

Ezekiel: Bible Study Guide

BY RIVERTREE CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES



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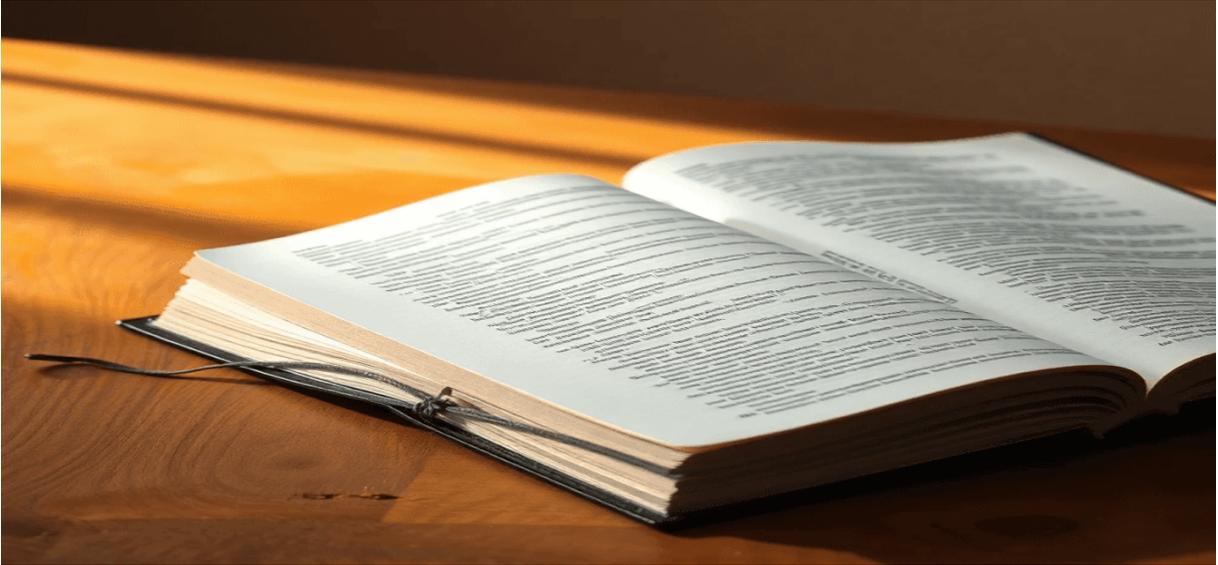
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INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL



Author and Date

Ezekiel, son of Buzi, was born into a priestly family, probably Zadokite, and fulfilled the ritual requirements to serve as a priest. Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon in 597 BCE, along with 10,000 other upper-crust captives (New Interpreter's Bible, 1994). The deportation is described in 2 Kings 24:14-16. Like Jeremiah (1:2) and Zechariah (1:1), Ezekiel was called by God from being a priest to serving as a prophet. As God's spokesman to the Jewish exiles in Babylon, he would rebuke them for their sins and expose their idolatry, but he would also reveal the glorious future the Lord had prepared for them (Wiersbe, 2007).

Ezekiel was called to become God's prophet during Israel's exile in Babylon. His name means "God strengthens," fitting his prophetic calling (3:8-9). He was a contemporary of Jeremiah (about 20 years older) and Daniel (roughly the same age). His ministry began in 593/592 BCE and lasted at least 22 years, until 571/570 BCE (29:17). He was also called to serve as a sentinel or witness among the exiles, warning them of impending danger (Attridge,

2006). Ezekiel delivered God’s message to the exiles using visions, prophecies, parables, signs, and symbolic acts.

Chronological Framework

Ezekiel dates his oracles more precisely than any other prophet, using a system based on the exile of King Jehoiachin (597 BC). This suggests the following timeline:

- **Chapters 1–24:** Oracles delivered before the fall of Jerusalem (593–585 BC), focusing on Judah’s coming judgment.
- **Chapters 25–32:** Oracles against seven foreign nations, delivered both before and after Jerusalem’s fall.
- **Chapters 33–48:** Messages of restoration and hope.

Biblical Themes

Ezekiel provides a theological interpretation of the Babylonian exile, moving from God’s judgment to ultimate restoration. Daniel I. Block (1997), in his detailed exegesis, systematically traces the movement from judgment to restoration, identifying the “knowledge of the Lord” as the central thematic refrain of the book. He provides extensive analysis on the departure and return of God’s glory, the development of individual responsibility in Chapter 18, the watchman role, the shepherd metaphor, and the promises of spiritual renewal under a new covenant and a restored, messianic kingdom. Block’s authoritative commentary is a primary academic source that develops the theological framework outlined below (Block, D. I, 1997).

1. **The Knowledge of the Lord.** A central refrain is that God acts “so that they will know that I am the LORD.” This phrase appears over 60 times. The exile itself was a dramatic revelation of God’s holy character, His justice in punishing covenant rebellion, and His sovereignty over all nations.

2. **The Glory of God.** God's majestic, mobile presence (depicted as a radiant, mobile throne-chariot in chapter 1) is a key motif. The glory progressively departs from the defiled temple in Jerusalem (Ch. 8–11) but ultimately returns to dwell in the future, purified temple (Ch. 43), signifying God's enduring presence with His people.
3. **Individual Moral Responsibility.** Ezekiel directly confronts the exiles' fatalistic proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (18:2). He insists each person is accountable for their own sin and righteousness before God (Ch. 18, 33).
4. **The Role of the Prophet as Watchman.** Ezekiel is appointed as a spiritual "watchman" for Israel (3:16-21; 33:1-9). His duty is to warn the wicked; his personal responsibility is discharged by faithfully delivering God's message, regardless of the people's response.
5. **God as the Divine Shepherd.** In contrast to Israel's failed leaders ("shepherds"), God Himself promises to seek, rescue, and shepherd His scattered sheep (Ch. 34). This theme culminates in the promise of a Messianic shepherd from the line of David (34:23-24).
6. **Spiritual Renewal and the New Covenant.** Restoration is not merely political. God promises a radical inner transformation": I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you... I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees" (36:26-27). This is a core expression of the New Covenant.
7. **The Messianic Kingdom.** Ezekiel envisions an idealized future restoration, the regathering and reunification of Israel and Judah (Ch. 37, the vision of the dry bones). Final victory over the cosmic enemy Gog (Ch. 38–39). A rebuilt temple from which a life-giving river flows, and a reorganized holy community where "the LORD is there" (48:35).

Major Literary Forms

Below is a summary of major literary forms used in the book of Ezekiel.

- **Visions** Extended, detailed scenes such as the chariot-throne of God (Ch. 1), the defiled temple (Ch. 8–11), and the new temple (Ch. 40–48).
- **Symbolic Actions** Ezekiel performs physical signs that dramatize his message, like lying on his side for 390/40 days (4:4–8) or not mourning his wife’s death (24:15–27).
- **Allegories and Parables:** Lengthy metaphors, such as Jerusalem as an unwanted child (Ch. 16) or as a vine (Ch. 15, 19).
- **Divine-Speech Formulas:** The phrase “the word of the Lord came to me” appears more than 50 times, emphasizing the prophet’s role as a mouthpiece.

Course Overview

Course Goal

Using the Bible as the conceptual framework, we will examine the judgments and promises of restoration in the Book of Ezekiel.

Lesson Objectives

- Heighten awareness of what scripture says about judgment and restoration.
- Analyze current issues in light of biblical principles.
- Apply key images, ideas, and themes found in the text.
- Evaluate issues from multiple perspectives.
- Identify modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications.

Chapter 1



Chapter Summary

In Chapter 1, Ezekiel, living among other Jewish exiles in Babylon, sees a vision of the “glory of the Lord” near the river Chebar. There, the hand of the Lord is upon him, and he is called to be a prophet. He experiences a divine vision, a great, angry storm cloud with flashing lightning. At its center are four mysterious living creatures. Each creature has four faces: human, lion, ox, and eagle, and four wings. They move together in perfect harmony, guided by a spirit. Beside each creature is a sparkling wheel, and these wheels can move in any direction without turning. The sound of their wings is like rushing water.

Above the creatures, Ezekiel sees a dazzling throne made of gemstones. Sitting on the throne is a figure glowing like fire and brilliant light. This is “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.” When Ezekiel sees this, he falls face down on the ground, awed and afraid. The vision shows Ezekiel that God’s power and presence are everywhere, even in a foreign land.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Vision of God's Glory:** The central event is Ezekiel's overwhelming vision of God's majesty and mobility. This establishes the book's authority. Ezekiel speaks because he has seen the Lord.
- **The Four Living Creatures (Cherubim):** These hybrid beings (human, lion, ox, eagle) represent the fullness of creation and God's supreme power over all realms. Their synchronized movement shows God's complete control.
- **The Wheels Within Wheels:** Symbolizing God's omnipresence and omniscience. They move in any direction instantly without turning, showing God is not limited by time, space, or earthly constraints. They are full of eyes, representing perfect knowledge.
- **The Expanse and the Throne:** The crystal platform above the creatures signifies the separation between heaven and earth. The sapphire throne and the fiery, human-like figure represent God's royal authority and overwhelming yet somewhat approachable presence.
- **The Storm and Fire:** Images of immense power, awe, and judgment. God arrives not in a gentle whisper but in a supernatural tempest, establishing His role as Judge.
- **The Call of a Prophet:** The vision's purpose is to commission Ezekiel. Seeing God's glory prepares him to deliver messages of judgment and hope with divine authority, regardless of his circumstances in exile.

- **God's Mobility:** A crucial theme: God's throne-chariot is not fixed in Jerusalem. He is present with His people even in a foreign land (Babylon), challenging the belief that He could be worshiped only in the Temple.
- **Human Response:** Ezekiel's reaction—falling facedown—is the only appropriate response to such holiness and power, modeling reverence and submission.

This chapter sets the theological foundation: God is sovereign, present in judgment, and His word comes through the prophet with ultimate authority.

For Further Engagement

1. What aspect of Ezekiel's complex vision do you find most intriguing?
2. How does the mobility of God's throne-chariot change your understanding of where God can be encountered?
3. Ezekiel describes an overwhelming experience using symbolic imagery. How might you use metaphor or vivid description to convey a powerful personal experience that is difficult to put into plain words?
4. The vision begins with Ezekiel in exile (by the Kebar or Chebar River). How can physical location or a state of displacement sometimes open a person to new perspectives or profound experiences?
5. Ezekiel sees a complex, almost mechanical vision of divine glory. If you were to design a symbolic image or scene to represent an awesome power or idea (like justice, creativity, or nature), what key elements would you include and why?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 2



Chapter Summary

After Ezekiel sees the incredible vision of God's glory in Chapter 1, a voice speaks to him from the throne and tells Ezekiel to stand up. As Ezekiel stands, the Spirit enters him, giving him the strength to listen. The voice identifies itself as the one sending Ezekiel on a mission. His job is to be a prophet to the Israelites, specifically to his own people who are living in exile and who have rebelled against God. The voice warns Ezekiel that they are stubborn and defiant. Whether the people listen to him or not, they will know that a prophet has been among them.

God then tells Ezekiel not to be afraid of the people, even though they might threaten him like thorns and scorpions. God instructs Ezekiel to accept and eat a scroll that will be given to him, which contains the words he is to speak. His mission is to deliver God's message faithfully, regardless of how the people react.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Prophet's Commission: The core of the chapter is God's formal call and assignment of Ezekiel as a prophet, giving him authority and a mission.
- The Message to "Rebellious Israel": God's primary characterization of the audience is their deep-seated "rebellion" against Him: a repeated, defining term throughout the book.
- The Audacity of the Call: God commands Ezekiel to speak "whether they listen or fail to listen." Success is measured by the prophet's faithfulness in delivering the message, not by the people's positive response.
- "Do Not Be Afraid": A direct command given to strengthen Ezekiel for his difficult task. The fear he faces is not of God, but of the hostile, resistant people.
- The Scroll of Lament: The symbolic message Ezekiel must internalize. It is written on both sides, indicating that the message of judgment is complete and inescapable.
- Eating the Scroll: A vivid image of total assimilation. The prophet must personally digest and own God's message. Its sweetness represents divine truth, its bitterness the message of woe he must proclaim.
- The Prophet as Messenger: Ezekiel's identity is strictly defined: he is a "son of man" (a human being) sent by "the Sovereign LORD" (the divine King). His authority comes entirely from his Sender.

- The Spirit's Empowerment: The chapter ends with the Spirit entering Ezekiel to strengthen him to stand, showing that the prophetic task is impossible without divine empowerment.

The chapter establishes the prophet's difficult, non-negotiable role: to faithfully declare God's word to a people guaranteed to reject it.

For Further Engagement

1. God tells Ezekiel not to be afraid of the people's words or looks. Describe a modern situation where someone might need similar courage to deliver an unwelcome truth, and what could help them be "unafraid."
2. Ezekiel is sent to people described as "obstinate and stubborn." How might this description change the way someone prepares for a difficult conversation or leadership role?
3. The command is to deliver God's message regardless of the audience's response. How can the principle of doing your duty, even without a guaranteed positive outcome, apply to a responsibility like schoolwork or a team project?
4. Contrast how God describes the people of Israel ("a rebellious nation") with how He instructs Ezekiel to behave ("do not be rebellious"). What does this reveal about the prophet's required character?
5. Analyze the phrase "...whether they listen or fail to listen." Why is this repeated, and what does it emphasize about the prophet's role versus the people's responsibility?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 3



Chapter Summary

In chapter 3, God continues instructing Ezekiel. He gives Ezekiel a scroll covered with writing on both sides, containing words of lament, mourning, and woe. This is the message Ezekiel must deliver. God tells him to eat the scroll. When Ezekiel does, he finds it tastes as sweet as honey, symbolizing that accepting God's word, even if it's tough, is good.

God then sends Ezekiel to the exiles by the Chebar River. The Spirit lifts Ezekiel up and carries him there in a powerful but troubled state. When he arrives, he sits among the people for seven days, overwhelmed. After this, God speaks again, making Ezekiel a "watchman" for Israel. A watchman's job is to warn people of danger. God explains that if Ezekiel warns a wicked person who doesn't listen, the person is responsible for their own fate. But if Ezekiel fails to give the warning, God will hold Ezekiel responsible for that person's death.

Finally, God commands Ezekiel to go to the plain, where God's glory appears again. The Spirit enters him and tells him to shut himself inside his house. God warns that the people will

bind him with ropes, but he must speak whatever God tells him. Ezekiel is to deliver God's messages faithfully, whether the people listen or refuse.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Scroll's Taste:** Sweet as honey in his mouth, it confirms that receiving and assimilating God's word is a privilege and joy for the prophet, even if its content is bitter for the hearers.
- **Assigned Audience:** God sends Ezekiel specifically to his own exiled people, Israel, not to foreign nations. His mission is intensely focused, making their refusal even more culpable.
- **The Hardened Audience:** God warns that the people are so stubborn that their foreheads are harder than flint. This highlights the depth of their rebellion and prepares Ezekiel for total resistance.
- **The Role of the Watchman:** God appoints Ezekiel as a spiritual watchman for Israel. His core duty is to warn the wicked; if he fails, their blood is on him. If he warns and they ignore, their blood is on their own head. This establishes a strict theology of prophetic responsibility and human accountability.
- **The End of Ezekiel's Muteness:** The chapter ends with Ezekiel returning to the exiles at Tel-abib, sitting among them "stunned for seven days" before God commands him to finally speak (his muteness will be context-specific until Jerusalem falls, see 3:25-27 and 24:25-27). This period of silence underscores the message's gravity.

- Two Modes of Speech: God will control Ezekiel’s tongue: sometimes opening his mouth to deliver a divine message, sometimes making him mute as a judgment-sign against the rebellious house. His speech is a tool in God’s hands.
- Confinement and Symbolism: God tells Ezekiel he will be bound in his house and confined, physically symbolizing the nation’s coming siege and his restricted ministry to a hard-hearted people.

This chapter completes the prophet’s commission, emphasizing the weight of his task and the predictable failure of his audience.

For Further Engagement

1. Ezekiel is told to internalize God’s words (“eat this scroll”) before speaking. How can the principle of personally absorbing a message before sharing it apply to a responsibility you have, like teaching, coaching, or giving advice?
2. God tells Ezekiel he is being sent to people who are “hardened” and “obstinate.” How might this warning prepare someone for a difficult task, like confronting a friend about a harmful habit?
3. Ezekiel is made unable to speak except when God gives him words. What are the potential benefits and challenges of carefully choosing when to speak in a conflict?
4. Compare and contrast Ezekiel’s reaction to his calling with his description at the end of the chapter. What has changed?
5. Analyze the metaphor of the “watchman.” What are the duties, warnings, and consequences described for this role?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

PART II: JUDGMENTS CONCERNING JUDAH AND ISRAEL (4-24)

Chapter 4



Chapter Summary

God now commands Ezekiel to perform a strange prophetic act, or “sign,” using a clay brick. Ezekiel is to draw a map of Jerusalem on the brick. Then, he must set up an iron pan like a wall between himself and the city and act out a siege against it. He is to lie on his left side for 390 days, bearing the “sin” of Israel, and then on his right side for 40 days, bearing the “sin” of Judah. Each day represents a year of punishment for the nations.

Next, God instructs Ezekiel about his food and water during this time. His diet will be meager and strict, consisting of bread baked from a specific grain mixture, cooked over dung as fuel instead of a clean fire. His water ration is also carefully measured. This diet symbolizes the

scarcity and unclean conditions the people will face during the coming siege and exile. When Ezekiel objects to the unclean fuel, God allows him to use cow dung instead of human waste.

These actions are a visual prophecy. Ezekiel is not just speaking words; he is physically acting out the coming siege, famine, and exile that Jerusalem will suffer because of its rebellion against God.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Prophetic Street Theater:** The entire chapter consists of symbolic acts commanded by God. Ezekiel's body and his props become a living, visual prophecy to the exiles.
- **The Clay Tablet and Siege:** Ezekiel draws a map of Jerusalem on a clay tablet and stages a miniature siege against it with an iron plate. This acts as a public, physical declaration of the city's imminent and inescapable judgment.
- **The 390 and 40 Days:** Lying on his side for a total of 430 days (390 + 40) symbolizes bearing the "years of their sin." The 390 days for Israel and 40 days for Judah represent the long history and depth of their collective guilt.
- **The Defiled Food:** God instructs Ezekiel to eat a meager, measured diet of bread baked over human dung. This directly symbolizes the famine and defiled food the people will eat during the siege in a foreign land (outside God's holy law).
- **God's Concession:** When Ezekiel protests the use of human dung (as a priest, this would be deeply defiling), God allows cow dung instead. This shows God's

compassion for His prophet while upholding the core message of defilement and hardship.

