline

**Ch 26** Ezekiel made prophecies about Tyre that were fulfilled: Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the mainland (8), Nations would come against Tyre (3), She will be made a bare rock (4), Fishermen will spread nets over her (5), Debris thrown into water (12); Never rebuilt (14); Never found again (21).

**Ch 27** Tyre is pictured as a wealthy trading-vessel which will be ship-wrecked.

**Ch 28** Pronounces judgement on the King of Tyre and laments his fall, (and also Sidon), and then gives hope for the Lord's repatriation of His people.

### Interpretation

During his ministry Jesus referred little to his place in the OT (eg John 3:13-15; Matthew 12:39ff; Luke 4:18). However, on the day of the resurrection, Jesus explained 'all that was said concerning himself in Scriptures' (Luke 24:27).

Similarly, though the NT often refers to Satan and his demon legions, the OT has few explicit references to him. One of these is Ezekiel 28 and the 'king of Tyre'.

### Word List

- 1 *Tyre* Heb 'rock'. On the coast, about 35 miles NW of the Sea of Galilee.
- 3 *Daniel* (see also 14:14,20) Hebrew 'God is my judge'.
- 12 *lament* Hebrew *qinah* means funeral dirge. (cf Isaiah 14:4-23)

### Bible connections

- 2 *as wise as a god* cf Genesis 3:5; Psalm 9:20; 82:6-7.
- 11ff *cf Isaiah's prophecy against Babylon* Isaiah 14:12-15.  
*Satan in OT* only refs – Gen 3:1ff; 1 Chron 21:1; Job 1:6ff, Zech 3:1  
*demise of Satan* 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 20:10.
- 13 *precious stones reminiscent of high-priest's breastplate* see Exodus 28:17-20.
- 24 *Cherub guarding Eden* Genesis 3:24.

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

- 2 What did he mean by 'I am a god'?
- 3 Why Daniel?
- 7 Who are the ruthless foreigners?
- 10 What is the 'death of the uncircumcised'?
- 12 What does it mean 'the model of perfection'?
- 13 What do the precious stones mean?  
When was he created, and by whom?
- 14 What does a guardian cherub do?
- 16 How did trading fill him with violence / cause him to sin?  
Where is the Mount of God from which he was driven?
- 17 How did their heart become proud?  
Where was he thrown to earth from?
- 18 When did fire consume them? Were they reduced to ashes?
- 24 When would Israel not have malicious neighbours?
- 25 When would the people of Israel be gathered to live in their own land?  
When was it given to Jacob?
- 26 When would He 'inflict punishment on the neighbours that maligned them'?

What surprises or confuses you?

Why are all the prophecies all mixed up? – Nebuchadnezzar, surrounding neighbours, destruction of Tyre, land and sea, return of people of Israel.

12ff Why is Adam / Satan implied – why is it not more specific?

## 2) The Context

a) individual book,

- 2 haughty – self elevation (16:50; 31:5)
- 10 uncircumcised cf 32:21
- 11 take up a lament (cf 19:1; 26:17; 27:2; 32:2)
- 24ff hope for God's people (cf 11:14-21; 16:59-63; 20:33-44)
- 25 restored to own land (36:16-32)
- 26 live in safety (34:25)

b) whole Bible,

- 2 *I am a God* (cf Genesis 3:5)  
Everyone haughty of heart will not remain unpunished. (Prov 16:5; 20:4)  
c.f. the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 9:10)  
Cf Herod Agrippa – ‘the voice of a God not a man’ (Acts 12:20-23)  
Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought. (Romans 12:2)
- 5 pride (Psalm 10:4; Proverbs. 16:18)
- 6 The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it. (Psalm 24:1)
- 7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10)
- 13 precious stones (cf high priest’s breast plate – minus its 3rd row: jacinth, agate, amethyst Exodus 28:17-20).
- 14 guardian Cherub (Genesis 3:24)  
2 gold Cherubim protect the mercy seat (Exodus 25:19; 37:9; 1 Kings 8:7)
- 15 Blameless – not perfect (cf Gen 6:9; 17:1; Job 1:1)
- 16 New Eden and new Adam needed (Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 5:42-50)
- 17 threw you to earth (Luke 10:18; Revelation 9:1)
- 24 hope after discipline (Hebrews 12:5-13; Revelation 3:19)  
thorns (John 19:2)
- 24-26 partial fulfilment (Ezekiel 1:1-4) ultimate inheritance (1 Peter 1:40)

d) Bible story

See study 1

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions passage raises?
- 2 ‘I am a god’ meant he believed he was in ultimate charge.
- 3 Daniel (lit. ‘God is my judge’) may mean ‘are you wiser than the judge?’
- 7 The ruthless foreigners may be the Babylonians and the Greeks.
- 10 The ‘death of the uncircumcised’ means all who die outside God’s covenant
- 12 ‘The model of perfection’ implies no sin(?)
- 13 The precious stones (as worn by the High Priest) pointed to access to God.  
He was created by God at the creation of Garden of Eden.
- 14 Guardian Cherubim protect Eden and guard the way to the tree of life(?)
- 16 Trading (competitively?) filled him with violence / hate / caused him to sin(?)

*Mount of God / Garden of God means Eden(?)*

*17 Their heart became proud on account of their beauty.*

*He was thrown to earth from heaven*

*18 Fire consumed them /they were reduced to ashes by Babylonians/Greeks.*

*24 Israel would not have malicious neighbours in the New Heaven and Earth.*

*25 Israel would be gathered to live in own land after exile / New Heaven etc.*

*It was given to Jacob/his sons when Joshua led them into the promised land (Josh 3+4).*

*26 Punishment would be inflicted on the day of judgement at the end of time.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Prophecies of the future are jumbled up because they are part of God's eternity. Humans on earth live 'in time', which is consecutive; in eternity, time will not exist.*

*12ff Satan is embedded in OT - cf Jesus 'in all the Scriptures (Lk 24:27) yet not explicitly evident (cf Matthew 12:39; John 3:13-15; Luke 4:18)*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Success & power have gone to your head. In your pride, you think yourself to be a 'god'. (1-5)*

*You are not God and will be humbled and will die at the hands of Godless foreigners. (6-10)*

*You were perfect, in Eden with access to me. (11-13) You were trusted till you sinned and I made a spectacle of expelling you, ensuring your complete destruction. (14-19).*

*Sidon, you too will be put to the sword. (20-23)*

*But the nation of Israel will be protected. I will gather them and reveal myself to the nations. They will live in safety; neighbours, if malicious, will be punished. (24-26a).*

*Then they will know that I am the Lord their God. (26b).*

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Sin/rebellion is totally unacceptable in the presence of God.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 16**

*Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character

2 *The Lord is Sovereign over the whole earth, Tyre included!*

7 *God controls the fate of the nations.*

16 *God ensures holiness in His presence.*

22 *God shows himself through the destruction of the wicked.*

b) His grace?

25 *The Lord gathers his people*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

24 *Jesus bore literal thorns on our behalf.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

2 *Listen to the Word of the Lord about yourself.*

5,17 *Beware a proud heart.*

5,16 *In aiming for business success, beware the temptation to sin.*

16 *Seek purity and holiness in all your dealings*

6,17 *Do not count yourself as wise.*

7,12 *Do not be impressed with your own beauty.*

18 *Note – all the rebellion against God ultimately comes to ashes.*

26 *Expect the judgement of God on all who malign you.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

# Series B

## Study 9

## Ezekiel 33:21-33

### The Lord is in charge – take Him seriously

#### Background

Following the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Tribes of Israel (721 BC), the population was deported and replaced by immigrants (2 Kings 17:24).

When Babylon overran Judah (587 BC), they deported the nation but left behind some of the poorest people to work the land (2 Kings 15:11,12).

[A residue was finally snuffed out by Nebuchadnezzar in 582 BC – Jer. 52:30]

In Chs 1-24 Ezekiel's main concern was with Jerusalem as it *was* and *had been*.

Ch 24 ff Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, has been besieging Jerusalem

Ch 33 onwards, Ezekiel is concerned with what Jerusalem *will* be.

Chs 33-37 start a new section referring to *after* the fall of Jerusalem.

