

## LECTURE 15: EZEKIEL

### “The God who is present”

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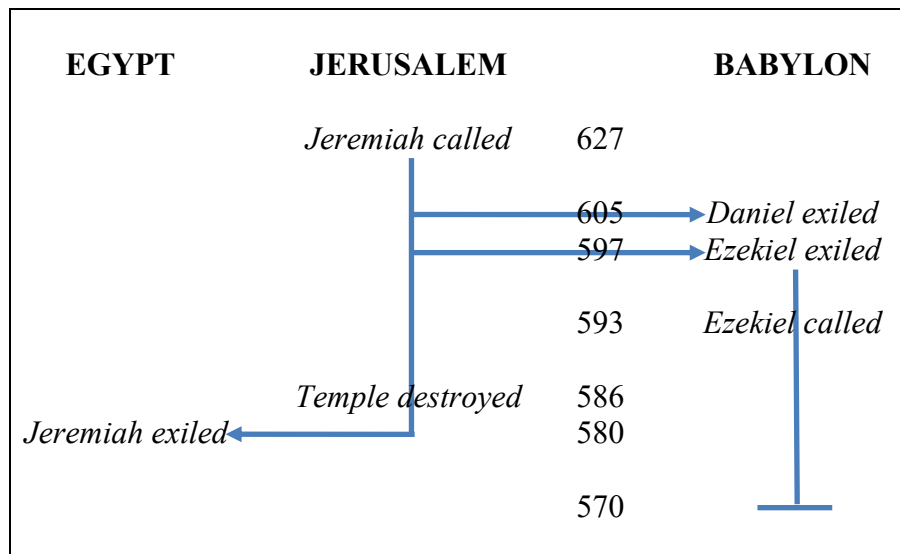
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## I. Orienting Data

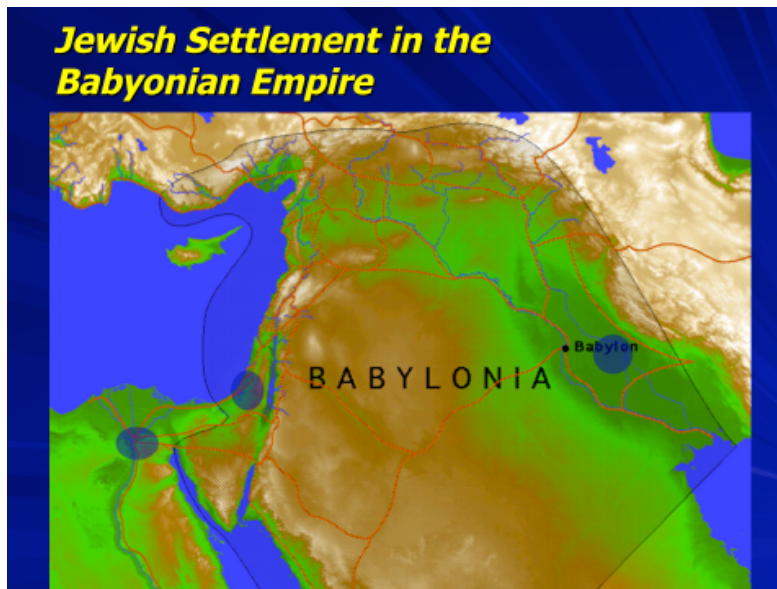
- A. Prophet and Audience:** Ezekiel (“God strengthens”), an Israelite priest and prophet who was taken to Babylon in 597 B.C., and a younger contemporary of Jeremiah. Yahweh asserted, “<sup>2:3</sup> I send you to the people of Israel, to the nations [i.e., tribes] of rebels. . . . <sup>3:4</sup> Go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them. <sup>5</sup> For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel— <sup>6</sup> not to many peoples of foreign speech and a hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to such, they would listen to you. <sup>7</sup> But the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me: because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart” (Ezek 2:3; 3:4–7; cf. Jer. 1:5).
- 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; also included are foreign nation oracles.
- 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:**

