

Old Testament Survey Part 4 - The Prophets

Ezekiel - Part 2 - Chapters 25-48

Outline

The **second half** of the **Book of Ezekiel**, chapters **25-48**. comes to us in **three** major sections.

Oracles against Foreign Nations ([25:1–32:32](#))

Promises of Restoration ([33:1–39:29](#))

Vision of Restoration Realized ([40:1–48:35](#))

As the **first half** of the book ended last week, all the **tragic prophecies** of Ezekiel concerning the **fall of Israel** are finished. The **section ended** with the **Nebuchadnezzar** laying **siege** to **Jerusalem** and the **tragic death** of **Ezekiel's wife**. From **Pastor Dave's** lesson, *"Faithful Ezekiel has lost his beloved wife—the delight of his eyes. And, in obedience to God's command, he did not outwardly mourn her loss in the sight of the people. And by so doing, he became an example to them of how they should respond to the impending destruction of their greatest delight—the Temple of God. They should not mourn the loss that that they caused to come upon themselves through the guilt of their great sin."* **End quote**. Now Ezekiel being already in the **land of Babylon** with the **captives of Judah**, finds himself and a small **remnant of God's people** in **Exile**. Alas, the **doom** of **Israel** and **Judah** as spoken by **Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, and **Ezekiel** has come upon the idolatrous people of God's choosing, and they find themselves under **God's purifying judgment**. But all three of these **Major Prophets** speak of the **remnant of God's people** who will eventually **return from exile** with a **rebuilt city** of **Jerusalem** and a **rebuilt Temple** for the worship of God. You remember how **Isaiah** had **promised** that God would raise up the **Persian King Cyrus** to **rebuild the city** and the **Temple**.

Isaiah 44:28-45:3 - 28 "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"

And how **Jeremiah** had **promised** that their **captivity** would only last **70 years** and that the **faithful** among the **remnant** would return from the **land of Exile**.

Jeremiah 29:10-14 - 10 "For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 11 'For I know the plans that I have

for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12 'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 'You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 'I will be found by you,' declares the Lord, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the Lord, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.' NASU

But Isaiah and Jeremiah had both mingled prophecies and oracles about the far distant future, beyond the return from exile, that included promises of the forgiveness of all their sins and spiritual regeneration. Then God would permanently remove their idolatry and give them willing hearts of obedience by the powerful work of His Spirit. This was the everlasting New Covenant promise of Jeremiah 31:1-37, where both houses of Israel and Judah would be given God's Spirit, who would write His Law upon their hearts and cause them to walk in ways. And Ezekiel has repeated much of this great promise already.

Ezekiel 11:16-21 - 16 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God,' Though I had removed them far away among the nations, and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone. "' 17 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God,' I shall gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I shall give you the land of Israel. "' 18 "When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. 19 "And I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them. And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. 21 "But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I shall bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord God. NASB

So thus far even as Israel's doom, exiled from the land as a small remnant of captives has come to pass, yet a return from exile is on the horizon. But much more, a great spiritual restoration of the entire living ethnic nation awaits in the far distant future under the reign of the great Davidic King to come. In that Day they will be regathered, resurrected, and their fortunes restored according to God's faithful Word which these prophets have spoken. This is the main subject of our text today in the second half of Ezekiel's book, chapters 25-48.

Oracles against Foreign Nations ([25:1–32:32](#))

As we pick up in **chapter 25**, Ezekiel begins a long section of oracles of judgment against Israel's nearby nations. This section is much like **Isaiah's chapters 13-23** and **Jeremiah chapters 45-50**, where God promises the **fall** of the **nations** which had **forsaken** and **abused Israel**, all of who **fell** under the **Babylonian Invasion**. These nations included Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, and even Babylon itself. The *ESV Study Bible* comments, "*Oracles against Foreign Nations... Their primary theological role is to show that all peoples are under the dominion and discipline of the King of kings. Israel is uniquely God's own, yet all nations are subject to the one true God. The fate of every nation, whether for judgment or for blessing, is in God's hands. Implied hope for Israel is thus a secondary message of the condemnatory foreign-nation oracles. In Ezekiel, just as Judah and Jerusalem are punished for impurity and oppression, so too are the foreign nations.*" **End quote.** Let us see in these **texts** not only **predictive prophecy** showing that only **God speaks** things **before** they **happen**, but also **His Sovereignty** and **attention** to **everything** and **everyone** in the **world** that **He created** for **His own purpose** and **glory!**

Chapter 25 includes oracles of judgment against Israel's neighboring nations of Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia. One **profound feature** in this chapter is God giving the **reasons** for the **judgment** on these **nations**, and how they assaulted and afflicted His people Israel. This is seen clearly in the "**because you did thus and so, therefore I will**" clauses.

