

LECTURE 15: EZEKIEL

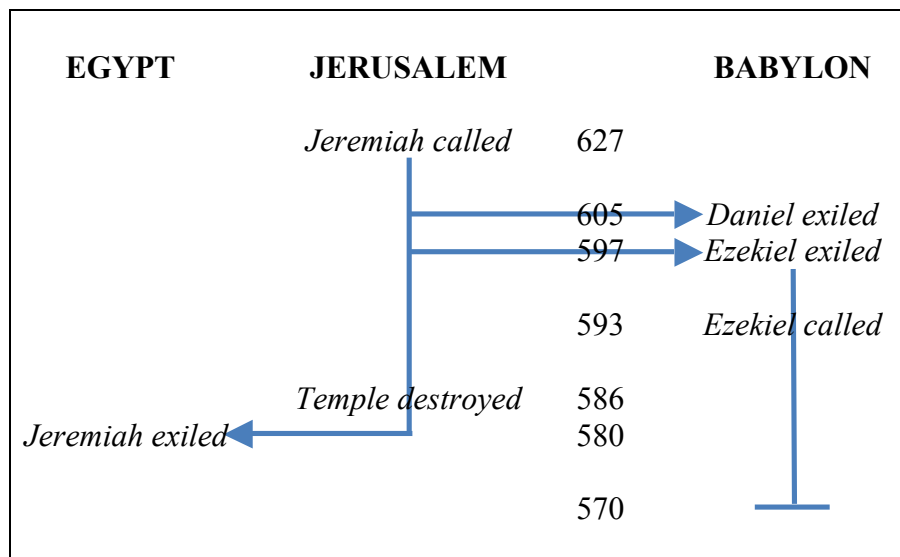
“The God who is present”

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I. Orienting Data

- A. **Prophet and Audience:** Ezekiel (“God strengthens”), an Israelite priest and prophet who was taken to Babylon in 597 B.C., and a younger contemporary of Jeremiah
- B. **Date of Prophetic Activity:** 593–570 B.C.
- C. **Content:** A series of prophecies announcing the fall of Jerusalem, including the departure of Yahweh, followed by Israel’s eventual restoration with the return of Yahweh among the first wave of captives from Judah
- D. **Emphases:**
 1. Despite all beliefs to the contrary, Yahweh, the just judge, will punish Israel and the world for their iniquities.
 2. Yahweh, the God of mercy and compassion, will restore his people and be present with them once more.
- E. **Historical Context:**
 1. 627 Jeremiah called as prophet in Jerusalem
 2. 605 Daniel exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon
 3. 597 Ezekiel exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon (Jer. 29:2)
 - While those taken thought their exile would be short (Jer. 28), Jeremiah told them to settle for the long haul (Jer. 29:1–23).
 4. 593 Ezekiel called as prophet in Babylon
 5. 586 Temple destroyed in Jerusalem
 6. 580 Jeremiah exiled from Jerusalem to Egypt

Fig. 14.1. Time & Place of Jeremiah & Ezekiel





II. Literary Overview of Ezekiel

A. Messages of Doom for Judah/Israel (1:1–33:33)

1. The Call of Ezekiel to Prophetic Ministry (1:1–3:27)
2. Signs and visions of Woe for Judah/Israel (4:1–11:25)
3. Judgment Oracles against Judah/Israel (12:1–24:27)
4. Judgment Oracles against the Nations, Highlighting that Judah's Fate Is No Different (25:1–32:32)
5. The End of An Era: The Destruction of Jerusalem (33:1–33)

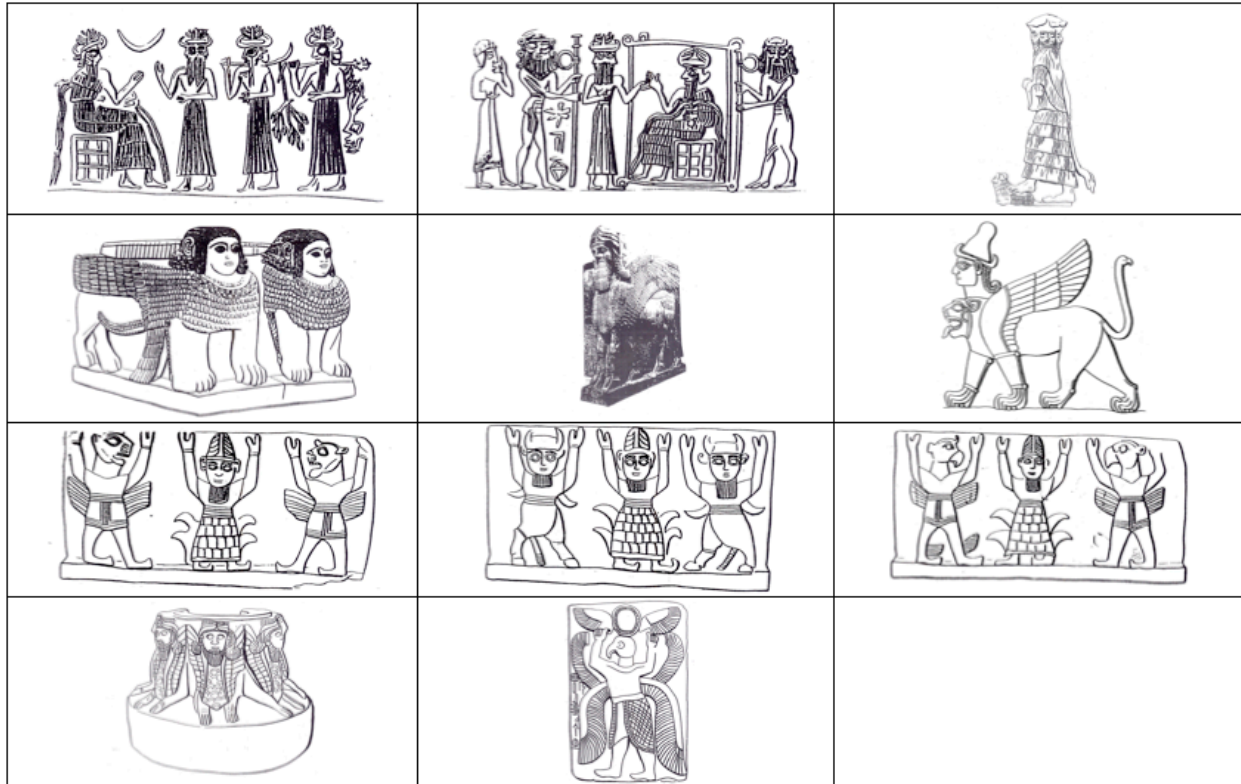
B. Messages of Hope for Judah/Israel (34:1–48:35)

