**Ezekiel Sermon #1**

**God’s Calls a Prophet**

**Themes in Ezekiel:**

1. The sovereignty/glory of God. (Ezek 1:4f). God’s sovereignty demands both the destruction of Jerusalem and the salvation of God’s remnant. Theodicy.

2. The utter sinfulness of human beings. Israel sinful from birth (23:3) and worse than Sodom (16:46-48) Ezekiel 23 is so graphic it is offensive to some.

3. The inescapability (and justice) of God’s judgment. This is the main theme of Ch 1-24 Ezek 14:12-20 (esp v. 14) Even Noah, Daniel and Job could only save themselves!

Points #2,3 are virtually absent from today’s preaching. A healthy balance of 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 A few hairs tucked away 5:3 the faithful marked 9:4

Background:

Ezekiel 1:1-3

The situation.

Jerusalem/Judah was been defeated 597 BC by Nebuchadnezzar.

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

Zedekiah is a very weak king (Jeremiah “a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways”). In 586 the people will force him to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar (fulfilling the prophecy in Ezekiel)

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

v. 2 5th year of Jehoiachin’s exile 592 BC

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

One would think that Israel would have been softened up by now. One would be wrong.

**I We Need to See God**

Ezek 1:4-21 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.

Apocalyptic literature, so the idea is to get the dramatic picture.

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.

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 Jerusalem 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, eagle Most powerful creatures of earth, wild, field, air.

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)

Q: How do you see God? Like an old man with a beard?

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

When God comes, it is called the Day of the Lord. Is the Day of the Lord a good day? Depends.

Likewise, Jesus is coming back, and he is coming in judgment (unlike the first time he came, which was to bring salvation, not judgment. John 12:47). 2 Cor 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

Q: How do you see God?

If you would be a “prophet” for God you must first “see” God.

CH I just sets the scene. God is on his throne. Theodicy. Just like Revelation. Now the story starts.

**II We Need to Stand Up for God**

Ezek 1:28b -2:8a Ezekiel’s mission (v. 4 say to them: this is what the Lord says.)

Is this not our mission? (not our purpose but our mission)

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

v. 1 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 is like Ezekiel 37 Valley of Dry Bones. Ezekiel the first of a remnant God will raise up through the Holy Spirit. When we were given the Spirit we were commissioned as ministers.

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. 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)

People in the world are still hoping that the world can meet their needs. It cannot!

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.

v. 5 Q: Do the people around you know that a prophet has been among them?

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.

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.

2:6-8a Do not listen to the world. V. 8 “listen to what I say to you.”

Which do you listen to, the world or to God?

**III We Need to Eat the Scroll**

Ezek 2:8b-3:3 Ezekiel eats the scroll. Message: I. We need a personal encounter with God (1:4f) II. We need to stand up for God III 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)

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

v. 4 now go and speak. We need to eat the words before we speak them.

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)

3:8-9 God’s solution: We need to be as hard and stubborn as they are.

[3:10-15 Ezekiel sits silent for seven days. Distressed and Depressed.]

**IV We Need to Be God’s Watchman**

3:16-21 The watchman of Israel. Context: this is a warning/encouragement to Ezekiel that it is time to start delivering the message.

v. 16 At the end of 7 days…. Ezekiel not too fired up about his mission.

Q: What does a watchman watch for? Danger, enemies

Q: Who is coming in this case? God is coming!!! (in the form of Babylon)

v. 18 I will hold you accountable for their blood.

Sobering words. I do not want to be accountable for the “blood” of my family, neighbors, friends, coworkers, etc.

Who have you warned about sin and judgment this week?

Ex: guys in a copy shop in Boulder

We hear about God’s love

We hear God wants to bless us.

Do we hear warning’s of God’s coming judgment?

Are we unwilling to be the Watchman of Israel? We need to teach Eph 2:1-3 and Eph 2:4-10.