33:1-20 repeats two statements dealing with human responsibility:

√1-9 *Ezekiel's* responsibility to be a watchman for the people, warning them of approaching danger. *Compare with* 3:16-21 (Study 2, p 13).

√10-20 *Each hearer's* responsibility to repent individually so that they may live and not die. *Compare with* 18:21-29 (Study 5 p 27).

33:21-29 is an oracle to the people whom the Babylonians left in Jerusalem ('poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields' *Jeremiah* 52:16) who thought they could claim all the land for *themselves*!

33:30-33 concerns the exiles in Babylon and the shallowness of their sincerity as they listen to the prophet whose words had come true.

#### Word list

21 12<sup>th</sup> year. . . 586BC ie 3 years after ch 24.

23 *Abraham* the 'Father' of Israel see Genesis 17:5-10

#### Bible Connections

21-22 *city has fallen, Ezekiel's mouth opened* see 3:26-27; 24:25-27

24 *misunderstanding 'Abraham's descendants'* c.f. John 8:33-40; Luke 3:8

31 *actions showing self-seeking* c.f. Acts 8:18

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 21 *How long had the city been under siege?*  
*Why had he come to Babylon (in slavery, 1400 miles away?)*
- 22 *What does it mean that the hand of the Lord was upon him?*  
*How long had his mouth been shut for?*  
*Why was his mouth opened?*
- 24 *Why were they saying Abraham is only one man?*  
*What did they mean that the land was given to them?*
- 25 *Why 'eat meat with blood, look to your idols and shed blood'?*
- 26 *How were they relying on their sword? – they'd been routed!*
- 27 *Why three situations described?*
- 29 *How would their destruction make them know that He was the Lord?*
- 30 *What does 'talking by the walls and doors of the houses' mean?*
- 31 *Why do they come to Ezekiel if they don't put his word into practice?*  
*What kind of unjust gain?*
- 32 *What did he mean by a 'singer of love songs with a beautiful voice'?*
- 33 *How / when would it all come true?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 24 *How could the defeated remnant imagine they could ever retake possession of the land?*

## 2) The Context

a) individual book,

- 21 *5<sup>th</sup> month, 5<sup>th</sup> year, the Lord first spoke to Ezekiel in exile. (1:4)*
- 22 *closed my mouth, (3:26,27) and at death of wife (24:25-27) but God would open it when fugitive brought news of start of siege of Jerusalem (24:26)*  
*'The hand of the Lord was upon me'. cf visionary encounters (cf 1:3; 3:22)*
- 26 *defiled your neighbour's wife (18:6,15; 22:11)*

b) whole Bible,

- 22 *knows the end from the beginning. (Isaiah 46:10)*

- 24 the poorest who had not been deported to Babylon (Jeremiah 40:7,8)  
Abraham was only one person when God called him, inherited the land.  
(Isaiah 51:2)  
O Israel, if you would but listen to me. (Psalm 81:8,10)
- 25 not to eat blood (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:10-16)  
eyes lifting up – looking for help (cf 18:12; Psalm 121:1)
- 27,28 the escapees of Babylonians – unrepentant (Jeremiah 44:16,17)
- 31 faith and deeds? (James 2:4)
- 32 minds set on earthly things (Philippians 3:19)  
not the hearers of the law will be justified (Romans 2:13; James 1:22,25)

### c) Bible story

Mankind has been separated from God by their sin. God had given them his requirements in the Law. Following continuous disobedience, however, they have been exiled from the land God had given them. At this point in the story, God is telling Ezekiel what life will be like when He defeats evil and ends captivity for His people.

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
- 21 The city had been under siege for three years.  
He come to Babylon to deliver the news.
- 22 'The hand of the Lord was upon him' means God's power was at work in him.  
His mouth been 'shut' since 3:26, i.e. from 5<sup>th</sup> year 5<sup>th</sup> month to 12<sup>th</sup> year 10<sup>th</sup> month, except when delivering a message from God.
- 24 They were saying 'Abraham was only one man' meaning if he could possess the land, so can we, who are many.  
They meant – God had left them in the land, so he must have given it to them.
- 25 God meant 'since you have completely disobeyed my Law'.
- 26 They relied on their own might, not on the power of God.
- 27 The three situations described mean 'everyone'.
- 29 Their destruction was foretold by the Lord, ie He was in control.
- 30 'Talking by the walls and doors of the houses' means in public (?)
- 31 They come to him out of habit / for public recognition.

*Unjust gain = material gain, social recognition.*

32 *He meant the prophet was regarded as entertainment.*

33 *It would it all come true following the fall of Jerusalem (a revolt was put down by Nebuchadnezzar. (c 582 BC)*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

24 *When immediate danger subsides, the effect is quickly forgotten.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*In the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ezekiel's exile, the Lord revealed that Jerusalem had fallen (21,22).*

*The Lord told Ezekiel to tell the remnant in Jerusalem – 'you are just as bad as those exiled. The land is not yours' (23-26) The Lord will crush all that are left' (27-29)*

*Say to the exiles with you – 'you pretend to listen but then do not obey me. You will believe my Word when it comes true and it is evident that Judah is totally destroyed' (30-33).*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*The Lord's Word of judgement will be fulfilled.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

**v 33**

*'When all this comes true - and it surely will – then they will know that a prophet has been among them.'*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

22 *The Lord is in control.*

*The Lord knows the beginning from the end.*

23 *The Lord speaks his Word through men.*

25 *The Lord knows our heart / sees our actions.*

27ff *The Lord will judge fairly and finally.*

30/31 *The Lord is not deceived by our religious pretence.*

33    *The Lord keeps His Word through His prophets.*

b)    His grace?

23    *God continues to speak to His people.*

c)    Jesus and His salvation?

33    *'The Prophet' did come 'among us' – in Jesus.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2)    What should I do?

22    *Hear the Word of the Lord.*

24    *Don't use earthly computations to presume on God.*

29    *Acknowledge the Lord's hand in judgement.*

30f    *Don't put on a show for the Lord.*

33    *Wait on God to fulfil His Word*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## GRACE!!!

### Background

By chapters 33-37, Jerusalem has fallen, the people are now in exile in Babylon, under discipline. God speaks to them in a quite different spirit.

A new order is promised, the core of which is the change of heart that must happen if God's new society is to come about. (36:26-27)

vv 1-7 prophesy that the contempt which heathen nations heaped on Judah would return on their own heads.

vv 8-15 tell of the fruitfulness of Israel which the exiles will enjoy when they return home.

In vv 16-38 God tells Ezekiel about the new kind of covenant he will establish for his people, for the sake of his holy name. He will do it through the house of Israel (v23).

### Word List

- |    |                       |  |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 26 | <i>heart</i>          | In Hebrew thinking, the heart includes the will and mind; it is the seat of the personality, a person's inmost nature. |
|    | <i>spirit</i>         | Here it refers to what drives and regulates desires, thoughts and conduct <i>see also</i> Study 1 ch. 1 v12 (p.8)      |
|    | <i>heart of stone</i> | ie contrary to nature, hard-hearted.   |
|    | <i>heart of flesh</i> | ie a tender, responsive heart as God designed it to be.  |
| 27 | <i>Spirit</i>         | Here refers to God the Holy Spirit.  |

### Bible connections

- |       |                                   |   |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 24-28 | <i>new heart and spirit</i>       | <i>see also</i> Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:10-12                |
|       | <i>the change it produces</i>     | <i>see</i> Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9b-11; Romans 6:6-11.  |
|       | <i>cleansing in Levitical law</i> | <i>see</i> Exodus 30:17-21; Leviticus 16:14-16; Numbers 19:17-19. |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 17 *What conduct and actions?*
- 18 *What does He mean 'shed blood on the land'?*
- 20 *How did the nations profane His name?*
- 21 *What does the Lord mean by 'His Holy Name'?*
- 22 *How had they profaned His Name in the lands where they had gone?*
- 23 *How would he show the holiness of His name through Ezekiel before their eyes?*
- 24 *How would he gather them?*
- 25 *How would he cleanse them?*
- 26 *What difference would a new heart make?*
- 27 *How would a new spirit work in them?*
- 28 *What land did he give to their forefathers?*
- 29 *What does 'save from their uncleanness' mean?*
- 30 *Why would famine be a disgrace?*
- 32 *How would they show their shame?*
- 33 *How would that happen 'in a day'?*
- 35 *When will this happen?*
- 37 *'Once again' – when had this happened in the past?*
- 38 *How would they know he was the Lord?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 31 *There is no mention of repentance before God acts?*

