**Prophets of the Exile**

Jeremiah (627-580 BC) u

Lamentations

Ezekiel (593-573 BC)

Daniel (605-535 BC)

**Ezekiel**

Resources:

The Book of Ezekiel Jim McGuiggan Montex Publishers

Ezekiel The NIV Application Commentary Iain M. Duguid

Historical context:

Josiah 640-609

Jehoahaz 608 (3 months, then replaced by Pharaoh)

Jehoiakim 608-597

Jehoiachin 597 (3 months, then into exile, when Ezekiel also was taken into exile)

Zedekiah 597-586

Gedaliah 586

Jerusalem has been defeated. Jeremiah and Ezekiel advise submitting to Nebuchadnezzar (and therefore to the Lord’s discipline). If not, then Jerusalem will be completely destroyed. This is, in fact, what happened. (Ezek 33:21-22).

Jehoiachin the child king is in exile and his uncle Zedekiah is on the throne as a regent. Ezekiel went into exile with Jehoiachin.

Zedekiah is a very weak king (Jeremiah “a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways”). He rules as a puppet and seems unable to control his people. They force him to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar.

**Themes in Ezekiel:**

1. The sovereignty/glory of God. (Ezek 1:4f, 2 Chron 7:1-2). The glorious and sovereign God has gone into exile with his people Ezek 11:16 Ezek 8-11 explains why the glory of God must leave the temple. God even determines the result of divination! (Ezek 21:21-23). God’s sovereignty demands both the destruction of Jerusalem and the salvation of God’s remnant.

2. The utter sinfulness of human beings. Israel sinful from birth (23:3) and worse than Sodom (16:46-48) Sins against God and against fellow-man Ezek 22:7-12) Ezekiel 23 is so graphic it is offensive to some. The problem: People say “peace, peace, when there is no peace.” Jer 8:10-11)

3. The inescapability (and justice) of God’s judgment. This is the main theme of Ch 1-24 Ezek 5,7,12,15,17 21 The end of the road. They will be burnt to a crisp (Ezek 24) Even Noah, Daniel and Job could only save themselves! (Ezek 14:12-20 (esp v. 14) They are being judged, not for sins of their fathers, but for sins they were committing on an on-going basis (Ezek 18, 33)

 a. Theodicy: Ezekiel establishes a doctrine of “free will” and elucidates the nature of

 God’s justice as it relates both to individuals and to groups of people.

Points #2,3 are virtually absent from today’s preaching, even in our churches. This is something to take note of. A healthy balance of teaching on grace, love, peace as well as fear, holiness and judgment are called for.

4. The return of the King and the restoration of God’s remnant to glory. Ex: The throne has a rainbow (1:28) A few hairs tucked away 5:3 some spared 6:8 the faithful marked 9:4.

The announcement of good news, importantly, only follows after the announcement of the destruction of Jerusalem (Ezek 24, 33:21-22). God’s glory returns 43:1-5 East Gate closed forever. God will not leave his temple ever again. A new David Ezek 34:22-24 A new covenant, new heart, new spirit Ezek 37:1-14 Judah will be back in Eden Ezek 38-39 (like Rev 22:1-6)

Captivity motif

Exile motif There is a sense in which we live in exile

Remnant motif We, as disciples, are a remnant.

Canononical? Slight difference between the sacrifice legislated in Ezekiel and in Leviticus. Hananiah ben Hezekiah “burned 300 barrels of oil in his lamp in search for a reconciliation between the laws. He succeeded and Ezekiel was declared part of the canon.

Deuteronomy 28 & 29 Blessings and curses. This is exactly what happened and what will happen

In Ezekiel’s day Israel was saying Deut 29:19 “I will be safe even though I persist in going my own way.” The result: Deut 29:28 (note: 29:29 follows)

It all starts in Genesis Ch 1-4 Adam and Eve sinned, became captives to sin and were sent into exile. Gen 3:17 cursed ground, painful toil, thorns and thistles Genesis 3:23 So the Lord banished them from the Garden (and cherubim guarded the entrance, as they do in Rev 4 and as seen in Ezek 1)

Captivity: Egypt = Babylon = Rome

God sends you back into the world to be disciplined by the world, since you will not accept his discipline.

Books about victory and conquest and restoration (Joshua, Exodus, Nehemiah, 1,2 Samuel) are more popular than books about defeat and exile (Jeremiah and Ezekiel), but we need these books. We need reminders of immanent judgment and of surviving in exile. As Christians in the post-Christian age, the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah become more relevant! In any case, we need balance between the two.

We are exiles, foreigners, aliens (Hebrews 11:13-16) Rightly, the description of 2nd century Christian Epistle of Mathetus to Diognetus:

As citizens, Christians share all things with others, and yet endure all things as foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country and every land of their birth as a land of strangers… They pass their days on earth, but there are citizens of Heaven. They obey the prescribed law, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives.

We live life on a bridge, yet we seek to put down roots. We have much to learn from Ezekiel. We need to learn to live as exiles, as Strangers in a Strange Land. Like Ezekiel, our home is in the Promised Land, yet we will not occupy that land in this life.

Like Ezekiel, we need to establish a Judean enclave where we live. Like Ezekiel, we need to be countercultural, even in a world which thinks it is Christian!

Outline:

Ezek Ch 1-24 Jerusalem must fall. The end of the road.

Ezek Ch 25-32 Judah’s enemies must fall as well. (1 Pet 4:17-18) (Jerusalem destroyed)

Ezek Ch 33 Bridge from Ch 24 to Ch 34

Ezek Ch 34-48 Jerusalem must be comforted. The Messiah will come and will save a remnant. The end of the road is not the end of the story.

Bottom line, the book of Ezekiel focuses on Jesus Christ.

Detailed Outline:

I Ch 1-24 The End of the Road for Judah

Ch 1-3 Vision and Commission of Ezekiel

Ch 4 Ezekiel acts out the destruction of Jerusalem

Ch 5 A haircut and its meaning

Ch 6-7 Idolatry of Judah

Ch 8-11 The necessity of the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah

Ch 12 Signs and warning of judgment

Ch 13 False prophets

Ch 14 God, the righteous judge

Ch 15 The parable of the useless vine

Ch 16 Shameful history

Ch 17 Parable of the two eagles

Ch 18 Individual righteousness

Ch 19 Parable of the lion and of the vine

Ch 20 A record of rebellion

Ch 21 Babylon, the sword of God

Ch 22 Corruption of God’s people

Ch 23 Ohola and Oholibah

Ch 24 The cauldron. Ezekiel refuses to mourn.

II Ch 25-32 The End of the Road for Judah’s enemies

Ch 25 Ammon

Ch 26-28 Tyre

Ch 28 Sidon

Ch 29-32 Egypt

III Ch 33 The Watchman, Jerusalem has been destroyed

IV Ch 34-48 Comfort for God’s people. The Messiah is coming

Ch 34 A better shepherd

Ch 35 Edom judged

Ch 36 The mountain of the Lord

Ch 37 Valley of dry bones

Ch 38-39 God and Magog—the enemies of God’s people—destroyed. God’s people saved.

Ch 40-48 The temple rebuilt Restoration of the remnant

**Ezekiel 1**

Ezekiel 1:1 30 years old when he began his ministry as a prophet. (also the age when he could act as a priest)

5th year of Jehoiachin’s exile 592 BC

Ezekiel was born 622 BC

“among the captives” Perhaps he did not think of himself as a captive.

Ezekiel has been in captivity already for five years, with 10,000 captives: the “cream of the crop” of Israel. (2 Kings 24:14 Jer 24:1-10)

One would think that Israel would have been softened up by now (Psalm 137:1-4 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept..). One would be wrong

Ezek 1:4-28 Ezekiel sees the glory of God—a prerequisite for being a prophet of God.

This is a vision of God on his throne, surrounded by the cherubim, coming in judgment. It is the Day of the Lord.

On the throne, surrounded by the cherubim (Rev 4:6f). The roving chariot symbolizes that God can be anywhere. Like other ancient kings who brought their throne with them as they traveled. (note: cherubim = God’s chariot 1 Chron 28:18 also Ps 18:10)

The cherubim are the ones who guard God’s holiness (they guard Eden, they were worked into the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies, they sat above the mercy seat and around the throne of God in Rev 4.)

There is a parallel vision to that in Ezekiel 10 when the presence of the Lord departs from the temple, leaving Jerusalem5 defenseless before the Babylonian army.

Break it down:

1:4 cloud, flash of lightening (also fire in v. 13) = judgment From the North = Babylon

v. 5 four living creatures = cherubim Rev 4:6b-8 Identified as such in Ezek 10:1

v. 10 four faces man, lion, ox (Hebrew could be bull), eagle (Rev 4 lion, ox, eagle, man)

v. 12, 17 move God’s judgment coming like a chariot

v. 15-18 Wheels in wheels, with eyes all over = searching to protect God’s holiness (the version in Ezek 10:12, Rev 4:6 has eyes all over).

v. 22-28 The throne of God. v. 28 rainbow = hope (hope recalls Lam 3:22-23)

This is a picture of the throne of God, reminiscent of Holy of Holies.

The message of Ezekiel 1:4-28 God is coming to judge Judah! Jim McGuiggan: “This is no social visit.”

**Ezek CH 2-3 Ezekiel commissioned**

Ezek 2:1-7 Ezekiel’s mission (v. 4 say to them: this is what the Lord says.)

2:1 “Son of man” (*ben-adam*) stresses his humanness (as opposed to God’s holiness). Used as an enigmatic title by Jesus.

Stand on your feet. It is good to prostrate ourselves before God, but we need to get up from there to take action.

Note: The Spirit comes into Ezekiel as he stands up. This theme will come out more strongly in Ezekiel 37 with the Valley of Dry Bones. Ezekiel is to be the first of a new community of the remnant whom God will raise from spiritual death into a revived nation. In this sense he is a prefigure of Christ.

I will speak to you. God makes Ezekiel a prophet.

Note: In OT, only certain people received the Holy Spirit, like Ezekiel, but those who did were commissioned to speak God’s words to the people. In the NT, we all have the spirit, therefore, we all speak. (reminds me of 2 Cor 4:1-15 esp. v. 13)

v. 4 Ezekiel needs to be obstinate and stubborn. Why? Because the people are obstinate and stubborn. Remember: 5 years of captivity had not yet humbled them.

Why do they continue to be stubborn? They are holding out hope. Jerusalem has not yet been destroyed. (Jer 28:1-4 a false prophet predicts the captives would be restored within two years Jer 29:15-23 Nebuchadnezzar will put these prophets to death before your eyes) They were also relying on 2 Chron 7: (v. 16 for example, but ignoring 7:13-14), and on Psalm 89. (v. 3-4, 26-29for example) They were listening to what their itching ears wanted to hear (2 Tim 4:3-4) They were trusting in the temple, rather than the God of the temple. (Jeremiah 7:4). They were being told “peace, peace.” (Jer 6:13-14, 8:11-12)

Illustration: During the dark days of the American Civil War, a woman asked Abraham Lincoln if he thought God was on the side of the North. He replied: “Madam, I am less concerned whether God is on our side (ICOC) than whether we are on his side.”

Q: How can we be like this?

Ezek 2:5 Whether they listen or fail to listen…. We need to remember that it is not our job to convert people, but to speak to people. Noah preached repentance for 100 years with no apparent luck, but consider his effect in the long run.

Mcguiggan: “*Successful* evangelism is faithful proclamation by word and life.”

v. 5 They knew a prophet had been among them. Q: How? How will people know you are a prophet among them? Because we declared the counsel of God.

The people to John the Baptist: Who are you? He replies A voice….

Later on, when they finally come to their senses, they will remember the one person who truly spoke the words of God to them. We need to be that person. Even if they do not, on Judgment Day we need to be clear of conscience in this regard.

In Ezekiel’s case he is being specifically told that he will have little or no “fruit” of his toil.

Ezek 2:8-3:3 Ezekiel eats the scroll. Message: 1. We need a personal encounter with God (1:4f) 2. We need to digest his Words (parallel Jeremiah 15:16, Rev 10:9-11 in which it tasted sweet but because sour in the stomach)

What is on the scroll (front and back to represent its completeness)? Probably the words God wants Ezekiel to communicate to his people.

Q: Have you, like Ezekiel, eaten the scroll?

Ezek 3:4-9 Why are these people not responding to Ezekiel? They have heard it all before. They are very religious. Religious people are had to convert.

v. 4 speak my words to them. Again, this is his commission.

v. 5 not obscure speech. Theirs is not a language barrier, but a heart barrier.

v. 7 We need to remember this. It is not us they reject, it is God they reject (assuming that we have not been obnoxious or rude or weird is some way)

3:8 God’s solution: We need to be as hard and stubborn as they are.

3:10-15 Why is Ezekiel so angry (v. 14)?

v. 11 For the third time he is told Say to them, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says.”

v. 12-13 reminded of God’s glory, but also of impending judgment.

v. 15 Ezekiel overwhelmed at the task before him. Tempted to not do it?

3:16-21 The watchman of Israel. (Hosea 9:8 a lookout who provides advanced warning to the people of coming danger. I this case the coming “enemy”/danger is God himself!)

Context: this is a warning/encouragement to Ezekiel that it is time to start delivering the message.

Ezekiel not too fired up about his mission. But if he does not deliver God’s message he will be judged along with them. Sobering words for us. I do not want to be accountable for the “blood” of my family, neighbors, friends, coworkers, etc.

Christianity today: We hear God’s love taught. We hear that God has a wonderful future for all in this life—that he will bless those who choose him. But…. Do we hear the message of judgment. Are we unwilling to be the Watchman of Israel? “Though we may be creative in the way we deliver the message, we are not free to be creative in the content of the message we are to deliver.” (Duguid) We need to teach Eph 2:1-3 and Eph 2:4-10.

v. if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil. Evidence against Calvinism. This will be discussed further in Ch 18.

v. 20 Does God put stumbling blocks in front of people? Yes, he does. 2 Thess 2:11 Those who refuse to love the truth, God will send a powerful delusion. Why? As a judgment? As a means to let them go to the pit, in hopes that they will come to their senses? Besides, the stumbling block may simply be something he/she is offended by, such as the truth, or something he/she is looking for to appeal to greed, pride, etc.

3:22-27 Ezekiel sees the vision one more time.

He will only speak when God tells him to, at other times his tongue will “stick to the roof of his mouth.

**Ezekiel 4 & 5 Dramatic symbolism.**

Ezek 4:1-3 Parable/acting out the siege of Jerusalem. (which actually happened 587-586 BC)

1. drawing of the city.

