

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF EZEKIEL

Andy Brewer

INTRODUCTION

A study of the sacred Old Testament scriptures is an invaluable asset to any and all students of the Bible, New Testament Christians or not. To engage in such is to tap into the forethought, foreknowledge, foreshadows, and foresight of the eternal God whom we serve. However, to reject such is ultimately to reject the abundant blessings waiting in store for any who would desire them. And as neglected as the Old Testament as a whole is, it is believed by most that Ezekiel is one of the most neglected books in the entire Bible. Why is it, though, that such a book as that of the twenty-sixth book of the Bible would be passed by even among those who earnestly desire a knowledge of the scriptures?

Ezekiel, like most of the prophetic books of the Old Testament, is seasoned throughout with symbolism and highly figurative language. In order to understand the whole of Ezekiel's narrative it, then, is absolutely essential to understand the non-literal elements of his writings. However, the twenty-first century mindset is conditioned to interpret things literally; and quite frankly for most people, studying Ezekiel to the degree required to properly understand it is simply too much work. But, the problems, with which Ezekiel had to deal are too similar to those faced today, especially in the United States, and thus the divine knowledge contained in Ezekiel is simply too valuable to not glean. Blackwood's studied conclusion was that, "...he who studies this grim prophecy begins to discern a haunting parallel with the events and attitude of today."¹

The Old Testament entirely, and especially the books of prophecy, give such an abundance of wisdom and hope in view of the future that it is no wonder Paul wrote of such, "*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*" (Romans 15:4).² In this brief introduction and overview, particular attention, then, will be given to the days in which Ezekiel lived and worked so the stark comparisons to today can be readily seen.

HISTORICAL SETTING

The writer, himself, identifies the timeframe in which he is living and working. Ezekiel, being the writer, as discussed later, states that this is now, "...in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month..." (Ezekiel 1:1) and in the, "...fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity" (Ezekiel 1:2). Scripture dictates that of the three carryings away, Jehoiachin was part of the second in 597 B.C. The fifth year of that captivity would then place these events around 592 B.C. The northern nation of Israel, at this time, would have been exiled to Assyria 130 years earlier; and their brethren to the south have now been in Babylon for fifteen years. However, it was still to be six years before Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Babylonian raze at which time the temple and the wall would be lain to waste.

The thirtieth year of which Ezekiel writes would be his own, therefore he would have been born in 622 B.C. At this time Josiah, Judah's third and final righteous king, was midway through his reign. After Josiah's death, having been slain in Megiddo while fighting against the Egyptian forces of Pharaoh-Neco, his successors either did not have the gumption or the desire to set the feet of the nation toward righteousness, and therefore their ungodliness caused God to bring judgment upon them.

As for the prophetic work of Ezekiel, he worked among his brethren for twenty-two years, until 570 B.C. when he died at the age of fifty-two. His life and work would coincide with the likes of Jeremiah and Daniel, thus it is obvious that God had a plan in reaching his people during this time regardless of where they were. Primarily these men were sent with the message that the seventy-year period was real and they would remain for every second of it. But, likewise, the similar message of each of these prophets was that of hope. This hope was physical in that after seventy years they would be released and sent home, but this hope also was spiritual in looking forward to the time in which the prophesied Messiah would come and establish His eternal kingdom in which would be found life. Jeremiah back in the homeland, Daniel in the Babylonian court, and Ezekiel in the exilic land each delivered the divine message so as to provide the hope so desperately needed in these troubled days.

However, a final word regarding the historical setting and its impact upon the people and the majority of Ezekiel's message would be helpful. Wherein Judah was sent to Babylon because of idolatry, the Babylonians were an idolatrous people. Therefore anybody that dwelt in Babylon was going to have to deal with their sordid

sacrilege. Their principle god was named Baal, but they likewise worshipped the likes of Nego Marduk, and Sheshak. The task then placed upon Ezekiel, as well as the other prophets, was to remedy the people's idolatry while they were in the midst of concentrated idolatry. Ezekiel then set about to fulfill his mission which, "...was to show the exiles of the southern kingdom of Judah that their rebellion toward God had caused their captivity and that the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple was evidence of God's wrath (cf. Ezekiel 1:1-24:27). The account of Ezekiel's prophecies in Ezekiel 25:1-32:32 served to warn the surrounding nations that they were to honor the God of Israel."³ The nation then was going to have to look beyond their local influence and be an example to the surrounding nations by rejecting the ill-fated idol and serve their Savior and God, therefore giving them the right to return home with the blessing of God. This is the type of hostile environment in which Ezekiel was to work and thus the setting would obviously determine the means through which he would approach his responsibility.

AUTHOR

The writer identifies himself with a quick change from writing in first person to third person during the first four verses of the text. First, he states that, "*I was among the captives by the river Chebar*" (Ezekiel 1:1), then he transitions to say, "*The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest...*" (Ezekiel 1:3). Some would question the reality of Ezekiel's authorship, but their "questions" are nothing more than a pathetic ploy to deny authenticity and verbal inspiration and exalt the atheistic viewpoint of sacred history.

Ezekiel was the son of Buzi. His name, meaning "God strengthens," dictates who he was as that would be his divine directive during his years of service. The fact that he was a priest would determine that his father, too, was a priest. He was sixteen years of age when Nebuchadnezzar first came up against Judah and carried away the temple vessels and the seed royal, among whom was Daniel. Then when he was twenty-five Nebuchadnezzar again took many captives from Judah, and this time Ezekiel was among them, alongside king Jehoiachin. Now it is five years later, he is thirty, and God is calling him to prophesy among his exiled brethren.