Ezekiel 25:2-4 - 2 "Son of man, set your face toward **the sons of Ammon, and prophesy against** them, 3 and say to the sons of Ammon, 'Hear the word of the Lord God! Thus says the Lord God, "**Because you said, 'Aha!' against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into exile, 4 therefore, behold, I am going to give you to the sons of the east for a possession,**

Ezekiel 25:8-9 - 8 'Thus says the Lord God, "Because Moab and Seir say, 'Behold, the house of Judah is like all the nations,' 9 therefore, I am going to deprive the flank of Moab of its cities, NASB

Ezekiel 25:12-13 - 12 'Thus says the Lord God, "**Because Edom has acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has incurred grievous guilt,** and avenged themselves upon them," **13 therefore, thus**

says the Lord God, "I will also stretch out My hand against Edom and cut off man and beast from it. And I will lay it waste; from Teman even to Dedan they will fall by the sword. NASB

One must see in this the great **Abrahamic Promise** that **God** would **bless** those who **bless Israel** and **curse** those who **curse them**, **Genesis 12:3**. **Chapter 26** begins with a similar refrain **against Tyre**. This oracle however lasts for 3 chapters, **26-28**.

Ezekiel 26:2 - 2 "Son of man, **because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled, now that she is laid waste, ' 3 therefore, thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you** NASB

This chapter contains an amazing prophecy of the cities siege stating that it would literally be thrown into the sea.

Ezekiel 26:12 - 12 "Also they will make a spoil of your riches and a prey of your merchandise, break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses, **and throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water.** NASB

This **prophecy** was **fulfilled twice** in **history**. Since Tyre was an **island city**, Nebuchadnezzar had his soldiers **gather rocks** and **rubble** from the mainland part of the **city** and **build a causeway** to the **walls** of the **island** to lay siege. It lasted **13 years**. Much later in history, this was repeated by **Alexander the Great** in **332 BC**, who **utterly destroyed** the city. All 3 of these **chapters 26-28** contain a terrible refrain which repeats in **26:21**, **27:36**, and **28:19**, **predicting Tyre's everlasting fall**.

Ezekiel 26:21 - 21 "I shall bring terrors on you, and you will be no more; **though you will be sought, you will never be found again,**" declares the Lord God. NASB

Chapter 27 is a **lengthy lament** for **Tyre** and all the **massive wealth** and **trading** by **ships** with **nations** all around. Yet for all its **splendor** and despite its wealth, **Tyre** is **doomed**.

Ezekiel 27:35-36 - 35 'All the inhabitants of the coastlands Are appalled at you, And their kings are horribly afraid; They are troubled in countenance. 36 'The merchants among the peoples hiss at you; You have become terrified, And you will be no more.' NASB

Chapter 28 contains an **amazing typical prophecy** who many believe **foreshadows** the **fall of Satan** himself. Tyre's **pride** and **boasting** are implied throughout this **prophecy**, and here it is **personified** through its **monarch**, which present him as

angel of sorts. The *ESV Study Bible* Comments, "[Ezek. 28:11-19](#) The final anti-Tyre oracle adds a plethora of detail. As in [ch. 27](#), there is no indictment (like in [28:1-10](#)) but rather a narrative lament culminating in inevitable doom. The imagery is colorfully vivid. Tyre is likened to a second Adam, clearly a created being ([vv. 13, 15](#)) and yet a "cherub" ([v. 14](#)). It is in the "garden of God" in [v. 13](#), and on the "mountain of God" in [vv. 14 and 16](#). Some would see [v. 17](#) as a poetic allusion, wherein Ezekiel likens the downfall of the proud king of Tyre to the fall and curse on Satan in [Gen. 3:1-15](#). At minimum, the extravagant pretensions of Tyre are graphically and poetically portrayed (cf. note on [Ezek. 28:4-5](#)), along with the utter devastation inflicted upon Tyre as a consequence ([vv. 18-19](#))." **End quote.**

This is indeed **one** of those **clearly surreal** and **luminary texts** in the **Bible**.

Ezekiel 28:11-16 - 11 Again the word of the Lord came to me saying, 12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God, "**You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 "You were in Eden, the garden of God;** Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. **On the day that you were created They were prepared. 14 "You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 "By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, **And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub,** NASB**

Surely **his end is terrible**, like **all** with the **audacity to oppose God and His people**.

