

EZEKIEL

page 2

The sin of Jerusalem. Ezekiel 8 to 11.

From the construction of the tabernacle, by Moses, the glory of God was present with the Jews, [Exodus 40:34-35](#),

This was followed by the later Temple, [1 Kings 8:11](#)

But now Ezekiel is about to see the Glory depart from the temple, because of the sins of the people. Once that happened the Jewish nation would be no different to any of the surrounding Gentile nations, it was the presence of God which made them different and special.

We find in these chapters a vision given to Ezekiel to show the reason for the coming events. As there was no king with the exiles in Babylon, to direct the people, a group of elders had been appointed, by the people, to be the leaders, on the occasion recorded they had come to Ezekiel for possible help and advice.

The vision.

Ezekiel records, *"The hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me."*

The Temple is defiled. [Ezekiel 8:1-18](#).

Ezekiel sees the same glorious being, as he had previously seen. Ezekiel is taken in his spirit from his house into the future, to the temple in Jerusalem.

He sees the glory of God in the temple, verse 4. But the first object he is shown is an *"image of jealousy"*, this is an idol which stirs up "jealousy" from God, The important point is that God cannot be jealous, that is a sin, but God cannot tolerate someone or something taking His place, This was happening to His chosen people, [Deuteronomy 32:19-22](#).

The relationship between the Jewish nation and God is like a "marriage," so what the Jews were doing was having was an *"affair"* with the other *"gods and idols."*

The pagan idol worship of the Gentile neighbour's had been added to the normal worship of the Lord. See [Deuteronomy 7:1-11](#);

[2 Kings 21:1-7](#).

Ezekiel was now taken to a hole in a wall of the temple, this leads into a secret room, there he saw seventy elders of the people offering incense to various images of "creeping things", verse 10, and idols, note verse 12. *"God has left us and cannot see us."* God can see all things and the actions of people.

Ezekiel is moved on and is now looking at the gate of the temple, there he saw the women openly involved in heathen worship, the evil worship of Tammuz, probably a fertility god, who is thought to be like the fertility god Osiris of Egypt.

The fourth sight Ezekiel gets is the twenty-five men at the door of the temple, openly worshipping the sun, their backs to the temple, verses 15,16. As their position was close to an area restricted to the priests, it is possible they were actually priests from the temple. Note [Exodus 20:1-6](#).

verses 17,18, The meaning of the words *"they put the branch to their nose."* is unknown but appears to be an insulting action to the Lord. It appears that the people had no fear of God, they just did not care. Note that punishment was on the way, *"provoke me to anger."* Neither will the Lord hear when they cry out during this action of punishment.

A true Believer must make sure there are no "idols" in their lives which can separate them from the Lord.

The people are to be judged. [Ezekiel 9:1 to 10:22](#).

Ezekiel is still in the temple when he hears the command for six armed men to go to the *"brazen altar,"* (probably angels who appeared as men), a seventh man appears to be a scribe, he was instructed to mark those who *"sigh and that cry for all the abominations."* Who were sad for the sins of the people, indicating there was a faithful remnant who still did worshipped the Lord only. This "marking" will also be a sign at the end times,

[Revelations 7:3;](#)

[Revelations 9:4,](#)

Today a Believer is "marked" by the Holy Spirit, [Ephesians 1:13,14.](#)

The remaining men-angels were then instructed to follow behind the scribe-angel who was marking the people, any who were not marked were to be killed, no one was to be spared, their sex or age was not considered, just the mark.

What Ezekiel was seeing was in the future, the people could not have seen the marks given by the scribe angel, the Babylonian army did not destroy Jerusalem and the people until 586 BC, while the vision Ezekiel is living takes place in 592 BC,

[Ezekiel 8:1.](#)

Because the temple had been defiled by the idol worship the command was to start the judgement there.

Consider [1 Peter 4:17](#)

This also applies to the Church today.

A dead body was unclean to a Jew, Therefore, the dead bodies would defile the temple, but it had already been defiled by the behaviour of the people.