The prophet states that his home among the captives is by the river Chebar. This was "a place called Tel-Abib near Nippur on the grand canal southeast of Babylon (Ezekiel 1:1,15)."⁴ He also lived in his own house. This is interesting based on the fact that most view the captivities as times of slavery comparable to the cruelty of the taskmasters in Egypt. However, in Babylon the people were treated more as colonists instead of slaves, which would explain why Ezekiel lived independently in his own house, but even more this explains why Daniel and others would have been able to rise to offices of such high esteem.⁵

Other than his father and his home, little is known about Ezekiel's personal life other than the fact that he was married (Ezekiel 24:18). It is known that he rose to some influence among his brethren seeing that the elders of Judah would often assemble at his house (Ezekiel 8:1; 14:1; 20:1).⁶ Ezekiel's personality, though, shines forth from his writing. He has been noted to be one of the most colorful of the prophets because of the symbolic actions seen throughout this book.⁷ He used vivid imagery and colorful illustrations to effectively and plainly get his point across to the people.⁸ The greatest compliment that can be given to Ezekiel, though, is his passion for preaching and love for his brethren. These two qualities are necessary for anyone to be an effective leader, and God saw in Ezekiel these traits when he called unto Ezekiel and said, "*Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus said the Lord God*" (Ezekiel 2:3-4).

A final observation about Ezekiel as author of this book would have to be the stress he placed on individual responsibility. He first set the precedent by owning up to his own personal responsibility. It would have been easy for Ezekiel to respond to the Lord's call similar to the way Moses or Jonah did. However, Ezekiel recognized that his God had singled him out for a reason, and his response was never one of question or doubt, but rather of acceptance. Then, though, after practicing it he preached it. To the children of Israel Ezekiel taught individual responsibility in passages such as Ezekiel 18:20 and 33:12. Many today would learn well from Ezekiel's acceptance of responsibility.

It is believed that Ezekiel concluded his prophetic work around 570 B.C. and died about ten years later at the age of fifty-two. It would only be another twenty-one years before Cyrus and his Persian army would

come up against and overtake Babylon under the rule of Nabonidus, and shortly thereafter send the captives home (536 B.C.) just as Ezekiel had promised.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Ezekiel's inspired text is easily deduced from its theme. As mentioned before, Ezekiel's two-fold theme in writing was essentially judgment and hope. He first of all dealt with God's judgment upon them and the purpose of it.

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do anymore the like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity" (Ezekiel 5:8-11).

In other words God's judgment now is sent upon Judah because of their abundant ungodliness. It was then through His providence that Babylon came against Judah from which many died and more went to the seventy year captivity. God always has and always will punish wrongdoing. If only today's world would read the likes of Ezekiel and see what the result of ungodliness can be, surely God fearing folks would rise up and take a stand.

The second of the two-fold theme of Ezekiel is hope. Just as he reminded Judah of why they were in Babylon in the first place, he points to the future to help them recall the fact that God is merciful in addition to just. God tells Ezekiel that in the midst of His fury and wrath...

"...I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land" (Ezekiel 36:21-24).

Therefore, just as God had sent them into captivity, He likewise would bring them out in mercy. They had been reminded of God's objective justice, but now they remember His wonderful mercy. Similarly, God continues to be a God of objective justice, but he also will have mercy upon all who will seek it and meet the conditions for it. And so Ezekiel's two-fold theme was judgment and hope.

However, now the task is to determine how the theme defines the purpose. Knowing the theme it can only be concluded that Ezekiel's purpose was by using the combined theme that the people would come to know that He is the Lord.⁹ This, however, has likewise been the general theme of most of the historic and prophetic books of the Old Testament. The Jewish people had rejected God for the "illustrious" idol so long ago that they seemingly had forgotten all about the God that took their forefathers by the hand and led them forth out of Egypt. Therefore Ezekiel's work and writing served as a reminder to the people of the true God whom they had forgotten. A phrase repeated sixty-three times in Ezekiel sums up God's theme and purpose of the book: *"...and ye shall know that I am the Lord"* (Ezekiel 6:7, etc.).

In a world that is seemingly doomed to repeat Judah's mistakes, God providentially continues to raise up voices for righteousness similar to that of Ezekiel. It can only be prayed that mankind will start to listen lest they suffer the eternal exile of torment.

OVERVIEW

Ezekiel's prophetic book has been outlined and overviewed in numerous ways of considerable value; however, in order to provide a basic understanding of this book a brief outline and then summary of each chapter would be of great value.

From an exegetical standpoint, Wilkinson and Boa outlined Ezekiel in the following way: (1) The Commission of Ezekiel (chapters 1-3); (2) The Judgment on Judah (chapters 4-24); (3) The Judgment on the Gentiles (chapters 25-32); and (4) The Restoration of Israel (chapters 33-48).¹⁰

However, from the standpoint of principle and application, Frank Chesser brilliantly outlined Ezekiel in two ways:

“Ezekiel opens with captivity and closes with liberty. Chapters 1-33 focus on sin and judgment due sin ensuing from God’s holiness, righteousness, justice, and wrath. Chapters 34-48 center on the material and spiritual blessings of love, grace, and mercy conjoined with the obedience of faith. Chapters 1-33 mirror Genesis 3:6 and man’s helplessness in the face of sin. Chapters 34-48 reflect Genesis 3:15 and 12:3. The first chapter of the final and climactic section of Ezekiel has sacrifice and priesthood (40:39-46) anticipating the termination of the seed of woman and Abraham in Christ and Calvary.”¹¹

The balance Ezekiel provides now is evident as he deals with sin and then looks forward to the fruits of penitence (such should define the preaching and teaching done today). Now, though, a closer examination to the text shall be given.

Ezekiel 1

The events of Ezekiel 1 have been called “the vision of the likeness of God’s majesty.”¹² He begins his prophetic book by relaying the events that called him to prophesy. The word of the Lord came forth to Ezekiel in a vision that made known to him God’s glory. “*No man hath seen the Father at any time*” (John 1:18), but God has revealed Himself to His faithful servants from time to time, this being an occasion. Ezekiel looks and sees a whirlwind, representing the presence of God, burning with the fire of God’s brilliance and might. The four creatures that came forth from the whirlwind of representations of God’s majesty, because as powerfully as they are described they still were under his throne (Ezekiel 1:26). When Ezekiel saw the likeness of the glory of the Lord, he fell prostrate and listened to His voice.