1. Restoration Proclaimed (34:1–39:29)
2. Restoration Envisioned (40:1–48:35)

III. Message of Doom and Gloom for Judah (Ezek. 1–33)

A. The Initial Vision of God's Glory in Its Historical Context (Ezek. 1)

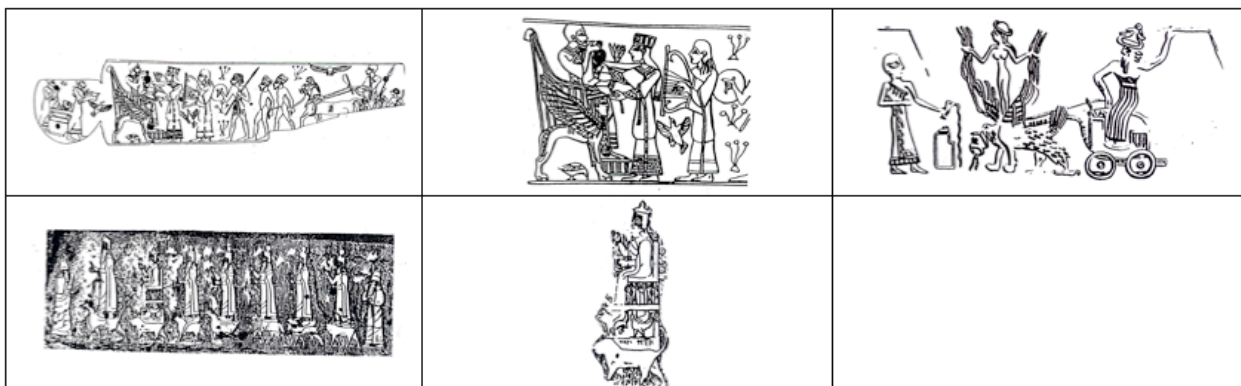
1. Ezekiel 1:4–14: Composite figures with four faces and yet human bodies. The depictions of Babylonian gods found from the time of Ezekiel align in amazing ways with Ezekiel's descriptions of these heavenly beings.



2. Ezekiel 1:15–21: In association with the living beings is a chariot-like image, with wheels full of eyes. We find many images of gods riding chariots in the ancient world, and we also find composite figures full of eyes.



3. Ezekiel 1:22–28: Above the chariot was a vast expanse, and above the expanse a throne, and on the throne one “with a human appearance,” the great King, the King of Glory! In the following depictions, gods are seen riding chariots above winged creatures.



THINK!

How do we explain Ezekiel's description of God's glory in light of the prophet's ancient context? The reliefs and statues of gods from the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian eras clearly suggest that Ezekiel would have had a category for the chariot and the types of winged creatures he saw. The heavenly beings, all servants of Yahweh, resembled the Babylonian gods of the day. How do we explain this close resemblance, and what significance do you see in the fact that, while Ezekiel appears to easily describe the angelic beings, his portrayal of God himself breaks down, restating over and over again that "he had the appearance of the likeness of..." What is the significance of these similarities and differences?

B. The prophet's call: 5 years after his exile, Ezekiel the priest was called as prophet to the "house of Israel," which were primarily the exiles in Babylon (Ezek. 2:1–5; 3:1–7)

C. Israel's covenant faithlessness developed

1. Israel, the idolater (Ezek. 8–11)

a. Israel's abominations in the Temple (ch. 8)

- i. The "image the provokes jealousy" (8:3; cf. Exod. 34:14) stands adjacent to "the glory of the God of Israel" (8:4).
- ii. Then people of Judah are engaged in pagan worship right amidst the presence of God.

<i>Text</i>	<i>Where?</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>What?</i>	<i>ANE Origin?</i>
8:3, 5	North gateway entrance of the inner court	??	"The seat of the image of jealousy"	Canaanite worship
8:10–12	In the "rooms of pictures" surrounding the inner court	70 elders of Israel worshipping in the dark with censers of burning incense	Engravings of "every form of creeping things and loathsome beasts," and all Israel's idols	Egyptian worship
8:14	Entrance of the north gate	Weeping woman	Tammuz	Mesopotamian worship
8:16	The entrance to the inner court of the temple	25 men with backs to the temple and faces toward the east	Sun worship	Babylonian worship

Gil McConnell, adapted from V. H. Matthews, M. W. Chavalas, J. H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

b. Yahweh's response (chs. 9–11)

- i. *Synthesis* (8:18): "Therefore I will act in wrath. My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. And though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."
- ii. Stage 1 (9:1–11)
 - (1) Yahweh commissions the preservation of all "who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed" in Jerusalem (9:4) but also the destruction of all who fail to grieve over sin (9:1–2, 5–8). The abominations include:
 - (a) Innocent blood is shed by the powerful (22:3–4, 6)
 - (b) Idolatry (22:3–4)
 - (c) Contempt for parents (22:7)
 - (d) The sojourner, fatherless, and widow are wronged and exploited (22:7)

- (e) What is holy is despised (22:8)
 - (f) Sexual immorality (22:10–11)
 - (g) Extortion and dishonest gain (22:12–13)
- (2) The glory cloud begins to leave the earthly temple, moving from the Ark of the Covenant to the threshold of the entrance to the Holy of Holies, filling the temple with glory (9:3; 10:4).
- iii. Stage 2 (10:1–22)
 - (1) The Lord commissions that burning coals be taken from the heavenly throne room from between the cherubim and scattered over the city (10:2, 6–7); these coals of fire for sacrifice from the heavenly altar are the fuel from which God’s wrath against sin is satisfied, and whereas in Isaiah’s vision they purify the penitent (Isa. 6:6), here they will consume the wicked.
 - (2) The glory of God’s presence in the earthly temple moves from the threshold of the entrance to the Most Holy Place to the entrance of the temple’s east gate (10:18–19).
- iv. Stage 3 (11:1–25):
 - (1) Ezekiel is commissioned to rebuke the idolaters of Jerusalem, declaring the coming of exile as divine judgment against their pagan practices (11:1–12).
 - (2) Yahweh promises to preserve a remnant from his people, first being a sanctuary to the exiles (11:16; cf. Hos. 3:1–5), and then restoring them to their land (Ezek. 11:17) and transforming their hearts “that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them” (11:19–20).
 - (3) The glory of Yahweh completely departs from temple and from Jerusalem and hovers over the Mount of Olives, east of the city (11:23).
- v. Stage 4—Future: At the end of the book, the presence that departed returns to a new temple, and the city of Jerusalem is forever renamed “Yahweh Is There!” This is the consummation of the promised restoration, ultimately realized in Revelation 21–22.
 - Ezek. 43:2–5. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. ³And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. ⁴As the glory of Yahweh entered the temple by the gate facing east, ⁵the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of Yahweh filled the temple.
 - Ezek. 48:35. And the name of the city from that time on shall be, Yahweh Is There.
- 2. Israel, the wayward bride (Ezek. 16; cf. Hosea 2):
 - a. 16:1–7 – Yahweh’s adoption of Israel, an abandoned child.
 - b. 16:8–14 – Yahweh’s lavish, covenantal, unmerited love for his bride.
 - c. 16:15–34 – Israel’s rejection of Yahweh through trusting in her own beauty (self-reliance and arrogance, v. 15) and through prostitution (i.e., idolatry and man-ward reliance) (vv. 32–34).