Ezekiel was shocked by what he saw, he tried to intercede with God. In reply to this appeal the Lord again revealed His glory,

[Ezekiel 10:8-22.](#)

In the vision we find a few small feature changes, compared with the vision in,

[Ezekiel 1:1ff.](#)

The living creatures are "*full of eyes*," in the faces of the cherubim, verse 14. The face of an ox is apparently replaced by the "face of a cherub", it may be the effect of the position of Ezekiel to the Cherubims. We must also remember that these living creatures were Cherubims so would have had the "face of a cherub."

The glory of God departs the threshold of the house and then stood over the chariot. The glory of God cannot remain in the defiled temple.

The chariot now moves to the door of the east gate of the temple.

The leadership failed. [Ezekiel 11:1-25](#)

Ezekiel again sees the twenty-five men at the door of the temple, openly worshipping the sun, amongst them is Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. Ezekiel is told that these men "**give wicked counsel in this city.**" They worshipped the sun so could not be getting any guidance messages from God. Their advice encourage the people to build houses, they had a saying "*It is as safe as a piece of meat in a pot*," the Jews believed that they were like the choice cuts of meat and so would not be rejected. This message was given by these false priests even though Jeremiah had previously warned that the Babylonian army would come, [Jeremiah 26:1ff.](#)

God instructs Ezekiel to say "they are the butchers, not the meat, they had killed to gain riches." If these leaders were not killed in Jerusalem by the Babylonian army then they will be caught as they flee to the border by the Babylonian soldiers, see [2 Kings 25:8-21.](#)

As Ezekiel preached the message, in his vision he saw Petaliah drop dead.

Again Ezekiel pleads for God to protect His people.

Verses 14-21, God gives a word of encouragement for Ezekiel, He promised to keep His people, "*they may be scattered but I will be with them and eventually I will return them to the land of Israel.*"; This promise goes beyond the exiles later return from Babylon.

The Glory of the Lord leaves the earth. [Ezekiel 11:22-23.](#)

The chariot had remained at the east gate of the temple with the glory of God, now the chariot moves off with the glory of God above it. It moves to the Mount of Olives.

The Temple was finally destroyed in 586 BC, so there was no place on earth where the glory was until the birth of the Son of God, Jesus,

[Luke 2:9,32;](#)

[John 1:14.](#)

The vision ends. [Ezekiel 11:24,25.](#)

Ezekiel is returned by the Holy Spirit to his house, where he told the elders all he had seen and heard.

How many believed we are not told. Four years later the siege of Jerusalem started, later they were to be told of the destruction of the temple by the Babylonian army.

The Words of God are true and never fail.

False and the Truth. Ezekiel 12 to 14.

Confidence in the false information. [Ezekiel 12:1-28.](#)

The people would not listen to the various messengers sent by God, So Ezekiel was instructed to "act out" his messages to make the people listen.

Escaping from a besieged city. [Ezekiel 12:1-16.](#)

Ezekiel is instructed to act out an escape from Jerusalem, this action sermon takes place over a period of time, part of his act was in daylight, part at night.

His first action is to prepare a package of essentials for a journey, this he then hid somewhere away from his house. That evening he returns to the house and digs a small hole through one wall, the houses were made of mud bricks so this would be reasonably easy. The people are watching his actions.

He now collects his hidden package and enters his house, then climbs out through the hole he made, his face is covered and he is not able to see. What was the message?

The sermon indicated that the leaders in Jerusalem were preparing to flee from Jerusalem, they had prepared essential supplies and hidden them. The hole in the wall indicated that the Babylonian's were about to enter the city and were attacking the walls. Finally, by night the leaders flee the city. History records that king Zedekiah, his advisors and his army used this method of escape but were soon captured by the Babylonian army, [2 Kings 25:1-7.](#)

The Babylonian soldiers killed the king's sons, and his advisors in front of the king, then put out his eyes.

Ezekiel told the leaders in Babylon the next morning what was the meaning of the action message and what was about to happen, just as planned by God, who was using the Babylon nation to punish His people.

