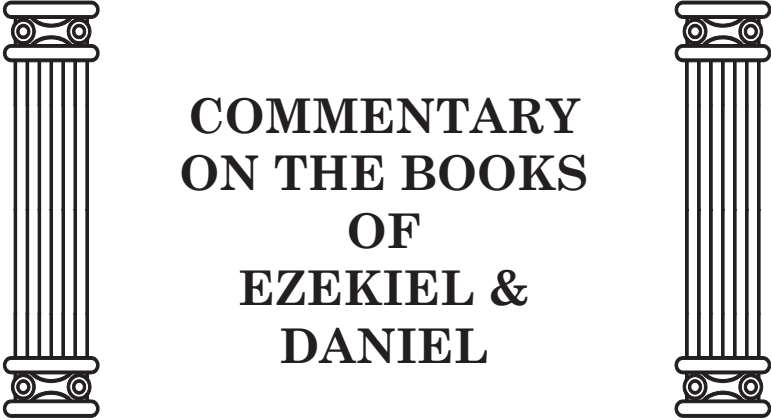


**GOD'S MESSAGES
BIBLE
COMMENTARY
SERIES**

VOLUME 16

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading.
(Nehemiah 8:8).



**COMMENTARY
ON THE BOOKS
OF
EZEKIEL &
DANIEL**

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**The Book Of  
EZEKIEL**



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# *Introduction To Ezekiel*

## **The Author:**

There is much disagreement over whether the book of Ezekiel was written by one author or more than one. The writer of this commentary is convinced that the book is far more unified than many of the more liberal school believe. If one believes the book is a patchwork it is but natural to envision a plurality of authors. If the book is a unit, one author is quite acceptable.

Ezekiel was born in 622 B.C. He was the son of Buzi and was probably from the line of Zadok. When he was about thirty years of age God called him to be a prophet to the people of Israel. He loved God's people to such an extent that he sat for a week, hesitating to tell the leaders the degree of trouble which lay ahead. Jehovah had to insist that he act as a watchman and inform his fellow Israelites the seriousness of their sins. He then proceeded to obey the word of the Lord Even at the time of his wife's death he continued faithfully.

## **The Background:**

At the time of Ezekiel's birth, the good king Josiah ruled God's people. The Egyptians and the Babylonians were vying for power over the entire area. Nebuchadnezzar had defeated the Egyptians and Babylonia appeared to dominate the land. Daniel had been taken into captivity in that nation. Jeremiah was older than Ezekiel and had

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wept over the sins of Israel as he preached to them of coming disaster if they did not repent. The young man Ezekiel and his two celebrated companions in prophecy can certainly be said to have lived in troublous times.

The Nature of the Message:

In the first twenty-four chapters of the book of Ezekiel the warning is issued that Jerusalem must fall. Her sins are so grievous that God cannot ignore them forever. The city will be taken by her enemies and will be turned into ruins. The people will be taken captive and taught that the Lord has a plan which must be followed. If not there to be disastrous consequences.

The fall of Jerusalem would give her neighboring nations great satisfaction. That attitude would not last. It was true that Israel was suffering at the hands of the One whom they claimed to be the Only True and Living God. But that same God would not overlook the sins of the nations who were gloating over the sad conditions of His chosen servants. He would punish those nations also.

Ezekiel used vivid examples of the distress which was to come upon Israel. Jesus taught in parables. Ezekiel taught by acting out the coming troubles. Among the scenes he played out before his people were:

1. Weighing his hair after cutting it off.
2. Eating his food with great trembling.
3. Marching along slowly as a captive might do.

The latter part of the book, in chapters thirty-four to forty-eight deal with hope for the future. There would be a new form of government. There would be a new kind of nation. There would be a new and different temple which would see a new and different kind of worship services. The present problems would not last forever.

Chapter 1

Ezek 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

The amount of speculation on this first chapter of Ezekiel may be as great or greater than another chapter of the entire Bible. It begins right here in the first verse. No one is certain as to the “thirtieth year.” The most reasonable application seems to be that it was the thirtieth year of the life of Ezekiel.

The months at that time and in that place do not coincide with those of our own. The suggestion has been that it may have been in what we would term July.

Ezekiel had been taken captive, along with thousands of other Jews and sent to the land of Babylonia. They had been placed in the area of the river Chebar. This was not actually a natural river. It was a canal, used for irrigation purposes. It was a time of great sorrow over the deportation from the territory of Canaan. Ezekiel will play an important part in making it clear to his people why they are in such a condition. He will also inform them of hope for the future.

What does it mean when we are told that the heavens were opened in order that Ezekiel might see visions of God? No man knows the full extend of the heavens which God created in the beginning. Some believe they have calculated the dimensions of the universe. We doubt it! This verse is only saying that Ezekiel was provided with a window in which he would be able to see visions which would give him a view of God’s glory. God is a spiritual being whom our natural

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eyesight cannot observe. The word “likeness” will be used repeatedly in this chapter. This is an indication of the difficulty for human eyes to see the Lord without some special arrangement.

**Ezek 1:2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,**

The fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity would have been 592 B.C. He was taken captive in 597 B.C.

**Ezek 1:3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.**

It was not the word of Ezekiel which he would be commanded to relay to his people. It was to be the word of the LORD. Ezekiel had been a priest. This meant that he had been responsible for communication from man to God in the nature of prayer and sacrifices. This was different. He would now be charged with communication from God to men.

When God appoints a man to obey one or more of His commands, He provides that which is necessary to accomplish the duty. Ezekiel was to have very special responsibilities. He would need the strong hand of God in order to see those responsibilities dealt with in a proper fashion.

**Ezek 1:4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.**

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As Ezekiel looked upward, he saw what looked like a great storm approaching. Although it had many of the characteristics of a combined thunderstorm and hurricane, it was far more impressive than that. Perhaps we are doing the best we can when we think of the funnel cloud of a tornado. This whirlwind came from a northerly direction and appeared to have flames of fire surrounding it. It was very bright and had an amber color.

Ezek 1:5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

Ezekiel proceeds to tell us some of the details of what he saw. Here is that word “likeness.” The text does not say these were four living creatures. It says they looked like four living creatures. In some sense these creatures looked like men. As will immediately become apparent, they also had features which were not like men.

Ezek 1:6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

Men do not have four faces, nor do they have four wings. There must be some importance in these non human aspects. More is to be said about both the faces and the wings.

Ezek 1:7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.

The feet of these creatures were not jointed like those of men. They looked more like the hoof of a cow or a

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calf. Burnished brass is very reflective. The feet of these creatures gave off reflections such as would come from a polished brass surface.

**Ezek 1:8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.**

Now we learn that they had hands also. This means we have hands, feet, faces and wings. At this point things begin to get complicated. We can see that each of these features except wings is associated with some attribute of both man and God. With wings one can move swiftly. With faces one can see. With feet it is possible to move from place to place. Hands allow one to move and manipulate objects. These four creatures are servants of Jehovah and obey His will. The emphasis here is upon that which God desires to be done.

The position of the hands under the wings is somewhat of a mystery. It may be that this is only a way of locating both hands and wings on the same creature. Whichever direction the creature moved, it had a face pointed in that direction.

**Ezek 1:9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.**

Two wings of one creature were joined to the wings of a creature on each side of it. Since each had four faces it was not necessary to spin as they moved. They were always moving straight forward with respect to one of the four faces.

**Ezek 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion,**

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on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

Only one of the four faces appeared to be like that of a man. The other three resembled those of the animal kingdom. We take note that each of the faces tells of dominion over a phase of behavior.

1. Man is known for his intelligence.
2. The lion is known for fierceness.
3. The ox is known for service.
4. The eagle has great swiftness.

These creatures declare that which God has at His disposal to accomplish His purposes.

Ezek 1:11 Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

There were two pairs of wings on each of the creatures. Apparently one pair of wings was outstretched and the other pair were folded up against their sides. The pair which was outstretched touched those of the creature on either side of each of them. Thus there was a spirit of cooperation among the four creatures.

Ezek 1:12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

Each of the creatures remained stationary with respect to the others of the four. They did not spin around, nor did they depart from the specified arrangement. We are not talking about four independent beings, all following

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their own inclinations. The spirit which determined their movement cause all to move in unison.

**Ezek 1:13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.**

**Ezek 1:14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.**

Tremendous energy was associated with the group. They looked like a bed of red hot coals with fire flashing from them like streaks of lightning. The entire group was bright as the sky in the midst of an electrical storm. We are not told from where they ran nor where they returned. The picture suggests enormous activity.

**Ezek 1:15 Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.**

**Ezek 1:16 The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.**

This is the first mention of the wheels. Wheels indicate motion. Some writers see four wheels for each of the creatures. It may be that there were four wheels in all, and that each creature had but one wheel. This is not clear. The creatures had four faces but we are not told each had four wheels.

The wheels all had the same appearance. They



were the color of beryl, which is emerald or green. Very honestly I do not know just what is meant by saying the appearance of the wheels was as if it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

**Ezek 1:17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.**

**Ezek 1:18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.**

The rings seem to be the edges of the wheels. These rims of the wheels were most impressive. They had eyes looking in all directions. They have the ability to see all that needs tending to upon the earth.

**Ezek 1:19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.**

**Ezek 1:20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.**

**Ezek 1:21 When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.**

The wheels and the living creatures were not a unit. They moved together and were not independent of each other. One was not a part of the other. It seems that the moving power of the entire chariot had it's source in the wheels. The movement of each of the four creatures was determined by it's wheel.

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We point out that the body of a man without the spirit is dead. These living creatures would have been powerless without the energy emitted by the wheels.

Ezek 1:22 And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

The four living creatures supported a firmament which was the color of a gigantic crystal. Crystal is clear and transparent, as in the case of diamond. Again, this would have been an astonishing sight.

Ezek 1:23 And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

We are reminded that each of the four creatures had a pair of outstretched wings, and another pair which covered their bodies.

Ezek 1:24 And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.

We are all familiar with the sound produced by a locomotive and it's trailing chain of railroad cars. All other sounds seem to be overwhelmed by that one source. This is apparently but a tiny fraction of the sound produced by the wings of the creatures. The sound was as mighty as one might expect if the Creator of heaven and earth had spoken.



Ezek 1:25 And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

Ezekiel heard that voice from above the firmament and knew that wisdom called for him to listen very carefully to what he was about to be told. The four creatures came to rest and there was a feeling of suspense. Ezekiel must have wondered just what would happen next

Ezek 1:26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

Ezekiel saw what looked like a gigantic throne. It had the color of a sapphire, which is blue. A figure could be seen seated upon the throne. The figure looked like a man. Dear reader, remember that in the beginning God created man in His own image. This figure is intended to call our attention to the will of God.

Ezek 1:27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

The color of the figure was like amber. Amber is a yellowish brown substance which is translucent, or allows the passage of light, even though not transparent. From top to bottom the figure had the appearance of fire. This resulted in an enlightenment of the sky around the majestic chariot.

Ezek 1:28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

One of the most beautiful sight men ever set their eyes upon is that of a beautiful rainbow after a summer storm. Ezekiel presents a picture of the glory of God. He has used one color after another to complete his description of what he saw. He closes his description with not one, but every color of the rainbow. God's glory is beyond man's ability to either perceive or describe to others. Ezekiel has done all that is possible to draw the divine picture. He tells us he was so humbled by what he had seen that he fell upon his face to the ground.

Someday my friends, those who are faithful in these present fleshly bodies will be raised in new spiritual bodies which will allow them to come into the presence of Jehovah. Those who have proven unfaithful will be told to depart forever.

At a time when doctoral degrees were not as prevalent as they are when I write these words, one of the most knowledgeable doctors of the Christian college I was attending would always sit at the end of a pew during chapel services. As soon as prayer was begun he would slip quietly out of his seat and kneel down upon the floor. I have often wondered if that would not be my own reaction if I someday come into the direct presence of the Lord.

Ezekiel is about to receive a message. It will not be a message of comfort. It will be one of JUDGMENT!

Chapter 2

Ezek 2:1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

Ezekiel had been overcome by the majesty of the vision which he had just seen. He had fallen upon his face to the ground. Now he is told to get up on his feet and hear what the Lord had to say to him.

God addressed the prophet as “son of man.” I note that the King James Version of the Bible capitalizes the word “son.” I believe this is a mistake. When Christ is called the Son of man the word Son should be capitalized. Christ is called the Son of man because He was God, born of a fleshly woman. He was the Only Begotten of the Father. That is quite a different concept than is the case with Ezekiel. Ezekiel is called son of man because he was a frail human who needed the assistance of God to accomplish the task which was about to be laid upon him.

There were only three persons who are called by this phrase. Daniel, Ezekiel and the Lord Jesus Christ. We have not taken the time to count the number of occurrences in the book of Ezekiel. There are close to one hundred.

Ezek 2:2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

What spirit was it that entered into Ezekiel? Was it not the Holy Spirit? I have encountered faithful Christians who contend that the Holy Spirit does not personally indwell humans. I disagree. This is an example of such indwelling. I have been asked if another man should bow down and worship me since I hold such a view.

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I must ask the same question concerning Ezekiel. Should men have bowed down and worshiped him because the Spirit entered into him? Ezekiel would have been shocked beyond measure. God gives the Holy Spirit to every man or woman who is willing to do His will. The Spirit will empower that person to do that which God expects him to do. That will be different at different times and on different occasions.

**Ezek 2:3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.**

The assignment which God presented to Ezekiel was to tell his own people they were a rebellious nation who had sinned grievously. This had been true for many years. It had finally reached the point that God felt it necessary to punish them because of it.

Both the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom had shown the same disrespect for God's instructions. The Babylonian empire had taken Assyrian territory and thus those of God's people from both Israel and Judah were being addressed. They are called Israel even as they were before the division between the norther and southern kingdoms.

**Ezek 2:4 For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.**

Impudence is looked upon in children as being naughty and rude. Sometimes they are chastised by their parents. Sometimes they are not. When they are not

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chastised the behavior becomes worse. They are looked upon with disgust by others who observe their need for correction.

It is far more serious when God's adult children become stiffhearted. Grown men and women should cherish the instructions of the Heavenly Father and obey Him to the very best of their ability. If they do not, He will correct them. That is precisely what He intended to do with Israel.

Ezek 2:5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

Ezekiel was to realized beforehand that they would possibly reject the preaching which he did. That was not to be an excuse for failing to do what God had commanded him. They were to be made to realize that a man of God had spoken the Word of God. They were to have no excuse for continuing in sin. If they did continue, it was not to be the fault of Ezekiel.

Ezek 2:6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

Ezekiel was not to back off in pronouncing the message of the Lord. He was to "Fear not, for I am with thee." He might anticipate much discomfort and suffering at their hands. Briers, thorns and scorpions can inflict painful damage. Even savage looks directed toward one

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can be very discouraging. The fact that we have the book of Ezekiel today is evidence that he heard the Word of the Lord and obeyed it, in spite of the response of the sinful people.

Briers prick a little. Thorns are more painful. Scorpions may even kill. But Ezekiel was to use the power of God's Spirit to stand up under the pressure.

**Ezek 2:7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.**

This verse is nearly an exact repetition of verse five. The repetition is for the sake of emphasis. Ezekiel was not to ignore the task.

**Ezek 2:8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.**

If the prophet were to reject the command of Jehovah, he would be placing himself in the same class as those to whom he was to preach. He would be rebellious, just as they were.

The Lord was about to give Ezekiel something which he must thoroughly digest. Then he would be expected to feed the people those same truths. Sometimes the Word of God is most pleasant to the taste. Other times it can be most distasteful.

**Ezek 2:9 And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein;**

Today we think of a book as being composed of many pages, bound together by a spine. It was not so in the

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time of the prophet. Messages were written on scrolls which were unwound as they were read. Ordinarily these scrolls were written only on one side. Ezekiel saw a hand extended to him with such a scroll being offered to him.

Ezek 2:10 And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

When the scroll was unrolled, it was found to be written on both sides. There was no room for the prophet to add any of his own comments. He was expected to declare just what the Lord gave him; nothing more and nothing less. This would not be easy. The scroll contained judgments which would be laid upon the sinful nation.

The warning was emphatic. Instead of saying the scroll contained woes, it also added to similar words, lamentations and mourning. How could the Lord make it any more plain that trouble of the most serious kind lay just ahead for this impudent and rebellious people?

Chapter 3

Ezek 3:1 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

No Christian should ever neglect the study of God's precious Word. We are told to go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. That cannot be done unless one finds pleasure in feasting upon the bread of life and looks forward to sharing it with others. This is especially true of the men who stand in the pulpit and dispense the spiritual food to those who recognize the need to draw close to the Creator who prepared that spiritual nourishment for them.

Ezekiel was being assigned a task which he would find to be delightful at some times and then burdensome at other times. In each case he must be ready to meet the experiences with which he would come face to face.

Ezek 3:2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

We are not to suppose that Ezekiel actually and physically ate the scroll. What he did was to open his soul to these truths in such manner that God could feed him in mind and soul. The picture the present writer sees is that of a dedicated student sitting in a university library nearly oblivious to anything else which is happening. The attention is to completely given to the information at hand that all else fades into the background.

This sort of attitude should be found in Bible teachers and students alike. You can not teach others by either word or example unless you have fed upon God's Word.

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**Ezek 3:3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.**

Can the reader recall the days of childhood when mom or dad stopped at the corner store and bought a bright colored bag of candy. He could hardly wait for the container to be opened in order that he could get one of those delicious morsels in his mouth.

Ezekiel had much that same experience with respect to the eating of the scroll which God gave to him. There are not many things as sweet as honey. Ezekiel found the truth to be in that class. It was not something he had to force himself to do. He relished it.

