

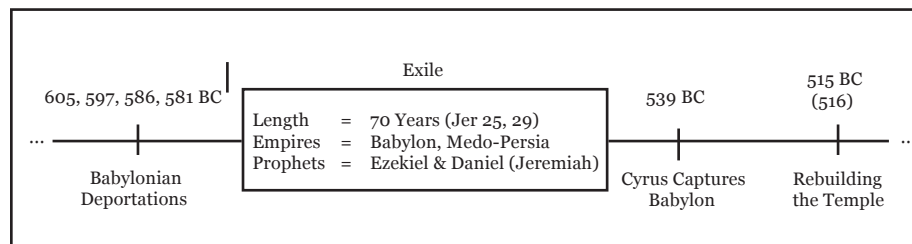
SESSION 3

Ezekiel: Part One

I. PRAYER

II. PANORAMA OF THE BIBLE

Movement 8: Exile



III. THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

A. His Context

1. Ezekiel's name means "God strengthens" or "God will be strong."
2. Ezekiel's profession was a priest ("...the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest" —Ezek 1:3). Other prophets who were also priests include Jeremiah and Zechariah. Ezekiel's professional background explains his apparent interest in the Temple, the priestly functions and offerings, the glory of the Lord, and so forth.

B. His Captivity

1. Ezekiel was taken into Babylonian exile in 597 BC (the second major deportation). He accompanied King Jehoiachin and others into exile (cf. 2 Kgs 24:10-16; Jer 29:1-2).
2. Ezekiel apparently settled in Tel Abib near the Kebar River (Ezek 3:15). He was able to live in a home (8:1; 14:1; 20:1), had some degree of mobility and was consulted by certain elders among the exiled population.

C. His Call

1. Ezekiel's call to prophetic ministry came in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's exile (around 592 BC).
2. Ezekiel was likely thirty years old (if Ezek 1:1 refers to his age... "In the (my) thirtieth year...") when he received his divine call.

Ezekiel 2:1-5

He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you."² As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.³ He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day.⁴ The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.'⁵ And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them."

D. His Contemporaries

1. Ezekiel and Daniel both began ministries at relatively young ages while both were in Babylon.
2. Ezekiel's focus was the fall of Jerusalem, the fall of nations, the departure of the glory of God, and the eschatological (end-times) future, namely the tribulation and millennium. Daniel's focus was upon the Gentile nations in Israel's future and end-times prophesies of the tribulation and millennium.
3. Ezekiel and Jeremiah were also overlapping prophets. Both prophesied Jerusalem's destruction, false Shepherds, the New Covenant, and judgment upon surrounding nations.
4. Ezekiel ministered to the exiles in Babylon; Jeremiah ministered to the remnant in Jerusalem. Ezekiel was married (but lost his wife around the time of the siege of Jerusalem); Jeremiah was unmarried.

IV. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

A. Charted

| BOOK OF EZEKIEL | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|---|----------------------|---|----------|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----|----------------------|----|
| Judgment | | | | | | | Restoration | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | 32 | 33 | | | | | | 48 |
| Judgment on Judah | | | | | On the Nations | | Blessings to Come | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | 24 | 25 | 32 | 33 | | | | | | 48 |
| Glory Present | | Glory Departing | | | | | | | Glory Returning | | | | |
| 1 | 3 | 4 | | | | | | 39 | 40 | | | | 48 |
| 2 Visions | | 4 Signs 2 Sermons | | 1 Vision | | 5 Signs 7 Parables 6 Sermons | | 7 Judgments (against Nations) | | 1 Vision 1 Sign | | 1 Vision (Temple) | |
| 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 12 | 24 | 25 | 32 | 33 | 39 | 40 | 48 |
| "Then they shall know that I am the Lord" | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

B. Purpose of Ezekiel

1. To announce the coming judgment and fall of Jerusalem (chs. 1-24; about half of the book was written before the fall).
2. To announce judgment upon Gentile nations (chs. 25-32).
3. To announce a coming restoration and eventual return of the glory of the Lord (chs. 33-48).