2. siege works = attack of Babylon

3. iron pan = Q: Is it God behind this iron pan—separated from his people? God is no longer hearing the cries of his people. Ezekiel is now a prophet, but no longer a priest (intervening)

Ezekiel is acting the part of the Lord in this parody.

v. 3 It will be under siege and you will besiege it = The Babylonians will besiege the city but, behind the scenes, it will be the Lord who is besieging the city, with the Babylonians as his agent. Q: Application to us?

v. 5-6 Ezekiel continues this behavior for 430 days. Bizarre behavior. Q: How do you think the people responded to this bizarre behavior? Did the people understand what Ezekiel was acting out? How would you feel if a member of your church did something like this in a very public place?

Application: In a visual-image-focused age, might we do well to incorporate drama into our worship and our evangelism?

390 + 40 = 430 years = length of the captivity in Egypt (acc to Ex 12:40-41) captivity symbol

(note: the siege parable was maintained throughout the time of the laying down parable—these are parallel parables about the siege of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah)

Not 430 years of actual sin. If so, it would begin about 1022 BC, early in David’s reign. No obvious point of beginning. Also, the 40 years seems to be symbolic as well, as there is not event around 632 BC which could be the beginning of this event. Besides, Samaria did not even exist for 390 years.

390 years = time of the sin of Israel/Samaria/Northern Kingdom

40 years = time of the sin of Judah/Southern Kingdom.

So this vision represents the fact that all of Israel will go into captivity “in Egypt.” (Hosea 8:13 Egypt = Assyria Rev 18:2 Rome = Babylon Rev 11:8 Rome is symbolically Sodom or Egypt) Their expectation that the exile will be partial and temporary is wrong.

390 years implies the sin of Samaria was greater, but 40 years implies that Judah was also very sinful.

40 years of suffering for lack of faith/obedience: Numbers 14:26-35 forty years: one for each day exploring the land. (and the interpretation in Hebrews 3:7-4:2) The 390 is explained by 430 – 40.

Q: Did Ezekiel actual lay down in the street for 430 days? More likely he went home at night, but came out again every day to act out this spiritual play. He did not literally lay down 24/7 as he cooked his food.

v. 4 “bear their sin” = suffer the consequences for their sin Is 53 “for he bore the sin of many”

4:9-11 Mixture of grains and weighing out grain and water = scarcity of food and water during the siege, rationing. 0.25 kg of grain is starvation rations. “Ezekiel’s bread.”

4:12 Eat food cooked over human excrement = without the temple, you will be unclean during your exile. (Hosea 9:3-4 a good parallel)

4:14-15 Please, no! God grants this concession.

4:16 A specific prophecy about the conditions in 587-586 BC in Jerusalem.

Purpose of this physical prophecy: Do not rely on the temple and God’s support of Jerusalem. All will go into captivity.

Ezek 5:1- The haircut parable. The point: From those to whom much as been given, much will be expected. (Luke 12:48) This certainly applies to us!

For a Jew, cutting off the hair and beard is a very humiliating thing—far more than it would be for us. (Ezek 7:18)

A fulfillment of Isaiah 7:20? (the verse says it is about Assyria, so perhaps no)

v. 2 fire, sword and exile.

v. 3 The remnant motif. God will protect a remnant. (but even some of them will suffer v. 4) Fortunately, for them, Malachi 3:6 applies. “I, the Lord do not change. So you; O descnedants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

v. 5 “I have set you in the center of the nations.” God has made us a city on a hill. With this comes great responsibility (and potentially great punishment for rebellion against the mission)

Being on God’s side is not necessarily a blessing, if we are not faithful.

v. 7 You are worse than the pagans!!! An exaggeration? Possibly, but given God’s expectations, it seems that way to him.

v. 8-12 Judgment on Judah! v. 10 Cannibalism in Jerusalem. This actually happened, and it was prophesied (Deut 28:53-57). Reminiscent, also, if the judgments described in Leviticus 26:14f for “not carrying out all these commands and rejecting my decrees… for violating my covenant.” Wild animals (Lev 26:22) sword and pestilence (Lev 26:25) eating of one’s own children (Lev 26:29), being scattered among the nations (Lev 26:33) Because of theirs and their father’s sins (Lev 26:39) but… Lev 26:44f hope.

v. 12 God provides an interpretation of the dream.

v. 13 But… then my wrath will be satisfied and I will comfort my people.

Application: What about us under the New Covenant? 1. The blessings and curses are spiritual rather than physical. 2. Christ has already taken the penalty/curse for our sins so we avoid this by being born again. However, Hebrews 10:26f applies to Christians. 3. Either way, the principle of blessings and curses holds for us, because “it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

**Ezekiel 6 & 7: Judgment on Israel (along with a ray of hope)**

Judgment, not only on Jerusalem, but on all Israel/Judah—on the mountains of Israel.

Ezekiel 6:2 “Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel.

Here the mountains, hills, ravines and valleys are a personification of the people of Israel.

All have become polluted by their idolatry. Q: has our culture and society become ever-more-polluted by all kinds of idolatry? We are like the people in the days of Noah… When the rain came it was too late.

For them:

Baal, who represents the storm god. The god of power and authority and of wealth.

Ashtoreth (Greek: Aphrodite), who represents sex, pleasure. The idols worshipped by Judah are the same idols worshipped in our modern culture, dressed up in different clothes (1 John 2:15-17). Our “high places” are more modern, but equally likely to bring about spiritual destruction and judgment.

v. 8 But a remnant will be saved from the devastation. I hope that we are among that remnant. When God saves us, we need to remember the depths we sank to and from which we turned. v. 9 like them, we need to “loathe ourselves for the evil we have done and for our detestable practices.

v. 10 An ominous passage. At final judgment, how will people “know that I am the Lord”? “I did not threaten in vain to bring calamity on them.”

“And you will know that I am the Lord” is in Ezekiel 72 times.

Jeremiah 7:1 The end has come. The time when one can repent has been reached. The time beyond which it is no longer possible to repent has arrived. A solemn warning to us. Hebrews 6:4-6.

This is the “Day of the Lord,” which is not good news for everyone. 1 Pet 3:10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief.

***The Day of the Lord in the Old Testament.***

*Sometimes the Kingdom breaks out, judgment happens and people start dying! (esp see the OT and the Day of the Lord)*

*The Day of the Lord is that period of time when God openly intervenes in history and the affairs of man—in judgment and in blessing. Joel 1:15 Woe, because of that day!*

*TDOTL normally appears as totally bad news, but for God’s people that is not the case.*

*TDOTL 26 times in OT The “day” of Jesus is also used in the NT (referred to as the day of Christ)*

*What is TDOTL? It is a day to repent. (or better yet, to repent before it arrives)*

*Let us read some sample passages*

*Is 2:12-22 TDOTL comes on prideful individuals. The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and the lofty.*

*Isaiah 13:6-13, 17-21. TDOTL is destruction of Bablylon. V 17 I will stir up the Medes. (that is what happened) vs 10-13 apocalyptic language.*

*Judgment on those who attack Israel*

*Is 34:4,8-10 Edom The starry host falls*

*Judgment on those who stand aside when Israel is attacked*

*Jer 46:10 Judgment on Egypt. Judgment on false allies of Israel. (don’t read?)*

*Joel: 1:15 (already read) 2:1-2 Blow the trumpet!!!*

*Joel 2:11-17 A dreadful day v. 13 But you can still repent.*

*Joel 2:28-31 quoted in Acts 2*

*The Day of the Lord Joel 2:28-29 I will pour out my spirit in those days.*

*A classic passage on TDOTL Joel 3:9-14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.*

*(Amos 5:18-20, Obadiah 15, Zeph 1:8, Zeph 1:14, 1:18-2:3) (all Zeph chapter 1 )*

*Malachi 4:5 Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. John the Baptist. Refers to AD 70. For us: TDOTL is the return of Jesus and final Judgment Day. (Rev 21)*

***II. TDOTL in the NT:***

*2 Thess 1:6-10 The Day of the Lord will come to those who trouble you. V. 10 “on that day” (this should give us comfort)*

*Matthew 24:36-39 Concerning the day or the hour… As in the days of Noah… So it will be in the coming of the Son of Man.*

*2 Pet 3:8-10 The Day of the Lord will come like a thief.*

*The theme of these passages is that we need to be ready for the coming of the Kingdom of God—for The Day of the Lord.*

*Phil 2:14-16 …that I may boast on the day of Christ. (also 2 Cor 1:12-14)*

*1 Cor 5:5 hand this man over to Satan so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on The Day of the Lord. (Also Phil 1:9-10 blameless and pure until the day of Christ.)*

*[2 Thess 2:1-4 We do not need to fear The day of the Lord…]*

*1 Thess 5:1-11 (just read)*

v. 4, 9 We can reach a point that God shows no pity. God’s love and mercy are, at least in a sense, at odds with his justice. God’s love and his justice met at the cross so that for those who accept Christ, God’s love supersedes his justice. For those who worship idols and reject covenant with God, his justice supersedes his love. Not that his love fails, but that justice prevails. In the words of Amos 5:24 Let justice roll on like a river.

Illustration: A person in the Niagara River reaches a point at which it becomes impossible to escape the current.

Illustration: Rev 6-15 were judgments meant to bring about repentance and a change of heart. Rev 16-19 were about judgment, plain and simple. We can reach a point that we cannot turn back from.

The message to the lost? v. 5 Disaster!!! Disaster is coming. v. 7 Doom!

v. 19-22 (read it) Quite an image “they will throw their silver into the streets and their gold will be an unclean thing. On the day of judgment, everything we thought of as awesome, we will realize it was in fact an abomination. The “almighty peso” is not so powerful.

Things you can buy Things you cannot buy

Medicine health

Books knowledge of God, wisdom

Position character

Attention love

What have you relied on? How much assistance will it bring you on the Day of Judgment?

7:24 God’s instrument in this judgment: The most evil of nations (Babylon). God can use the evil in the world to chastise us.

**Ezekiel Ch 8-11 The Necessity of the Destruction of Judah**

Ezek 8:1 In the sixth year in the sixth month. Ezekiel is now 31 14 months after the first vision. He is still in the midst of (but very near the end of) acting out the parables about Jerusalem. Note, he is in his house, so he did not act out the devastation 24/7.

Note: He is speaking to the elders of Israel, coming to the prophet for assurance. They are more spiritual than those committing acts we are about to witness—they are not bowing to idols, but they are still in sin, as we will see (Ezek 14:1 idols in their hearts)…. Ezekiel is hesitant to give the vision to this group, as we will see, for obvious reasons.

8:2 A vision of the Holy Spirit or perhaps of Jesus.

8:3 …by the hair of my head… Ezekiel is being forced to see this vision. He is reluctant to see it.

8:3 “An idol of jealousy” A statue of Ashtoreth? In the North = a guard against attack?

8:4 God is still in the temple in Jerusalem.

8:6 They are doing detestable things which will drive me far from my sanctuary (This is reminiscent of Hebrews 10:26-31. God will abandon his temple (us) if we provoke him to jealousy sufficiently.

8:7-13 Hidden idols (Jaazaniah son of a powerful noble who had taken part in Josiah’s reforms 2 Kings 22:3-14)

8:11 70 elders are symbolic of the whole people Their excuse? The Lord no longer sees us (v. 12) Q: Do we say that to ourselves as we indulge our sinful nature?

Duguid: “Far from the Lord’s having abandoned the land, it is they who have driven the Lord away. Far from their incense-burning being an effective means for warding off dangers, it is one of the causes of God’s impending judgment on them. Ironically, it is their vision that is clouded, not the Lord’s.”

8:14-17 even blatant idolatry open sin

v. 14 Women weeping for Tammuz. Not just the men. Tammuz was an Assyrian god—the

consort of Ishtar—who died and went to the underworld, so this is part of worship of Tammuz.

v. 15 25 priests = 24 courses of priest plus the high priest = all the priests. Bowing to the sun.

These guys are truly ecumenical!

v. 17 Do you see this, son of man. God is convincing Ezekiel that he is right in his judgment. Interesting.

8:18 Even if they shout in their prayers, I will not hear. (Heb 6:4-6)

Admonition to us: We should “Seek the Lord while he can be found” (Isaiah 55:6) for a time will come when we can no longer even do this.

Ezekiel 9 The vision is continued.

9:1f Executioners from the North with a war club. Babylon. “Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.”

9:3 God is in command here (not Nebuchadnezzar)

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn. Q: Do you mourn? If we do not mourn over sin, then we may end up like these people.

9:4 Marking on the forehead reminds us of (or vice versa) Revelation 7:1-17 People protected from the coming judgment. (note: they are not saved from physical punishment, but only from judgment and being kept from heaven. Q: Does this sealing mean that the Christians will escape physical suffering in the coming tribulation? Answer: No! In Ezekiel 9:1-6, the righteous are sealed from judgment, but definitely not from the destruction about to come on Jerusalem. This is seen in Ezek 21:3-4 in which many of these righteous ones were killed in the siege. Conclusion: When people sin, all suffer but not all are punished. There is a lot about **theodicy** in Ezekiel. There is a big difference between suffering with the guilty and suffering because we are guilty.

More on theodicy: In Ezekiel, we have is very strong terms both sides of the coin of God’s grace and his judgment. We have in Exodus 34:6, we have Ezek 18:20, Jeremiah 31:30 and Deut 24:16 but we have clearly worked out Exodus 34:7 and Deuteronomy 5:9-10. When God is showing patience, it can cause us to doubt his willingness to judge, but when God finally comes in judgment, it can cause us to doubt his mercy.

For us, this “seal” this “mark” is the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)

9:5 Kill without pity or compassion. Not that God does not have pity or compassion, but for some of us, God’s justice trumps his love for us. (also 8:18 I will not show pity, 9:10 I will not show pity or spare them)

9:6 Begin at my sanctuary…. Judgment, of course, begins with the elders/leaders. 1 Pet 4:17

9:8 Ezekiel crushed by the scene. Won’t you save a remnant?

9:9 God: The people brought this on themselves. 9:10 They are sending themselves to hell.

9:11 It is done.

**Ezekiel 10,11**

Ezekiel 10:1f Ezekiel sees God on his sapphire (royal blue) throne, over the cherubim, in the temple. In all this, God rules. This is one of the themes of Ezekiel.

10:2-8 The one in linen who showed mercy in Ezek 9 is the one asked to exact judgment in Ezek 10 by spreading coals around the city. This is us. We are the aroma of God to some and the stink of death to others (2 Cor 2:14-16).

Physical destruction of Jerusalem in 586 foreshadowed.

10:4 The glory fills the Temple (as it did when Solomon’s temple was commissioned 1 Kings 8:10-11)

 10:9-17 Cherubim redescribed. Only significant difference is eyes all over their bodies (protecting righteousness of God)

10:18 The glory of the Lord departs from the temple. Very significant. As in 30AD vs 70 AD God departed the temple before he allowed the Gentiles in to defile it.

May this never happen to us!

Jerusalem is doomed.

Remember: the ones learning about this vision are the elders of the exile.

Ezekiel 11 Judgment on the leaders of Judah/Jerusalem. What is their sin?