**Ezek 3:4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.**

Only after the prophet had assimilated the contents of the scroll was he ready to give to others that which had proven to be so delightful to himself.

Note that God's servant was not to invent truths from his own mind. He was to speak the Word of God to those listeners. It is in man's domain to learn and teach such thoughts as deal with the laws of nature. It is not in man's domain to determine the ultimate and eternal values and rules of the spiritual realm. We are neither to add to, nor to take away from the revealed will of Jehovah.

**Ezek 3:5 For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel;**

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The challenge God had given to Ezekiel was not beyond his ability to deal with. It would have been different if the people he was to teach did not speak his own language. That was not the case. He could speak in words they understood, and they could listen and understand those words if they would but do so.

Ezek 3:6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

Strangely, God informed Ezekiel that those who had difficulty in understanding his words would have been more willing to accept them than would those of Israel, who had little excuse for not hearkening. Sometimes humans fail to appreciate the real values of life while they frantically reach out for that which is infinitely less precious.

Ezek 3:7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

How did the Lord know that the people would reject the preaching which Ezekiel was told to present? It was because this had been the pattern many times in the past. They would not listen because Ezekiel was to present God's own truths. They had shown themselves to be insolent, hard-headed and hard hearted. They would follow the same pattern again. The Word which had tasted as sweet as honey would be bitter in their bellies.

Ezek 3:8 Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

Have you noticed the intensity which is demonstrated when an impudent child informs it's parent that it has no intention of doing what it has been told to do. The faces may become quite close together with the foreheads almost touching. Such is the picture before us here. But, Ezekiel is not to back off. God has caused him to be just as determined as those who oppose the truth he preaches.

Ezek 3:9 As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

Adamant is thought to be diamond. There are not many thing harder than flint, but diamond is one which is. Nothing which the Israelites say or do is to soften the words which God gave in the scroll. Remember that rebellious spoiled five year old that stomped his foot at his mother and refused to obey. When mother made it absolutely clear that it would be more unpleasant to rebel than to obey, the child turned away pouting, but did what it was told to do. Israel was to have no excuse for sinful lives. God was making it certain that they knew His will.

Ezek 3:10 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

Ezek 3:11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

Ezekiel is again called the "son of man." The word is capitalized in the text but this is questionable. The

prophet is not called the son of man in the same sense that Christ wore that title. Ezekiel is the son of man because he is of human origin and should care for the welfare of his own kind.

Ezek 3:12 Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place.

In this instance the word “spirit” should have been capitalized. It is not the spirit of Elijah that took him up. It was the Spirit of God. He had fallen on his face to the ground and now he was to stand erect.

An awesome voice was heard praising the glory of the LORD. What was the LORD’S place? It was the throne upon which He sits as He rules in heaven and on earth. His glory is beyond human comprehension. All men should bow before the great I AM.

Ezek 3:13 I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.

The word “noise” is used three times in this one verse. It is assumed that this is meant to help us with the understanding of the power associated with the Spirit of God. In the book of Acts when the Spirit of God came upon the apostles, we are told of a mighty rushing wind that filled the house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Ezek 3:14 So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

It is quite possible that the Spirit of God truly lifted Ezekiel up and carried him to the location of the people to whom he was to speak. He did not enjoy the experience he was having now, as he did when he was eating the roll which was sweet as honey. This time there was a feeling of bitterness. He would much rather have been given something more pleasant to do. That was not to be. God was insistent that he go and preach to his fellow Israelites who were in Babylonian captivity. He realized he could not refuse to go.

Ezek 3:15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

We are told that what is here called a river was more accurately translated as canal. This was an area which had been irrigated and was a site where captives could be put to hard labor.

Ezekiel was astonished at the sight. He sat in their midst for seven days apparently so shocked that he remained silent. It was hardly believable that the chosen people of God had come to such an end. How long would this condition last??

Ezek 3:16 And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 3:17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

At the end of the seven days, it was really God who broke the silence. The Lord informed Ezekiel that he had been made a watchman over the rebellious people. Watchmen are to give warning when danger is approaching. Such danger was at hand and Ezekiel was to let the people know of it.

Ezek 3:18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

When God gives Ezekiel, or any other person, the job of warning souls in danger to turn from that danger, the warning must be given. If the wicked are warned the person who gave them the warning has lifted the guilt from his own soul. Even if the sinner goes on his way to destruction, the one who has warned is innocent. If on the other hand, God expected His servant to give a warning which was not given, both the one who was to warn, and the one who died because of lack of warning were to be punished.

Ezek 3:19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked

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**way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.**

**Ezek 3:20 Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.**

Does the Lord really place a stumbling block in the way of any man? This verse seems to say that He does. How can this be reconciled with the statement that God is not tempted, neither tempteth He any man? The answer lies in the fact that God knows the future. When it becomes obvious that a person is determined to live in sin, God will allow him that choice, and will hasten him on his way to hell fire.

**Ezek 3:21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.**

It would be advisable for the good man to warn both the righteous man and the unrighteous of the danger which lies ahead. In both cases the one who does the warning has attended to God's will, and will not be held accountable for neglect of the soul of his fellowman.

**Ezek 3:22 And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.**

**Ezek 3:23 Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood**

**there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.**

The prophet was then given the command to go to the area where the captives had been working. He would be given further instructions by the Lord when he arrived there.

**Ezek 3:24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.**

The Spirit of God then caused Ezekiel to go to the house where he would be staying. There he would be within sight of his fellow Israelites.

**Ezek 3:25 But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them:**

Who was it that was to put the bands upon the prophet? The context here implies that the attitude of the people would prevent Ezekiel from teaching freely. They would not believe God's Word. It would do no good for him to move among them until God saw fit to help.

**Ezek 3:26 And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house.**

God would cause Ezekiel to either physically be unable to speak, or else so disgusted that he felt it useless to speak. The people were not to be reproved until God

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saw that the time was right. Their rebellion was about to become deadly.

Ezek 3:27 But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

When the Lord finally saw fit to loose the tongue of the prophet, the people were to be told that that had freedom of choice. If they chose to hear God's warning and turn from sin, they would have the opportunity. If they chose to ignore the warning and continue in their wickedness, they could do that. Many would no doubt choose sin. They were proud.

Chapter 4

Ezek 4:1 Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem:

Ezekiel has now been given the opportunity to teach once more. This time he is to begin by finding a piece of tile and allowing it to represent the city of Jerusalem. The captives had been of the opinion that God would certainly not keep his people in bondage for any extensive period of time. He would surely see that they were released and returned to their beloved city of Jerusalem. They were to learn different.

Ezek 4:2 And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about.

We will not concern ourselves greatly as to the exact size of the tile. The main thing is that the captives understand the reason for the strange scene. Jerusalem will be placed under siege and they will find themselves still in bondage after many years of slavery.

Ezekiel was to build fortifications near the city, just as the future enemies of the real city would do. He was even to build a mount up to the walls and place a miniature battering ram where it could smash against the wall of the model city.

Ezek 4:3 Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.

Ezekiel was to take an iron pan and place it between himself and the model city. This would represent the hard

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headedness of the Israelites toward the Word of the Lord. Ezekiel would be taking the role of the Lord and would lay siege to the model city.

**Ezek 4:4 Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity.**

Ezekiel was to suffer for the sins of the people. He would be expected to lie on his left side for a certain number of days to suffer for the sins of Israel. We do not know whether this position was kept constantly, or whether it was just sufficient that the people could see the burden he was bearing.

**Ezek 4:5 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.**

This was to last for 390 days. Each day represented a year of punishment for the nation of Israel.

**Ezek 4:6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.**

After lying on his left side for 390 days, he was to start lying on his right side for another 40 days, which would represent forty years of punishment he would suffer for the sins of Judah.

**Ezek 4:7 Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it.**

The total number of days would be 430, which is precisely the period of time Israel spent in Egyptian bondage. We do not believe this was a matter of coincidence. Israel remembered those days in Egypt from generation to generation.

**Ezek 4:8 And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.**

There is a strong similarity here between the suffering of Christ for the sins of mankind, and Ezekiel's suffering for the sins of both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

By the way, anyone who has tossed and turned in bed while trying to fall asleep can well understand something of the discomfort Ezekiel must have felt while lying so consistently on the same side.

**Ezek 4:9 Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.**

The food which Ezekiel was to put into the vessel were not luxuries. They were the kind which would be used when food was scarce. He was to prepare just enough to last through the 390 days on a rationed basis.

**Ezek 4:10 And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it.**

The word "meat", as used here does not refer to flesh alone. Anything which was not drink was termed meat.

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He was to ration it out to himself in a very limited amount per day. The captives were to suffer food shortages.

Ezek 4:11 Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink.

The amount of solid food amounted to around one half pound. The amount of water was approximately a pint and one half. In addition to the famine of food, the captives would endure a shortage of water.

Ezek 4:12 And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight.

Bread made from wheat was of much finer quality than that made from barley. These less appetizing barley cakes were to be baked over embers provided by dried human feces. If anything would cause them to be both undesirable and unclean this should have done so. All of this was to be done in plain sight of the captives in order that they might have no difficulty in getting the point. There was to be distress of many different types as a result of their opposition to the will of the Lord.

Ezek 4:13 And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.

The Jews would be separated from the temple for a lengthy period of time. This would prevent them from making the sacrifices which were specified as a means of assuring the cleanness of the food and drink.

Ezek 4:14 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up

even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.

Ezekiel objected to these last commands. He had tried very hard to refrain from eating anything which God had declared was unclean. The book of Leviticus has much to say about such regulations. Ezekiel wondered if God would truly command him to eat that which He Himself had declare corrupting.

Ezek 4:15 Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith.

What a concession this was! He could substitute cow manure for human feces. This would not be quite as offensive, but would certainly cause the meals to be disgusting.

Ezek 4:16 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment:

God intended for Israel to learn the consequences of disobedience to His commandments. They will have plunged themselves into hideous suffering. This suffering would not be for just a few days. It would continue for many long years.

Ezek 4:17 That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.

They would find themselves shocked at the appearance of both themselves and their companions. With such a



shortage of food and drink, the bodies would become thin and subject to ill health of several kinds.

Perhaps the drama which Ezekiel was portraying to his people would cause them to discover the meaning of the words "The wages of sin is death." This is true in the cases of both physical death and spiritual death. The reader would do well to take the lesson taught by Ezekiel to heart.

Chapter 5

We now come to another of God's portrayals through the prophet Ezekiel. We shall label this one, "The Haircut." The reason for this label will be quite clear as we proceed through the discussion of the text.

Ezek 5:1 And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

The prophet was to obtain a sharp knife. This may well have been a short sword, sharpened to a razor edge. He was to use the knife to shear off both the hair of his head and that of his beard.

Men often view their hair and beards to be signs of manliness. This is especially true of those who live in the part of the world where Ezekiel was laboring. It is safe to presume that he performed this cutting off in full view of the people. The prophets were known for their ability to get attention by unusual methods. The cutting off of his hair represented the coming shame which would come upon the city of Jerusalem as a result of their disregard for the statutes of Jehovah.

After cutting off the hair, Ezekiel was to carefully weigh it out into equal thirds. Each of these three portions would carry heavy meaning.

Ezek 5:2 Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them.

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One of the three portions of the hair was to be burned in fire. God's wrath is sometimes described as a consuming fire. This burning was to take place in the midst of the city map which Ezekiel had drawn previously. It represented the fact that many of the Israelites would die inside Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar attacked it with his armies.

A second portion of the hair was to be placed outside the wall of the city. It was then to be hacked to pieces by the sword. This would be a representation of the destruction of large portions of the Israelite people as they lost their lives in trying to defend the city.

The final third of the hair was to be scattered by the wind. This would portray the scattering of many of the citizens of Jerusalem to the nations surrounding Canaan. It should also be noted that the sword was to cause the loss of some of this third portion.

**Ezek 5:3 Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.**

A very small part of the hair was to be retained and fastened in the skirt or robe of Ezekiel. This is mentioned last but should not be considered an afterthought. The remnant of Israel is a major theme running through the history of that nation. Ezekiel himself stands for the city of Jerusalem. The hair which clings to him is the part of Israel which clings to God and His city.

**Ezek 5:4 Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.**

Even from the remnant, there were those who were to be cast into the fire. Some of those who had at first shown loyalty to the Lord would later turn away from Him. None

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were to completely avoid the punishments which God was to bring upon them for breaking His commandments.

Ezek 5:5 Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.

Do not take this verse lightly! God had seen fit to place his chosen nation in a position where it could easily be observed by those of Africa, Asia and Europe. It was intended that the Israelites act as the “light of the world.” The observance of God’s commandments could have shown to others that blessings come with that obedience. Sadly, they chose to neglect God’s commandments and instead of blessings. They were now to demonstrate the curses which come upon men when they go their own way.

Ezek 5:6 And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.

What a horrible statement this is. Because of her privileged position, Israel bore more responsibility. The fact that she had disregarded God’s truth when it had been made so clear would cause God to pour out wrath upon them. When men know of a way which is sure and certain, they should most certainly take that way rather than choosing the way which leads to destruction.

Ezek 5:7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither

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**have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you;**

Israel had even gone farther than just ignoring the commandments of Jehovah. They had also defied the portion of the surrounding nations laws which were of a righteous nature. This left them as a lawless people. They were being guided by neither divine nor human legislation.

**Ezek 5:8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.**

It was not just the opposition of men that the Israelites were facing. God Himself had turned against them. He must cause the nations around them to understand that it is fatal to act as if God did not exist. These punishments which were to come upon them should become a lesson to ALL nations.

**Ezek 5:9 And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations.**

The suffering was to be greater this time than it had been in the past, or would be in the future. It would be appropriate because of the advantages His people had enjoyed, and the disdain which they had demonstrated.

**Ezek 5:10 Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.**

The cannibalism mentioned here actually came to pass. Parents actually cooked and ate the flesh of their

own children. (See the book of Lamentations for the fulfilment of this prophecy.)

*Lam 2:20 Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?*

*Lam 4:10 The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.*

**Ezek 5:11 Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.**

God has always lived. He lives now, and He will continue to live. A statement as certain as the one in the beginning of this verse will come to pass.

It cannot be claimed that the Lord was unmerciful in the punishments which would be administered. He had been patient far beyond what could have been expected. A sanctuary is to be a clean and holy place. Israel had offered unclean sacrifices upon the altar of the Lord. They had brought that which God abominated into His place of worship. His patience had come to an end.

**Ezek 5:12 A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.**

Four types of punishment would be dealt out. There would be disease and hunger. There would be war. There would be scattering of the people into many different nations.

**Ezek 5:13 Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.**

Is it well to take vengeance upon one's adversaries? Jesus Christ went to the cross as He prayed for them to be forgiven for they did not know what they were doing. Is ignorance an excuse for sin? No, it is not. The Israelites knew full well that God had promised both blessings and cursings; blessings to the obedient, cursings to the disobedient. He does well to be angry when deliberate sin is committed. It is right that mankind be punished for such behavior. God is comforted in such cases because He has done all that is possible to correct the matter.

**Ezek 5:14 Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by.**

It is true that Israel has become a reproach among many nations. The word "Jew" has not been a nice word in the mouths or ears of the people who were neighbors of that nation. Our Lord Jesus Christ had to overcome much hatred which had been built up over the centuries against fleshly Israel.

**Ezek 5:15 So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I the LORD have spoken it.**

Jehovah uses four words to picture the feelings of the neighboring nations when they see His wrath fall upon Israel. Those words are “reproach, instruction, astonishment and taunt.” When the punishments were ended, people of all the earth, including Israel should understand the danger of mocking God.

**Ezek 5:16 When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for their destruction, and which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread:**

**Ezek 5:17 So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee: and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it.**

These two closing verses just serve to underline the importance of the previous warnings. We need to add a concluding remark here. The church of Jesus Christ is the Israel of today. It is to be the “Light to the nations of the world just as fleshly Israel was to be in the days of the prophets. If the church allows that which is unclean and abominable to God to enter into it, the same wrath of God can be expected in that day. Christians have a twofold duty as was made clear by our Saviour when he was asked which was the greatest commandment. He replied that the first was to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and the second was like unto it, in that we are to love our neighbor as ourself. Our love for the Lord will be shown by a life of purity and obedience. Our love for our neighbor will be shown by our teaching through thought, speech and deed.

## *Chapter 6*

In the previous chapter Ezekiel had pronounced a tremendous curse of God which was to befall the city of Jerusalem for her disloyalty to Jehovah. In this chapter he expands the view to the entire land of Canaan. The picture is so vivid that it becomes difficult to even discuss it. Yet God included it in our Bibles and we very much need to read and consider it with great care.

**Ezek 6:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

This chapter and the following one begin with the same words. It is not theorizing on the part of Ezekiel that is being presented. It is the solemn declarations of the Only True and Living God.

**Ezek 6:2 Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,**

Much of the land of Canaan is covered with small mountains. The people of the land had been using the tops of these mountains to set up their altars to the supposed deities of their own imagination. Jehovah commanded Ezekiel to turn his face toward the mountains where this idolatrous worship was being practiced and declare the horrors which were to come against that which he hated.

I, along with the majority of God's followers, do not enjoy contemplating such awful events as Ezekiel is to describe. It is much more enjoyable to read the thirteenth chapter of the book of I Corinthians with its description of love. However, my wishes must be brought into line with that which God knows is needful.

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Ezek 6:3 And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.

God is going to make it abundantly clear that He intends to step in and take action against the spiritual adultery which has captured the hearts of so many of His people. It will not be just the mountains and high places. His anger will be felt wherever the false worship is practiced. It will not matter whether these sites are high elevations, or valleys like Hinnom and Gehenna.

One of the ways in which God will operate is to allow enemy armies such as that of Nebuchadnezzar to come in upon them with weapons of war. The results will be disastrous.

Ezek 6:4 And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols.