C. Distinctive Repeated Phrases

1. "Son of Man" over 90 times
2. "Glory of the Lord" about 17 times
3. "The word of the Lord came to me" 49 times
4. "That they will know that I am the Lord" 70 times
5. "This is what the Sovereign Lord says" ... about 113 times

D. Structural Elements within Ezekiel

1. Five Visions of Ezekiel
 - a. Vision of the Glory of the Lord (1:3-3:21)
 - b. Vision of the Plain (3:22-27)
 - c. Visions of Jerusalem (8:1-11:25)
 - d. Vision of Dry Bones (37:1-4)
 - e. Vision of the New Temple (40:1-48:35)
2. Ten Signs (Symbolic Acts)
 - a. Sign of the Brick (4:1-3) ... Fall of Jerusalem
 - b. Sign of Lying Down (4:4-8) ... Harshness of Captivity
 - c. Sign of Defiled Food (4:9-17) ... Severity/Deprivations
 - d. Sign of Shaved Head (5:1-17) ... Destruction of Jerusalem
 - e. Sign of Packed Belongings (12:1-16) ... Exile
 - f. Sign of Trembling (while eating and drinking) (12:17-20) ... Anxiety of Judgment
 - g. Sign of Drawn Sword (21:17-20) ... Babylon the instrument
 - h. Sign of the Signpost (21:18-23) ... Jerusalem to be destroyed
 - i. Sign of Silence in Bereavement (24:15-27) ... Submission to judgment
 - j. Sign of Two Sticks (37:15-17) ... Israel and Judah will be reunited
3. Seven Parables
 - a. Parable of the Vine (15:1-8)
 - b. Parable of the Adulterous Wife (16:1-63)
 - c. Parable of the Two Eagles (17:1-22)
 - d. Parable of the Two Lions (19:1-9)
 - e. Parable of the Withered Vine (19:10-14)
 - f. Parable of the Two Sisters (23:1-49)
 - g. Parable of the Cooking Pot (24:1-14)
4. Teaching Aids (used by Ezekiel)
 - a. Visions
 - b. Proverbs
 - c. Prophecies
 - d. Symbolic acts
 - e. Symbols
 - f. Parables
 - g. Poems
 - h. Allegories

V. A KEY THEME IN EZEKIEL: “THE GLORY OF GOD”

A. Definition

The expression, “the glory of the Lord,” occurs about seventeen times in Ezekiel. But what is this “glory” spoken of? Theologian F. Barackman (*Practical Christian Theology*, 441) notes, “Essentially, the glory of God is the visible radiance of His divine perfections...” In light of the perfections or attributes of God which are always fully and completely within God’s essence or being, at times this majestic reality radiates visibly when God is especially near. E.F. Harrison observes that this “kabod” (or glory) “denoted the manifestation of light by which God revealed Himself, whether in a lightning flash or in the blinding splendor that often accompanied theophanies. Of the same nature was the disclosure of the divine presence in the cloud that led Israel through the wilderness and became localized in the tabernacle.” (Harrison, “Glory” in *EDT*, 2nd Ed., 484).

B. Tracing the “Glory of the Lord” in Ezekiel

1. Vision of God’s greatness (Ezek 1)

Ezekiel 1:25-28

*Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. ²⁶ Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. ²⁷ I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the **glory of the LORD**. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.*

2. Vision on the Plain: God appears in glory

Ezekiel 3:22-23

*The hand of the LORD was on me there, and he said to me, "Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you."²³ So I got up and went out to the plain. And the **glory of the LORD** was standing there, like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown.*

3. Vision of Jerusalem's idolatry

Ezekiel 8:1-4

*In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign LORD came on me there.² I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal.³ He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood.⁴ And there before me was the **glory of the God of Israel**, as in the vision I had seen in the plain.*

Note:

From this point on, the glory of God will begin to depart from Jerusalem and the Temple. This would be undeniable proof that God's presence with His people as manifested by His glory was leaving the rebellious, idolatrous people. Would the glory ever return?

4. The Glory Departs: From the Holy of Holies to the Entrance of the Temple

Ezekiel 9:3^a, 9-10

*Now the **glory of the God of Israel** went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple...⁹ He answered me, "The sin of the people of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the*

land is full of bloodshed and the city is full of injustice. They say, 'The Lord has forsaken the land; the Lord does not see.'¹⁰ So I will not look on them with pity or spare them, but I will bring down on their own heads what they have done."

Ezekiel 10:3-5

*Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and a cloud filled the inner court. ⁴ Then the **glory of the LORD** rose from above the cherubim and moved to the threshold of the temple. The cloud filled the temple, and the court was full of the radiance of the **glory of the LORD**. ⁵ The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far away as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.*

Within the Holy of Holies (or The Most Holy Place) was the Ark of the Covenant. Above the ark was the cherubim whose wings arched over the sacred chest (cf. Ex 25:10-22). It was at this place God promised to meet with His people. The idea that God's manifested presence was departing this sacred place would have been chilling.