Ezekiel 2

Here is recorded the entirety of Ezekiel’s actual call to the prophetic ministry. The voice he heard came forth from the throne at the end of the previous chapter was the voice of God. Now as the Lord reveals unto Ezekiel his work He emphasizes three points. First, this is Ezekiel’s task and he is expected to abide thereby. There would be no excuses to which Ezekiel could turn in order to vacate his responsibility, not even the evil influence of his brethren. Second, Jehovah points out that this rebellious nation will be more likely to reject Ezekiel and the message than they will be to accept him and it, and that the captivity itself was the result of their ungodliness. Then, third, Jehovah stresses that the message Ezekiel was to deliver was not his own but that of God. God’s message was to indicate His power and control, thus any other message would not suffice. The chapter closes with the scroll of God lain before Ezekiel, filled with lamentations, mourning, and woes.

Ezekiel 3

With the scroll of God before him, Ezekiel is commanded to eat it. His consumption of the scroll, still all as part of the vision, indicated his acceptance of the divine message. The very depth of his being was to be embodied by this message, and as it tasted as honey for sweetness, Ezekiel refers to the goodness of it. Now fully equipped with what he was to take to the captive countrymen, Ezekiel is sent with the encouragement to be strong in the face of adversity, and tell his brethren the message whether they would hear it or not. Then suddenly the vision comes to an end as the Spirit lifts him up and takes him back to Tel-abib, at the river Chebar where he began. Ezekiel’s individual responsibility is again stressed as he is given the dutiful task of being the watchmen of his brethren and told that regardless of the people’s penitence, Ezekiel would be held accountable as to whether he warned them. The closing words find Ezekiel struck dumb, only being able to talk when God opens his mouth and gives him the message he would share.

Ezekiel 4

Now is given the first warning of the coming siege of Jerusalem. As stated, Ezekiel’s call (chapters 1-3) occurred in 592 B.C., the siege and destruction of Jerusalem took place just six years later (586 B.C.). Now the people, through these three symbolic illustrations, are to know the fate of their brethren still at home. The first illustration given is the sign of the tile. The clay tile would represent Jerusalem, the fort built against it was Nebuchadnezzar’s army, and the pan was the wall around the city. The point was Jerusalem’s doomed fate and the wall’s destruction. The second illustrative sign was Ezekiel’s having to lay on his side. A day for a year,

Ezekiel was on his left side three hundred ninety days facing the iniquity of Israel and on his right side forty days facing the iniquity of Judah. Israel was guilty of the greater sin thus represented by the longer burden; but, also the combined time of four hundred thirty years is representative of the years in Egypt their forefathers bore (Galatians 3:17). The bread he would consume depicted the third sign of illustration. These verses point to the famine Jerusalem would suffer and the extent to which the people would go so as to not starve. Ezekiel was given strict rationing restrictions and then was told the bread eaten would have to be baked over burning cow dung, indicating the impurity of the foods required for survival. They had enjoyed a liberal lifestyle, now they would be limited to the bare necessities.

Ezekiel 5

God, through Ezekiel, next sets out to pinpoint the means of His judgment upon them. To illustrate Ezekiel shaves all of his hair off and divides it into three equal portions to which he does the following: (1) he burns one third of it to illustrate how a third of the Jews would die by the pestilence; (2) he chops one third of it up with the knife to illustrate how a third of them would die by the sword of the Babylonians; and (3) he throws one third of it into the wind to illustrate how a third of them would be scattered into the captivity. The most disturbing of the foretold events is when it is stated that the famine will effect them to such a degree that fathers would eat their sons and sons would eat their fathers just to stay alive. Surely the burden of sin is greater than should be borne.

Ezekiel 6

The symbol of Judah's damnable departure was the high places of idolatry. Ezekiel now sets his face before the Judaeen mountains and declares the desolation of these atrocious altars. They would be broken down along with the idols and the idolaters. Many would die, but hope is given for the future by way of a remnant. This remnant would be persons saved from the sword and ushered into captivity where they would be given opportunity to repent. They would remember God in their captivity and be given opportunity to return home. Likewise it would be through this remnant that the lion of the tribe of Judah would spring forth, the Messiah promised, prophesied, and pointed to in the Old Testament. Without this remnant's preservation the seed line would extinguish and with it man's hope for redemption.

Ezekiel 7

Warnings are finished, now God will take action upon His people. The seeds of iniquity and idolatry the people had sown for generations would now cause them to reap God's heavy hand of justice. Once Babylon was sent upon them there would be nothing left to do. They could fight but their efforts would be in vain. Outside the city was the fierceness of the battle, and inside the city was the fire of death. The only alternative was to surrender and hope for mercy. They would blow the trumpet to indicate battle, but there would be none to answer the call. They could surrender their riches in hopes of mercy, but it would not save them. They could turn to their idols for help, but would only find them deaf and dumb. Destruction was inevitable and all the king would be able to do was mourn. By these events they would know that Jehovah is God.

Ezekiel 8

Ezekiel dates the current events now to be in the sixth year and sixth month, or one and one half years since his call (Ezekiel 1:2). God comes to him in the appearance of fire and in a vision takes him to Jerusalem to point out four specific abominations of which the people were guilty. (1) The image of jealousy in the inner courts (vs. 3); (2) the worship of the beasts and creeping things (vs. 10-11); (3) the women's worship of Tammuz; and (4) the worship of the sun by twenty-five priests (vs. 16). These abominable actions on the part of Jerusalem kindles an intense anger within Jehovah and His reaction is, *"Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ear with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them"* (Ezekiel 8:18).

Ezekiel 9

The executors of God's judgment, numbering six, come as commissioned by Jehovah with weapon in hand and ready to act. These came from the north, representative of Babylon being north of Judah. A man with an inkhorn appears who serves a two-fold purpose: (1) God's destruction of Jerusalem would be recorded to prove unmistakably His power; and (2) a mark would be placed upon the heads of those to not be slain and then comprise the remnant. Then men and women, young and old without the mark of salvation were slain before Ezekiel's eyes. He cries out for mercy on behalf of his brethren not because they deserved mercy, but because

of the heathen's ridicule of God who delivered them and now is killing them. However, His response essentially was, they had made their bed and now they would lie in it.