- d. 16:36–59 – Yahweh’s just wrath poured out on his rebel bride, who has become more corrupt than even Samaria and Sodom (vv. 46–47) through covenant unfaithfulness (v. 59).
- e. 16:60–63 – Yahweh’s gracious, covenant reconciliation (see Hos. 2:14–23).
- 3. Israel, the constant rebel (Ezek. 20)
 - a. 20:5–8 – Yahweh’s revelation of himself, renewal of the land promises, call to faithfulness in Egypt, but Israel’s initial rebellion (v. 8).
 - b. 20:9–17 – Yahweh’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt, his merciful preservation of them in the wilderness, his covenant with them at Sinai, and his merciful preservation of them after the golden calf episode and the Kadesh-barnea episode, despite their sustained faithlessness.
 - c. 20:18–26 – Yahweh’s call to the new generation to heed his covenant (vv. 18–20, Deuteronomy?), his promise of future exile (v. 23), his commanding laws without enablement (v. 25; cf. Deut. 29:3[ET4]), and Israel’s sustained rebellion.
 - d. 20:27–31 – Israel’s sustained idolatry in the land all the way to the present.
 - e. 20:32–44 – Yahweh’s purpose to overcome Israel’s rebellion through wrath and to establish himself as their king

D. Ezekiel’s “Sign” (ch. 24):

- 1. More than any other prophet, Ezekiel is called upon to involve himself personally in the divine word by acting or living out his prophetic message (cf. 12:6).
- 2. Ezekiel’s loss of his spouse as a sign: In what way does Ezekiel’s marriage relate to his message? (Ezek. 24:2, 14–24, esp. v. 24)
 - a. Losing the “delight of your eyes” (24:15–18)
 - b. The messenger becomes the message: God instructs Ezekiel not to mourn over the loss of his wife (24:16–17), so as to be a “sign” to the people of how foolish and nonsensical they are in failing to mourn over the loss of the temple and God’s presence due to their own sin (24:21–24).

E. Foreign Nation Oracles (chs. 25–32)

- 1. In Ezekiel 24, the prophet leaves his audience with Jerusalem’s siege imminent, the spiritual state described, and their future glim.
- 2. He then enters into a series of foreign nation judgments, highlighting that Judah’s end is no better than the nations: Ammon, Moab, Seir, Edom, Philistia (ch. 25), Tyre and Sidon (chs. 26–28), Egypt (chs. 29–32).

F. The Destruction of Jerusalem (ch. 33)

- 1. The prophet’s warning (33:1–20)
- 2. Jerusalem’s fall described (33:21–29)
- 3. The people’s lack of response, but God’s validation of himself and his messenger (33:30–33).
 - Ezek. 33:32–33 And behold, [Ezekiel,] you are to them like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it. When this comes—and come it will!—then they will know that a prophet has been among them.
 - Cf. Ezek. 12:28; 20:49

G. Conclusion:

1. Judah is dead—a spiritual reality that the physical judgment/exile would portray! They are not resting in peace but lying under the curse of God; like a valley of dry bones (Ezek 37:1–2).
 - Eph 2:1–3. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience . . . ³ by nature children of wrath.
2. Any hope that follows is unmerited mercy and must be akin to resurrection.

THINK!

In Ezekiel 20:25, Yahweh declared, “I gave them statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life.” What does this statement mean? In your response, assess whether Ezekiel 20 suggests a particular giving of the law to which Ezekiel refers and clarify how the statement in 20:25 relates to (1) Yahweh’s promise that in the age of restoration, “I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (36:27); (2) the statement in Leviticus 18:5, “You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am Yahweh”; (3) Paul’s assertions that “in the law is embodiment of knowledge and truth” (Rom. 2:20), that “the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me” (7:10), and that “the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (7:12).

IV. Message of Hope for God’s People (Ezek. 25–48)

A. Ezekiel’s vision of Israel’s restoration (earlier anticipations)

1. 11:14–21 – Yahweh’s work of new orientation in a remnant of Israel
 - a. Two groups:
 - i. The remnant who are redeemed and transformed (vv. 17–20).
 - ii. The rebel who will be judged: Those whose hearts persist to go “after their detestable things and their abominations” (v. 21).
 - b. Commentary on the remnant:
 - i. Though Israel has been exiled among the nations, Yahweh has continued to be a sanctuary to them in the foreign lands (v. 16).
 - ii. Yahweh will restore a remnant of Israel to their land (v. 17), and they will remove all abominations (v. 18).
 - iii. They will be characterized with (v. 19):
 - (1) One heart (*leæb~ }ehΩaæd~*, i.e., singleness of devotion; cf. Ps. 86:11; 1 Chr. 12:34, 39[ET 33, 38]), contrasting with their previous waywardness (see 14:3; 20:16; cf. “double heart” in Ps. 12:3[ET 2]). NOTE: Elsewhere, Ezekiel uses *new heart* (18:31; 36:26).
 - 14:3. These men have taken their idols into their hearts.
 - 20:16. Their heart went after their idols.
 - (2) New Spirit (*ru@ahΩ hΩ∞d~aæsûa@*, i.e., positive divine influence; stands in *contrast* to one/new heart)
 - (3) Heart of flesh (*leæb~ baæsíaær*, i.e., creation of new responsiveness to and desires for God’s ways = enablement), contrasting with their previous stubbornness (see 2:4; 3:7).
 - 2:4. The descendants also are impudent and *stubborn* (lit., “strong of heart [*hΩizqe@-leæb~*]”).
 - 3:7. All the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a *stubborn heart* (*u@q\$ûe@-leæb~*).