## 2) The Context

a) individual book

- 16ff *God's judgement of Israel (cf ch 20)*
- 17 *Defiled is priestly language for rendering something unclean. (cf 4:14; 20:7)*
- 18 *poured out wrath (cf 7:8)*
- 26,27 *new heart (11:14-21)*
  - heart of stone (20:32)*
- 32 *be ashamed (cf 16:52)*

36 *I am the Lord. I have spoken. I will do it cf (12:25)*

b) whole Bible

16-21 *Israel to be a Holy nation – a kingdom of priests demonstrating to the world the holiness of the one true God. (Exodus 19:6)*

17 *woman's uncleanness (Leviticus 15:19-24, 25-33) cf disgust to the Lord. (Lamentations 1:9; Ezekiel 9:11)*

*practises that defile (Leviticus 18:6-29) — land vomits out (Lev 18:24,25)*

18 *blood shed (22:6,7) ...the city of bloodshed (24:6)*

*idols (Exodus 20:4)*

*wrath of God (Exodus 15:7 etc, Revelation 19:15)*

20 *The name of the Lord (Ex 34:57) – His character, attributes, person and purpose*

20 *'The Lord's people .... had to leave the land.' cf Exodus 32:12-13; Num 14:15-24)*

21 *The Lord is 'concerned for His name'. – He is jealous (Exodus 20:5; 34:14)*

25 *cleansing required (Isaiah 4:3-5; Psalm 51:2,7)*

*cleanse from sin (1 John 1:9)*

*sprinkling – priestly ritual involving blood (eg Leviticus 1:5,11; 3:2,8,13)*

27 *Put my Spirit in you – Pentecost (Acts 2) (Cf Romans 8:1-17)*

*It is God who works in you to will and to do his good pleasure(Phil2:12-13)*

28 *dwell in the land I gave your forefathers (cf Genesis 15:18; Exodus 6:8)*

30 *Famine was a sign of God's punishment for disobedience. (Leviticus 26:20)*

31,32 *loathe your selves, cf repent (Luke 5:8; Roman 7:18)*

*I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh. (Romans 7:18)*

*Repent and do the things you did at first. (Revelation 2:5b)*

33 *The blood of Jesus purifies us from all our sins (1 John 1:7)*

37 *as numerous as sheep, cf stars in the sky (Genesis 15:5)*

*In Egypt, the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly. (Exodus 1:7)*

38 *numerous as flocks in Jerusalem (cf great multitude - Revelation 7:9)*

*Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus is Lord (Phil 2:10)*

c) Bible story

See study 9

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 17 *conduct and actions = shed blood and defiled it with idols (18)*
- 18 *'shed blood on the land' means official violence and bloodshed.*
- 20 *'profane His name' = violate express commands – child sacrifice, idolatry, false swearing, improper sacrifices.*
- 21 *'His Holy Name' = his reputation for holiness purity, justice, integrity etc*
- 22 *They profaned His Name by disgracing Him by association, in the eyes of onlookers.*
- 23 *The Lord would show the holiness of His name by unilateral action through them.*
- 24 *He would gather them in the first instance through Cyrus. (Ezra 1:1).*
- 25 *The Lord would reckon them 'clean'.*
- 26 *A new heart would enable a new start for mind, spirit, emotions/personality*
- 27 *The new spirit would work in them to follow his decrees and keep his laws.*
- 28 *The land he gave to his forefathers stretched from Egypt to the Euphrates.*
- 29 *Uncleanness meant separation from God.*
- 30 *Famine was generally seen as a sign of God's curse.*
- 32 *They would show their shame by repenting.*
- 33 *'The day' is the start of the process (cf born again?)*
- 35 *This is the end of time / the restoration of all things.*
- 37 *'Once again' – this had happened before in Egypt, after the time of Joseph.*
- 38 *They would know that he was the Lord when he did this for them – 'made his people numerous as sheep'.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

- 31 *Repentance is a response to the grace of God.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*'Son of man', Israel lived in the promised land. They ignored me and sinned and so they were exiled. They profaned My Name by their deeds amongst the nations. (16-21)*

*So, I will show My Holiness and then the nations will know that I am the Lord. (20-23) I will do this by bringing back my people from their exile, by cleansing them, by giving them a new heart of flesh, by My Spirit in them, enabling them to keep My commands and live in the land I gave their forefathers, where I will*

prosper them. (24-30). Then they will repent and recognise that I have done this for my Name's sake. (31, 32)

When their sins are forgiven, God promised to resettle them in 'the garden of Eden'. (33-36) He would hear the prayer of Israel and increase their number greatly. Then they would know that He was the Lord (37, 38).

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*The Lord, in grace, cleanses, saves and promises us Heaven so that we will know 'He is the Lord'*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 22**

*Therefore, it is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I do these things but for the sake of my Holy Name which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. (c.f. v 32a)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*17 God regards our sin as totally abhorrent.*

*21 God is concerned for His Holy Name.*

*22 God acts primarily for His Name's sake.*

*23,38 God wills that He be acknowledged as Lord of all.*

*35 God will bring about the restoration of Eden.*

*36 God expects to be taken at His Word.*

*37 God responds to the plea of Israel.*

b) His grace?

*19 The Lord dispersed sinful Israel; He didn't obliterate them.*

*24 The Lord acts to 'gather us' before he cleanses us.*

*26 The Lord **gives** us a new heart!*

*27 The Lord moves us to follow His decrees.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*33 Jesus purifies us from all our sins*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

22      *Trust that the Lord faithfulness is linked to His integrity not our 'lovability*

23/38   *Know that He is the Lord.*

28      *Be the Lord's people.*

31      *I should remember my evil ways and repent of them.*

32      *We are locked into the honour of God's name, not His love or our lovability!*

37      *Plead to the Lord to make His people numerous.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Praise God for your resurrection

### Background

In their exile in the P.O.W. camps of Babylon, the Jews felt demoralised and hopeless (vv1).

vv1-10. In a vivid vision, God tells Ezekiel he will put his Spirit into his people.

vv11-14 uses the language of resurrection to illustrate the promise of Israel's return to a new life in their own land from the deathlike existence in exile. One fulfilment of this was when the next emperor, Cyrus, allowed them to return to Judea and rebuild the temple (so they could pray for him).

vv15-23 uses a simple visual aid to show how God will reconcile his people so that they become one. NB at this point (721BC) 'Ephraim etc' (ie Israel) is scattered among nations (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11), 'Judah etc' is exiled in Babylon

vv24-28 talk about the reign of the coming Messiah, developing what was said in ch 34 describing God as the Shepherd of his people.

In this chapter, the Hebrew word *ruah* is translated 3 different ways: In vv1,14 as Spirit; v5,6,8,9,10 as breath; v9 as wind or winds. (In the NT, the Gk word *pneuma* can have the *same three meanings*; two of them are used in John 3:3-8).

### Word List

- 1,2 *valley* same Hebrew word as the *plain* in 3:22, probably the same location intended.
- 4 *Lord you know* i.e. 'You know the answer to that – of course they can't!'
- Prophecy* *command in the Lord's name (cf 9,12).*
- 5 *breath* Hebrew *ruah* can mean breath, wind or spirit
- 6 '*will know that I am the Lord*' – used 70x in Ezekiel; only 20x in rest of Bible.
- 7 *rattling sound* or an earthquake. Both meanings of word occur in Ezekiel (3:12f; 12:18; 38:19).
- 9 *four winds* ie the four corners of the earth cf 7:2
- 16 *Judah, Joseph (Ephraim his son)* ie representing the 2 kingdoms of earlier days
- 24 *my servant* a clear Messianic title.
- 25 *king and prince for ever* again, Messianic titles.