It was upon the altars that the sacrifices to the false gods were offered. Those altars would be demolished and made useless. Sticks and stones were carved into various types of images, sometimes of their imagined gods, but also in the form of sexual organs which inspired orgies of the most vivid kind. The idols were those images which represented the false gods themselves.

God would see to it that the altars would have no gathering of worshipers around them. The images would lie in shatters and the ground in the vicinity of the idols would be strewn with the carcasses of those who had worshiped them.

Ezek 6:5 And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

The area around the altars and images would more nearly resemble a cemetery than a center of worship.

Ezek 6:6 In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.

The damage would not be limited to the places of false worship. It would extend to the homes of the cities. The entire land would feel the edge of the sword which the Lord would bring into their midst.

Over and over the seriousness of the coming punishment is repeated. No one could miss it.

Ezek 6:7 And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

This phrase, “and ye shall know that I am the LORD” is found over and over and over again in this book of Ezekiel. Those who heard or read would have no excuse when the judgment fell.

Ezek 6:8 Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.

God’s remnant is a recurring thought running through a good portion of the Bible. There are many who travel

the broad way which leads to destruction. There are but a few who travel the one which is narrow and has a strait gate. It is that few who make up God's precious remnant. At this time Israel had that few who remained true in the midst of sin.

The scattering of the Jews throughout many nations is a fact impossible to deny. They can be found on any continent, and in practically every nation on earth. Hitler decided to eliminate the Jew from that territory which he dominated. He failed! They are still present in the nation of Germany.

Ezek 6:9 And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

It is interesting that God speaks of being broken. It is not His power which has been broken. It is His heart. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. It is because of His love that He has not eradicated mankind from the face of the earth. The remnant would have the opportunity to turn their whorish hearts and wandering eyes back to the One whom they should be honoring with their worship.

Ezek 6:10 And they shall know that I am the LORD, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.

Whether those of the remnant pay attention or not, they will be faced with the truth that there is a God in



heaven, and His name is Jehovah. These are not empty words which are being said to them. They may repent, or they may perish.

Ezek 6:11 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.

When these horrible punishments fall upon them, the people will have a tendency to show strong emotion against what is happening. Such complaints will fall on a deaf ear. All of the punishments were deserved. They would be endured.

Ezek 6:12 He that is far off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: thus will I accomplish my fury upon them.

It would not matter how far or near the people were to the land of Canaan. God's eye would find them, and His hand of punishment would fall upon them. They who worship false gods will find that those so-called gods will not respond when they are called upon. Sword, pestilence and famine will search them out wherever they are.

Ezek 6:13 Then shall ye know that I am the LORD, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols.

The powerful statement that “Ye shall know that I am the LORD” is repeated. Throughout the promised land, the surface of the ground would be littered with the corpses of those who had turned their faces toward the sun, the moon, the stars and other objects of the creation, and had neglected the worship of the Only One worthy of that worship.

Ezek 6:14 So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Not all who read these words will have the chance to visit Palestine in these present days. Those who have visited will recognize the truth of what is said. How sad it is that both the Jews and the Arabs contend for possession of that land today. There are many places on earth today which are far more inviting than that in which God's people betrayed Him so viciously.

We do not know today where Diblath was. But from the general tone of the text, it seems that it refers to much of what Abraham was told was a land which God would show unto him. Will men ever come to the realization that God blesses those who love and obey Him, and that He curses those who ignore His will and mock Him?

Chapter 7

Ezek 7:1 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Chapters six and seven are sometimes thought of as a unit. Both deal with the doom of Jerusalem and the land. Both begin with precisely the same words.

Ezek 7:2 Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land.

Ezekiel has the very distasteful job of declaring the patience of the Lord to be at an end for Israel. The punishment will extend to the farthest reaches of their territory.

Ezek 7:3 Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations.

I can recall my parents telling that with one more occurrence of my bad behavior I would have no more chances. Then when I did that same thin again, I knew very well that there was no need for me to beg my way out. Solomon said that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It was tragic that Israel had not taken those words to heart.

My friend, would you like for the Lord to judge you according to your ways, or would you prefer that He extend mercy to you along with grace? That was not to be the case with Israel. They had reached the end of the line. Their sins were about to find them out.

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**Ezek 7:4 And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.**

The rebellious people were treating Jehovah as if He were no more than another human, or one off their many false gods. When He had laid His judgment upon them, they would have no doubt that He is Ruler of heaven, earth and all that is in them.

**Ezek 7:5 Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come.**

That which was to come upon them was not just one among many troubles. This would be one which stood out as greater than anything they had thus far seen. It is sure and certain.

**Ezek 7:6 An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come.**

**Ezek 7:7 The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains.**

The two words “is come” are used four times in these two verses. It may sound like a broken phonograph record. It is not! It will no longer be tomorrow. It will be TODAY.

The mountains sometimes resounded with the shouts of joy and triumph. No such rejoicing would be heard among the hills of the land. The grief had been waiting and waiting. The wait is over.

**Ezek 7:8 Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations.**

Verse four and verse eight sound almost exactly alike. Israel will be dealt with just as they had acted. All God really had to do was just let nature take it's course. Those who play with fire are sooner or later going to be burnt. They need not expect God to step in and protect them after the insolent manner in which they had dealt with Him on a repeated basis.

**Ezek 7:9 And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the LORD that smiteth.**

**Ezek 7:10 Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded.**

God uses two kinds of rods in working with His people. One is the rod of power such as that wielded by Moses as the people escaped from the Egyptians. The other is the rod of chastisement which is now ready to descend upon this pride filled people who are so determined to sow sin. The rod was not dead. It was now to blossom and bear an unhappy harvest.

**Ezek 7:11 Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them shall remain, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither shall there be wailing for them.**

Violence has a way of multiplying itself. It had become so common in the land of Israel that the results would have their effect upon everyone. Men, women and children would all be engulfed in the sorrows, but it be of no avail to weep and mourn.

**Ezek 7:12 The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.**

Business transactions would be meaningless. The one who sold goods would have no reason to rejoice in that the profit he had made would be of no use to him. The one who purchased a product that was disappointing need not grieve over his loss. It would have made no difference if it had been of a superior nature. The enemies were to come in and cancel out the effects of any trading, whether profitable or unprofitable.

**Ezek 7:13 For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life.**

This may be a reference to the Jubilee year. This came about every fifty years. Any transfer of property was cancelled at that time and all was returned to the one who owned it at the time of the Jubilee.

Evil men and women would not find it possible to fortify themselves against any retaliation against their greed. Utter chaos would reign and mob rule would prevail.

**Ezek 7:14 They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.**

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Is this the trumpet of the enemy which was blown, or was it that of the people of Israel. In either case the trumpet warning would find no warriors rising to the occasion. The enemy would find little resistance. Israel would be helpless

Ezek 7:15 The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him.

If the people decided to fight, they would find the sword of the enemy too powerful to oppose. If they decided not to fight, they would find themselves defeated by hunger and disease.

Ezek 7:16 But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity.

The stragglers who did manage to flee into the more desolate regions would be found mourning like doves who have been driven from their nests. Neither the mountain tops nor the valleys and caves would provide protection. We are reminded of the fact that “Your sins will find you out.”

Ezek 7:17 All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water.

In the face of all the tragedy hearts would melt with fear. Physical strength would fail them. They would be too weak to swing a sword, or even to stand in battle.

Ezek 7:18 They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame

shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads.

Their appearance would be woeful. The horror on the inside would be evident in the sackcloth they would wear upon their bodies and the shame that could be seen in their faces. The baldness would be present because of the tearing out of the hair.

Ezek 7:19 They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity.

Money would become nothing more than shiny metal. Gold and silver coins would be of no use for bribery. The enemies could take these coins at will. Their stomachs would be empty of food. Their souls would be empty of hope. All of this would be their just due for setting their own will above that of God.

Ezek 7:20 As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations and of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them.

The ornament mentioned here is the sanctuary of the Lord. It was to be used for His praise and honor. Instead of being used for that purpose, the people had placed idols and images within it. As a result God would remove them from it.

Ezek 7:21 And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it.

Those who were about to invade the land would be allowed to take over the holy place and fill it with that which was repulsive to Jehovah. The enemy would take great glee in being able to take control.

Ezek 7:22 My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.

If the face of the Lord is toward us, no one can bring us to shame. If the Lord turns His face away from us, we can not prevail. Weeping is common when God has turned away.

Ezek 7:23 Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.

What kind of a chain is the one spoken of here? Some believe it to have been long lines of people moving out into neighboring lands. Others think it had to do with things coming around full cycle, similar to the saying that all that goes around comes around. Violence and crime breed more violence and more crime when Jehovah is left out of the picture.

Ezek 7:24 Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled.

If Israel wished to live like the heathen who loved sin and hated God, He would bring such people in upon them.

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The result would be that their pride would be cut off and the access to God would be taken away as the holy places became polluted with that which God despised.

**Ezek 7:25 Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.**

When the ruin which was ahead came upon them, they shall cry out, Peace, Peace. But there shall be no peace.

**Ezek 7:26 Mischief shall come upon mischief, and vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.**

Trouble would be piled up on top of trouble. When that happened the people would expect the previous channels of communication with God would be open to them. Such help would be unavailable. Prophets were supposed to guide through the visions provided by God. These would cease. Priests were supposed to administer the laws of Jehovah. This would be impossible in such chaos. Elders are expected to pass their wisdom down to those with less experience. The elders would not be heard.

**Ezek 7:27 The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.**

Rulers would be helpless. Trouble would plague everyone from the peasant to the princes. God was ready to allow them to go their own way. When it was found that it is not in man to direct his own steps, some few might come to their senses and realize the need to reach upward to the only source of ultimate hope.

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Chapter 8

Ezek 8:1 And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me.

It has now been just over a year since Ezekiel had seen the vision of the glory of God before. That vision took place in the fifth year of the captivity. This is the sixth year. Since the captivity took place in 586 or 587 B.C., we are talking about probably 592 B.C. Ezekiel knows that every year of that period of time was a painful experience. It would still be over sixty years before the seventy years were up.

The leaders of the people had come to Ezekiel's house and were sitting there with him when the hand of God touched him. Something of great importance was just ahead.

Ezek 8:2 Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.

He then saw a vision which looked very much like the one he had seen before. This seems to have been the Spirit of God this time. If the other vision was that of the Father in heaven it is understandable that the second person of the Godhead would have a similar glory about Him. Again we read of fire from the loins downward and also upward. Again there is a brightness along with the fire.

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**Ezek 8:3 And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.**

In his vision, the Spirit of God reached out and caught Ezekiel up by the locks of his hair and transported him to the door of the temple gate which faced toward the north in Jerusalem. At that gate there was an image seated which was most hateful to Jehovah. It was an image which caused jealousy in the heart of the Lord.

God is not jealous in the same manner as men are. His jealousy arises from the danger He sees for his people when they worship that which can never aid them in any way. Our jealousy seems to be self centered. His jealousy is for the welfare of those who have been created in His image.

**Ezek 8:4 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.**

**Ezek 8:5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.**

God called upon Ezekiel to focus his eyes upon the way that led to the north. When he obeyed the command, he saw the image which caused God's jealousy. It was located within easy eyesight of the altar upon which sacrifices should have been presented to Him.

It may be worth mention that it was by way of the north that the invaders had come in to take their captives in the past.

**Ezek 8:6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.**

The reason for having brought Ezekiel to this place was that he could be shown the horrible sins the people who were still left in Jerusalem were committing in the worship of false gods. He had already seen the image of jealousy. Now he was to see even worse sights. The Lord had solid reasons for being angry with Israel. Ezekiel needed to be shown what they were.

**Ezek 8:7 And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.**

Ezekiel is being brought closer to the most holy portion of the temple. As he is brought to the door of the courtyard he sees a hole in the wall. This seems, from the general context of the events, to have been a door which was ordinarily out of the sight of the general public.

**Ezek 8:8 Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.**

The prophet was told to dig into the hole in the wall. When he did that, he discovered a door which led closer

to the most sacred places. Some things were going on of which many were unaware.

**Ezek 8:9 And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.**

The image of jealousy was just the first in a series of abominations which he was to be shown.

**Ezek 8:10 So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about.**

When he passed through the door, he saw pictures of all types of objects which were being worshipped by those who were supposed to be restricting such adoration to the One True God.

**Ezek 8:11 And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.**

Standing there in praise of the various objects of worship were seventy men who were elders in the land. Jaazaniah was a priest. He had a censer from which a cloud of incense was being offered to the false gods.

**Ezek 8:12 Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.**

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These were the men who had more reason to trust in the LORD who had so blessed His chosen people through all those centuries of the past. Now here they were showing utter disdain for Jehovah and offering their praise and sacrifices to “nothings.” They seemed quite convinced that what they were doing was invisible to their Maker. They could not have been more mistaken. Jehovah sees all!

Ezek 8:13 He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do.

This was still not the end. There was even worse to come. Ezekiel must have been utterly disgusted by this time, but he was to be exposed to things God had seen that Israel’s leaders thought were hidden to His eyes.

Ezek 8:14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD’S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

Ezekiel was then led to an inner gate of the temple itself. There he saw a group of women who were shedding tears over Tammuz, who is thought to be the same as the false god Adonis of the Greeks. Tammuz was considered to be a god of fertility who brought on the revival of the vegetation each spring of the year. It is probably safe for us to believe these women were concerned with their own fertility. Tammuz had supposedly died and been resurrected, proving his power to revitalize nature, including humans.

Ezek 8:15 Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

Where are the abominations to reach an end? Ezekiel is told there are still more.

Ezek 8:16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

As Ezekiel was brought to the inner court of the temple he saw about twenty-five men with the backs turned toward the temple and facing the east. They were in the process of worshipping the sun.

It is most disgusting when men lower their gaze from Jehovah who created them to worship their fellow men. How completely unexplainable it is when they leave that level to worship the sun, moon, stars and planets. If it is disgusting to us, what must it be to the Only One deserving our worship?

Ezek 8:17 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.

It might seem to be a light matter to the house of Judah who were participating in these sins. It was

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certainly not a light matter to the Lord. The result was that the entire land had been taken over by corruption and violence.

But what is meant by saying further insult had been made when the people put the branch to their nose. In general, the commentators had expressed difficulty in understand just what this meant. I see but two explanations which seem logical. The first is that they were “thumbing their noses at God.” All of us understand the crudity of this gesture. The second is that the branch is the crotch of another human, and that homosexuality is involved in their abominable worship practices. This is crude, but it is far from impossible.

**Ezek 8:18 Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.**

Did Jehovah had a right to be angry? Oh Yes! Not only had He a right to be angry. He was angry! They had brought Him to the breaking point. It is not pleasant to think of a time when God no longer will hear prayer. But the Bible says that these sinners might cry out “loudly” to Him and find that He has a deaf ear. Could He possibly make it any plainer that He is a JEALOUS GOD?

## *Chapter 9*

**Ezek 9:1 He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.**

The reason for the loud voice should be clear. There is to be no questioning of His call for the destruction of the wicked in what God had blessed so fully in making it the religious center of the world at the time of this scene.

There were some who were charged with the oversight of the city. We are told in other passages that God has given his angels charge concerning His people. These angels know what is taking place and they are to deal with matters as God directs them.

These have weapons of destruction in their hands. They are commanded to ready themselves for making use of those weapons.

**Ezek 9:2 And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.**

These are called men, but this is probably only because this allows Ezekiel to see them in the vision. At the call of Jehovah they approached the city of Jerusalem by way of the north gate. This was the gate through which devastating enemy armies had come. This time it will be no different. There will be massive destruction.

There are seven of these angels. One of the seven differed from the other six. Rather than having a weapon

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of destruction, he is dressed clean linen and has an inkhorn at his side. All seven of them stand beside the brazen altar ready for further instructions.

Ezek 9:3 And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side;

The glory of God would ordinarily have been found between the cherubim on the ark. It had left that position and had moved to the door of the temple. This was the same personality which Ezekiel had seen earlier, with fire and the appearance of polished brass.

He called out to the angel with the inkhorn to give him instructions.

Ezek 9:4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

The angel with the inkhorn was to move through the city of Jerusalem and place a mark on the foreheads of those who lamented over all the wickedness of the city.

Let us be careful about our own attitude toward the sin which surrounds us in our own day. Are we truly grieving over it, or do we find it entertaining?

Ezek 9:5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

The six were not to go about their destruction of the wicked until the one with the inkhorn had made it certain as to which were to be spared and which were to be destroyed.

Ezek 9:6 Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

There is to be no mercy for those who do not have the mark in their forehead. Both men and women, young and old, Every individual is to be examined. Surprisingly, even the children are included in the count. Nor is the temple sanctuary exempt. That is the beginning point for the action. The wickedness had penetrated to that area which was expected to be most pure, and was not. Even the elders or leaders of the people were to face the test.

The reader should compare the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation with what is done in the marking of the foreheads here. Also there are similarities to the marking of the houses at the time of the exit from the land of Egypt.

Ezek 9:7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

The command from the glory of God was that the court and even the temple itself were to be defiled by being strewn with the corpses of those who were slain. The angels did as they had been bidden.

Ezek 9:8 And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

Ezekiel was stricken with horror. It seemed that God was not willing to leave even the remnant which He had promised would always be protected. Would the Lord really eliminate every one of His people?

Ezekiel is sometimes perceived as an insensitive prophet who preached that the chips must fall, and he was pleased that it be so. This passage states just the opposite. Ezekiel asked if it was not possible that mercy would be extended.

Ezek 9:9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

God's reply to Ezekiel was that the iniquity of the people was enormous. The people had become bloodthirsty and vicious. They had adopted the idea that God simply did not see what was going on. He had gone on to other pursuits and left them to revel in their sea of wickedness.