11:3 The leaders say “peace, peace.”

Note on the text. It might say “Isn’t the time near to build houses?” or, in the margins they are saying “The time is not near to build houses” If the former, then the advice is being given in Jerusalem. If the latter, then the advice is being given to the exiles.

11:15 The people say “peace, peace.” We, not the exiles, are God’s favored people.

(but we must always be reminded that faith is belief in things not seen… beware of appearances)

11:7-11 A prophecy that they will be killed outside the city. They are saying the city is a cauldron. God is saying, “not for you!” This is what happened, as Zedekiah and the leaders broke out of Jerusalem, were captured and executed at Riblah (2 Kings 25:1-7)

11:18f A hopeful promise to the exiled remnant.

11:19 A new heart and a new spirit. This prophecy applies to those that the remnant prefigures--those under the New Covenant (and is reminiscent of Ezekiel 36:24-30)

11:22-23 The end of the road. God leaves the temple. A foreshadow of what will happen to us if we are unfaithful to God (and the nail in the coffin of Calvinism’s P in TULIP)

v. 23 God left the temple and went to the Mount of Olives (above the mountain East of the city) to observe/wait for the destruction of the city by Babylon. This is a foreshadow of Jesus, rejected by the people Matthew 23:37. As a result her house will be left desolate Matthew 23:38. Matt 24:1 Jesus then left the temple until they are willing to welcome his coming and went to the Mount of Olives. Again, God left his temple and left it to be destroyed by the Gentile (in this case by Titus and Rome). Once more, the glory of God has left his temple and gone to the Mt. of Olives, leaving behind a doomed, empty structure.

11:24-25 Ezekiel given the unenviable job of relating all this to the elders who came to his house for assurance.

**Ezekiel 12 Ezekiel acts out the final destruction of Jerusalem and going into exile.**

(read 12:1-16)

Ezek 12:3 Son of man, pack your bags…. Ezekiel performs a visual prophecy. Like Ezekiel, we, too have packed our bags and are exiles. We are a remnant. We are strangers in a strange land. We are aliens and sojourners (Heb 11:13f)

v. 3 Do it “in their sight.” He made a big fuss about this and, presumably, drew a great crowd. Like acting out a skit in which normal things are done in a purposefully exaggerated way. Going through his stuff, making a lot of noise.

Pack your bags, dig through the wall (what wall? His house?)(v. 5), cover your face (v. 6) do it at night (v. 7)

This is a prophecy about Zedekiah (v 10). And of course, this is exactly what happened. They dug through the wall and left at night (v 12). Zedekiah was blinded and carried off into exile (He will not see Babylon v. 13) and died in Babylon. All this happened exactly as Ezekiel acted out (Jeremiah 52:4-11 2 Kings 25:1-7) Truly, Ezekiel was a prophet and, belatedly, the people realized he was a prophet.

But I will spare a remanant (v. 16)

Ezek 12:17-20 A second acted out prophecy. Ezekiel eats bread and drinks water with trembling. We should imaging his exaggerated motion.

Ezel 12:21 A proverb. “The days keep passing by, and every vision fails.”

Ezekiel turns this proverb around, saying, (v. 23) “The days are near when every prophecy will be fulfilled.”

 v. 27 “it is about the distant future.” Sounds like 2 Peter 3-3-7(-13). As in the days of Noah….

Illustration: It reminds me of the time my mother spanked my brother and he whispered under his breath “that tickled.” God’s response to our mocking him is to bring on the judgment more quickly.

v. 28 God’s answer: No more delay!

**Ezekiel 13 False prophets Condemned**

Begin with 13:1-2 What is the false prophet’s message: “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” (Ezek 13:10)

Message: We should not be whitewashing empty tombs (v. 11). This is what so much of the religious (Christian) world does. Ironically, God asks: When I destroy your wall (with hail, torrential rain and windstorms, symbolic of God’s judgment), where will the coat of whitewash be? I will expose the foundation. Q: What is your foundation? Is it God?

Our church needs to be the real thing!

Summary of this chapter: 13:15-16. Let us not be like these false prophets!

17f Prophetesses as well.

v. 22 What do these false prophets do? They dishearten the righteous (you are too committed, you are too hard core, you are a legalist, you are in a cult) and encourage the wicked not to repent.

**Ezekiel 14 God, the Righteous Judge Against Idols of the Heart**

Read Ezek 14:1-6

Ezekiel 14:2 “These men (elders of Judah in the exile) have set up idols in their heart. They are “Christians” but their discipleship is outward, not inward. They have heart disease.

They put “stumbling blocks before their faces” (v. 3, 4, 7) They are willfully giving their attention to worldly things (entertainment, “toys,” pornography, opportunities to gamble, overeat, etc.)

14:9 And if the prophet is enticed to utter a prophecy… God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. God will “give them over to a depraved mind.” (Romans 1:28) He will send them a powerful delusion (2 Thess 2:9-12) God is sovereign and will do whatever he wills. Those who speak the lie and those who believe the lie will both suffer judgment. When the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14)

14:11 The result: When others see the judgment that falls on false prophet and false hearer, they will be motivated not to behave that way.

God said something similar to this in Deut 13:1-5 where God says of the words of false prophets: “The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and all your soul.”

14:12f God again justifies to Ezekiel his judgment on the people. Not that he has to do this, but he does this out of concern and compassion for Ezekiel.

14:13-16 If I have made my decision and we have reached the end of the road, not even the prayers of Noah, Daniel and Job could save this people!!!!! (although they would be saved) What do these three have in common? They spoke to Gentiles the Word of God.

[aside: Liberals claim that this is not the Daniel who was well-known to Ezekiel because they need to date Daniel after 164 BC, but there is no support for this claim. Obviously, Ezekiel (and God) assume that this person is so obvious that no Jew would need to have the identity of this Daniel explained to him/her. This particular Daniel is pointed out as a. righteous (14:14), wise, and a revealer of secrets (28:3). There is no reasonable doubt who this is a reference to.]

Why Noah, Daniel and Job? Because they are, of all the Jewish heroes, most noted for righteous behavior (Genesis 6:9 blameless among his people, Job 1:8 Daniel 6)

Also, note the parallel passage in Jeremiah 15:1-2 where the Lord says that he would not even listen if Moses and Samuel were to intercede for the people. It too late to change God’s heart with regard to Judah.

14:21-23 The purpose of this passage is to console Ezekiel (and us) at the horrors his righteous wrath will bring on those who rebel against him. God is not sentimental, but he is compassionate

[aside: One theme of Jeremiah and Ezekiel is corporate responsibility. We, as Westerners, are used to assuming that all interactions with God are individual. We do not see God as interacting with us as a group—as a church. We should reevaluate this assumption in light of Ezekiel and Jeremiah]

**Ezekiel 15 The parable of the useless vine**

What good is a vine if it bears no fruit (of righteousness)? It is good only for the fire.

Even less, what use are the trimmings from the vine? They have no earthly use at all, except to be burned.

v. 7 Although they have come out of the fire… (they had escaped 605 and 597 BC), they will yet be consumed by fire.

**Ezekiel 16 Shameful history**

The most comprehensive list of Judah’s sins. This is an analogy for Judah, but it is also an analogy for us to consider.

A parable of God’s relationship with Israel.

Ezek 16:1-2 What should we do about the detestable practices of the religious: confront them!

God: v. 2-5 You were the lowest of the low, the poorest of the poor, the weakest of the weak, but I loved you nevertheless.

v. 6-7 (read vs. 6) I made you live. I planted you and made you the most beautiful of jewels.

v. 8-14 I entered into an intimate relationship with you. (gave you a covenant) I made you a queen.

v. 15f But you trusted in your beauty and became a prostitute. (1 Cor 4:7 What do you have that you did not receive) Daniel 4:30 Is this not the great Babylon that I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty? You loved God’s gifts to you, not the God who gave them to you. Your blessings became a curse to you.

v. 20-22 You sacrificed your children to other gods (such as education, sports, success…)

v. 26-29 Prostitution with (trust in) Egypt, Philistia, Assyria and Babylonia.

v. 31 You became so low you refused payment for your prostitution.

v. 32 You paid your clients to have sex with you!

v. 35-41 So you will be destroyed!

v. 43 The antidote: remember the days of your youth.

This is us before we were saved!

v. 44-58 You are worse than Sodom and Samaria. If I save you, then I have to save them!

Praise God and how amazing!!! Ezek 16:60 But I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth. This reminds me of Hosea Ch 3

Ezek 16:62 I will establish a (new) covenant with you, which will include your sisters (Sodom and Samaria). This is the Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31.

**Ezekiel 17 Parable of Two Eagles**

This is a parable about the relationship between Judah and its powerful neighbors Babylon and Egypt. It is a condemnation of Judah’s reliance on Egypt, as well as a promise that God will plant a tree to replace Judah destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezek 17:2-4 A great eagle comes to Lebanon, takes off the topmost shoot and carries it away to a city of merchants. This is Nebuchadnezzar taking Jehoiachin (and the nobles and leading men v. 12-13) to Babylon (597 BC).

Lebanon is often use as a figure of Israel (ex Jeremiah 22:23 where “you who live in Lebanon” is a reference to living in a in Jerusalem built of Lebanese cedar)

17:5-6 The cedar shoot flourished like a low, spreading vine. This is the Jews, potentially flourishing with Zedekiah subservient to Nebuchadnezzar (but without political power, and thus a low, spreading vine, not a tall tree)

17:7-8 A second great eagle (but not as great as the first one, according to the description). Judah reached out to Egypt. A big mistake, as God had said through Jeremiah to trust him and submit to Nebuchadnezzar.

17:9-10 This policy will not work and Judah will be destroyed.

17:11-21 The parable interpreted (as stated above) v. 15 but the king (Zedekiah) rebelled and sent envoys to Egypt. v. 16 Pharaoh will be no help and Zedekiah will die in Babylon. (In fact, when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, Pharaoh Hophrah came in support and Nebuchadnezzar lifted the siege, but when he had dealt with Pharaoh, he returned, besieged Jerusalem again, and finally, after a long siege, razed the city. Jeremiah 37:5-15)

The cause of the destruction of Judah is a lack of faithfulness (v 20) (he had signed an oath to Nebuchadnezzar, swearing by Jehovah not to rebel). They relied on Egypt rather than on God.

17:22-24 But I (God) will also plant a shoot—a remnant and plant it on a high mountain (Zion… the Mountain of the Lord Isaiah 2: 2) and will make it flourish (Amos 9:14). It will be a tender sprig (a tender shoot Isaiah 53:2). Birds of every kind will come and nest in it. A prophecy of the church/kingdom. Isaiah 11:1-11 11:10-11 “In that day, the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and the islands of the sea.”

**Ezekiel 18 Individual righteousness**

Ezek 18:2 The fathers eat sour grape and the children’s teeth are set on edge.

In other words, the children inherit the effect of what their parents did. They were applying this to the situation of being disciplined by Babylon. It is our father’s fault, not ours.

[There is a grain of truth to their complaint (for example 2 Kings 21:10-18) if we are talking about corporate consequences for sin]

18:3 God says that every person will be taken as an individual and will be accountable, before God, for what they do individually. (as reflected in the Mosaic Law Deut 24:16, but here God is stating a general principle)

We should be aware that a vast swathe of Christianity does not agree with this most basic doctrine. They are called Calvinists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Dutch Reformed and the majority of Protestants. They believe that we are totally depraved and guilty of the Original Sin of Adam.

“All souls are mine” And therefore all are predestined to salvation, if they will have it Romans 8:28-30

18:5-18 God’s justice. Does this contradict Exodus 20:4 No! Both are true, and this is borne out by Ezekiel as much as any book in the Bible. The sin of one can cause the suffering of another, but not the punishment of another.

18:5-9 A righteous man who (unrealistically) commits no sin (note the high proportion of social justice in this list…)

18:10-13 A son does evil the father did not do. The righteousness of his father will be irrelevant in his relationship with God.

[aside: there is no promise in the Bible that if you are a good, righteous parent, that all your children will be faithful disciples. As a principle, this is great, but as a promise, it is NOT TRUE. Train up a child in the way he should go…. (Prov 22:6) is a principle, but not a doctrine. Environment is strong, but it is not omnipotent. (McGuiggan)]

18:14-18 Now, the reverse case. The grandson acts as the grandfather. He will not be punished for what his father has done.

Q: Is this works salvation? Answer: No. It is a crystal clear statement that when it comes to individual relationship with God, we stand on our own.

Just in case it needs to be restated: Ezek 18:20 repeating Ezek 18:3 but expanding on it applying v. 5-18.

18:21-24 The final state of our relationship with God/repentance will determine where we end up with God. (However, we should remember Hebrews 6:4-6 and 2 Peter 2:20-22).

(Share the story of Shmuley Boteach about how a Jew sees willful sin is dealt with: by repentance)

Ezek 18:22 None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered. How encouraging!!!

Ezek 18:24 None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. How scary a thought!!!

Ezek 18:25-29 Humans try to call God unjust in this.

Q: Does this make (human) sense? If a murderer repents and decides not to murder, do we let him off the hook? No!!!!

Parable of the workers in the field Matthew 20:1-16 (God: “Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or envious because I am generous?” 20:14) Humans are repelled by this, but this is God’s justice.

Ezek 18:30-32 Here is the bottom line on the issue of eternal consequences for sin.

The bottom line is this: Judah as a whole, and most of the individuals in Judah need to repent. Let’s worry about this fact and trust the rest to God’s providence and sovereign will, trusting in both his justice and his grace. All this debating about whether God is just and who is to blame is just a waste of hot air. God has no intention to get into debates with us about his justice (as evidenced by Romans 9:14-18) Our job is to repent!

I will judge you, each according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. (v. 30).

God’s plea to all of us: Why will you choose to die, O house of Israel? (v. 31)

How I longed to gather you in as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wints, but you would were not willing (Matthew 23:37)

18:32 God desires that no man be lost. God desires that all men be saved. 1 Tim 2:4 Calvinism is a lie! The T and the P in TULIP are false doctrine, according to Ezekiel 18:30-32.

Q: Does this mean that God’s will is not always done? Yes (if so, then why pray it in the Lord’s prayer) It is God’s will that we have free will. In the broadest sense, God’s will is always done.

**Ezekiel 19 Parable of the lion and of the vine**

Message of both parables: Do not trust in the fact that you have kings from the line of David (such as Zedekiah). They will not save you from destruction.

Ezekiel 19:1-9 The “lioness” is the royal line of rulers descended from David. The lion represents royalty, especially for Babylon.

19:3-4 The young lion is Jehoahaz. He was 23 years old when his father Josiah died. He reigned for only 3 months in 608 BC (2 Chron 36:1-4). Pharaoh Neco took him to Egypt, where he died (2 Kings 23:31-14)

19:5-9 The second young lion is Jehoahaz’s brother Jehoiachin, who took the throne at only 18 years old (2 Kings 24:8). He also ruled only three months and was taken in chains, this time by Nebuchadnezzar, to Babylon.