### Bible connections

- 11,14 *demoralised people revitalised* see John 20:19,22; Acts 2; Eph. 2:1-10.
- 16 *writing on sticks* cf Numbers 17:2ff; Zechariah 11:7ff.
- 22,24 *one flock, one shepherd* see John 10:14-16; Ephesians 2:11-22.

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 What did 'the hand of the Lord being upon him' mean?  
'brought him out' of what?
- 2 Why did he lead him 'to and fro'?  
Why a valley?
- 3 Why did he not answer 'yes' or 'no'.
- 4 What did he mean by 'Prophecy'?
- 6 Who would know that he is the Lord?
- 8 Why was there no breath in them?
- 9 What is the breath?  
How were they slain?
- 10 Why an 'army'?
- 11 What did they mean 'cut off'?
- 12 Why 'graves'?
- 14 What did he mean, he would put His Spirit in them?
- 16 Why 'Joseph' not 'Israel'?
- 22 When would this happen?  
Who will be the King?
- 23 How would he cleanse them?
- 26 What is a 'covenant of peace'?
- 28 How does he make Israel holy?

What surprises or confuses you?

*There are no conditions mentioned – just "I will..."*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 12 open graves / bring back to land of Israel (36:33)
- 26 increase their numbers (36:38)

b) individual book,

- 1 the hand of the Lord (cf 1:3)  
valley = alluvial plain (cf 3:22,23)

- 4,11 dry bones – our hope is gone (33:21)
- 22 one nation – God's covenant people (36:10; 39:25; 45:16)
- 24 one shepherd (34:11)

c) whole Bible,

- 3 c.f. Jesus to blind man - What do you want me to do for you? (Mk 10:51)
- 4 through the Spirit of Jesus - We may all 'prophesy' (1 Corinthians 14:5)
- 6-10 breathed into man (Genesis 2:7)
- The Spirit gives life. (John 6:63)
- 9 four winds (Daniel 7:2; Matthew 24:31)
- 10 I am the resurrection and the life. (John 11:25)
- the trumpet call of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
- 11 cut off (from their people) (Leviticus 7:20, 21 etc; cf Is 53:8)
- 18 Be prepared to give an answer. (1 Peter 3:15)
- 19 the (lost) tribes of Israel c.f. Israel the elder brother (Romans 9-11)
- 22 unity of people of God (John 17:11; Ephesians 4:3-5)
- 23 cleanse them (cf Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:7)
- 24 shepherd (Psalm 23; John 10:11)
- Walk in my judgements. c.f. David (1 Kings 11:38)
- 'great David's greater son' (Matthew 22:41ff)
- 26 We have peace with God. (Romans 5:1)
- 27 my dwelling place (lit tabernacle) c.f. Jesus (John 1:14)
- 28 no-one snatch you from my hand (John 10:28,29)

d) Bible story

See study 9

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?
  - 1 'The hand of the Lord being upon him' meant God was at work in / through him.
  - 2 He led him 'to and fro' to witness the 'vast army'. (10)  
A valley / plain, so he could see the extent of the army(?)

- 3 He may have wanted to say 'no', but that would have been unacceptable. Instead, he left open the possibility that God was going to work a miracle.
- 4 'Prophecy' meant, speak God's Word.
- 6 You, ie the people whose bones these were, would know that he was the Lord?
- 8 There was no breath in them because God had not yet given them life.
- 9 'Breath' means the spirit of God.  
Slain – perhaps by the Babylonians?
- 10 An 'army', because these were the people of God!
- 11 'Cut off' meant, severed from their land and the purposes of God.
- 12 'Graves' because they were dead!
- 14 He meant he would be putting His Spirit in them and would give them life.
- 16 Why 'Joseph'? Because Joseph's sons, Ephraim & Manasseh, were the dominant tribes(?)
- 22 This would happen when His kingdom would come.  
Jesus will be the King
- 23 He cleansed them by offering a sacrifice in their place.
- 26 'Covenant of peace' means no more strife / war.
- 28 He makes Israel holy by 'cleansing' them.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*This is all by grace!*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*In a vision, the Lord brought me to a valley of bones and told me to command, in His Name, the bones to assemble as fully formed bodies. This they did. (1-8) He then told me to command the Spirit to enter the bodies, giving them life. This happened. (9,10)*

*In the same way, He said, I am going to bring back the whole house of Israel to their land and put my Spirit in them. (11-14).*

*The Lord then told me take two sticks with Judah and Ephraim written of them and to hold them as one stick. (15-17) When the people ask 'why?', tell them I will gather **all** Israel back and make one kingdom of them again – saving and cleansing them. (18-23)*

*David will be their king in the land I gave Jacob, for ever. They will live in peace for ever – guaranteed. Their numbers will increase, and I will live among them for ever as their God. This will show the nations that you are mine. (24-28)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*God will resurrect his people, cleanse them and then rule among them, forever.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*‘... for I will save them all from their sinful backsliding and I will cleanse them. They will be my people and I will be their’ God 23b)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*1 The Lord initiates his revelation with us.*

*3 The Lord invites our response.*

*4 The Lord commands us to speak His Word.*

*9 The Lord commands life.*

*12 The Lord commands resurrection.*

*14 The Lord gives His own Spirit.*

*21 The Lord will gather all His own to Himself.*

*27 The Lord lives among His people.*

b) His grace?

*23 The Lord saves His people from sinful back sliding and cleanses them.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*24/25 ‘David’ / Jesus will rule over them for ever*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*3 Answer God when he is speaking to you!*

*7,10 Speak God’s Word when He commands.*

*Do as the Lord commands, even if it seems nonsensical.*

*11,12 Believe God above experience / feeling.*

*18 Be ready to give an answer in Jesus name.*

*23-27 Believe in / trust God in the grace of God*

*28 Give God the credit for your ‘holiness’.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Study 12

## Ezekiel 39:1-29

### Believe in God's victory over all evil

#### Background

The sheer number of sevens in chs 38,39 indicates we are dealing with something symbolic; there will be many fulfilments of this prophecy through history, culminating in a final and total one. (To the Hebrews, seven was the complete, perfect, divine number (*cf* Genesis 2:2))

38:1-6 The hordes from the 'far north' (6) represent the direction from which the worst of Israel's foes came.

39:1-16 retells the story of the overthrow of Gog in different language and fuller detail. This is typical of Hebrew poetry and the semi-poetical writing used in these oracles. The repeated use of the number 'seven' indicates we are dealing with apocalyptic symbolism (revealing the final/end times)

39:17-24 picks up on 39:4 and gives us a graphic, though gruesome picture of a great sacrificial feast.

39:25-29 tells how every captivity of God's people will end.

Ch 39 concludes this section of the prophecy – (33:21-39:29) on 12<sup>th</sup> year of exile. The next section begins on the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the exile (40:1-48:35).

#### Word List

- |    |                  |   |
|----|------------------|---|
| 1  | <i>Gog</i>       | probably symbolising personified head of the forces of evil which are intent on destroying the people of God. |
| 6  | <i>Magog</i>     | the land of Gog <i>see</i> 38:1   |
| 11 | <i>Hamon Gog</i> | means 'hordes' of Gog   |
| 16 | <i>Hammonah</i>  | means horde   |
| 18 | <i>Bashan</i>    | the very fertile area east of River Jordan and north of Gilead  |

#### Bible connections

17-24 *the Lord's sacrifice see* Isaiah 63:1-6; Jeremiah 46:10; Revelation 19:17-21