- **Siege Rations:** The strict rationing of food and water (20 shekels of bread, a sixth of a hin of water per day) graphically foreshadows the starvation and desperation of the coming siege.
- **Bearing the Iniquity:** By lying bound as a physical sign, Ezekiel embodies the people’s punishment, “bearing their iniquity.” It is a burden placed on him by God to dramatize their fate.
- **Audience and Message:** These acts are performed in view of the exiles. The visual, shocking nature makes the message undeniable and unforgettable, bypassing their hardened ears.

This chapter introduces a major mode of Ezekiel’s ministry: he doesn’t just speak the message; he painfully and publicly lives it as a sign.

For Further Engagement

1. Ezekiel’s actions were a form of “performance prophecy.” What is a modern example of a public, symbolic act (like a protest, vigil, or art installation) designed to draw attention to a serious issue? How is it similar?
2. God instructs Ezekiel to physically bear the symbolic “punishment” of Israel and Judah. If you had to create a symbolic personal act to represent a social problem (e.g., poverty or injustice), what might it involve and why?
3. Ezekiel’s diet was restricted to represent scarcity. How does real scarcity (of food, time, or resources) force people to change their daily habits and priorities?

4. Analyze the significance of the different time periods (390 days for Israel, 40 days for Judah). What might the numbers represent, and why is Judah's time shorter?
5. Compare the two acts involving food: the meager rations and the defiled fuel. How do they represent two different aspects of the coming siege and exile (physical hardship and spiritual uncleanness)?
6. How does the sequence of acts—building a model, lying bound, then preparing defiled food—create a progression in demonstrating the severity of the coming judgment?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 5



Chapter Summary

In Chapter 5, God tells Ezekiel to take a sharp sword and use it as a razor to shave his head and beard. He is then to carefully divide the hair into three parts. Ezekiel is instructed to burn one third inside his model city, strike one third with the sword around the city, and scatter one third to the wind. This strange performance is a clear message for Jerusalem because the people rebelled against God's laws more than the nations around them, and a terrible judgment is coming. The chapter ends with strong warnings of famine, plague, war, and destruction as punishment for their disobedience.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Razor Sword: A symbol of precise, sharp judgment. God will use Babylon as His razor to shave Jerusalem entirely. There is no escape.
- The Hair Symbolism: The prophet's hair and beard represent the population of Jerusalem. Shaving is an act of humiliation and mourning, signaling total loss.
- The Three-Part Fate: The divided hair enacts three distinct punishments for the people:
 - Burned inside the city → representing death by plague and famine during the siege.
 - Struck around the city → representing death by the enemy's sword.
 - Scattered to the wind → representing exile and dispersion, with only a small remnant preserved ("a few tied in the folds of his garment").
- "A Few Hairs" Preserved: The remnant is both a sign of hope and a warning; they will be preserved only for further judgment if they remain rebellious.
- Jerusalem at the Center: Because Jerusalem was placed at the center of the nations, it was given a unique role. Therefore, her sin and punishment would be uniquely severe and serve as an example to the nations.
- "Worse Than the Nations": God's core accusation: Judah's rebellion is more shocking than that of the surrounding nations because she knew God's laws and covenant. She violated the statutes of the very nations she should have judged.
- Cannibalism Fulfilled: The prophecy of parents eating children during the siege is explicitly stated as a consequence. This shows the total moral and societal breakdown judgment will bring.

- Purpose of Judgment #1: Vindication: God states His actions against Jerusalem will cause Him to “be vindicated” in the eyes of the nations. His justice and holiness will be demonstrated. This is a key theme.

The chapter presents Jerusalem’s impending destruction as a measured, total, and exemplary judgment for her unique privilege and rebellion.

For Further Engagement

1. The hair symbolizes the people of Jerusalem. What is a modern object or symbol you could use to represent a community, and how might you alter it to show different possible fates (e.g., preservation, division, destruction)?
2. Ezekiel’s symbolic act made a private reality (God’s judgment) publicly visible. Describe a situation today where making a hidden consequence visible (e.g., pollution, a social injustice) is a crucial step toward addressing it.
3. God says Jerusalem rebelled more than the nations around it. How can a position of greater privilege or knowledge lead to greater responsibility and consequence in areas like leadership, citizenship, or friendship?
4. Analyze the progression from the symbolic act (verses 1-4) to the spoken explanation (verses 5-17). How does each part of the hair’s fate correspond to a specific consequence described later in the chapter?
5. Compare the metaphors used for Jerusalem: “center of the nations” and a “cautionary tale.” How do these two images work together to explain the severity of the punishment?
6. How does God connect the people’s “detestable practices” and idolatry inside the city to the coming disaster of famine, disease, and war from outside?

7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 6



Chapter Summary

Chapter 6 is a direct message of judgment against the mountains and hills of Israel. God tells Ezekiel to face these places and prophesy against them because they are covered with altars and shrines for idol worship. The punishment will be severe: the high places will be ruined, altars smashed, and idols destroyed. The people who worshiped there will die by sword, famine, and plague in front of their own false gods. The purpose is for the survivors to finally understand that God is the Lord and to regret their idolatry.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Message to the Mountains of Israel: God’s judgment is not just against the people, but against the land itself: the mountains, hills, ravines, and valleys where idolatry was practiced. The land suffers for the sins committed upon it.
- Idolatry as the Core Sin: The chapter directly targets the “high places,” the hilltop altars where Israel worshipped idols. This was a persistent, fundamental rejection of worshipping God alone.
- The Goal is Knowledge: A key repeated phrase: “Then you will know that I am the LORD.” The purpose of the severe judgment is revelatory; it forces a recognition of God’s identity, power, and exclusive claim on their allegiance.
- The Scattering: The consequence is that the people will be “scattered among the nations and dispersed through the countries.” They will experience exile, removed from the very land they defiled.
- Survivors as Reminders: Some will “escape the sword” into exile. In these foreign lands, they will “loathe themselves” for their evil and acknowledge God. The survivors’ repentance becomes a testimony to God’s judgment.
- End of Idolatry: The idols and altars will be “laid waste,” “broken,” and “obliterated.” The judgment will serve to wipe out the physical infrastructure of false worship.
- The Reality of the Sword, Famine, and Plague: The “triple threat” of divine judgment is declared again. God will send these agents of death as concrete punishments.
- From Center to Periphery: The judgment starts at the center (Jerusalem, the altar) and spreads to the “every high hill, on all the mountain tops”—leaving no place for idolatrous refuge.

This chapter emphasizes that idolatry profanes the land itself, and God's judgment will be total, aiming not just for punishment but for the ultimate recognition of His identity.

For Further Engagement

1. The chapter condemns idolatry, the worship of man-made things. What might be considered a modern “idol”—something created or pursued that takes the place of higher values or responsibilities?
2. Ezekiel prophesies that disaster will make people recognize the truth. Describe a situation where a personal or societal crisis has forced people to re-evaluate their priorities or beliefs.
3. God says the “high places” (sites of false worship) will be ruined. What is a principle or harmful practice in your community that, if removed, would force positive change?
4. Contrast the fate of the people with the fate of their idols. What is ironic or significant about idols being broken and altars laid waste amid the corpses?
5. Analyze the phrase “...you will know that I am the Lord.” Why does God repeat this, and how does it frame the entire chapter's message?
6. How does God's instruction in verse 11 to “strike your hands together” function? Is it a gesture of alarm, grief, or satisfaction? What does it tell us about the tone of the prophecy?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 7



Chapter Summary

Chapter 7 announces the absolute and final end for the land of Israel. God declares that disaster is coming, not as a warning, but as the finished conclusion. The chapter describes a day of chaotic terror. Violence will erupt in the land, people will try to sell their property but find no buyers, and no one will be able to escape the coming wrath. People will throw their silver and gold into the streets because it cannot save them. The temple, meant to be a place of pride, will be defiled by invaders. The message is clear: because of their detestable conduct, their time of judgment has arrived.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The End is Here:** The central, repeated declaration. The Hebrew word for “end” means a definitive termination or conclusion. God’s patience has run out; the day of final reckoning for Israel has arrived.
- **The Climax of Judgment:** God says He will pour out His wrath without pity and judge them according to their ways and deeds. The time of warning is over. The consequence is now inescapable.
- **A Closed Loop:** The chapter describes a cycle of violence and pride (“the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed”), leading to a climactic meltdown of social order.
- **Wealth as Futile:** The idols and wealth of the people become useless. Silver and gold cannot save them; God’s judgment will make their treasure worthless in the time of crisis.
- **The Seller’s Lament:** A key reversal: “The seller will not recover the land.” This marks the end of normalcy and inheritance (like the jubilee law); the land will be permanently lost to foreign occupiers.
- **Corruption of the Holy Place:** God promises to profane His sanctuary by allowing foreigners to enter and defile the temple. This is the ultimate sign of His withdrawn protection.
- **“Disaster upon Disaster”:** A cascade of catastrophes—violence, pestilence, famine, invasion. Social cohesion breaks down completely: “No one will be able to save another.”
- **Seeking Peace, Finding None:** Even seeking a divine vision, consulting elders, or priestly instruction will fail. Every human and religious recourse will be blocked.
- **The Final State:** The outcome for the people is total humiliation and recognition.

Chapter 7 functions as a prophetic summary sentence. It's the announcement that the verdict is final; all hope of reprieve is gone.

For Further Engagement

1. The prophecy describes a complete societal collapse where money, beauty, and wisdom become worthless. What modern dependency (like technology, currency, or social status) would cause the most chaos if it suddenly lost all value?
2. Ezekiel 7 warns that people's pride in their own beauty and ornaments will be taken away. How can an overemphasis on external appearance or possessions blind a person or community to more important internal problems?
3. The chapter describes a moment of irreversible consequence ("the end"). Describe a principle from everyday life (like a health habit, financial decision, or relationship choice) where there is a "point of no return" before serious consequences occur.
4. Analyze the repeated shift in pronouns (from "your" doom to "my" anger). How does this grammatical shift emphasize the source and ownership of the coming judgment?
5. The chapter lists things that will fail: the rod (authority), pride, wealth, violence, and finally, "peace from the mountains." What does this progression suggest about the total nature of the collapse?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 8



Chapter Summary

Chapter 8 begins a report on Ezekiel's second vision, which occurred about a year after the first vision (around 592 BCE (MacArthur, 2005, p. 901). In this and a series of succeeding visions, Ezekiel is taken on a spiritual journey from Babylon back to Jerusalem. He is shown the temple itself, but instead of holiness, he sees four shocking scenes of idol worship happening right inside its courts. First, he sees an idol of jealousy at the north gate. Then he is shown elders secretly worshiping carved animal figures in a hidden room. Next, women are weeping for a Babylonian god at the temple entrance. Finally, he sees men with their backs to God's temple, worshiping the sun toward the east. God explains that these acts of idolatry are the reason He has withdrawn and will bring severe judgment.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Visionary Transport: Ezekiel is not physically moved, but in a vision, God’s Spirit “lifted me up between earth and heaven” and brought him to Jerusalem. This reaffirms his role as a divine witness to events at the temple.
- The Image of Jealousy: The first and most public abomination is a revolting “image that provokes jealousy” set up right at the “north gate of the inner court” of the temple. This is a direct taunt to God’s presence.
- Progressive Descent into Sin: The vision takes Ezekiel on a tour from the outer court inward, revealing deeper, more secret layers of idolatry among Judah’s leaders, showing the corruption was total and systemic.
- The Seventy Elders and Abominations: In secret chambers, the ruling elders (who should lead in worship of God) are worshipping “detestable things”—likely Egyptian or Canaanite animal idols—and claiming, “the LORD does not see us.” It’s a denial of God’s omniscience.
- The Women Weeping for Tammuz: Ritual mourning for a pagan dying-and-rising god of fertility, practiced by women “at the entrance to the north gate.” This shows the infiltration of pagan nature worship.
- The Twenty-five Men with Backs to the Temple: The climax: in the inner court, priests and leaders prostrate themselves to the rising sun (worshipping Baal or a sun god), with their backs deliberately turned on God’s sanctuary—an act of supreme contempt.
- “Greater Abominations”: God guides Ezekiel through each scene, each time saying he will see something “more detestable” than the last. This escalates the shock and demonstrates the depth of the defilement.

- “Will I Be Far from Them?”: A rhetorical question from God. He affirms that He has witnessed “all their detestable practices,” and this is the basis for the coming, unsparing judgment.

This chapter provides the spiritual justification for the temple’s destruction: it has been turned into a pagan pantheon. The guardians have become the defilers.

For Further Engagement

1. The vision shows corrupt worship happening in secret, behind walls. What is a modern example of a harmful practice that is kept hidden within a respected institution or community?
2. Ezekiel is shown things progressively deeper inside the temple, suggesting a hidden core of corruption. How can a series of smaller, secret compromises in values lead to a major moral collapse in a group or person?
3. The elders justified their actions by thinking God didn’t see them. Describe a situation where the feeling of being unseen might tempt someone to act against their principles, and what counteracts that temptation.
4. Compare the four scenes in the vision. How does each one represent a greater level of offense or departure from true worship?
5. Analyze the role of the elders (leaders) in the vision. Why is their involvement in idolatry especially significant to the message of judgment?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 9



Chapter Summary

Continuing the vision from Chapter 8, Ezekiel hears God call for the city's executioners to come forward. Six men with deadly weapons appear, led by a seventh man dressed in linen with a writing kit. God tells the man in linen to go through Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of everyone who is grieving over the idolatry happening in the city. Then, God orders the six executioners to follow and kill everyone who does not have this mark, starting with the elders in the temple itself. Ezekiel is horrified and cries out, but is told the punishment is just because the people have filled the land with violence.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Summoned Executioners: God calls six armed “men” (angelic beings) with “deadly weapons in their hands” to carry out the judgment in Jerusalem. Another man, clothed in linen (a priestly, heavenly scribe), is also summoned.
- The Mark of Protection: The man in linen is sent through the city to put a mark (tav) on the foreheads of those who “grieve and lament over all the detestable things” being done. This is an act of divine mercy and separation, sparing the faithful remnant.
- The Slaughter Begins: The six executioners are commanded to follow the linen-clad man and kill “without pity” everyone who does not bear the mark. They are to start “at my sanctuary”—the very place most defiled.
- Judgment from the Inside Out: Starting at the temple and then moving outward demonstrates that judgment begins with God’s own house (those who knew better) before it spreads to the wider city. This order underscores the leaders’ greater guilt.
- Ezekiel’s Intercession: Horrified, Ezekiel cries out, “Ah, Sovereign LORD! Are you going to destroy the entire remnant of Israel?” This reflects his compassion and role as a mediator, though the time for intercession is past.
- Full Guilt and No Mercy: God’s response: The land is “full of bloodshed and the city is full of injustice,” so “I will not look on them with pity or spare them.” This justifies the totality of the judgment.
- The Linen-Clad Man Reports: The man in linen returns, saying “I have done as you commanded.” This confirms the protective marking is complete and the judgment is authorized to proceed.

The chapter graphically depicts the selective, just, and total nature of God’s wrath—even in total judgment, He spares those loyal to Him, and He rightly punishes all idolatry and violence.

For Further Engagement

1. The “mark” identified those who were faithful. What is a modern symbol or action (not literally on the forehead) that can publicly identify a person’s core values or loyalties?
2. In the vision, the executioners were told to show no pity. When is it necessary for a judge or authority to act without pity, and when is mercy more appropriate? Use a real-world example.
3. Ezekiel passionately intercedes for the people despite their sins. Describe a situation where speaking up for people who are facing consequences, even if they are partly at fault, is an act of moral courage.
4. Contrast the roles of the man in linen and the six executioners. What do their different tools (writing kit vs. weapons) and tasks signify about justice and mercy in this vision?
5. Analyze the reason for starting judgment at the sanctuary. Does punishing the religious leaders first make the wider judgment seem more justified or more severe? Why?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 10



Chapter Summary

In Chapter 10, Ezekiel's vision continues inside the temple. He watches as the man in linen from the previous chapter is now told to go among the amazing, fiery cherubim (the living creatures he saw in Chapter 1) and take coals of fire from between them. The man gathers the burning coals and scatters them over the city of Jerusalem, symbolizing the fire of God's judgment about to fall. Ezekiel then sees the glory of the LORD, the radiant presence he saw in his first vision, lift up from above the temple's cherubim, move to the temple's threshold, and finally depart, hovering at the east gate. This signals God's presence leaving His holy house because of the people's sins.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Departure of God's Glory: This is the climax of the temple vision (chapters 8-11) and the book's central tragedy: God's glorious, fiery presence (the kabod) abandons the defiled temple and city.
- Two-Stage Departure: First, the glory moves from atop the cherubim-throne to the threshold of the temple. This is a pause, a final moment before exit. Finally, it rises and leaves, standing over the Mount of Olives to the east (see 11:23).
- The Coals of Judgment: God commands the man in linen to take burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city. This is the means of the fiery judgment prophesied earlier.
- The Cherubim (Living Creatures): The same four-faced, wheeled creatures from chapter 1 are identified here as cherubim, confirming they are the angelic bearers of God's throne-chariot.
- Connection to Chapter 1: The vision directly links back to Ezekiel's inaugural call. The sight of the cherubim and wheels affirms that it is the same God who was present by the Chebar River now departing from Jerusalem.
- The Wheels: They are again described as full of eyes, symbolizing God's omniscience, and they operate as one with the cherubim, meaning God's judgment is perfectly coordinated.
- "The Glory of the God of Israel": This title is used repeatedly, underscoring whose presence is leaving. It is not a foreign god, but Israel's own God who can no longer dwell where He is so profaned.

- The Door of the East Gate: The glory's movement through the east gate of the temple has profound significance—it is the same route back from which it will dramatically return in the final vision (43:1-4).

The chapter visually seals Jerusalem's doom. The temple's destruction is a consequence, not the main event—the main event is God Himself leaving.