[aside: This parable skips Jehoiakim, which is especially interesting given that in Jeremiah 22:18 God tells Jeremiah not to lament for Jehoiakim—that he should have the burial of a donkey (which is confirmed by Josephus *Antiquities* 10:6 “without burial”) and Ezek 19:14 says that this is a lament]

The point: Do not trust in your royal line. Psalm 89, 2 Chron 7, the lying prophets, etc. When a king and a nation are unfaithful, they will be judged.

19:10-14 The same idea. The “mother” vine is Israel or, more likely the Davidic line. She had powerful branches/rods (rulers, kings) come from her (v. 11)

19:12. These branches have already been uprooted and sent in to exile (planted in the desert). The branches are no longer strong.

The point of Ch 19. Stop trusting in man, no matter how powerful he may appear.

Don’t go down to Egypt. Isaiah 36:6 (Rev

**Ezekiel 20 More Shameful History: A record of rebellion**

In the seventh year, in the fifth month on the tenth day… 590 BC Ezekiel now 32 years old.

The hypocritical elders come to Ezekiel for comfort again. Sometimes we have a lot of gall!!! They receive no comfort! He will indeed speak to them, but not a word they want to hear.

20:2-29 You have always rebelled. Even the history you are proud of is a story of continuous rebellion. The only reason I did not destroy you a dozen times (in Egypt, in the desert, in the Promised Land) [but even so, I destroyed them in the desert and left only a remnant. v. 15] is because of my name and because I promised to Abraham and because of the effect it will have on the nations. Similar to Acts 7:9-53.

God wants to be glorified in the church and he wants the church to be a beacon, but if we are unfaithful, prideful and rely on self, he will oppose us and take away our lampstand.

20:39-44 Even now there is hope, but not for this generation (afterward v. 39). At least the remnant will learn the lesson and repent. This is a dual prophecy of both Zerubbabel and of Jesus Christ.

Read 20:42-44

**Ezekiel 20:45 and Ezekiel 21 Babylon, the Sword of God**

Ezek 20:45 “ … set your face toward the south” Judah and Jerusalem.

20:49 God, the vision is not clear enough. They are not getting it. They don’t know it applies to them.

Ezek 21. God makes it plenty clear. Set your face against Jerusalem (v. 1) A fire will burn which will consume both the dry trees and the green trees if Judah.

21:3-4 is significant. The sword will carry off both the righteous and the wicked. (despite the fact that the righteous had been sealed in Ezek 9) Isaiah 57:1 seems to deserve a reading here. The righteous perish and no one ponders it in their heart. They are taken away to spare them from evil. They may die, but they enter into peace. Death is not evil!

21:10 “The sword despises every such stick” Judgment will be equal on the kings (the scepter/stick) and on the people. God treats all people equally.

Ezekiel may be acting out the swordwork before the elders.

21:18-24 Another visual parable. A signpost. Ekekiel acted this out, with the two names on the signs.

21:18 Nebuchadnezzar comes to destroy (in 586 BC?) and at a fork in the road chooses between Rabbah/the Ammonites and Jerusalem. He picks the arrow for Jerusalem (belomancy to the Greeks), he examines the images (teraphim) he examines the liver (divination) Nebuchadnezzar turns against Jerusalem. God can even use the work of diviners to accomplish his will. But because of their guilt, they will be taken captive.

21:23 A difficult passage. It may mean that it will seem like a false omen to the false prophets in Jerusalem who swore Jerusalem was safe. Surely God could not allow Nebuchadnezzar to choose Jerusalem, but they will be taken captive. Or…. It will seem a false omen to the Judeans who have sworn to obey Nebuchadnezzar. Surely….

21:26-27 Hope! Judgement of Zedekiah and the death of the Davidic monarchy will not be the final end. Both the monarchy (the crown) and the priesthood (the turban) will suffer mortal blows. The Messiah—the new priest and king—will come. Under him the lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low. Matthew 23:11 God turns everything upside down. That which the world tells us will be our salvation will prevent our salvation. That which the world says is powerless will be what saves us.

What a wonderful messianic prophecy?

21:28-32 Do not gloat, Ammon. You will be judged as well.

**Ezekiel 22 Shameful Judah Part III**

It is almost as if God is trying to wear us out with the repeated listing of Israel’s sins. Guess what, folks, we need (nearly) constant reminder of our sins. It is not popular to preach against sin, but it is necessary.

Ezekiel 16 and 20 were about shameful history of Israel. This is a list of the current prevalent sins of Judah. It is more of the same.

The message: Doom! (v. 3) I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their heads all they have done. (v. 31)

Much of this sin list is social injustice. 1. Treated father and mother with contempt. (v. 7) 2. oppressed the alien, the orphans the widows (v. 7) and the poor and the needy (v. 29). We are told to help the weak (James 1:27, Micah 6:8, etc), but they abused the weak.

A litany of sexual sins, idolatry, violence, violating the Sabbath, bribery, extortion….

Result: v. 15 I will disperse you among the nations. This is what sin does. It creates loneliness, aimlessness, purposelessness, separation, humiliation and desperation.

22:25-28 God calls out the leaders of Judah.

**Ezekiel 23 Ohola and Oholibah**

Oholah is Samaria/Ephraim/Israel/the Northern Kingdom

Oholibah is Jerusalem/Judah/the Southern Kingdom

The Hebrew words Ohola and Oholibah derive from the word for tent or tabernacle.

Ohola her tent

Oholibah my tent is in her

This is R rated stuff.

23:5-10 Oholah began her prostitution in Egypt, and continued it with Assyria.

Her husband was God himself, and she lusted after an ugly arrogant, violent brute. How typical of us! Her problem? She lived by sight, not by faith.

23:9 God gave them over to the sin they lusted for. Romans 1:24-28.

23:5-8 God will give us to that which we give ourselves to. Is this what hell will be like?

23:11-27 Oholibah was worse than her sister! First she prostituted herself with (trusted in) Babylon. Then she prostituted herself with (trusted in) Egypt. v. 20 is amazingly shocking. Sin is disgustingly ugly!!!!!! This is what our sin is like! We call it “pro choice” We call it “social drinking” “alternative lifestyle” I was “frustrated” “hormones”

Oholah’s and Oholibah’s mistake was that they were not satisfied with God. Are you satisfied with what God has given you? 1 Timothy 6:8 If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

23:22 Here is the take-home lesson. I will give you over to what you gave yourself to.

v. 25 I am jealous!!! Godly jealousy is a good thing. Yet, despite all these things, God loved Oholah and Oholibah. This is the story of Hosea told in parable. God commanded Hosea to take back Gomer even though she was living in prostitution and did not even want to come back to him. God’s grace is truly amazing Romans 5: God shows his live in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

v. 28 You will become the very thing you hate. This is what sin does!!!! It will “take away everything you have worked for. John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. Jesus came that we might have life!

v. 49 Then you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord.

**Ezekiel 24 The cauldron Ezekiel refuses to mourn.**

Jan, 588 BC A date to mark down. This is the date when Nebuchadnezzar put Jerusalem under siege. Here, as before, Ezekiel proves that he is a prophet—capable of knowing the future, as news of the siege certainly did not come for several months. The city did not fall for about two years.

24:6 The cauldron with the encrusted layers of stuff is Judah with her unrepented sin.

24:6 Empty it piece by piece without casting lots for them. Babylon will destroy indiscrimitately.

Ezek 24:12 Sin is a “heavy deposit.”

24:11,13 When God has finished pouring his wrath on Jerusalem it will get really hot, but then the impurity/encrusted junk in the pot will finally be cleaned.

v. 14 I will not have pity (as illustrated by Ezek 24:15-24 when Ezekiel does not mourn for his wife)

Ezek 24:15-24 God tells Ezekiel to not mourn over the death of his wife.

24:15 I am about to take away the delight of your eyes. (Judah is the delight of God’s “eyes.” Yet, do not lament or shed any tears.

The point: God loves Judah as Ezekiel loves his wife. But because of their sin, God will destroy Judah and will not mourn over it.

Q: How did God feel about the people in Sodom and Gomorrah? He loved them intensely.

It is not that he did not love Judah. Far from it.

v. 21 God: You are so proud of the Tabernacle—it is the object of your affection as is his wife to Ezekiel. It will fall, and you will not mourn.

Whether they accepted the advice is debatable, but the point is clear. When we suffer discipline for our sins, or even for the sin of others, we should accept it with equanimity, as it is from a sovereign God who loves us.

v. 27 Ezekiel will be prophetically silent for two years—until news of the fall of Jerusalem arrives.

The message here is this: If you rebel and run after idols, you will lose everything you love and everything truly important to you.

**II Ezekiel 25-32 The End of the Road for Judah’s enemies**

Judgment may begin with God’s people, but those who oppose the Lord will also be judged.

1 Peter 4:17-18

Should the Christian rejoice when their enemies are judged?

How long…. Before God judges the wicked. Retribution, not vindictiveness, is a good thing. Right now, I cannot relate to this sentiment, but I believe we will when we reach heaven. We will agree with these martyrs that God’s judgment on those who oppose Jesus is a good thing. This sentiment—asking God to come in judgment on God’s enemies—is a common theme in Psalms (Psalm 94:1-3) and is in common in Revelation (Rev 11:7-18 Rev 16:5-6) On the other hand, there is Romans 12:19 Do not take vengeance. Vengeance is mine; I will repay.

Ezekiel 25 Ammon This is the nation which “lucked out” when Nebuchadnezzar checked the liver and did the thing with the arrows, as prophesied with the visible parable of the signpost in Ezek 21.

Also, Moab and Edom.

Ezekiel 26-28 Tyre In the eleventh year. 586 Destruction of Judah’s enemies comes after destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezek 26:4 was literally fulfilled by Alexander.

Ezekiel 26:3-14 Tyre.

v. 3 I will bring many nations against you

v. 4 I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock.

v. 5 She will become a place to spread fishnets.

v. 6 Her settlements on the mainland will be ravaged by the sword.

v. 7 (specifically) Nebuchadnezzar will do this (but only the mainland).

v. 12 They will… throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea.

v. 14 It will never be rebuilt

Nebuchadnezzar takes mainland Tyre only after a siege of 13 years 586-573 BC

Alexander attacks Tyre in 332 BC, building a causeway to the island of Tyre using the rubble from Old Tyre.

Tyre attached again and again by Seleucids, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, finally ceasing to exist as a city on the original site.

Much of the language of Revelation 18 is taken from Ezekiel 27:25-36 because Rome replaced Tyre as the greedy merchant who all relied on for their riches.

Ch 28 Sidon

Ch 29-32 Egypt

Ezek 29:1 end of 587 BC Egypt will be no help (although Nebuchadnezzar did call off the siege briefly when Hophra marched against Nebuchadnezzar Jer 37:5f)

Ezek 29:15 Egypt will not be totally destroyed, but her days of world domination will be at an end. The days of Israel going down to Egypt are over. This, of course, is what happened.

29:18-20 (571 BC) After years of only partially defeating Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar will turn against you.

**III Ezekiel 33 The Watchman, Jerusalem has been destroyed**

Transition chapter bridging Ch 24, Ch 34 (as we will see below)

Ezek 33:1-6 The Watchman of Israel. God repeats his admonition to Ezekiel. This time it is at least in part a defense of Ezekiel to the people who are now ready to repent (sort of) (say to your countrymen v. 1 He did not say this in Ezek 18. In other words, Ezekiel did his part!). He was simply doing his duty.

33:7-9 repeating it to Ezekiel. A sort of recommissioning as the people will now consider him a true prophet.

33:10 The people have finally repented! Amen! About time! You would think so.

But… It appears to be worldly sorrow.

“It’s too hard!”

They admit the discipline is their fault, but they do not have the godly sorrow of 2 Cor 7:11 What readiness to see justice done. Do you accept the Lord’s discipline? Do you accept the negative consequences of your sin without complaining?

33:11 God: My only desire in this judging is that you will live. It is AMAZING that God stoops to justify himself to these people.

Again, I am reminded of Matthew 23:37, 1 Tim 2:4

v. 12 to the whining “repentant” person whose attention God has now gotten, he says “the wickedness of the wicked will not cause him to fall when he turns from it.”

v. 13 but if you trust in your righteousness….

Q: Do you trust in God or do you trust in your own righteousness?

THE BOTTOM LINE: v. 17 These people are not done complaining and justifying themselves, so God repeats himself. God does not need to defend himself in this matter.

Romans 11 is a discussion of God with Jews and Gentiles in which the Jews are saying “not fair.” God rebukes the Jews. Rom 10:5-11 The Jews say to God “It’s too hard.” God says, no it is not. In is very near you, in your mouth and your heart. It’s too hard is not a good excuse for not repenting. Rom 11:2-6 Elijah said “it’s too hard” God tells him to open his eyes. Rom 11 Jews: It’s not fair. Rom 11:22f Consider the kindness and the sternness of God. Both have the same object in mind.

Ezekk 33:21 585 BC A messenger arrives (Ezekiel 24:26) Jerusalem has fallen! Ezekiel is vindicated as a prophet. v. 22 Ezekiel again begins to prophesy to the people (Ezekiel 24:27) Here we see that CH 33 is a bridge. The content of his message is to change dramatically.

33:23-29 Those left behind in Jerusalem (specifically Ishmael Jer 40,41 2 Kings 25:25-26) are back to saying peace, peace, when there is not yet peace for Jerusalem. v. 24 Abraham was only one man… God: You are no Abraham!

33:30-33 Ezekiel now a very popular prophet. Beware of being popular with unrepentant people. God’s true prophet will only be popular with a very few.

33:30 Come hear the message. v. 31 Yes, but they do not put them into practice.

 They “express devotion” but their hearts are greedy. 2 Tim 3:5 Remember, the evangelist is and always will be a watchman for the church.

v. 32 They are looking for entertainment. “one who sings a love song with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well.”

v. 33 If you are a faithful watchman, then when they truly repent, they will know that “a prophet has been among them.”

**IV Ch 34-48 Comfort for God’s people. The Messiah is coming, bringing salvation.**

Now that the working of God’s wrath is (nearly) complete, the rest of the book will be a comfort. Ezekiel preaches good news. A remnant will repent, return, be restored and the City will be rebuilt!

This was all prophesied in Deut 30:1-6

There is some double (and even triple) prophecy here in that, the restoration under Cyrus and the restoration under the Messiah are both in mind.

**Ezekiel 34 A better shepherd**

In this chapter bad leadership is condemned, godly leadership is described and, most importantly, a future perfect leader is prophesied. Jesus Christ, the “good shepherd John 10:11-18 What is a good shepherd? One who lays down his life for his sheep. (John 10:18)

What is the job of the shepherd?