Ezekiel 10

Now is pictured the glory of the Lord, the burning of Jerusalem, and the withdrawing of God from the sanctuary.¹³ After Jerusalem's fall the cherubim from chapter one reappear along with the scribe of chapter nine. The scribe is to take coals of fire and scatter them throughout the city signifying the fact that it would then be burned to the ground. The cherubim had come in to destroy from the north, but now from the south they move northward again and with them went the glory of the Lord, now departing from Jerusalem. After a symbolic discussion of God's omniscience and omnipresence (the "all-seeing" One) the cherubim with the glory of the Lord depart Jerusalem completely and spread forth to the four corners of the earth (in all directions). How sad it is indeed to know that God chose these people and this place with and in to dwell, a marvelous honor indeed; but because of their utter rejection now He must depart. It would be better to love in perpetuity than to love and lose, the fate of which all Judah is now the recipient.

Ezekiel 11

Ezekiel is now brought to the east gate of the Jerusalem temple and, seeing a group of twenty-five men, is told by God that these were the men who provided wicked counsel to the people. These men told the people that destruction was not near and that Jerusalem itself would protect them from the Babylonians. Ezekiel is commissioned to prophesy against them and warn them of their error, the result of which would be their death and destruction. In the midst of Ezekiel's prophecy one of the men, Pelatiah, falls dead stirring the spirit of Ezekiel, striking in him fear that God would not preserve the remnant. Jehovah, though, assures that though He will scatter the nation abroad He would still protect them and be their sanctuary. The chapter closes with the glory of the Lord being removed from the temple and residing on a mountain to the east, probably the Mount of Olives, and Ezekiel being returned to Babylon to speak to the captivity the visions he had received from God.

Ezekiel 12

At this time the actions of Ezekiel are to become a commentary about the exilic events that would shortly transpire. He is to carry provisions in the midst of the people symbolizing the needs of the captivity and he was to dig through the wall in their sight to foreshadow the wall's destruction. Then Ezekiel prophesied that even the king himself would not be able to escape the captivity but he would be led to Babylon and die there though he would never see it (because Zedekiah's eyes were put out after seeing the death of his sons – II Kings 25:7). The people, though, were being influenced by the false prophets that because it had been such a long time since they had gone into captivity and Jerusalem itself still stood that it would not be destroyed (some had been there over fourteen years and some over five years). Ezekiel's guarantee to them, however, was that God had meant what He had said and Jerusalem would fall. His words would no longer be prolonged, "*but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God*" (Ezekiel 12:28b).

Ezekiel 13

God, now, sends Ezekiel on the offensive against the false prophets who lied to the people about the captivity. They were cunning in their unenviable efforts, but God accuses them of not standing in the gap or building a protective hedge around the people. They, in fact, lied so long and to such an extent that they began to be convinced of their own lies just as the people. Jehovah compares their false teachings to a wall built with untempered mortar. It might have had structure but it had no strength and so when put to truth's test it would fall to the ground in shambles. They cried out, "Peace, peace" when there was no peace and now they would be exposed for their sins. Then at the close of the chapter God sets His sights of vengeance upon the false prophetesses who were deviously leading the people astray through their sorceress practices. God states His displeasure in their actions and promises deliverance of the people from their sly treachery. Based on His actions, they would know that He was Lord.

Ezekiel 14

The elders now assemble in the house of Ezekiel and the Lord speaks to Ezekiel for the intent of informing and forewarning these men about their lifestyles and the coming judgment upon the nation. It is easy, now, to see the source of Judah's sin because it was rooted in their leadership. Sin often starts at the top and filters down as was the case with Judah. Ezekiel's message was that anybody at all who was steeped in idolatry needed to repent lest they bear the punishment of their iniquity. However, salvation of the entire nation was no longer an option. Ezekiel draws upon three righteous men of history to prove this point. He states, "*Though*

these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord" (Ezekiel 14:14). Unlike Sodom that could have been saved by ten righteous souls found therein, one righteous soul could not have saved Judah but only that soul. Through these events God's justness was going to be known by all the people, a lesson many would do well to realize today.

Ezekiel 15

An allegory is now provided to illustrate the purpose behind God's actions. He points to the vine tree in the midst of a forest and points out that the sole purpose of that tree is to bring forth fruit. However, if it does not bring forth fruit then it is just as profitable cast into the fire as it is left whole. Such was the case with Judah. Their purpose was to bring forth the fruit of glory to God, but since they were not accomplishing their purpose then they were just as profitable cast into the fire as they were being left whole. God then would prove His power through their destruction and the land would be left desolate.

Ezekiel 16

In lengthy detail, Ezekiel outlines the gradual apostasy of Judah. Throughout her history, the Israelite people relied heavily upon their physical lineage traced back to the similar sinful deeds of the Amorites and the Hittites. Starting in Egypt God took these people and cleansed them as His own children. He nurtured them, protected them, and provided for them. He made a covenant with them of redemption, but their redemption would depend on their faithfulness. However, Judah forsook Jehovah and played the spiritual harlot. So steeped in sin was she that the Lord points out that the daughters of the Philistines were even ashamed of their lewd behavior. They forsook God and joined themselves with other nations and gods, breaking the covenant. Regardless of their sin, though, God's covenant had a far more reaching effect than simply unto the Jews, therefore God continued to work according to His everlasting covenant. But the promise was made that upon fulfillment, through the coming of Christ and the gospel, the people would be ashamed of their past because of God's great blessing upon them.

Ezekiel 17

Turning now to the form of a riddle, Ezekiel speaks a parable of eagles illustrating the events that had and would transpire. Nebuchadnezzar would come to Jerusalem and take Jeconiah and the seed royal back to Babylon, and though Zedekiah would try to preserve the nation's independence by aligning with Egypt, there was nothing they would do to stop God's wrath coming through Babylon. Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon himself where he would eventually die like many of his people had. However, through the preserved seed would the Messiah come forth and establish in the city of Jerusalem a new Jerusalem, the church of Christ. By this all of mankind would see the power of God displayed.