**Fig. 14.1. Time & Place of Jeremiah & Ezekiel**



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



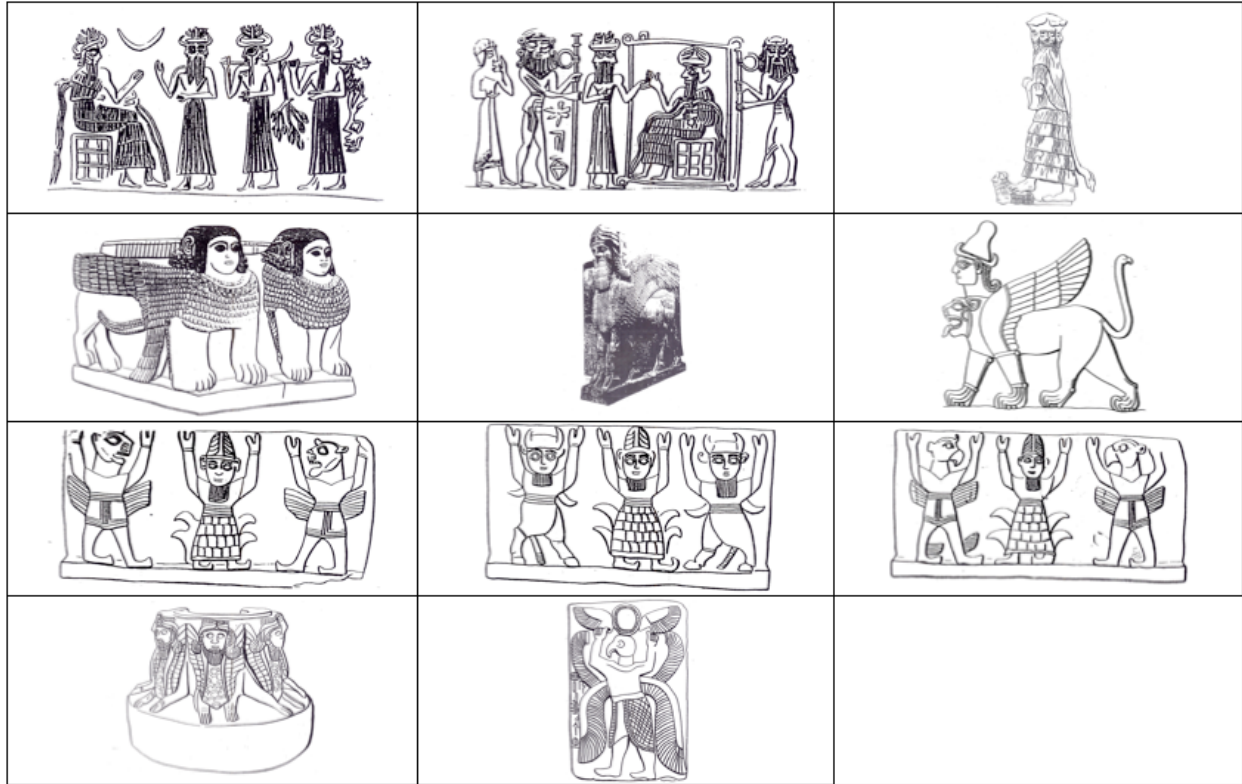
#### F. Outline of Ezekiel

1. Messages of Doom for Judah/Israel (1:1–33:33)
  - a. The Call of Ezekiel to Prophetic Ministry (1:1–3:27)
  - b. Signs and visions of Woe for Judah/Israel (4:1–11:25)
  - c. Judgment Oracles against Judah/Israel (12:1–24:27)
  - d. Judgment Oracles against the Nations, Highlighting that Judah's Fate Is No Different (25:1–32:32)
  - e. The End of An Era: The Destruction of Jerusalem (33:1–33)
2. Messages of Hope for Judah/Israel (34:1–48:35)
  - a. Restoration Proclaimed (34:1–39:29)
  - b. Restoration Envisioned (40:1–48:35)

## II. Message of Doom for Judah/Israel (Ezek. 1–33)

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

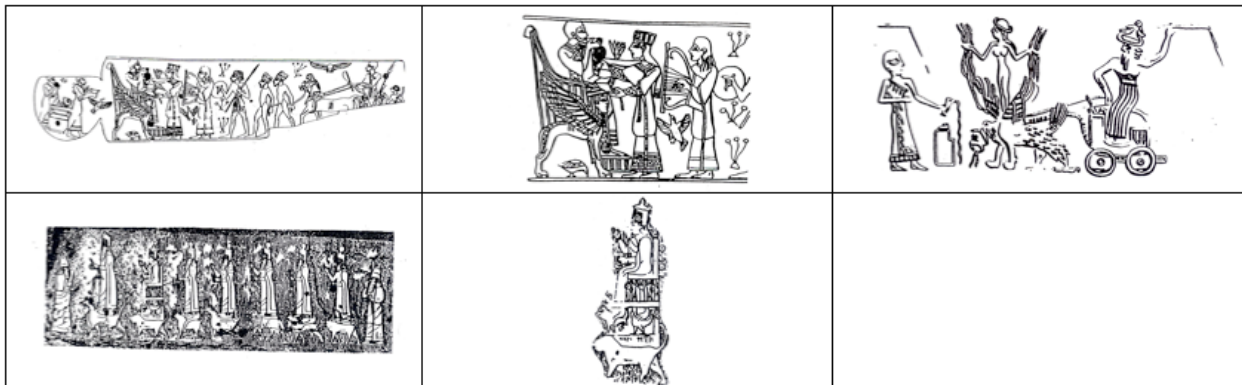
1. Ezekiel 1:4–14: Composite figures with four faces and yet human bodies. The depictions of Babylonian gods found from the time of Ezekiel align in amazing ways with Ezekiel's descriptions of these heavenly beings.



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 alter 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 the 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. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>As the glory of Yahweh entered the temple by the gate facing east, <sup>5</sup>the 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 below and Hos. 2:14–23).
3. Israel, the constant rebel (Ezek. 20)
- a. Ian Duguid (*Ezekiel*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999], 247) sees three generation’s history presented in a six-stage cycle: the generation who lived in Egypt at the time of the exodus (20:5–10), the desert generation (20:11–15), and their children (20:18–23). Duguid fails to link vv. 24–25 to this pattern, and it is these verses that appear to address the additional laws of Deuteronomy as laws that would ultimately “devastate” (v. 25) and “condemn” (2 Cor 3:9) the people.
    - i. The Lord’s self-revelation (vv. 5–6, 11, 18–19)
    - ii. A challenge to exclusive devotion (vv. 7, 12, 19–20)
    - iii. Israel’s rebellion (vv. 8, 13, 21)
    - iv. The threat of the Lord’s wrath (vv. 8b, 13b, 21b)
    - v. Wrath limited/deferred for the sake of the divine name (vv. 9, 14, 22)
    - vi. Act of limited judgment (vv. 10, 17, 23)
  - b. In Egypt: 20:5–10 – Yahweh’s revelation of himself, renewal of the land promises, call to faithfulness in Egypt, Israel’s initial rebellion, and YHWH’s merciful redemption.
  - c. At Sinai and Kadesh: 20:11–17 – Yahweh’s further revelation of his will and Sinai covenant, Israel’s golden calf and Kadesh-barnea rebellions, and Yahweh’s unrelenting faithfulness to preserve. On the echo of Lev 18:5 in Ezek 20:11, the conditional nature of the Mosaic covenant, and Ezekiel’s vision of Yahweh’s accomplishing for the people what they could not do on their own (36:27; 37:14), see below.
  - d. In the wilderness: 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.
  - e. 20:27–31 – Israel’s sustained idolatry in the land all the way to the present.
  - f. 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 <sup>2</sup> 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 . . . <sup>3</sup> 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).