For Further Engagement

1. The “coals of fire” were taken from among the cherubim to be scattered. If you were to symbolize a purifying or consuming judgment using a natural element (like fire, water, or wind), which would you choose and why?
2. The vision depicts God's glory departing from a corrupted place. Describe a situation where a person or group might need to withdraw their presence or support from a situation that has become morally compromised.
3. The wheels moved in perfect unison with the cherubim, symbolizing coordinated purpose. What is an example from nature, technology, or a team where multiple parts must move in perfect harmony for a greater purpose to be achieved?
4. Compare the description of the cherubim and wheels in Chapter 10 to the first vision in Chapter 1. What details are the same, and what key difference is revealed here about their identity?
5. Trace the movement of God's glory in this chapter. How does its gradual departure (from the threshold to the entrance, to above the cherubim) create a sense of finality?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 11



Chapter Summary

Chapter 11 continues Ezekiel’s temple vision. At the east gate, God shows him 25 leaders and tells him they are giving the people in Jerusalem bad advice, saying, “It is not near; let us build houses,” as if they were safe from danger, like meat in a pot. God declares they are the “meat” in the pot—they will be dragged out of the city and judged at the border. One of them, Pelatiah, dies while Ezekiel is prophesying, shocking the prophet. In the vision’s closing, God comforts Ezekiel and the exiles with a promise. He will gather them back to the land, give them a new heart and spirit to follow Him, and remove their stubbornness. Finally, the glory of the LORD completes its departure, lifting from the city and resting over the mountain east of Jerusalem.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The False Counsel of the Leaders:** At the temple's east gate, 25 leaders are seen plotting. Their core philosophy: "This city is the cooking pot, and we are the meat." They mean, "We're safe inside these walls (the pot); those in exile (outside) are the burned scraps" (a reversal of the judgment in 24:3-6). This is a false sense of security.
- **God Refutes Their Slogan:** God declares the prophecy is against them: they, the leaders, are the meat in a pot—in Jerusalem—and judgment (the sword) is coming inside the city, not just on the exiles. Their "safe" city will be their place of execution.
- **Judgment on the Plotters:** One leader, Pelatiah, dies as Ezekiel prophesies. This is a sign-act confirming the word is real and judgment is beginning. Ezekiel's fearful intercession ("Ah, Sovereign LORD!") follows.
- **The Promise to the Exiles:** After rebuking the leaders, God gives a critical message of hope to Ezekiel and the exiles: "I have sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries... yet I will be a sanctuary for them for a little while in the countries where they have gone." God's presence is with the true remnant in exile, not the corrupt leaders in Jerusalem.
- **The New Spirit and Heart:** The core promise: God will "gather you from the nations" and give them "an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them...so they will follow my laws." This is the first major prophecy of internal, spiritual renewal in a restored people.
- **The Removal of the Stony Heart:** Specifically, God promises to "remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh." This directly targets their inner rebellion and promises a transformational change of nature.

- The Final Departure: The vision concludes with the Glory of the LORD rising from the city and standing over the Mount of Olives to the east. Its departure is complete, visually confirming Jerusalem is without God's protective presence.

This chapter establishes a crucial theological pivot: judgment is coming on Jerusalem, but true hope lies with a spiritually renewed remnant in exile, not with the false leaders who think they are secure.

For Further Engagement

1. The Jerusalem leaders believed they were safe and privileged (“the meat in the pot”). Describe a modern situation where people in positions of security might become complacent and ignore warnings of coming trouble.
2. God promises to be a “sanctuary” for the exiles. What does it mean for someone to find safety and stability in their principles or faith during a time of displacement or crisis?
3. The chapter ends with the vision of God's glory leaving Jerusalem. If a guiding principle or core value “departs” from an organization, what are the signs, and what usually fills the void?
4. Analyze the reversal in the “pot” metaphor. How does God turn the leaders' boast about safety into a promise of judgment?
5. Compare the two groups: the leaders in Jerusalem and the exiles in Babylon. How does God's message redefine who is truly “safe” and who is truly “judged”?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 12



Chapter Summary

In Chapter 12, God tells Ezekiel to act out two more symbolic signs for the exiles. First, he must pack a bag as if going into exile, dig through a wall in the evening, cover his face, and carry his belongings out before the people. This is a warning that the king and people in Jerusalem will soon be taken captive to Babylon, blinded and in shame. The second message addresses those in Jerusalem who dismiss his warnings with a cynical proverb, “The vision he sees is for many years from now.” God declares there will be no more delay—every prophecy will soon be fulfilled, and that mocking proverb will end.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Symbol of the Exile: Ezekiel packs an exile’s baggage (a small bundle), digs through the city wall by hand, and carries it out on his shoulder at dusk. This acts as prophetic

street theater, dramatizing the coming deportation of King Zedekiah and the people of Jerusalem.

- **The People's Complacency:** They have adopted the cynical proverb: "The vision that [Ezekiel] sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off." This shows they dismiss his warnings as irrelevant to their immediate future.
- **God's Response to Delay:** God declares He will "put an end to this proverb" and announces: "There shall be no more delay of my words... whatever I say will be performed." The prophecy is now imminent.
- **Zedekiah's Fate Foreshadowed:** The sign-act specifically predicts King Zedekiah's attempted nighttime escape, blindness, and capture by the Babylonians. Crucially, it says "He will not see it [the land of Babylon], though he will die there," referring to his blinded eyes (fulfilled in 2 Kings 25:7).
- **Judgment is Near:** Ezekiel is told the prophecy concerns the "the prince in Jerusalem and all the Israelites who are in it." It is not for a distant future but for the present leadership and people.
- **The Oracle of Fulfillment:** God declares an end to "every vision" being seen as a lie or delayed. His "word will no longer be delayed." This is a promise of certainty and imminent action.
- **Twofold Message:** The first half (vs. 1-16) is a sign to Jerusalem's inhabitants. The second half (vs. 17-20) has Ezekiel enact trembling and eating with fear, a sign of the "anxiety" and "despair" the people will feel in exile.

- The Purpose is Knowledge: The final goal remains: “then they will know that I am the LORD.” The fulfillment of the prophecy in their lifetime will prove God’s word is true.

This chapter confronts the people’s dangerous belief that judgment is a distant fantasy, using powerful visual prophecy to say: It is happening now.

For Further Engagement

1. Ezekiel acted out exile before it happened. If you had to perform a simple, symbolic action to warn people about a likely future event (like a debt, a health issue, or a social trend), what would you do and what would it represent?
2. The chapter addresses people dismissing prophecy because it doesn’t happen immediately. Describe a situation where a delayed consequence (in health, environment, or relationships) causes people to ignore a serious warning.
3. Ezekiel was told to eat and drink with trembling and anxiety. How does the emotional state of a messenger affect the impact of a serious message they are delivering?
4. Compare the two symbolic acts—carrying belongings by day and digging out by night. How do these two parts create a complete picture of the coming exile?
5. Analyze God’s response to the mocking proverb. How does His declaration “The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled” directly counter and judge the people’s attitude?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 13



Chapter Summary

Chapter 13 is a strong message from God against the false prophets and prophetesses in Israel. These are people who claim to speak for God but only tell people what they want to hear, declaring “peace” when there is no peace. God accuses them of building a flimsy, whitewashed wall that will collapse when the real storm of His judgment hits. They have misled the people, and God promises to remove them from the community and save no one who trusts in their lies.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- False Prophets: God’s judgment is directed against men and women who claim to speak for Him but deliver lies. They “prophesy out of their own imagination,” following their own spirit, not God’s.

- The Foxes in the Ruins: A strong metaphor. False prophets are like “foxes among ruins.” Instead of repairing the spiritual wall, they exploit the brokenness for their own benefit, making things worse.
- Whitewashing a Cracked Wall: They proclaim “Peace” when there is no peace. This isn’t just optimism; it’s the sin of applying a false veneer (“whitewash”) to a structurally flawed wall Israel’s leaders built without God. It gives a dangerous illusion of safety.
- God’s Response: The Storm: God will send the “rainstorm... hailstones and violent winds” of His wrath to sweep away the whitewash and destroy the flimsy wall completely, exposing the false prophets’ lies.
- False Prophetesses: Women are also condemned for practicing “magic charms” and “ensnaring people’s lives.” They sew “magic bands on all wrists” and make “veils for the heads,” likely as protective amulets or divination tools that promise survival but actually empower the people’s rebellion.
- Hunting Souls: Their core sin: “You hunt down souls... for a few handfuls of barley and scraps of bread.” They exploit people’s fear for petty profit, damning them with false assurances.
- God’s Promise to Tear Down: God promises to “tear off your magic bands” and “rescue my people from your hand.” They will no longer be trapped in these lies. This is an act of liberation.
- “You Will Know I Am the LORD”: This classic Ezekiel phrase is directed at both the false prophets and their victims. The exposure of their lies will serve as another proof of God’s true identity.

This chapter highlights the gravity of misleading God's people, showing that a comforting lie is more spiritually destructive than a hard truth.

For Further Engagement

1. The false prophets gave people false peace ("Peace when there is no peace"). What is a modern example of a leader or influencer offering comforting but misleading assurances during a crisis?
2. The chapter warns against those who claim authority but distort messages. What are some strategies people can use to critically evaluate the claims of a supposed expert or leader today?
3. The "magic charms" were meant to control others. What are subtle ways people today might try to manipulate or control others under the guise of helping or protecting them?
4. Contrast the roles of a true prophet and a false prophet as described in this chapter. What is the core difference in their motivation and message?
5. Analyze the dual metaphor of "whitewash" and "flimsy wall." How does this image explain both the deception of the false prophets and the inevitable consequence for those who believe them?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 14



Chapter Summary

In Chapter 14, some of the elders of Israel come to Ezekiel to seek guidance from God. The LORD tells Ezekiel that these men have set up idols in their hearts, allowing these false gods to become stumbling blocks. Because of this, God refuses to answer them directly. He declares that anyone in Israel—whether a common person or a legendary righteous figure like Noah, Daniel, or Job—who turns to idols will be cut off and face judgment. The chapter ends with a sobering point even if these three great men were in the land, they could only save themselves by their righteousness, not the nation. Jerusalem’s fate is sealed because of its pervasive sin.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Idols in the Heart:** The core issue is not just physical idols, but “idols set up in their hearts.” This is the internal, spiritual allegiance that separates a person from God, making them “estranged” from Him.
- **The Elders’ Hypocrisy:** Leaders of the exiles come to “inquire of the LORD” through Ezekiel, but they harbor secret idolatry. God refuses to be consulted by them, exposing that their seeking is insincere.
- **God’s Direct Answer:** God declares He will answer such a person “according to the multitude of his idols.” The answer will be a judgment that matches their sin, not the guidance they pretend to seek.
- **The Call to Repentance:** A clear path is offered: “Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!” This is the only way to restore a right relationship with God.
- **The Four Severe Judgments:** God lists His agents of judgment: “sword, famine, wild beasts, and plague.” These are the covenant curses from Leviticus 26.
- **The Three Righteous Men:** A key theological statement: Even if three legendary righteous figures—Noah, Daniel, and Job—were in a sinful land, they could only “save themselves by their righteousness.” Their merit cannot shield a rebellious community. This emphasizes individual accountability.
- **A Remnant for Consolation:** Despite the total judgment, a “remnant” will survive and be brought out. Their presence will “console you” (the exiles) when you see their wicked ways, proving God’s judgment was just.

- Purpose of Judgment #2: God acts so that “they will know that I have not done without cause all that I have done.” His actions are not arbitrary but a necessary response to profound, persistent sin.

The chapter establishes that God sees the heart, that individual righteousness cannot transfer to a corrupt community, and that judgment has a revelatory purpose.

For Further Engagement

1. The sin condemned is “idols in the heart.” What might be a modern “idol of the heart”—something a person secretly prioritizes above their stated values or commitments?
2. God says He will answer the hypocritical inquirer directly with judgment. Describe a situation where someone’s hidden motives lead to consequences that directly expose their insincerity.
3. The chapter states that even righteous people can only save themselves. How does this principle of personal accountability apply in a group project or team setting where some members are not contributing?
4. Contrast the elders’ external act (seeking God’s word) with their internal condition (idols in the heart). How does this define hypocrisy?
5. Why does God choose the examples of Noah, Daniel, and Job? What do these three figures have in common, and how does using them strengthen His argument about Jerusalem’s fate?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 15



Chapter Summary

Chapter 15 is a short, sharp message using the image of a vine. God asks Ezekiel what use a vine branch is compared to a tree's wood. The answer: It is useless for building or making tools. Its only purpose is to be fuel for a fire. God then says the people of Jerusalem are like that vine wood because they have failed to be fruitful and are spiritually worthless due to their idolatry, they are fit only for the fire. Just as a burned vine branch is charred and useless, so Jerusalem will be consumed by judgment.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Jerusalem as Useless Wood: The central metaphor: Jerusalem is compared to a “vine branch” from a wild grapevine, as distinct from the cultivated vine representing Israel

(as in Psalm 80). Grapes are the vine's purpose; without fruit, the wood itself is "useless," fit only for fuel.

- **The Fire Test:** The analogy demonstrates its worthlessness. If a vine branch is useless for crafting, it's thrown into the fire. If the fire chars both ends and the middle, it becomes "even more unfit for any work." It's not purified but proven completely worthless.
- **The Charred Reality:** This is a picture of Jerusalem's history. The city has already been "charred" by partial judgments (like the first deportation in 597 BC). Instead of being refined, it's been proven more unusable. It offers no strength or value to God.
- **Total Rejection:** The conclusion is stark: just as a charred vine branch is thrown into the fire, so God will "set my face against them" and consign the unfaithful city to total destruction. Her destiny is to become fuel for the fire of judgment.
- **No Distinction:** Unlike fruitful wood (like cedar) used for building, the vine offers no structural value. This dismisses any claim Jerusalem has based on her status or temple; without faithfulness, she is mere kindling.
- **Purpose of Judgment #3:** The judgment will reveal the truth of her condition: "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them." It's a revelation of righteous rejection.

This chapter is a short, blunt statement: Because Jerusalem produced no faithfulness ("fruit"), she has no inherent worth to preserve, only a destiny for the fire. It strips away any false national pride.

For Further Engagement

1. The vine branch is useless for its intended purpose (bearing fruit) and only fit to burn.
Describe a situation where something designed for a high purpose (a tool, a talent, a position) becomes worthless because it fails to serve that purpose.
2. The metaphor focuses on functional value. How can this principle apply to evaluating a person's character or a community's health—not based on their history or title, but on what they currently produce?
3. The branch is already charred from a previous fire (judgment) before being fully consumed. How does experiencing a partial consequence sometimes fail to lead to real change, setting the stage for total failure?
4. Analyze the structure of God's argument. How do the rhetorical questions in verses 2-5 logically build the case for the vine wood's complete worthlessness?
5. This chapter reinterprets a common positive symbol for Israel (the vine). What effect does turning a symbol of fruitfulness into a symbol of uselessness have on the listener?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 16



Chapter Summary

Chapter 16 is an extended allegory where God describes Jerusalem's history as the story of an abandoned baby girl. He finds her helpless, cares for her, and she grows into a beautiful woman. He marries her and lavishes her with gifts, making her glorious. However, she becomes arrogant, trusting in her beauty, and turns into a prostitute. She builds pagan shrines everywhere and even sacrifices her own children to idols. She is worse than a prostitute—she pays her lovers (other nations and their gods) instead of being paid. Because of this extreme unfaithfulness, God will gather all her lovers against her, expose her, and destroy her. Yet the chapter ends with a promise God will remember His covenant and, after her punishment, will forgive her and re-establish His relationship with her.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Jerusalem as an Unwanted Infant:** The city's spiritual origins are described as being "thrown out into the open field" at birth, unwanted and left to die, representing her pagan roots before God found her.
- **God's Rescuing Grace (V. 8):** The central act: God saw her and said, "Live!" He rescued, raised, entered a covenant with her, and lavished her with wealth, beauty, and royalty. Everything she possessed was an unmerited gift.
- **The Adultery Metaphor:** Jerusalem's idolatry is depicted as "prostitution." She used the very gifts God gave her to create idols and pursue alliances with foreign nations (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon)—a betrayal of the marriage covenant.
- **Worse Than Sodom and Samaria:** A shocking comparison. God declares Jerusalem is "more depraved" than her notoriously wicked sisters Sodom and Samaria. Her greater privilege led to greater corruption and a lack of mercy.
- **The Reversal of Punishment:** Her punishment will fit her crime. Just as she publicly pursued lovers, she will be publicly "exposed" and her "nakedness" uncovered by her former allies, who will turn against her.
- **The Everlasting Covenant (V. 60):** Despite her unfaithfulness, God promises to "remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth" and to establish an "everlasting covenant" with her. This points to a future, unbreakable covenant of grace.

- Purpose: To Know I Am the LORD: Again, the ultimate goal of judgment and restoration is revelatory—so she will “know that I am the LORD” and be silenced by her shame, understanding the full story of grace and justice.

This chapter presents Israel’s history as a story of radical grace met with radical betrayal, leading to severe judgment, yet still pointing to a future hope based on God’s faithfulness, not theirs.

For Further Engagement

1. The story warns about forgetting one’s humble, graced origins. Describe a situation where a person or group, after achieving success, might forget the help they received and act with entitlement or betrayal.
2. Jerusalem used the gifts from her “husband” (God) to attract other “lovers.” How can talents, resources, or status given for a good purpose be misused to serve selfish or harmful ends?
3. Analyze the shock value of this allegory. Why is comparing the covenant relationship to a marriage and betrayal to adultery such a powerful way to explain Jerusalem’s sin?
4. Compare the fate of Jerusalem’s “sisters,” Sodom and Samaria. Why does God say Jerusalem’s guilt makes them seem righteous by comparison?
5. Examine the role of memory and forgetting in the story. How does Jerusalem’s amnesia about her rescued origins lead directly to her corruption?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 17



Chapter Summary

Chapter 17 presents a political allegory in the form of a riddle about two great eagles and a vine. The first eagle (Babylon) takes the top of a cedar tree (Judah's king) and plants it in a city of traders. It grows into a low vine, turning its roots toward the second eagle (Egypt) for help. God asks Will this vine survive? The answer is no. Because the king of Judah broke his treaty with Babylon by seeking help from Egypt, he will be captured and die in Babylon. The chapter ends with a promise from God He Himself will one day take a tender shoot from the top of the cedar and plant it on a high mountain, where it will grow into a majestic tree—a future king from David's line who will rule under God's authority.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Riddle of the Eagles and the Vine:** The chapter is an extended political allegory. The first “great eagle” is King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who “transplants” Judah’s royal line (King Jehoiachin and the nobility) to Babylon. The second “great eagle” is Pharaoh Psammitic II of Egypt, whom King Zedekiah foolishly turns to for help.
- **The Broken Covenant:** Zedekiah is the “seed of the land” (a native king) planted by Babylon. His sin is breaking his “oath” and “covenant” sworn to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:13), seeking Egypt’s aid instead of submitting to Babylon as God’s agent of judgment (see Jeremiah 27).
- **Judgment for Treachery:** God declares Zedekiah will not escape. He will die in Babylon, and his army will be destroyed because he “despised the oath and broke the covenant.” God holds him accountable for his political oath-breaking.
- **The Sovereign Planting:** After the allegory, God shifts the metaphor. He Himself will take a “tender sprig” from the top of a cedar (the Davidic line) and plant it on Israel’s high mountain. It will grow into a majestic tree, and birds will nest in its shade.
- **The Future Messiah-King:** This final image is a messianic prophecy. The “tender sprig” represents a future Davidic king (ultimately Jesus Christ) whom God will establish. His kingdom will provide shelter and security for all nations.
- **God’s Sovereignty over Nations:** The entire allegory demonstrates that God controls the rise and fall of empires (the eagles). He uses them for His purposes and judges those who rebel against His ordained order.