5. The Glory Departs: From the Entrance to the East Gate

Ezekiel 10:18-19

*Then the **glory of the LORD** departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim. ¹⁹ While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the **glory of the God of Israel** was above them.*

6. The Glory Departs: From the East Gate to the Mount of Olives

Ezekiel 11:22-25

*Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the **glory of the God of Israel** was above them. ²³ The **glory of the LORD** went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of*

it. ²⁴ The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia in the vision given by the Spirit of God. Then the vision I had seen went up from me, ²⁵ and I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me.

The removal of God's presence manifested in His visible glory signaled the end of God's blessings and protection. Judgment was near and certain. The "glory of the Lord" will not return (in the Book of Ezekiel) until chapter 43.

7. The Glory Returns

Ezekiel 43:1-5

*Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, ² and I saw the **glory of the God of Israel** coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with **his glory**. ³ The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. ⁴ The **glory of the LORD** entered the temple through the gate facing east. ⁵ Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the **glory of the LORD** filled the temple.*

When will this occur? Since the days of Ezekiel and the Babylonian captivity there has not been a manifestation of the glory of the Lord. And further, in 70 AD the Roman legions destroyed the Temple that Ezekiel saw the glory returning to. So when will this prophetic vision be realized?

It must await for a time when the Temple is rebuilt, and the Messiah-King has returned to establish the eternal, Davidic Kingdom. Thus, it is yet to be fulfilled.

Prophetically, Feinberg (quoted by Constable, *Notes*, 64) suggests, "from this very place (i.e. Mt. of Olives) the Lord Jesus left this earth (Acts 1) and to it He will return (Zech 14; cf. also Lk 21:20 with Matt 24:3; Lk 24:50-51; Acts 1:11-12)."

Insight:

The one possible exception to the glory of the Lord not seen again (until the far, prophetic future) occurs in the life of Christ. Recall the events on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Matthew 17:1-8

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.⁴ Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.⁷ But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid."⁸ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

Perhaps at this moment, the divinity of Christ broke out from His humanity in a majestic display of His glory.

VI. BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Chart of Ezekiel

| BOOK OF EZEKIEL | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Judgment | | | Restoration | | | |
| 1 | | | 32 | 33 | | 48 |
| Judgment on Judah | | On the Nations | | Blessings to Come | | |
| 1 | | 24 | 25 | 32 | 33 | 48 |
| Glory Present | Glory Departing | | | | Glory Returning | |
| 1 | 3 | 4 | | 39 | 40 | 48 |
| 2 Visions | 4 Signs 2 Sermons | 1 Vision | 5 Signs 7 Parables 6 Sermons | 7 Judgments (against Nations) | 1 Vision 1 Sign | 1 Vision (Temple) |
| 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 12 |
| | | | | 24 | 25 | 32 |
| | | | | | 33 | 39 |
| | | | | | | 40 |
| | | | | | | 48 |
| "Then they shall know that I am the Lord" | | | | | | |

The biblical development which follows uses the shaded portion of the chart as an outline guide.

B. Two Visions (Ezek 1-3)

1. Vision #1 (Ezek 1:1-3:21)

While a captive in Babylon near the Kebar River, Ezekiel, the thirty-year old priest, had the first of five significant visions.

a. The living creatures and the "glory of the Lord" (1:1-28)

Ezekiel 1:4-9 (four living creatures)

I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal,⁵ and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human,⁶ but each of them had four faces and four wings.⁷ Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like

burnished bronze. ⁸ Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings, ⁹ and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.

- (1) The “windstorm out of the north” speaks of coming judgment from the north (as Babylon did in the siege of Jerusalem).
- (2) “Fire” suggests judgment, a refining of the rebellious nation.
- (3) “Four living creatures” refer to cherubim (cf. 10:5, 20; also compare to Ezek 10; Gen 3; Rev 4). Alexander suggests, “The cherubim are seemingly angelic creatures who escort the holiness and righteousness of God’s glory” (14).
- (4) “Four faces and four wings” describe the living creatures. The faces were of the appearance of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (1:10). Constable (21, quoting Stuart) notes, “These traditionally were the four most impressive animals, man being chief over all, the lion chief of the wild animals, the ox chief of the domesticated animals, and the eagle chief of the birds.”