Ezek 9:10 And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

The prophet is assured that God had seen. What He had seen would not be tolerated. Those who were rejoicing

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in their sins would find no leniency. They were to be sure their sins would find them out.

**Ezek 9:11 And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.**

The angel who had been charged with placing the identifying marks on the foreheads of those who were true to God announced that he had accomplished the charge he had been given. Although we do not hear from the other six who were to destroy those who treated the will of God with disdain, we can most certainly conclude that these six had also concluded their grim assignments.



## Chapter 10

This is one of the most difficult chapters in the Bible to completely understand. The visions carry truths which must not be missed. At the same time the imagery is so foreign to our every day experiences with respect to the natural world that we come to the realization that God is only presenting a degree of information about spiritual matters which men can try to comprehend without the detailed and logical relationships which lie beyond our abilities.

We are reminded of dreams from which we awoke and only then did we realize we were dreaming. When attempting to put the dream back together, we find ourselves wondering if the dream had some meaning that we missed. We will do our best to grasp the basic truths of Ezekiel's vision without going off into wild speculation.

**Ezek 10:1 Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.**

The word "firmament" ordinarily carries the idea of solidity. That is not the case here. It only has the appearance of solidity. Ezekiel is looking at the area over the heads of the cherubim which are associated with the mercy seat of the ark and the mercy seat. The cherubim are the spiritual servants of God who carry out those tasks which are divinely assigned to them. These tasks vary from one time to another. This time the cherubim support the throne of the glory of God.

The firmament has the color of a sapphire stone. Sapphires are a beautiful blue in color and are very clear.

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They are sometimes said to be heavenly blue in color. Ezekiel does not see an actual throne. He sees something which has the appearance of a throne.

Ezek 10:2 And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in my sight.

Who is the “He” who gives the command for coals of fire to be taken from between the cherubims and scatter them over the city of Jerusalem? It is not clear whether it is God Himself, or a cherubim who relays a command from the Lord. Either way, it is an act initiated by the One who rules the universe.

Fire has different uses in the biblical scene. At times it warms. At times it purifies. This time it will destroy by burning that which God abominates. The command was that the coals be given to the man who had previously marked the foreheads of those who were to be protected from destruction. He is thus familiar with what is to be burned and what is not. The command to scatter the coals of fire was carried out.

Ezek 10:3 Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.

The cloud off the glory of the Lord had entered into the temple at the time it was built. At that time it was said to have filled the area. The same picture is seen here.

Ezek 10:4 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of

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**the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory.**

The cloud of glory then moved from the area of the mercy seat to the threshold of the temple. Now not only the temple was filled with the cloud, but the courtyard also.

**Ezek 10:5 And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.**

The sound of the cherubims wings was loud enough to be heard even to the outer edges of the temple courtyard. We compare this with the sound of the rushing mighty wind which was heard on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles to enable them to perform miracles of healing, etc.

**Ezek 10:6 And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels.**

When the man clothed with linen heard the command to receive the coals of fire and scatter them upon the city, he went in and stood beside the wheels which were associated with the cherubims.

**Ezek 10:7 And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out.**

Upon the arrival of the man clothed in linen, one of the cherubims reached out and took coals from between the cherubims and placed it in the man's hands. The man then took them out into the city. He seems to have had no reluctance to do this. Before, he had marked those who were to be exempt from the punishment. Now he will apply the punishment to those who were not exempt.

**Ezek 10:8 And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings.**

What is the meaning of the man's hand which appeared? I believe it tells us that the punishment was to come to Israel through human actions. The city would be destroyed and burned at the hands of men, but at the will of God.

**Ezek 10:9 And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone.**

Each of the four cherubims had a wheel associated with it. The wheels differed in color from the firmament discussed earlier. All I can say with respect to the different colors is that there is great majesty demonstrated. I am reminded of the cascades which were a tourist attraction near the city of Jackson, Michigan. It was a family treat to go occasionally at night and wonder at the beauty of this sight. Water fell like a river over a series of falls under which various colored lights shone. As the lights changed color the onlookers would remark at their beauty with amazement. We must confess that there is no way we can fully imagine the scene Ezekiel saw.



**Ezek 10:10 And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.**

All four of the wheels were in some way a part of a unit. All of the wheels worked together to move the throne above them.

**Ezek 10:11 When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went.**

This verse is beyond my abilities to imagine. Each of the cherubim faced a different direction of the compass. It seems that each of them went straight in the direction toward which the heads were pointed. This would seem to say that the whole unit expanded in all four directions simultaneously.

**Ezek 10:12 And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had.**

Now we have a more comprehensive list of the parts of the cherubims. They had bodies, backs, hands, wings, wheels, eyes all around, and wheels. If the reader is quite confident that he or she has a perfect picture of this chariot of Jehovah, I am envious.

**Ezek 10:13 As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel.**

**Ezek 10:14 And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second**

**face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.**

We search for a command after the words “O wheel.” We do not find one. The next information is that the four cherubs had similar faces those spoken of before this. There is one difference the cherubim which has the face of a man here is the one who was said to have had the face of an ox before.

**Ezek 10:15 And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar.**

What a strange verse! The cherubims are spoken of in the plural, and then in the same breath they are called “the” living creature. Again we are reminded of other statements in the scriptures. In regard to the threefold nature of the Godhead, we are informed that there are three and the three are one.

We must not miss the point of the verse that this creature is the same as the one Ezekiel saw when he was transported from the river of Chebar in Babylonia to the city of Jerusalem and to the temple.

**Ezek 10:16 And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them.**

Can we say that the wheels provide the energy which moves the entire unit? I tend to agree with one author who stated that the wheels represented the ever moving providential oversight of God. Israel was to find that God

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has not forgotten that which takes place upon this globe called earth. He is vitally concerned with the salvation of every man or woman ever to appear here.

Ezek 10:17 When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for the spirit of the living creature was in them.

The spirit is that which brings life and movement into being. That which gave life to the creature Ezekiel saw was the wheels God set into motion.

Ezek 10:18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims.

At this point the cloud of God's glory which had moved from the mercy seat to the threshold off the temple departed from the threshold and came to rest above the four cherubims. Departure of the glory of God from the temple was just ahead.

Ezek 10:19 And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

As Ezekiel watched in his vision, the entire throne scene left the surface of the earth and moved toward the east gate. The cherubim and all that was associated with them moved together in preparation for their departure.

Ezek 10:20 This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims.

Every thinking man must recognize there is a spiritual world which exists at a higher plane than this material universe in which we dwell. When Ezekiel reviewed the entire experience he was firmly convinced that he had seen a vision from that spiritual world. There would be much less sin among men if others were to be as certain that God is working in the affairs of men and knows both their sins and their righteous actions.

Ezek 10:21 Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.

Ezek 10:22 And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward.

There is nothing new contained in these last two verses. That does not mean they are useless. They confirm what has been described before.

Although our minds are stretched to the breaking point, we are caused to marvel at the greatness and love of the One who cares so much for the eternal welfare of each and every one of us.

Chapter 11

In this eleventh chapter of Ezekiel we have some very shocking news for those who were in the city of Jerusalem and had not been taken into captivity in Babylon. Ezekiel is transported there in vision and is then expected to convey the information which he receives to the captives. A portion of the information deals with the future of the captives. A second part applies to those remaining in the city.

Ezek 11:1 Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

Did the Spirit actually take the body of Ezekiel from the region of the river of Chebar, or did it transport his consciousness? It is my understanding that it was his consciousness and not his body, and that his body remained in Chaldea with the captives while he was enabled to see what was taking place in the area of the temple in Jerusalem.

Ezek 11:2 Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city:

He was first allowed to see the situation at the east gate of the temple which looked out toward the Mount of Olives. There he saw twenty-five men. Among these men were two of the principal men of the city.

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These were Jaazaniah and Pelatiah. Ezekiel was told that these men were giving damaging advice to the people of the city.

**Ezek 11:3 Which say, It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh.**

What was this wicked counsel? They were saying it was not the time to build houses; that the city was a caldron and they were the flesh in the caldron.

Normally a caldron would be a pot in which flesh was cooked. Why are these two thoughts connected, that Jerusalem was a caldron and the people still there were being cooked? And why were they not to build houses?

The most reasonable explanation this writer has been able to discover is that those who still remained felt that God had allowed those who were taken captive to be eaten in the sense that they no longer counted as God's chosen people. Their view of themselves was that they were in a very hot position and in great danger, but that they would survive the attacks by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. According to their way of thinking, there was no time to build houses because it was necessary to fight for their lives against the invaders.

**Ezek 11:4 Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.**

God commanded that Ezekiel prophesy against these misguided leaders. They would not be able to protect themselves from the fire. They would meet a similar fate as did those already captured. It was not because these still in Jerusalem were approved by God that they had

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not already been removed. It was wrong for them to be encouraging one another to resist the invading army. In doing so they were setting themselves up against the will of the Lord.

They were quite wrong about being the flesh in the caldron. It was those whom they had slain because they would not fight the invading army that had been the flesh.

Ezek 11:5 And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

Jehovah knew the thoughts of the false leaders in the city, as He knows the thoughts of all men. They were only misguiding those who followed them. They had been responsible for the death of those who lay strewn about the streets of the city even at that time.

Ezek 11:6 Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

Those who gave false advice were responsible for the death of many of their own people. It was God's decision that punishment would be administered to them. It was their own fault that many dead lay in the streets.

Ezek 11:7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it.

They had very good reason to be concerned over their dead. They were being boiled in the caldron which they had brought upon themselves. Nevertheless God would remove them from the situation in which they had plunged themselves.

Ezek 11:8 Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD.

They would be removed from their supposed caldron and would be judged out in the borders of the land of Canaan. They were quite wrong when they assumed that they were to escape without being judged for their sins. They would face judgment.

Ezek 11:9 And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you.

God would remove them from the city of Jerusalem and the dangers they had met there. But the outcome of that would be that they would find themselves in an even worse situation. They were to face judgment for their unbelief.

Ezek 11:10 Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Although they would escape from the city of Jerusalem, they would find themselves facing their foes in the outlying portions of the land. They would be punished by the Chaldeans.

Ezek 11:11 This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel:

Any persecution they had suffered within the city of Jerusalem would be overshadowed by that which they were to face at the hands of the foes in the outlying regions of the land.

Ezek 11:12 And ye shall know that I am the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.

They had acted like the heathen by rejecting the will of Jehovah. Now they would find themselves turned over to those whose behavior they had followed.

Ezek 11:13 And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

Even while Ezekiel was prophesying to the leaders, Pelatiah, one of the two principle men fell dead. Ezekiel was exceedingly troubled. He remembered the promise of Jehovah that a remnant would be saved. He was now beginning to wonder if God intended to destroy every Israelite. Would God really fail to keep His remnant promise?

Ezek 11:14 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

God's reply to Ezekiel was that He had not forgotten His promise, and that a remnant would be protected just as He had said.

They had agreed that those who had been driven from the land were unacceptable to God and would be eliminated from the fold of the Lord. This was a false position. Even though the captives were scattered among many nations, God would continue to protect the small number who continued in faith. He would gather that small number and assemble them into the land of Israel which had been given to them.

This is the point where the prophesy of Ezekiel is to turn from the literal land of Canaan to the New Jerusalem in the Kingdom of God in heaven. The old fleshly city of Jerusalem was to be replaced by the New spiritual Jerusalem in the heavenly places.

Ezek 11:15 Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.

Those who had remained in Jerusalem felt that they were less deserving of punishment than those who had been removed into Babylon. They falsely claimed that the land had been promised to them and that God would see that they were enabled to continue there.

Ezek 11:16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a

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**little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.**

They were to understand that God was the one who had arranged for the captives to be scattered among various nations. Even so, He would see that the remnant would not be utterly destroyed.

**Ezek 11:17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.**

**Ezek 11:18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.**

The time would arrive when a new spiritual creation would take place. The stony hearts of the people would be replaced by hearts which were happy to obey the Lord rather than living according to their own will. Idolatry would be eliminated. They would walk in His statutes. They would then be counted as His people and would receive His blessings.

On the contrary, those who failed to make the change to obedient faith would find that their sinfulness would bring misery and curses upon their own heads.

This new Israel of God may be identified today as the Church of Jesus Christ. God's promise of a remnant has been kept. That promise was conditional. It was made to those few who walked in His statutes. It was not meant for those who ignored His laws.

**Ezek 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:**

There would be some who would respond to the will of Jehovah. That remnant would welcome the faithful service which the Lord demanded. A new spirit of obedience and love for the will of Jehovah would replace that old spirit of selfish rebellion.

**Ezek 11:20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.**

When the right relationship is established between the Lord and His people, Both the Lord and His people will find great satisfaction in working together. Oh yes! God would not forget His own!

**Ezek 11:21 But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.**

There was to be no such happy fate for the unfaithful. They were to face the consequences of their evil hearts.

**Ezek 11:22 Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.**



After this Ezekiel was lifted up in the Spirit as the cherubims first moved up to the top of the Mount of Olives and then transported him back to the captives in Babylon or Chaldea. After having returned him to the captives, the vision which Ezekiel had been seeing left him. He then obeyed the command to share what he had seen with those who were being held in the captivity.

The Spirit of God had now abandoned the city and the temple. This was but the first page of the new volume which was to be delivered through Jesus Christ in the new dispensation.

**Ezek 11:23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.**

What a horrible thought! The glory of the Lord had been an indication of His presence among His people. Now the people were being taught the lesson that when God is mocked, those who have been His people shall experience misery which they had not anticipated.

**Ezek 11:24 Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.**

At this point the vision was complete. The truths which God wanted presented to those in captivity were to hear that which had been shown to Ezekiel in the vision.

**Ezek 11:25 Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.**

The information which Ezekiel gave to the captives should have given them new hope which could allow them to bear up under the difficult conditions which they were enduring.

## *Chapter 12*

Now Ezekiel will use a method which partially used by preachers in the pulpit today. When the preacher wishes to talk about some topic which is gentle and loving in nature, he will soften his voice and make it fit the nature of the topic. When he wishes to discuss the wrath of God, he may raise his voice and put a far different expression on his face.

Ezekiel will use actions which God Himself has suggested to him, and which will draw attention to the message which is to be placed in the minds of those who observe those actions. It will be literally impossible for those observers to ever forget the events and the main points which God wants taught.

**Ezek 12:1 The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying,**

Remember that the prophet has now concluded his vision journey to Jerusalem and he is now about to relay the information he has been given about the certainty of the coming captivity of those who remain in the city, and also the certain destruction of the city by the forces of Nebuchadnezzar.

He was among those earlier captives and knows the sort of things which were experienced when the captives were exiled from their land. They had to carry whatever belongings they felt absolutely necessary, and which they were able to carry on their own backs. He will now mimic those actions to show the surety of a similar experience for those still remaining in Jerusalem. These are not original thoughts of the prophet. They are the commands of the Lord.

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Ezek 12:2 Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.

Ezek 12:3 Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.

He is reminded that the reason for what he is about to do lies in the rebellious nature of the people of Israel. They have shown repeatedly that they are unwilling to open their eyes and their ears to the expressed will of God. They will now be given a demonstration which will intensify the meaning of the message.

The first thing Ezekiel is to do is to get some of his belongings and move out among the people where he cannot help but be noticed. He is then to trudge back and forth carrying those belongings, just as the exiles did when they were forced to leave Canaan and go to the region of Babylonia, or Chaldea. This was to be done during the daylight hours while he could be easily seen.

Then he was to dig through the wall of his house and place a covering over his head so that he could not see the ground. He was to take some of his stuff and carry it through the hole in the wall. It is possible that this was to be done in the darkness of the night when he could not see his way; however it is also possible that the covering over his face was the reason for the darkness which caused him not to be able to see. Otherwise the same darkness which caused him not to be able to see the ground would have prevented the people from seeing him. Whichever was true, he was providing an example of deliberate blinding such as the people had been doing when they

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refused to heed the instructions of Jehovah.

We find that when Jerusalem was taken the remainder of the people were removed, King Zedekiah was blinded and was unable to see the land of Chaldea and this was true either while he was moving toward it or after arriving in it.

**Ezek 12:4 Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity.**

This time the command was to move the belongings in broad daylight while others could see the prophet as he carried his stuff from his home to distant places. The point would be impossible to deny.

**Ezek 12:5 Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby.**

Ezekiel was even to dig through the wall of the city and carry his goods out of the city through the opening.

**Ezek 12:6 In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.**

As he carried these possessions, he was to cover his face in such manner that he would be unable to see the ground. Ezekiel was to be an object lesson which would be very, very plain. They would be moving out of the city and into the land of the Chaldeans.

**Ezek 12:7 And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for captivity, and in the even I digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought it forth in the twilight, and I bare it upon my shoulder in their sight.**

Ezekiel did precisely as he was commanded by the Lord.

**Ezek 12:8 And in the morning came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,**

God knew full well that the curiosity of the people who saw the peculiar things Ezekiel was doing would find it quite impossible not to ask him whether he was out of his mind, or whether he had some reasonable explanation for his behavior. They would ask him “What doest thou.”

**Ezek 12:9 Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou?**

**Ezek 12:10 Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that are among them.**

When the people asked him what he was doing, he was to reply by telling them his actions were a command from the Lord. He was to demonstrate that the same things which the prophet was doing would be done by the people who still remained in Jerusalem. Even the ruler of the people would find it necessary to dig through the wall of the city and carry his belongings upon his back.

**Ezek 12:11 Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove and go into captivity.**

Those back in the city were not going to evade the corrective actions God was preparing for them. They would be removed from the city of Jerusalem. They would also end up in the captivity of the Chaldeans.

**Ezek 12:12 And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with his eyes.**

These efforts to escape would be unsuccessful. They would be carried out in the dark. Even the king would go to the land of the Chaldeans, but he would not be able to see the land because he would be blinded by Nebuchadnezzar's man.