- The Principle: “I Bring Down... I Exalt”: The key lesson: “I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.” God sovereignly humbles the proud and exalts the humble.

The chapter explains Judah’s current political disaster (Zedekiah’s rebellion) while pointing to a future, divinely planted Messianic kingdom that will never fail.

For Further Engagement

1. The chapter condemns breaking a solemn oath. In modern terms, why is violating a sworn promise or treaty considered such a serious offense, even in secular contexts?
2. The allegory shows a smaller power (the vine) trying to play two larger powers (the eagles) against each other. Describe a situation where a weaker party’s attempt to manipulate stronger allies backfires.
3. The oracle ends with a vision of God’s direct, future intervention. How can a long-term hope for a better solution help people endure a current, failing political situation?
4. Contrast the two “plantings” by the first eagle. What is the difference between the “top shoot” taken to Babylon and the “seed” planted in Judah, and what does this show about Nebuchadnezzar’s strategy?
5. Compare the fate of the rebellious vine with the promise of the new “tender shoot.” How do these two images illustrate the difference between human political schemes and God’s sovereign plan?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 18



Chapter Summary

Chapter 18 directly addresses a popular saying among the exiles, “The parents eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” This proverb meant they felt they were being punished unfairly for their parents’ sins. God firmly rejects this idea. He teaches that each person is responsible for their own life a righteous person who does what is right will live, a wicked child of a good parent will die for their own sins, and a person who turns from evil will be forgiven. The chapter emphasizes that God has no pleasure in anyone’s death and pleads with the people to repent and live, because He judges everyone according to their own ways.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Individual Moral Responsibility: The chapter directly confronts a fatalistic proverb used by the exiles: “The parents eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on

- edge.” God refutes it, establishing the principle that “the one who sins is the one who will die.”
- **The Righteous Person:** Ezekiel defines a righteous person through a list of concrete, moral and ritual actions: he does not worship idols, does not defile his neighbor’s wife, does not oppress the poor, returns pledged collateral, gives food to the hungry, etc. This righteousness is based on their “ways” and “deeds” under the covenant.
 - **The Wicked Son of a Righteous Father:** If a son sees his father’s righteous life but chooses a life of violence and sin, “he will not share in his father’s righteousness.” He will die for his own sins.
 - **The Righteous Son of a Wicked Father:** Conversely, a son who sees his father’s wickedness but rejects it and lives righteously “will surely live.” He will not be punished for his father’s sins.
 - **The Possibility of Repentance:** A wicked person who “turns away from all the sins they have committed” and does what is just and right “will surely live; they will not die.” God takes “no pleasure in the death of the wicked.”
 - **The Danger of Apostasy:** A righteous person who turns to wickedness—all their former righteous deeds “will not be remembered.” They will die for their new treachery.
 - **God’s Desire: Repent and Live!** The chapter’s core message is God’s plea: “Repent! Turn away from all your offenses! ... Why will you die, house of Israel?” Judgment is not God’s desire; life through repentance is.

- Fairness of God's Justice: The chapter concludes with the declaration: "I will judge each of you according to your own ways." God's ways are fair: He judges based on individual choice and action, not generational guilt.

This chapter establishes a foundation for personal accountability and hope, breaking the cycle of fatalism and emphasizing that repentance is always possible and desired by God.

For Further Engagement

1. The chapter rejects blaming parents for one's own problems. Describe a situation where it is easier to blame circumstances or family history than to take responsibility for one's own choices.
2. The list of righteous actions includes giving food to the hungry and clothing to the naked. How can small, practical acts of justice be a measure of someone's character today?
3. God says, "Repent and live!" If a person wanted to make a genuine "turn" or change in their life direction, what would be one practical first step?
4. Analyze how the three case studies build a logical argument. How does changing the moral character in each generation prove that guilt and righteousness are not automatically transferred?
5. Examine the people's complaint in verse 25: "The Lord's way is not just!" How does God's closing argument about His own character ("Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?") answer this charge?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 19



Chapter Summary

Ezekiel 19 presents a lament, singing a funeral song for the leaders—the “princes”—of Israel. God asks Ezekiel to take up a lament and explain it to the people.

The chapter uses two allegories:

First, Israel is pictured as a lioness. Her first cub became strong and learned to hunt, but he was captured and taken to Egypt. She then raised another cub, who also became strong and a fearsome hunter. But he, too, was caught, trapped in a pit, and taken to Babylon.

Second, Israel is compared to a vine. It was a strong, fruitful vine, planted by water. But in its anger, God plucked it up in fury. He threw it into the desert, so its branches dried up and it could no longer bear fruit. The fire then burned the vine up, root and branch, leaving nothing fruitful left to rule Israel.

The point is that this lament is sung because the kingly line of Judah, which God had raised up, has come to a ruinous end because of its pride and disobedience.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **A Lament for the Princes:** The chapter is structured as a dirge (funeral song) for the final kings of Judah. The tone is mournful, marking the tragic, failed end of the Davidic monarchy.
- **First Allegory: The Lioness and Her Cubs:** The lioness is likely the nation of Judah or the royal line. The first “young lion” cub is King Jehoahaz, who was captured and taken to Egypt in 609 BC (2 Kings 23:31-34). The second cub is King Jehoiachin, captured and taken to Babylon in 597 BC (2 Kings 24:8-15).
- **Second Allegory: The Vine and Its Branch:** The nation is a fruitful vine, but one strong branch (likely Zedekiah, the last king) is plucked up by the “east wind” (Babylon). It withers and is transplanted into a desert.
- **The Fire from the Branch:** The prophecy says, “Fire spread from its main branch and devoured its fruit.” This refers to Zedekiah’s rebellion, which brought the fire of Babylon’s final siege (586 BC), destroying not just the king but the kingdom (“fruit”).
- **The Shift from Power to Weakness:** The allegory begins with powerful lions (kings with authority) and ends with a dried-up vine branch (powerless exile). It traces the monarchy’s decline from strength to captivity.
- **The End of Royal Rule in Judah:** The lament makes clear there is “no strong branch... no scepter to rule.” David’s throne is empty. The monarchy, as a functioning institution, has ended.

- Universal Recognition (V. 19-21): The final stanza places the words into the “ears of the exiles”, confirming they hear this sad song about their own leaders’ downfall. This is so “all the trees of the field” (a symbol for other nations) will know who caused it.
- God as the Unseen Actor: Though the agents are foreign kings, the final line says the vine was “uprooted in fury” and “planted in the wilderness”. The ultimate cause is God’s righteous judgment (“fury”) against the unfaithful king.

The chapter uses poetry to summarize the history of Judah’s last four kings as a tragedy of wasted potential, culminating in the monarchy’s extinction by God’s hand.

For Further Engagement

1. The lament mourns leaders who devoured their people. Describe a modern situation where a leader’s aggressive or self-serving actions ultimately lead to their own downfall and harm their nation.
2. The vine is transplanted from fertile ground to a desert. What does it feel like for an individual, family, or community to be uprooted from a place of strength and identity and placed in a “barren” environment?
3. The chapter reflects on a fallen dynasty. Why is it important for a society to honestly lament and assess the failures of its past leadership, rather than just forget or glorify it?
4. Compare the two allegories. How does the lioness story focus on the character and fate of individual kings, while the vine story focuses on the fate of the entire kingdom?
5. Analyze the cause of the vine’s destruction. Was it the “east wind” (Babylon), or was the vine already flawed (“plucked up in fury”)? What does this say about the reason for Judah’s fall?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 20



Chapter Summary

In Chapter 20, some elders of Israel come to Ezekiel to ask for a message from God. Instead of giving them a new word, God tells Ezekiel to confront them about their ancestors' long history of rebellion.

God reviews Israel's story like a frustrated parent:

1. In Egypt, God chose Israel and promised to bring them to a good land, but even there, they worshiped Egyptian idols.
2. In the Wilderness, God gave them His laws and the Sabbath as a special sign, but they repeatedly rebelled. God held back from destroying them only for the sake of His own reputation among the nations.
3. The Next Generation, God warned their children not to follow their parents' sins, but they rebelled too.
4. In the Promised Land, Even after God gave them the land, they defiled it with idol worship on every high hill.

Because of this unbroken pattern of disobedience, God will not let the current elders inquire of Him. He declares He will rule over them with a “mighty hand and outstretched arm” in judgment, scattering them among the nations. Yet He also promises a future gathering and restoration, not because they deserve it, but for the sake of His holy name.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class

- **A History of Rebellion:** This is an indictment of Israel’s entire history. God recounts a pattern of idolatry and rebellion from the time in Egypt, through the wilderness, to their present state in the Promised Land. Each generation repeated the sins of the last.
- **For My Name’s Sake:** God emphasizes His repeated restraint: “I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned.” He withheld deserved judgment throughout history to protect His reputation among the nations.
- **The Gift of the Sabbath:** The laws and statutes, especially the Sabbath, are given as a sign of the covenant so Israel would know God. But they repeatedly “profaned my Sabbaths”, treating this core sign of holiness as common.
- **The Unfulfilled Wilderness Judgment:** God declares that He swore in the wilderness to “disperse them among the nations.” The current exile is not a new punishment but the final enactment of a long-deferred sentence.
- **The Laws that Were Not Good? (Verse 25):** One of the most difficult verses: God says He gave them “statutes that were not good and laws through which they could not

live.” Likely meaning He gave them over to the destructive consequences of their choices (like child sacrifice), not that He gave evil laws.

- The Pilgrimage to the High Places: In their present idolatry, the people are engaging in pagan worship. God will not accept their hypocritical inquiries; He will purge the rebels from among them.
- The Future Restoration: After judgment, God promises a new act of grace. He will “bring you out from the nations” and “purge” the rebels. He will one day be “served without restraint” on His holy mountain.
- The New Exodus: God promises a future gathering into the “wilderness of the peoples.” There, face to face, He will “enter into judgment” and pass them under the rod, bringing them into the “bond of the covenant.” This is a purification process.

Chapter 20 frames the present exile as the climax of a long history of failure, driven by God’s patient commitment to His own name, and looks ahead to a future restoration He alone will accomplish.

For Further Engagement

1. The chapter shows a pattern where blessings (freedom, laws, a land) lead to forgetfulness and rebellion. Describe a modern parallel where prosperity or security can lead to negligence or entitlement.
2. God’s ultimate motive is to preserve His holy name/reputation. In human relationships, when is it more important to act to protect your own integrity and commitments than to simply appease the other person?
3. The Sabbath was meant to be a sign of belonging to God. What is a practice or tradition in your life that serves as a regular “sign” or reminder of your core values or identity?

4. Analyze God's statement, "I gave them statutes that were not good and laws they could not live by" (v. 25). Does this mean God gave bad laws? What is a better interpretation of this difficult verse in context?
5. Examine the role of the "firstborn" (v. 26). How does the accusation that Israel sacrificed their children connect to the broader theme of defiling God's gifts?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 21



Chapter Summary

In Chapter 21, God tells Ezekiel that He has drawn His sword and it will not return to its sheath. This sword is His judgment.

The chapter contains three actions or messages:

1. **Prophecy Against Jerusalem:** God directs Ezekiel to face Jerusalem and prophesy against the “sanctuaries” and the land of Israel. God’s sword of judgment is sharpened, polished, and ready to slaughter everyone—both the righteous and the wicked.

2. **The King of Babylon’s Dilemma:** Ezekiel acts out a sign. He groans in agony as if in terrible pain. When the people ask why, he explains it’s because of the news that is coming. He then describes the King of Babylon at a crossroads, using divination (like shaking arrows, consulting idols, and looking at a liver) to decide whether to attack Rabbah (the Ammonite capital) or Jerusalem. The signs point to Jerusalem.

3. Judgment for the Ammonites Too: Finally, God tells Ezekiel to prophesy against the Ammonites. Although the King of Babylon initially turned toward Jerusalem, the Ammonites will not escape forever. God's sword will also be drawn against them for their gloating and ridicule.

The main idea is that God's unstoppable judgment, wielded by the Babylonian army, has been decreed.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Drawn Sword of the LORD: The central image. God declares He has drawn His "sword from its scabbard" and will not sheathe it again. This symbolizes His personal, active agency in using Babylon as His weapon of judgment.
- Sign-Act of Groaning: God tells Ezekiel to "groan before them with broken heart and bitter grief." When questioned, Ezekiel is to announce that the groan is for the terrifying "news that is coming," every heart will melt, and knees will give way.
- The Song of the Sword: A poetic section where the sword is personified as being "sharpened," "polished," and ready to "slaughter". It is given into the hand of the "slayer," King Nebuchadnezzar.
- The Ordeal of the King of Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar is depicted at a crossroads, using divination (shaking arrows, consulting idols, reading a liver) to decide whether to attack Ammon or Jerusalem. The "lot for Jerusalem" comes up. This shows God is sovereign over even the pagan king's strategic decisions.

- The Prince of Israel (Zedekiah) Stripped: The “scepter” (royal authority) is removed from Judah. God overturns the throne until “he comes whose right it is” (a messianic reference to the rightful Davidic heir in the future).
- The Ammonite Delusion: The Ammonites, who allied against Babylon, rejoice at first, thinking they’ve escaped. But God declares His sword is also “drawn for slaughter” against them—their judgment is merely postponed.
- Judgment is Now: The repeated phrase “against all flesh” underscores the totality of the crisis. The execution of God’s sentence is immediate and inescapable.

This chapter portrays judgment as a sharp, personal decision by God, executed by a pagan king who is an unwitting instrument, and destined for all who rebelled, including Judah’s false allies.

For Further Engagement

1. The sword in God’s hand symbolizes a terrifying force He directs. Describe a situation where a human power is used as an unwitting (or unwilling) instrument of a larger moral or historical purpose.
2. The people of Jerusalem are deluded by “lying divinations.” What are modern forms of “false security” (unreliable information or beliefs that can prevent people from seeing a clear danger)?
3. The monarchy is overturned “until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs.” In times of institutional failure or collapse, why is the hope for a future, rightful ruler so powerful?
4. Analyze the progression of the three oracles. How does moving from the “sword” (impersonal instrument) to the “divination” (specific historical decision) to the “crown removed” (specific institution) intensify the sense of targeted judgment?

5. Why does the text go into such detail about the pagan divination practices (arrows, idols, liver)? What effect does it have to show God using a foreign king's superstitious rituals to accomplish His will?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 22



Chapter Summary

Chapter 22 is a direct, harsh indictment of Jerusalem’s sins and an explanation for why God’s judgment is coming. The chapter first asks two questions: “Will you judge the city of bloodshed?” and “Are you the city that brings on her doom by shedding blood?”

It then lists the terrible sins filling the city:

1. Violence and Idolatry: Rulers and officials use power to murder and gain wealth (“shed blood”). The people worship idols, treat parents with contempt, oppress foreigners, and mistreat orphans and widows.
2. Social Corruption: Everyone cheats each other for profit. False prophets cover up the truth. Priests do not teach the difference between holy and common, or clean and unclean.
3. A People Impure: God states that the people are like “dross” (skimmed-off impurities) from melted silver—their value has been burned away, leaving only worthless slag.

Because of this pervasive corruption, God declares He will gather His people in Jerusalem and “melt” them in His furious anger just as metal is melted in a furnace. He looked

for one person to “stand in the gap” and repair the moral wall to prevent the judgment, but found no one. Therefore, the destruction is fully deserved.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Jerusalem as a City of Bloodshed:** The city is indicted as “the city of bloodshed.” This central crime is social injustice—violence against the vulnerable.
- **The Catalog of Sins:** God provides a systematic list of the people’s violations, which fall into two broad, intertwined categories:
- **Ritual/Religious:** Idol worship, desecration of the Sabbath, eating at mountain shrines, and father/son sleeping with the same woman (likely in pagan rites).
- **Social/Relational:** Murder, oppression of foreigners, orphans, and widows, extortion, usury, slander, and sexual immorality. The list shows a society that has violated the core of the Law horizontally (toward others) and vertically (toward God).
- **The Smelting Furnace Metaphor:** Jerusalem is a “smelting furnace,” where the intense heat of sin has not refined the people but has left them as “dross” (slag, impurities). As with silver refining, the dross must be removed by fire.
- **The Failure of Leadership:** Specific blame is placed on three groups who should have upheld justice:
- **Princes (“roaring lions”):** Use power to kill and plunder.
- **Priests:** Violate the law, profane holy things, and fail to teach the difference between holy and common.

- Prophets: Whitewash the sin with false visions and lies (as in chapter 13).
 - This is a total leadership collapse.
 - The Search for an Intercessor (Verse 30): A pivotal moment. God looked for one person “who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.” The failure is absolute.
 - The Consequence: Because of their dross-like state and the lack of a righteous intercessor, God declares, “I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger.” The furnace of sin invites the fire of judgment.

This chapter presents Jerusalem as a failed society where every social contract and religious command is broken, and the community has become so corrupt that no righteous mediator can be found to avert the coming wrath.

For Further Engagement

1. The chapter condemns leaders who “make the many into few” through exploitation. Describe a modern situation where the powerful enrich themselves at the expense of the wider community.
2. The smelting metaphor suggests destructive heat is needed to remove impurities. When, in personal or social life, is a painful crisis necessary to expose and remove deep corruption that otherwise goes unaddressed?
3. The failure of prophets to give honest warnings is critiqued. What is the responsibility of those who communicate (journalists, influencers, community leaders) to point out real problems, not just “whitewash” them?

4. Analyze how the list of sins progresses. Does it move from offenses against God to offenses against people, or are they intertwined? What does this structure tell us about God's view of sin?
5. Examine the failure of the four leadership groups (princes, priests, officials, prophets). What specific duty did each fail in, according to the text?
6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 23



Chapter Summary

Chapter 23 tells an allegorical story of two sisters, Oholah and Oholibah, who represent the two kingdoms of Israel. Oholah is Samaria (the Northern Kingdom, Israel) and Oholibah is Jerusalem (the Southern Kingdom, Judah). When they were young in Egypt, they started pursuing idolatry and alliances with foreign nations, which God compares to prostitution.