Ezekial 28:19 - 19 "All who know you among the peoples Are appalled at you; **You have become terrified, And you will be no more."** NASB

In all this **God is Sovereign**, and **His eye** is upon **His world**, and **His people**. It is a **bad policy to afflict** His people Israel, who **in the end**, will reap His **blessing**.

Ezekiel 28:24-26 - 24 "And there will be **no more for the house of Israel a prickling brier or a painful thorn from any round about them who scorned them;** then they will know that I am the Lord God." 25 'Thus says the Lord God, "**When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and shall manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant**

Jacob. 26 "And they will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards, and live securely, when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God." NASB

Chapters 29-32 is an **oracle** against **Egypt**, the **seventh nation** to be condemned. They, like Tyre, have **seven oracles** spoken **against** them. **Egypt** like the others will be **judged** for their **treatment** of Israel.

Ezekiel 29:5-7 - 5 "And I shall abandon you to the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers; You will fall on the open field; you will not be brought together or gathered. I have given you for food to the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the sky. **6 "Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am the Lord, Because they have been only a staff made of reed to the house of Israel. 7 "When they took hold of you with the hand, You broke and tore all their hands; And when they leaned on you, You broke and made all their loins quake."** NASB

But a **unique feature** of **Egypt's** oracle is after **God judges** and **scatters** them for **40 years**, He promises to **regather** them and **restore** them.

Ezekiel 29:12-13 - 12 "So I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated lands. And her cities, in the midst of cities that are laid waste, **will be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands."** 13 'For thus says the Lord God, **"At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered. 14 "I will turn the fortunes of Egypt and make them return to the land of Pathros,** to the land of their origin, and there they will be a lowly kingdom. NASU

Chapter 30 is a **lament** for **Egypt** who will be given into the hand of **Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon**. **Chapters 31-32** pronounce the **fall of Hophra, Pharaoh King of Egypt**, which happened in **570BC**, and later **Pharaoh Hophra** was **killed** in **567BC**.

Ezekiel 32:11-12 - 11 For thus says the Lord God, **"The sword of the king of Babylon will come upon you. 12 "By the swords of the mighty ones I will cause your hordes to fall; all of them are tyrants of the nations, And they will devastate the pride of Egypt, And all its hordes will be destroyed."** NASU

And so the nations surrounding Israel all come under judgment by God, even as His own people are in judgment and exile in Babylon. What follows is a section of tremendous promises of restoration to God's exiled people.

Promises of Restoration ([33:1–39:29](#))

Ezekiel's oracles now shift gradually in the direction of **promise** and **restoration**. He revisits the **realities** of **life** under **judgment** while building toward the solid promise of a **renewed** and **permanent relationship** of life with God. **Chapter 33** is an **instruction** to the prophet or **watchman** and his audience, reminding them of their **responsibility** to call people to **faithful living** in light of **God's warnings**. Its **language reflects** the sections earlier in **Ezekiel 3:16-21**, and **18:19-32**. This includes a **repeated theme** of the **prophets**, the **call to repentance**.

Ezekiel 33:10-12 - 10 "Now as for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus you have spoken, saying, **"Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?"** 11 "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no **pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?**' NASU

After warning both the **Israelites** still living **back in Judea** and also the **people** in **exile** in **Babylon**, he then **turns** to warn and **chastise** the leaders of God's people. Ezekiel develops the **picture** of the **community** and its **leaders** as flock and shepherds. **Chapter 34:1-16** addresses the **leaders** as **shepherds**, and these are **scary words** for all who **lead God's people**. A **promise emerges** as the **Lord** promises to be the **good shepherd** to them who will **gather His flock** and care for them. This **Good Shepherd** of course will be the **Messiah**, the **Davidic King**.

Ezekiel 34:23-27 - 23 **"Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd.** 24 **"And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them;** I the Lord have spoken. 25 **"I will make a covenant of peace with them** and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may **live securely** in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. 26 **"I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing.** And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing. 27 "Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit and the earth will yield its increase, and **they will be secure on their land.** NASU

Here the Lord brings up a **"covenant of peace"** He will make with them so they will **dwelt securely**, and He will also make the **land** a **fruitful blessing**.

Ezekiel 34:30 - 30 "Then they will know **that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people,**" declares the Lord God. NASU

These **promises to "the house of Israel"** will **intensify** in the section to come. **Chapters 35-36** is an **interlude** including yet another **oracle of judgment**, this time against **Mount Sier** (Edom), and the surroundings Mountains of Israel. Edom is condemned for their treatment of Israel.