25-29 *The captivity of God's people will end. see* John 8:31-36

25 *bringing Jacob back from captivity see* 29:14; Ps 14:7, 126:1-3; Amos 9:14

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Why 'against' Gog?*
- 2 *What does he mean 'turn you around'?*  
*Why from 'the far north'?*
- 3 *Why bow from left and arrows from right?*
- 4 *Why on the mountains of Israel?*
- 5 *What does it mean to 'fall in the open field'?*
- 6 *What is the significance of 'the coast lands'?*
- 7 *How will He make His Holy Name known?*
- 8 *When was / is 'the day'?*
- 9 *Why will they use the weapons for fuel?*  
*Why for 7 years?*
- 10 *Why bury Gog in the 'valley ... east ... Dead Sea?*
- 11 *What travellers?*
- 12 *Why will they be burying them for 7 months?*
- 13 *When will be the day that the Lord is glorified?*
- 14 *How will they cleanse the land?*  
*What will they begin their search for?*
- 17 *Why all birds and animals?*  
*How can they drink blood?*
- 19 *What sacrifice is he preparing for them?*
- 21 *When and how will his glory be displayed?*
- 25 *Who are 'Jacob' and 'all the people of Israel'?*
- 27 *How will He show himself as holy?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why is the message so obscure?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 2 *turn you around (38:4)*  
*come from the north (38:15)*

b) individual book,

- 4 *bodies - food for animals (29:5)*
- 8 *It is coming. It will surely take place. (21:7)*
- 22 *that day forward (cf 43:27) i.e. the defeat of Gog and hordes ((39:3-5)*
- 23 *for their sin / iniquity (cf 3:18; 4:4)*
- 24 *uncleanness / defilement (c.f. 24:13)*
- 25 *zealous for His Name (36:22; 39:7)*
- 29 *pour out spirit (Joel 2:29) contrast: 'pour out wrath' (7:8; 14:19; 20:8)*

c) whole Bible,

- 1 *All authority is His. (Matthew 28:19)*
- 6 *'Fool'. This night your life will be required of you. (Luke 12:20)*
- 7 *The Holy one of Israel, c.f. Holy one of God – (Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34; Jn 6:69)*  
*At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. (Philippians 2:10)*
- 9 *Victory belongs to the Lord, though He uses His people. (1 Cor 15:58)*  
*It is finished. (John 19:30)*  
*Jesus has defeated rulers and authorities. (Colossians 2:5)*  
*Therefore ... we are more than conquerors. (Romans 8:37)*  
*If the son set you free, you shall be free indeed. (John 8:31-36)*
- 10 *Plunder / despoil c.f. Jesus and Devil (Luke 11:22; Eph. 4:8; 1 John 3:8)*
- 13 *Jesus was glorified through the crucifixion / resurrection. (John 17:5)*
- 17 *The Lord has made clean. (Acts 19:15)*
- 18 *feast for the birds /beasts (c.f. Revelation 19:17,18)*
- 21 *to put a hand on (power?) (Psalm 89:25)*
- 23 *I hid my face... (Ps 13:1; 27:9; 104:29) c.f. face to shine (Nu 6:25,26)*  
*from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> hour the land went dark (Matthew 27:45)*
- 26 *remember their sins no more (Jeremiah 31:34)*
- 28 *not leaving any behind—cf Daniel? Left behind in 3<sup>rd</sup> year Cyrus (Dan 10:1)*  
*all given will come to me – no one snatch away (John 6:37; 10:28f)*

d) Bible story

See study 9

# LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 1 *Gog symbolises forces of evil against God.*
- 2 *He means 'turn you around' that He will impose His will upon you.*  
*'The far north' is where the worst of Israel's foes came from.*
- 3 *The bow is held in the left hand and arrows in the right?*
- 4 *The mountains is where they would flee to having been routed.*
- 5 *'The open field' is where the pitched battle would take place.*
- 6 *'The coast lands' would be the fertile lands.*
- 7 *He will make His Holy Name known on the day of judgement.*
- 8 *'The day' is the final day of judgement.*
- 9 *The victory over evil is total / complete.*  
*7 years is God's perfect number.*
- 11 *Gog buried by the Dead Sea – no life, no further trouble(?)*  
*travellers down by dead sea(?)*
- 12 *7 months = God's perfect time (?)*
- 13 *The Lord will be glorified after his crucifixion / resurrection.*
- 14 *They will cleanse the land by ensuring that all are buried.*  
*They will search for human bones.*
- 17 *Why all birds and wild animals?*  
*They could only drink blood if the Law was fulfilled.*
- 19 *The sacrifice- Is he preparing for them is the death of evil(?)*
- 21 *His glory will be displayed through Jesus at the end of time.*
- 25 *'Jacob' and 'all the people of Israel' means the 12 tribes i.e. all the people of God.*
- 27 *He will show Himself holy through Jesus.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The message is obscure because prophetic language is often hard to grasp.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Say to all Israel's enemies, 'The time comes when I will crush you and reveal Myself'. (1-8) The Israelites will be totally free (9,10), their enemies totally annihilated (11-16) and be able to celebrate the victory. (17-20). God's glory and grace to His people will be evident for all to see, forgetting their sin. (21-24).*

*In compassion, I will bring all My people back from captivity and demonstrate My holiness to all people. Then then they will know I am their God; I will not hide My face from them again and I will pour out My Spirit upon them. (25-29)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*The Lord will crush His / His peoples' enemies and bring His people to His land, with Him revealing Himself as holy. (c.f. 29)*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 27**

*When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself as holy in the sight of the nations.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*1 The Lord is against evil!*

*2 The Lord is in ultimate control of evil.*

*3-6 The Lord will destroy all evil.*

*7 The Lord will ultimately end all evil.*

*24 The Lord judges the sin of His people.*

*27 The Lord is holy and all powerful*

b) His grace?

*25,28 The Lord brings us back from captivity through his compassion.*

*28 The Lord does not leave any of his people behind.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*23 The Father 'hid his face' from Jesus as he bore our sin.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*17-20 Prepare to celebrate God's victory over evil.*

*21 God's glory and righteous judgement will be seen by all.*

*27 Be on the Lord's side – He is holy and all powerful.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

# Study 13

# Ezekiel 43:1-27

## Believe you are accepted through Jesus

### Background

Chs 40-48 take place later than the other visions / oracles in ch. 39: we jump from the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ezekiel's exile in ch. 1-39 (except for 29:17-21), to the 25<sup>th</sup>. The vision of God's glory leaving the Temple (10:18ff) is now reversed 19 years later when He returns (43:5). In this section

- a) Ezekiel is taken to a 'very high mountain' - probably Mt Zion (40:2).
- b) An 'angel' shows the Temple area starting at the East gate (40:6-42:20).
- c) The Glory of the Lord then re-enters the temple (43:1-12).
- d) The altar sacrifices are described (43:13-27).
- e) Regulations for ordering the Temple (re priests etc (ch 44 & 45).
- f) More ritual regulations (45:18-46:24).
- g) The river flows from the Temple (47:1-12).
- h) The land is described for 12 tribes. City gates specified (47:13-48:35).

The name of the city is "**THE LORD IS THERE**" (48:35).

### Understanding chapters 40-48?

- 1] Literal? - Thin in detail. Impossible to follow. Not reflected in 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple.
- 2] Fulfilled in Church? - Ezekiel and Revelation have much in common but in the latter, John's city has no Temple and no sacrifices, for the Lord God and the Lamb are its Temple (Rev 21:1-22:5)
- 3] Symbolic ('Apocalyptic Typology') - A mixture - The Temple is present? Sacrifices are offered? God is there!? Cf the present age – An in-between stage? The Kingdom of God has started (Mt 3:2; 12:28) but is yet to come in its fullness. (1 Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 12:10)

### Word list

- |     |                          |  |
|-----|--------------------------|--|
| 1   | <i>gate facing east</i>  | The gate from which God's glory had departed to join the exiles in Babylon (10:18,19; 11:22)<br>Gate through which Jews expect Messiah to come (44:1ff). Blocked up by Muslim leader Saladin in 12 <sup>th</sup> C |
| 7,9 | <i>prostitution</i>      | <i>ie</i> their spiritual adultery, worshipping other 'gods'.  |
| 7   | <i>idols</i>             | or corpses, <i>ie</i> kings buried there   |
| 12  | <i>law of the temple</i> | Hebrew <i>torah</i> , its 'pattern' of holiness  |