Oholah (Samaria) lusted after the Assyrians, forming political and religious alliances with them. Because of this unfaithfulness, God handed her over to those same Assyrians, who destroyed and shamed her.

Oholibah (Judah) saw this but did not learn. She became even more depraved, lusting after both the Assyrians and then the Babylonians. She sent messengers to them and eagerly pursued their idols. Because her unfaithfulness was even greater, God declares that the very lovers she chased—the Babylonians and their allies—will turn against her in brutal judgment. They will strip her, kill her children, and burn her houses.

The point is that both kingdoms broke their covenant with God by seeking security and identity in foreign powers and their gods instead of trusting in Him.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Allegory of Two Sisters: The kingdoms of Israel (Northern Kingdom, named Oholah) and Judah (Southern Kingdom, named Oholibah) are depicted as two promiscuous sisters in a marriage covenant with God (symbolized by “they became mine”).
- Spiritual Adultery as Political Alliance: Their “prostitution” is their obsessive pursuit of political and military alliances (“they lusted after... Assyria... Babylon”) instead of trusting God for protection. This idolatry involved adopting the foreign nations’ gods and practices.
- Egypt: The First Corruption: Both sisters “played the whore in Egypt” in their youth, indicating that Israel’s sinful inclination toward foreign dependence began during their time in Egypt.
- Oholah (Samaria/Israel): She lusted after Assyria and was “handed over” to her lovers, who killed her and took her people captive (the Assyrian exile of 722 BC). This serves as a historical warning to Judah.
- Oholibah (Jerusalem/Judah): She saw her sister’s punishment but became even “more depraved.” She lusted first after Assyria’s imagery, then turned to the Babylonians,

and finally turned back to Egypt. Her sin is more profound because she had the example of Israel's fate.

- **The Lovers Become Executioners:** In a dark twist of justice, Judah's lovers ("whom she turned to in lust")—specifically the Babylonians—will be gathered by God to become her executioners. The nations she courted will turn against her "with hatred", stripping, killing, and burning her.
- **Judah's Punishment Matches Her Crime:** The judgment mirrors the adulterous metaphor: she will be publicly "stripped", her lovers will "cut off your nose and ears" (a punishment for adultery in some ancient laws), and she will be stoned by a mob. This is the fate of an adulteress.
- **Cup of Horror and Desolation:** She will drink from "your sister's cup"—meaning she will suffer the same fate as Samaria, only more severe. The goal is to "put an end to your prostitution" and make them "drink the cup of your sister."
- **Purpose: To Know I Am the Sovereign LORD:** As in Chapter 16, the purpose is to end the lewdness and bring the cynical, knowing confession that God is sovereign and His judgment is just.

The chapter uses a shocking, sustained metaphor to portray idolatry and political faithlessness as a form of marital betrayal that invites horrific, shameful destruction from the very nations they trusted.

For Further Engagement

1. The chapter portrays seeking security in alliances as a form of infidelity. When can relying on a powerful but morally questionable partner for safety compromise a group's identity and principles?

2. Oholibah had knowledge of her sister's disastrous example but repeated it. Describe a situation where seeing the negative consequences of an action fails to deter someone from doing the same thing.
3. The allegory reduces complex political strategy to a raw metaphor of lust. What is the danger when national policy is driven by fascination with another culture's power or "splendor" rather than by principle or wisdom?
4. Analyze the progression in the allegory. Why does starting the story of both sisters in Egypt (their "youth") matter for understanding their later actions?
5. Why does God declare He will "rouse" or stir up the very lovers (nations) the sisters pursued to come and attack them? What does this say about the nature of their alliances?
6. Compare Oholibah's final sin: turning back to Egypt after being with Babylon. Why is this "double treachery" presented as the final, damning act?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 24



Chapter Summary

Chapter 24 marks a turning point. On the very day the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem begins, God gives Ezekiel two powerful signs.

First, he tells a parable about a cooking pot. Jerusalem is like a pot set on a fire, filled with choice meat (its people). But the pot is so corroded with rust (its persistent sin) that even boiling the contents won't clean it. The only remedy is to empty it piece by piece—meaning the people will be killed or exiled—and then to heat the empty pot until its rust melts away in the fire. This symbolizes the total destruction coming to the city.

Second, God tells Ezekiel that his wife, “the delight of your eyes,” will die suddenly. However, Ezekiel must not mourn publicly: no weeping, no traditional acts of grief. When the people ask why he isn't mourning, he is to explain that his personal tragedy is a sign for them. When Jerusalem (the “delight of their eyes”) falls, they will be so shattered that they will mourn in silence, overwhelmed by the weight of their punishment.

The chapter ends with God telling Ezekiel that on the day a fugitive arrives confirming Jerusalem's fall, Ezekiel's own muteness (a sign from earlier in the book) will end, and he will speak freely again.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Date: The Siege Begins:** The prophecy is dated to the very day the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began (“the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year” – January 587 BC). This ties Ezekiel's prophecy directly to the historical event.
- **The Cooking Pot Parable:** Jerusalem is again a “cooking pot” (see chapter 11), but here it is corroded with rust (symbolizing persistent guilt). The choice pieces of meat inside represent the city's inhabitants facing the “fire” of the siege. The rust won't come off, so the pot's contents must be burned away—total judgment is the only purification.
- **The Death of Ezekiel's Wife:** God tells Ezekiel his wife, “the delight of your eyes,” will die suddenly. However, Ezekiel is forbidden from the traditional, public mourning rites: “Do not mourn or weep or let any tears flow.” He is to grieve silently.
- **Ezekiel as a “Sign” to the People:** His personal tragedy is a public prophetic act. The people will ask him why he isn't mourning. His answer: God is about to take away “the delight of your eyes”—the temple and their children—and they too will be forbidden to mourn properly due to the overwhelming horror and shame.

- The End of Muteness: A fugitive arrives to bring news of the city's fall. On that day, "your mouth will be opened" to the fugitive, and Ezekiel will speak freely. This ends the sign-act of muteness that began in 3:26, signaling the prophecy is fulfilled.
- The Ultimate Knowledge: The fall of Jerusalem will be the definitive revelation: "Then they will know that I am the LORD." The long-threatened event comes to pass, proving God's word is true.

Chapter 24 is the turning point of the book. It uses Ezekiel's deepest personal loss to symbolize the nation's coming loss, marking the end of prophecy about Jerusalem's fall and the beginning of a new phase focusing on hope for the nations and restoration.

For Further Engagement

1. The "corrosion" in the pot was persistent, ingrained evil. Describe a situation in an institution or relationship where a deep-seated, ignored problem eventually leads to a catastrophic breakdown.
2. Ezekiel's personal tragedy became a public sign. When have you seen someone's personal grief or loss serve as a powerful, unspoken message or lesson for a wider community?
3. The exiles will be struck dumb with silent grief. What is the difference between grief expressed through ritual and grief so deep it is wordless and paralyzing?
4. Analyze the progression of the pot's fate. How does starting as "choice meat" and ending as an empty, superheated, burned-out husk illustrate the completeness of Jerusalem's destruction?
5. Why were the normal rituals of mourning (tears, special food, altered dress) forbidden to Ezekiel? What does the absence of ritual communicate that ritual itself cannot?

6. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

PART III: ORACLES AGAINST SEVEN FOREIGN NATIONS (25-32)

Chapter 25



Chapter Summary

After many chapters focused on Judah's judgment, Ezekiel now turns to pronounce God's judgment on the surrounding nations. The chapter is a series of short prophecies against Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia. These nations are condemned not for general wickedness, but for their specific, malicious reactions to Judah's downfall. They cheered, mocked, or tried to take advantage of Judah's destruction. God declares that because they celebrated the ruin of His people, they will themselves be ruined by other nations and will know that "He is the LORD."

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Shift in Focus:** This chapter marks a major turn from Judah to the nations, showing God is the judge of all peoples, not just Israel.
- **The Crime of Schadenfreude:** The core offense is mocking and gloating over another's disaster (especially "Because you... clapped your hands and stamped your feet, rejoicing with all the malice of your heart"). It's a judgment against cruel celebration.
- **"Then you will know that I am the LORD":** This signature phrase of Ezekiel appears for each nation. The goal of judgment is revelation—forcing these nations to recognize Israel's God as the true, sovereign power.
- **Poetic Justice:** The punishment fits the crime. Nations that took joy in Judah's land being laid waste will have their own lands given to others (e.g., Ammon to "people of the East").
- **Collective Judgment:** The prophecies are against whole nations for their shared attitude and actions, highlighting corporate responsibility.

The chapter teaches that how we treat others in their suffering matters deeply to God.

For Further Engagement

1. Ammon is judged for gloating over another's misfortune. Why is schadenfreude (taking pleasure in another's downfall) considered a serious moral failing in both personal and international relations?
2. Moab is judged for saying Judah is "like all the other nations," denying its special status. When is it harmful to ignore or deny the unique history, identity, or circumstances of another group?

3. The chapter shows that those who take advantage of a crisis may face their own. Describe a historical or modern example where a nation's aggression during a regional conflict later backfired.
4. Analyze the geopolitical context. These are all small nations on Judah's borders. Why would their mockery and aggression toward a fallen Judah be a logical, if cruel, political move? How does God's judgment challenge that logic?
5. Compare the judgments. What do the similar fates (being overrun by desert tribes, losing towns, becoming desolate) suggest about the nature of God's justice toward these enemies?
6. Examine the role of Israel in Edom's judgment (v. 14). Why is it significant that Israel is named as the instrument of judgment against its kinfolk, unlike the other nations?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 26



Chapter Summary

This chapter begins a major three-chapter prophecy against the powerful island city of Tyre. God declares judgment on Tyre because its people saw Jerusalem's fall and greedily thought, "Good! Now her trade will come to us!" For this selfish delight at Judah's ruin, God will bring many nations against Tyre (like waves of the sea) to destroy its walls, towers, and mainland suburbs. The prophecy vividly describes the city being scraped bare like the top of a rock and becoming a place where fishermen spread their nets. It announces that Tyre will sink into the sea and never be rebuilt.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Motive of Greed:** Tyre’s sin is economic opportunism—seeing a neighbor’s tragedy as a chance for profit. This contrasts with the malice of the nations in Chapter 25.
- **The “Nations as Waves” Metaphor:** God says He will bring many nations against Tyre “like the sea bringing up its waves.” This portrays the coming siege as an unstoppable, repeated, natural force.
- **Complete Destruction:** The language is thorough—“scrape her soil from her,” “a bare rock.” The prophecy emphasizes permanence: Tyre will be gone forever, becoming a place for fishermen, not merchants.
- **Historical Fulfillment:** This points to the famous 13-year siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (to ruin the mainland) and later Alexander the Great (who built a causeway to capture the island city). The “fishermen spreading nets” image was famously fulfilled.
- **Divine Control:** The agents are nations (like Babylon), but the force behind them is God (“I am against you, Tyre”).

The prophecy shows that God judges not just open hatred, but also cold-hearted greed, profiting from others’ suffering.

For Further Engagement

1. Tyre saw another’s disaster as its own commercial opportunity. Describe a modern parallel where a company or country might economically benefit from a rival’s crisis. What are the ethical implications?
2. The prophecy turns a powerful port into a bare rock for fishermen. Describe a situation where a center of power or activity is reduced to a mere, forgotten landmark.

3. The reaction of the coastlands shows how the fall of a dominant power sends shockwaves. How does the collapse of a major corporation or empire create fear and uncertainty for its partners and rivals?
4. Analyze the metaphor of the attacking nations being “like the sea bringing up its waves.” Why is this an ironically fitting image to use against a sea power like Tyre?
5. The prophecy describes the destruction in very physical terms: walls broken, dust scraped, towers felled. Why is such a concrete, material description effective for conveying total judgment?
6. Compare the reasons for judging Tyre and the nations in Chapter 25. How is Tyre’s sin (gloating for economic gain) similar to, yet distinct from, Ammon’s (gloating with malice)?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 27



Chapter Summary

This chapter is a detailed lament, or funeral song, for the city of Tyre. Ezekiel compares Tyre to a magnificent, gorgeously-built merchant ship sailing the seas in luxury. The first half lists all the high-quality materials and skilled workers from around the known world who helped build this “ship” (the city). The second half describes its rich global trade, naming specific nations that traded soldiers, goods, and resources with Tyre. The song ends abruptly when an “east wind” (a metaphor for Babylon) wrecks the ship. It sinks with all its crew and riches, stunning the surrounding nations who mourn the loss of their great trading partner.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Tyre as a Ship: This central metaphor highlights Tyre’s identity as a seafaring trade empire—beautiful, wealthy, and globally connected, but also fragile and doomed to sink.
- Catalog of Commerce: The long lists of trading partners (from Spain to Mesopotamia) and luxury goods (silver, ivory, ebony, embroidered cloth) emphasize Tyre’s vast wealth and central role in the ancient economy—its pride and its reason for existence.
- Source of Pride = Source of Downfall: The very things Tyre boasted in, such as its perfect construction, its network of alliances, its immense wealth, become the focus of its lament. Its strength was dependent on others, making it vulnerable.
- The “East Wind”: This symbolizes the Babylonians (from the east) as an unstoppable force of nature that destroys human enterprise.
- Universal Shock: The reaction of “all who live by the seashore” and the ship’s “merchants” shows Tyre’s fall wasn’t just a local event, but an economic catastrophe for the whole region.

This lament reveals the hollow core of material glory and warns that trust in wealth and alliances, rather than in God, ends in ruin.

For Further Engagement

1. Tyre was the “market of the peoples,” a central global hub. What modern city or economic center serves a similar role today, and what might a “lament” for its sudden collapse focus on?
2. The merchants mourn the loss of wealth and system, not human life. When have you seen a crisis where the public discussion focused more on economic loss than on human cost?

3. The ship was wrecked by an “east wind” (an unexpected, powerful force). Describe a modern “east wind”—a sudden, disruptive event that could collapse a complex, interconnected system.
4. Analyze the structure of the chapter. How does moving from the ship’s beautiful construction (v. 1-9) to its vast trade network (v. 10-25) to its sudden wreck (v. 26-36) build a sense of dramatic irony and tragedy?
5. Why does the lament end with the perspective of the merchants and sailors? How does this final viewpoint drive home the chapter’s message about what Tyre ultimately valued?
6. Compare this lament with the judgment oracle in Chapter 26. How does Chapter 27 deepen the understanding of what will be lost beyond just walls and towers?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 28



Chapter Summary

This chapter concludes God’s judgment on Tyre with two prophecies. First, it’s a message of doom against Tyre’s prince (its human ruler) for his arrogant belief that he was “a god,” sitting on a divine throne in the sea. God will bring violent foreigners to kill him and throw him into a pit. Second, and more famous, is a lament for Tyre’s king, a poetic vision about a magnificent, anointed “guardian cherub” who was in Eden, covered in precious stones and perfect until pride corrupted him. For his pride, he is cast down from God’s mountain to the earth and destroyed. The chapter ends with a final promise that Tyre will be “no more.”

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Two Levels of Judgment:** The chapter clearly distinguishes the human prince (who wrongly thinks he's a god) and a symbolic, supernatural "king". This second figure is a metaphorical picture of Tyre's power and divine-like pride.
- **The Garden of Eden and the Guardian Cherub:** This poetic image blends the story of a perfect, privileged being in a holy place with that of Tyre's splendor. It portrays the city's greatness as a gift from God, corrupted by pride.
- **The Sin of Pride:** This is the core issue. The ruler's downfall is his boast, "I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god." It's a judgment against idolizing one's own success and beauty.
- **The "Stones of Fire":** These are the beautiful, shining gems that covered the "king," symbolizing his immense glory and luxury.
- **Cast to the Earth:** The downfall is total—from a perfect, high position in God's presence to being destroyed on the ground, exposed for all to see.

The chapter shows that the ultimate sin behind greed and cruelty is pride, and that even the greatest beauty and wisdom can be twisted into self-worship.

For Further Engagement

1. The ruler of Tyre's sin was claiming, "I am a god." What are modern, more subtle forms of this boast? Where do people or institutions act as if they are beyond accountability or the ultimate authority?
2. The "king" is corrupted by his own beauty and splendor. How can great talent, success, or privilege become a spiritual trap, leading to pride and a fall?

3. Sidon is called a “pricking brier,” a persistent, irritating source of harm. Describe a situation where a constant, low-level hostility or nuisance can be more damaging than a single large conflict.
4. Analyze the settings: the ruler sits in the “seat of the gods” (a throne room), while the king is placed in “Eden, the garden of God.” How do these different settings highlight the difference between a human political claim and a cosmic, spiritual reality?
5. Why does the oracle use the imagery of a guardian cherub? What does this specific role (protecting holiness) make his rebellion particularly heinous?
6. Compare the fates of the two figures. The ruler is killed by foreigners; the king is cast down and consumed by fire. How do these punishments fit their respective “crimes”?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 29



Chapter Summary

This chapter shifts focus from Tyre to Egypt, beginning a new series of prophecies. God pronounces judgment on Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. He compares Pharaoh and Egypt to a great dragon (or monster) lying in the Nile, claiming, “The Nile is mine; I made it.” For this arrogant pride, God will catch this dragon with hooks, drag it out, and leave it in the desert to die. Because Egypt was a weak, splintered “reed” that Judah foolishly leaned on for support, God will make it a desolate wasteland for forty years. After this, He will restore it to a modest kingdom, so that Egypt will finally know that God is the true Lord—and they will never again rule over other nations.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Egypt as the “Monster-in-the-Nile”: This image portrays Pharaoh as a proud, monstrous beast claiming ownership of Egypt’s lifeline, the Nile River, and thus claiming god-like power.
- The “Splintered Reed”: A key criticism: Egypt was not a reliable ally. When Judah leaned on it for support, it splintered and stabbed them. This references failed military aid to Judah against Babylon.
- Pride and False Ownership: Pharaoh’s central sin, like Tyre’s, is prideful claim to self-sufficiency (“I made the Nile”). It shows the foolishness of claiming credit for a gift from God.
- Hooked and Dragged Out: A humiliating image of a fisherman catching and disabling a powerful creature, symbolizing God’s total control over Pharaoh.
- The 40-Year Desolation: A period of complete punishment and cleansing for Egypt, a significant number in the Bible representing a generation of judgment.
- Humbled Restoration: Unlike Tyre, Egypt will be restored, but only as a humble, lowly kingdom that knows God is Lord. Its pride is permanently broken.

This prophecy condemns nations for their dangerous arrogance and highlights the failure of human alliances against God’s plan.

For Further Engagement

1. Egypt’s boast, “My Nile is my own; I made it,” represents extreme national self-sufficiency. What modern equivalents exist where a nation, corporation, or individual claims sole credit for their prosperity and security?