Ezekiel 35:5-7 - 5 "Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end, 6 therefore as I live," declares the Lord God, "I will give you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you; since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you. NASU

The **Mountains of Israel** however are given a **lengthy promise** in **36:8-15**. You remember how **Israel's blessing** is **always tied** to the **land** and their **faithful worship** in the **land**. Here God **prepares** the **land** for **blessings** and **restoration**.

Ezekiel 36:8-12 - 8 'But you, **O mountains of Israel, you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel; for they will soon come.** 9 'For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be cultivated and sown. **10 'I will multiply men on you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt. 11 'I will multiply on you man and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first.** Thus you will know that I am the Lord. 12 'Yes, I will cause men — **My people Israel — to walk on you and possess you, so that you will become their inheritance and never again bereave them of children.**' NASU

Chapter 36:16-38 is a section of **stunning** and **amazing promises** of the **spiritual restoration** of Israel, including a **restoration** of the **land** and abundant **prosperity**. The **overarching theme** of this section is **God's restoration** of Israel for the **sake** of **His holy name**, and in spite of **Israel's terrible sin, unfaithfulness, and idolatry**. Verses **16-21** is a **purpose clause** for their **judgment** as God develops His argument for their blessing.

Ezekiel 36:18-21 - 18 "Therefore **I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. 19 "Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I**

judged them. 20 "When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord; yet they have come out of His land.' 21 "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. NASU

Verses 22-32 contain astonishing promises of spiritual renewal for Israel, not for their sake, but for the sake of God's Holy Name. Then "23 the nations will know that "I am the Lord," as God will prove Himself "holy among you in their sight."

Ezekiel 36:22-23 - 22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. 23 "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight."

God will do this by transforming His people, Israel. He will gather them from all the nations and bring them into their own land. There He will cleanse them from the idolatry, and will change their hearts by His Spirit, and will move them to obey His Word. This is the same New Covenant promise of Jeremiah 31 & 32.

Ezekiel 36:24-27 - 24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. NASU

This is undoubtedly the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, which we New Testament Christians, Jew and Gentile, have enjoyed throughout the Church Age. But Israel not only receives regeneration, but also an everlasting return to their own land with abundant blessing, and an intimate relationship with God! God does this as a testimony to the nations which will never be reversed, for the sake of His name.

Ezekiel 36:28-29 - 28 "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. 29 "Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. 30 "I will

multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the **disgrace of famine among the nations**.

This will cause a **tremendous work of repentance** and **brokenness** in the hearts of Israel, which will be the **finishing work of God's Spirit** which will **save them** from all of their **uncleanness**, including their **pride** and **ingratitude**.

Ezekiel 36:31-32 - 31 "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 "I am not doing this for your sake," declares the Lord God, "let it be known to you. **Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"** NASU

Verses 33-36 promises a **restoration** of the **land of Israel**. In contrast to the **name of the Lord** being **profaned**, the **nations** will be in **awe** of the **Supremacy** of the **holy God** who has **regathered, restored and rebuilt** His **ancient people**.

Ezekiel 36:33-36 - 33 'Thus says the Lord God, "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, **I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt.** 34 "The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by. 35 "They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.' 36 "Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, the Lord, have spoken and will do it." NASU

Verses 37-38 promise that **Israel** will **flourish** in **cities filled** with their **own people**, in contrast to a small, **scattered remnant** in **exile**.

Ezekiel 36:37-38 - 37 'Thus says the Lord God, "This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: **I will increase their men like a flock.** 38 "Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the Lord.'" NASU

Chapter 37 is one of the **famous passages** of all the **Old Testament** prophets, "**the Valley of Dry Bones.**" After promising in **36:26-27** to give them a **new heart** and **spirit**, the **beleaguered exiles** are still just a **tiny poor remnant** of **captives** in a **foreign land**. Here God gives a **vivid vision** filled with **imagery** to address their **despair**, explaining that it relates **directly to them**, the "**11 whole house of Israel.**"

Ezekiel 37:1-6 - 1 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and **He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord** and set me down in the middle of the valley;

and **it was full of bones.** 2 He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, **there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry.** 3 He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, You know." 4 Again He said to me, "**Prophecy over these bones and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.'**" 5 "Thus says the Lord God to these bones, '**Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life.**" 6 '**I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive;** and you will know that I am the Lord.'" NASU

He gives the setting for the vision as a valley filled with **"very many bones"** that are **"very dry."** Even as a **tiny poor remnant** of **captives** can here God's Word, He will bring these **very dry bones** to **life** by breathing the **breath of life** into them.