In Ezekiel the bad news comes before the good news.

Jer 7:1-8

Q: Are you trusting in deceptive words? Praise the Lord…. God bless….

Jer 6:14

Q: Have you been saying peace, peace…

v. 20 Would God put a stumbling block in front of a person? Yes!

2 Thess 2:9-12 God will give us over to the things we choose to believe in.

Like the Jews in the wilderness: Numbers 11:16-20 They demanded meat and God gave them quail meat until it came out their nostrils.

So, let us trust God so this does not happen to us.

We will get to the good news, but…

I. We need to see God.

II. We need to stand up for God.

III. We need to eat the scroll.

IV. We need to be God’s watchman.

[Skip v. 24-27]

**Ezekiel 4 & 5 Dramatic symbolism. Physical prophecy**

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

Remember, it is 592 BC and Ezekiel has just begun his prophetic ministry.

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?

Bad things will happen to you, but God will be behind it.

Ex: Will….

Ezek 4:4-8

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

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?

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

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

40 years = time of the sin of Judah/Southern Kingdom. (since the reign of Josiah)

v. 8 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.

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.

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.”

Ezek 4:12-17

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. Don’t dress the wounds lightly. Do not say the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. All will go into captivity.

Ezek 5:1-13 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)

v. 2 This is right after he finished the siege parable.

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 descendants 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. 10 eating their own children (fulfilled in Lamentations 4:10)

Thank goodness for Ezek 5:3.

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

Ezek 7:19-20 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 dollar” 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?

v. 27 Then they will know… but “then” will be too late for them.

Ezekiel 9:1-6 The vision is continued.

9:1-2 Executioners from the North with a war club. Babylon.

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

v. 4 “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.”

Q: Do you “grieve and lament” over the detestable things done in our society and culture?

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn (about sin).

Similar to Rev 7:1-17

Righteous are sealed from judgment, but not from suffering when God comes in judgment.

Conclusion: When people sin, all suffer but not all are punished.

Theodicy

There is a big difference between suffering with the guilty and suffering because we are guilty.

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.

God’s love and his justice meet at the cross. For those who repent, love triumphs over justice. For those who do not, his justice triumphs over love.

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

**Ezekiel 10,11**

Ezekiel 10:1-4 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.

10:18 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.

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)

Note: In Ezekiel 43:1-5 After coming in judgment against the people’s sins in 586 BC, the people were restored to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity, the temple was rebuilt and God reoccupied the temple.

This is the pattern throughout the Bible:

God’s people are in the Promised Land, they fall into sin, they are sent into captivity, but God brings a remnant back to the Promised Land.

This is the story of the whole Bible:

**I. Genesis 1 God created the universe and the earth. It was very good.**

**II. Genesis 2 God created man so that we could have an intimate relationship with him.**

**III. Genesis 3 and 4 We messed up very badly—destroying that relationship.**

**IV. Genesis 5-Rev 20 God is repairing the damage done by sin.**

**V. Rev 21-22 God has fixed the problem and we are back in a relationship with him.**

Ezekiel 18 Is God a just God? What is his justice like?

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, but given Ezekiel 8 & 9 this is a completely false claim.]

18:3 God says that every person will be taken as an individual and will be accountable, before God, for what they do individually.

Much of Christianity does not agree with this doctrine. Calvinists. They believe that we 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… also note that in Ezekiel 16:49 the sin Sodom’s people committed were violations of social justice. “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned: they did not help the poor and needy)

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.

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).

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!!!!

Why is God’s justice different?

1. Because, unlike man, God knows the heart.

2. Because Jesus died and was raised to solve the sin/separation problem.

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?” 20:15) 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. 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)

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.

**IV. Ch 19-24 The End of the Road**

**V. Ch 34-36 God Will Save a Remnant**

**IV. Ch 19-24 The End of the Road**

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 588 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.

v. 27 A ruin! A ruin! This was your life due to sin!!!