- iv. THE RESULT: “They will walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them” (v. 20), in contrast to their previous pattern of disregarding in whole the covenant stipulations (see 5:6).
- 5:6. And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries all around her; for they have rejected my rules and have not walked in my statutes.
- c. Parallel texts:
- Jer. 32:38–39. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.
 - Ezek. 36:26–28. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. ²⁸And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.
2. 16:60–63 – Yahweh’s gracious, covenant reconciliation with his once-rebellious bride (see Hos. 2:14–23).
- a. Israel’s has broken the (old Mosaic) covenant (v. 59), but God declares, “I will remember *my covenant* (*wšzaæk~art~i }on~i }etð-bšr~itð~i*) with you in the days of your youth (Abrahamic?)” (v. 60; cf. v. 8; cf. Lev. 26:42, 45).
- Lev. 26:40–42. But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, ⁴¹so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, ⁴²*then I will remember my covenant* (*wšzaæk~art~i }etð-bšr~itð~i*) *with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham*, and I will remember the land.
 - Lev. 26:43–45. But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes. ⁴⁴Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I Yahweh their God. ⁴⁵*But I will for their sake remember the covenant* (*wšzaæk~art~i laæhem bšr~itð*) *of the first ones whom I brought out of the land of Egypt* in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am Yahweh.
- b. Yahweh’s remembering will result in this: “and I will *establish/confirm* for you an *everlasting covenant* (*wah~qimo~tð~i laæk~ bšr~itð }o~laæm*)” (v. 60; cf. v. 62). The language “everlasting covenant” is explicitly used of the:
- Noahic covenant (Gen 9:16; Isa. 24:5 [Adamic Universal Covenant? (so Young, Oswalt)]);
 - Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17:7, 19; Ps. 105:10 // 1 Chr. 16:17);
 - Davidic covenant (2 Sam 23:5 // 2 Chr. 13:5);
 - New covenant (Isa. 55:3; 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26).
 - Covenant signs: circumcision (Gen. 17:13) and Sabbath (Exod. 31:16; Lev. 24:8)
- c. Israel will feel guilt over their past rebellion when God incorporates both Samaria (remnant from the northern tribes of Israel) and Sodom (remnant from the nations) into their midst (i.e., gives them “to you as daughters,” v. 61). This incorporation will happen, lit., “not from your covenant (*wšloæ } mibbšr~itðeæk~*)”; Daniel I. Block (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 518), offers the following three possible interpretations:

- i. “Not on account of/because of your covenant” (causative use of *min* preposition, GKC §119z), meaning Jerusalem is established in a position of honor not as a reward for her faithfulness but as a demonstration of divine constancy (so Greenberg, Taylor).
- ii. “Not apart from your covenant” (privative use of *min* preposition, WO §11.2.11e), meaning Samaria and Sodom are not kept outside the covenant as second-class citizens (so Brownlee, Eichrodt).
- iii. “Even though they are not your covenant *partners*” (concessive use of *min* preposition), meaning Samaria and Sodom will become benefactors of this covenant, even though they had no covenantal ties with Jerusalem (so Block).
- d. Theological Significance:
 - i. QUESTION: Does God’s *establishing* an everlasting covenant suggest the making of something totally new or the confirmation of a previously initiated covenant?
 - ii. As highlighted in our discussion of Genesis 6:18 (see notes on Genesis), three distinct verbal ideas are used with respect to covenant making:
 - (1) “To cut / make a covenant” (*kāʾaṣrat bšr ʾit*) = idiomatic, common Hebrew expression for making or initiating a covenant relationship (e.g., Gen. 15:18; Exod. 24:8; Deut. 5:2–3), though it may also be able to mean “confirm” or “fulfill” an existing covenant relationship (Exod. 34:10; Deut. 29:1).
 - (2) “To give / make a covenant” (*naʾetan bšr ʾit*) = alternate Hebrew expression for making or initiating something new in a covenant relationship (e.g., Gen. 9:12; 17:2; Num. 25:12).
 - (3) “To maintain a covenant” (*hāqim bšr ʾit*) = lit. “he upholds/erects/makes stand/confirms a covenant”; elsewhere it is used for ratifying pre-existing “oaths” (Gen. 26:3), “vows” (Num. 30:14), “words” (Deut. 9:5), “promises” (2 Sam. 7:25), and “threats” (Jer. 30:24). When used with covenants, it appears to contrast with the two above, pointing to the maintenance, fulfillment, confirmation, or establishment of a covenant already created. It is used of people fulfilling their covenant obligations (2 Kgs. 23:3; Jer. 34:18) and also of God fulfilling his:
 - (a) With Noah and his offspring (Gen. 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17);
 - (b) With Abraham and his offspring (Gen 17:7, 9, 21; Exod. 6:4; Lev. 26:9; Deut. 8:18*);
 - (c) With Israel throughout the generations (Lev. 26:9);
 - (d) With the restored Israel in the new covenant as fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs (Ezek. 16:60, 62).
 - iii. In our passage, Ezekiel’s use of *hāqim bšr ʾit* (16:60, 62) appears to point back to the Abrahamic covenant and ahead to the new covenant; however, elsewhere, like Isaiah and Jeremiah before him, Ezekiel uses *kāʾaṣrat bšr ʾit* for the new covenant (Ezek. 34:25; 37:26; cf. Jer. 31:31–33; 32:40; Isa. 55:3). Most likely this means (1) that *kāʾaṣrat*

bšr ʾîl is the broader term (see its use for covenant fulfillment in Exod. 34:10; Deut. 29:1) and (2) that the new covenant is *organically connected* to the Abrahamic, likely through fulfillment of the covenant promises.