2 Kings 25:4 tells of the fulfillment of this prophecy. The fulfillment came about approximately five years from the time Ezekiel presented the prediction to the people.

*2Kings 25:4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.*

**Ezek 12:13 My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there.**

This is a very specific prophecy which could hardly be ignored when it took place. A king, walking around in foreign territory with covering over his eyes would most certainly draw attention.

**Ezek 12:14 And I will scatter toward every wind all that are about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them.**

God was very clear about what He intended to do to this rebellious people. He would scatter them in every direction to many different lands. He would allow most of them to be killed by famine, pestilence and the sword. Still, He would save a remnant from death. This remnant would be able to tell of all these abominations, even as we are reading of them at the present time.

Those who might have been willing and able to assist King Zekeiah were so terrified that they fled in all directions and left the King to witness the murder of his sons before his eyes were put out.

**Ezek 12:15 And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries.**

Only Jehovah Himself could make such an improbable statement and then bring it to pass just as it was predicted. The prediction certainly did take place. There are Jews in many many countries today as a result of that scattering.

**Ezek 12:16 But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither**

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they come; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

When the predictions came to pass only foolish persons would have the nerve to deny both the existence and also the power of the God of heaven.

Ezek 12:17 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Ezekiel was then commanded to present another visual demonstration. He was to eat his food with quaking and drink his water while trembling and fear. The quaking and trembling may speak of two conditions of mind. They could have been wondering when the food and water would no longer be available because of scarcity. They could also have been fearful of the horrors which could be ahead at the hands of their captors. The invaders had the power to leave the land completely desolate and waste for the entry of wild beasts. The damage would not be limited to Jerusalem. It would be extended to many other cities and villages of the land.

Ezek 12:18 Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness;

Ezek 12:19 And say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord GOD of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the land of Israel; They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein.

Not just Jerusalem would be devastated. Cities and villages all over the land of Canaan would be trembling

with fear over what the future held. It would become an undeniable fact that the Lord was ready to deliver Israel into the hands of the Chaldeans who would captivate them and leave the land of Canaan in a devastated condition.

Ezek 12:20 And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Any denial of God's involvement in the catastrophe would be utter foolishness. He was angry with His people and they would feel His wrath.

Ezek 12:21 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

The people who were being witness to the strange actions of Ezekiel then found another escape route in their minds to deny any real concern about the horrible prophecies that Ezekiel was laying out before them. They began to say that it might be true that these things would happen, but that this would not affect the people for many years. Thus they need not be concerned over any possible danger to those of Jerusalem in the present days.

The captives in Babylonia were convinced that God would not allow His great city of Jerusalem to be laid waste. If such were to happen it would be far away in the future.

God provided a very definite reply to their denials of the danger ahead. Their proverb which stated that the days are prolonged and the visions fail would be caused to cease.

Ezek 12:22 Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are

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**prolonged, and every vision faileth?**

**Ezek 12:23 Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision.**

In the past there had been altogether too many false prophesies which had not been fulfilled. These were presented by men who wished only to raise their popularity by prophesying that which the people wanted to hear. Naturally they did not find fulfillment. Those false prophets would be found out and discredited. It would be different with the predictions of the Lord. They would be fulfilled, and the fulfillment would be at hand. In their own days the Lord would see that the predictions came to pass.

Such attitudes as those held by the people to whom Ezekiel was presented the Word of the Lord have not been limited to those people in that time. The same attitudes are shown by those of these latter days. In 2 Peter 3:3-4 we are told of those who held the same false hope that God would not follow up His prophetic warnings with action.

*2Pet 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

*2Pet 3:4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

There will be a large number of persons who are shocked in the end time, just as those of the time of Ezekiel were to be shocked.

**Ezek 12:24 For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel.**

Those were not empty predictions which Ezekiel was placing before the people. The false prophets would live to see their lies proven to be just that. The predictions being made by the Lord would take place.

**Ezek 12:25 For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD.**

My dear reader, pay close attention to the truths which are presented in the Holy Book of God. They are dependable.

**Ezek 12:26 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying.**

Jehovah was well aware of the foolish false confident sayings of the disbelieving people. They were saying the dire things being prophesied would either fail to happen, or would be so far in the future that there was no need for them to be concerned. The Lord declared that they were (dead) wrong. The prophecies were to occur, and it would not be postponed far into the future.

The proof of the validity of the warnings was not long to come. Within a period of less than five years everything which had been predicted had taken place.

As a postscript to this chapter let me add that there are masses of persons in this present Christian dispensation who do not believe Christ will return in

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judgment, or that if He does return, it will be so far in the future that it is of no great concern to those alive at present. Christ may return at any point in time. Even if such unbelievers do die before His return, they will be raised to face the judgment.

Ezek 12:27 Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off.

Ezek 12:28 Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD.

The Lord gave Ezekiel a crystal clear reply to the self deceived Israelites. Those who declared that the visions of punishment for the opposers of the will of God, would be proven WRONG. They did come to pass and it was in less than five years.

Chapter 13

Ezekiel had emerged from the vision which carried him in the Spirit to the land of Canaan and showed him the serious situation of the people who were being told everything would be worked out and any present difficulties were but for a short time.

He was now in possession of information which must be related to his fellow Israelites, no matter what the personal consequences might turn out to be. They were going to be punished severely for their lack of dedication to the God of Heaven. It would be his very unpleasant duty to make this clear to them.

Ezek 13:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

First it must be made clear to them that what Ezekiel was about to say would not originate from his own mind. They were truths which had been presented to him from the Lord Himself.

Ezek 13:2 Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

It was going to be necessary to place the true Word of Jehovah before Israel. This would not be good news. They would react negatively and wish to believe the false prophets rather than the unpleasant truths which Ezekiel had the duty to express. The people would be faced with conditions which would leave them heartsick. Even so, they must believe the Word of Jehovah rather

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than that of men who spoke only what the people wanted to hear.

**Ezek 13:3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!**

There would be no end of the woes which the false prophets would bring upon both themselves and the people as a result of ignoring the correcting punishments they were determined to ignore.

**Ezek 13:4 O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.**

The false prophets were about to lead Israel into the same kind of serious dangers which hungry foxes brought upon their victims in the desert. They would cause people to suffer even more than would have been the case if those prophets had never been heard.

**Ezek 13:5 Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.**

The advice of the false prophets had resulted in the people believing there was no danger which could not be easily overcome. The word should have been to stand in the gaps and defend God's truth with all their strength. The battle between God's truth and Satan's lies was real. Israel could not afford to be indecisive.

**Ezek 13:6 They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.**

The false prophets had been substituting lies and false promises of security. They were making these promises out of their own hearts and minds. Jehovah had said no such thing as the false prophets were presenting to the people.

**Ezek 13:7 Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken?**

The word “vain” means empty or worthless. That was a perfect description of the lies the false prophets were presenting and claiming to be the Word of God.

**Ezek 13:8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD.**

Because the false prophets had spoken lies, and Israel had believed them, they had placed themselves in opposition to God. That would result in very painful consequences.

**Ezek 13:9 And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.**

They need not think God would remain inactive in the face of such opposition. Those who fought against the purposes of Jehovah would find that they would be

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cast out from among the faithful and would find their lies shown to be just that. Both the false prophets and those who adopted their lies would find God to be capable of overcoming their deception.

Ezek 13:10 Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:

There is nothing more dangerous than contradicting the truth of the Heavenly Father. To preach peace when conflict was staring them in the face would lead to death. The defensive walls the false prophets were building were not going to stand when God stretched out His Almighty arm against them.

Ezek 13:11 Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.

Untempered mortar has not been properly aged to make it strong. The forces which were about to come upon Israel were strong enough to overcome any attempts which might be made to protect the city of Jerusalem. The storms were far too vicious to be held off by human defenses. The only possible victory must be gained by following the Word of the Lord.

Ezek 13:12 Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?

The weak efforts to defend Jerusalem through the use of strictly human defenses would not be sufficient. When

the walls fell, everyone would be asking WHY. Was this not the chosen city of the Lord?

Ezek 13:13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it.

God has resources which men can not oppose. Wind, floods and hail are but the beginning. God had been challenged. For the good of mankind He would oppose the challenge and would see it defeated.

Ezek 13:14 So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

How sad it is that the pride of men and women causes them to think they can be successful in fighting against the infinite wisdom of the Almighty Jehovah. The weak defenses which the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem were woefully inadequate to protect the citizens from the attacks of the Chaldeans.

Ezek 13:15 Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered mortar, and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it;

When men stand up on the side of the Lord, He can help them to overcome any enemy. But, when men

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set themselves up against God, they will find defeat inevitable. Abraham was a friend of God. Things went well for him. Judas was an enemy of God. Death and eternal damnation are his lot. The lesson here is that one is extremely foolish to fail in support of the Maker. If God be for us none can succeed against us. If God is against us, none will be able to defend us.

**Ezek 13:16 To wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord GOD.**

The lies of the false prophets who claimed peace to be in the immediate future of Jerusalem were to be a perfect example of what takes place when men set themselves up in opposition to divine wisdom and power.

**Ezek 13:17 Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them,**

Women of Israel had joined in the false view that God would provide health and wealth for His errant people. These women were wrong. They were not prophesying the word of God. They were seeing vain and empty lies. Ezekiel was commanded to expose the lies which they were pouring out.

**Ezek 13:18 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you?**

These evil women were attempting to use magic and witchcraft to convince the people that all would be well in the end. Everyone who reads these words in the present day is aware of the methods used by such women to make profit at the expense of those who are taken in by their selfish words and deeds. They could not save those who came to them for advice. The only real hope was in living by God's truth.

**Ezek 13:19 And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?**

God asks if it is really true that such persons would cause the loss of many souls for just a few handfuls of barley or bread. The results of the lies would be of two kinds. Those who were opposing the Word of the Lord would feed for a short time on barley or bread, but they would face eternal death in the end. And those who had been serving the Lord might be persuaded to turn from Him, thus losing their hope of eternal life.

**Ezek 13:20 Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make them fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly.**

The magicians and witches would use all sorts of paraphernalia to impress their observers. Those attempting to capture souls by such methods are doomed to final defeat. Both the witches and those who are captured by their trickery will die eternally. If, however,

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God is able to persuade the victims to turn from the devil's servants, those who have been released will fly to heaven and finally be with their Maker.

Ezek 13:21 Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

God promised that His truth will conquer such magic and witchcraft when all is said and done. The victims would be made to realize the folly of attaching one's self to false hopes. Such false hopes are the seed which yield a crop of misery and despair.

Ezek 13:22 Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:

How could anyone more effectively fight against God than these fakers were trying to do it? They had cut into the hearts of those who had been trying to follow God's truth and had brought great sadness to them. In addition, they had encouraged the stupidity of the wicked, and had cause them to believe the best way to live is the way of Satan. Satan and his lies will not bring ultimate happiness.

Ezek 13:23 Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

God made a solemn promise to Israel that the lies and deception would come to an end and the people would see the folly of the advocates of the devil.

Following the false promises of the servants of Satan leads to final disaster. There is no greater danger!

Chapter 14

Ezek 14:1 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

It was the God given task of Ezekiel to warn Israel of the tremendous dangers facing them if they did not repent of the worship of idols. These activities were directly opposed to one of the uppermost commandments of the Lord. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Ezek 14:2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Of course the Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel in a more direct fashion than is true of those who preach the Word today. We have the written Word of the Holy Bible. Nevertheless, we can be as certain of the truth in God's Book as Ezekiel was in his day.

Ezek 14:3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

God made it crystal clear that Ezekiel should pull no punches. Israel was headed in a deadly direction. They must be warned. If they refused to heed the warning that refusal would be fatal to their souls.

The people had not only worshiped idols which could be seen. They had allowed this attraction to penetrate to their hearts. They had fallen in love with these false gods. God's love could and must warn them, but if they disregarded it, spiritual death was certain.

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Their hypocrisy was no secret to the Lord. They were making a drastic mistake in assuming that they could defy Him and then expect His blessings.

**Ezek 14:4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;**

Israel had the mistaken idea that because God had chosen Israel as a special people who would aid in bringing the rule of the Lord into the various nations of the earth, He would permit them to oppose His will and then expect a continuation of those blessings.

He did not intend to bless those who mocked Him. He could easily see the deceit which stood between these elders and any blessings He might have provided for Israel. God does not bless idolators.

**Ezek 14:5 That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.**

A patient with serious heart trouble might very well refuse to allow any medical treatment, regardless of the qualifications of the doctor. Israel was doing the same thing on a spiritual level. Their idolatry was so precious to them that they were ready to spurn Jehovah's prescription.

**Ezek 14:6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn**

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yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

In spite of the mental stubbornness of the people, God still offered the remedy. They must repent and turn away from their hateful idolatry. As long as their hearts yearned for the idols, they had demonstrated a deadly problem with heart failure. Without turning from that disease they would separate themselves from His blessings.

Ezek 14:7 For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

It did not matter whether the one coming to one of God's prophets was a descendant of Abraham or not, if that person placed more value upon the idols he worshiped in his heart than He did upon service to Jehovah, he had no hope. He would have an answer to his inquiry, but it would not be the kind of answer he anticipated.

Ezek 14:8 And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

When the Lord decides to make an example of a man or woman and cut His blessings away, the sinner faces certain eternal punishment if he or she fails to turn their affections away from the idols and to the God of heaven.

Ezek 14:9 And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

If the prophet of God desires to believe and teach a lie, God will send that prophet a strong delusion that he may believe such a lie. Then, when the false prophet has taught his fellow man to sin, God will destroy him from the fellowship of the righteous. This was true in the day of Ezekiel. It is just as true today.

Ezek 14:10 And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him;

If a human has sunk so low that he will prophesy lies in the name of the Lord, Both the prophet and the one who believes his lies will face similar punishment. The appetite for lies is just as deadly for the teacher as it is for he who is taught those lies.

Ezek 14:11 That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

The dearest thing to God's heart with respect to mankind is that He might be their God and they might be truly His people. When He punishes men and women He does not do so because He finds pleasure in seeing them suffer. Most parents will understand that punishment



is necessary in order that their children understand the seriousness of misbehavior. It is the same with the Father in heaven.

Ezek 14:12 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,

This verse indicates an extension off the line of thought presented previously.

Ezek 14:13 Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:

When the Lord uses the word “land” He is speaking of the people who dwell in that land. Those who are supposed to be His people have been sinning grievously. Therefore they must be punished. One of the forms of punishment will be famine. This famine will result in the death of both man and beast.

Ezek 14:14 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

Then the question arises as to whether God will bring such punishment upon the land if they are still a small number of righteous persons in it. He declares that even if such righteous persons as Noah, Daniel and Job were to be present, the punishment would still occur. Their own souls would be safe but those whom they could not influence toward righteous living would still be destroyed.

Ezek 14:15 If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:

A second form of punishment would be vicious animals prowling through the land. The fear of these beasts would cause men to tremble with fear and hesitate to even move out where they could be attacked.

Ezek 14:16 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.

To be the son or daughter of a righteous parent would not insure safety of the offspring. Every person must answer for their own sin. Only Christ can offer salvation to men. Even then the salvation depends upon hearing and obeying His teachings and following in His footsteps

Ezek 14:17 Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:

A third form of punishment is war. When God determines to allow men to kill one another in war, the destruction is devastating. Grief becomes almost indescribable. Why is it necessary that men suffer so greatly? It is because sin has been allowed free run in their midst.

Ezek 14:18 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver

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**neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.**

Does the repetition of this thought have a sound purpose? Most certainly it does. The truth of the statement is so important that such repetition is necessary. Every man and woman must face the consequences of the decisions they make to ignore the wisdom of the Almighty.

**Ezek 14:19 Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:**

Pestilence is a fourth form of punishment which men may face. Disease is a natural result of sin. It is not true that every disease from which an individual suffers is the result of his own sin. However, if there had never been sin, there would be no disease.

**Ezek 14:20 Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.**

Again we read the awful statement that the presence of righteous persons in the society will not protect the unrighteous from the wrath of God. Those righteous persons will ultimately live in the presence of God. The unrighteous will be eternally separated from all that is holy.

**Ezek 14:21 For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and**

**the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?**

Here we have a summary of the four judgments God was about to apply to Israel. They were:

1. Famine
2. War
3. Vicious animals
4. Disease

These four were not applied because God loves to see men suffer. They were intended to change the direction of the lives of any who could be touched with the seriousness of their sinful lives.

**Ezek 14:22 Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it.**

In spite of the fact that so much grief had to come upon so many, there would be a small number who would survive to carry on the work of the Lord. This would provide some comfort that all would not be abandoned because of the sins of the masses.

**Ezek 14:23 And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD.**

When that small number who successfully passed through the dismal days of the punishment the purposes

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of Jehovah would become much clearer. He had excellent reasons for applying the corrective measures. Many souls of the days to come would be saved because of the lessons taught to Israel.

My friends, those lessons are still being noticed by wise persons of our own time. Are you among those who have learned from them?

Chapter 15

This brief chapter of only eight verses contains truths which must not be overlooked just because of the brevity of the chapter. God's vineyard must bear fruit. Otherwise it is fit only to be burned.

Ezek 15:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

We are never to forget that Ezekiel is not presenting his own wisdom. That which he teaches is from the mind of Jehovah.

Ezek 15:2 Son of man, what is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

Every person familiar with the outdoors knows the vast differences in the blessings produced by the oaks and fir trees, and those produced by a vine found in the midst of a forest

Ezek 15:3 Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?

It is utterly ridiculous to think of making furniture from a wild grapevine; just as it is ridiculous to think of gathering grapes from an oak tree. The wood from a vine is not even suitable to use as a peg to hang a kitchen pot upon.