Ezekiel 37:7-10 - 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. 9 Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.'" 10 **So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.**

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In contrast to a **tiny remnant few** is a valley with **very many bones**. When God does **His work** of **gathering** them up and breathing upon them by His Spirit, **"they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army."** See here a **remarkable vision** indeed. In **verses 11-14**, this **vision** gives us the very clear meaning that is intended. **Biblical images** in **prophecy** many times give us the very **information** within **its context** to **understand** its meaning.

Ezekiel 37:11-14 - 11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.'" 12 "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, "**Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.**" 13 "Then you will know that I am the Lord, **when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people.**" 14 "I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life,

and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it," declares the Lord.'" NASU

Even as Israel seems to be a **tiny remnant scattered** among the **nations** and **"completely cut off,"** yet God will **regather** them up, **resurrect them** from their **graves,** and **"place them on their own land."** Verses 15-28 are even more astonishing, and also going beyond just the return from exile into the far distant future. Here the vision will continue by **picturing** the **reunification** of old **Northern** and **Southern Kingdoms** of **Israel** and **Judah.** We realize that the 10 Tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel had **largely perished** and been scattered to the **nations** in **722 BC** in the Assyrian Invasion. Here God promises to **regather** them **all,** join them to **Judah** (2 Tribes of the Southern Kingdom), and **place** them **in the land,** with **one Davidic King** to **rule** over them.

Ezekiel 37:15-20 - 15 The word of the Lord came again to me saying, 16 **"And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, 'For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.'** 17 **"Then join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand.** 18 "When the sons of your people speak to you saying, 'Will you not declare to us what you mean by these?' 19 say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, **"Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand."** 20 "The sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.

Again we are given the very **information** within **its context** to **understand** its **meaning.**

Ezekiel 37:21-23 - 21 **"Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.** 23 "They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I **will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God.** NASU

God will place His **Davidic King** over them and will move them to **obey His Word**. He will do this when He **gathers all 12 Tribes** to live **in the land, forever**. This will happen when they become recipients of the **everlasting (NEW) covenant**.

Ezekiel 37:24-28 - 24 "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. 25 "They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. 26 "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. 27 "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 28 "And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever." NASU

These closing verses concerning **God's Temple** point forward to later in the book, **chapters 40-48** in its **vision of the Temple**.

Charles Spurgeon writing in the 1850's, 100 years before Israel was regathered in the land.... *"The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel." ... "If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage—a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away—must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a king is to rule over them. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" [Ezekiel 37:21-22]."* **End quote.**

Chapter 38-39 contain the **famous prophecy** of the **Gog and Magog war** against **Israel** in the **latter days**. Much **controversy** accompanies the **identity** of **Gog** and **Magog**, which remains **unclear**, although many are willing to **conjecture** who they may be. Nevertheless, they are clearly the great **end time enemy** of God's people,

whom **God** Himself **musters** to come and **fight against** the **restored** people of **Israel** in the **“latter years” 38:8**, and the **“latter days” 38:16**. The text describes people both from Israel and the nations who are living securely on the mountains of Israel.

Ezekiel 38:7-9 - 7 "Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. **8 "After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them.** 9 "You will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you." NASU

The great **Gog** and **Magog** army is **summoned** by the **Lord** to come **against** His **people** who are **dwelling securely** in the land, so that God may show His sovereignty through this great army and **“16 so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog.”**

Ezekiel 38:14-16 - 14 "Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord God, "**On that day when My people Israel are living securely, will you not know it?** 15 "You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army; 16 and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. **It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land,** so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog." NASU

Clearly in the **text** this happens in a **day** when **Israel** and the **nations** are enjoying security in the land of Israel and **“8 they are living securely, all of them.”** But even as **God** has **brought this army** against His people, He has done it to **crush them** and **display** his **fierce wrath** against the remaining **rebellious nations** of the **world**, who are **identified** as the **Gog** and **Magog** horde.

Ezekiel 38:18-19 - 18 "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," declares the Lord God, "**that My fury will mount up in My anger. 19 "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.**" NASU

The **text** describes the **demise** of this **massive army** by God's meticulous **Providence**. There in the **sight** of **God's people** and the **nations** who have sought to live securely in **God's land**, they meet their **fiery end**.