- iv. While the new covenant comes about directly because Yahweh “remembered” promises made in the Mosaic covenant (Lev. 26:45; cf. the restoration blessing promises in both Lev. 26 and Deut. 30), there are at least two reasons for believing Ezekiel is, in 16:60, 62, suggesting an *organic* link between the new covenant and the Abrahamic covenant rather than the Mosaic covenant:
 - (1) Yahweh’s statement through Ezekiel that he would “remember *my* covenant” is most likely an echo of Leviticus 26:42, where Yahweh declared that the age of restoration would be initiated when he remembers “my covenant” with the patriarchs (in contrast to just remembering “a covenant” with the Sinai generation in Lev. 26:45). For the texts, see above.
 - (2) The *establishment* of the new covenant spoken of Ezekiel 16:60, 62 appears to be anticipated already in Genesis 17:7 in direct relation to the Abrahamic promises.
 - (a) In the Genesis lecture, I argued that Genesis 15 principally addresses the fulfillment of the first half of Genesis 12:1–3, which focuses on the promises of land and offspring (“Go to the land ... so that I may make you a great nation, bless you, and make your name great”), whereas Genesis 17 principally addresses the fulfillment of the second half, which focuses on the promise of mediation of blessing (“Be a blessings so that I may bless those who bless you and so that through you all the families of the earth may be blessed”). It is the latter that finds fulfillment in the new covenant (see Gal. 3:8).
 - (b) Genesis 17:7 makes explicit mention of God’s promise to *establish an everlasting covenant* with Abraham and his offspring, all within the context of God’s global purposes for the patriarch.
 - Gen. 17:4–9. Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be called Abraham, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷And I will establish my covenant (*wah∞qimoæt ʾî }et ʾîl-bšr ʾîl ʾî*) between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations *for an everlasting covenant* (*lib≈r ʾîl {o@laem*), to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.
 - (c) The rest of Genesis 17 suggests that Abraham’s fatherhood of the nations stands in distinction to his covenant with

Abraham and his offspring, though established by means of it.

3. 20:32–44 – Yahweh purposes to overcome Israel’s rebellion through wrath and to establish himself as their king:
 - a. Redemption and purging of the covenant community, with the remnant alone being preserved (vv. 34–38).
 - b. Refined and purified Israel serving Yahweh in Jerusalem with effective mission, displaying his holiness to the nations (vv. 39–44).

B. Ezekiel’s vision of Israel’s restoration (primary texts)

1. 34:11–31 – Yahweh the Shepherd, David the shepherd prince, and the covenant of peace
 - a. Yahweh is Israel’s Shepherd who will seek and rescue his scattered, needy sheep (34:15–16): “I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord Yahweh. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.
 - b. The means by which Yahweh will rescue his flock is through the “one shepherd, my servant David,” who will represent, reflect, and resemble the great Shepherd, serving as the people’s prince (34:22–24).
 - c. Yahweh will establish with his restored remnant a “covenant of peace,” such that they will live in security with full provision and protection, under the care of God (34:25–31).
2. 36:22–32 – Purity, new heart and God’s presence, restored covenant
 - a. The Setting:
 - i. Through their unrestrained evil, Israel had defiled the Promised Land, thus demanding divine curse—i.e., exile (vv. 17–18).
 - ii. Through exile, Israel has profaned Yahweh’s name, making the nations question God’s willingness (faithfulness) or ability (sovereignty) to protect his people (vv. 19–21; cf. Deut. 9:28).
 - b. The Structure:
 - i. Prologue: v. 22—God will act not on account of Israel but on account of his holy name (cf. 20:44); the new covenant becomes a divine-name reclamation project. The new covenant is also grounded in divine mercy (Deut 4:30–31) and done in remembrance of both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants (Lev 26:42, 45).
 - ii. **V. 23: The goal of new covenant transformation**—missions for the sake of worship (cf. Acts 1:8)
 - (1) *God’s action*: Sanctify his great name—displaying the reality and value of his transcendent fullness through his people.
 - (2) *Result*: Nations will know that Yahweh is God, when Yahweh does an internal work in Israel before the eyes of the nations (cf. Lev. 10:3).
 - Acts 1:8. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be *my witnesses* in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

- iii. **Vv. 24–25: The *basis* of new covenant transformation**—restoration from exile and cleansing from sin
- (1) *God's action*: Take Israel from the nations, gather them from the lands, bring them to the Land, sprinkle on them clean water.
 - (a) New exodus motif: Outside this passage, “take, gather, bring” are used together only in Deut. 30:4–5, suggesting Ezekiel’s oracle expands on Moses’ new covenant “circumcision of the heart” motif of Deuteronomy 30:6.
 - Deut 30:4–5. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there Yahweh your God will *gather* you, and from there he will *take* you. ⁵ And Yahweh your God will *bring* you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it.
 - Jer 16:14–15. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when it shall no longer be said, “As Yahweh lives who brought up the peoples of Israel out of the land of Egypt,” ¹⁵ but “As Yahweh lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.” For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers.
 - (b) The NT treats the consummation of the new exodus motif in Christ’s cross-work, which secured redemption from sin.
 - Luke 9:30–31. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of *departure* (lit., *exodus*), which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.
 - Eph. 1:7. In [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.
 - Col. 1:13–14. [The Father] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 - (2) *Result*: Israel will be clean from their defilements and idols
 - (a) Israel’s cleanness implies that Yahweh’s wrath against their sin has been satisfied.
 - Ezek 22:15. I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will consume your uncleanness out of you.
 - Ezek 24:13. On account of your unclean lewdness, because I would have cleansed you and you were not cleansed from your uncleanness, you shall not be cleansed anymore till I have satisfied my fury upon you.
 - (b) Water + Spirit in Ezek 36:25–27 appears to provide the backdrop to Jesus’ discussion of new birth in John 3:
 - John 3:3, 5. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . ⁵ Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
 - (c) Into this context Jesus’ death is portrayed as the vicarious curse judgment that brings salvation:
 - John 3:14–15. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
- iv. **Vv. 26–28: The *nature* of new covenant transformation**—internal new birth and reconstitution of the God-people-land relationship

(1) *God's action*: Heart transplant *to* Israel, place the divine Spirit *within* Israel, and (by these actions) cause Israel to obey (cf. Jer. 32:40).

- Deut 30:6. And Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, for the sake of your life.
- Jer 31:33. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Yahweh: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
- Jer 32:40. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.
- Rom. 2:29. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.
- 2 Cor. 3:3, 6. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. . . .⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

(2) *Result*: Israel will follow God's ways and dwell in the Land, and the covenant relationship will be reestablished (cf. Jer. 31:33).

v. **Vv. 29–31: The *ballast* of new covenant transformation—
humiliation as a fuel for sustained adoration**

(1) *God's action*: Save Israel from their defilements (not just forgiven [v. 25] but delivered!) and sustained physical provision.

(a) Deliverance from evil (37:23)

- Ezek 37:23. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

(b) Provision (34:22, 25–29)

- Ezek. 34:22–29. I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep.²³ And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.²⁴ And I, Yahweh, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am Yahweh; I have spoken.²⁵ “I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.²⁶ And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.²⁷ And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am Yahweh, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them.²⁸ They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid.²⁹ And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations.