1. Ezek 34:2 To take care of the flock. NOT to take care of yourself! They had taken advantage of their position as shepherd and had used the sheep.

2. 34:4 Take care of the weak. One key measure of a Jesus church is how the shepherds care for the weak.

3. 34:4 Bring back the strays.

4. 34:4 Bring in the lost.

The worst possible charge against a shepherd: You have treated them harshly and brutally. (sounds like the ICOC at one time) The result of bad shepherding: The sheep are scattered. (also sounds like what happened with the ICOC when we had bad shepherding)

Ezek 34:7-10 God’s response to bad shepherds.

v. 10 1. I will hold you accountable.

2. I will remove you from leading the flock. I will rescue my flock from you. May it never be that God has to rescue his flock from us.

34:11-22 God: If the shepherds will not do it, then I will shepherd my sheep (probably by raising up better shepherds)

34:18-20 The sheep are not completely without responsibility. Do not muddy the water—keeping the best for yourselves. Do not make of yourself a “fat sheep.”

34:23f God’s shepherd—the Messiah—is coming! John 10. Jesus the branch of Jesse, David will tend them!!!

v. 26 Showers of blessing!

v. 27 Much fruit! Security. Freedom (John 8 31f)

v. 28 Living without fear (1 Jn 4:18 perfect love drives out fear)

v. 29 Spiritual food. He will give us the bread of life. No longer will we hunger. Life to the full John 10:10

**Ezekiel 35 Edom judged**

**Ezekiel 36 The mountain of the Lord**

God personifies the “Mountains of Israel,” making them represent the people.

Ezekiel 36:1-7 God: I will judge the nations who hated and opposed you.

36:8-15 My wrath is complete. I will bless you more, even, than before. This is principally about the restoration of Judah.

36:22 It is not for your sake that I do this. It is for my holy name and for my holiness.

We need to remember this. Reminds of Deut 7:7-9

36:24f You will be a remnant devoted to me. A prophecy of the New Covenant.

-from all nations 24

-cleansed with water 25

-a new heart and a new spirit (born again) 26

-receive the Holy Spirit 27

-blessings (physical rather than spiritual because this is the Old Testament) 29-30

-repentance 31

No wonder Jesus challenged Nicodemus that he should have known this was coming. (John 3:10)

- v. 32 But remember I am not doing this because you were doing so awesome.

-much fruit 33f …like the garden of Eden v. 35 Symbolic of being in the Kingdom of God.

Parallel to Isaiah 65:19-25 where the vision is of the Kingdom of God/restored Israel/the Church/ Heaven. Note the symbolism is of physical things.

v. 36 A very encouraging statement: When the people see how blessed by God we are, “Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

**Ezekiel 37 Valley of dry bones**

The promise of a resurrection, and of the calling of a remnant.

Ezek 37:2 These bones aren’t just dry, they are “very dry”. The situation is hopeless. God loves a hopeless situation. So should we.

v. 3 God: Can these bones live?

Wisely, Ezekiel says “O Sovereign Lord, you alone know”

What about your neighbor: Can these bones live? What about your marriage: Can these bones live? What about your career, your spiritual life, you children who have gone into the world. Can these bones live?

v.4 What is the solution to spiritual death? “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.”

Who is this prophecy about? This is a “double prophecy” Its principle subject is Israel, defeated, scattered and in ruins. Can it be brought back to life? Yes!!! How, by hearing (and listening to) the Word of the Lord.

v. 5 How can we be raised from the dead? By receiving the Holy Spirit. When we receive the Holy Spirit at baptism, we come to life, spiritually. Zech 4:6 Romans 8:9-11

He’s Alive!!! (Frankenstein)

v. 7 What a bizarre vision. “I heard a rattling sound.”

v. 10 Breath entered them and they came to life—a vast army. Gr. *pneuma* Spirit.

37:11 God interprets the vision. The primary application is to Israel. They were “dead” in Babylon, but God will bring them back to life in Canaan. “I will settle you in your own land.”

Ezek 37:15f Parable of two sticks. Another visible parable. Join the stick of Judah and the stick of Ephraim.

[aside: Mormons claim that the two sticks are the Bible and the Book of Mormon. What do you think?]

God will bring together Judah and Ephraim = bring together Jew and Gentile in the Kingdom.

37:22 A clear messianic prophecy. “I will make them one nation in the land…. There will be one king over them….

I will save them…. v. 23

I will cleanse them…. v. 23

37:24 As clearly messianic as it could be. My servant David will be king over them. (OT parallels?)

v. 26 A new covenant under David. I will put my sanctuary among them forever. (We are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20) God will tabernacle among us. John 1:14

They will be my people. Reminds of Hosea 1:10-11, Hosea 2:23 “You are my people.” This is clearly messianic, but it also is a double-fulfillment, as is Hosea 11:1 (which is a quadruple fulfillment. Out of Egypt I called my son. Moses, Israel, Jesus, us)

This is about the church, but it is also about heaven/the Kingdom of God Revelation 21-22.

**Ezekiel 38-39 God and Magog—the enemies of God’s people—destroyed. God’s people saved.**

How God will deal with the enemies of his people at any time. It can be applied to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. God’s comfort to his people that what happened before will not happen again. Of course, all this is messianic as well.

The purpose of this vision is similar to that of Revelation (especially Rev 20:7-10 with Gog and Magog). It may look bad, but God is in control.

Is this about Antiochus Epiphanes? Yes. Is it about the persecution of the church by Rome? Yes.

Jim McGuiggan: Gog is a grand illustration of any and all who oppose God’s people.

38:1-4 I am against you Gog, prince of Magog.

Meshech and Tubal are two tribes in Asia Minor. Herodotus tells us that they were involved in the slave trade.

v. 5-6 Gog and Magog have allies from Persia (east), Cush (Ethiopia, south), Put (North Africa, west) and Gomer and Togarmah (north) In other words, Israel is surrounded!

v. 8 You will invade the Promised Land “gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel” the remnant (us) are living in safety.

v. 11-12 unwalled cities. God’s people living in security. They look like sitting ducks. No problem. God will destroy them without a shot.

v. 16 God is in control.

v. 19-23 Apocalyptic language against God’s enemies. Esp. v. 23

39:1-4 Judgment on Gog and Magog: the enemies of God’s people.

v. 9-10 They will burn their weapons.

[v. 11-16 more apocalyptic language. 17-20 Clearly apocalyptic.]

39:22-24 We will know that He is the Lord because he judged us justly

v. 25-29 This is what it is about. This vision is to encourage God’s people that he will protect them.

v. 27 He will show himself holy through us, and bring us into his kingdom.

v. 29 God will live in us and pour his Holy Spirit on (in?) us.

Prophecy vs Apocalyptic Apocalyptic like a divine comic book.

Prophecy: Mainly preaching and secondarily prediction.

Apocalyptic: Mainly prediction and secondarily preaching.

Apocalyptic: A wider scope than prophecy. (whole world addressed, rather than just the Jews)

Apocalyptic: A heavy emphasis on eschatology (the study of end times) Daniel, by far, gives most clear glimpse of heaven and the resurrection in the OT. Ezekiel: valley of dry bones.

Apocalyptic (vs. prophecy): Very visual. A valley of dry bones

Apocalyptic literature always has a historical setting and significance. Knowledge of the historical situation is very important to understanding the vision.

Symbolic. The rule of thumb with apocalyptic literature **ought** to be that, unlike historical, doctrinal or other literature, things should be taken figuratively, unless the context demands a literal interpretation. This is the exact reverse of historical or doctrinal literature, in which things should be taken literally unless the context demands it be taken figuratively.

Dramatic. Apocalyptic literature is very dramatic, vivid, forceful. Uses the grotesque and the terrifying to catch our attention. We should avoid interpreting the small details of such dramatic visions (such as interpreting the ten toes of the statue in Daniel 2 as the Common Market)

**Ezekiel 40-48 The temple rebuilt Restoration of the remnant**

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the Kingdom of God/God with his people. Do not get caught up in the details. It gives very precise instructions for building the restored temple.

Is it about the restoration of the kingdom and the temple in 516 BC? Yes

Is it about the church and the heavenly tabernacle? Yes

Is it about the ultimate embodiment of the tabernacle/Kingdom of God/Heaven? Yes.

Hebrews 8:3-6 “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” (or in Ezekiel 40-48).

This section is about God’s holiness—his perfection, and about dwelling with God. The instructions must be carried out “to the letter.”

Ezek 40:1 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile and the 14th year after the destruction of Jerusalem (572 BC)

Ezek 43:1 The glory of the Lord returns to the temple (after leaving it Ezekiel 10:18). He enters through the East Gate (as he had exited it through the East Gate).

v. 3 This is the same vision as Ezek 1 “when he came to destroy the city” but this time he is coming to live in the city again! v. 7 I will live there forever.

43:10 Why is God giving us all this precise details? “that they may be ashamed of their sins.”

44:2 The East gate is to stay shut (because only the holy can enter through the East gate.

46:1-3 Except on Sabbaths and New Moons when the gate is opened, but the high priest does not pass through it.

44:15f Only the Zadokites (also 43:19) (a particular family of Levitical priests) have been righteous (for example when they supported Solomon when others were opposing him). They can minister in the temple.

44:16 We are the Zadokites! (1 Pet 2:9)

v. 23 teach the difference between the holy and the common. That is our role.

v. 28 I am to be their only inheritance. They will have no possessions in the land. We are to rely on God and seek the kingdom first.

45:9-12 The leaders are responsible for social justice.

Ezek 47:1-12 The river from the temple. Parallel Revelation 22:1-5 and Zech 14:8-9, 16-21, This is about God taking care of his people in need. It has imagery from the Garden of Eden.

v. 1 It comes from the temple—from God.

It cleanses (Zech 13:1)

v. 8 It is living water (Zech 14:8, John 7:37-39)

Ezek 48:35 A great summary of Ezek 40-48. “And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE.”

This is the definition of the Kingdom of God. We end Ezekiel back in the Garden of Eden, as God had designed all along. And to God be the glory!

**Jeremiah: The Burden of the Lord**

Q: Have you ever known someone who only shared bad news?

Jeremiah had two nicknames:

1. The weeping prophet.

2. The burden (oracle, *masah*) of the Lord. (Jeremiah 23:33) (Vulgate, Septuagint “burden”)

Background: Jeremiah 1:1-3.

a. 13th year of Josiah (627 BC) One year after his reform. Started out great. (ruled 640-609). Killed by Egyptians at Megiddo defending Babylonians.

b. Jehoahaz 609 3 months. Deposed by Pharaoh.

c. Jehoiakim 609-597 Unfaithful, worshipped Baal, etc. surrendered to Babylon, rebelled went to Egypt.

d. Jeconiah/Jehoiachin 597 Also unfaithful. Blinded and taken into exile.

e. Zedekiah 597-586 Also unfaithful. Very weak and easily influenced. Turned to Egypt again (despite warnings from Jeremiah and Ezekiel). Jerusalem destroyed, temple burned.

d. Captivity and humility. Rebelled again. Ishmael murdered Gedaliah. The people panic. Jeremiah taken to Egypt. This group never returned to Israel.

e. Stoned to death in Egypt (according to Jewish tradition). Bummer!

Chronology of Jeremiah: It can be difficult to follow the historical context of various passages in Jeremiah. Below is an approximate time frame for the various episodes in the book:

Ch 1-20 *For the most part*, these prophecies come from 627-605 BC—before Jeremiah was commanded to write down his prophecies and give them to Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 25:1-3)

Ch 21 Final siege begins 588

Ch 22 Oracles on kings to Jehoiachin 598

Ch 23 unsure

Ch 24 Good and bad figs 597 or after

Ch 25 70 years predicted 605

Ch 26 Shiloh sermon 609 or after

Ch 27-28 Accept yoke of Babylon 594

Ch 29 Letter to captives after 597

Ch 30-31 unsure

Ch 32-33 Jeremiah buys property 588/87

Ch 34 Siege temporarily lifted 588

Ch 35 Recabites after 601

Ch 36 Burning the scroll 605-604

Ch 37 Jeremiah imprisoned 588

Ch 38 Jeremiah in the muddy well 588/87

Ch 39 Jerusalem falls 586

Ch 40 Gedaliah at Mizpah 586

Ch 41 Gedaliah assassinated 586 or after

Ch 42-43 Emigration to Egypt 586 or after

Ch 44 Jews in Egypt defend actions 585

Ch 45 A message to Baruch 605

Ch 46-51 unsure

Ch 52 Epilogue conderning Jehoiachin 561

Themes in Jeremiah:

I. Admonitions against false religion

II. God’s judgment on his people and on the enemies of his people

III. Restoration of the remnant

Passages about the remnant:

Jer 6:9 God gleans the remnant

Jer 29:1-11 God has plans for the remnant (written within days of captivity)

Jer 31:7, Jer 33:14-18 God saves the remnant

Jer 39:9 God directs the remnant

Jer 40:11 God abundantly blesses the remnant

Jer 42:1-3, 15, 19 God releases the remnant

Jer 43:4-7, 44:14

Jer 50:20 God forgives the remnant

A few things to bear in mind as you read Jeremiah:

Jeremiah uses metaphors/symbol a lot:

Jer 1:11-16 The Almond Tree

Jer 13:1-11 The Linen Belt

Jer 13:12-14 The Wineskins

Jer 18:1-10 The Potter’s House

Jer 19:10-13 The Jar

Jer 24:1-10 The Fig baskets

Jer 27:1-8 The Yoke

Jer 32:1-41 The Field

Jer 43: 8-13 The Stones

Another point about Jeremiah: Of all the Old Testament prophets and writers, he sounds the most modern. The issues he raises sound very familiar. The kinds of attitudes and sins he deals with are very “modern.” Francis Schaeffer (*Death in the City*) called Jeremiah the quintessential prophet for the postmodern age, with its moral relativism and its “open-mindedness.” “Jeremiah provides us with an extended study of an era like our own, where men have turned away from God, and society has become post-Christian.”

Another point about Jeremiah is that he is very pointed and open about his negative feelings when he talks to God.

Ex:

Jeremiah 4:10 “You have deceived this people and Jerusalem by saying, ‘You will have peace,’ when the sword is at our throats.

Jeremiah 12:1 “You are always righteous, O Lord, when I bring a case before you, Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do the faithless live at ease?” [note God’s response in 12:5 If you have raced with men… It will get even harder for you in the future]

[Also Jer 15:10-18, to which God offers admonishment v. 19 and encouragement v.20-21 and Jer 20:7-10, 14-18]

If we look at the chronology, we will discover that after about 588 BC, Jeremiah no longer questioned God’s judgment or his own prophetic call.

Another note about Jeremiah: He is a prophet of social justice.

Jer 5:26-29 …they have become rich and powerful and have grown fat and sleek. Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor. Should I not punish them for this?