### Bible Connections

- |   |                                    |   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| 2 | <i>roar of rushing waters</i>      | <i>cf</i> 1:24  |
|   | <i>land radiant with his glory</i> | <i>cf</i> Deut. 33:2; Isaiah 60:1-3 Habakkuk 3:3f                                   |
| 5 | <i>glory filled the temple</i>     | as at the consecration of Solomon's temple<br>1 Kings 8:10f; <i>cf</i> Isaiah 6:1-3 |
| 7 | <i>throne-room</i>                 | <i>see</i> 1 Kings 8:12,13,27; <i>cf</i> Jeremiah 3:17; 17:12                       |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1    *What had been happening before 'then', and who was 'the man'?*  
     *Why the 'gate facing east'?*
- 2    *What is 'the glory of God'?*  
     *Why 'rushing water'?*  
     *What land?*
- 3    *What vision had he seen and when?*  
     *Why did he fall face down?*
- 4    *Why the Temple and not Jerusalem?*
- 5    *Who was the Spirit?*  
     *Why 'lifted up'?*
- 6    *Who was the 'someone' speaking from inside the Temple?*
- 7    *Why 'the soles of his feet'?*  
     *When will they 'never again defile my holy name'?*
- 8    *What does it mean 'placing a threshold next to...'?*  
     *When did he destroy them?*
- 10   *Why would a description of the Temple make the people ashamed of sin?*
- 11   *Why make known only if they are ashamed?*  
     *How could they be 'faithful to its design'?*
- 12   *What is the Law of the Temple?*
- 13-17 *Why all these measurements about the altar?*
- 18   *Why are there sacrifices? If God is living among them, they can't be sinning?*
- 21   *Why burn the sin offering outside the sanctuary?*
- 22   *Why the second day?*
- 24   *Why sprinkle salt on them?*
- 26   *Why making atonement for the altar?*
- 27   *Why at the end of 8 days?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*What time is this vision set in? – there are still sacrifices...*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

18 *'the man' (40:3; 41:1; 42:1)*

b) individual book,

- 1 *gate facing east (10:19; 40:6)*
- 3 *Kebar river (1:1; 3:15 etc)*  
*face down (1:28)*
- 5 *Spirit lifted me up (3:12; 11:24)*
- 19 *family of Zadok – only ones to remain faithful during the monarchy (44:15ff)*
- 27 *Eighth day – after cleansing (eg 9:1; 14:23)*

c) whole Bible,

- 2 *We beheld his glory.. (John 17:1-5)*  
*roaring of rushing waters (Revelation 1:15; 19:6)*
- 5 *the Spirit (Genesis 1:2)*  
*lifted up (John 3:14)*  
*robe filled the Temple (Isaiah 6:1)*  
*no Temple in Revelation (Revelation 21:1-22:5)*
- 7 *soles of my feet (Isaiah 37:25)*
- 11 *Repent the Kingdom of God is near. (Mark 1:15)*
- 18 *He lived among us and we beheld his glory. (John 1:14)*
- 19 *only Levites to minister before the Lord (40:46)*
- 27 *If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

d) Bible story

See study 9

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 1 *Before 'then', the 'man' with the measuring rod who looked like bronze (40:3) had been showing him round the Temple.*

*The gate facing east was the way the Lord had left and the way He was coming back.*

- 2 *'The glory of God' is the dazzling majesty of His presence.  
Sound of 'rushing water' means God was communicating(?)  
The land surrounding Him.*
- 3 *The vision he had seen was in Babylon (Kebbar river) 25 years after exile.  
He fell face down in Worship of God.*
- 4 *The Temple was the site of the dwelling place of God.*
- 5 *The Spirit was the active expression of the Person of God.  
'Lifted up' meant the Spirit was moving him(?)*
- 6 *'The man' was God the Son cf 2:2 and the 'someone' speaking was God the Father(?)*
- 7 *'The soles of his feet' meant where he had his dwelling place(?)  
They will 'never again defile' at the end of time, as Jesus returns as judge.*
- 8 *'Placing a threshold next to me' means associated with me.  
He destroyed them when he exiled them.*
- 10 *A description of the Temple makes people ashamed of their sin because it described the need of an unblemished sacrifice to enter God's presence.*
- 11 *It is only those who have repented that will enter the Kingdom of God.  
'Faithful to its design' by using it / approaching God in the prescribed way.*
- 12 *'The Law of the Temple' is being faithful to its design and following its regulations.*
- 13-17 *The measurements about the altar show how central and important what happens on an altar is to the relationship between God and man.*
- 18 *'God among' / 'sacrifices' speak of an interim stage; as when Jesus 'dwelt among us'.*
- 22 *The second day gives a pattern of each of the other six days.*
- 24 *'Sprinkle salt' on them was an expression for the sealing of a covenant.*
- 26 *The altar is the key area where God and man will meet.*
- 27 *In 7 days the altar is perfectly prepared – on 8th and subsequent days your / our offerings are to be presented.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The vision is set in an interim stage: sacrifices are still made, but God is present.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Having been brought to the East Gate, I witnessed the Lord returning in His glory to the Temple. The Spirit lifted me into the inner court and God's Glory filled the Temple. (1-5) With the man beside me, God spoke from the inner Temple – 'I will rule and live here forever with Israel without any of their previous sinful*

practices' (6-9) 'Tell Israel about the layout of the Temple so that their lives may reflect the truth of its design and regulations adhering to the Law of God. (10-12) Note, the altar's exact measurements are given with its steps facing east.(13-17) Levites of the family Zadok are to make these offerings over 7 days to atone for, cleanse and dedicate the altar. On the 8th day the priest will make your sacrifices and I will accept you. (18-27)

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*If man repents, God has made provision for mankind to live with Him forever.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

**v 9**

*Now let them put away from me their prostitution and lifeless idols of their kings, and I will live among them forever.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*1 God's presence is awesome.*

*1,5 God's glory is all consuming.*

*7 God is jealous for his holy name.*

*8 God's anger is roused by defilement of His name and detestable practices.*

*9 God promises to live among a moral people who worship Him only*

*10 God's Temple describes His holiness and man's sinful separation.*

b) His grace?

*27 God promises to accept us on the basis of the sacrifice, not of our deeds.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*13-17 At the centre is the place of sacrifice / the cross of Jesus.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*9 Determine to live with God, forever.*

*10 Consider the plan of the Temple to elicit repentance.*

*27 Present my 'offerings' on the basis of Jesus' acceptable sacrifice on the 'altar' of His cross.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Look to Jesus for all you need before God

### Background

Chapters 40-48 tell of salvation for God's people, victory over the enemies of God and his people, and finally a new temple, a new Torah (instructions about life and worship) and a new Eden *see p3*. Ch 45 deals with:

a) vv 1-8a The centre of the new holy land is God Himself! The protected area around the Temple, separating holy and secular areas, was like a green belt. The Prince's land was to east and west. (i.e. the former habit of kings annexing land belonging to the people was to stop!) Allocation to the separate tribes of Israel comes later, in ch. 47-48.