Ezekiel 1:25-28 (a voice, a throne)

Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. ²⁶ Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. ²⁷ I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

- (1) The “voice” was apparently the voice of God.
- (2) The “throne of sapphire” (or lapis lazuli) had a “figure like that of a man” seated upon it. The figure was a theophany (appearance of God) within the vision. Ezekiel’s response was to fall facedown, an appropriate response to a greater recognition of who God truly is.

b. The call of Ezekiel (2:1-8)

Ezekiel 2:1-5

He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.”² As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.³ He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day.⁴ The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says.’⁵ And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

c. The work of Ezekiel (2:9-3:21)

Ezekiel 2:9-10; 3:3-4 (the scroll)

Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll,¹⁰ which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe...

³ And he said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel.”² So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.³ Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it.” So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.⁴ He then said to me: “Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them.”

- (1) The “scroll” represented the prophetic message from God that Ezekiel was to speak.
- (2) To “eat this scroll” was to assimilate the message fully and completely. The taste of God’s words was sweet to the prophet’s taste, similar to the description of the word in Psalm 19:10 (NASB), **“They (the word) are more precious than gold, they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb”** (cf. Rev 10:9-10).

Ezekiel 3:10-11 (the charge)

And he said to me, “Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. ¹¹ Go now to your people in exile and speak to them. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says,’ whether they listen or fail to listen.”

Ezekiel 3:16-19 (the sobering challenge)

At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁷ “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. ¹⁸ When I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. ¹⁹ But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself.”

2. Vision #2 (Ezek 3:22-27)

Ezekiel 3:22-27

The hand of the LORD was on me there, and he said to me, “Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you.” ²³ So I got up and went out to the plain. And the glory of the LORD was standing there, like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. ²⁴ Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet. He spoke to me and said: “Go, shut yourself inside

your house. ²⁵ And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes; you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people. ²⁶ I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious people. ²⁷ But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you shall say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' Whoever will listen let them listen, and whoever will refuse let them refuse; for they are a rebellious people."

- a. In this second vision, Ezekiel again falls facedown. To be invited to rise up and stand before a Sovereign was to be invited to do business (have conversation).
- b. The Spirit raised and strengthened Ezekiel. Interestingly, Ezekiel speaks of the indwelling of God's Spirit more than any other prophet.
- c. Ezekiel would be bound within his house (either literally or metaphorically restrained) and not able to speak until God opened the prophet's mouth. Then the true prophet of the Lord would boldly declare, *"This is what the Sovereign LORD says"* (3:27).

C. Four Signs, Two Sermons (Ezek 4-7)

1. Sign #1: Sign of the brick (4:1-3)

The prophet was told to take a brick (perhaps a clay tablet) and draw the city of Jerusalem on the brick complete with siege equipment and camps surrounding the city. An iron pan was to be placed between Ezekiel and the model city. Perhaps this symbolized no escape from the city's fate or a wall of separation between God and the sinful people.

2. Sign #2: Sign of lying down (4:4-8)

The second sign symbolically demonstrates that both the northern ("lie on your left side") and southern ("lie

on your right side”) kingdoms will experience divine judgment; Jerusalem in particular would suffer at the hands of Babylon.

3. Sign #3: Sign of defiled food (4:9-17)

The prophet was instructed to mix unusual foods to make bread fueled by human excrement (though the Lord allowed Ezekiel to substitute cow dung for cooking). The interpretation of this symbolic action was then given.

Ezekiel 4:16-17

He then said to me: “Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair,¹⁷ for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin.

4. Sign #4: Sign of the shaved head (5:1-17)

The next sign required the prophet to shave his head: burn one-third of the hair; strike one-third with a sword; scatter one-third to the wind (yet tuck away a few strands in the folds of Ezekiel’s garments).

Ezekiel 5:11-12

Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will shave you; I will not look on you with pity or spare you.¹² A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine inside you; a third will fall by the sword outside your walls; and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with drawn sword.

Ezekiel 5:13

“Then my anger will cease and my wrath against them will subside, and I will be avenged. And when I have spent my wrath on them, they will know that I the LORD have spoken in my zeal.

5. Sermon #1: Against the mountains of Israel (false worship) (6:1-14)

Ezekiel 6:1-3

The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them ³ and say: ‘You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places.