Jeremiah 22:15-16 Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me? Declares the Lord.

Jer 22:2-3 To the king: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do not wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. He says that if they do so, they will never fail to have a king on David’s throne (22:4)

(also Jer 7:5-7)

Outline of Jeremiah:

I. Jeremiah’s mission Ch 1

II. God’s charge against his people Ch 2 You have left God!

III. Jeremiah’s message Ch 3-5 Return and repent!

IV. Jeremiah’s critique Ch 6 The leaders say peace, peace…

V. Judgment is coming on Judah Ch 7-22

VI. Good News! Ch 23-33 God will gather a remnant to be with him.

VII. History surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem Ch 34-45

VIII. Judgment on Judah’s enemies Ch 46-51.

IX. Epilogue Ch 52 The Fall of Jerusalem

Archaeology and Jeremiah

Three events recorded in Jeremiah are well confirmed by archaeological discovery

1. The fall (but not destruction) of Jerusalem in 597 BC

2. The destruction of Lachish.

3. The raising up of Jehoiachin by Evil-Merodach 560 BC

1. The fall (but not destruction) of Jerusalem in 597 BC This is confirmed by the Babylonian Chronicles.

These events are recorded in 2 Kings 24:10-17 2 Chronicles 36:5-7

 [In] the seventh year, the month of Kislev, the king of

 Babylonia mustered his forces and marched to Syria. He

camped against the city of Judah (Jerusalem) and on the

second day of the month of Adar he took the city and captured

the king. He appointed a king of his own choice there, took its

heavy tribute and brought them to Babylon.

The puppet king was Zedekiah.

2. The destruction of Lachish is confirmed by the Lachish Letters 586 BC

The Lachish Letters 588 BC 6 letters on clay shards

One letter: “The light at the top of Azekah just went out, and we are next. Send an army of relief or the city will fall to Nebuchadnezzar.”

This confirms Jeremiah 34:6,7

Within two days, the author of this letter was killed. Two years later, Jerusalem fell.

Remember: All this was prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 39 envoys) and in Deuteronomy 29:15, 49f If you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and over take you: The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth

3. The raising up of Jehoiachin by Evil-Merodach in 560 BC (Jeremiah 52:31-34)

In the ruins of Babylon a document was found which listed the provisions for Jehoachin.

“Day by day the king gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived.” (2 Kings 25:27-30, Jer 52:31-34).

All this is confirmed by the discovery in Babylon of the order to take care of Jehoiachin.

Tablets from the royal archives of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon were unearthed in the ruins of that ancient city that contain food rations paid to

captives and craftsmen who lived in and around the city. On one of the tablets, **"Yaukin, king of the land of Judah"** is mentioned along with his five sons listed as royal princes. Below are a few inscriptions found on the tablets: 10 (sila of oil) to the king of Judah, Yaukin.

2 1/2 sila (oil) to the offspring of Judah’s king,

4 sila to eight Judean men.

These tablets also indicate that Jehoiachin received twenty times as much food rations as others on the list which indicates that the Babylonians treated him more valuable then other captive kings on the list.

Archaeology thus indicates that Jehoiachin was treated well by the kings of Babylon whom provided daily food rations for him.

I. The Call of Jeremiah

Jer 1:1 Jeremiah a priest

Jer 1:2 13th year of Josiah 527 BC Josiah’s reform is under way.

Jeremiah 1:4-19 Jeremiah’s mission:

1. v. 4 I have set you apart before you were born as a prophet to the nations.
2. Say whatever I command you. 1:7-8
3. His mission is to preach judgment is coming. A seething cauldron (1:13) Disaster from the North (Babylon) 1:14
4. But he also has a positive mission to build and to plant (1:9) His message is like the branch of an almond tree (the first to bud in the early spring) 1:11-12

Note: almond = watching God is watching to help Jeremiah so his world will be fulfilled.

Q: Is this our mission?

No wonder Jeremiah was not all that excited to preach (1:6) Jeremiah got some bad treatment. Jeremiah 20:1-8. Q: Are you prepared to be a “laughing stock?” (literally) Are you prepared to “sit alone?” (Jer 15:17). Are you prepared to be thrown into a miry pit? (Jer 38:6)

But we should remember that God will put words in our mouth (Luke 12:11-12) Jer 1:8 He will be with us. v. 19 he will rescue us. You will be my spokesman. I will be with you and will rescue you Jer15:19-21)

v. 18 Similar to Ezekiel, he will be “a fortified city, an iron pillar, a bronze wall.

Against who? The king, the priest and the people. Ouch.

II. God’s charge against his people. They have betrayed God’s love. They have gone after other lovers.

Jer. 2:4-5 Is God exaggerating? (Titus 1:15)

v. 5 Is God enough for you? Or do you need more? Are you willing to accept what God gives you?

You (v. 6) and the priests (v. 8) do not ask “Where is the Lord?” I was not sophisticated enough to you. I did not appeal to your fancy. I became quaint to you.

2:11-13 Q: How do we become worthless? Answer: By seeking the blessings of the world rather than the blessings God offers.

v. 11 Has a nation ever changed its gods? Even the pagans are at least loyal to their national deities! But not you!

v. 13 Q: Have you “dug your own cisterns”—looked for satisfying water elsewhere than in the living water from God? Jer 18:14-15a God’s living water is an unending stream, yet we have forgotten him.

2:20-22 You are like a runaway bride—loved deeply by her lover, yet you went for prostitution. (also 2:32-33)

v. 23 You are like a wild donkey in heat…

v. 27 We say to an inanimate piece of wood, “You are our father.” Who, me???? (Rom 1:25)

 **Titus 1:15-16**

III. Jeremiah’s message: 3:14-18 3:22 4:1-4 4:8

Return, Repent

3:14-18 Return and I will choose you. I will bring you back from the northern land and I will make a new covenant.

3:22 Return from backsliding. To backslide is not to leave God. It is to no longer do what you did before (evangelism, prayer, zeal, etc.). Sounds like Rev 2:1-7 Ephesus disciples lost their first love.

4:1-4 What “unplowed ground” do you need to break up? What area in your life have you allowed to become hard and unpenetrable to God’s Words?

4:8 Do you need to put on sackcloth and ashes? (ie not take care of even your most basic needs as you attend to repentance) (like 2 Cor 7:11-12)

The result: Disaster from the North (Babylon) 4:5,6 a lion = Babylon (also 6:22f)

Jer 4:23-26 The natural result of sin: an empty life in ruins.

The postmodern attitude: Jer 5:12-13

Jeremiah: a prophet of social justice. Jer 5:26-29

One of my favorite passages in Jeremiah—so relevant for the postmodern, post-Christian world: Jer 5:30-31 A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it that way. But what will you do in the end?

This is our struggle!!!

IV Jeremiah’s critique: Jer 6:13-15 The leaders dress the wounds of my people lightly. They say “peace, peace.” (parallel passage: Jer 8:8-12)

v. 15 no longer ashamed…. Some of us are no longer ashamed of worldly behavior. Movies we go to, the places we go to, Missing church is not as big a deal as it once was…. Some of us have begun to tell little lies… Some of us have begun to do things at work that we hope our spiritual friends do not find out about. Are you able to be ashamed as you once were?

Some of us are no longer willing to confront it.

If you are friends of the world, it is no longer peace, peace.

(sounds like 2 Tim 4:1-5 Some seek to have their ears itched. Is that you?)

God’s solution: 6:16-20 Stand at the crossroads and look…. Seek the good way and walk in it.

We already know what to do…. Of course for the “modern,” the ancient truth is out of fashion—obsolete. Let us beware of this philosophy.

6:20 It is not simply about being more religious.

(Parallel passage Jeremiah 23:16-24, 33-40)

V. Judgment is coming! Jer 7-22 Lots more bad news we will skip False religion, Slaughter, Punishment, Destruction, Broken Covenant, Drought, Famine, Sword, Disaster

Jer 7:1-8 God’s word to the religious: Do not trust in vain words—“The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.”

The sanctuary will not save you if you are not sanctified.

Q: What might the modern equivalent be?

Trusting in the church/the fellowship rather than trusting in Jesus, the head of the church. It is tempting for church leaders to encourage this kind of behavior.

Note, again, the opposite of trusting in vain words, is to practice social justice. v.5-6.

Notice: Jesus quoted Jer 7:11 in Matthew 21:13 Might we view the church as the source of our livelihood or a business opportunity?

Jer 7:30-34 an ironic prophecy which was fulfilled when the Valley of Ben Hinnom became the Valley of Gehenna—the perpetually burning dump of Jerusalem which was used as a metaphor of Hell by Jesus.

CH 8-14 is a long section in which God explains why judgment is coming. It includes:

Ch 11 The covenant is broken. Plot to kill Jeremiah at Anathoth.

12:1 Another example in which Jeremiah complains about God’s justice, yet in the end he accepts God’s righteousness.

Ch 13 The parable of the spoiled linen belt. Israel has become useless.

The Parable of the Wineskins. God will judge his people. It will be like drunkenness.

Jer 15:1-2 Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Death, sword, starvation, captivity. (Ezek 14:13-14)

Jer 15:6 We send ourselves to destruction by rejecting God’s love. (Matthew 23:37-38… but you would not have me. Behold, your house lies forsaken and desolate.)

Jer 17:5-10 Do not trust in man.

17:5 Do not trust in man

17:7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord

17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things…. In the context, it is deceitful in that it tends to trust in human things (v. 5)

17:10 I, the Lord, search the heart.

Q: If God were to search your heart, would he find one who is fully trusting in Him?

17:19-27 If you keep the Sabbath, you will have kings on their throne in Jerusalem forever, but if you do not, I will kindle an unquenchable fire.

Q: Why is God so upset when we do not observe the Sabbath (or the NT equivalent)

Q: Is God exaggerating? As how we view and use our money is an accurate reflection of how we view God, so how we accept and use an opportunity from God to rest, reflect and enjoy a relationship (putting aside the worries, pleasures and attractions of the world) with him is an accurate reflection of our wider spiritual health. Thus, this is not a gross exaggeration. Amos 8:5 expresses this well. “When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market meat.” (also Isaiah 58:13-14)

 Jer. 18 At the potter’s house. Jer 18:1-12 Q: What is God saying about us? The pot was marred, so he formed it into something different.

This is kind of like the Jeremiah equivalent of Ezekiel 18, except talking about a nation rather than an individual.

v. 12 The people’s response: It is no use. We will not change. Jer 19:1-10 Jeremiah stood in front of the elders and (v. 10,11) he shattered the pot. These people are past remaking. May this never happen to us! Judgment and doom!

Jer 20:1-6 Jeremiah and Pashhur. Jeremiah put in the stocks. We have already looked at this. Jeremiah says, “you are not Pashhur. You are Magor Missabib (terror on every side).”

Jer 20:7 Another example of Jeremiah complaining to God. But….

This chapter includes one of the classic passages in Jeremiah. After being beaten and put in the stocks for preaching judgment on the lost, he said (about the insult and reproach for speaking the truth),

Jer 20:9 “But if I say, ‘I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,’ his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed I cannot.”

Jeremiah 21 Flee the city!!! Surrender!!!! 21:8-10 Jeremiah a “traitor.”

we have already seen Jer 22:13-17, but it bears reminder… Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar?

This would make a great Bible discussion. Note: in 22:15, “your father” is the righteous king Josiah (as shown by v. 11)

VI. Jeremiah announces good news. God will restore a remnant. Ch 23-33

Ultimately, Jeremiah is a prophet of good news!!!!

Jeremiah 23:1-8 God will gather a remnant and place shepherds over them.

v. 5 a righteous branch. Notice, the Hebrew for branch is *nazer* so when Jesus is called the branch, this is fulfilled in that he is the “branch” of David/Jesse (Isaiah 11:1,10), but also in that he is a Nazarene.

About Matthew 2:23, I will have to say that this one gave me a problem for
several years. I finally figured it out just a few years ago. In the Hebrew, the word Nazareth is *nazaret*,the same as the word branch. It is very interesting that God caused the Messiah, Jesus, to be raised in Nazareth because Nazareth means branch. There are several Old Testament passages which prophesy that the Messiah will be called the branch, which can also be interpreted as Nazarene. It is interesting and wonderful that Jesus was both the branch of Jesse and a Nazarene. This is one of hundreds of amazing pieces of evidence which proves conclusively that the entire Bible is inspired by God. The relevant passages are
Isaiah 11:1,2 Jeremiah 23:5 Zechariah 3:8 and Zechariah 6:12. Branch passages.

v. 6 a king. The Lord our Righteousness.

v. 7-8 a double prophecy.

Jeremiah 23:28-29 Another example of my claim earlier that Jeremiah is more “quotable” than Ezekiel. God’s world will reveal things for what they really are.

[maybe: Jer 23:33-40 Here is where Jeremiah gets the nick name “the burden of the Lord.” This is reminiscent of 2 Tim 4:2-5 Preach the Word, in season and out… Men will no longer endure sound doctrine, but will gather for themselves teachers to teach what their itching ears want to hear.]

Jer 25:8-14 70 years Is this the passage Daniel was reading in Dan 9:1f?

Jeremiah 28 The false prophet Hananiah. “Two years and I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar”.

28:9 Jeremiah “the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes true.”

Hananiah takes the yoke from Jeremiah and breaks it. (apparently he was wearing a yoke)

Jeremiah: You will get a yoke iron.

Jeremiah 29 Jeremiah writes a letter to the exiles (the ones Ezekiel is preaching to). Build houses and settle down, plant gardens, eat the food, marry and have children. In other words accept the discipline of God.

Jeremiah 29:10-14 I will rescue you from captivity. I will bring you back to the Promised Land.

Do you believe God has great plans for you if you will plow up the unplowed ground, seek the ancient paths, and seek him with all your heart?

Will you wait seventy years for God to bless you?

Jeremiah 30:1-11

v. 10 Has God saved you from a distant place?

Jeremiah 31:27-37 More good news.

v. 30 Recognize this verse? (Ezekiel 18:2)

Q: How is the New Covenant different from the Old? (v. 32)

v. 28 A covenant only of blessing.

v. 29-30 About individuals in a relationship with God. (no more 70 year captivities) No more group blessings and curses (such as Deut 29,30)

v. 34 It won’t be you are born then you get to know me. You will be born knowing me.

v. 34 Does this mean we do not need to teach one another? (Matt 28:20)

v. 34b I will forgive their wickedness. (Q: Wasn’t that also true with Israel? Heb 9:6-10, 10:15-18

v. 35-37 Great assurance!

Jer 32:1-15 Jeremiah buys a field. This represents confidence that God will do what he says. (read v. 1-4 and v. 13-14)

Note v. 4 Zedekiah will see it all with his own eyes (but then will have his eyes taken out)

Destruction (32:26-29) and renewal (31:36-44)

(if time) Jeremiah 33:12-22 Still more encouragement. Why does God make such a strong promise?