Ezek 15:4 Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?

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A vine which bears no grapes is so useless that it is thrown into the fire and burned. No part of it is of use. Neither the ends nor the middle are worth saving.

**Ezek 15:5 Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?**

Even before the vine is cast into the fire, it was without value. After being burned in the fire, it becomes nothing but ashes which soil the surroundings.

**Ezek 15:6 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem.**

Jerusalem had placed herself in precisely the same condition as a vine with no grapes. God makes a solemn promise that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will meet a similar fate to that of the wild grapevine.

**Ezek 15:7 And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them.**

The present writer has had the unpleasant experience of staring into the face of other persons who did not appreciate the ragged clothes he wore in grade school. That was nothing compared to what those who set themselves in opposition to the Lord God will feel when they come to the realization that they have caused God to set His face against them. When that happens in the

judgment day they will rue the day that they decided to make the Lord their foe rather than their friend.

**Ezek 15:8 And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD.**

That land which had been described as flowing with milk and honey would become desolate. Pestilence, Vicious beasts, famine and war would leave it barren and desolate, all as a result of the disrespect of the people of Israel toward the love and grace which had been showered upon them from the time of Abraham to the time of the spiritual adultery which was practiced with the false gods of the Canaanites whom they had failed to drive out of the land at the command of the Lord.

## *Chapter 16*

This lengthy chapter of 63 verses does just what God intended it to do. It shows how corrupt Israel had become, and why it had become necessary to lay serious punishment upon it. If the reader becomes nauseated while contemplating the ingratitude shown by those whom God had blessed so wonderfully for so long, the feeling is quite understandable.

Sodom and Samaria had long since been caused to suffer for their spiritual rot. Should they be punished and Jerusalem be left unscarred when she was even more abominable in her sins than they had been. God said no. They must face their punishment, just as had her companions in sin.

**Ezek 16:1 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

We are not allowed to forget that it is not the personal feelings of Ezekiel which are being declared. These are the Word of the One and Only King of the universe. They must not be bypassed.

**Ezek 16:2 Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,**

Ezekiel is addressed as a Son of man. Jesus was also given this title at times. Both the prophet and the Christ could feel the hurt which comes from observing men dying in sin and paying little attention to the end of the path those men were treading. When the prophet unfolds the will of God before these foolish rebels, they will have no excuse to continue in their deadly spiritual suicide.

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Ezek 16:3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

Those of Jerusalem were certainly not acting like the children of God. There seemed to be attempting to prove that they belonged side by side with those whom God had commanded be driven out of Canaan when they had moved in. Even though they had been blessed above any other people on the face of the earth, they had lowered themselves to a more disgraceful condition than those nations they were supposed to have displaced.

Ezek 16:4 And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.

They had been no great nation when God came upon Moses in the land of Egypt. At that time they more closely resembled a newborn infant who was so helpless that it's navel needed cutting and it's body needed to be washed with salt brine as an antiseptic. It was as if it had never even been diapered when God first led it from the bondage in Egypt.

Ezek 16:5 None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

Israel had been left to fend for herself as an unwanted baby is sometimes thrown out into a dump with no one caring whether it lived or died. If God had not had



compassion on her at that time, she would have been eliminated from existence.

Ezek 16:6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

God had not been willing to pass by the helpless infant nation and let her die in her birth blood. He had called for her to live, and she had lived.

Ezek 16:7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.

What a vast change had come about because of God's concern and compassion. She had grown from babyhood to womanhood. Her figure was attractive and her hair was grown. She was ready for a marriage relationship. All that she needed was for someone to love her, cover her nakedness and be proud of her capabilities. God had blessed her up to that point. What could He do more?

Ezek 16:8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

God's actions are pictured as a marriage ceremony. It was a time for love. He saw that she was properly clothed

and promised her that if she would be loyal to Him, He would continue to bless her.

Ezek 16:9 Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

The Lord had first cleansed her from her condition as a neglected infant. He had continued to care for her as she passed through the years of childhood. He had anointed her with oil to encourage the development of her beauty.

Ezek 16:10 I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

When she had reached the age of adolescence God had seen that she was clothed with silk and fine linen. Israel had no excuse at that point for claiming she had been neglected. Just the reverse was true.

Ezek 16:11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

It was not simply that she had her nakedness covered. She had been given every adornment that might be used to enhance her attractiveness. Chains and bracelets added to her charm.

Ezek 16:12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

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A crown had been obtained for her head. A beautiful jewel had been placed in the middle of her forehead. Ear rings were fastened to her ears. She was God's queen and must reflect His glory to all persons.

**Ezek 16:13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.**

Think now of the vast difference between Israel's condition at this point and that in which God found here as a forsaken babe in Egypt. She was living in conditions found only in the palaces of royalty.

**Ezek 16:14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.**

The beauty of the nation of Israel had become so great that it was known and discussed by many other less privileged nations; and all of this was the result of God's loving concern for her. She was the apple of His eye.

**Ezek 16:15 But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.**

Now we will be shown the horror of ingratitude toward God for the wonderful grace He lavished upon His chosen nation of Israel. One would expect the outpouring of blessings which had been made hers when the covenant

between Israel and Jehovah had declared Him to be her God, and her to be His people would have overshadowed any evil intrusion into the partnership.

To the contrary, Israel found the worship of the false gods of the heathen of the land to be so attractive that she had poured out her favors upon any who gave her a wink of the eye.

**Ezek 16:16 And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.**

Israel had actually taken the gold and silver which Jehovah surrounded her and had used those valuable metals to beautify the high places of the land where the false gods were worshiped. Such had not been seen before. It would not be seen to the same degree again.

**Ezek 16:17 Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,**

No person has any silver and gold which did not come from the hand of God. This was especially true with respect to Israel. God had poured out more blessings upon her than any other nation in the history of the world. Now she had repaid Him by turning these pieces of jewelry and molding them into images of men, to whom they might offer their affection.

**Ezek 16:18 And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.**

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To aggravate the situation even farther, they had taken the beautiful garments which God had made available to them and used them to decorate their images. Oil which God had provided for them was used to burn incense before the images. Just how could God permit such insults to go without notice?

Ezek 16:19 My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord GOD.

The various substances which emitted pleasant odors had been used as sacrifices to these false gods and images of various kinds.

Ezek 16:20 Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter,

The children who had come into existence through the power of Jehovah had been sacrificed to the false gods. Those sons and daughters were meant to be dedicated to Jehovah and certainly not burnt in sacrifice to Molech, or other imaginary gods.

Ezek 16:21 That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?

They should have held to their children with all of the energy of their souls. Instead, they burnt them to ashes before the false gods. God's children are meant to

live and grow in His image, not to be fuel for sacrificial fires honoring those which were no gods.

Ezek 16:22 And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood.

God's chosen nation had completely forgotten the miseries of the past when they had been cast out as babes to die of starvation, etc.

Ezek 16:23 And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;)

Ezek 16:24 That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street.

Contrary to God's wishes, Israel had set up many locations in high places where all could observe the spiritual adultery which they practiced. Their Maker was their Husband, they should have been true to Him.

Ezek 16:25 Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms.

The worship of the false gods very often involved sexual promiscuity. Israel had offered herself to any who passed by and had cheapened herself until she was a well known whore, bringing disrepute upon the very God who had given her all she had, or ever would have.

Ezek 16:26 Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.

It was not just with the heathen in the land of Canaan that Israel was unfaithful. She had even turned and winked at Egypt who had held her in captivity for some four centuries. How stupid!

Ezek 16:27 Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way.

God had allowed them to degrade themselves to a point so low that even the Philistines looked upon them as a moral disgrace.

Ezek 16:28 Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldst not be satisfied.

It was not enough that favors were given to the Egyptians and the Philistines. Israel had also received attention from the Assyrians. Even this large clientele did not satisfy her hunger for sin. She extended her illicit relationships to anyone who would give her their attention.

Ezek 16:29 Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.

The list of lovers goes on and on. Egypt, Assyria, the Philistines, the Chaldeans, or any other who chose to share her bedroom were invited to do just that.

Ezek 16:30 How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman;

The heart of Israel should have been strong enough to resist every attraction of the false gods. She had the Only True and Living Creator of Heaven and Earth. Nonetheless, she acted the whore with a host of evil playmates.

Ezek 16:31 In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire;

Israel was acting in a manner most disgusting than that off a normal harlot. The harlot would offer her services for a reward of some kind. Israel did not stop there. She played the field without any thought of a fee.

Ezek 16:32 But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!

Israel was acting more like a wife who saw a stranger and took him in just for the excitement of the moment.

Ezek 16:33 They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.

The normal procedure would have been for those who secured the services of a prostitute to pay the prostitute for those services. In the case of Israel, she was hiring them to come to her rather than the reverse.

Ezek 16:34 And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.

Israel's plan of action was indeed much more inglorious than that of a common whore. She was the one who hired her lovers rather than being paid for her services. God looked upon her as being lower than a street walker.

Ezek 16:35 Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD:

It was way past time for Israel to rise up from the filth and hear the word of God. He addressed her as a harlot, which she had proven she was.

Ezek 16:36 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;

What a horrible verse we have before us! A woman who acts in such manner is precisely where Satan wants her to be. She is naked and willing to embrace any idol which happens along. It is even allowed to go so far as to spill the blood of her children as they are offered on the altars of these false gods.

Ezek 16:37 Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.

God promises that He will do Israel a favor in that He will allow her to come into intimate contact with those with whom she has acted promiscuously. They will be allowed to see her without all of her finery. She will then be found not as attractive as she had been when He had favored her.

Ezek 16:38 And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.

Women who ignore their wedding promises too keep themselves only to their husband almost always find that the end of their actions is not just what they expected it to be. Jealousy leads to violence and bloodshed. Israel was to find herself in the midst of bloody battles and captivated by those who wanted to use her for their own advantage.

Ezek 16:39 And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare.

When Israel's false lovers were through with her, she would be back in much the same condition she was before the Lord took her under His arm. All that she

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prized from her disloyalties to Him would be removed. It would seem that she could have anticipated such an end, but she showed no inclination to worry about such possibilities.

**Ezek 16:40 They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords.**

Dear reader, it may be somewhat difficult to remember that we are reading about a disloyal nation rather than a disloyal wife. Here we see Israel surrounded by those who were through with her attractions and were ready to leave the city of Jerusalem lying mangled and covered with ashes.

**Ezek 16:41 And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.**

When the agony which God was going to allow being brought on to the city of Jerusalem was concluded, She would not wish to play the harlot game any more.

**Ezek 16:42 So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.**

When Israel had learned the hardships of living as a harlot, and had turned from her idolatrous worship, God would cease to be angry with her. Then there could be better days ahead. I think we may say that those days were to come only when those of His people who were true

to Him accepted His Son as the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.

**Ezek 16:43 Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.**

Israel should have remembered the days in which she was lifted up from the garbage dump by the hand of Jehovah and provided with all of the wonderful things that a queen might enjoy. But because she had forgotten all God had done for her, God would now bring her evil days down upon her own head. When He had finished she would not enter into these abominable types of behavior again.

**Ezek 16:44 Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter.**

Her reputation would have been scarred. Everyone would class her with the ones from which she had copied her actions. She did not originate such actions. She only mimicked others whom she saw practicing them.

**Ezek 16:45 Thou art thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite.**

The company she was keeping was not the best to be found. She had been taught by the Hittites and the

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Amorites. She had learned well. She hated her husband Jehovah, and was ready to sacrifice her children by sending them through the fire to Molech.

Ezek 16:46 And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters.

What a family. Her sisters were Samaria and Sodom. Both of these sites were famous for their wicked ways. Father, Mother, and sisters were all evil. She had taken up their ways.

Ezek 16:47 Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.

No, we got ahead of ourself. She had not just done as they had done. She had become more rotten in soul than they had. What must then become of her?

Ezek 16:48 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.

Ezek 16:49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

One would think that none other could have reached the spiritual depths to which those men of Sodom reached when they called out for their visitors to come out where

they could know them sexually in homosexuality. Israel had equalled and even surpassed what Sodom had done.

Ezek 16:50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

When Sodom committed such wickedness as Israel was doing, the Lord had removed them from places of influence, as He saw the need to do so.

Ezek 16:51 Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.

Samaria had been heavily punished for her sins, and they were not half as bad as the ones committed by Israel. In fact, Israel had become so bad that she made Samaria look like a good little girl.

Ezek 16:52 Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.

If Israel was determined to try to outdo other nations in sin and wickedness, she must pay the price of her actions.

Ezek 16:53 When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters,

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**and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them:**

When the Lord decided to declare Sodom and Samaria as having paid their debt for sin, He would only then be able to do the same for Israel. All would have to be considered in the same breath.

**Ezek 16:54 That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them.**

Shame! Shame! Shame! Sodom, Samaria and Israel. Both Sodom and Samaria could take a small degree of comfort in the knowledge that Israel had fallen along with them.

**Ezek 16:55 When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.**

**Ezek 16:56 For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride,**

There was a time in which the evils done in Sodom would have been looked upon with horror by those of Israel. But those days had passed. Israel had joined and then surpassed them in her own sins.

**Ezek 16:57 Before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of thy reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all that are round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about.**

We were about to overlook the wicked Philistines. Had Israel descended to the same level as that despicable nation? They joined the other heathen nations in despising the fallen nation of Israel.

**Ezek 16:58 Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD.**

The reaction of the Lord to the unfaithfulness of what were supposed to be His people caused him to point out the need for punishment which would match their sins.

**Ezek 16:59 For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.**

It takes two to join in a covenant. Israel and Jehovah had made oaths with respect to one another. The Lord would be their God, and they were to be His people. A people worship and serve their God. He in turn loves and cares for His people. But Israel had broken her oath and rejected the covenant. God was about to declare His coming actions in response to Israel's despicable lies.

**Ezek 16:60 Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.**

The Lord God did not completely cast out Israel. He remembered the promise He had made to them in the days gone by. As a result of these memories of long ago, He would set up a new covenant. This one would be more embracing than the one which had been broken. Others than just Israelites would be invited to share in the new covenant.

This is the promise which means so much to all of the nations on earth today. The gospel reaches out to invite all who will to come and walk with the Father in heaven.

**Ezek 16:61 Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.**

The time would arrive when that remnant of the Jews who came to their senses and turned back to the Father in heaven would find themselves joined by penitent spiritual kinsfolk from around the world. However it would take place through a new covenant and not the one which Israel had broken.

**Ezek 16:62 And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD:**

That old covenant which had existed between Jehovah and the Israel of old was to be supplanted by a new one made up of all those who came to the realization that Jehovah is Lord and must be loved and served.

**Ezek 16:63 That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.**

There would be great shame in the minds of some of those of the blood of Abraham because of the sin which had been committed. The confusion associated with that shame would only be cleared when the new covenant

embracing the faithful off all nations had been established through the offering of the blood of the Son of God upon the cross at Calvary.

## Chapter 17

Israel had gotten herself into deep trouble with the Lord. She had committed spiritual adultery with the people of the land of Canaan. Her moral values had been lowered to the point that God felt the need to punish her seriously for her disloyalty to Him.

She lay between two strong powers. Babylon lay to the northwest and Egypt was located to the southeast of her. She felt she must make a choice as to which of these powers she would turn for help. She should have walked in the Word of the Lord and then such decisions would have been unnecessary. But she had not chosen that plan of action and now she must face the uncomfortable results of her foolish actions.

**Ezek 17:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

Again and again and again Ezekiel made it crystal clear that the warnings he was giving were not his own. They came to him from the mind of God. Thus it would be extremely wise for Israel to take heed.

**Ezek 17:2 Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;**

Riddles and parables both require one to do some introspection to determine just what the main point of the saying is. The advantage of using these types of speech lies in the attention factor. It is difficult to ignore the curious manner in which the truth is offered.

**Ezek 17:3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full**

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of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar:

This eagle is Nebuchadnezzar. He ruled the most powerful nation in that area of the world at the time. Without God's help Israel was completely helpless before the Babylonian king.

Ezek 17:4 He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he set it in a city of merchants.

Nebuchadnezzar took control of the weak King Zedekiah and dealt with him as a puppet. Israel was at his mercy. He was able to manipulate the Israelites at will.

Ezek 17:5 He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree.

He removed the citizens of the land of Israel to a place where they could be used as bondservants to increase his power even farther than before.

Ezek 17:6 And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

Israel grew in population under the watch of Nebuchadnezzar. However, it was completely dependent upon Nebuchadnezzar's power. The situation was most

unpleasant for a people who had been so richly blessed while they were faithful to God.

Ezek 17:7 There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation.

This second great eagle was the Pharaoh of Egypt. Egypt was not the equal in power of the Babylonians. But Israel felt that the combined power of herself plus that of Egypt might give relief from the oppression of Babylonia.

Ezek 17:8 It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine.

Ezek 17:9 Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof.

Ezekiel was told to relay a message to the people. They had a punishment to face for their sins. God had determined that the punishment would be at the hands of the Babylonians. If Israel felt that she could avoid the punishment by breaking with the will of Jehovah and siding with Egypt, she would find that the plan would fail.

Ezek 17:10 Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east

wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew.

Even if Israel attempted to plant herself in the shade of Egypt, she would find that she would wither under the pressure of the Babylonians. Running to Egypt was not an answer to the misery into which she had plunged herself.

Ezek 17:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 17:12 Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon;

Ezekiel was commanded to warn Israel that the King of Israel and his princes had been taken to Babylon with the full knowledge of Jehovah. This was God's way of punishing Israel for her disrespect of His divine rule.

Ezek 17:13 And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land:

Nebuchadnezzar had demonstrated that he had the power to rule over Israel by controlling the King and his princes. Zedekiah had been forced to make an agreement with Nebuchadnezzar that he would act in accord with the commands of that powerful ruler.