Ezekiel 18

This chapter argues in great detail the individual responsibilities that the people were now facing. Yes, the children were suffering the natural consequences of their parents' sins, but their souls were in their own hands. Their eternal destiny would not be determined by the sins or righteousness of another no more than another's eternal destiny would be determined by their sin or righteousness. Maybe they had grown up in a sinful environment, but as accountable adults it is now their responsibility to make things right. The entire chapter is well summed by the timely words of vs. 20: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*" Ultimately, though, God's mercy allowed the penitent soul to escape their iniquity and the consequences thereof. God was, is, and always shall be interested in man's salvation and not in their demise, therefore His mercy continued to similarly stand.

Ezekiel 19

A lamentation is now extended toward Judah's princes. The illustration of the lioness with her young lions symbolizes Jerusalem with her final two kings that sealed the doom of Judah by leading the people into multiplied evil. The result of them both was being put in chains and led to Babylon. They had been planted in a fruitful land where they prospered and grew to be a great nation. Now, though, Judah was planted in the wilderness of the captivity, away from their homeland, and the only thing in the immediate future that they could look forward to was the captivity. Their kings had led them to glory, but now they had led them to ruin.

Ezekiel 20

As the elders of Judah again assemble in the house of Ezekiel, they come seeking to enquire of the Lord regarding their release from captivity. It is with self-centeredness they do so and God refuses to listen to them.

Rather through Ezekiel He provides a history lesson of the Jewish nation and their continued rejection of God despite His generous blessings upon them. God had chosen them, through His promise to Abraham years earlier, to make Himself known unto and deliver from bondage to freedom. God had provided them with many things, the two foremost being law and rest. Through cruel irony, in the midst of assuming they were pleasing God, they actually rejected all He had done, including the law and rest. By turning to idolatry and profaning the Sabbaths they stirred up the wrath of God who spared them only for the sake of preserving credibility among the heathen. He then set out to punish them for continuing in their wicked ways, the result of which was the captivity of which they now enquired. Jerusalem would be destroyed from top to bottom and even the righteous would have to suffer temporarily while God smote the wicked with His wrath.

Ezekiel 21

God is now pictured as unsheathing His sword of wrath against Judah. This sword is said to be sharpened and furbished, completely capable of slaughtering whomever its point is dropped. Regarding this prophecy, Ezekiel is told to set his face at Jerusalem and specifically toward the holy places. It was the impurity enacted at these locations that caused God's wrath to begin with, thus it is only fitting that His vengeance begin here. The sword is said to be Nebuchadnezzar and that regardless of where it started (whether Jerusalem or Rabbath) to be assured that it would come. The divination methods of Nebuchadnezzar (linked to idolatry) set him towards Jerusalem, but because the people would think it to be inaccurate they would remain and be taken to Babylon. Christ is pictured in this chapter as the only rightful heir to David's throne, thus Zedekiah, the wicked prince, was to remove the diadem from his head looking forward to he one whose it was. The final verses picture the destruction of the Ammonites who perished at the hand of Babylon along with others in the southern land.

Ezekiel 22

Jerusalem is pictured as the bloody city, now, describing the character of the people as they dealt unevenly with so many people. Two especially disheartening reasons Jerusalem was described as the bloody city was because of their idolatrous practice of offering their young children to the god Molech and the fact that they would at times kill God's prophets whom He sent to warn them of such evil. Their guilt is seen through their blood stained streets. A host of sins are named of which the people were guilty and Jehovah points out that He is blowing the bellows upon His wrathful fire to increase their burden and indignation. The leaders have failed to lead and the people have yet still followed blindly. The result then was the fire of God's wrath upon them.

Ezekiel 23

Often in scripture one's unfaithfulness to God is illustrated as marital unfaithfulness. This is the premise of the whole book of Hosea, and such is the premise of this whole chapter. Aholah and Aholibah are described as two sisters given to whoredom. They represent Samaria and Jerusalem respectively. Aholah (Samaria), the older sister, had gone off and played the harlot with Assyria and Egypt, making unlawful alliances in hopes of being protected from other nations. However, each discovered her unfaithfulness and slew her with the sword. Common sense would have indicated to Aholibah (Jerusalem), the younger sister, to not tread the same treacherous path as her sibling, but none was to be found. She joined herself to Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt and eventually suffered the same fate. Their infatuation with the foreign nations' lifestyles pulled them further into their spiritual prostitution and resulted in their continued sin, idolatry, killing of children, and other unthinkable actions resulting in their demise. God would purge the faithless to preserve the faithful and continue the unfolding of His redemptive scheme.

Ezekiel 24

By way of another parable Ezekiel foretells of Jerusalem's coming ruin. The boiling pot of Jerusalem would be inflicted by the fire beneath, representative of Babylon. All of the inhabitants, though, would be removed and exiled to Babylon and just as the pot remained on the fire to be purged but would not, God intended Jerusalem to be purged of impurities but they refused. God's wrath then is increased upon them because they refuse to be purged and promises a time of judgment to come. To illustrate, then, what would become of Jerusalem God tells Ezekiel that his wife would die. However, Ezekiel was not allowed to mourn as a sign of what the people's response to Jerusalem's ruin would be. The destruction would be so swift and unexpected that they would not weep but simply go off to Babylon without choice. When Ezekiel's wife died

and he did not mourn this troubled the people and Ezekiel then told them that this represented what was to come.

Ezekiel 25

Now begins a series of prophecies continuing through chapter thirty-two regarding foreign nations that surrounded Judah. In all seven nations are foretold of things to come. In this chapter four are forewarned including Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia. These smaller nations in addition to Tyre and Zidon faced ruin as the mighty Babylonians marched right over them en route to Egypt, their ultimate goal.¹⁴ Dobbs noted, “The smaller nations along the route were butchered one by one. The military machine of Babylon had time; they were waiting for the conquest of Tyre by starvation. It was slow, but it was deadly. In the meantime, other kingdoms had to go. Nebuchadnezzar could leave no potential enemy at his back as he advanced toward his target. Egypt was his goal, but Tyre, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, and Zidon were in the way. They had to be cleared out. When Tyre fell, Babylon wanted a straight shot at Egypt – and Babylon would not be denied.”¹⁵

Each of these nations was a fierce enemy of the children of God and now Jehovah would use Babylon to punish them just as He had Judah. Ezekiel is told to set his face against these heathen nations and when the man of God sets his face against the heathen, God has set His face against them. Ezekiel is but the representative of God. With each, vengeance was carried out and all of man truly knew that Jehovah is God.