Terror fills the people. [Ezekiel 12:17-28.](#)

A second action sermon, probably soon after the first. Ezekiel is instructed to eat his small amount of food and water while shaking with fear. This was to indicate what was about to happen in the city of Jerusalem.

None of the Ezekiel visions had been immediately fulfilled so the people doubted the visions, they believed only in the false prophets, hence they quoted the proverb, *"The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?"* Probably made by the false prophets. God then responded with *"I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision."* the replacement proverb has the meaning "The day approaches when all visions will be fulfilled."

"Why worry? Prophecies come to nothing." There are many today who have this attitude, who do not believe in the soon return of Christ,

[2 Peter 3:1ff;](#)
[Matthew 16:3.](#)

Through out this message the Words of God, *"For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass;"* are emphasized, verse 27. Ezekiel was told *"they will be fulfilled very soon,"* verse 28. Six years later Jerusalem fell to the Babylonian soldiers.

The False Prophecy. [Ezekiel 13:1-23.](#)

Woe unto the foolish prophets.

There was a number of people who claimed to have "a word from the Lord." They claimed to speak with His authority. These prophets and prophetesses were using the occult, (black magic, supernatural belief), which was an act forbidden to the Jews. [Deuteronomy 18:9-14.](#)

The prophets are lying, [Ezekiel 13:1-16.](#)

The Lord states that these people see nothing and lie, they had no call from God and never heard His voice, all their messages were self created and probably from Satan. Ezekiel compares them to foxes, who scavenge in the ruins, only caring for themselves. Ezekiel is then told they are like builders, who are building "walls" but using weak material and covering, when a storm is generated by God, the wall fails, like their false messages. These prophets were only supplying the messages the people want to hear, not the truth.

In verse 9, God describes what will happen to these false prophets, they will lose their position of power, be exposed as fakes then prevented from returning to the promised land. *"ye shall know that I am the*

Lord GOD."

Read the words of Jesus concerning false prophets, [Matthew 7:17-27](#).

The sorceresses. [Ezekiel 13:17-23](#).

These women appeared to be using magical arts, which were forbidden to the Jews, [Deuteronomy 18:9-14](#).

They were producing magical charms for the people to wear. They told peoples fortunes for money, *"for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread"* but really they were animals hunting and trapping the people, giving a false hope, which kept the people from trusting the Word of God. *"I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the LORD."* verse 23.

The sins of the people.

[Ezekiel 14:1-11](#).

Ezekiel had been made to stay in his house and not speak, except when he had a message from God, [Ezekiel 3:24-27](#).

The elders of the Jews were coming to Ezekiel to see what he was doing and to hear his words.

On this occasion he received two messages for them from the Lord.

Their hidden sins.

These men were behaving just the same as the men Ezekiel had seen in his vision of the temple, [Ezekiel 8:1ff](#).

They appeared to be serving the Lord but were secretly worshipping idols. Now they had come to the Lord's messenger, Ezekiel, to receive the message but their hearts were really elsewhere. As a result, the message was a warning that God will judge them each personally unless they repented.

Verse 7,8: This tells us that if anyone *"who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart,"* will find that God will use them as warning example to others who do not repent.

Verse 9: This could suggest that God has failed, but the people knew His commandments and therefore knew that idol worship was a sin, [Exodus 20:1-6](#). God may allow false prophets just to test the faith and trust of the people, see [2 Thessalonians 2:11,12](#).

A Faith that is False.

[Ezekiel 14:12-23](#).

Four Judgements are describe in this passage.

Famine: In [Deuteronomy 28:15-20](#), [Deuteronomy 28:38-40](#) and [Deuteronomy 28:50-57](#) we find warnings that judgement will be given if they failed to obey the Word of the Lord.

Why did the Lord refer to Noah, Daniel and Job? These were men of faith and declared righteous, if they were still alive and living in the land their righteousness was personal and therefore could only deliver them, their presence could not save the people from the judgement of their sin, because it was also personal. The leaders were teaching that just a few righteous would prevent judgement by God. A false hope, there is no such thing as a "borrowed faith". See [Romans 3:19-25](#).