Ezek 17:14 That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping of his covenant it might stand.

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The agreement or covenant was stated in such way that Israel would agree to serve the Babylonian King in return for protection from further embarrassment. As long as Israel respected the covenant she would be permitted to exist.

Shall he prosper? Shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant and be delivered?

**Ezek 17:15 But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall covenant, and be delivered?**

The agreement which had been made between Babylon and Israel was honored by God and was not to be broken by Israel appealing to Egypt for relief.

**Ezek 17:16 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die.**

Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon as a result of breaking the covenant. Nebuchadnezzar had been allowed to have complete control over Israel. The king of Israel would die in captivity in that foreign land.

**Ezek 17:17 Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons:**

It was true that Pharaoh of Egypt had strong military power. He could put large numbers of horses into the

action. He was capable of building fortifications for defense if needed. That would not alter the picture.

**Ezek 17:18 Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape.**

Israel would find it impossible to escape the agreement she had made with Nebuchadnezzar. That covenant would stand until God's punishment of Israel had been accomplished.

**Ezek 17:19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head.**

There were actually two covenants which Israel had broken. The first and foremost was the covenant God made with Israel that He would be their God and they would be His people. The second was the agreement Israel had made with Nebuchadnezzar to serve him in return for his supervision.

**Ezek 17:20 And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me.**

As a result of the effort of Israel to break away from the punishment which God intended for her to be exposed to, she would now be taken to Babylon and would answer for her rebellion against Him.

**Ezek 17:21 And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it.**

The large majority of the Israelites would die in the land of Babylon. In addition, those who did survive with their lives would find themselves scattered in every direction. We can still see the effects of that scattering in various parts of the earth to the present day.

**Ezek 17:22 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent:**

That tender branch which the Lord cropped off the highest point on the great cedar of Israel was the Lord Jesus Christ who was planted on Mount Zion and has become the Rock of ages.

**Ezek 17:23 In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.**

We begin to see here why Ezekiel is sometimes referred to as the prophet of hope. All is not lost with respect to the Israel of God. The tender twig which was taken from the great cedar was to live and thrive. It would provide protection and spiritual food for all on earth who would hide themselves in the shadow of His branches.

**Ezek 17:24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done it.**

All of the tall and stately nations of the earth are seen here as dignified trees. God will rule in the affairs of every nation, to whatever degree that nation will accept His authority. He will build up that which is weak and will humble the proud until all come to the realization that HE RULES!

## Chapter 18

Does God sometimes seem unjust to you? If so, you have a lot of company from among the Israelites of the days we are considering in this chapter. Be careful! God does not like to be accused of that particular pattern of action. In this chapter He faces the criticism of the Israelites and points out that they are using a very unreliable measuring stick.

**Ezek 18:1 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,**

Are you getting tired of seeing this same statement repeated over and over? Ezekiel was surely not tired of restating it. He wants to make absolutely certain that those who are receiving the message he is delivering know it is from the God of heaven, and not from him personally. He is absolutely right in repeating this truth. All preachers of the gospel, and every Christian who tries to teach others should follow the same path.

**Ezek 18:2 What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?**

Many among the Israelites were complaining that the burdens they were bearing were punishment for the sins of others who had come before them. The fathers had committed the sins, and they were suffering the punishment. How could a just God do this to them?

**Ezek 18:3 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.**

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When He was through with God's reply, there would be no excuse for making such an accusation any more. Jehovah is NOT UNJUST! This will be made quite clear.

Ezek 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

The first thing to be established is that God is in control. Every soul that ever existed came into being through His creative power. No soul of either the father or the son would be destroyed for the sins others had committed. Every man or woman would be responsible for their own sins, not those of others.

Ezek 18:5 But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

Ezek 18:6 And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

Ezek 18:7 And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

Ezek 18:8 He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

Israel knew what sin was. God had spelled out very clearly just what He permitted and what He did not permit in the lives of His people. The list in these last

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verses is not a complete enumeration. There are others which could be added. But, these are enough to establish the point which needs to be made.

Thus far the list is negative. These are examples of that which God despises and for which He will punish.

**Ezek 18:9 Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.**

The person who has avoided all of such actions will not be punished. Such punishment would be unjust. Only the soul that sins will die for sin.

The problem here is that “If a man says he has not sinned he makes God a liar.” “All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

**Ezek 18:10 If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things,**

**Ezek 18:11 And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour’s wife,**

**Ezek 18:12 Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination.**

**Ezek 18:13 Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.**

Just as in the case of the previous list, the one who commits these sins will endure the punishment. If the son has sinned, he will face punishment for that sin. He

will not be punished for those of his father.

There is no need to linger on detailed explanations of each of the sins listed. Again the point is clear.

**Ezek 18:14 Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,**

**Ezek 18:15 That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife,**

**Ezek 18:16 Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,**

**Ezek 18:17 That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.**

We have considered three generations; a father, his son, and his grandson. If the father is a righteous man, he will not be punished for sin he did not commit. If his son then commits sin, that son will be punished for that sin which he has done. If he then has a son who acts in a righteous manner, that son will not die for his father's sins.

**Ezek 18:18 As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.**

The son shall live or die for the type of life he has lived, and not for that of his father.

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Ezek 18:19 Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

Ezek 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

There is another consideration which must be given our attention. Is it not true that children suffer as a result of their parents sin? The answer to that question is that very often this happens. However, there is a difference between such suffering and punishment. A father who squanders everything he has to buy the liquor which leaves him so incapacitated that he cannot work may well bring great suffering upon his children. But, this suffering is not punishment for the sins of the father.

Ezek 18:21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

The next major question is “Will a man or woman die for the sins they have committed in the past if they repent and turn from that way of life?” God’s answer to this question is no. One can turn away from sin, live a righteous life and see eternal life.

Ezek 18:22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him:

in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

Does God hold a grudge? If a person has sinned against Him and then has repented of that sin and asked for forgiveness, God will forgive him. It is not true that once saved always safe. Nor is it true that once a sinner, always a sinner. God leaves room for freedom of choice. The righteous man may turn to sin and die. The sinner may turn to righteous living and be saved.

Ezek 18:23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Why are these things true? It is because God has two desires. First, He created man with freedom of choice. Man is not to be a puppet. Second, God does not take pleasure in the death of any man. He rejoices in the soul that turns from sin to righteousness.

Ezek 18:24 But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Once saved, always saved? Not by any means! A man who was once righteous has the freedom of choice to turn from those righteous ways and plunge himself into sin. When that happens, unless he later reconsiders and turns back to God, that man will die.

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But was he truly righteous at any time? God says he was. That is sufficient evidence for your present writer. Let us abhor sin and depart from the very appearance of it.

**Ezek 18:25 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?**

Who is it that is right God or the Israelites? Are they suffering as punishment for the sins of their fathers? No, they are suffering for the sins which they have committed. They cannot argue that they are innocent.

**Ezek 18:26 When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.**

My friend, if you have been living in sin, do not wait too late. If you die in the midst of such a life there will be a second death. The first death will be a separation of the soul from the body. That is not a pleasant thought. But the second death is far more horrifying than the first. It is the separation of the soul from God, and it is eternal. There will then be no opportunity for further choice.

**Ezek 18:27 Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.**

It does not take a genius to conclude that the choice to live righteously in this present life is the only reasonable pathway. Every person should make an

effort to live in righteousness, and to persuade others to do the same.

**Ezek 18:28 Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.**

Take note of the number of times the words “live” and “die” are used in this chapter. God obviously wishes for us to know He wants you to be a joyful member of His family after the judgment has taken place.

**Ezek 18:29 Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?**

Even with such information in their hands, Israel has accused God of being unjust and punishing the righteous for the sins of the wicked. It is not God who is unreasonable. It is the person who claims that He is.

**Ezek 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.**

Every member of the house of Israel would be judged for his own manner of life. They were commanded to repent and live a life which would be pleasing in the sight of the Lord. In that case they would not lose their eternal life with God because of guilt.

**Ezek 18:31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and**

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make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

A new heart and a new spirit result from a cooperation between God and man. Man must see the seriousness of sin. It leads to death. When man reaches out for a new life of righteousness, God will cleanse his soul and he will become a new creature, with a promise of eternal life with the redeemed.

Ezek 18:32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

For emphasis, God repeats what He has stated for forcefully before. He did not create man for eternal punishment in hell. Condemning souls to eternal separation from all that is wholesome is the farthest thing from His mind. Serve Him and LIVE.

There is one remaining consideration. Those who believe that men who are once saved will always be safe claim that the death mentioned in this chapter is not eternal hell fire. They see it as physical death only.

Let me refer you back to verse 26. Shall we take a second look at it?

Ezek 18:26 When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

If a person dies physically while living a sinful life, that person will die spiritually and be eternally separated from all that is holy.

Chapter 19

God's patience with the southern kingdom of Judah was growing thinner and thinner. When His people had first asked that they be permitted to have a king, like the nations surrounding them, He had warned them that this was a dangerous step. He was their King. They would find that their human kings would become proud and would move them away from Him. As is always the case, the Lord was correct.

We shall see two lines of thought presented by the prophet Ezekiel in this chapter. Both are evidence that the people are headed for severe correctional measures in the near future. Their kings have not served them well.

Ezek 19:1 Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,

The first line of thought begins here in verse one and goes through verse nine. It is a lamentation over the rulers of Judah. There is reason for lamentation or weeping. Ezekiel has the unpleasant task of pointing out the errors of the rulers.

Ezek 19:2 And say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions.

Lions are known as the kings of the jungle. They rule by power. They devour other animals and then roar over their prey. The southern kingdom was compared to a mother lion who was raising her young to be this type of beasts.

We must not fail to recall that Jesus Christ is called "the Lion of Judah." He was not "a" lion of Judah. He was

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“the” lion of Judah. He is the true Ruler of the heavens and the earth.

**Ezek 19:3 And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men.**

There is a difference of opinion as to the identity of the kings who are described in the chapter. I think the exact identification is of less importance than the proud nature of whichever of the last kings of Judah are being considered. Judah has brought up some ferocious lions to be their kings.

**Ezek 19:4 The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.**

The first whelp considered did not last long. He developed a reputation among the nations round about and ended up in chains of bondage in the land of Egypt. As is implied in the verse, his rule did not last long.

**Ezek 19:5 Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion.**

Judah realized that her hope of ruling other nations had been sadly damaged by the loss of this first king, began looking toward a replacement. She succeeded in finding another who would replace him.

**Ezek 19:6 And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men.**

This second king followed in the footsteps of the first. He also learned how to take advantage of others. Other men were no more than objects to be conquered and devoured at his pleasure.

**Ezek 19:7 And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring.**

This second lion had a longer rule than the first. He succeeded in finding the neighboring nations places of hiding. He left the land wasted and desolate. He took possession of that which was of value among those nations. Fear was spread abroad as a result of his fierce roaring.

**Ezek 19:8 Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit.**

This second ruler, or lion, overreached himself. He had provoked one nation after another, until a number of them collaborated in setting a trap for him. They succeeded in bringing his roaring to an end and causing him to be taken into captivity in the land of Babylon.

**Ezek 19:9 And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.**

Judah had lost her place as the apple of God's eye. She was to mark the end of God's earthly kingdom. After a lengthy time, that earthly kingdom was to be replaced

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by the spiritual kingdom over which the Son of God has been enthroned.

I will add just a word about the possible identification of the two lions or rulers of Judah who are discussed above. Most of the commentators see the first lion whelp to be Jehoahaz. The reader is referred to the first few verses of 2 Chronicles 36 for further information. There is disagreement as to the identity of the second lion whelp. Some believe it to have been Jehoiakim since he followed Jehoahaz on the throne. However there are other excellent students of the scriptures who believe Jehoichin was the second. I will frankly admit that I do not know.

Ezek 19:10 Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters.

We now move to the second line of thought found in this sordid chapter. This time Judah is compared to a vine. The words “in thy blood” may very well mean that since these kings all arose from the same national mother they might be expected to act in the same manner. For some time the southern kingdom of Judah had prospered with rulers who had considerable influence. The land, as God had described it, was one which allowed the people to live in plenty. Rulers had this advantage on their side.

Ezek 19:11 And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches.

Everything looked rosy at first. There were other branches, but Judah produced some which were looked

upon with respect. If she and her rulers had acted in harmony with the will of Jehovah, all would have continued well. They did not act in that manner and God allowed them to suffer consequences.

Ezek 19:12 But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them.

Actually the southern kingdom found itself in the position of a vassal to Babylon for some time. When Nebuchadnezzar insulted Judah's ruler, it seems that he became somewhat worried that an alliance might be made between Egypt and Judah. To remove this possibility he took the ruler of Judah to Babylon and imprisoned him.

Ezek 19:13 And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground.

No longer was there to be an earthly kingdom for the people of God. The northern kingdom of Israel had been removed long before. Now the southern kingdom of Judah suffered the same fate. They were taken from the land which was said to be flowing with milk and honey and was sent to one which was dry and thirsty.

Ezek 19:14 And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

The result of the arrogance of God's people was that the ruler of the nation brought persecution upon her.

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There had been no rod or sceptre of such noble character that she could continue in God's favor.

Yes we must surely agree that God had given His people every advantage. He had blessed them beyond all expectations. But they had not responded to His providential care. The people at that time had reason for lamentation. We also, who read of their history must join them in lamentation all these centuries later.

## Chapter 20

The date given in the first verse reveals that it was in the year 591 B.C. that the events of this chapter took place. God's mercy and His grace had been demonstrated over and over again. In spite of all these favors Israel had been wicked and rebellious. Rather than being grateful for God's assistance, they had complained about one thing after another. Once more the elders were gathered to question God's prophet Ezekiel as to why more had not been done.

**Ezek 20:1 And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the LORD, and sat before me.**

The elders were the very ones who should have been calming the people and helping them to appreciate what had been done for them. Instead, they were questioning God's love. We might expect that this would meet with a sharp response from the Lord through the lips of Ezekiel.

**Ezek 20:2 Then came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 20:3 Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.**

Ezekiel wore a similar title to that of the Son of God. Jesus was also called the "Son of man", but in a much different sense. God commanded Ezekiel to make a

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response which could hardly be easily dismissed. If the elders had come to question the methods of the Lord, they would not get much satisfaction from their visit to the prophet.

Ezek 20:4 Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers:

Ezekiel was going to have to let the people know just how serious their criticisms were. The ingratitude had begun way back in the times of their ancestors. The present elders were only continuing the behavior of those whom God had befriended in days gone by.

Ezek 20:5 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I am the LORD your God;

Ezek 20:6 In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands:

They had been enslaved in the land of Egypt and shamefully mistreated. They could have been left in that condition, but they were not. God delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh through a series of miracles. In addition to delivering them from slavery, God had led them to a land which had abundant food and was the envy of the neighboring nations.

Ezek 20:7 Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

God made it absolutely clear that He would not not appreciate any worship of idols and false gods on their part. There is but ONE GOD, and He must be respected and obeyed.

Ezek 20:8 But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

The people failed to listen. They were determined to bow down before those which were no gods. This was not a fault found only in Israel. Men of every nation on earth, and in every age have idolized the idols of wealth, power, fleshly pleasure and a host of other follies. The anger which had risen against His people while they were still in Egypt had become even greater after they determined to drag their playthings along with them.

Ezek 20:9 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

The main reason that the Lord did not allow Israel to remain in Egypt was that the surrounding nations

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would have concluded that their false gods were more powerful than He had made a covenant with Israel that they were to be His people, and He would be their God. The rest of the nations needed to know of His love, power and dependability.

**Ezek 20:10 Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness.**

In order to wrest them out of the hands of Pharaoh, He led them out of the land of Egypt and into a long journey through the wilderness. It was not a delightful trip, but it did result in the end of the bondage.

**Ezek 20:11 And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.**

It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. We are to trust in the Lord. When we do that, He will direct our paths. God spoke to His people through Moses on Mount Sinai. The ten commandments were not frivolous. They reached down from the glory of heaven to lead men toward the eternal purpose for which they had been created. It is difficult to believe that in return, men would complain that they had been mistreated.

**Ezek 20:12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.**

God Himself had created the heaven and the earth in six days, and had rested on the seventh. He knew that

man would need such a rest and thus commanded that it be kept. The sabbath acted as a rest which was much needed. It also acted as a memorial to remind man of God's presence at all times.

**Ezek 20:13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.**

When we see a child deliberately running out into the street when it's parents have told it not to, we wonder how it can endanger it's life in doing that which it's parents have so carefully trained it. How much worse it is for grown men and women to defy the word of their Creator and follow their own will even though it leads to eternal damnation

**Ezek 20:14 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.**

Jehovah is not just interested in fleshly Israel. He is vitally concerned about all men. If Israel had followed His commandments they could have been instrumental in leading others people to love and obey Him who is Lord of all.

**Ezek 20:15 Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands;**

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If Israel had kept the commandments of Jehovah, they could have entered into the land of Canaan years before they finally did so. As it was, they were required to wander in the wilderness for forty years before entering that land.

Ezek 20:16 Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.

The Lord is still telling Ezekiel things which would make it clear why they had suffered as much as they had. It was not because He was unjust. It was because there was a real need for them to understand how important their obedience was to themselves and also to those who would live after them.

Ezek 20:17 Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

Ezek 20:18 But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols:

Ezek 20:19 I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them;

Even though those foolish ancestors had acted according to their own will rather than that of the God of heaven, He had been merciful toward them and allowed them to continue their lives. He had constantly reminded them that they were not to follow the wisdom of men, nor to kneel before false gods of metal and stone.

He is GOD. There is none other. When God has spoken, men who disobey are like the little child who

runs into the street against the will of it's parents. The wages of sin is death.

Ezek 20:20 And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.

Ezek 20:21 Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.