Ezekiel 26

Ezekiel twenty-six through the beginning of chapter twenty-eight exclusively deal with the ungodly nation of Tyrus, otherwise known as Tyre, and each chapter deals with a specific aspect of Tyre’s situation. Chapter twenty-six describes and explains the coming judgment and destruction of Tyre at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and mighty Babylon. Tyre had much joy in Jerusalem’s fall. As their only competitors on the trade-market nearby, Tyre would gain extensively from Jerusalem’s fall. So rather than weeping for the loss of their former allies, they rejoiced in their coming abundance. However, their joy would soon fade. Babylon spent thirteen years doing so, but finally overcame Tyre and destroyed her power. Old Tyre was destroyed to such an extent it would have had to be completely rebuilt from scratch anyway so they moved the city off the coast to an island where it remained until eight hundred years later when Alexander and the Greeks destroyed it. The words of God truly came to pass: “*I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord*” (Ezekiel 26:21).

Ezekiel 27

Just as chapter twenty-six describes the destruction of Tyre itself, chapter twenty-seven considers the reasons for the coming destruction. Ezekiel speaks a lamentation upon Tyre that describes the pride they had demonstrated among themselves by saying, “*I am of perfect beauty*” (Ezekiel 27:3b). Their lavish lifestyle, manifold merchandising, and yet treacherous treatment then caused God to blow in the east wind (Babylon) and break them. With Tyre’s destruction was the destruction of their riches and wealth; thus, their self-exaltation brought about a type of self destruction.

Ezekiel 28

Now that Ezekiel has foretold their destruction and given the reasons for it he turns his eyes toward the top and prophecies regarding the king of Tyre. This man had exalted himself to be a god, sitting in the seat of God. Because, then, he had climbed to the top of Mount Self-Exaltation and is claiming to be “king of the mountain,” God is going to knock him down. Jehovah sends the terrible of the nations (Babylon) to draw their swords against him and His promise is “*Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers...*” (Ezekiel 28:10). Just as the fate of the nation is sealed in death, so then is the fate of the king. Then in the final verses of the chapter Ezekiel pronounces woe upon Zidon for aiding and abetting the enemies of Judah. They too would be overcome by Babylon for their great evil.

Ezekiel 29

In the tenth year of Ezekiel’s exilic stay in Babylon (587 B.C.) he was given a word by the Lord to prophesy against Egypt. Egypt, like the other six nations of doom, had given themselves to pride and arrogance in addition to a mistreatment of the Israelite nation throughout history. Jehovah, through Ezekiel, announced, “*I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt*” (Ezekiel 29:3); and when God be against us, who can be for us? God’s displeasure with Egypt bore full fruit when Babylon of old traipsed across the Nile to claim their prize. A period of forty years is promised in which Egypt would be left desolate and barren; but then after those years

it would be restored. Through Egypt's fall Nebuchadnezzar would complete unfinished business. In the thirteen year campaign against Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar had not provided wages for his army, but through Egypt's spoil those wages would be provided. The following three chapters continue to detail Egypt's doom.

Ezekiel 30

Jehovah's wrath upon Egypt was imminent. The day was near and coming, thus they should readily expect it. Not only, though, would Egypt pay the wages of their sin, but those close to them who supported and uplifted Egypt would suffer as well, nations such as Ethiopia, Libya, and Lydia would all fall by Babylon's sword. Egypt would be burned with the fire of God's wrath and the source identified is none other than Nebuchadnezzar. The land would be laid to waste and then God would set His sights on Egypt's idols. His promise was, "...I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph..." (Ezekiel 30:13). With God against him the powerless Pharaoh was without defense and in falling to Babylon its inhabitants would scatter among the countries, thus further proving that Jehovah is God.

Ezekiel 31

Pinpointed now is Egypt's underlying problem: greatness. No, it was not inherently wrong for them to have grown to the prominence they enjoyed. The first nine verses indicate the extent of Egypt's greatness. However, along with greatness came pride. As Egypt began to recognize their power they, then, grew in pride, exalting themselves above all others. Jehovah points out that trees do not exalt themselves for their height because they all die eventually and are then no greater than other trees (vs. 14). Therefore Egypt had no room to boast for she would one day find ruin as well. Egypt's fall greatly disturbed other nations around the world. Their knowledge of the events brought the sobering thought "If it can happen to mighty Egypt it can happen to anybody." Egypt's past prominence was no guarantee for an immovable future, a lesson every American would do well to learn. With the nations of old every government around the world should recognize that without God there are no guarantees.

Ezekiel 32

Egypt's destruction is now described in further detail. God will break them with His staff of power and Babylon will rise up in triumph over them. With vivid imagery Ezekiel describes the complete lack of hope with which Egypt is forced to look toward the future. They would be obliterated to such an extent that many would look in horror at the mighty things done to Egypt. Egypt's lack of power is illustrated by God's statement that for Babylon, "*Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil...*" (Ezekiel 32:14). Babylon would have smooth sailing against Egypt who would not even be able to cause a ripple in Babylon's swift destruction. The once mighty Egypt would become nothing more than the same rubble that characterized the lowly nations fallen before them. Truly God is great in His power.

Ezekiel 33

Jehovah turns His attention again toward Ezekiel and speaks once more about responsibility. He, as God's watchman, had the responsibility to warn. Regardless of the people's response or lack thereof Ezekiel was to warn. As long as he warned then he did the will of God, but if he did not warn even if the people repented Ezekiel would be lost because he did not do his job. Then Jehovah relates the people's responsibility. As individuals their penitence or lack thereof would determine their individual salvation. No longer could the misaligned majority depend upon the faithful few. Now each person was individually responsible for him/herself. In the second half of the chapter, in the twelfth year of captivity, a messenger comes to Ezekiel with news of Jerusalem's fall. He had prophesied of it for years and knew it would come; now the hand of the Lord had come down upon them. Ezekiel was made dumb and only the Lord's word could proceed from his lips. For the rest of the chapter Ezekiel explains to the captives what had caused these things to come to pass. Their rejection of God and His statutes had sucked the life (spiritually) out of them and no longer were they fit for His service. The sun still burns, the moon still shines, and those principles continue to apply if only more would listen.