Ezekiel 23 1-10 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 God dwelt with Samaria and in Judah. (as he dwells in us)

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

In this case, the “prostitution” is idolatry.

Q: v. 7 What have you given yourself to? God sees this as prostitution.

We “prostitute ourselves with “the handsome” (v. 6) and “the elite” (v. 7)

The world is very attractive. Let’s admit it!

23:18-22 Oholibah was worse than her sister! [probably not literally, but because he dwelt in Jerusalem] 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” “boys will be boys” “keeping up with the Jones.”

God will turn away from us in disgust. (v. 18)

Oholah’s and Oholibah’s mistake was that they were not satisfied with God. Q: 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. 28-29 You will become the very thing you hate. This is what sin does!!!! It will “take away everything you have worked for. (v. 29) 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.

Ezekiel 24:1

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. Ezekiel got it exact!!!! The city did not fall for about two years. (2 Kings, Jeremiah)

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 24:11-14

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) (being a prophet of God can require a great cost to us)

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

(this is happening while Jerusalem is under siege)

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

Ezekiel 33 Transition chapter bridging Ch 24, Ch 34 (as we will see below)

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.

God’s wrath has been poured out and now it is time for God to come to his people with love and mercy.

**V. Ch 34-48 The Messiah is coming. God Will Save a Remnant.**

Now that the working of God’s wrath is 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!

It is about our opportunity to repent, to return, to be restored to God, and to have our relationship with him rebuilt.

This was all prophesied in Deut 30:1-6

Some of us were banished from God to the most distant land under the heavens.

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 Shepherds, sheep and the Good Shepherd.

bad leadership is condemned,

godly leadership is described

Ezek 34:1-6

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.

This has been my goal, personally, since I came here and it is my goal for 2020.

Q: Who will you take care of?

Q: What stray will you bring back this year?

Q: Will you bring in a lost sheep this year?

The worst possible charge against a shepherd: v. 4 You have treated them harshly and brutally. The result of bad shepherding: The sheep are scattered.

Sheep can be annoying. Young Christians create problems. (Dwayne yesterday)

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.

34:11-16 God: If the shepherds will not do it, then I will shepherd my sheep, and I will create a remnant.

This is a double prophecy about Judah and about the Church.

v. 16 Hopefully you are not the “sleek and the strong.”

34:17-21 The sheep are not completely without responsibility. Do not blame it on bad leadership.

 Do not muddy the water—keeping the best for yourselves. Do not make of yourself a “fat sheep.” (v. 20)

Q: Have you muddied the waters (v. 18) for other Christians by your actions?

Q: Are you a “fat sheep.” (v. 20) Do you take care of yourself first and others come in a distant second?

34:22-31 God’s shepherd—the Messiah—is coming! (John 10:14 I AM the Good Shepherd). 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

**V. Ezekiel 36-39 God is calling a remnant.**

**VI. Ezekiel 40-48 God has restored his remnant.**

Ezekiel 36 The mountain of the Lord

36:22-23 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

At one time you were Oholah or perhaps even Oholibah.

36:24-32 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

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

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

-be ashamed and repent 31

- v. 32 But remember I am not doing this because you were doing so awesome. Note: he says this twice for a reason.

-much fruit

Ezek 36:33-38 God calls a remnant.

Your ruins will be rebuilt. This is your life in Christ.

Your life was ruins before God came into it.

 …like the garden of Eden v. 35 Symbolic of being in the Kingdom of God.

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.

Q: Can you relate?

God puts his spirit into the bones and they come alive.

We were dead, but God makes us alive by the Holy Spirit.

Read 37:11-14

Ezekiel 37:24-28 My dwelling place will be with them and David my servant will be their prince.

Q: Is Jesus your prince/Lord?

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

This is about the church, but it is also about heaven/the Kingdom of God

Ezekiel 38-39 God and Magog—the enemies of God’s people—come to attack God’s people in unwalled cities. But God destroys Gog and Magog. God’s people are saved.