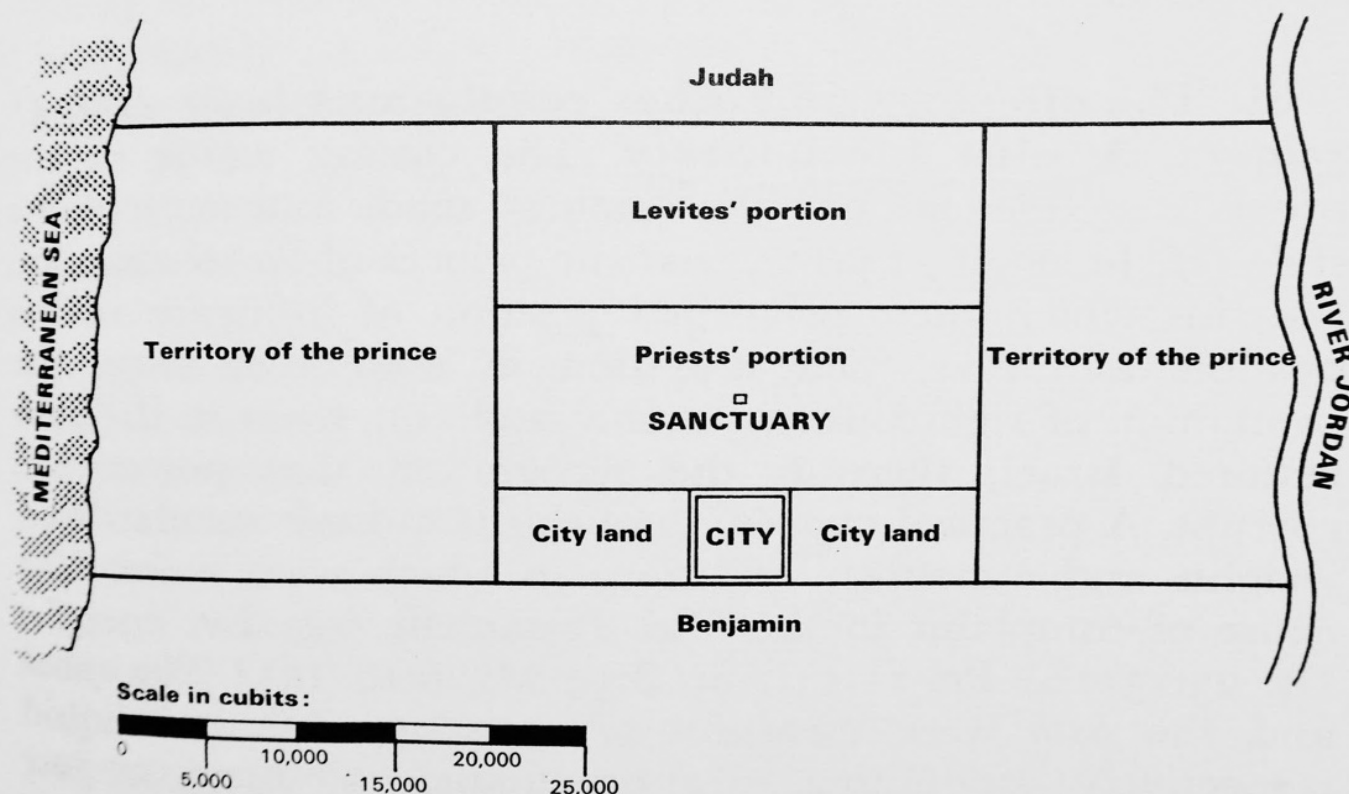
b) vv 8b-17 The special gift offered through the prince

The 'prince' is a messianic figure, though in Ezekiel he has sons (46:16) and presents an offering for himself (45:22)?!

c) vv 18-25 Offerings in the sanctuary

It marks the Passover and the passage to the promised land cleansing of the sanctuary (18-20), revised regulations for Passover (21-24); feast of tabernacles (25).

Fig. 1. PORTIONMENT OF THE LAND



## Word List

- 1ff *cubits* 1 cubit= 18ins. 10,000 cubits = 4.57 km. i.e. under 3 miles.
- 7 *prince* Hebrew *nasi*, prince over the tribes under God's kingship, one who *serves* rather than *dominates* (cf 17, 22).
- 9 *accurate/honest* related to the term right/righteousness (9).
- 10 *ephah* = 22 litres (used only of cereals) = 1 *bath* (dry measure only)
- 12 *shekel* = 10 gm. 50 shekels = 1 Mina (500 g). 60 Mina = 1 *Talent* (30Kg).
- 13 *homer* = 10 ephahs i.e. 220 litres, or 'a donkey load' = 1 *Cor*, used of fine flour, wheat, barley and as a liquid measure of oil.  
(See New Bible Dictionary under 'Weights and Measures, OT')
- 25 *Feast...* ie the Feast of Tabernacles/Shelters, at harvest time.

## Bible connections

- 8 *fair allocation of land* cf Isaiah 5:8; 1 Kings 21; Galatians 3:26-29
- 9 *Do what is just and right.* see Jer. 22:3, 13-17; Zech. 7:9-10; Titus 2:11-3:2
- 23 *No mention of the Passover lamb in the Passover!* (cf Ex 12:3-7)
- 25 *7<sup>th</sup> month 15<sup>th</sup> day* is the Feast of Tabernacles (but *omits* Feast of Weeks, Day of Trumpets, 8<sup>th</sup> day of Tabernacles, Day of Atonement!)

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 Who is 'you'?
- When will they allocate the land as an inheritance?
- How will they 'present to the Lord' a land?!?
- Why is it so large – much larger than the Temple?
- 2 Why are all the measurements multiples of 50?
- 4 Why only for the priests?
- 6 Why does the city only have 'a strip'?
- 7 Who is the prince?
- 8,9 Who are the 'princes'?
- 10 Why do the scales have to be so accurate?
- 12 Why is the mina defined by three weights?
- 13 What is 'a special gift'?
- Who is it for?
- When was the gift offered?
- 15 Why sheep from well-watered fields?
- 16 What will the prince use the gift for?
- 18 Why purify the sanctuary?
- 20 Why make atonement for the Temple?
- 21 Why observe the Passover?

What surprises or confuses you?

- 7 Who is the prince (c.f. 46:18)?

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 18 cleanse sanctuary, cf cleanse altar (43:20).

b) individual book,

- 1 'This is what the sovereign Lord says.' (cf 2:4).
- 9 just and right (18:5; 33:14,16,19).
- 13 special gift (48:8,12,20).
- 15 make atonement (16:63).

c) whole Bible,

- 1 allocate... cf the promised land (Joshua 13:6; 23:4).
- 10 fraudulent weights (cf Lev 19:36; Deut. 25:13-16; Prov. 11:1; Mic 6:11).
- 17b Atonement for the house of Israel. (Romans 3:25; 2:17)
- 20 I am the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6)
- 21 Unleavened bread eaten during the Passover. (Exodus 13:6,7)
- 22 Sin offering for himself (c.f. 2 Corinthians 5:21).

d) Bible story

See study 9

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 1 'You' refers to those leading the people of God.  
The allocation happens between the ages after the Messiah arrives.  
'Presenting to the Lord', cf a tithe for the Lord which signifies that all is His.  
The large holy area is a buffer around the Temple, where all the priests would live.
- 2 Perhaps the measurements were all multiples of 50 just for everyone's convenience!
- 4 Only for the priests, as this anticipates the coming of the Messiah.
- 6 The city only needs 'a strip' because the residents all have a tribal allocation elsewhere.
- 7 The prince (singular) is the Messiah.
- 8,9 The 'princes' are the rulers of men.
- 10 The scales to be so accurate so the poor are not cheated.
- 12 Traders had only one of each weight, so Mina = one 15 shekel weight + a 20 + a 25.
- 13 The gift is 1/6<sup>th</sup> of an ephah from each homer of wheat & barley, oil 1/10<sup>th</sup> bath from each cor, plus 1 of every 200 sheep. (See Word List p 67)  
'A special gift' is a token for the prince.  
It was to be offered on the Day of Atonement.
- 15 From well-watered field means healthy. fat sheep.
- 16 See verse 17. The Prince will provide the offerings at the festivals etc.

- 18 *They purify sanctuary must be pure if the offerings are to be acceptable.*  
 20 *The Temple must be clean for God to enter it.*  
 21 *The Passover is the key to deliverance from Egypt; c.f. Gospel and slavery to sin.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The 'prince' alludes to the Messiah. (The fact that he 'provides a bull for himself' (22) should be seen alongside there is no Passover lamb in the Passover – mysterious!)*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*God is at the centre of His people, flanked by 'the prince', who is Jesus. (1-7a).*

*The Lord has righteous standards and He accepts the 'special gift' of His people offered by and through 'the prince', Jesus. (7b-17).*

*The Lord has made provision for humans to escape 'Egypt/Passover' (ie their slavery to sin) and to pass through the 'wilderness' (this life) to reach heaven and be with Him. (18-25).*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Jesus provides and offers the sacrifice that makes atonement for God's people*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v17**

*It will be the duty of the prince to provide the burnt offerings, grain offerings and drink offerings ..... at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

2 *God's perfect sanctuary is at the heart of His people.*

9 *God detests injustice.*

10f *God expects integrity in our dealings with one another.*

20 *God expects the 'Sanctuary and Temple', i.e. the way to God, to be pure.*

b) His grace?

17,22ff Jesus provides the perfect offering for our sin

c) Jesus and His salvation?

7 *Jesus spans the promised land*

16 *It is God purpose that all people should come through Jesus*

17 *Jesus provides the offering for our sin!!*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

1 *The people of God in obedience to Him are expected to 'allocate the land'.*

9ff *'Princes' (God's people?) – do what is 'just and right'.*

16 *Participate in the 'special gift' to the prince (Jesus)*

17 *Trust Jesus's offering to the Father on your behalf*

18 *Acknowledge – All Israel needs atonement with God.*

21 *The Lord expects us to 'observe' / obey Him.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Do you see God's purpose, revealed by Jesus?