Ezekiel 34

Ezekiel now speaks by God unto the evil leaders of Judah. They had fattened themselves with lush lifestyles at the expense of the people and God is not pleased. These men had misused their positions of authority for personal benefit and now they would pay. God pronounces woe upon them for their deeds and makes this promise – at the judgment He would judge between the fat and the lean. The Lord's promise to His flock is that He would provide. They would eventually be brought back from Babylonian exile where Jehovah

would provide safety and supplies much needed for survival. They would be cared for physically in looking forward to the time in which they would be cared for spiritually. The final nine verses of this chapter are Messianic. One shepherd, identified as David, would be raised up to feed and lead the people. David having been long dead, this obviously is a reference to the seed of David, Jesus the Christ. Through His covenant of peace, the flock of God would then always know their souls' needs would be met, never more to be in bondage again.

Ezekiel 35

Mount Seir represents the Edomite nation, whom was the polar opposite of Jehovah's righteous remnant. Edom's continued presence would have presented problems with Judah's return so God deals with them. Verse nine reveals God's promise as, "*I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*" Edom's continued desolation today proves the fulfillment of God's promise. In stark irony, the world would then rejoice in Edom's desolation in the same way Edom had always rejoiced in theirs'. The restoration, in prophecy, of God's people thus is begun; the very people through whom the blessed Messiah came forth to save the people from their sins.

Ezekiel 36

To the mountains (leaders) of Israel, God now turns His attention in relating to them the two-fold reason He is allowing Israel to return home. First, God is enacting judgment on the surrounding heathen nations, and He will do so by raising up His once faithful nation back to a state of prominence. They had scoffed at the captivity and bondage of Israel and Jehovah would then punish them for such. However, more important than judgment on the nations was God magnifying His holy name. The world mocked a God who would deliver His people only to send them back into bondage. But now God would show His power by unveiling His plan. He had had a purpose for exiling them and now He would fulfill His plan. He would deliver them back into their homeland so lush and fertile that to them it would appear as the Garden of Eden. They would thus be sanctified and allowed to enter into rest; a striking parallel to God's sanctification of men's souls today for the purpose of entering rest. Again these things would be done that the people would know He is Lord.

Ezekiel 37

Perhaps one of the best-known accounts in the Scriptures, Ezekiel 37 now provides the reader with two illustrative symbols to the hope of the nation. First, Ezekiel is transported in a vision to a valley in which dried bones were abundant. These bones had no connection between each other, nor was there any life found therein. These bones were representative of the nation of Judah, who had in captivity had the life sucked out from them. However, through the power of God there was hope of a resurrection of life. So Ezekiel prophesied and the bones came together, connected, and produced flesh; but, as of yet had no life. Then, though, Ezekiel prophesied to the four winds and breathed into this army the spirit of life and they became living creatures. This was symbolic of Judah, though being in captivity, being resurrected unto the freedom of life enjoyed at home. Second, Ezekiel sets his eyes not only toward the revitalization of an old kingdom, but the coming of a new. Jehovah instructed Ezekiel to take two sticks, one representing Israel and one representing Judah, tie them together and make them one again. This, though, would not be made manifest in a united kingdom as to old Israel, but born anew under a new standard. They would be one nation without defilement, under the united leadership of king David, walking according to the judgments of God. This is a prophecy of the coming church in which all of mankind could be united and led by David's descendant Jesus Christ, in which the will of God could abound eternally. Peace would be made possible and all of man would recognize Jehovah as Lord.

Ezekiel 38

The children of God from past to present have always had more enemies than friends, and Judah was no different. Pictured in chapter thirty-eight are all the nations of the world coming up against Israel in opposition, but God stands with His people. There may have been questions in the people's minds regarding God's presence because of how much they had already suffered (having done so for their own sins), but God reminds the people that He works on His own schedule. "*After many days he visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them*" (Ezekiel 38:8). Gog, the nation most mentioned in this chapter, is warned that when they rise up against Judah, they would in the process experience the wrath of God. Jehovah may at times have felt the need to

punish His children, but other nations were not free to do with them as they would, illustrated by God's warning to Gog.

Ezekiel 39

Those things foretold in chapter thirty-eight now come to pass in chapter thirty-nine. Gog is destroyed by the Lord for their aggression against His people. In fact their destruction was so great that Israel would burn their weapons for seven years (complete time) and Gog would bury their dead for seven months (complete time). They would be as a great sacrifice that God would make on behalf of His people. Thus it would be through that great sacrifice that Judah would be redeemed from bondage and given back their liberty. God in providing for His people likewise proves to the people His power and that He was the one whom they were to serve.

Ezekiel 40-48

These chapters, combined because of content, are often referred to as "Israel's Glorious Hope to Come." In them Ezekiel is looking forward to the coming church and does so from two standpoints: (1) Vision of the Future Temple Described [chapters 40-43:12] and (2) Vision of Future Worship and Future Land [chapters 43:13-48]. The primary focus of these chapters is to discuss these two points from these two perspectives: (1) pattern and (2) glory. First, the coming church, in which the saved are now, is one established according to a pattern. Its prophesied pattern was to be fulfilled or else it was not the church. Its presented principles were to be met or else it was not the true church. These chapters, in referencing the exact measurements and expectations of the temple, illustrate how that God's church can be identified by the pattern set forth in scripture (time established, location, indestructibility, et.) and any "church" not fitting the pattern is not *the* church of the New Testament. Likewise is the worship of this church to be according to the pattern. Rather than a feel-good saga of sporadic insanity, the worship of the church is to be organized, reverent, and meaningful to all, especially the Recipient of it. Therefore, first these chapters prove that God is a God of pattern and truly He is not the author of confusion but of peace (I Corinthians 14:33). Second, though, the chapters present the glory of God as pictured through His church and worship. The temple built for God was beautiful beyond comprehension because of the precious material with which it was built, but the church of Christ is more beautiful and precious because it is stained with the blood of Jesus Christ. The worship under Mosaic mandate was precise and sacrificial, but the Christian's worship is according to spirit and truth (John 4:24). Just as the writer of Hebrews set out to prove, truly Christ and Christianity are superior to anything the Old Testament had to offer. To a people destitute in derision, Ezekiel spoke these things to give hope of future times, a better day ahead. Today, men can enjoy that better day of which many anticipated, if only they would do things exactly as God said (as illustrated by these chapters) and accept His free and marvelous gift through obedience.