Ezekiel 39:1-8 - 39 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "**Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**"; 2 and I will turn you around, drive you on, take you up from the remotest parts of the north and bring you against the mountains of Israel. 3 "I will strike your bow from your left hand and dash down your arrows from your right hand. 4 "**You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field.** 5 "**You will fall on the open field; for it is I who have spoken,"** declares the Lord God. 6 "**And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the Lord.** 7 "**My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.** NASU

The **rest** of **Chapter 39:9-20** describes the effort to **clean up** the **battle ground** which is **strewn** with **dead bodies** and **spoils** from the **war** against this great horde. Now what is somewhat **unclear** in the **Old Testament** is made **very bright** and **clear** in the **New Testament**. In the New Testament, **Gog** and **Magog** are the names of the **nations led by Satan** to **attack Jerusalem** at the **end** of the "**thousand years**" (Rev 20:8). Understanding this **narrative** becomes clear by the **few verses** in **Revelation** that describe it in the **context** of those **latter days** after the **Millennial Age**.

Revelation 20:7-10 - 7 When the thousand years are completed, **Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war;** the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 **And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.** 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. NASU

Here, **after** the **Millennium** is **completed**, and **Israel** and the **faithful nations** are **living securely** in the **land**, **Satan** is released to **deceive** the **rebel** nations from "**8 the four corners of the earth.**" As **Ezekiel** described, they come to **make war** and

are **consumed by fire** there on the **mountains of Israel**. All of **God's ancient enemies fall** and are **no more!** Here we have **learned when** this battle takes place, **who** its players are, **how** it all ends, and all of it is for the **glory of God** and the **vindication of His name**. The last verses of **Ezekiel 39** give us even more detail.

Ezekiel 39:21-29 - 21 "And **I will set My glory among the nations; and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them.** 22 "And **the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God from that day onward.** 23 "The nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and I hid My face from them; so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword. 24 "According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I dealt with them, and I hid My face from them." 25 Therefore thus says the Lord God, **"Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name. 26 "They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their own land with no one to make them afraid. 27 "When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. 28 "Then they will know that I am the Lord their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. 29 "I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,"** declares the Lord God. NASU

Vision of Restoration Realized ([40:1–48:35](#))

Chapters 40-48 include a **lengthy prophecy** of a **renewed Temple of God** where the **glory of the Lord returns to dwell among His restored people with restored worship** in a **restored land**. Ezekiel is given a **heavenly messenger** to guide him on a tour of the **Temple** and its **measurements**, its **regulations** and **rites**, its **purpose** among the **restored world**, and its **place** among its **restored people**. It comes in **4 sections** described in the *ESV Study Bible*...

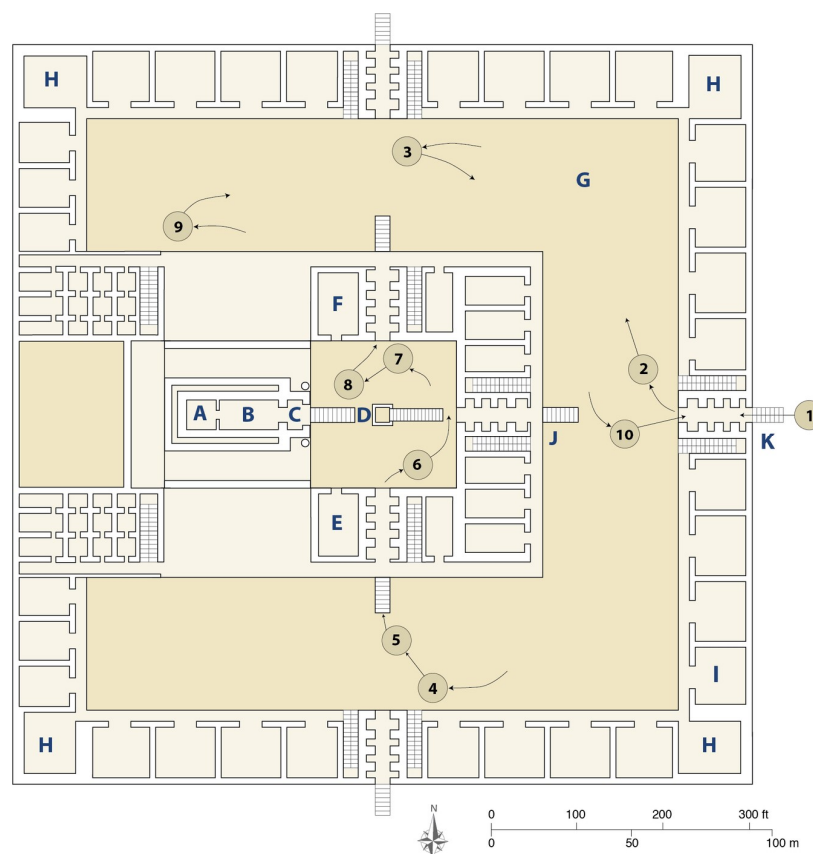
Chapters 40-42 - Ezekiel is again taken on a tour, this time of the new temple, which culminates with the return of the glory of God.