### III. Message of Hope for God's People (Ezek. 34–48)

#### A. Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Restoration: Early 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 (*lēb ʿehād*, 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 (*rûaḥ ḥ<sup>a</sup>dāšâ*, i.e., positive divine influence; stands in *contrast* to one/new heart)
  - (3) Heart of flesh (*lēb bāsār*, 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 [*ḥizqê-lēb*]”).
    - 3:7. All the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a *stubborn heart* (*ûq<sup>s</sup>šê-lēb*).
- 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. <sup>39</sup>I 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. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. <sup>28</sup>And 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* (*w<sup>e</sup>zākartî ʾnî ʿet-b<sup>r</sup>rîṯî*) with you in the days of your youth” (v. 60; cf. v. 8), which likely refers to the Abrahamic covenant (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, <sup>41</sup>so 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, <sup>42</sup>then I will remember **my covenant** (*w<sup>e</sup>zākartî ʿet-b<sup>r</sup>rîṯî*) 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. <sup>44</sup>Yet 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. <sup>45</sup>But I will for their sake remember **the covenant** (*w<sup>e</sup>zākartî lāhem b<sup>r</sup>rîṯî*) 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/affirm* for you an *everlasting covenant* (*wah<sup>a</sup>qimô<sup>tî</sup> lāk b<sup>e</sup>rî<sup>t</sup> 'ôlām*)" (v. 60; cf. v. 62). The language "everlasting covenant" is explicitly used of the:
    - i. Noahic covenant (Gen 9:16; Isa. 24:5 [Adamic Universal Covenant? (so Young, Oswalt)]);
    - ii. Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17:7, 19; Ps. 105:10 // 1 Chr. 16:17);
    - iii. Davidic covenant (2 Sam 23:5 // 2 Chr. 13:5);
    - iv. New covenant (Isa. 55:3; 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26).
    - v. 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 (*w<sup>e</sup>lō<sup>'</sup> mibb<sup>e</sup>rî<sup>t</sup>ē<sup>k</sup>*)"; 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 affirmation 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" (*kārat b<sup>e</sup>rî<sup>t</sup>*) = 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" (*nātan b<sup>e</sup>rî<sup>t</sup>*) = 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" (*h<sup>a</sup>qîm b<sup>e</sup>rî<sup>t</sup>*) = 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 God’s maintaining, affirming, fulfilling, confirming, or establishing 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 *h<sup>a</sup>qîm b<sup>e</sup>rît* (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 *kārat b<sup>e</sup>rît* 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 the new covenant stands as a fresh new work *in contrast to the old* (*kārat b<sup>e</sup>rît*; see its use for covenant restatement in Exod. 34:10 and renewal Deut. 29:1) but (2) that the new covenant is *organically connected* to the Abrahamic and stands as God’s affirmation of what he started there.
- 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. <sup>5</sup>No 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. <sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>And I will establish my covenant (*wah<sup>a</sup>qimōtî ʾet-b<sup>r</sup>rîʾî*) between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations *for an everlasting covenant (librît ʿôlām)*, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. <sup>8</sup>And 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 Nature of God's Future Name-Consecrating Act (36:22–31)
  - i. The makeup of God's name-consecrating act (36:22–23)
    - (1) YHWH's promise to consecrate his name (36:22–23a)
      - (a) The generator of his act (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).
      - (b) The promise to act (v. 23): God will sanctify his name.
    - (2) A result of consecrating his name: 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.
  - ii. The process of God's name-consecrating act (36:24–31)
    - (1) *Stage 1: Restore and purify (36:24–25)*—restoration from exile and cleansing from sin
      - (a) The promise to restore and purify (36:24–25a): God will take Israel from the nations, gather them from the lands, bring them to the Land, and sprinkle on them clean water.
        - (i) 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.<sup>5</sup> 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,”<sup>15</sup> 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.
        - (ii) 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,<sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
- (b) A result: cleansing and separation (36:25bc): Israel will be clean from their defilements and idols
- (i) 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.
  - (ii) 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. . . .<sup>5</sup> Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
  - (iii) 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,<sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
- (2) *Stage 2: Reorient and Empower (36:26–28)*—internal new birth and reconstitution of the God-people-land relationship
- (a) The promise to reorient and empower through his presence (36:26–27): God will give Israel a heart transplant, place his divine Spirit *within* her, and (by these actions) cause Israel to obey (cf. Jer. 32:40).
    - (i) 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.
    - (ii) 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.
    - (iii) 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.
    - (iv) 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.
    - (v) 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. . . .<sup>6</sup> 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.