- a. The phrase “mountains of Israel” occurs 17 times in Ezekiel (and no where else in the Old Testament). While it is true that “mountain” can be used metaphorically for a nation, here the topography of Israel seems to be in view. The mountains of Israel run north to south across the length of the land. But what does this mean?
- b. Alexander (26) observes,
“Chapter 6 begins with Yahweh calling upon Ezekiel to prophesy against the mountains, hills, valleys, and stream beds of Israel. This seems somewhat strange until one realizes that Canaanite religion employed the hilltops and valleys for their major places of idolatrous worship. This passage indicates that Judah was practicing Canaanite religion when God stated that He would destroy the high places, sun pillars, and altars (6:3-6; cf. Lev 26:30).”

Ezekiel 6:11-13

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Strike your hands together and stamp your feet and cry out “Alas!” because of all the wicked and detestable practices of the people of Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine and plague. ¹² One who is far away will die of the plague, and one who is near will fall by the sword, and anyone who survives and is spared will die of famine. So will I pour out my wrath on them. ¹³ And they will know that I am the LORD, when their people lie slain among their idols around their altars, on every high hill and on all the mountaintops, under every spreading tree and every leafy oak—places where they offered fragrant incense to all their idols.

6. Sermon #2: "The end has come" (7:1-27)

a. Judgment promised (1-4)

Ezekiel 7:1-4

The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says to the land of Israel: "The end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land!" ³ The end is now upon you, and I will unleash my anger against you. I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. ⁴ I will not look on you with pity; I will not spare you. I will surely repay you for your conduct and for the detestable practices among you. "Then you will know that I am the LORD."

b. Judgment certain (5-13)

Ezekiel 7:5-8

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "Disaster! Unheard-of disaster! See, it comes!" ⁶ The end has come! The end has come! It has roused itself against you. See, it comes!" ⁷ Doom has come upon you, upon you who dwell in the land. The time has come! The day is near! There is panic, not joy, on the mountains. ⁸ I am about to pour out my wrath on you and spend my anger against you. I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices."

c. Judgment described (people's weakness) (14-27)

The coming judgment would be so severe that it would expose the weakness and irresistibility of the people under God's wrath. Note the descriptive phrases:

- (1) "wrath is upon the whole crowd" (14)
- (2) "devoured by famine and plague" (15)
- (3) "every hand will go limp" (17)
- (4) "clothed with terror" (18)
- (5) "covered with shame" (18)

Ezekiel 7:26-27

“Calamity upon calamity will come, and rumor upon rumor. They will go searching for a vision from the prophet, priestly instruction in the law will cease, the counsel of the elders will come to an end.²⁷ The king will mourn, the prince will be clothed with despair, and the hands of the people of the land will tremble. I will deal with them according to their conduct, and by their own standards I will judge them. “Then they will know that I am the LORD.””

N.B.

Session 4 of Movement #8 will continue the study in Ezekiel. The format/outline will be the structural section describing Visions, Signs, Sermons, Parables, Judgments, and Temple vision.

VII. TAKEAWAYS

A. God Uses People Even in Dire Circumstances

Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry began five years after being deported (with others) to Babylon. It was not the best of times or life situations, but God called him and used him for His greater purposes.

Irrespective of one’s calling, finding contentment in God’s presence and provision is key.

Philippians 4:11^b-13

... for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

B. Judgment and Blessings

The Book of Ezekiel illustrates (like most of the prophetic books) God’s righteous judgment upon His disobedient people. At times the disciplining hand of God was severe

but always the invitation to repent was offered. And further, a day of restoration and blessing was promised in that (future) day.

C. The Glory of God

The eventual departure of the physical, manifested presence of God was described in Ezekiel as movement outward, away from the Temple. God was leaving. Often in the Scriptures, God's glory is a visible appearance (e.g. at the pillar of fire/cloud in Exodus; at the dedication of both Tabernacle and Temple). However, God's glory can be seen as an attribute of God, something which partially describes His essence.

In our day we are called to glorify God, that is, to honor and enhance God's reputation. We cannot increase God's glory but we can reflect it through our transformed lives.

2 Corinthians 3:18

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Romans 15:5-6

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Insight

J. Frame (*Systematic Theology*, 398) notes:

"It is God's intention for the creation to return glory back to Him. When our lives image the attributes of God, others see the glory of God's presence in us as His temples. So we bring God's glorious reputation to the eyes of others. Thus, we ourselves are part of the light that goes forth from God over the earth."