(2) *Result*: Israel will remember and loathe their past sinfulness

- (a) Ezekiel's vision of the new covenant regularly includes the redeemed having a deep humiliation over past sin:
- Ezek. 6:9. Then those of you who escape will remember me among the nations where they are carried captive, how I have been broken over their whoring heart that has departed from me and over their eyes that go whoring after their idols. And they will be loathsome in their own sight for the evils that they have committed, for all their abominations.
 - Ezek. 16:62–63. I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am Yahweh, ⁶³that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord Yahweh.
 - Ezek. 20:43. And there you shall remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves, and you shall loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed.
 - Ezek. 36:31. Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations.
- (b) In light of the amazing favor God has shown us, such loathing of sin is the antidote for crushing pride and arrogance and nurturing God-dependence. That is, the sustained mindfulness of sinfulness and the depravity from which we have been saved keeps us ever dependent on Christ and ever loving and grace-giving to our neighbor.
- (c) This passage stresses that true humility is only found when one makes much of God, ultimately in Christ, for the ultimate result of such loathing of personal sin is “through you I will vindicate my holiness before their eyes” (36:23). That is, the humility of the new covenant is *not* one that draws attention to self (in pity) but one that draws attention to the mercy of God.
- (d) This truth was enjoyed by Charles Simeon (1759–1836):
- “I have continually had such a sense of my sinfulness as would sink me into utter despair, if I had not an assured view of the sufficiency and willingness of Christ to save me to the uttermost. And at the same time I had such a sense of my acceptance through Christ as would upset my little bark, if I had not ballast at the bottom sufficient to sink a vessel of no ordinary size.” (Quoted in Piper, *The Roots of Endurance*, 107.)
 - “There are but two objects that I have ever desired for these forty years to behold; the one, is my own vileness; and the other is, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.... This I seek to be, not only *humble and thankful* but *humbled in thankfulness*, before my God and Savior continually.” (Quoted in Piper, *The Roots of Endurance*, 108.)
 - “I have had deep and abundant cause for humiliation, [but] I have never ceased to wash in that fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness, or to cast myself upon the tender mercy of my reconciled God.” (Quoted in Piper, *The Roots of Endurance*, 110.)
 - “By constantly meditating on the goodness of God and on our great deliverance from that punishment which our sins have deserved, we

are brought to feel our vileness and utter unworthiness; and while we continue in this spirit of self-degradation, everything else will go on easily. We shall find ourselves advancing in our courses; we shall feel the presence of God; we shall experience His love; we shall live in the enjoyment of His favor and in the hope of His glory.... You often feel that your prayers scarcely reach the ceiling; but, oh, get into this humble spirit by considering how good the Lord is, and how evil you all are, and then prayer will mount on wings of faith to heaven. The sign, the groan of a broken heart, will soon go through the ceiling up to heaven, aye, into the very bosom of God.” (Quoted in Piper, *The Roots of Endurance*, 111.)

- vi. Epilogue: v. 32—God will act not on account of anything wrought in Israel.
- 3. 36:33–38 – The Promised Land Restored like the Garden of Eden
- 4. 37:1–14 – The Resurrection of Yahweh’s People
 - a. The vision of dry bones coming to life (vv. 1–10)
 - b. The interpretation and application (vv. 11–14)
 - i. Resurrection (vv. 12–13)
 - ii. Divine presence and life (v. 14)
 - iii. The land: a context for relationship (v. 14)
 - iv. A knowledge of God (v. 14)
- 5. 37:15–28 – The Fulfillment of Yahweh’s Eternal Covenant with Israel
 - a. The vision of one stick (vv. 15–19)
 - b. The interpretation described: Ethnic, territorial, and political integrity: A reunified people in the land under one king (vv. 15–22)
 - i. Take, gather, bring (v. 21): Deut 30:4–5. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there he will take you.⁵ And Yahweh your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it.
 - ii. One king (v. 22): Ezek 34:22–24. I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and he shall be their shepherd. 24 And I, Yahweh, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am Yahweh; I have spoken.
 - iii. Unified kingdom, not two
 - c. The interpretation expounded:
 - i. Spiritual and community integrity:
 - (1) Cleansing from sin and covenant renewal with God, under the Messiah (vv. 23–24a)
 - (2) A new commitment to Yahweh’s will (v. 24b)
 - (3) Lasting occupation of the Promised Land under the Messiah (v. 25; cf. 28:25)
 - ii. Covenantal integrity and the presence of God (vv. 26–27)
 - Ezek. 37:27. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

- Lev. 26:11–12. I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you.¹² And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.
 - 2 Cor. 6:16. What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
- iii. Mission accomplished (v. 28): “The nations will know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore” (cf. Lev. 20:7–9; 22:31–33).
- Lev. 22:31–33. So you shall keep my commandments and do them: I am Yahweh.³² And you shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel. I am Yahweh who sanctifies you,³³ who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am Yahweh.
- C. Ezekiel’s Vision of the Inclusion of a Remnant from the Nations (Ezek. 16:53–63; 17:23–24[?]; 29:13–16[?]; 47:22–23)**
- D. *Excursus: The OT Vision of Hell as Conscious, Eternal Torment***
1. There are an increasing number of evangelicals in today’s world affirming annihilationism rather than a view of hell as eternal, lasting torment. Many assert that the OT clearly affirms this view, portraying Sheol or the grave as the end for the wicked, with nothing beyond. However, both the old and new covenant prophets, Ezekiel included, appear to maintain a deep conviction in the afterlife, as the following reflections will show.
 2. A sample of the OT’s vision of the afterlife:
 - a. Ezek 32:17–32 portrays the arrival of the king of Egypt in Sheol; here he experiences something far from annihilation!

Ezek 32:17–32. In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me:¹⁸ “Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt, and send them down, her and the daughters of majestic nations, to the world below, to those who have gone down to the pit:¹⁹ ‘Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised.’²⁰ They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword. Egypt is delivered to the sword; drag her away, and all her multitudes.²¹ The mighty chiefs shall speak of them, with their helpers, out of the midst of Sheol: ‘They have come down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’²² “Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword,²³ whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the pit; and her company is all around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living.²⁴ “Elam is there, and all her multitude around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who went down uncircumcised into the world below, who spread their terror in the land of the living; and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.²⁵ They have made her a bed among the slain with all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for terror of them was spread in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit; they are placed among the slain.²⁶ “Meshech-tubal is there, and all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they spread their terror in the land of the living.²⁷ And they do not lie with the mighty, the fallen from among the uncircumcised, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads, and whose iniquities are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living.²⁸ But as for you, you shall be broken and lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword.²⁹ “Edom is there, her kings and all her princes, who for all their might are laid with those who are killed by the sword; they lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the pit.³⁰ “The princes of the north are there, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down in shame with the slain, for all the terror that they caused by their might; they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.³¹ “When Pharaoh sees them, he will be comforted for all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, declares the Lord GOD.³² For I spread terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid to rest among the

uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, declares the Lord GOD.”