- (b) A result: security of home and relationship (36:28)—Israel will follow God’s ways and dwell in the Land, and the covenant relationship will be reestablished (cf. Jer. 31:33).
- (3) *Stage 3: Rescue and provide (36:29–31)*—humiliation as ballast for sustained adoration
- (a) The promise to rescue and provide (36:29–30): God will save Israel from their defilements (not just forgiven [v. 25] but delivered!) and sustained physical provision.
- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> And I, Yahweh, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am Yahweh; I have spoken. <sup>25</sup> “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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> 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.
- (b) A result: self-loathing in light of grace (36:31)—Israel will remember and loathe their past sinfulness
- (i) 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, <sup>63</sup>that 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.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.)

- c. The Present Implications of YHWH’s Future Name-Consecrating Act (36:32)
  - i. The generator of his act restated (36:32a)—God will act not on account of anything wrought in Israel.
  - ii. The charge to be ashamed and confounded (36:32b–d)
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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>32</sup>And you shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel. I am Yahweh who sanctifies you, <sup>33</sup>who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am Yahweh.
6. Ezekiel’s Vision of the New Covenant Superseding the Mosaic Covenant
- a. In 20:11 we read, “I gave them my statutes and made known to them my rules, by which, *if a person does them, he shall live*” (cf. 18:5, 9, 17, 19, 21; 33:10, 13, 19; Amos 5:4). This type of pattern resulted not in Israel’s life but in their death; they entered into curse. They were unclean like a woman in her menstrual cycle (Ezek 36:17) and they were dead, like the dried skeletons of a defeated army in the valley (37:1).
  - b. Into this context, Yahweh declares in 36:27, “And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.” Then later in 37:14, we read, “And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live.” In the context of the valley of dry bones vision, this is nothing less than resurrection. Then in 37:24 we read of this resurrected people: “My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes.” Sprinkle writes, “What was previously held out as a conditional possibility is here fulfilled by Yahweh himself in his program of restoration” (“Law and Life: Leviticus 18:5 in the Literary Framework of Ezekiel,” *JSOT* 31.3 [2007]: 275–93, citation from 290).
  - c. Thus, already in the OT, there is the explicit contrast of the old covenant as a human deeds-based covenant and the new covenant as a divine-enablement covenant, ultimately by faith.
  - d. Earlier in Deuteronomy we saw a similar contrast.
    - i. We read the command, “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn” (Deut 10:16) with the promise, “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul, for the sake of your life (30:6).
    - ii. Later in Deut 30:8–14 we learn why: “And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today. <sup>9</sup> The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, <sup>10</sup> when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>11</sup> For (ׁנ) this commandment that I command you today *will not be* too hard for you, neither *will it be* far off. <sup>12</sup> It

*will not be* in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’<sup>13</sup> Neither *will it be* beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’<sup>14</sup> But the word is very near you. It *will be* in your mouth and in your heart, so that you *will do it.*” Deut 30:11–14 is the exact passage that Paul cites as teaching a righteousness from faith *in contrast* to Lev 18:5 that teaches a righteousness from law (Rom 10:3–8).

- iii. Throughout Deuteronomy the consistent command-promise combination is “do this *so that* you may live” (e.g., Deut 4:1; 5:33; 8:1; 11:8–9; 16:20; 22:7; 30:19; 31:13; cf. Rom 7:10). In contrast, Deut 30:6 is the one place that changes the pattern for it reads, “The LORD will circumcise your heart . . . to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, *for the sake of your life*” (DeRouchie’s translation). What the people could not attain on their own, God would work in order to bring it about. This is the point of Ezek 36:27 and 37:14: “And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. . . . And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

**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: Ezekiel 32:17–32 and the OT Vision of “Hell” (as the Grave/Sheol/Hades and Gehena/Lake of Fire)**

1. The Challenge: There are an increasing number of evangelicals in today’s world affirming annihilationism rather than a view of hell as eternal punishment, destruction, and banishment. Many also assert that the OT clearly affirms the view that Sheol or the grave is 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 Conscious Intermediate State for the Righteous and Wicked:
  - a. Ezek 32:15–32 portrays the arrival of the king of Egypt in Sheol, where enters consciously and even feels shame.

Ezek 32:15–32. When I make the land of Egypt desolate, and when the land is desolate of all that fills it, when I strike down all who dwell in it, then they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>16</sup> This is a lamentation that shall be chanted; the daughters of the nations shall chant it; over Egypt, and over gall her multitude, shall they chant it, declares the Lord GOD.”

<sup>17</sup> In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>18</sup> “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: <sup>19</sup> ‘Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised.’ <sup>20</sup> They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword. Egypt is delivered to the sword; drag her away, and all her multitudes. <sup>21</sup> **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.’

<sup>22</sup> “Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, <sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> “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.** <sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> “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. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> But as for you, you shall be broken and lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword.

<sup>29</sup> “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. <sup>30</sup> “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.

<sup>31</sup> “**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. <sup>32</sup> 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.
- ii. Specifically, those in the grave:
  - (1) Know Yahweh (32:15),
  - (2) Know that the terrors they caused in “the land of the living” have determined their fate (3:23, 24, 25, 26, 27),
  - (3) Are able to speak (32:21),
  - (4) Are able to see and bear “regret” over their loss of status and power (ESV= “comfort”; 32:31; cf. 31:16), and
  - (5) Carry the shame of dishonorable burial (32:24, 25, 30).
- b. This vision corresponds closely to Jesus’s parable about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31).
  - i. The poor and sore Lazarus dies and “was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side,” whereas the rich man died, was buried, and went to Hades (16:22–23).
  - ii. In Hades, the rich man was “in anguish,” whereas Lazarus “was comforted” with Abraham (16:25).
  - iii. In Hades, the rich man could see and communicate with Abraham and Lazarus who were “far off” (16:23–25) with a “great chasm” being fixed between them and the rich man. The chasm was such that those with Abraham “may not be able” to pass over to those in Hades, and “none [in Hades] may cross” to be with Abraham (16:26).
- c. Similarly, Job notes the following about the grave:
  - i. Job 3:17–19. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners are at ease together; they hear not the voice of the taskmaster. The small and great are there, and the slave is free from his master.
  - ii. Job 10:21–22. Before I go—and I shall not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow, <sup>22</sup> the land of gloom like thick darkness,

like deep shadow without any order, where light is as thick darkness.  
 [NOTE: In light of other texts, here is likely talking only about his body.]