### Background

Ezekiel has a vision of an extraordinary river that grows miraculously as it flows from the temple, turning the Dead Sea into the Sea of Life. It was a startling vision which made him think. (Modern translations omit three 'beholds' in v1-7, as well as 'Do you see this?' in v 6.)

The fulfilment of the message (1-12) may be

- 1) The river means God's grace as the exiles returned and rebuilt the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple and listened to God's Word (Ezra 6:14-16; Nehemiah 8:8-10)
- 2) Or it may refer to the springs of living water that Jesus foretold the Holy Spirit would bring (John 4:14; 7:37).
- 3) Or the river of the water of life that John foretold, Revelation 22:1-5.

The land will be divided equally amongst all, Jew and foreigner alike (22).

### Word List

8	<i>Arabah</i>	the Jordan valley
	<i>Sea</i>	the Dead Sea
	<i>fresh</i>	lit 'healed'
10	<i>En Gedi</i>	midway along W side of Dead Sea, still same name today.
	<i>En Eglaim</i>	probably N of En Gedi. Possibly the currently named 'Ain Feshka', a spring near Qumran (famous as the place where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found).
		En Gedi to En Eglaim = right round coast of Dead Sea?
	<i>Great Sea</i>	the Mediterranean

### Bible connections

1	<i>river</i>	see Psalm 46:4-7; Joel 3:18; Zechariah 14:4-9; Genesis 2:10; John 7:37ff; Revelation ch 22
9	<i>living creatures/swarm/teem</i>	c.f. Genesis 1:20-24
12	<i>leaves for healing</i>	c.f. Genesis 2:15-17; Revelation 22:2,3
23	<i>room for Aliens/Gentiles</i>	see Isaiah 56:3-8; Acts 10:34-35, 44-48 Romans 10:11-12; Matthew 28:18-20

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Who is the man?*  
*Where was the entrance to the Temple?*  
*Why water?*  
*Why towards the East?*  
*Why the South side of the Temple?*
- 2 *Why through the North gate?*  
*What was / was not happening on the West side?*
- 3 *Why was he measuring?*  
*Why did he lead him through the waters?*
- 3-5 *Why 1000 / 4000 cubits?*  
5 *Why 'crossing'? – had they been zig zagging?*  
6 *Why did he ask if he had seen this?*  
7 *What was the significance of the trees?*  
8 *Why does it flow towards the eastern region?*  
*How does it 'become fresh'?*
- 10 *Where are En Gedi and En Eglaim?*  
*How were the fish of the 'Great Sea' (i.e. the Mediterranean) found in fresh water?!*
- 11 *Why were the swamps and the marshes 'left for salt'?*
- 12 *Why 'every month'?*  
*Who were they healing and of what?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 6 *Why was his attention drawn to this? ('Do you see this?')*

## 2) The Context

surrounding passage,

- 1 *the man (40:3, 41:1 42:1; 43:1; 44:1)*  
*The man brought me back. (44:1)*  
*Temple facing east (8:16)*

individual book,

- 6 *Have you seen this? (8:12,15,17)*
- 10 *spreading nets (c.f. Tyre 26:5:14)*

whole Bible,

- 1 *river in the city of God (Psalm 46:1)*  
*water flowing out of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea (Zechariah 14:8)*  
*river flowed out of Eden to water the garden (Genesis 2:10)*  
*entrance to Solomon's Temple at the lowest level faced south (1 King 6:8)*
- 3 *measuring line (11:1; 21:25)*
- 5 *growth of the river, cf mustard seed and leaven (Matthew 13:31-33).*
- 7 *See I make all things new. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 21:5)*
- 9 *In Him was life and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4).*
- 12 *You may eat of the fruit of any tree... (Genesis 2:16).*  
*God our Saviour wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3).*

d) Bible story

See study 9

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 1 *The man is Jesus (?) c.f. Trinity (43:1-7).*  
*The entrance to the Temple was on the East side.*  
*Water is the symbol of life.*  
*The East was the direction the Lord had left and returned by.*  
*If the South side of the Temple was the lowest side, this miraculous river was at least still flowing downhill!*
- 2 *Exit through the North Gate because the Eastern Gate was kept closed.*  
*West was the opposite side from where the exiles and then God had gone.*
- 3 *The measuring line was to mark out 1000 cubits = 500 yards.*  
*'Through the water' must have meant across the river.*
- 3-5 *1000 / 4000 cubits purely descriptive, showing how the river grew, the longer it got.*
- 5 *'Crossing'? – they must have been zig-zagging.*

- 6 He asked because he wanted him to note that the river had grown.
- 7 The trees showed fruitfulness – the provision of God.
- 8 It flowed East as that was the direction God had come from / it was towards the Dead Sea.  
It ‘become fresh’ by being cleansed / ‘healed’. Some kind of new-life physics?!
- 10 En Gedi and En Eglaim are around the Dead Sea.  
If ‘Great Sea’ fish could live in fresh water, the river was sustaining totally new life.
- 11 ‘Salt’ is a valuable commodity?
- 12 ‘Every month’ means throughout the year.  
The fruit gave nourishment and the leaves had medical use. i.e. constantly life-giving.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*He was meant to see and note that the river was getting larger as it flowed into the lands around the Temple, not from natural tributaries, but because God was multiplying it.*

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*The man showed me the water flowing out from under the Temple in direction of its opening ie eastwards and drew my attention to the fact that it was getting steadily deeper (1-6a).*

*He led me back to the banks of the river and showed me that it flowed into the Dead Sea which had become ‘fresh’. It teemed with life. Fishermen were active all round it, though the old salt swamps (somehow) remained as a source of salt. (6b-11).*

*Fruit trees lined the banks of the river, fruiting monthly, a constant source of food, while their leaves could be used for healing (12).*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*People are called to acknowledge the blessing of God and His Spirit as He brought extraordinary growth and health to His creation, restoring life.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 6a.**

*Son of man, do you see this?*

# LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*1 The life / Spirit of God emanates from within.*

*6 God wants us to witness His Spirit's presence.*

*7 God wants us to acknowledge that He restores life and is making all things new.*

*12 God's blessing is enjoyed by both banks ie wherever He goes.*

*Gods purpose is to heal / save.*

b) His grace?

*1 The Spirit of God comes at his initiative.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*6 Jesus reveals God's truth to us.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*6 Be prepared to answer God's question – do you see this?*

*Note: God wills His blessing on the parched and dead lands.*

*7 Look – Jesus restores life.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Note

**The Bible Project** provides a very helpful Overview of many books of the Bible in short movies which can be viewed free on-line. Each builds into an A4 page, which can be downloaded and printed , also free.

See

[www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)

**Old Testament    Ezekiel    Read Scripture Overview**

(For Ezekiel, the movie is in two parts. Since they are on YouTube, you need to click Stop at the end of the second movie, or it will run on to material chosen by YouTube

# *Sharing the Word*

## **Use**

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

## **Preparing for a group**

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers \*

## **A format**

If you have 45 mins together, you might like to try dividing it up like this.

(If longer or in a large group, you can extend the times)

- 1) Drink, bite to eat, chat (10 mins)
- 2) A Bible reading (2 mins)
- 3) A Bible study
  - a. Any questions? (Whether answer is known or not!) (2 mins)  
(Don't answer any, till all questions noted!)
  - b. Any relevant cross references? (2 mins)
  - c. Discussion of answers (13 mins)
  - d. Conclusion (10 mins)
    - i. A Key verse and Main Point?
    - ii. What does it show about God / Jesus?
    - iii. What should I do?
- 4) Sharing (Trials and joys – family, work, self) (5 mins)
- 5) Prayer (1 min)

## **Remember!**

As we gather round God's Word

- a) Listen to the views of others
- b) Make room for the novice. They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others' especially, 'seekers' in your sharing together.

\* The **process** is explained and practised in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**'. Email: [office@tpc.org](mailto:office@tpc.org)



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