- i. He finds a place where wards are arranged by nationality (32:21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32) and where the inhabitants are conscious and aware. Specifically, those in the grave:
- ii. Know Yahweh (32:15),
- iii. Know that the terrors they caused in “the land of the living” have determined their fate (3:23, 24, 25, 26, 27),
- iv. Are able to speak (32:21),
- v. Are able to see and bear “regret” over their loss of status and power (ESV= “comfort”; 32:31; cf. 31:16), and
- vi. Carry the shame of dishonorable burial (32:24, 25, 30).
This is far from annihilationism.
- b. The very fact that the dead can be reawakened suggests a sustained personhood after life in the land of the living ends (see 1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:18–37; 13:20–21). Then we have clear resurrection texts (Isa 26:19; Hos 6:1–3; Ps 16:11–12; 49:15–16; cf. Ezek 37:1–14).
- c. Within Qoheleth there is a deep conviction not only that death comes to all (Eccl 2:20–21; 3:19–20; 8:8; 9:2–3) but that there will a future judgment that will distinguish all public and secret good and bad deeds (Eccl 3:16–17; 11:9; 12:13–14).
- d. A handful of texts explicitly speak of the grave as a place of perpetual firey torment (Isa 34:10) and of “everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2), where “their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh” (Isa 66:24; cf. v. 16).
3. A sample of NT texts that portray the death of the wicked as everlasting torment:
 - a. John the Baptist and Jesus taught that the torment of the wicked under God’s judgment will be grievous and eternal.
 - Matt 3:12. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. Cf. Luke 3:17.
 - Matt 8:11–12. I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
 - Matt 13:41–42. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - Matt 13:49–50. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Cf. 22:13; 24:51; 25:30
 - Matt 18:8–9. And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire.⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.
 - Matt 25:41, 46. Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. . . .⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- Mark 9:42–48. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. ⁴³ And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ “where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”
- Luke 13:27–28. But he will say, “I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!” ²⁸ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.
- b. The NT anticipates a future resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked:
 - John 5:28–29. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.
 - Acts 24:15. . . . having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.
- c. Paul contrasts the death and corruption of the wicked under God’s fury and wrath with *eternal* life for the righteous:
 - Rom. 2:6–8. He will render to each one according to his works: ⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸ but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.
 - Rom. 5:21. . . . so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - Rom. 6:23. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - Gal 6:8. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
- d. John explicitly declares that the future torment will be eternal.
 - Rev. 14:9–11. And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name. Cf. 19:20; 20:5.
 - Rev. 19:2–3. “For his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” ³ Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”
 - Rev. 20:10. And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Cf. 9:17.

E. Sacred Space, the Glory of God, and the Vision of the Temple (adapted from a handout created by Gil McConnell and Brett Toney, BCS students)

1. The Vision Is about the Permanent Return of God’s Glory (Ezek. 43:2–5; 48:35)
 - Ezek. 43:2–5. And behold the glory was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. As the glory of Yahweh

entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up and brought into the inner court; and behold, the glory of Yahweh filled the temple.

- Ezek. 48:35. The circumference of the city shall 18,000 cubits. And the name of the city from that time on shall be, Yahweh Is There.

2. An Overview of the Vision and Its Purpose (adapted from D. I. Block, “Guarding the Glory of Yahweh: Ezekiel’s Geography of Sacred Space,” paper presented at ETS, Danvers, MA, November 18, 1999).

a. The Temple Design:

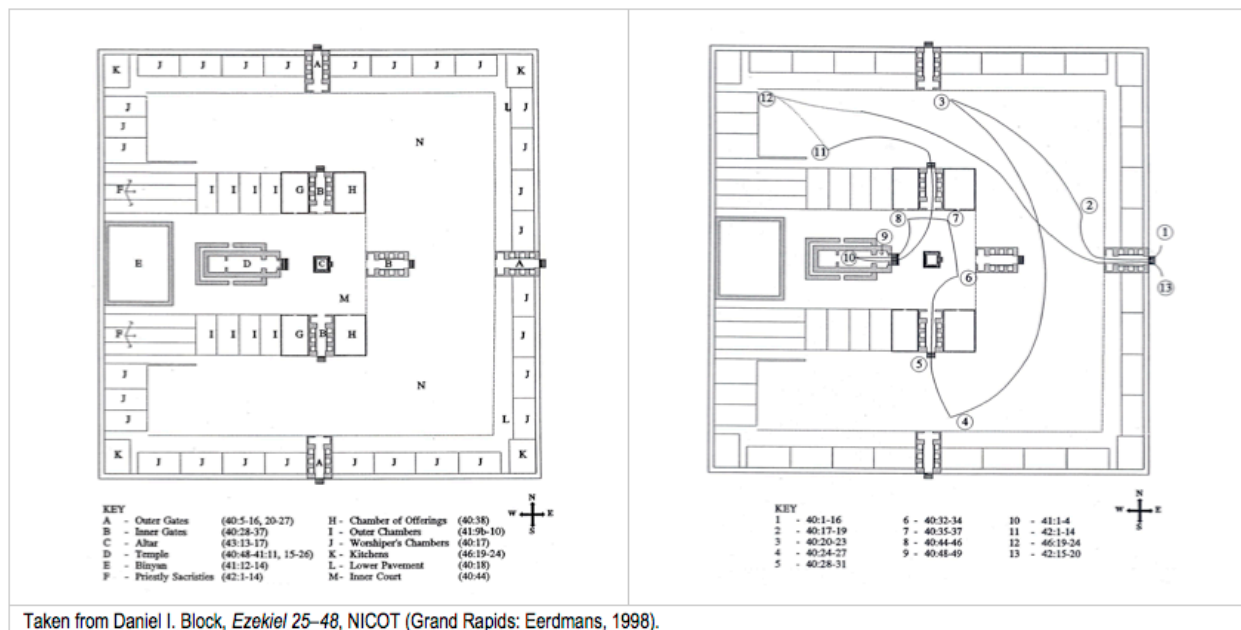
- i. On a high mountain with a structure “like a city” (40:20; cf. 48:35; Rev. 21–22)
- ii. Atypical for the period: little detail of the temple’s beauty and more focused on amazing dimensions.
- iii. Structured as a perfect square (Ezek. 42:15–20) with perfect proportions inside and out (40:13–15, 33; 40:48–41:11), all of which point to a perfect deity.
- iv. Steps throughout the structure point upward in the direction of the altar, which stands at the center of the compound and stresses that communion with God is only possible through sacrifice. Block writes (15): “The observers eyes are drawn ever upward to the top of this temple mount, where stand not only the magnificence and utterly holy residence of God, but also the altar, which represents the like between a holy God and a sinful people. The vertical geography of Ezekiel’s Temple proclaims not only the glory and transcendence of God, but also his mercy.”