2. Judah was tempted to rely on Egypt as a “staff of reed” for support. What are some modern “reeds” people or nations lean on for security that are destined to fail? Why is reliance on them problematic?
3. The “forty years” represents a complete period of punishment. Describe a situation where a person or institution had to go through a long, humbling period of “desolation” before being restored to a more modest, functional state.
4. Analyze the punishment: being hooked, dragged into the wilderness, and left as carrion. How does each step of this process directly contradict and dismantle Egypt’s identity as the fertile, life-giving Nile civilization?
5. Compare the fates of Tyre (Ch. 26-28) and Egypt. Both are judged for pride, but their punishments differ in duration and final outcome (Egypt is restored, Tyre is not). What might account for this difference?
6. Examine the two dates given. Why is it significant that the second oracle (v. 17-21) is dated years after Jerusalem’s fall? What does this reveal about the ongoing nature of prophecy and fulfillment?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 30



Chapter Summary

This chapter is a collection of prophecies declaring the coming “Day of the LORD against Egypt.” It announces that Egypt and its allies will face a terrible day of dark clouds, war, and destruction brought by Babylon. The heart of Egypt will be shattered as its idol worship, kingly pride, and the Nile River that sustains it are all broken. The wealth of its cities will be plundered, and the people will know that God is the one bringing this judgment. The chapter emphasizes the purpose of all this: to enable God to break Egypt’s arrogant power and show that He is Lord.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The “Day of the LORD”: Typically, a term used for God’s judgment on Israel, it is now applied to a foreign nation. It’s a day of darkness, chaos, and punishment specifically against Egypt and its allies.
- Egypt’s “Arms” and “Heart” Broken: Its military power (“arms”) is shattered, and its central source of life, the Nile and Pharaoh’s power, fails, causing the whole nation to collapse.
- Purpose of Judgment: Repeatedly stated as so that “Egypt will know that I am the LORD” and its arrogant “pride in its power” will be crushed, making it a lesson for others.
- Divine Instrument: God explicitly names Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon as His appointed agent to carry out this destruction.
- The Nile’s Judgment: The river, which Egypt saw as a source of life and a god, will be “made dry,” a massive blow to both its economy and pride.
- Annihilation of Idols and Cities: Specific Egyptian cities and false gods (such as Memphis and the sacred bulls) are named to convey the extent of the destruction, leaving no place or deity spared.

The chapter frames Egypt’s fall not as a random political event, but as a controlled act of God to humble a proud nation.

For Further Engagement

1. The “day of the LORD” is described as a time of clouds and doom. Describe a modern event or period that felt like an inescapable “day” of reckoning for a powerful but corrupt institution.

2. Egypt's allies fell with it, showing the danger of tying one's fate to a proud, doomed power. Give a modern example (political, financial, or social) where smaller entities suffered collapse because of their association with a failing leader or system.
3. Pharaoh's "broken arm" symbolizes a failed rescue attempt. Describe a situation where a promised source of help or support proved to be weak and ineffective when needed most.
4. Analyze the literary effect of listing so many specific Egyptian cities (Memphis, Thebes, etc.). How does this list move the prophecy from a general threat to a vivid, inescapable reality?
5. Compare the use of the sword in this chapter. It is the "sword" of Nebuchadnezzar, but also the "sword" of the LORD. What does this duality reveal about how Ezekiel views historical events?
6. The prophecy moves from a general declaration (v. 1-19) to a specific, dated sign-act about Pharaoh's arms (v. 20-26). How does this structure strengthen the overall message?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 31



Chapter Summary

In a prophecy directed at Pharaoh, Ezekiel tells a symbolic story about Assyria to teach a lesson. He describes Assyria as a magnificent cedar tree—the tallest, most beautiful tree in Eden, with deep roots by abundant water. All the other trees (other nations) envied it. But because of its pride in its own height, God handed it over to a foreign power to be chopped down. The great tree fell, and all the other trees were shocked. The message is then applied directly to Pharaoh: Egypt is just like that proud cedar, and because it has lifted itself up in pride, God will hand it over to the same fate—it will be cut down and go to the underworld.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Assyria as the Cedar of Lebanon: The ultimate symbol of towering strength, beauty, and pride. It represents a once-great empire that fell because of its arrogance.

- The Garden of God (Eden): Again, a place of perfection and privilege. Being there signifies that Assyria's greatness was a gift from God, not its own creation.
- The Waters of the Deep: The tree's roots had access to the great subterranean waters, a symbol of abundant life, security, and blessing.
- Pride as the Cause of Fall: The tree's downfall is explicitly linked to its heart becoming proud of its height. Its own success was its undoing.
- The "Mighty One of the Nations": This is Babylon, the "axe" God uses to chop the tree down, showing God's control over world powers.
- Warning by Analogy: The whole chapter is a pointed warning to Pharaoh: "You are just like that tree. Its fate is your future."
- Descent to the Underworld: The fallen tree goes down to "the pit" (Sheol) among the dead, a stark image of complete humiliation and the end of glory.

This chapter powerfully argues that no nation, no matter how great, is safe from God's judgment if it becomes prideful about the blessings He gave it.

For Further Engagement

1. The cedar was proud of its height, thinking it reached the clouds. What are some modern examples of an institution or individual becoming arrogant because of their perceived "height" (success, size, or influence)?
2. The fall of the great tree served as a warning to "all the trees of the field." Describe a situation where the dramatic failure of a leading company or celebrity served as a cautionary tale for others in the same field.

3. The allegory states that the tree was well-watered by the “deep.” How can abundant resources (money, talent, natural advantages) actually create a spiritual danger for a person or nation?
4. Analyze the comparison between Egypt and Assyria. How does using Assyria’s past destruction make the threat against Egypt more credible and terrifying?
5. The tree is cut down by a “mighty one of the nations” (Babylon), but the action is attributed to God. How does this chapter portray the relationship between divine judgment and human historical actors?
6. Examine the contrast between the tree’s former state (nurtured in the “garden of God,” providing shelter) and its final state (cut down, abandoned, in the pit). How does this contrast amplify the tragedy?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 32



Chapter Summary

This chapter contains two final, graphic laments over Pharaoh and Egypt. First, God compares Pharaoh to a fearsome lion or dragon whom He will catch, kill, and leave as food for birds and beasts. Then, in a more extended funeral song, He pictures Pharaoh’s fall as the dragging-down of a great monster into the underworld (Sheol). There, in the “pit,” Pharaoh will see the other fallen, disgraced warriors of once-great nations—Assyria, Elam, Edom, and others—all brought low by the sword. The message is clear: Egypt will join them, stripped of all pride and power, lying in disgrace among the dead.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Pharaoh as a Monstrous Beast: He is described as a “lion” and a “dragon” of the Nile, causing chaos. God’s act of catching him in a net shows total control and humiliation.
- Cosmic Darkness: The threat to “darken the stars” and cover the sun and moon symbolizes the total, world-shattering nature of Egypt’s fall.
- The March to Sheol: The most dominant image is of Egypt’s army being slain and descending to the underworld—the “pit” where the dead dwell.
- Comfort in Hell: A shocking idea: the other fallen nations in the place of the dead will feel “comforted” to see mighty Egypt join them. This shows the ultimate leveling nature of death and judgment.
- The “Company of the Uncircumcised”: Lying among the dead “slain by the sword” is the ultimate disgrace for a warrior. The specific grouping with other fallen powers reinforces shared humiliation.
- The End of Arrogance: The chapter’s final point is that Pharaoh’s terror on earth is over, and Egypt will be humbled forever, sharing the common fate of all proud empires.

It concludes the long prophecy against Egypt by showing that even the greatest human terror will end in shared ruin.

For Further Engagement

1. The dragon thrashing in the water disrupts everything. Describe a modern leader or institution whose exercise of power is similarly disruptive and chaotic.
2. In Sheol, all former empires are equal in death and disgrace. How does this vision challenge modern ideas of legacy, historical memory, and “winning”?

3. Pharaoh is “comforted” to see he’s not alone in his fate. When have you seen the shared experience of failure or humiliation provide a strange form of comfort?
4. Analyze the shift between the two laments. How does the first (cosmic judgment on the land) lead logically into the second (descent to the underworld)?
5. Compare the depiction of Sheol here with earlier mentions (e.g., Ch. 31). How does Chapter 32 expand the cast of characters and deepen the theme?
6. Examine the phrase “laid to rest among the uncircumcised.” Why was this the ultimate insult for a Pharaoh who was considered a god?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

PART IV: MESSAGES OF RESTORATION AND HOPE (33-39)

Chapter 33



Chapter Summary

After prophecies against foreign nations, the focus returns to Israel. First, God reappoints Ezekiel as a “watchman” for his people. Just like a guard must warn the city of danger, Ezekiel must warn Israel of God’s judgment. If he warns them, they are responsible for their own choices. Then, news arrives that Jerusalem has finally fallen. The night before, Ezekiel’s muteness is lifted. When the exiles come to hear his words, he delivers two big messages: 1) It’s too late for those left in Jerusalem; their fate is sealed. 2) For the exiles listening now, they must truly turn from their evil ways and walk in God’s laws. It’s not enough to just listen; they have to do what is right.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Watchman Redefined:** This repeats the imagery from chapter 3, emphasizing that the prophet's role is to deliver God's warning faithfully. Their job is to warn, not to control the outcome.
- **Individual Responsibility:** A key principle is restated: each person is responsible for their own life. God judges each one based on their own actions now, not the past actions of their people.
- **The Fall of Jerusalem Confirmed:** This is the turning point of the entire book. The long-threatened judgment has now happened. Ezekiel's prophecies of doom are proven true.
- **End of Muteness:** Ezekiel's ability to speak freely, held back since the start, is restored. His role now shifts from predicting doom to guiding the survivors.
- **True Repentance:** The message changes from "the end is near" to "here's how to live now." God says listening is not enough. Genuine change means turning away from sin and doing what is right and just.
- **The Scapegoat's Game:** God criticizes those who blame others ("Our sins are on our fathers") or who claim God is unfair. He declares He will judge each person by their current path.

The chapter is a pivot point, moving from warning to a call for genuine change among those who survived the disaster.

For Further Engagement

1. The watchman's role is to give a clear warning. Who are the "watchmen" in our society today (e.g., journalists, whistleblowers, friends), and what happens when they fail in their duty?
2. The people listened to Ezekiel for entertainment but did not act. Give an example of how people today might consume religious or ethical teaching as a form of intellectual or emotional entertainment without letting it change their behavior.
3. God judges the person based on their current path, not their past. Describe a situation where someone was unfairly judged based on their past reputation instead of who they are trying to be now.
4. Analyze the contrast between Ezekiel's role before the fall of Jerusalem (watchman warning of judgment) and his role after the fall (watchman explaining and offering hope). How has his message and audience changed?
5. Compare the two groups addressed: the exiles in Babylon (v. 30-33) and the remnant in Judah (v. 23-29). In what ways are both groups guilty of misinterpreting God's promises?
6. Examine the symbolism of Ezekiel's mouth being opened. Why was it closed before, and what does its opening at this precise moment signify for the rest of the book?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 34



Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a powerful prophecy against Israel's leaders. God accuses the shepherds (kings and rulers) of being selfish and neglectful. Instead of feeding and protecting the sheep (the people), they fed themselves, used force to rule, and let the flock be scattered. Therefore, God will remove these bad shepherds and promises, "I myself will search for my sheep and look after them." He will rescue His scattered people, bring them home, and provide for them in good pasture. God then promises to set up one true shepherd from David's line, the Messiah, to care for them. The chapter ends with a new covenant of peace, promising safety, blessing, and the end of their oppression.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Leaders as Bad Shepherds:** This common biblical metaphor critiques abusive and self-serving leadership. Their failure is practical: they didn't strengthen, heal, or search for the lost.
- **God as the True Shepherd:** The main idea is God's personal intervention. He rejects human rulers and says "I myself" will do the job they failed at. This is a direct promise of God's care and rescue.
- **The Messiah-Shepherd:** A future, ideal ruler from David's family will be appointed to lead God's people with justice and care. This points directly to a coming king (Jesus, in Christian interpretation).
- **Gathering the Scattered:** A promise to seek out the exiles and survivors from all the nations where they've been driven, bringing them back to their own land.
- **Justice Among the Flock:** God announces He will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep—a warning that even within the people, the strong and ruthless who bully the weak will be held accountable.
- **A Covenant of Peace:** The goal is not just return, but a state of complete peace (shalom), safety from wild beasts (enemies), abundant blessing, and God's presence with them.

This chapter shifts from judgment to hope, focusing on God's promise to personally fix the leadership crisis that destroyed the nation.

For Further Engagement

1. The bad shepherds were accused of neglecting the weak, sick, and the lost of the flock. What are modern examples of leaders (in government, church, or other organizations) failing in these same ways?

2. God promises to “judge between sheep and sheep,” ending oppression within the community. Describe a situation today where “sheep” (powerful members of a group) are butting and trampling the “weak sheep” (vulnerable members).
3. The image of God searching for the lost sheep is one of active care. How can individuals or communities embody this “search and rescue” attitude toward those who feel spiritually or socially “scattered”?
4. Analyze the contrast in verbs used: what do the bad shepherds fail to do (v. 4), and what God promises to do (v. 11-16)? What does this contrast reveal about the nature of true leadership?
5. The chapter promises both a divine shepherd (God) and a human shepherd (“David”). How are these two roles related? Does one replace the other, or do they work together?
6. Examine the progression: judgment on shepherds -> God rescues the flock -> judgment within the flock -> a Davidic shepherd -> a covenant of peace. How does each step logically lead to the next in the plan of restoration?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 35



Chapter Summary

God has another message for Ezekiel, but this time it's for a place called Mount Seir—which stands for the nation of Edom. The Edomites were relatives of Israel but became bitter enemies. God declares that because they gloated over Israel's destruction, tried to take their empty land, and spoke against Him with arrogance, He will turn their mountains into a barren wasteland. Anyone traveling through will be shocked at how completely Edom is ruined. This judgment will happen so that Edom and all nations will realize God's power over justice. He repeats His key phrase: "Then you will know that I am the LORD."

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Mount Seir as a Symbol:** Mount Seir was the homeland of Edom. Using it as a name for the whole nation personalizes the judgment against their pride and ancient hatred.
- **The Crime of Malicious Joy:** Edom's core sins are celebrating Israel's fall ("you rejoiced"), greedily trying to seize the empty land, and speaking arrogantly against God Himself.
- **"Everlasting Hatred":** God highlights Edom's long-standing, deep-seated hostility, which fueled their cruelty when Israel was vulnerable (this refers to events during Jerusalem's fall).
- **Poetic Justice:** The punishment fits the crime. Edom said the ravaged lands of Israel would be theirs; instead, their own land will become a permanent "desolation and a waste."
- **Bloodshed and Desolation:** Edom is guilty of violence ("bloodshed"), so their judgment is framed as a bloodguilt being repaid. Their land will become an empty, shocking ruin.
- **Divine Knowledge:** As with other nations, the ultimate purpose is revelatory: "you will know that I am the LORD." This judgment serves as a public demonstration of God's justice and power.

This chapter sets the stage for the restoration of Israel (Chapter 36) by first removing the threat and example of a hate-filled, predatory neighbor.

For Further Engagement

1. Edom saw Israel's disaster as an opportunity for personal gain. Can you think of a modern situation in which one group's tragedy (a natural disaster or economic collapse) was exploited by another for territorial or financial advantage?

2. The “ancient hatred” suggests a long-nursed grudge passed between generations. Describe the dangers of holding onto or inheriting such group-based animosities in families, communities, or nations today.
3. The chapter shows that celebrating the downfall of others can incur serious consequences. When have you seen “schadenfreude” (taking joy in another’s misfortune) backfire on a person or group?
4. Compare the sins of Edom in this chapter with the sins of the “shepherds of Israel” in Chapter 34. How is the nature of their wrongdoing different, and why might that lead to different pronouncements (judgment vs. promised restoration)?
5. Analyze the keywords “desolate” and “desolation.” How is this word used to describe both Israel’s fate (from Edom’s perspective) and Edom’s own coming fate? What is the literary and theological effect of this wordplay?
6. Edom’s crime was not just looting, but intent (“they shall be mine”). How does the prophecy highlight the internal attitude and desire as being just as punishable as the external action?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 36



Chapter Summary

After the judgment on Edom, God speaks a prophecy of hope to the mountains of Israel. He compares Israel to a land that has been mocked and trampled by enemy nations. God promises that He will act for His own name's sake, because the nations have sullied His reputation by claiming He was powerless to protect His people. He vows to bring the people back from exile, cleanse them from their idolatry, and give them a new heart and spirit so they can obey Him. The desolate land will become like the Garden of Eden, and the people will rebuild and prosper. The final result will be that Israel will be ashamed of their past sins and will know that God is the Lord.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Land as a Person:** The mountains of Israel are spoken to directly as if they can hear. They have been an “object of scorn” to the nations, a land defiled by its people’s sin and enemy occupation.
- **For My Holy Name’s Sake:** The primary reason given for restoration is God’s concern for His own reputation. He acts to defend the honor of His name, which has been profaned among the nations because of Israel’s exile.
- **Inner Transformation:** This is the famous “new heart” and “new spirit” promise. God says He will remove their heart of stone (stubbornness) and give them a heart of flesh (soft, responsive). He will put His own Spirit within them to make them obey His laws.
- **Responsibility Shift:** God says, “I will do this,” taking full responsibility for the cleansing and renewal. The people’s role is to receive it. He even cleans them first, then enables them to live rightly.
- **Reversal of Shame:** The land will be restored to a “garden of Eden,” and the people’s fortunes will be rebuilt. Their shame over their past will be replaced by blessing, and they will remember their evil ways with loathing.
- **Not for Your Sake:** A critical point: God is clear that He is not restoring them because they deserve it, but for the sake of His own holy name, which they had profaned among the nations.

This chapter is the theological heart of Ezekiel’s hope, focusing on divine grace and internal renewal rather than human effort.