- d. That Samuel could be called back from the grave identifies a conscious experience following physical death.
- 1 Sam 28:11–15. Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” He said, “Bring up Samuel for me.”<sup>12</sup> When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul.”<sup>13</sup> The king said to her, “Do not be afraid. What do you see?” And the woman said to Saul, “I see a god coming up out of the earth.”<sup>14</sup> He said to her, “What is his appearance?” And she said, “An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe.” And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.<sup>15</sup> Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?”
- e. 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).
- 1 Kgs 17:17–24. After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him.<sup>18</sup> And she said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!”<sup>19</sup> And he said to her, “Give me your son.” And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed.<sup>20</sup> And he cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?”<sup>21</sup> Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again.”<sup>22</sup> And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived.<sup>23</sup> And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, “See, your son lives.”<sup>24</sup> And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.”
  - 2 Kgs 4:18–37. When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers.<sup>19</sup> And he said to his father, “Oh, my head, my head!” The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.”<sup>20</sup> And when he had lifted him and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died.<sup>21</sup> And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out.<sup>22</sup> Then she called to her husband and said, “Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again.”<sup>23</sup> And he said, “Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” She said, “All is well.”<sup>24</sup> Then she saddled the donkey, and she said to her servant, “Urge the animal on; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you.”<sup>25</sup> So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her coming, he said to Gehazi his servant, “Look, there is the Shunammite.”<sup>26</sup> Run at once to meet her and say to her, ‘Is all well with you? Is all well with your husband? Is all well with the child?’” And she answered, “All is well.”<sup>27</sup> And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to push her away. But the man of God said, “Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me.”<sup>28</sup> Then she said, “Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me?’”<sup>29</sup> He said to Gehazi, “Tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply. And lay my staff on the face of the child.”<sup>30</sup> Then the mother of the child said, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he arose and followed her.<sup>31</sup> Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. Therefore he returned to meet him and

told him, “The child has not awakened.”<sup>32</sup> When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed.<sup>33</sup> So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD.<sup>34</sup> Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm.<sup>35</sup> Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.<sup>36</sup> Then he summoned Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, “Pick up your son.”<sup>37</sup> She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.

- 2 Kgs 13:20–21. So Elisha died, and they buried him. Now bands of Moabites used to invade the land in the spring of the year.<sup>21</sup> And as a man was being buried, behold, a marauding band was seen and the man was thrown into the grave of Elisha, and as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.

f. While conscious and alive, the dead do not declare the praises of YHWH in the land of the living.

- i. Ps. 6:4–5 [5–6]. Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love.<sup>5</sup> For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?
- ii. Ps 30:9 [10]. What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell your faithfulness?
- iii. Ps 88:10–12 [11–12]. Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you?<sup>11</sup> Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon?<sup>12</sup> Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
- iv. Ps. 115:17. The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence.
- v. Ecc. 9:4–5, 10. But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for living dog is better than a dead lion.<sup>5</sup> For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten....<sup>10</sup> Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.
- vi. Isa 38:17–19. But in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back.<sup>18</sup> For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness.<sup>19</sup> The living, the living, he thanks you, as I do this day.

3. Resurrection Texts—A future reality beyond the grave (e.g., Isa 26:19; Dan 12:12; Hos 6:1–3; Ps 16:10–11; 49:15–16; cf. Ezek 37:1–14).

- Isa 26:19. Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.
- Dan 12:2. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
- Hos 6:1–3. Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.<sup>2</sup> After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.<sup>3</sup> Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.

- Psa 16:10–11. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. <sup>11</sup> You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
  - Psa 49:15–16. But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. *Selah* <sup>16</sup> Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases.
  - Ezek 37:1–14. The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.” <sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, 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 may live.” <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. <sup>11</sup> 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 is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”
4. Future Judgment Day: 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).
- Eccl 2:20–21. So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, <sup>21</sup> because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil.
  - Eccl 3:16–17. Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness. <sup>17</sup> I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.
  - Eccl 3:19–20. For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. <sup>20</sup> All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return.
  - Eccl 8:8. No man has power to retain the spirit, or power over the day of death. There is no discharge from war, nor will wickedness deliver those who are given to it.
  - Eccl 9:2–3. It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. <sup>3</sup> This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

- Eccl 11:9. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.
  - Eccl 12:13–14. The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup> For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.
5. Eternal Torment. A handful of texts explicitly speak of the wicked people's ultimate future as filled with perpetual fiery torment sustained by the breath of God (Isa 30:33; 34:10)—a time of “everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2) during which “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).
- Isa 30:33. For a burning place has long been prepared; indeed, for the king it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it.
  - Isa 34:10. Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever.
  - Isa 66:16, 24. For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many. . . . <sup>24</sup> And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.
  - Dan 12:2. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
6. NT Texts: A Sampling
- 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, <sup>12</sup> 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, <sup>42</sup> 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 righteous <sup>50</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. . . . <sup>46</sup> 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. <sup>43</sup> 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. <sup>45</sup> 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. <sup>47</sup> 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, <sup>48</sup> “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!”<sup>28</sup> 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<sup>29</sup> 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:<sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;<sup>8</sup> 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,<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.”<sup>3</sup> 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. **Excursus: Ezekiel 37 and the OT Vision of Resurrection on the Third Day**