b. The Purpose of the Temple Vision:

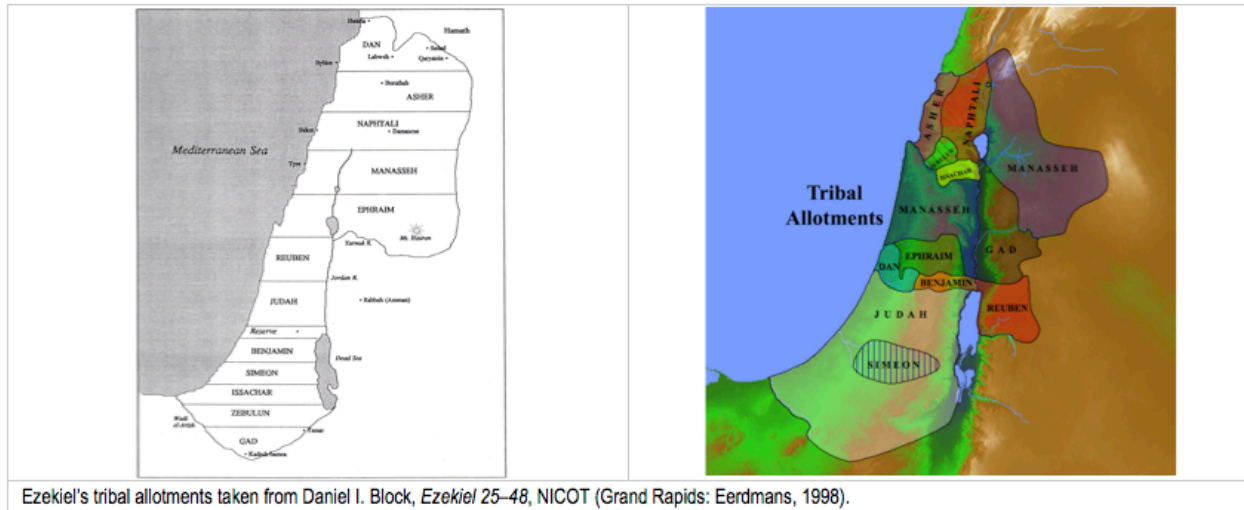
- i. Points to Yahweh’s promises and the renewal of the covenant; judgment is not the final word!
- ii. Highlights the holiness, transcendence, and supreme reign of God and calls people to live in light of such holiness.
 - (1) The overview leads up to the “Most Holy Place” (41:4) and then moves away from it, highlighting the levels of holiness in the temple compound.
 - “This is the Most Holy Place” (41:4)
 - “The north chambers and the south chambers opposite the yard are the holy chambers, where the priests who approach Yahweh shall eat the most holy offerings. There they shall put the most holy offerings...for the place is holy” (42:13)
 - “When the priests enter the Holy Place, they shall not go out of it into the outer court without laying there the garments in which they minister, for these are holy. They shall put on the other garments before they go near to that which is for the people” (42:14).
 - “He measured [the temple compound] on the four sides. It had a wall around it, 500 cubits long and 500 cubits broad, to make a separation between the holy and the common” (42:20).
 - Cf. 46:20
 - (2) It then states that the purpose of the temple vision and its laws is that Israel would heed “the law of the temple: the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy” (43:12).

- Ezek. 43:10–11. As for you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and they shall measure the plan. ¹¹And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, that is, its whole design; and make known to them as well all its statutes and its whole design and all its laws, and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe all its laws and all its statutes and carry them out. ¹²This is the law of the temple: the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.
- iii. Stresses that, although the glory departed, it will return!
- iv. The centrality of the altar sounds forth hope for a sinful people to be reconciled to God.
- c. Five Views on the Nature of Ezekiel's Temple—Physical or Figurative? (Adapted from G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Temple* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004], 335–64).
 - i. Predictive of a literal physical temple (Scofield)
 - ii. Symbolic representation of future blessing (T. Longman and R. Dillard)
 - iii. Figurative of an ideal heavenly temple, not intended to be built (S. S. Tuell)
 - iv. Figurative of a spiritual ideal (D. I. Block)
 - v. Real heavenly temple that will descend and be established in non-structural form (G. K. Beale)

Fig. 14.2. Ezekiel's Temple: Structure and Tour



3. The Restored Land

Fig. 14.2. Tribal Allotments in Ezekiel & Joshua Compared**V. Guided Reading for Ezekiel:****A. Key chapters:** 1, 18, 34, 36:16–37:28, 40–44; 48:30–35**B. Questions:**

1. What vocation other than prophet had Ezekiel most likely been raised for?
2. What was Ezekiel called to do more than any other prophet of Yahweh? In what way does Ezekiel's marriage relate to his message?
3. What clause occurs some 65x in the book of Ezekiel and expresses God's desire and intention to make himself known and acknowledged?
4. Try to draw on a piece of paper a picture of the vision Ezekiel describes in chapter 1. Why do think Ezekiel started his book this way? That is, what does Ezekiel seek to accomplish in his reader through the imagery?
5. Summarize the message of Ezekiel 18 in a single sentence.
6. How does God portray himself in Ezekiel 34? How does he portray his "servant David" in the same chapter?
7. In Ezekiel 36:16–32, how are we told Israel profaned the name of God? What does Yahweh declare he will do to restore his reputation in the world? In Ezekiel 36:33–36, what does God say will become "like the garden of Eden"?
8. Where do we read of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones once again becoming living beings? What are we told the meaning of the vision is?
9. Characterize the period of restoration described Ezekiel 37:24–28? What does Ezekiel call the reality Jeremiah refers to as the "new covenant"?
10. "And will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you, And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." In what chapter are these words found?