VII. Historical events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem Ch 34-45

In this section, note that all of Jeremiah’s former prophecies concerning Jerusalem are fulfilled. No wonder Jeremiah was ultimately received as a prophet, and no wonder his book entered the Hebrew canon.

Jer 35:1-16 The Recabites. Jeremiah tempts the Recabites to drink wine, but they refuse. Read v. 6-11.

Q: What is God’s point to his people?

Q: What is God’s message to us? (non-attachment)

Jer 36:1-3 What was on the scroll?

36:4 What if they had repented?

36:15-26 How might we be like Jehoiakim?

Q: Did God’s word work? (Isaiah 55:11) Is it true that God’s word always works (either to judge or to save).

36:27-32 We cannot destroy God’s word, but if we reject his word we will be destroyed.

Jer 37 Zedekiah replaces Jehoiachin. V. 1-3

Egypt marches and Nebuchudnezzar withdraws.

37:9-10 Do not trust in Egypt. God’s plans are set.

37:13 Jeremiah inspects his property, is accused of treason with Babylonians, beaten and jailed.

Jer 38:1-3 Jeremiah prophesies—speaks treason. Zedekiah not very happy. v. 4-6 lowered into a cistern. Jeremiah is getting to a pretty low place.

38:17-18 God is upset when we do not accept the discipline he puts into our lives. 38:19 Zedekiah’s excuse.

Jer 39 Jerusalem falls

Jer 40:1-6 Nebuchadnezzar frees Jeremiah, leaves Gedaliah in charge. Israel to serve Babylon (v. 9) 70 years.

Jer 41 Gedaliah assassinated, Jews flee to Egypt.

Jer 42:10-12 Serve Nebuchadnezzar I will save and deliver you. Will you trust God?

Jer 42:19-22 If you go to Egypt, you will die by the sword.

42:19 A clarion call to all who would follow God. DO NOT GO TO EGYPT!

VIII. Judgment on Judah’s enemies. Ch 46-51

We will be skipping Jer 46-51 Judgment on the enemies of God (similar to Ezekiel 25-32).

The point of this section: God will judge his people, but the enemies of God should not take confidence from this. 1 Pet 4:17.

Jer 52. This is an epilogue, added by a Jewish editor. Jer 51:64 “the words of Jeremiah end here.”

Jeremiah 52 The fall of Jerusalem.

Jer 52:31-34 has been confirmed by archaeological discovery in Babylon, as mentioned previously.

NOTES FOR FULL DANIEL CLASS

Background to Daniel:

Theme: God Rules the Nations, Do Not Fear!

Main messages:

1. How to stay pure and uncorrupted—to maintain your integrity in a world

 in which you are surrounded by unbelievers.

2. God is in control. He will protect his people. Do not fear. God will deal

 with those who persecute or otherwise oppose your service for him.

Principle Audience:

Jews who suffered under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes (167-164 BC)

Things that make Daniel unique:

1. Daniel, more than any other book, is the fighting ground for intellectuals

 over whether the Bible is inspired by God. If they cannot cut down

 Daniel, then their case is lost

2. Daniel ↔ Old Testament as Revelation ↔ New Testament

Both:

1. Largely Apocalyptic.

2. Concerning end times. (eschatology)

3. Written to a people who are suffering very intense persecution.

3. Daniel has by far the most information in the OT about angels, the resurrection and the after life. OT has very little about heaven, hell and eternal life.

4. Daniel set in a pagan nation. Daniel’s ministry was principally to pagans.

5. Daniel is a very unique “prophet.” In fact, was he a prophet? Did he occupy the position of prophet among the Jews? No. Did he proclaim, “Thus says the Lord” to Israel? No. Did he predict the future? Yes. If Daniel was a prophet, he was a prophet to the nations.

6. More specific predictive prophecy than any book in Bible by far.

Author:

Daniel, but probably an editor put together some of the historical materials and most likely even wrote certain sections. (Daniel 4:19, “Then Daniel, (also known as Belshazzar) was greatly perplexed.” Daniel 10:1 “In the third year of Cyrus, a revelation was given to Daniel.”)

Then in the next verse Daniel 10:2 Daniel says “At that time, I, Daniel…”

Not what Daniel would have said.

We will see that authorship is very important. Skeptics will insist that Daniel wrote nothing. They will question whether a person named Daniel ever even lived.

Language:

Both Hebrew and Aramaic (vernacular language of Jews after about 550 BC)

Daniel 2:4 Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic: through the end of Daniel 7 is in Aramaic.

Note that DSS has the same Hebrew/Aramaic split.

Date of writing: 6th century BC. Daniel lived until at least 536 BC when he had his last vision.

Skeptics: Daniel written around 160 BC. It is “pseudepigraphic” (There were many pseudepigraphic Hebrew writings from 200 BC to AD 200 Baruch, for example, which everyone knew were pseudepigraphic)

Evidence pro:

1. Existence of Greek words in the text, when Greece did not conquer the area until 335 BC.

 But…. Very few Greek words. What words from an unfamiliar language are incorporated first? Chinese word for guitar is guitar.

Greek words in Daniel are some of the musical instruments in Daniel 3:5

2. Supposedly a fairly modern type of Aramaic is found in the Aramaic sections.

 Most conservative scholars totally deny this. There is no evidence of later Aramaic style at all. It is more of a Mesopotamian than a modern, Judean Aramaic.

3. The real reason. If Daniel was written by 535 BC, then Daniel is without

 the slightest possibility of a shadow of a doubt the inspired word of God.

4. Almost every commentary I have read claims that the book of Daniel is a blatant fake. A total lie!

Evidence con:

1. Septuagint translation from Hebrew to Greek about 200-170 BC. Hard to

 translate before it was written.

2. Daniel manuscripts have been found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Eight

 fragments have been found, with parts of all but ch 12 (which is actually

 quoted in another DSS). The oldest two have been dated to 150-100 BC

3. Would it be possible to convince the ultraconservative rabbis to accept a

 blatant faked book into the canon of the scripture. It is impossible to

 claim that Daniel was accepted later than 100 BC, even for the greatest

 die-hard skeptic.

4. We will see that Daniel predicts amazingly specific things way after 165

 BC. Therefore the whole argument totally falls apart. (skeptics will

 deny this, and thus their bogus arguments about Daniel 2 etc, as we will

 see)

Historical background.

1. 722 BC Samaria destroyed by Assyria.

2. 612 BC Assyria/Nineveh destroyed by Nabopolassar (Babylonian) and Cyaxares (Median).

605 BC Nebuchadnezzar son of Nabopolassar king of Babylon

 Neb attacks Jerusalem, Jehoiakim submits, captives and

 tribute/treasure taken to Babylon. (beginning of Jeremiah’s 70

 years?

600 Judah rebels

597 Neb returns, attacks Jer. Jehoachin taken as captive to Babylon.

 Zedekiah installed as puppet king.

586. Zedekiah rebels, Neb. Returns, Jerusalem and Solomon’s temple

 leveled. (beginning of the 70 years of captivity?)

Nebuchadnezzar succeded by Evil-Merodach, then Nabonidus, then Belshazzar.

550 Cyrus reigns over Media/Persia

 a. 546 Lydia

 b. 538 Babylon

 c. 530 Egypt

538 Babylon captured by Cyrus’ armies. Decree to return to native lands. (Ezra 1) (Daniel 5) Media/Persia takes over Babylonian empire.

537/6 Jewish captives return to Jer. to build temple

522 Darius king. Decree to rebuild temple. Second return (Ezra 6)

 (battle of Marathon, invasion of Greece)

516 Temple completed. (Haggai, Zechariah) Note: This is 70 years after the captivity (See Jeremiah 29)

486 Xerxes. (Thermopylae battle, Esther.)

464 Artaxerxes (decree to rebuild Jerusalem, 3rd return under Ezra,

 Nehemiah, Malachi)

336 Alexander takes throne of Macedon

334-332 Crosses into Asia, Conquers entire Persian Empire

323 Alexander dies

315 Four successor dynasties take over

311. Seleucus, general of Ptolemies, establishes separate dynasty.

185-163 Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes rules over Jerusalem.

167 Temple desecrated.

164 Macabeean revolt. Temple cleansed

63 Pompei conquers Jerusalem for Rome.

31 Battle of Actium. Greek power ends

6/5 Jesus born under Rome

29 AD Jesus crucified.

70 Titus destroys Jerusalem

Outline of Class

I. Practical examples in the lives of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Ch 1,3-6). Remaining righteous in a pagan world.

II. Prophecies of the future. Ch 2,7-12

Ch I Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael Will they compromise their

 convictions under pressure from the world?

Background:

605 Captives sent from Jerusalem for assurance of submission. Children of the leading families in Jerusalem.

Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael children of aristocratic families, taken as captives.

Babylonians try to make them Babylonian

Change their names

Daniel → Belshazzar (named after the chie pagan god of Babylon: Bel Belshzzar = “may Bel protect his life”)

Hananiah → Shadrach etc… v 5,6

Educate them in their culture. v 4,5

Offered wealth and power in the new system as a bribe to become Babylonian.

Similar to Joseph (taken as a captive as child, raised up to position of power, tempted to compromise, etc. ) in many ways.

Will they lose their convictions?

But….. God is in control.

Isaiah 39:6,7 Notice that the prophecy includes being made eunuchs.

Daniel 1:2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiachim

1:9 God caused the official to show favor to Daniel.

1:17 God gave them knowledge and understanding.

1:8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself. He refused to lose his Jewishness.

Do you refuse to lose your Christianness when people at work ask you to make teensy compromises with your conviction.

Daniel SM&A purposefully made an issue out of it to prove to themselves and their boss their conviction. They went overboard.

Q: Have we gone overboard to make our Christianness stick out or have we gone overboard to not make too many waves at work?

v. 11 Please test your servants.

Q: Is it wrong or a bad thing to rise to positions of prominence in an ungodly world?

Q: What are the potential pitfalls?

Q: How might we imitate DSM&A at work?

V 20,21 God sees a man willing to not compromise his convictions at all. Blesses him fully.

 By the way…. About 604 BC till 538 BC a long time… We will see that Daniel and friends never compromised even one bit.

Theme verse of Daniel Daniel 12:3

Ch III The image of gold and the fiery furnace THE FIRES OF PERSECUTION

Do not conform to the pressure of the religious world to conform.

How will your faith hold up?

The Scene:

A few years after DSM&A entered service to Nebuchadnezzar.

A giant idol is built in the plains of Dura. (a large open plane not far from Babylon where tens of thousands could gather.

Note the relationship to Daniel 2 with the statue. Neb has forgotten what he learned back then.

Where is Daniel? Off on a mission?

Nebuchadnezzar calls a big party, and guess who is invited. Attendance was not optional!

3:4-6 Imagine you are SM&A What thoughts go through your mind?

“I will bow my head, but not my heart. God will understand”

Talk about peer pressure!!

Their religious friends (and even fellow-Jews?) Don’t be so hard line.

Appn: Jews in time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Many wanted to combine Greek culture and philosophy with Judaism.

Appn: Persecutions of Diocletian: Some offered the sacrifice to the Roman god. What should the church do with these people after the persecution ended?

Appn: the denominational world/ecumenical movement, etc….

You don’t really have to be so committed.

Are you really saying all these people are lost? How could you be so arrogant.

Daniel 1: Pressure on the job

Daniel 3: Pressure from our religious friends.

SM&A: Would God really want me to die now? Doesn’t he have great things in store for me? What would it hurt for me to compromise?

Q: Was their “salvation” at stake?

Q: What would you have done? Really…. My kids….

Me: Barney Ellison

V 7 the horn etc. blow. 30,000 bow and three remain standing. Being a disciple might make you stick out. Are you ready for that? (Remember Antiochus Epiphanes)

v. 13. Dragged to furnace. Neb is furious. Gives one more chance to repent

SM&A refuse to bow.

I love v 16-18. Note

1. God is able

2. But even if he does not, we refuse to compromise our devotion to God.

Is that your attitude about the truth of the gospel? Imagine how awesome an example this was to the Jews suffering under Antiochus Epiphanes.

Even as they were dragged to the flames, they could have changed their minds.

7 times hotter. Critics: here is a mistake in Daniel.

What was going through their minds as they were dragged to the furnace?

3:22-25

Result:

1. Nebuchadnezzar praised God

2. SM&A promoted.

Were they guaranteed this result? No!!!!

Ch IV A KING EATS GRASS

Ch IV is about pride in our own accomplishments.

Theme: God rules the nations. God also rules the rulers of the nations.

Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a giant tree…. 4:10-16. About AD 570, at height of his greatness.

4:17 The theme of ch 4 and one of the themes of Daniel.

 (remember the Jews in time of Antiochus Epiphanes. How could God

 put such an evil man over us?)

v 22 You, O king, are that tree.

v. 27 repent and the calamity may not fall on you.

v. 28 Is this not the great Babylon me my I

Herodotus ( 484-430 B.C) describes the city of Babylon in his day and its splendor.

The city stands on a broad plain, and is an exact square 120 furlongs[1] (13.63 miles) in length each way, so that the entire circuits is four hundred and eighty furlongs (54.52 miles)….It is surrounded, in the first place, by a broard and deep moat, full of water, behind which rises a wall fifty royal cubits in width, (87 feet ) and two hundred in height (350 feet).

On the top, along the edges of the wall, they constructed buildings on a single chamber facing one another, leaving between them room for a four horse chariot to turn. In the circuit of the wall are a hundred gates, all of brass, with brazen lintels and side-posts.

The city is divided into two portions by the river which runs through the midst of it. The river is the Eurphrates, broad, deep, swift stream, which rises in Armenia….The city wall is brought down on both sides to the edge of the stream.

The houses are mostly three and four stories high; the streets all run in straight lines, not only those parallel to the river, but also the cross streets which lead down to the waterside.[2]

The great gardens of Babylon.

1 Cor 4:7 Deut 8:6-18, 2 Cor 12:7-10

 While the words were still on his lips….

For us: Q: How might we be like Nebuchadnezzar?

Nebuchadnezzar appears to have become crazy for a while

 (one obscure historical reference may confirm this story…

 like King George of England)

This illness of Nebuchadnezzar has been diagnosed as insania zoanthropica . Raymond Harrison recites a personal experience in a British Mental institution in 1946,

 The patient was in his early 20’s who reportedly had been hospitalized for about five years. His symptoms were well developed on admission, and diagnosis was immediate and conclusive. He was of average height and weight with good physique, and was in excellent bodily health. His mental symptoms included pronounced anti-social tendencies, and because of this he spent the entire day from dawn to dusk outdoors, in the grounds of the institution…..