Chapters 43-46 - The voice of the Lord now instructs Ezekiel in the regulations for Israel's renewed worship life.

Chapters 46:19-47:12 - When the “tour” resumes, Ezekiel witnesses the river flowing from the temple, which brings life to the world.

Chapters 47:13-48:35 - The book concludes with the division of the land among the tribes with the new city and new temple at its heart, with equal access for all.

Chapters 40-42 give a **narrative** of the **vision** of the **New Temple**. It starts with a **date** of the **vision** which happens **14 years** after the **destruction of Jerusalem, 40:1**. From the **ESV Study Bible**... “Ezekiel is given a vision of a rebuilt temple, just as he had been given a temple vision 20 years earlier (8:1). As on that occasion, a heavenly being leads him around the temple precincts. This time, however, the vision does not reveal the sin of Ezekiel’s people but the splendor of his God. The temple itself appears to be geometrically idealized. It is a square structure, its areas nested, with the most sacred place being both the innermost and the uppermost, as each succeeding area is elevated from the preceding. It seems also to be symmetrical around the east-west axis, with the main entrance facing east. Ezekiel is led back to the outer court in [ch. 42](#) where various chambers of the temple area are identified... see drawing below.” **End Quote.**



This section ends with the **glory** of the **Lord returning** to the **Temple**.

Ezekiel 43:1-5 - 43 Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing toward the east; **2 and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.** 3 And it was like the appearance of the vision which I saw, like the vision which I saw when He came to destroy the city. And the visions were like the vision which I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face. **4 And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. 5 And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house.** NASU

Chapters 43-46 describe the **regulations** for **restored worship**. The presence of **reproof** and **correction** in this section seems to **indicate** that this **Temple** is **present** in the **Millennial Age** where **sin** still **exists** in a **restored world**, but not a world in its **final stage** of **immortality** and perfection in the New Heavens and Earth. Nevertheless, it **prescribes God's will** for its **restored worship**. From the *ESV Study Bible*... "Although some aspects of Ezekiel's "tour" reappear from time to time, the emphasis now falls on the activities to take place in the temple, and the regulations for the officiants and leaders of the community. The main altar and its round of sacrifices is the first element put in place ([43:13-27](#)). The identification of the prince's gate in [44:1-3](#) introduces the regulations concerning access to the temple area and the rules governing priests ([44:4-31](#)). [Chapter 45](#) brings together seemingly disparate interests, including the arrangements of the temple's hinterland ([45:1-6](#)), exhortations to justice ([45:9-12](#)), and regulations concerning offerings and sacrifices, Sabbaths, and festivals ([45:13-46:15](#)). Instructions concerning the "prince" are interspersed, but come to the fore at [45:7-8](#) and [46:16-18](#). There is no other body of legislation for the community like this outside the Pentateuch (thus its introduction by God as the law of the temple, [43:12b](#)). It has the effect of placing Ezekiel in the role of a second Moses, meeting with God not at the mountain in Sinai ([Ex. 19:1-5; 31:18](#), etc.) but on the mount of the new temple ([Ezek. 43:12](#))." **End quote.** The vision gives very **much information** and it brings up a **host** of **probing questions** to try and **understand** what the **world** will be like in the **Millennial Age** and beyond. But here we must be **cautious not** to go **beyond** what the **Scriptures states**, and **hold** this **unclear** and **limited knowledge** in **tension** with what **we know** that is **clear** in the Bible's **revealed knowledge**.

Chapters 47:1-12 describes a river flowing from the temple, which brings life to the world. From the *ESV Study Bible*... "A trickle of water miraculously issues from the south side of the threshold of the sanctuary and makes its way south of the altar ([v. 1](#)), out the east gate to the outer court, and then out of the main east gate ([v. 2](#)). The trickle becomes a powerful river as Ezekiel and his guide wade into the stream, the guide measuring as they go ([vv. 3-5](#)). Sitting at the river bank, the guide explains the life-giving properties of the river ([vv. 6-12](#)). This aspect of the vision coheres with [34:25-31](#) in affirming that renewal is not just moral and does not just come to people but affects the entire natural world. Here, however, the water brings life not just to the "world" but to that part of it least capable of sustaining life." **End quote.** The **features described** in this **section** seem to also indicate its **existence** in the **Millennial Age**, yet at the **same time** there are references which are **very similar** to the **river, fruit and leaves** described in the **New Heavens and Earth** in **Revelation 22:1-2**. Again caution is required.