### 1. Introduction

- a. Many today do not believe that the OT truly affirmed an afterlife or resurrection from the dead. Ezekiel is one who appears to counter this thought.
- b. Building off Leviticus 18:5, the prophet first notes the death-dealing nature of the Mosaic covenant: “I gave them my statutes and made known to them my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live. . . .<sup>13</sup> But the house of Israel rebelled against me. . . . They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live” (20:11, 13; cf. v. 21). The result for Israel was uncleanness, described as a woman in her menstrual cycle (36:17), and then death, portrayed as a valley of dry bones (37:1–2). In to this context, we read that God would, among a

restored community and by his Spirit, bring life out of death. “I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (36:27). “And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD” (37:14). “They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. <sup>24</sup> My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes” (37:23–24).

Ezek. 37:1–14 (cf. 1 Thess 4:13–18). The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, 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 may live.” <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

<sup>11</sup> 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 is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

- c. In 1 Thessalonians 4:8, the apostle Paul appears to allude to the fulfillment of the new covenant promise from Ezekiel 36:27. After asserting, “This is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3) and stressing “God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness” (4:7), he stresses, “Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.” This latter phrase appears to be lifted from Ezekiel 36:27, “And I will give my Spirit in your midst,” or 37:14, “And I will give my Spirit in you.” Because of the close association with the giving of the Spirit and the resurrection in Ezekiel 36–37, it is likely not by chance that Paul’s mind immediately moved to speak of Christ’s return and the great resurrection of the saints (1 Thess 4:13–18).
- 1Thess. 4:13–18. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. <sup>15</sup> For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be

caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

## 2. NT Texts Identifying That Christ's (Third-Day) Resurrection Is Taught in the OT:

- Mark 12:18–27.
- Luke 24:45–46. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and he said to them, “*Thus it is written*, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.”
- John 20:8–9. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand *the Scripture*, that he must rise from the dead.
- Acts 17:2–3. [Paul] reasoned with them from *the Scriptures*, <sup>3</sup> explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”
- Acts 26:22–23. To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but *what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass*: <sup>23</sup> that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.
- 1 Cor. 15:3–5. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins *in accordance with the Scriptures*, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day *in accordance with the Scriptures*, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

## 3. NT Texts Citing OT Resurrection Texts

- Acts 2:25–31 (cf. Ps 16:10–11). For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; <sup>26</sup> therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. <sup>27</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. <sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.” <sup>29</sup> “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup> Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, <sup>31</sup> he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.
- Acts 13:32–33 (cf. Ps 2:7). And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, <sup>33</sup> this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.”
- Acts 13:34–35 (cf. Isa 55:3; Ps 16:10). And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.” <sup>35</sup> Therefore he says also in another psalm, “You will not let your Holy One see corruption.”
- 1 Cor. 15:54–58 (cf. Isa 25:8; Hos 13:14). When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” <sup>55</sup> “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

## 4. Potential Resurrection Typology and Third-Day Possibilities

- a. *Jonah's three-days in the fish*. Jesus paralleled his own coming resurrection with Jonah's resurrection-like deliverance from the belly of the fish. Matt 12:40 (cf. Jon 1:17–2:10[Heb 2:1–11]). For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- b. *Israel's restoration from exile.* Hosea's declaration that Israel's exile would end in three days is a strong pointer to the resurrection of Christ, who represented Israel and in his death bore their curse (Isa 49:5; Gal 3:13–14). Hos. 6:1–3. Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. <sup>2</sup> After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. <sup>3</sup> Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.
- c. *The sacrifice of Isaac.* Heb 11:19 (cf. Gen 22:5). He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.
- d. *OT "baptism" events:* In the NT, Christ portrays his death as a baptism (Luke 12:50) and both the flood (1 Pet 3:20–21) and Red Sea crossing (1 Cor 10:2) are called baptisms. Because Israel's Passover marks their birth as a nation, and because the parting of the Red Sea likely happened on the third day after this new creation, this great exodus event may also typologically point to Christ's resurrection. (Recall Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration spoke of Jesus' work in Jerusalem as an "exodus" (Luke 9:30–31).
- e. *New creation through water:* In the NT, both baptism (e.g., Rom 6:4–5; Col 2:12) and sprouting seeds (e.g., 1 Cor 15:35–38) are images of resurrection. As such, the fact that the first sprouts came forth out of the watery chaos on the third day after the original creation may point to the resurrection. Gen 1:11–13. And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.
- f. *D and E together:* Exod 15:17.
5. A List of Potential OT Resurrection Texts:
- Gen. 1:11–13. And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.
  - Gen 22:5 (cf. Heb 11:19). Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you."
  - Deut. 32:39. See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
  - 1 Sam. 2:6. The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
  - Ezek. 37:1–14 (cf. 1 Thess 4:13–18).
  - Is. 25:7–9 (cf. 1 Cor. 15:54). And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. <sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup> It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