For Further Engagement

1. The “heart of stone” represents a stubborn, unyielding will. Describe a modern attitude or mindset that could be described as a “heart of stone” toward something good (like forgiveness, change, or help).
2. God promises to act “for the sake of my holy name,” not because Israel deserved it. Can you think of a situation where someone did the right thing primarily to protect their own integrity or reputation, rather than because the other person earned it?
3. The “sprinkling of clean water” symbolizes cleansing from guilt and defilement. What are some symbolic or real acts in modern life that represent a fresh start or being “cleansed” from a past mistake?
4. Compare the restoration of the land (v. 8-15) with the restoration of the people (v. 22-38). How are these two restorations different in focus, and how are they ultimately connected?
5. Analyze the cause-and-effect relationship in v. 16-21. How did Israel’s sin lead to exile, and how did exile lead to God’s name being profaned? Trace the logic.
6. Examine the sequence in v. 25-27: cleansing first, then a new heart, then a new spirit, then God’s Spirit within, then obedience. Why is this order significant? Could obedience come first?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 37



Chapter Summary

In a famous vision, God brings Ezekiel to a valley full of dry, scattered human bones and asks him if they can live again. Ezekiel answers, “Lord, you know.” God then commands him to prophesy to the bones. As he does, there is a rattling sound, and the bones come together, grow muscle and skin, but are still lifeless. When Ezekiel prophesies to the “breath,” wind (or Spirit) enters the bodies, and they stand up as a vast, living army. God explains: these bones are the whole nation of Israel, feeling hopeless, saying, “Our hope is gone; we are cut off.” The vision promises that God will open their graves of exile, bring them back to their land, and put His Spirit in them so they will live again. The chapter ends with a sign of two sticks (representing the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah) being joined into one, showing God will reunite them as a single nation under a Davidic king.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Valley of Dry Bones: This symbolizes the complete and final hopelessness of the people. Dry bones represent a situation that is humanly impossible to fix.
- Prophesying to the Bones/Lifeless Bodies: The act shows that God’s word (delivered by the prophet) is the creative power that initiates restoration.
- The Spirit/Wind/Breath: The Hebrew word ruach means all three: wind, breath, and Spirit. It is the life-giving power of God that transforms a re-assembled body into a living being.
- God’s Question and Ezekiel’s Answer: The question, “Can these bones live?” focuses entirely on God’s power alone. Ezekiel’s response (“Lord, you know”) models total dependence on God’s will and ability.
- “Our hope is gone; we are cut off.” This is God’s diagnosis of Israel’s spiritual and emotional state—utter despair. The vision is a direct answer to that despair.
- The Two Sticks Becoming One: A concrete sign of national reunification. The long-divided kingdoms (Israel and Judah) will be restored as one nation under one king from David’s line.
- Supernatural Restoration: The whole vision shows that Israel’s revival will be a miraculous act of God, from start to finish—resurrection from a state of death.

This vision is the ultimate promise of national resurrection, powered by God’s Spirit and word, not human effort.

For Further Engagement

1. The dry bones felt “our hope is lost.” Describe a modern situation—personal, communal, or national—where people might feel a similar sense of irreversible loss and dead-ended hope.
2. The restoration happened in stages: bones coming together, then flesh, then breath. Can you think of a process of recovery or renewal in life that also happens in distinct, necessary stages rather than all at once?
3. The two sticks represent a deep, long-standing division (North vs. South Israel). What is a major division in the modern world (political, religious, ethnic) that seems as historically entrenched, and what would “joining them into one” look like?
4. Analyze the progression of the vision. Why was it important for Ezekiel to see the bones become bodies before the breath entered them? What does this sequence teach about the process of restoration?
5. Compare the role of Ezekiel in the vision (prophesying as commanded) with the role of God (giving the command and the breath). What does this say about the relationship between human obedience and divine power in bringing about change?
6. Examine the connection between Chapter 36 and Chapter 37. How does the promise of a “new spirit” (36:26-27) relate to the coming of the “breath/spirit” (*ruach*) in the dry bones?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 38



Chapter Summary

After the vision of Israel's restoration, Ezekiel delivers a prophecy about a future, massive attack against the peaceful, regathered nation. A powerful alliance of nations from the distant north, led by a figure named Gog of Magog, will plot a surprise invasion to plunder Israel's wealth. However, God Himself will supernaturally intervene. He will bring Gog against Israel in order to display His own holiness and power. On the mountains of Israel, God will destroy Gog's army with a great earthquake, panic, disease, and torrents of rain, hail, and fire. The defeat will be so complete it will take seven months to bury all the dead. The ultimate purpose is for all nations and Israel to know that God is the Lord.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Gog of Magog: A mysterious, archetypal enemy leader from the remote north, representing a future coalition of hostile powers opposed to God's people.
- "In Later Years" / "In Days to Come": This places the event in a distant, future time after Israel has been restored to its land and is living in peaceful security (from chapter 36-37).
- God as the Director: A key twist: God states "I will bring you against my land" and "I will turn you around." The invasion happens under God's sovereign control to serve His purpose.
- The Divine Display: God's stated goal is to show His greatness and holiness in the sight of many nations. The battle is a public demonstration of His power.
- Supernatural Weapons: God fights directly with cosmic disasters—earthquake, panic, plague, torrential rain, hail, fire, and burning sulfur. Human weapons are insignificant in this battle.
- The Seven-Month Burial: This detail emphasizes the sheer, overwhelming scale of the defeat and the immense cleanup required, showcasing total victory.
- The Knowledge of God: The repeated purpose clause drives the point home: "Then they will know that I am the LORD." It is a final, definitive revelation of God's sovereignty to the world.

This chapter shifts from internal restoration to a final, external confrontation where God personally defends His restored people.

For Further Engagement

1. Gog sees a peaceful, prosperous nation and views it as a target for plunder. Can you think of a modern situation where a group's success or resources made it a target for envy and aggression from others?
2. The prophecy suggests that even in a state of blessed security, there can be sudden, massive threats. How does this relate to the experience of individuals or communities who face a crisis just when things seem to be going well?
3. The coalition is made up of distant, diverse nations united by a common greed. What are some forces or motivations in the world today that can bring very different groups together for a harmful purpose?
4. Analyze the tension in the text: Gog has an evil plan (v. 10), yet God claims He is the one bringing Gog (v. 4, 16). How can both be true? What does this say about the relationship between human evil and divine sovereignty?
5. Compare the depiction of Israel here ("dwelling securely," "unwalled villages") with its description in the vision of the new land in Ezekiel 47-48. How does the Gog prophecy test the permanence of that promised peace?
6. Examine the weapons of God's judgment in verses 19-22 (earthquake, pestilence, rain, hail, fire). Why are these "natural" disasters appropriate tools for this battle, as opposed to Israel's army fighting?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 39



Chapter Summary

This chapter continues and concludes the prophecy against Gog from the land of Magog. It describes the aftermath of God's victory over the invading army. God will completely destroy Gog's forces on the mountains of Israel, leaving their weapons to be gathered as firewood for seven years and their bodies to be buried in a mass grave for seven months. The scale of the slaughter is so vast that it will stop the travelers who bury the dead. The birds and wild beasts are called to feast on the fallen army. The ultimate result is that Israel and all the nations will see God's judgment and know His glory. Finally, God promises He will never again hide His face from His restored and Spirit-filled people.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Total Destruction:** God declares He will strike down Gog and his army, leaving only six survivors (a symbolic number for a tiny remnant) and giving their bodies as food to birds and beasts.
- **The Weapons as Fuel:** The invaders' abandoned weapons (shields, bows, arrows, clubs, spears) will be so numerous they will supply Israel with fuel for seven years, symbolizing long-term provision from the spoils of the victory.
- **The Valley of Travelers / Hamon-Gog:** A new place name, "The Valley of Gog's Horde," will be created for the mass burial. It will take seven months to cleanse the land, showing the immense scale of the defeat.
- **The Burial Detail:** The act of burying the dead to cleanse the land is a solemn, public duty. It stops normal travel ("it will block the travelers"), emphasizing how this event dominates the landscape and memory.
- **The Great Sacrificial Feast:** The image of God summoning birds and beasts to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the slain leaders is a graphic picture of a huge sacrificial meal offered by God in judgment.
- **Universal Recognition:** The central purpose is repeated: Israel will know the Lord their God, and the nations will see His judgment and understand His holiness. His glory will be displayed.
- **The Promise of Permanent Favor:** The prophecy ends with the promise that God will never again hide His face from a spiritually restored Israel, who will know He is their God.

This chapter completes the Gog prophecy by focusing on the permanent cleansing of the land and the final, undeniable revelation of God's power to the world.

For Further Engagement

1. The cleanup after the battle is a long, unpleasant, but necessary task. Describe a situation in life where, after a major crisis or conflict is resolved, there is still a long period of difficult “cleanup” work to do.
2. The chapter says all nations will see and understand God’s judgment. In modern terms, what is an event or revelation that can cause many different groups to suddenly see the same truth in the same way?
3. The idea of a “sacrificial feast” for animals turns the enemy’s defeat into a provision for nature. Can you think of an instance where something intended for evil or destruction was later used for a beneficial purpose?
4. Analyze the use of time periods: seven years of fuel and seven months of burial. What might the number seven symbolize, and how do these two periods relate to each other in the process of moving from war to permanent peace?
5. Compare the two “feasts” in the chapters: Gog’s intended feast of plunder from Israel (38:12-13) and God’s prepared feast for animals upon Gog’s army (39:17-20). What is the poetic justice in this reversal?
6. Examine the progression in verses 25-29: restoring fortunes -> gathering from enemies -> demonstrating holiness -> no more hidden face -> pouring out Spirit. How does the defeat of Gog serve as the crucial final step that allows for the “pouring out of the Spirit” promised back in Chapter 36?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

PART IV: VISION OF THE NEW TEMPLE AND POLITY (40-48)

Chapter 40



Chapter Summary

In a vision, Ezekiel is taken to the land of Israel and set on a very high mountain. There he sees a man whose appearance is like bronze, holding a measuring rod and a linen cord. This guide tells Ezekiel to pay close attention, because he must report everything he sees to the people of Israel. For the rest of the chapter, the guide leads Ezekiel through the outer gates and courts of a gigantic, perfectly symmetrical temple complex, meticulously measuring every dimension—walls, gateways, rooms, and porticos. The focus is on the eastern outer gate, the outer court, and the inner court's southern and eastern gates, noting their guardrooms and decorative palm tree carvings. The vision ends with them arriving at the inner court's outer threshold.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Perfect Blueprint:** This is not Solomon's ruined temple or a human construction plan. It's a divinely revealed ideal temple, measured by God's own representative, shown in detail to the prophet.
- **The Divine Architect:** The shining, bronze-like man with measuring tools is an angelic figure representing God's precise order, holiness, and control over the new dwelling place.
- **Obsessive Measurement:** The focus on exact numbers, dimensions, symmetry, and repeated structures (like triple guardrooms in each gate) emphasizes that God's design for worship is ordered, intentional, and separated from the ordinary world. Nothing is left to chance.
- **Staged Access:** The temple is built in layers (outer wall, outer court, inner court), showing increasing holiness and restricted access as one moves inward. The detailed gates act as thresholds and checkpoints.
- **Symbolic Palm Trees and Lions:** The palm tree decorations symbolize life and victory, while other carvings may represent guardianship or royalty. This points to a place of divine life and blessing.
- **"See with your eyes and hear with your ears":** A command for total attention. This vision is being given as a revelation to be announced, offering a concrete picture of future hope and restoration.

- **Silence on Sacrifice:** Notably absent is any mention of an altar, priests, or sacrifices at this point. The focus is solely on the building's perfect, holy structure.

This detailed architectural vision begins a major shift, showing that God's future dwelling with His people will be founded on perfect order and holiness.

For Further Engagement

1. The chapter is obsessed with precise measurements. When in modern life is such extreme attention to detail and specification essential (e.g., in construction, science, or even rules for a game)? What can go wrong if the details are ignored?
2. The temple complex is designed with a clear progression from the outer to the inner, marked by gates and rising steps. Can you think of a modern building or space (such as a courthouse, a stadium, or a secure facility) that uses its architecture to create a sense of progression or increasing importance?
3. The vision comes to Ezekiel years after the real temple was destroyed. Describe a time when someone held onto a detailed vision or plan for the future during a period of loss or ruin.
4. Analyze the movement in the vision. Ezekiel starts outside the wall, then goes through the outer gate, into the outer court, through the inner gate, and into the inner court. What might this physical journey toward the center symbolize about drawing near to God?
5. Compare this new temple's layout to what you know of Solomon's temple (or the tabernacle). What key differences or similarities in structure and emphasis do you notice? (Consider gates, courts, symmetry).
6. Look at the dates: the vision is on the "tenth day of the month" (v. 1). Historically, this was the day preparations began for Passover (Exodus 12:3). Why might this specific date be symbolically important for a vision about a new beginning and a place of sacrifice?

7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 41



Chapter Summary

The guide continues leading Ezekiel deeper into the visionary temple. They move from the inner court into the Most Holy Place, the central sanctuary. The guide measures the main hall, the inner sanctuary, and the side chambers on three levels around the building. Ezekiel then sees the interior walls decorated with alternating carved cherubim and palm trees, each cherub having two faces—one of a human and one of a lion. He also notes a wooden altar in the main hall and the design of the doorways. Finally, the guide takes him out to measure the separate temple courtyard and the main temple building itself, noting the three-story side rooms used by priests.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Progression into the Holiest Space:** The measurements move inward from the courts (Ch. 40) to the outer sanctuary (the Heikal) and finally to the Most Holy Place (Debir), the symbolic dwelling place of God. This marks the climax of the temple's sacred space.
- **The Two-Faced Cherubim:** These are not the four-faced creatures from Ezekiel's earlier vision. Here, each cherub has a human face and a lion face, possibly symbolizing intelligence/wisdom and strength/power guarding God's presence. The alternating pattern with palm trees (life/victory) covers the walls entirely.
- **Symmetry and Precision:** The meticulous measurements (20 cubits wide here, 10 cubits there) continue, stressing the divine perfection, order, and proportionality of God's holy dwelling.
- **The Side Chambers:** The three levels of rooms around the main building are for priestly use—likely storage for sacred items, tithes, or preparations. They show the temple's practical function and the priests' role in maintaining holiness.
- **The Wooden Altar:** Called the “table that is before the LORD,” this likely refers to the altar of incense or a table for the Bread of the Presence, representing prayer and communion in the outer sanctuary.
- **Separation and Boundaries:** The chapter notes a separate courtyard around the temple proper, distinct from the outer court where people could gather. This reinforces layers of holiness and restricted access.

The chapter's focus is on the architectural and artistic perfection of the space where God's presence would dwell, guarded by symbols of His power and life.

For Further Engagement

1. The temple's interior uses beautiful, symbolic art (cherubim, palms). What kind of art or symbols might you place in a building meant to inspire a sense of awe, peace, and sacredness today?
2. The architecture progressively leads to the Most Holy Place, which is separated and unique. Describe a space you know of that is designed to feel set apart or more significant than the rooms leading to it.
3. The side chambers serve a practical purpose (likely storage) but are built into the holy structure. What does this suggest about the relationship between the very practical needs of a community and its spiritual center?
4. Analyze the progression of spaces from Chapter 40: outer court (with the people), inner court (for priests), Holy Place, and finally the Most Holy Place. How does Chapter 41's focus deepen the theme of increasing holiness and restricted access?
5. Examine the cherubim carvings. They have two faces: a man and a lion. What might these two faces represent? (Consider: lion=strength/royalty, man=intelligence/rationality). What does their combination guarding the palm trees suggest?
6. Look at the measurements in verses 5-11, describing the side chambers and the increasing thickness of the wall. What does this detailed focus on the supporting structure and walls suggest about the permanence and stability of this temple compared to its predecessors?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 42



Chapter Summary

Ezekiel's guide now shows him the priests' chambers in two large buildings, one to the north and one to the south of the inner courtyard. These are three-story buildings with rows of rooms and walkways. The guide explains these rooms are for the priests to eat the most holy offerings and to store the grain, sin, and guilt offerings. They are holy spaces. The priests must change their sacred garments before entering the outer court, ensuring the holiness of the offerings is not transferred to the people. After this, the guide finishes measuring the entire temple complex, including its outer wall. Ezekiel then witnesses the glory of the LORD returning to the temple, filling the building with a radiant light.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **Priestly Chambers:** These are not living quarters. They are functional holy spaces for priests to handle and eat the sacrificial offerings. Their location between the sacred inner court and the “common” outer court is key.
- **Preserving Holiness:** A central theme is the careful separation between holy and common. Priests change clothes before entering the outer court to prevent the holiness of the offerings from transferring to the people (which could cause harm). This highlights God’s holiness as powerful and specific.
- **Measurement Complete:** With this, the entire visionary temple complex—its courts, gates, sanctuary, and now its auxiliary chambers—has been meticulously measured, signifying a complete, ordered divine blueprint.
- **The Return of God’s Glory:** This is the climax and purpose of the entire temple vision. The radiant presence of God (the kabod), which Ezekiel saw depart from the polluted temple in Chapter 10, now returns to fill the new, holy structure. The glory comes from the east through the east gate.
- **The Purpose of the Temple:** The detailed architecture finds its meaning here: it is a perfectly ordered sanctuary to receive and house the holy presence of God, sustained by priests who carefully separate the sacred from the profane.
- **A Vision of Future Restoration:** This return symbolizes God’s permanent return to dwell among His purified people, establishing His holiness as the center of a renewed community.

The narrative moves from architectural details to the main event: the divine presence coming home, signifying restoration is complete.

For Further Engagement

1. The priests have specific garments for specific zones. Can you think of a modern job or role where people must change clothes or equipment to move between different areas (e.g., a surgical room, a cleanroom lab, a hazardous site)? Why is this important?
2. The chambers are for storing holy things and eating holy meals. Think of a group you belong to (team, club, family). What is your version of a “most valued possession” that needs a special place, or a “shared meal” that strengthens the group’s bond?
3. The outer wall clearly marks the boundary. Describe a healthy boundary in a relationship that isn’t about keeping people out, but about creating a safe, defined space for something important.
4. Analyze the logic behind the garment rule in verse 14. It is a two-way protection. What is being protected when the priest changes before going out? What is being protected when he changes before going in?
5. Compare the final measurement of the outer wall (a square) with the measurement of the Most Holy Place (a cube). Why might the entire holy precinct share this geometric shape with its innermost core? What does this suggest about the nature of the space?
6. Look at the structure of the entire vision tour (Ch. 40-42): from outermost gates to inner courts, to the temple building, to the side chambers. Now it ends with the outer wall again. How does this structure create a sense of a complete, enclosed, and perfectly measured world?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 43



Chapter Summary

In this chapter, Ezekiel witnesses the return of God's glory to the new temple he has just seen measured. He sees the glory of the LORD coming from the east, its light and sound filling the land. The glory enters the temple through the east gate and fills it, filling the entire complex (as when it filled the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple). God then speaks to Ezekiel from inside the temple. He declares this is the place of His throne and His footstool, where He will dwell among the Israelites forever if they turn from their detestable practices and idolatry. God then shows Ezekiel the temple altar and gives detailed instructions for consecrating it. The chapter ends with the start of the daily ritual that will resume in the temple.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Glory's Return: The dramatic climax of the temple vision. The bright, thunderous manifestation of God's presence, seen departing in Chapter 10, now returns permanently through the east gate.
- "This is the place of my throne": God declares the temple as His permanent dwelling and seat of government. It's where heaven and earth connect, returning Him to the center of national life.
- The Condition of Holiness: God's promise to dwell among them forever is tied to a condition: Israel must stop defiling His name with idolatry, prostitution, and the corpses of their kings (likely a reference to idolatrous royal tombs). Holiness is required for God's presence.
- The Law of the Temple: Ezekiel is told to describe the temple's layout and regulations to the people, so they may be ashamed of their past sins and faithfully follow God's design.
- The Altar of Sacrifice: After the visual seer of glory, the focus turns back to the practical altar in the inner court. Its measurements, purification, and launching of daily sacrifices show worship is central to dwelling with God.
- Consecration Ritual: The seven-day process of atonement—sprinkling blood from sacrifices, burning offerings—cleanses the altar, preparing it for the re-establishment of daily worship and fellowship with God.