Ezekiel 47:12 - 12 "By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."

Chapters 47:13-48:35 describes the **allotment** of the **land** to the **12 Tribes** of **Israel**. From the *ESV Study Bible*... "The final element in the vision, and in the book, demarcates the territory for the whole of Israel ([47:13-23](#)), allots territories to the 12 tribes ([48:1-7, 23-29](#)), and allocates access to the new city ([48:30-35](#)). It includes a detailed version of the central area assigned to the sanctuary and city ([48:8-22](#); cf. [45:1-8](#)). These are clearly idealized boundaries, as strips are simply drawn east to west in equal chunks. And yet the overall boundaries correspond to those of [Num. 34:1-12](#). See map below." **End quote.** The book ends with a **remarkable** verse. **Nowhere** in this **Temple vision** is the **city called Jerusalem**, rather here at the **end** of the **vision** the **city's name** is **disclosed**.

Ezekiel 48:35 - 35 "The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and **the name of the city from that day shall be, 'The Lord is there.'**" NASU

See in this, the **most important element** in all that **God does** in **restoring** His **people** and His **places**, He **dwells among them**. This will be the **profound reality** of **God's redeemed, immortal, and perfect world** to come in His **New Creation**.

Revelation 21:3-4 - 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "**Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,**
4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer

be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." NASU



There are many **different interpretations** of this **Temple vision** and its **meaning**. I **currently** hold that this **vision describes** a **literal Temple** in the **Millennial Age**, with its **inhabitants** and **land described** accordingly. In regard to the **Temple sacrifices**, I am **not convinced** these are **literal blood sacrifices**, but because of my **hermeneutic** (literal, grammatical, historical), I lean that they **are literal**. I hold this point in **tension** with my **reading** of the **passage** and the **seeming difficulties** with **blood sacrifices** in an **age** when **Christ has died** as the **once for all sacrifice** for **sins for all time**. This is a **profound question** to be **answered** by the **Lord** when He returns. Here is a **helpful article** to understand different **interpretive methods** of this vision. From the **ESV Study Bible**... ***“With regard to the meaning of this passage as a whole: (1) Some interpreters understand this vision as a prophecy that will be fulfilled literally, with a rebuilt temple and Israel dwelling in the land according to its tribes—a future millennial kingdom on the earth (see notes on [Rev. 20:1–6](#)). Many who hold this position believe that literal animal sacrifices will be offered, but that in the future millennial kingdom they will function as reminders of the complete and sufficient death of Christ, a function different from what they had in the OT. (2) Other interpreters see this vision of a new temple and a renewal of the land of Israel as an extended, detailed metaphor predicting the presence of God among his people in the new covenant age (that is, his presence in the church). (3) Another view is that the vision predicts God’s presence among his people in the new heavens and new earth (cf. [Isa. 66:17](#); [2 Pet. 3:13](#); [Rev. 21:1](#)), not as physical details that will be literally fulfilled but as symbolic indications of the great blessings of that future age. In this interpretation, the details about worship and sacrifices are symbols of the centrality of worship of God: the temple represents the orderliness and beauty of God’s heavenly dwelling place; the priests and their sacrifices represent the service and worship of all God’s people; the division of the land represents the allocation of places to live for all God’s people; and the river represents the outward flow of God’s blessings to his people forever. (4) Finally, it is possible that there are both literal and symbolic elements in this vision, and that, as with the visions in [Ezekiel 1](#), this vision describes future realities that cannot be fully expressed in terms of Ezekiel’s present realities. Almost all interpreters agree that [Ezekiel 40–48](#) is one of the most difficult passages in the entire Bible.... No matter which interpretation one adopts, certain primary emphases are quite clear. The whole vision may be understood as describing the actual presence of God within the temple of the new community: [chs. 40–42](#) prepare for it; [ch. 43](#) realizes it; [chs. 44–46](#) provide the rules for it; [ch. 47](#) describes its effects; and [ch. 48](#) lays out access to it. The vision thus also presupposes threads and themes of earlier oracles: the supremacy of God; the requirements necessitated by his holiness; revitalization by the Spirit of God; honoring God by living in accord with his holiness; and ensuring the sanctity of the community by maintaining divine justice.”*** **End quote.**