- Is. 26:19. Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.
- Is. 53:10–11. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.
- Isa 55:3 (cf. Acts 13:34–35). Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.
- Hos. 6:1–3. “Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. <sup>2</sup> After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. <sup>3</sup> Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”
- Hos. 13:14 (cf. 1 Cor. 15:55). Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.
- Jon 1:17–2:10[Heb 2:1–11] (cf. Matt 12:40). And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. <sup>2:1</sup> Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, <sup>2</sup> saying, “I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. <sup>3</sup> For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. <sup>4</sup> Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’ <sup>5</sup> The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head <sup>6</sup> at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. <sup>7</sup> When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. <sup>8</sup> Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. <sup>9</sup> But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!” <sup>10</sup> And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.
- Ps 2:7 (cf. Acts 13:32–33). I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”
- Psa. 16:9–11 (cf. Acts 2:25–31; 13:34–35). Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. <sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. <sup>11</sup> You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
- Psa. 22:28–29. For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. <sup>29</sup> All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive.
- Psa. 49:14–16. Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; death shall be their shepherd, and the upright shall rule over them in the morning. Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell. <sup>15</sup> But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. *Selah* <sup>16</sup> Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases.
- Psa. 73:24. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory.
- Job 14:14; 19:25–27. If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come. . . . <sup>19:25</sup> For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. <sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, <sup>27</sup> whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
- Dan. 12:1–2 (cf. John 5:29). “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone

whose name shall be found written in the book.<sup>2</sup> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

## F. Sacred Space, the Glory of God, and the Vision of the Temple

### 1. Overview:

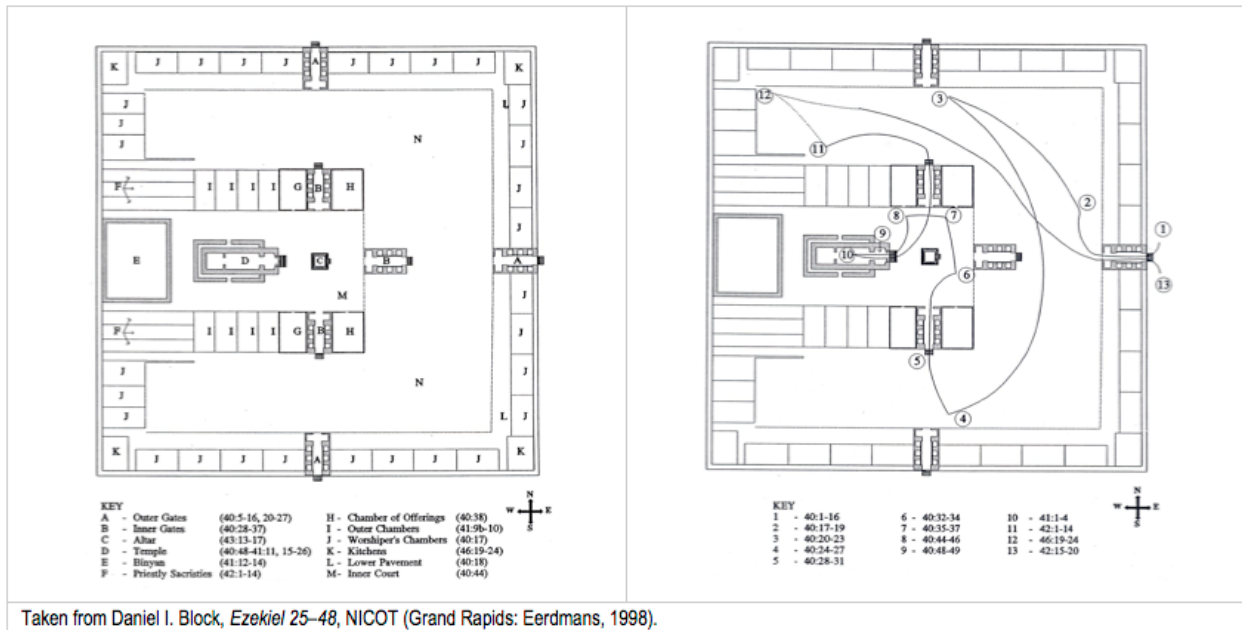
- a. The Vision Is about the Permanent Return of God's Glory (Ezek. 43:2–5; 48:35)
  - Ezek. 43:2–5. And behold the glory was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had 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.
- b. The temple itself includes Levitical priests (44:15–31) and sin atoning sacrifices (burnt, sin, and guilt: 40:38–39, 42; 42:13; 43:18–19, 21, 24–25, 27; 44:11, 27, 29; 45:15, 17, 19, 22–23, 25; 46:2, 4, 12, 13, 15, 20). There is also a life-giving river that flows from the throne to the Dead Sea, transforming it from a place of death to a place of life (47:1–12).

### 2. The Temple 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. A-typical 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. <sup>11</sup>And 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. <sup>12</sup>This 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 Press, 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)