The message: God is in control. It may look bad. It may look like God’s enemies are winning, but God is in control and he will win.

Some of us feel like we can’t make it. Can I really make it all the way to the end? Will I be overcome by sin and go back to the world?

It seems like our enemies are lined up against us.

Q: Has anyone felt this way at one time?

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

Magog is the forces of evil arrayed against us

Gog is the evil person working against us.

38:1-6 I am against you Gog, and your people Magog.

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

Q: Have you ever felt “surrounded” by the world/by forces of evil? What thoughts came into your mind at the time?

38:7-12

v. 8 You will invade the Promised Land “gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel”

v. 10-12

v. 11 unwalled cities. God’s people living in security. No problem. God will destroy them without a shot. The world will (foolishly?) think you are defenseless.

39:1-10 God will defeat our enemies and give their things to us. Do not fear.

We can live in great confidence

2 Cor 10:3-5 We have powerful weapons. They demolish strongholds.

Hebrews 13:5-6 What can man do to me?

Eph 6:10-20 Full armor. Mighty power.

Revelation 12 Satan is a 3-time loser

-tried to take out Jesus as a baby

-tried to assault heaven

-now taking it out on God’s people, but we know how Revelation ends.

Ezekiel 39:25-29 This is what it is about. This vision is to encourage God’s people that he will protect them.

Q: What will God do for you/us?

v. 26 We can forget our shame and our unfaithfulness.

v. 27 God will prove himself holy through us.

v. 28 Sure, I sent them into exile, but I will restore them to their proper place with me.

v. 29 I will pour out my Holy Spirit on them.

This is the same Holy Spirit which is a deposit, guaranteeing our salvation until the appearing of Jesus.

**VI. Ezekiel 40-48 God has restored his remnant.**

Ezekiel 40-48 The temple rebuilt. The remnant is reestablished.

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the Kingdom of God/God with his people.

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.

This section is about God’s holiness—his perfection, and about dwelling with God.

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

Sample passage Ezek 40:20f

Ezek 43:1-7 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).

Application: God comes and dwells in us as a temple. This is our spiritual resurrection (Ezek 37)

We sinned. God left us, but now, we have been restored and God is entering his temple.

a. Individually we are the temple of the Lord 1 Cor 6:19-21

Q: How does this knowledge affect how you think about yourself?

b. Collectively we are the temple of the Lord (Eph 2:19-22)

Q: How does this knowledge affect how you think about yourself?

43:10-12 Why is God giving us all this precise details? “that they may be ashamed of their sins.”

What a strange statement. Why does God say this to Israel? To us?

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).

Application for us: We do not need to feel ashamed, but we do need to remember that at one time we were ashamed.

43:12 All the area on top of the mountain will be most holy.

Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts.

[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.]

[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.

Point: We are the spiritual Zadokites.

 v. 23 teach the difference between the holy and the common.

v. 28 I am to be their only inheritance. They will have no possessions in the land.

Q: Application to us? Are you prepared to have God as your only inheritance?]

Ezekiel 47 A vision of the future.

 The river from the temple. Parallel Revelation 22:1-5, This is about God taking care of his people in need. It has imagery from the Garden of Eden.

v. 1-2 It comes from the temple—from God.

v. 3-5 It gets deeper and deeper.

v. 8 It is living water (Zech 14:8, John 7:37-39) How has God given you life?

John 7:38 Whoever believes in my, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. (by this he meant the Holy Spirit)

Ezek 47:12 God will provide food in abundance.

Parallel:

Revelation 22:1-6 Perfect Provision.

Q: What do you feel that you need? What will God do in your life and in the life of the church through the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit gives life!!!!!!

John 7:38 Whoever believes in me, streams of living water

End Ezekiel 48:35 We are back in the garden and “The Lord is There.”