From God's glory presented in chapter one to God's glory pictured in chapters forty through forty-eight, Ezekiel paints a beautiful portrait of God from His justice to His mercy. And if only man, in the bondage of sin today would see God's willingness to Judah, if only they would repent, this world would be a much more great and godly place in which to live. For centuries men have doomed themselves to the same mistakes, as did Judah of old. Let this world begin its trek back to God starting with you and me.

LESSONS

Frank J. Dunn, in his marvelous work called Know Your Bible, presented three lessons that will be mentioned and upon which we will elaborate.

First, "the terrible nature of sin. It destroys both men and nations."¹⁶ If ever a nation knew the repercussions of sin it was Israel. For centuries she as a united and divided nation had toyed with sin, never completely learning their lesson. Many things could be attributed to this perpetual problem, but perhaps two would be helpful especially given present circumstances in America and around the world. First, a lack of godly men to govern the people escalated an already growing problem of sin. Men in leadership often are guilty of conforming their practices to the majority rule, the problem of which is that sin is always in the majority. Israel and Judah never figured out that a godly nation starts with a godly government. America must soon figure that out. For decades now there has not been a political leader of high enough rank to speak out against the evils found in this nation and make a lasting influence. Shall America have to suffer the fate of Israel and Judah to figure it out? Secondly, though, was the fact that with each generation arose the need of godliness. Israel and Judah often apostatized within one generation, illustrating the need to teach our children the righteous

ways of New Testament Christianity. An ignorance in today's children will transform into an ignorance in tomorrow's adults and leaders. Mankind is always just one generation from total apostasy. May we do all we can to make sure that trend ceases to be.

Second, "individual responsibility – *'The soul that sinneth it shall die'* (Ezekiel 18:20). Men suffer not for the sins of others, but for their own sins."¹⁷ This lesson aids today's religious mindset in two ways. First, it adamantly refutes the Calvinistic heresy of total hereditary depravity. Babies are not born guilty of ancestral sins all the way back to Adam. But rather they are born pure and unblemish, guilty of sin only after committing such after reaching accountability. Secondly, though it teaches man to look inward. It is easy to point out the shortcomings of others, and even the world, and sometimes its needed; but it is much harder and much more needful to look at one's self to find fault. I am ultimately responsible for me, seeing that I will account for my sins and mine alone – no one else will be accountable for me. This sobers the mind to know as I will stand in judgment alone I have need to emphasize my individual responsibility more personally to protect my soul and have the most impact upon others.

Third, and finally, "the necessity of repentance in obtaining forgiveness of sins (14:1-20; 18:20-32; 33:1-22). God 'now commendeth' all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30)."¹⁸ The Lord had a standing promise of release to the people, but until they repented they could not be redeemed. Today's world has two extreme mindsets: (1) no hope or (2) universal hope. But just as Judah of old, if man desires to be redeemed from the bondage of sin, he must repent. God's promise is ready and willing, but man must take the step of faith, trusting in the Lord and His redemptive scheme, then forgiveness can be theirs.

There are many additional lessons that could be considered, but given the spiritual standing of society, those three best illustrate how improvement can be made especially in America. Recognize the terribleness of sin, accept personal responsibility for it, and repent before its everlasting too late.

CONCLUSION

The book of Ezekiel, though oft neglected, truly is a nugget of wisdom from which so much could be gleaned. As Chesser stated it, "Ezekiel is a perfect portrait of the background of redemption in Genesis 3-12 and is, therefore, a revelation of the nature of God, sin, and redemption."¹⁹ To this we do heartily concur. May today's generation and those to come learn the lesson Judah realized the hard way. The pleasure of sin may last a lifetime, but the glory of hope lasts an eternity. Let us turn to God and forever enjoy the hope of eternal redemption safe in the hallow of His hand.

ENDNOTES

¹ Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr. Ezekiel – Prophecy of Hope. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 11).

² All scriptures quoted from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

³ Joseph Meador. “An Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel.” In Introducing the Prophets and Their Message, Volume 1. Edited by Donald W. Walker. (Shenandoah, TX: Shenandoah Church of Christ, 2001), p. 290.

⁴ Keith A. Mosher, Sr. “Introduction to Ezekiel.” In Ezekiel and Lamentations: Lessons for God’s People. Edited by Curtis A. Cates. (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1997), p. 19.

⁵ Frank J. Dunn. Know Your Bible. (Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 1997), p. 285.

⁶ Mosher, p. 19.

⁷ Bobby Liddell. Class notes from Ezekiel and Lamentations. Memphis School of Preaching, 2007.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa. The Wilkinson and Boa Bible Handbook. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), p. 214.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 215.

¹¹ Frank Chesser. Portrait of God. (Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, Inc., 2004), p. 187.

¹² Curtis A. Cates. “Ezekiel’s Vision of God’s Glory (Ezekiel 1:1-28).” In Ezekiel and Lamentations: Lessons for God’s People. Edited by Curtis A. Cates. (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1997), p. 59.

¹³ Liddell.

¹⁴ H.A. “Buster” Dobbs. “Prophecies Against the Nations (Ezekiel 25:1-28:26).” In Ezekiel and Lamentations: Lessons for God’s People. Edited by Curtis A. Cates. (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1997), p. 238.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Dunn, p. 288.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 288-289.

¹⁹ Chesser, p. 187.