His daily routine consisted of wandering around the magnificent laws…and it was his custom to pluck up and eat handfuls fo the grass as he went along. On observation he was seen to discriminate carefully between grass and weeds, and on inquiry from the attendant the writer was told the diet of this patient consisted exclusively of grass from the hospital lawns. He never ate institutional food with the other inmates, and his only drink was water… The writer was able to examine him cursorily, and the only physical abnormality noted consisted of a lengthening of the hair and a coarse, thickened condition of the fingernails. Without institutional care, the patient would have manifested precisely the same physical conditions as those mentioned in Daniel 4:33[3]

It took 7 years, but… v 34

THOSE WHO WALK IN PRIDE, HE IS ABLE TO (WILL) HUMBLE

There are two ways for God to humble us

1. Blessing us

 2. Taking away our blessings. Which would you prefer?

Ch V PARTY ANIMAL MEETS MAN OF GOD

 Or THE WRITING ON THE WALL

 (this is where that saying came from)

The fall of Babylon. October 12, 539 BC

It is no coincidence that Ch 5 follows Ch 4. God rules the nations.

The scene:

Babylon has become decadent

Nabonidus, a semi-legitimate ruler, has gone off into the desert to pursue mystical studies

Belshazzar, his son, is regent

(note: skeptics doubted the reality of Belshazzar. Proof Daniel is fiction. They don’t say this any more. Vs 7 “I will make him the third in the kingdom = #2 behind Belshazzar. Later, records showed. Belshazzar began to rule as co-regent in 553 BC

What Belshazzar does not know: The armies of Cyrus were waiting that very night just outside the city.

Belshazzar is having a drunken party with all his corrupt officials.

v. 3 Drank out of the vessels from the temple of God.

Mistake city!!!!! God rules the nations.

The writing on the wall. (by the way, this plaster-covered wall has been discovered)

V 5. Belshazzar pees his pants.

V 10 The “queen” (probably the queen mother, the mother of Belshazzar, daughter of Nebuchadnezzar) she remembers Daniel.

I love v. 16, 17

Is that your attitude? Notice how Daniel has the same conviction he had in 605 BC, 67 years before. May we maintain such conviction for so long!!

v. 18-23 Daniel, as usual, gives credit to God. A lecture….

Belshazzar, if only you were teachable as was your grandfather Neb. V 22

v. 22 You have set yourself against the Lord of Heaven. (Like Antiochus Epiphanes and Diocletian and others were to do in the future)

Mene,

Mene

Tekel

Parsin

Counted, counted, weighed, divided (double meaning, Persia)

This message is for the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes as much as for Belshazzar. God will judge your persecutors.

5:30 When God says it is time for judgment, things happen fast.

October 12, 539 BC (Herodotus)

Read Daniel book p. 88 Herodotus. Note the festival going on.

Message: persecuted disciples. Do not fear. I am in control. I’ve got your back covered.

CH VI THROWN TO THE LIONS. About 538 BC Daniel 80+

How the world reacts to a righteous man of God.

Who is Darius the Mede? Ugbaru the Median general who conquered Babylon and was appointed governor? Astyages, former king of Media, who was deposed by Cyrus?

Note Daniel 9:1 Darius was “made ruler (not king)” over Babylon.

Note 9:28 The writer is well aware of Cyrus!

Note v. 4,5 They could find no basis for accusation. Could they say that about you? (again, see ch. 1) The only way we will be able to get this guy is to use his righteousness against him.

v. 6,7 the plot is hatched. Anyone who prays…

v. 8 Darius agrees. Pride goes before destruction. Like Jepthah.

Q: Will Daniel be caught in the trap?

What is Daniel’s response? Why did he keep the windows open? Note: Daniel shares his faith at work simply by being righteous. Everyone knows about his faith.

v. 10. He did not change a thing. What is your response when people try to use your righteousness against you?

Me at Marian College. Grossmont. I am the “Christian” professor there. A student tried to get me sued!

v. 12 An unusual law. Because it was a dual kingdom.

v. 16 thrown to the lions. Have you ever felt like that?

God shut the mouths of the lions.

Darius praises God.

Part II Prophecies of the Future

CH II A Dream of the Future.

v. 1 In the second year of his reign… 604 BC

Neb has a dream. Interpret it for me. Fine, tell us. Neb: no, you tell me the dream first, so I will know you are not religious fakes. Or I will kill you all.

v 11. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men. WRONG.

Many so-called charismatics are the same. God told me… I know it in my heart… Do not be intimidated by religious fakes. The world will be able to tell the difference.

Daniel’s prayer: v. 21 He removes kings and establishes king. Surely he can take care of our tough situation! God rules the nations. Do not fear.

v. 28 gives God the glory

The vision

A head of gold.

Chest of Bronze,

Belly and thighs of silver

Legs of iron, but legs are part iron and part clay

v. 37 God has given you dominion and power.

Head = Babylon

Chest = Media/Persia

Belly and Thighs = Greece

Legs = Rome.

Skeptics: head = Babylon Chest = Media Belly = Persia Legs = Greece

Divided kingdom Diocletian AD 284 Permanent after Theodosian AD 395

Clay: Western Rome AD 476

Iron: Eastern Rome—Byzantium until AD 1453

603 BC- AD 1453 over two thousand years.

Premillenialists 10 toes = EC (EU) now 27 countries oops

In time of Rome, God will establish the kingdom of God on the earth. V 44

When God proposes, he disposes.

Daniel VII Daniel’s First Vision. Four Beasts.

This vision focuses on Rome! (so much for 160 BC date of authorship)

First year of Belshazzar (regency) 553 BC

v.4 A lion Babylon lion a major motif. Eagle: Jer 48:40 Look, an eagle is swooping down

The heart of a man given to it. Nebuchadnezzar repents.

v. 5 a bear. Strength. Persia/Media 3 ribs = Lydia, Babylon, Egypt.

v. 6 a leopard. Speed Greece four heads = Antigonus, Cassander, Lysimachus and Ptolemy. (See ch. 8)

v.7 a terrible beast. This vision about Rome. Persecutions.

v. 7 10 horns = 10 kings (v. 24) (The Emperor’s Club)

Augustus…….Titus

v. 8 another horn. An eleventh king. Domitian. First systematic persecutor of Christians. AD 81-96.

This horn will speak boastfully.

Domitian was proverbial for arrogance and pride.

Go to v. 20-25.

v. 21 waging war against the saints. Imagine how 1st century disciples felt when they were persecuted by Domitian, the 11th emperor!!!! God is in control. Do not fear.

Subdue 3 kings: Galba, Otho and Vitellius defeated by his Father, actually. How did Daniel know that?

(Revelation 17:1-18 7 heads and 10 horns (ignoring G, O & V)

v. 8 the beast who once was (Antiochus Epiphanes), now is not, and yet will come (Domitian) God is preparing his people. v. 10,11 the eighth king is Domitian. He is going to his destruction. God is in control, do not fear)

v. 12-14 10 horns are 10 future persecuting emperors of Rome. But the lamb will conquer them….

back to Daniel

v. 25 will try to change the set times. Domitianus a new month

 (got rid of it the day after he died)

v. 25 and the laws. Set up an entirely new set of laws. (like Napolean)

v. 25 3-1/2 times ½ of seven A limited period of persecution.

v. 26,27 so cool (or go back to v. 9) Massively inspiring. But imagine being a 1st-3rd century disciple.

CH VIII Daniel’s second vision. A Ram and a Goat. Greece and Antiochus Epiphanes.

“The third year of King Belshazzar” 551 BC

v. 2 in the citadel of Susa. Later the capitol of Persia.

v. 3 A ram with two horns.

v. 3 A horn which was longer but grew up later. What a strange vision! Persia. Clearly, Daniel sees Media/Persia as one kingdom!!!

v. 4 Charged West (Lydia) North (Babylon) and South (Egypt)

v. 5 Suddenly, a goat charges form the West. Prominent horn: Alexander the Great. 334 BC crossed the Dardenelles.

v. 5 Without touching the ground. By 332, Darius III was dead

Note: Josephus tells the story of Alexander coming to Jerusalem and being showed Daniel.

v. 8 At the height of his power… 323 BC.

v. 8 Four Prominent horns. Antigonus, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy

 (v. 21,22) Not 3, not 5, 4!!!!!

v. 22 The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent the four kingdoms that will emerge from this nation but will not have the same power.

v. 9 Out of one of them. Seleucus 312 BC

v. 9 to the South (Syria) East (Persia, Media, Elam) toward the Beautiful Land (Palestine) All this took over 100 years.

v. 11 It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host—Antiochus had a statue of himself put up in the inner sanctuary of the temple.

v. 11 It took away the daily sacrifice. For three years.

a. see how specific!!

b. See how the Jews would be helped by this!!!!

1 Macabees 1:41-54. vs 57 Antiochus sets up the abomination of desolation.

v. 12 truth thrown to the ground. Hellenizing Jews set up as high priests

1 Maccabees 1:12-15. Jews request to build a gymnasium and to institute pagan practices in Jerusalem.

“Because of rebellion” God is in control. Why did this happen? Because the Jews had not been faithful. If we are not faithful—if we become prideful and do not rely on God he will judge us and discipline us.

Note: After this terrible persecution, Judaism had one of the greatest periods of both political power and faithfulness. This is when the Hasidim took religious power in Israel.

skip to v. 23-25

24. He will become very strong, but not by his own power.

25. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. Is this subtle?

 Back to v. 14 2300 evenings and mornings = 1150 days.

The actual desecration lasted from early Dec 167 – Dec 25 164 BC

 About 1150 days.

Dec 25, 164 Judas Maccabeeus successful revolt Maccabeean kingdom.

Hannukkuh celebrates this. See 1st Maccabees 4:36 f

An intense vision! 8:27 I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king’s business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

v. 25 Antiochus died the next year.

How Did Daniel know all this?

Intense persecution. Temporary. God is in control. Do not fear.

DANIEL IX THE MESSIAH IS COMING TO JERUSALEM.

Darius who was made ruler. An appointed governor, not a hereditary emperor. Daniel is not wrong.

9:1 538 BC The prophecy is coming true.

9:2 I understood from the prophet Jeremiah that the desolation would end after 70 years.

Awesome prayer. v. 5,6 We have sinned. We deserve what has happened to us.

Summarize. V. 17

v. 20,21 While I was still praying. Very encouraging.

v. 24-27

v. 24 Seventy “sevens” = 490 (years? let the fulfillment interpret the prophecy)

 finish transgression…. anoint the Most Holy (anoint = Messiah)

v. 25 issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem

 539 BC Darius Ezra 1 return and rebuild temple

 520 BC Darius Ezra 6 rebuild temple Never worked on wall

 458 BC 7th year of Artaxerxes Ezra 7:13-16 specific permission to

 rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

 445 BC 20th year of Artaxerxes To Nehemiah decree not quoted

 but implied. Specific permission to rebuild wall. Confirmed

 458 BC.

458 - 490 = -32 no! there was no zero BC = AD 33

The simple treatment. The Messiah is coming to Jerusalem around 33 AD.

Read in more detail. The Messiah is coming to Jerusalem during the seventieth week--between 26 and 33 AD. Most likely date of crucifixion was AD 30 (Passover Sabbath on a Saturday 29,33)

Let’s back off. Daniel predicted the year when Jesus would be crucified!!!!

v. 26 The people of the ruler will come. AD 69 Vespasian AD 70 Titus

Destroy the city and the sanctuary. Exactly what happened in AD 70.

Luke 21:20 When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies…

v. 22 the time of judgment on the Jews has finally come.

Matthew 24:12-14 sounds almost exactly like Daniel 8 under Antiochus.

Matt 24:15,16

This is the abomination of desolation of Jesus Christ

My opinion: God gave the Jews 40 years to consider Jesus, then he cut off their religion forever.

Daniel 9:27 He will put an end to sacrifice and offering. So much for the premillenial expectation!

Hebrews 8:13 It will soon disappear.

The abomination of desolation. It is over folks. Titus performs a pagan sacrifice right on the site of the temple.

DANIEL X & XI DANIEL’S FINAL VISION. KINGS OF THE NORTH AND KINGS OF THE SOUTH.

Daniel 10:1 In the third year of King Cyrus 536 BC This vision of a “great war” is the culmination and climax of Daniel.

v. 5-6 Might this be Jesus?

v. 16 An overwhelmingly intense vision. He falls to the ground, his face is deathly pale, he mourned for three weeks…..

10:20 Michael? Gabriel the angel of Israel.

11:2 Three more kings… Cambysses 530-522 Darius I 522-486

 Xerxes 1 Attacked Greece Artaxerxes Biggest attack on Greece

 v. 3 Then a mighty king Alexander

 Parceled out to the four winds. Not go to his descendents. Four successors.

Again, how did Daniel know this?

v. 5 The king of the South will become strong. (the Ptolemaic dynasty under Ptolemy 1)

v. 5 But one of his commanders will become stronger… Seleucus I Nicator

Go to outline. and Read my book p 196 for a while.

v. 21 begins the material on Antiochus.

v. 28-30 Ships of the western coastlands (The Romans intervene to save the balance of power!)

 Antiochus returns frustrated and angry to attack Israel

Read 1 Maccabees 1:10-16 also 1:41-64 4:36-40

v. 31-32 Antiochus desecrates the temple

v. 33-34 The Maccabees/Hasidim will have many defeats, and it will look very bad for a while.

v. 35 (also Daniel 8:25) Encouragement for the faithful Jews. God is in control. Do not fear.

v. 36-45 Rome vs Greece. The fulfillment of v. 35. The battle of Actium 31 BC The end of Greek power.

v. 36 He will exalt himself above every god.

Rome allowed all kinds of gods, as long as you would also worship the god Roma Rome!!!

v. 38 he will honor a god of fortresses. Roma (which later morphed into emperor worship)

v. 39 client kings

v. 40 The battle of Actium. The greatest sea battle in history up to that time.

Octavian (Autustus) vs Marc Antony and Cleopatra.

Why is this here? God is judging the Greek power which persecuted the Jews. God is in control. Do not fear.

v. 41 Edom Moab and Ammon will be delivered (true)

v. 44 Reports from the North (the Parthians attacked some outposts)

CHAPTER XII THE TIME OF THE END (still part of the vision)

Daniel 12 ↔ Revelation 20-22

12:1 persecutions under Rome?

12:2 Rev 20:11-15 Resurrection at end times, followed by judgment

12:3 Those who are wise (like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego)

 will shine….

Theme of Daniel?

Those who lead many to righteousness. … Do not forsake sharing your faith!!

How do I know I will be raised from the dead? Because it was the 11th emperor of Rome…

v. 5,6 How long will it be? My guess; events of AD 70 (see v 7 When the power of the holy people (Jews) is broken)

v. 8 What will happen?

Reply: Daniel, mind your own business. Just trust in God. God is in control. Do not fear. Some will be wise. Some will stubbornly oppose the truth. You, just keep your head and trust in me.

God’s final encouragement to Daniel (and us) You will rest and live with me forever.