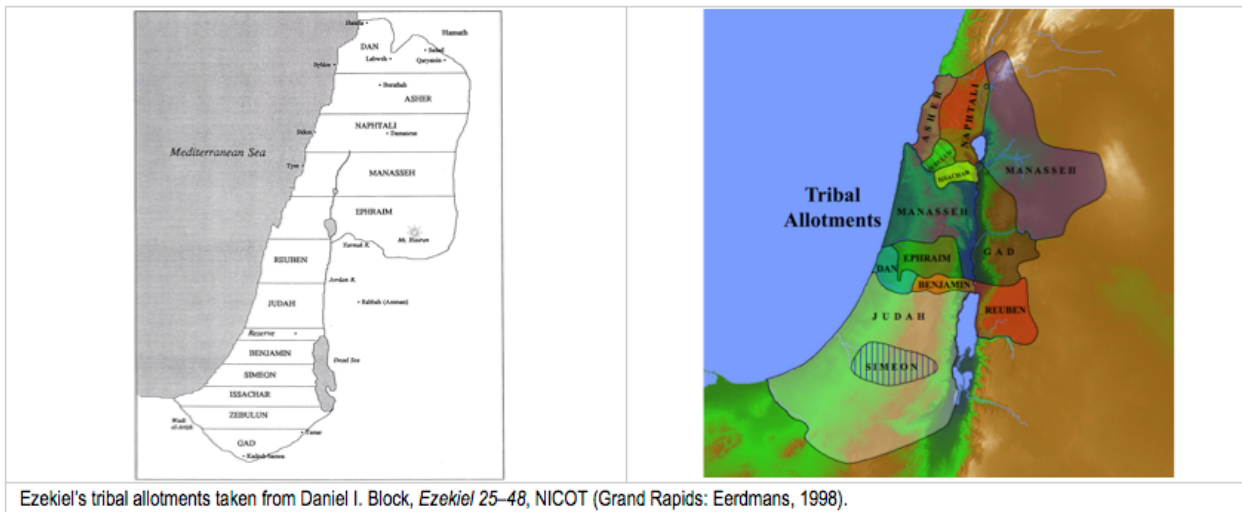
**Fig. 14.2. Ezekiel’s Temple: Structure and Tour**



Taken from Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

3. The Transformed Land

**Fig. 14.2. Tribal Allotments in Ezekiel & Joshua Compared**



4. Fulfillment: How are we to interpret the vision of a new temple and transformed land?

- a. What Ezekiel portrays as sacred space at the end of the book is earlier equated with what he will do *in and through his people*.
  - i. In 37:27–28 we get language somewhat akin to the vision itself: “My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”<sup>28</sup> Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”



- ii. However, earlier the prophet identifies *the people* in the place of the old covenant temple. *They* are the ones to whom people look to see a display of God's presence. As he says in 36:23, 27, "And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes....<sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." Similarly, 37:14 reads, "And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it."
- b. This close association of the people and the land is not new either chronologically or canonically.
  - i. Canonically, Jeremiah already equated the people with the city in 3:17–18: "At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart.<sup>18</sup> In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage."
  - ii. Similarly, Isaiah strongly associates the temple-city with the people a number of times. For example, he notes that "in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob'" (Isa 2:2–3). With images that Jeremiah himself is picking up, Isaiah also treats the people as the temple that enjoying God's hovering presence when he states in 4:5–6: "Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy.<sup>6</sup> There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain." More directly, Isaiah writes in 62:12, "And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken." At the end of the book he equates the new creation with both Jerusalem and the people: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.<sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people."
  - iii. The association between the people and the temple-city culminates in Rev 21, where, echoing Isa 65:17–19 we read in 21:1–3, 9–10: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first

earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.<sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.’...<sup>9</sup> Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.’<sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.” What John is told he will see is the Bride, but what he sees is Jerusalem.

- c. Along with the texts cited above, we must assess the significance of the fact that Ezekiel envisions burnt, sin, and guilt offerings in his temple vision (Ezek 40:38–39, 42; et al). The NT makes clear that Christ’s death supplied the “once for all” (Heb 9:26; 10:10) sacrifice: “He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (9:26). “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (10:14). Christ’s sacrifice supersedes all other sacrifices and renders any further sacrifices unnecessary. Isaiah had already anticipated this in Isa 53 when he stressed of the Messiah, “The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (v. 6) and “when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days ... by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous” (vv. 10). In light of such texts, I believe that Ezekiel would have never thought the vision he was seeing was an actual physical temple with new sacrifices in the place of Christ.
- d. Zechariah anticipated that the anticipated priest-king would build God’s temple and that some from “far off” would assist him in the building of it: “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.’<sup>13</sup> It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both....<sup>15</sup> And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And this shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”
- e. The NT portrays Jesus as the temple (John 2:19–21) and identifies all in him as the temple (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:20–21). Christ’s “Bride” is none other than the new “Jerusalem” coming down from heaven (Rev 21:9–10)—a people-city in whom God’s presence dwells in such a way that there is no longer a distinction between the holy and the common. As such, there is “no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (21:22).

- f. Similarly, Ezekiel's river in the desert is applied to Jesus, who declares himself to be "living water" that transforms souls (John 4:10; 7:38). In Isaiah's words, the waters of life signal the new creation of the messianic era: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isa 43:18–19). Elsewhere, using imagery that John picks up in Rev 21–22, Isaiah asserts, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness" (Isa 65:17–18). John would later write, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.... Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month" (Rev 21:1–2; 22:1–2). Significantly, Paul had already marked the dawn of this new creation in Jesus' first appearing: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). And again, "Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.... Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor 15:20, 23).
- g. These texts all suggest that Ezekiel's vision is to be read symbolically of the transformed people of God. Paul would highlight that already our life "is hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3) and that "the Jerusalem above ... is our mother" (Gal 4:26). Similarly, the author of Hebrews would stress that you have already "come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb 12:22). Nevertheless, we still await when our faith will become sight and the people and new creation will become fully coterminous with the presence of God (Rev 21–22).

**IV. Summary:** After Judah's rebellion results in Babylon destroying Yahweh's temple-throne in the earthly Jerusalem, the sovereign God will reestablish his reign through the new David by (1) returning Israel to its homeland, (2) indwelling his people by his Spirit resulting in them being a temple that displays his holiness, and (3) defeating all the enemies so that the world will know that Yahweh is the true God.

**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?