Wild beasts: See [Leviticus 26:22](#). The promise. Again the presence of Noah, Daniel and Job would not be able to prevent the animals killing other people.

The sword: The Babylonian army were soon to spread through the land, showing no mercy.

Pestilence: Death from the sword and famine will soon brings health problems, sickness and disease will soon be spread.

The Judgement of God. [Ezekiel 14:21-23](#).

Some people may feel that the promised judgements were far to severe, especially the false prophets.

The people deserved all that was promised because of their sin, but God, in His grace, was preparing a way out for a remnant, who will be saved by being taken to Babylon as slaves. Unfortunately, it appears that the hearts of some of this remnant were very sinful and their eyes were blinded to what they had done and the terrible punishment that was about to be suffered by the people. *"ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD."*

The messages are ignored. Ezekiel 15 to 17.

God knows the hearts of men and knew that the elders were only seeking Him for show, their hearts were actually on other ways of worship, they thought the messages from Ezekiel were more as an entertainment

than that he was a messenger from God.

In the next chapters we see three more messages given to these elders, who were at the time seated in the house of Ezekiel. Because they were blind to the word messages from God, Ezekiel has to use "*action sermons*," communicating with actions, pictures and parables.

The vine with no value. [Ezekiel 15:1-8](#).

The vine is a common image used in the Bible, often it is referring to the Jewish nation,

[Isaiah 5:1-7](#);

[Jeremiah 2:21](#);

[Matthew 21:28-46](#);

[Luke 20:9-19](#).

The nation was planted by God in the Promised Land and brought much "*worship fruit*" at the beginning, but idol worship appeared during the reign of Solomon and the "vine" produced poor and useless "*wild grapes*"

In Ezekiel's story he points out how worthless is the vine if it does not produce grapes. A vine is soft wood, not like a tree which can be made into furniture when it dies, the only use for a vine is as firewood and even then the ash left has no value.

Read [2 Chronicles 36:1ff](#) to see an example of the "*fire of God*" being applied to the "*vine of Israel*."

There is another vine mentioned in the Bible, [John 15:1-8](#), this vine is the true Believers, a Believer is not condemned by sin, Jesus has paid the penalty. In the message from Jesus the burning of the vine is indicating a life used for Christ producing nothing of worth for Him.

The unfaithful wife. [Ezekiel 16:1-63](#).

Verses 1-14. Both the city of Jerusalem and the whole nation are included in this message, it gives the spiritual history of the nation from the call of Abraham, through the giving of the covenant, "*the marriage*." The many blessings given by God to His "*wife*." The people were proud of their relationship with God, they were calling the Gentiles "*Dogs*," but God reminds them that they came from the Gentiles, the Amorites and Hittites, [Genesis 10:15,16](#). Abraham was once an idol worshipper until he was called by God, [Joshua 24:2,3](#).

No one looked after this young baby nation, no one made sure the nation was made clean or removed its connection to the original "mother". God passed by and took pity, by His grace, He gave them life through His Word.

The "baby" nation grows up and becomes a "young woman," - "*art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare*," verse 7. Unfortunately the nation were now slaves in Egypt, so the Lord needed to "redeem her," (to buy her back from being a slave) so He "passed by again," verse 8. "*I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness*:" this is the act of a man wanting to offer marriage at the time, to become engaged. see [Ruth 3:9](#) as an example.

The "wife" was washed and made fit to become a "queen." During the reigns of David and the early period of Solomon the Jews were well blessed, obeying the Word of God. He kept His covenant with the nation, unfortunately the people turned away from Him to the worship of idols, they took on "spiritual prostitution."

The nations great sin, [Ezekiel 16:15-34](#).

When Israel became wealthy and well known amongst the Gentiles they left the worshipping of the True God. They still took all His blessing but turned to worship man made idols, they worshiped the creation, not the creator, [Romans 1:21-25](#). the nation, "she", turned away from her "husband," preferring the false gods. She in fact went looking for and paid for the privilege of a false god, using the blessings and gifts of God to do so, verses 15-21.