This chapter connects the glorious vision of God's presence with the practical call to holy living and proper worship.

For Further Engagement

1. The glory returns from the east, the same way it left. Describe a situation where a restoration or reconciliation needed to follow the same “path” back as the original departure or break.
2. The seven-day consecration ritual involves specific, repeated actions. Can you think of a modern ceremony, tradition, or training period that uses a set number of days and repeated actions to prepare something or someone for a new, important role?
3. The temple design itself is meant to make Israel ashamed of their past idolatry. Can a beautiful, well-ordered space ever make you reflect critically on your own disorder or shortcomings?
4. Compare the description of God’s glory here (“sound like many waters,” earth shining, etc.) with Ezekiel’s first vision by the Chebar River (Ezekiel 1). What is the significance of the vision? What does that say about God’s character and His plan?
5. Analyze the structure of the consecration ritual (v. 18-27). Why is a sin offering required on the first day, and why must it be repeated for seven days? What does this process communicate about the nature of holiness and how it is approached?
6. Look at God’s strong language about Israel’s past defilement (“whoring,” “corpses of their kings,” v. 7-9). Why is it important to remember this past failure even at the moment of glorious restoration? What purpose does that memory serve?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 44



Chapter Summary

The guide brings Ezekiel back to the outer east gate of the temple, which is now shut. God explains that it must remain shut because the LORD entered through it, and no one else may use it. Ezekiel is then shown the concerns for proper holiness in the renewed temple, focusing on who may serve and how. The key points are: 1) Foreigners with “uncircumcised hearts and flesh” may not enter the sanctuary to serve as priests. A stricter standard applies only Levitical priests descended from Zadok may approach God to offer sacrifices, because they remained faithful when others strayed. 2) These priests are given strict rules about their clothing, conduct (no wine before duty), marriage, and teaching role. They must maintain high holiness to distinguish between sacred and common, lawful and unlawful. This reinforces that God’s restored presence requires absolute loyalty and purity.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Shut East Gate:** This gate is permanently closed because God's glory entered through it. It stands as a visual symbol of God's unique entry and the sanctity of the path He chooses.
- **Uncircumcised Foreigners Barred:** Those whose loyalty is elsewhere ("uncircumcised heart") cannot serve in the sacred space; entry is restricted based on spiritual and physical covenant relationship.
- **Judgment on Levites:** A historic rebuke: the tribe of Levi is demoted to secondary duties because they allowed idolatry when they should have guarded the sanctuary. Their failure is contrasted with the faithfulness of the sons of Zadok.
- **Priests from Zadok's Line:** This priestly line, which remained faithful to God during times of national rebellion (1 Kings 2:35), is honored with the highest privilege: directly approaching God to offer sacrifices. Loyalty matters.
- **Distinguishing Sacred/Common, Clean/Unclean:** A repeated priestly mandate. They must teach God's laws to the people and serve as moral and ritual gatekeepers, guarding holiness.
- **Priestly Purity Laws:** These include specific dress (linen garments), grooming (no shaved heads), conduct (no ritual wine before service), marriage restrictions, and handling holy things. Holiness is expressed through everyday obedience.

The shift from architectural details to personnel shows that a perfect structure needs faithful people to serve properly and guard God's holiness.

For Further Engagement

1. The east gate is closed because of its unique, sacred use. Can you think of a place, object, or day in modern life that is set aside or closed off because of its special, singular importance? (e.g., a historical site, a trophy case, a holiday).
2. The priests are held to strict standards of conduct (dress, diet, marriage). Why might people in positions of high public trust or leadership (e.g., judges, doctors, clergy) be expected to follow stricter personal rules than others?
3. The chapter distinguishes between those who remained faithful under pressure and those who did not. Describe a situation (in a team, organization, or family) where past loyalty or betrayal affected a person's future responsibilities.
4. Analyze the cause-and-effect relationship in the chapter. How does the event of God's return (Ch. 43) logically lead to the regulations in this chapter (closed gate, priestly rules)?
5. Compare the punishment of the unfaithful Levites with the sin offering on the altar (Ch. 43). Both deal with sin and impurity, but how is the method different? What does this teach about the consequences for leaders versus the ritual purification of the altar itself?
6. Examine the list of rules for the Zadokite priests (v. 15-31). Group them into categories: physical appearance, personal conduct, family life, and professional duty. What overarching theme do these rules promote?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 45



Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines how the land around the holy temple should be divided. A central, sacred portion is to be set aside for the LORD, the priests, the Levites, the city, and the prince. First, an area for God’s sanctuary and priests. Next, an area for the Levites who serve the temple. Then, a portion for the city, and also land for the “prince” (a term for a king or ruler). God gives rules so the prince acts justly: he must stop oppressing the people and use honest weights and measures. The chapter then describes the offerings the prince will lead the people in making daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly offerings for atonement and festivals. This includes the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- The Sacred District: The land closest to the temple is a holy buffer zone, belonging directly to God. This prevents the secular and sacred from mingling.
- No Royal Land Grab: For the first time, a legal portion is assigned to the prince, ensuring he does not seize land from priests or the people. This breaks the old pattern of oppression.
- Just Governance: Direct commands to the prince: “Stop your violence and oppression” and “use honest scales.” This ties correct worship to social justice and fair dealings.
- The Prince as Worship Leader: The prince’s role is to lead by example, providing the offerings for festivals and making atonement on behalf of the people. It’s a picture of an ideal, servant-leader.
- Restoration of Festivals: The detailed schedule of Passover and Tabernacles shows the full reinstatement of worship as the community’s rhythm. These festivals celebrate redemption and God’s provision.
- Centralized Atonement: Unlike before, the atonement offerings for the people and the sanctuary are centralized and orderly, coming from the prince at God’s command.
- Holiness Expands: The holiness of the temple now extends to the land around it, the priesthood, the city, and the economic system (via honest weights). God’s rule shapes everything.

The vision moves from temple architecture to social structure, showing God’s plan for a just society centered on proper worship.

For Further Engagement

1. The “holy district” makes worship the geographic and social center. If you were to design a community based on a central, shared value, what would you place at its physical center and why?
2. The rules demand honest weights and measures for trade. What are modern equivalents of “just balances”—tools or laws that ensure fairness in commerce and prevent consumers from being cheated?
3. The prince’s main job is to provide offerings, not just lead armies. How does this redefine what “strength” and “leadership” look like for a nation?
4. Analyze the land use plan in verses 1-8. How does this arrangement prevent the problems of the past, where priests and kings seized land (e.g., 1 Kings 21)? What does this suggest about God’s ideal for property and power?
5. Examine the commands to the princes in verses 9-10. The call to “do justice” is paired with stopping evictions and using honest scales. What connection is being made between ethical leadership and economic justice?
6. Compare the role of the “prince” in this vision with the pre-exilic kings of Israel and Judah. In what ways is the prince’s role elevated (he bears the offerings) and in what ways is it limited (he is given specific land, not the whole kingdom)?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 46



Chapter Summary

This chapter finishes describing the regulations for the restored temple and its worship. Most of it focuses on the prince's official duties and the patterns of worship tied to the Sabbath, the New Moon, and the yearly festivals. On these special days, the prince must enter the inner courtyard through the east gate's outer entrance and worship. The common people can also worship outside the gates on Sabbaths and New Moons. Then, the instructions turn practical: how food for offerings must be prepared in a specific temple kitchen to keep it holy. The chapter ends with details on priests' housing, inheritance, and a final note on separate kitchens for the sacrifices of the people.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Prince as a Worshiper:** The prince's main public duty is leading the people in worship on holy days. He enters and leaves through the same gates to avoid lingering, showing his role is for public service, not personal privilege or a power base.
- **Inclusive Yet Ordered Worship:** The people are included in public worship at the gates, but movement within the sacred courts is strictly regulated by one's role (prince, priest, Levite, layperson).
- **Sacred Time Restored:** The worship calendar is reestablished with weekly (Sabbaths) and monthly (New Moons) rhythms, along with the yearly festivals, providing a holy structure for the community.
- **Freewill Offerings:** Besides required sacrifices, the prince can also make freewill offerings of peace and thanksgiving, showing a personal, gracious dimension to his leadership.
- **Property and Inheritance:** Inheritance rules for the prince prevent land from being permanently taken. If he gives land to a servant, it returns to him at the Year of Jubilee. This ensures economic justice and stability.
- **Priestly Kitchens:** Food for offerings is prepared in a separate holy kitchen for only the priests. This maintains ritual purity and prevents holy items from becoming common. Another kitchen handles the people's sacrifices.
- **The Closed Inner East Gate:** The gate the prince uses for worship is the east gate of the inner court. While the passageway is open for worship, the outer doors of this gate remain closed except on Sabbaths and New Moons. This reinforces controlled access.

This chapter ties the restored system of festivals and governance to the physical temple, showing that holiness shapes time, ritual, and public life.

For Further Engagement

1. The worship has a set schedule (daily, weekly, monthly). How do regular routines or rituals in your own life (like family meals, weekly meetings, or annual celebrations) provide structure and meaning?
2. The prince leads in worship, not just governance. Who are some modern leaders whose public role includes participating in or leading communal rituals, and why is that significant?
3. The design includes specific rooms (kitchens) for specific tasks. How does having a dedicated space for an important activity (like a study, workshop, or studio) improve the quality and focus of the work?
4. Analyze the contrast between the east gate: shut permanently in 44:1-2, but opened for worship here. What does this say about the nature of God's holiness : is it about total exclusion or regulated, joyful access?
5. Compare the role of the "prince" in this chapter with the kings of Israel's past. How is his power limited by the property laws (v. 16-18) and defined by the offering laws? What kind of leadership model does this create?
6. Look at the final detail about the kitchens (v. 19-24). Why is it significant that even the preparation of the offerings is given sacred space and order? What does this add to the concept of holiness?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 47



Chapter Summary

Ezekiel's guide brings him back to the entrance of the temple. Here, Ezekiel sees a trickle of water flowing from under the temple's threshold, heading east. The guide leads him along as the water gets deeper and deeper—first ankle-deep, then knee-deep, then waist-deep, and finally a river too deep to cross. This river flows into the Dead Sea, and wherever it goes it brings life. The salty Dead Sea becomes fresh, filled with all kinds of fish. Fruit trees with healing leaves grow along both banks, bearing fruit every month of the year. The land will be healed, though some swamps or marshes will remain salty as a source for salt.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- **The Source of the River:** The water flows from under the threshold of the temple, from the sanctuary—the dwelling place of God. This shows the river’s origin is divine, not natural.
- **The River’s Growth:** The water deepens in stages (ankle, knee, waist, uncrossable) as Ezekiel follows it. This shows the life-giving power of God expanding from a small start until it becomes an overwhelming, transforming force.
- **The Transformation of the Dead Sea:** The Dead Sea, a place of extreme saltiness where nothing lives, becomes fresh and teeming with fish. This is a powerful image of God’s ability to bring life to what is dead and transform barrenness.
- **The Tree of Life:** The trees along the banks bear fruit every month and have leaves that bring healing. This directly echoes the Tree of Life in Eden and signals a restoration of paradisiacal blessing and perpetual provision.
- **Universal Healing:** “The water...will be healed” — the river brings healing to the entire landscape it touches, restoring creation itself.
- **Remaining Swamps:** Some marginal areas remain salty, perhaps as a reminder of the former state or as a practical source for salt. This indicates the transformation is total but not uniform.

This vision shifts from temple regulations to the ultimate result of God’s presence: a river of life flowing out to heal and restore the entire world.

For Further Engagement

1. The river starts as a trickle and grows into a mighty torrent. Can you think of a small action, idea, or resource in your community that, if nurtured, could grow to have a much larger, positive impact?

2. The river brings life to a dead sea. Describe a situation (in nature, a community, or a relationship) where something thought to be “dead” or hopeless was unexpectedly revived or healed.
3. The vision includes fishermen and fruit trees—ordinary jobs and food in a transformed world. How does this connect the miraculous to everyday human life and work?
4. Contrast the direction of movement in the earlier temple tour (going inward to the Most Holy Place) with the movement in this chapter (going outward with the river). What major shift in theme does this represent?
5. Analyze the symbolism of the river’s source: it flows from the threshold of the temple, near the altar. What does this location say about the relationship between proper worship, sacrifice, and the resulting blessing for the world?
6. The vision of life-giving trees (v. 12) closely echoes the Tree of Life in Genesis and Revelation. What does this connection suggest about the ultimate goal of Ezekiel’s entire vision?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

Chapter 48



Chapter Summary

This final chapter describes how the Promised Land will be divided among the twelve tribes in the renewed Israel. Each tribe is assigned a long, east-to-west strip of land, with the Sacred District—containing the temple, priests’ land, Levites’ land, and the city located at the very center. The city is renamed “The LORD Is There” (Yahweh Shammah). Gates are placed around the city’s walls, each named for one of the twelve tribes. This orderly arrangement shows a permanent home for every tribe, with God’s holy presence at the very heart of the nation.

Key Images and Ideas

Using a bible commentary, end-of-chapter bible notes, bible dictionary, or other sources, review the **following phrases, images, and symbols** from the chapter. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

- Equitable and Just Distribution: Every tribe—north and south—receives an equal strip of land. This corrects the historical tribal tensions and creates a permanent, fair allocation of inheritance, symbolizing unity and justice.
- The Central Sacred District: The holiest territory, the sanctuary, priests' portion, Levites' portion, and the city, is placed in the middle, not at an edge. God's presence defines the nation's center and unifies the tribes around it.
- “The Lord Is There” (Yahweh Shammah): This is a key thematic end to the entire book. The city's new name declares the ultimate purpose of restoration: God's presence dwelling permanently among His people, not just a rebuilt city or temple.
- Gates Named for Tribes: The city has 12 gates, each named for a tribe, symbolizing full access and inclusive belonging for every part of the people of God.
- No Overlapping or Moving Shares: Unlike the original conquest, tribal boundaries are fixed forever. This shows finality, permanent peace, and abolition of old disputes over land.
- Order over Chaos: The regimented, equitable division presents a complete reversal of the tribal warfare, injustice, and exile depicted earlier in the book.
- A vision of perfect divine order.

The book of Ezekiel ends with the fulfillment of all its promises: God's people restored, their land reorganized, and the presence of God dwelling eternally among them. The entire book moves from God's glory departing to God declaring “I am there.”

For Further Engagement

1. The tribes are arranged in equal strips north-to-south. What might be a modern equivalent of designing a community to ensure every neighborhood has equal access to a central park, school, or library?
2. The vision ends with a name: “The LORD is There.” If you could give a new name to your own school or hometown based on a core value or hope, what would it be and why?
3. Does the vision of perfect order and equality inspire you to work towards fairness in a group you belong to? Why or why not?
4. The Levites, Dan, and the “prince” portions are structured differently from the tribal allotments. What does this suggest about the nature of their roles in the new society compared to the others?
5. Compare the central placement of God’s portion here with how ancient Near Eastern temples functioned as economic and political centers for kings. What fundamental statement about authority is made?
6. The boundaries given are highly idealized and symmetrical, not following natural terrain like rivers or mountains. What does this style of geographical description communicate about God’s ultimate purpose for the land?
7. Identify and discuss any modern-day parallels, applications, interpretations, or implications, if any.

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About the Author



Rev. Lorrie C. Reed, M. Div., Ph.D., founded the Rivertree Christian Chapel to re-envision discipleship in the age of technology. Throughout her long career, she has worn many hats. Her formative professional experiences include service as a secondary school teacher, educational administrator, researcher, university professor, and consultant for systemic change.

She was called into ministry and ordained in 2017. Since then, she has served as the Associate Pastor of Christian Education in a UCC church, the Executive Director of the School for Ministry, and a Hospital Chaplain through the Advocate Healthcare System.

She has recently retired from pastoral ministry and is currently cultivating her gifts as an author. Dr. Reed has published thirteen books, including two recent novels: *Deep River Crossings* and *Witness in the Dust*.

She holds a bachelor's degree in English education from Southern Illinois University, a master's degree in educational administration from the University of Illinois – Springfield, a master's degree in theological studies from McCormick Theological Seminary, a Master of Divinity from Chicago Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in Research Methodology from Loyola University of Chicago. Rev. Dr. Lorrie nurtures a passion for healing, wholeness, and intergenerational resilience among people experiencing turbulence.

About Rivertree Christian Chapel

Founded in 2014, Rivertree Christian Chapel strives to serve God's people who need a little peace in the busy, complex cyber world. This virtual Chapel is a quiet place to pray, reflect, study, or find resources to help you on your journey.

At the Chapel, we honor the teachings of Jesus Christ. From the time of his birth, Jesus was on a mission. He announced that the spirit of the Lord was on him and that he had been anointed to (a) bring good news to the poor, (b) proclaim release to the captives, (c) give sight to the blind, (d) free the oppressed, and (e) proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:16-21). As disciples, we strive to carry out this mission online in the name of Jesus. The Chapel rests on a foundation of healing, renewal, and service.

The mission of Rivertree Christian Chapel is to glorify God and lift up the name of Jesus through sermons, prayer, discipleship, and education. The vision of Rivertree Christian Chapel is to (a) establish a virtual sanctuary for prayer and reflection, (b) maintain an online presence where God's people can seek shelter, (c) disseminate inspirational messages, and (d) promote justice in the manner that Jesus taught his disciples.

The Chapel's ministries strive to apply biblical principles as the basis for living in righteousness, wholeness, empowerment, critical reflection, and restoration. In doing so, we endeavor to promote social change and carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Visit our website at <https://rivertreechristianchapel.org/>