

Handout: Ezekiel Lesson 4

Ezekiel's vision-journey to Jerusalem took place in August/September of 592 BC, a year and two months after his call. The spirit of God transported him, in ecstasy (not physically), to and from Jerusalem (8:3b-11:24). Chapters 8-11 record his experience:

- Chapter 8 ~ Ezekiel witnesses the idolatries currently taking place in Yahweh's Holy Temple.
- Chapter 9 ~ Ezekiel has a vision of the future slaughter of Jerusalem's idolaters and the preservation of the faithful who wear the cross-mark of the angel-scribe.
- Chapter 10:1-11:13 ~ The cherubim of Chapter 1 reappear in Ezekiel's vision, superintending the destruction of Jerusalem that will take place in the future.
- Chapter 11:14-25 ~ Ezekiel receives a promise of the future restoration of the humbled and purified exiles who are cured of idolatry. The glory of Yahweh leaves Jerusalem.

In 10:1-11:13, Ezekiel's vision reveals Yahweh's Divine Presence departing from the Temple. Yahweh's glory departs in the same way he first took possession of the Temple (1 Kng 8:6-13; 2 Chr 5:3-6:2). Once God leaves, the city is no longer protected by the Divine Presence and opened to foreign invasion and destruction. God's chariot-throne will not return until 43:1-12 when Ezekiel has a vision of a future purified Jerusalem and rebuilt Temple.

In 11:2-7 God describes the leaders in five ways:

1. They are wicked schemers who plot evil.
2. They offer bad advice.
3. They are arrogant, seeing themselves as the best meat in the pot of Jerusalem.
4. Their arrogance has made them insolent in their lack of regard for Yahweh.
5. They have acted with injustice and caused bloodshed among their countrymen in the city.

There are two interpretations of the "bad advice" of the leaders concerning houses:

1. There will be no houses built because all resources must go to building the fortifications of the city.
2. There is no need for new buildings because everyone still in the city should take possession of the houses of the exiled citizens.

In 11:13-21, Ezekiel pleads for a sparing of a remnant of Israel, and Yahweh gives a positive response to his distraught prophet, saying the leadership in Jerusalem tried to separate the people from Yahweh; therefore:

1. He has preserved His relationship with a remnant by sending them into exile.
2. He has protected His remnant in their exile.
3. He will bring them back from their exile where they were purged of idol worship.
4. They will return to redeem the land of Israel and purify it from abomination.
5. He will give them an undivided/new heart and a new spirit in a renewed covenant relationship with their God.
6. In their renewed spiritual relationship, they will be able to keep His laws and commandments.
7. Once again, they will be Yahweh's people, and He will be their only God.

Yahweh's warning for those who refuse to repent and change their ways is they will experience Divine Judgment as their conduct deserves.

God's promise that the exiles will redeem the land of Israel once the term of their exile is complete is an application of the "laws of redemption" whereby a family member became a "kinsman redeemer" who could redeem land sold to pay a debt in the Jubilee Year (Lev 25:23-55; Ruth 2:20). The reference to "*your brothers one and all, to your kinsfolk*" in verse 15, more accurately translated: "your brothers, the redemption-men" or "men of your redemption..." supports this view. See the chart on the qualifications for a "Kinsman Redeemer" in the Old Testament and Christ's fulfillment of those qualifications in the New Covenant: <http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/charts/Christ%20our%20Kinsman%20Redeemer.htm>. It is evidently God's intent that the Judahites exiled from the Promised Land of Israel will redeem the land following the destruction of those who defiled it, with the land's temporary loss to the Babylonians as the payment of their kinsmen's sin-debt.

In 11:22-25 the glory of God departs from the Temple and rests on the Mount of Olives to the east of the city of Jerusalem. Some significant events associated with the Mount of Olives in the New Testament Gospels and Acts of Apostles:

1. Jesus rode from the Mount of Olives into the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.
2. Jesus and His Apostles spent the nights on the Mount of Olive during His last week in Jerusalem before His crucifixion.
3. After the Last Supper, Jesus withdrew with His Apostles to a garden on the Mount of Olives where He prayed to the Father, submitted His life to the will of the Father, and it was there that the Temple guards arrested Him.
4. Jesus' Ascension took place on the Mount of Olives.
5. An angel told the disciples that Jesus would return to the Mount of Olives in His Second Advent. The post-exile prophet Zechariah gave the same prophecy when he wrote that it is to the Mount of Olives that "the LORD your God will come, and all the holy ones with him."

See Mt 21:1-11; 26:30-31, 47-57; Acts 1:12 and Zec 14:4-5.

In Chapter 12, God requires Ezekiel to perform two symbolic acts/object lessons that depict the people trying to escape the doomed city of Jerusalem and eating in fear. He is to do these acts "while they watch" (referring to his fellow exiles). The phrase "while they watch" is repeated seven times between verses 3-7. He is also told to refute two proverbs concerning the delay in prophecy and visions. He is to announce that all of his visions and the words of Yahweh spoken by him concerning the destruction of Jerusalem will come true with the lifetimes of the exiles.

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