There was another side to their turning away from God, they now relied upon other nations for protection instead of the Lord, verses 23-34. It started with king Solomon when he married daughters from other countries, to make treaties with them for trade and protection. Strangely, considering their history, the Jews especially wanted a connection with Egypt for their protection.

Read [Deuteronomy 6:4-16](#);

[2 Corinthians 11:1-4](#);

[James 4:1-10](#);

[Revelations 2:4](#).

The great punishment. [Ezekiel 16:35-47.](#)

Despite many warnings,

[2 Chronicles 36:11-21](#),

They knew the covenant rules, but the Jews continued to turn away from God, even when some had already become slaves in exile. Now God lists the crimes, verses 35,36. Then the Lord tells of the punishment to come, they are to be burned, stoned, killed by the sword and their possessions destroyed, verses 37-42. As given in the law for those who turned to prostitute and adultery,

[Leviticus 21:9](#),

[Leviticus 20:10](#);

[Genesis 38:24](#).

Finally God will use the surrounding "lover" nations to be the executioners, publicly exposed the nation as an "adulteress," He allowed them to strip the city of Jerusalem and His temple and destroy them.

Verses 43-52: God knew what they had done and their hearts desires, He had patiently waited, but they refused to turn back to Him. They forgot all His gifts and did not understand the importance of their sins. They had come from idol worshipping people and now were turned back, "like father, like son."

Verses 44-59. "Your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite." God compares them with other nations known to be sinful, Samaria, Sodom, yet because the Jews knew the Law of God their sins were even worse, they made the other nations look good! God judged Sodom and Gomorrah with fire, what will He do to His own people who sinned?

Restored Israel. [Ezekiel 16:60-63.](#)

"I will remember my covenant with thee." There was still a small group who humbly sort the Lord. However, this passage refers to "an everlasting covenant." It therefore must be reserved for the future end times. There will be a time when the people of Israel will remember their sins and recognize the grace and goodness of God through Jesus Christ, "never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame."

The Eagles and shoots. [Ezekiel 17:1-24.](#)

This message is like a parable, a story with another meaning, we are considering a tree, two eagles and three plants. God hopes that Ezekiel's story will make the people think.

The vine represents Judah, the tree represents the royal family of king David, it was through this family or Dynasty, that the Messiah would come. The first eagle represents Nebuchadnezzar, who was controlling the kingdom of Judah, the second eagle is referring to an Egyptian king, who has promised to help Judah against the Babylonian king.

The three plants or "shoots" represent three kings. King Jehoiachin was taken off to Babylon, verses 3,4 and verses 11,12, the top most branch of the tree.

Following a short reign of three months under king Jehoiachin, he was removed and Zedekiah was made king by Nebuchadnezzar, unfortunately he only produced a "lowly vine," he was a poor leader, during his eleven year reign, verses 5-10 and verses 13-21. He broke an agreement with Nebuchadnezzar and turned to Egypt for help, the second eagle. The Egyptian's attempt to help Judah failed, and king Zedekiah was eventually removed, the "vine" uprooted and died, verse 16; [2 Kings 24:17 to 25:7](#).

Nebuchadnezzar will not now tolerate king Zedekiah, so killed his sons, blinded him and took him to Babylon where he died. Zedekiah had also turned from God by turning to Egypt. It was by the action of God which resulted in his punishment, see [2 Kings 25:1-10](#).

Zedekiah was the last of the kings of Judah, so the line of David seems to have ended, but Zerubbabel was the great-great grandson of king Josiah,

[1 Chronicles 3:17-19](#)

[Matthew 1:11-16](#).

Verses 22 to 24, A third "shoot," Verse 22 will be cultivated, and it will grow into a giant tree which will give protection to nature, this is referring to the Messiah, whose kingdom will one day be on earth, but for this to happen the other "trees" or kingdoms, will need to be destroyed, a prophecy for the future.