To hallow is to regard as holy. The sabbath in the Old Testament times and the first day of the week in the Christian age are vivid reminders that God is there. He desires that men live eternally with Him in heaven. This cannot be if they ignore His commandments. There is both a fleshly death and a spiritual death waiting for those who fly in the face of God's truth.

Ezek 20:22 Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth.

God was much concerned over His reputation, both among the people of Israel and also among the heathen nations who were observing what was taking place. If men lost respect for Him, they would be lost. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all might come to eternal life. He neither wished to leave His people unpunished, nor did He wish to completely eliminate them. In going the route which He followed, He could provide the best

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opportunity for both the heathen and His chosen nation to respect this goal.

**Ezek 20:23 I lifted up My hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them among the countries.**

Remember now that God is speaking to Ezekiel after this scattering had taken place. Ezekiel and the people of Israel were not in Canaan. They were in the land of Babylon and were wondering why God had allowed this misery to come upon them. By scattering them He could move both purposes forward. He could cause Israel to realize the error of their ways, and He could begin to teach the heathen the way of truth through the preservation of His chosen nation.

**Ezek 20:24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their father's idols.**

What had Israel done to pollute their own gifts and despised the sabbaths of the Lord? They had failed to learn the lesson which had been provided to their ancestors and had made precisely the same mistakes as those who had wandered in the wilderness. They had chosen idols in preference to the True God.

**Ezek 20:25 Wherefore I gave them also statutes which were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.**

If Israel was determined to abandon the life giving judgments which He provided for them, He would

allow them to see something of the end of their way of disobedience. He permitted them to direct their own steps in order to see where they led. Since they had chosen to make inquiry about their condition in Babylon, He was giving them the real reason. They had sinned, and the heathen were seeing His corrective methods in action.

**Ezek 20:26 And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord.**

Israel had gone so far as to have caused their first born child to be sacrificed to Molech. Their first born child was a gift from Him. They were throwing away those precious gifts which He had granted to them. They were at the time they were inquiring beginning to see the consequences of turning to false gods. They were far from the land which God had promised to them.

**Ezek 20:27 Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me in that they have committed a trespass against me.**

If the elders of Israel wished to know why they were suffering in Babylon, they had been given the answer. Their fathers had disobeyed and disrespected the statutes of God. That leads to suffering and death. Disobedience is a form of blasphemy in that it profanes the name of the Lord.

**Ezek 20:28 For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it**

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to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour and poured out there their drink offerings.

God had more than done His part of the covenant which had been made between Himself and the people. He had promised them a good land. He had kept His promise. But they had not kept their part of the covenant. They had not worshiped Him as the Only True and Living God. They had worshiped idols.

Ezek 20:29 Then I said unto them, What is the high place whereunto ye go. And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day.

Had Israel gone to the high places to worship Jehovah? Not by any means! They had gone to “Bamah” which means “high place.” The altar of the Lord had been forsaken as His people adored the idols at Bamah.

Ezek 20:30 Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit whoredom after their abominations?

Ezek 20:31 For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all you idols, even unto this day: and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.

In effect the Lord was asking them why they had not yet learned the lesson He was placing before them.

They were still polluting themselves through joining themselves with idols. Instead of being true to their divine Husband, they were playing the whore with idols. It can hardly be made any plainer than God was making it through Ezekiel the prophet.

Ezek 20:32 And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.

It was time for them to cease thinking that it was better to live as the heathen and worship their dead idols. If Israel expected better treatment from Jehovah, they could change their defiant ways and no longer depend upon those powerless objects of false worship. Let them change their ways and then there would be no reason to doubt the Lord.

Ezek 20:33 As I live saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you.

There was a very good reason for God's anger and fury. Through that means it would be possible for correction to be made and His people could then be removed from their grief in the land of Babylon. There was a lesson to be learned, and God was administering that lesson.

Ezek 20:34 And I will bring you out from the people and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you.

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Yes Israel would be brought out of Babylonian captivity after seventy years of chastening. But this would only happen after they had seen the end of their ways of defiance.

But once again, God is making a dual application. Israel was to be gathered out of Babylonian captivity, but far more important was the fact that God would call a new spiritual Israel out from among the nations of the world that prefer the attractions of Satan to the worship of the Lord.

We, in the present time, must learn the same lesson which God was teaching in the time of the Babylonian captivity. We cannot serve God and mammon.

**Ezek 20:34 And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.**

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has been sent from the throne of heaven to gather those who will listen into the fold of God. "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Those who hear and follow the Shepherd will find eternal joy. Those who are determined to follow pleasures of sin for a season will find those pleasures replaced by the fire of hell.

**Ezek 20:35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.**

**Ezek 20:36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.**

The Israelites who wandered in the wilderness of old had done so while God was pleading for them to turn from the idolatry toward which they were tempted. It was a long hard road. A remnant came through the testing period and entered into the land of Canaan. Even so, those who had been taken into Babylon were undergoing a testing period from which they might prove themselves obedient and receive a righteous man's reward.

Every Christian today has been called out of a wilderness of sin. It will be necessary for each of us to hear the voice of the Lord as it came to us through His Beloved Son. Are you listening?

**Ezek 20:36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness off the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.**

God's eternal plan was to test and prove a family which could live with Him in eternity. He tested Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. He tested Israel in Egypt and in the wilderness wandering. He tested Israel in Babylonian captivity. He is testing men today, and will test them until the end of earthly time. When He has gathered a family which has been proved true to Him, He will gather them around His eternal throne.

**Ezek 20:37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.**

A shepherd cause his sheep to pass under his rod. This was a means of determining if there were those present that were not of his fold. It also allowed him to determine if any of his own sheep had come up missing. Those whom he was testing were passing under His rod.

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For those who passed the test, He would provide blessings beyond their imagination.

Ezek 20:38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels and them that transgress against me. I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall enter into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

The Lord will know His own. He will make no mistakes. Those who pass the test will be allowed to enter into the land which has been prepared for them. That land was once the land of Canaan. Today it is heaven itself. Will the present reader be among those who have heard the voice of the Lord and followed Him through the gates?

Ezek 20:39 As for you, O house of Israel thus saith the Lord God; Go ye and serve every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts and with your idols.

The choice is theirs. Israel has heard the challenge. They may serve their dead idols and reap death, or they may serve the living God and reap life everlasting. That happy life will only come to those who choose correctly. How much men are willing to give up for a few fleeting moments of Satan's fleshly pleasures!

Ezek 20:40 For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things.

Mount Zion is God's holy mountain. In the days of Moses Mount Zion lay in the wilderness. Today Mount Zion is the church of our Lord. Those who have come to Mount Zion will be acceptable to Jehovah as they bring themselves as living sacrifices to honor the King of kings and Lord of lords. Christians have much to offer to our God. He will happily accept these gifts if we bring them to Him in sincerity and undivided adoration.

Ezek 20:41 I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.

The Babylonians were to learn that God could release His people from their clutches. God's children would be removed from their land and returned to their own land. When that happened, He would have proven His holy character. His power could not be denied.

The sweet savour had been at times the incense which was offered along with sacrifices made to idols. That was to change. God's own would send up their own sweet savour to their Father in heaven. Each true follower's life would be sweeter than any physical incense could ever be.

Ezek 20:42 And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I have lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers.

Obviously the land which was being spoken of here was the land of Canaan. It was that land which God had given to their fathers. When Israel was returned to that

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land, it would be evident to both God's people and the heathen that it was the power of the divine hand which brought it about.

However, I will not allow the reader to forget that God has a faraway land where death shall reign no more. Far more important than the return of the Israelites from Babylonia to Canaan is that gathering which will take place when the sheep shall have been separated from the goats at the final judgment.

**Ezek 20:43 And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.**

The time would come when those who did pass the test of faith which God had given them would repent and be ashamed of the wickedness they had done. They had plenty to be ashamed of. When men realize just how serious sin is, they abhor the fact that they sometimes fall into it. Israel paid dearly for the disloyalty to the Lord. They could have avoided a barrel of misery if they had but rejected advances of the devil.

**Ezek 20:44 And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.**

How sad it is that men must learn the hard way! God had been most gracious toward them. They needed to remember the mercy He had extended to them later on when temptation faced them again. Only God would be willing to forgive such traitorous behavior as they had engaged in.

**Ezek 20:45 Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me saying,**

**Ezek 20:46 Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south, and propesy against the forest of the south field.**

There is general agreement that the “south” here refers to the city of Jerusalem. It was to be devastated as a result of it’s infidelity. The “forest” of the south field could very well mean the groves where the idols had been worshiped. Ezekiel was to let it be known in no uncertain terms that the city and the groves would be burned. And so they were, as we will learn later.

**Ezek 20:47 And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein.**

Green trees are productive. Dry trees are dead and unproductive. Sadly, the fire which was to come would cause the physical death of some who had been faithful. However, the faithful need not concern themselves over the eternal fires of hell. They shall escape that horrifying destiny.

**Ezek 20:48 And all flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.**

Both the righteous and the wicked would see the horror which enveloped the land. Although they would see different eternal destinies, they would all come to

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understand the seriousness of rebellion. It hurts both the faithful and the unfaithful while they live in this present world.

Ezek 20:49 Then said I, Ah Lord God! they say of me, Doth he not speak in parables?

God's use of parables allowed those who wished to learn truth to do so. They allowed the wicked to claim ignorance.

Chapter 21

Here we have a continuation of the disgust which the Lord felt for Israel's non compliance with His statutes and commandments. In spite of the Jews belief that He would never allow His precious city of Jerusalem to be damaged by foes, He was ready to do just that. He would use the Babylonians to carry out the punishment.

There is little more difficult for the godly person to contemplate than the type of material predicted in that which we are about to study. This may be a bit more personal than the reader would like, but I am forced to declare that if someone were to place a platter of freshly dug earthworms before me and tell me to eat them, I would find it no more repulsive than attempting to digest the horrible facts presented in this twenty-first chapter of Ezekiel. I find it one thing to read them, and quite another thing to try to put my thoughts into words.

Ezek 21:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezekiel is but a spokesman for God. God liked to use human prophets through whom He might express himself. Ezekiel no doubt felt some of the disgust which the Lord had for the sins of Israel, but actually relaying these truths would have been most difficult. We are never allowed to forget that it was God who authored these truths and not the prophet.

Ezek 21:2 Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,

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In the last chapter it was hinted that Jerusalem was to feel the wrath of God for the failure to honor His will. Now it is to be much more plainly expressed. The people have chosen to follow the low plane of morals which existed among the people whom they had failed to drive from the land as God had commanded. They had even worshiped the idols which those heathen people adored.

God had warned them when they first desired to have a king like the nations around them. They would find that it was a disastrous path which they wished to walk. It was intended that He be their King. No man could act as a substitute. They are now to find that His warnings were accurate. The present king Zedekiah was to be the last from the line of David until the Messiah arrived.

**Ezek 21:3 And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.**

What a terrifying thought. God told them He was against them. He was ready to draw out His sword and cut off both the righteous and the wicked. It seems strange that the righteous would suffer along with the wicked, but there are times when death is a merciful stroke when such disaster as Israel was to suffer is just ahead. The wicked who died would not have to endure that which they would have experienced if they had continued to live through the horrors.

The enemy was Jehovah. David faced a gigantic foe when he met Goliath. Goliath was less than a midget when compared with Almighty God. The Word of God is said to be the sword of the Spirit. How wonderful it is to have that sword on our side. How awful it is to have it glittering in the hand of an angry God!

**Ezek 21:4 Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north:**

When the Lord speaks of his sword being used against “all flesh” He is talking about the entire nation of Israel. These were His chosen whom He had blessed beyond all others. The suffering was not unjust.

**Ezek 21:5 That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more.**

This time the “all flesh” is much more likely to include those outside the chosen nation. As I sit writing these words, I am very much aware of what took place when the Lord pulled His sword from it’s sheath and used it against those who had defied Him repeatedly.

Anyone who reads the record today, no matter what nation they claim as their own, should surely hesitate to invite God’s sword to be swung in their direction.

**Ezek 21:6 Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.**

The prophets of God very often acted out the lessons which they were commanded to teach. Such unusual acts could hardly fail to catch the attention of those who heard and saw what the prophet was doing.

This time Ezekiel was to sigh over the problems which were about to come. This was an attempt to convey the difficulty and grief which was to fall upon Israel. I find that the commentators have dealt with the word “sigh”,

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but that they have largely avoided the term “breaking of thy loins.” If have strong suspicions that the kidneys and the heart were not the object of attention here. Rather than to offend the reader, I will also avoid a four letter words which could well tell of what Ezekiel was doing to show the intense labor which the people would face.

Ezek 21:7 And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord GOD.

When Ezekiel had caught the attention of those who observed him and asked him the reason for his sighing, he was to tell them this was an indication of the exasperation which Israel would feel when the sword of the Lord came upon them. They would have no strength left.

Ezek 21:8 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

It would be wise to count the number of times the prophet reminded Israel that these were God’s words, not his own.

Ezek 21:9 Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD; Say, A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished:

A sword is not normally used in vain. It is a weapon which may be used for either offense or defense. God saw Israel as a foe rather than a friend. They had proven this

was the case by their attitude toward His commandments. It was now necessary to unsheath His sword and make use of it. It was sharp enough to do what needed to be done. It was polished to such a shine that it would strike fear into those who saw it coming.

Ezek 21:10 It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree.

That same sharp and glittering sword will one day be unsheathed at the end of time when it is used to destroy the foes of the Lord in the fires of hell. We would be well advised to give special attention to it's power.

It is definitely not something to laugh about. Israel might believe that God would never unsheath such a weapon upon His own nation of Israel. That would be a fatal mistake. The rod of His son is the authority of the king of the land. Zedekiah was just as fully condemned as any other mortal would have been for the corruption which existed. Both the king and the people were to face a force far more powerful than that which they possessed.

Ezek 21:11 And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer.

Jehovah is going to give His sword to someone else that it may accomplish it's work. The slayer is Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He will be allowed to brandish God's sharpened and furbished sword in order that the world may know it is not a mark of wisdom to have God set Himself against one.

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**Ezek 21:12 Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh.**

Ezekiel is commanded to cry out in anguish as a prediction of the grief which lies ahead for the nation. He is to slap his hand against his thigh to emphasize the seriousness of that which is to come upon them.

**Ezek 21:13 Because it is a trial, and what if the sword contemn even the rod? it shall be no more, saith the Lord GOD.**

The rod is the authority of the king of Israel. It is a sad picture that is drawn. God is about to bring His sword in the hand of Nebuchadnezzar in order that Israel might be punished for their sins. The sword was to remove the line of David until the coming of the Messiah and the Christian age.

**Ezek 21:14 Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite thine hands together. and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers.**

Over and over again the sword was to be swung at Israel. The smiting of the hands together was the command for the sword to be used. It was to be used to kill God's enemies. It did not matter whether they were the leaders or the followers. The most powerful often make provision for their escape if the battle goes against them. That would not happen in this case. Zedekiah and the nobility of Israel would feel the wrath of the Lord just

as surely as the lowest of the population. Hiding would be impossible.

**Ezek 21:15 I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their heart may faint, and their ruins be multiplied: ah! it is made bright, it is wrapped up for the slaughter.**

Everything had been made ready for the onslaught. Fear would reign. Destruction would be found everywhere in the land. God did not enjoy the process of punishing His people. That did not prevent Him from doing it. A parent often finds it difficult to spank a son or daughter for their deeds. The responsible parent will administer the spanking even though it hurts himself even as it does his child.

**Ezek 21:16 Go thee one way or other, either on the right hand, or on the left, whithersoever thy face is set.**

Israel would find that there was no escape route from that which God was about to lay upon them. They might turn to either the right or the left. They would still find the sword facing them.

**Ezek 21:17 I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the LORD have said it.**

The smiting of the hands together is apparently the signal that the command is to be entered into right away. Causing His fury to rest does not mean He has changed His mind about the punishment of the people. It means that the time has come for the punishment to rest upon them.

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Ezek 21:18 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

Are you counting the times this statement has been repeated in the book of Ezekiel, and particularly in the present chapter? Israel is not to blame Ezekiel for what they are hearing. This is the Word of the LORD.

Ezek 21:19 Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the way to the city.

At times Jesus Christ is called the Son of man. The point is that Ezekiel is to speak to men as one of them, even if he is conveying the Word of the Lord. He is to find a place where a road is divided, with one branch going toward Ammon and the other toward Jerusalem. Punishment is to fall upon both of these locations. Ezekiel is to dramatize the decision by acting it out.

Ezek 21:20 Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced.

Ezekiel is to point out the decision which God will make in bringing the punishment into reality. That reality is not far off.

The Ammonites were related to the Israelites in a distant fashion. How sad that both of these branches of the family had misused their blessings so badly!

Ezek 21:21 For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two

ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver.

Ezekiel's action was but a prelude to what Nebuchadnezzar would actually do in his choice to attack the city of Jerusalem. The king would use three methods of divination. One method was to use arrows. There are alternative explanations as to how this was done. The most probable seems to be that two arrows would be placed in a container with one labeled as Jerusalem and the other labeled Ammon. The container would be shaken up and without looking into it one of the arrow would be withdrawn. The label on the arrow withdrawn would be the point of attack.

A second method of divination was to consult terraphim and the third was the use of the liver of an animal to arrive at the decision. We must confess that there is less information at hand for explanation of how these last two methods would have been used in the case at hand.

Ezek 21:22 At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering rams against the gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort.

The decision was made to attack Jerusalem. A number of preparations were made. Shouts were made that fear might be instilled in the dwellers of the city. Battering rams were made ready to demolish the gates of the city. A fort was built and an incline was made ready that the invader might go over the walls.

Ezek 21:23 And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken.

The false prophets of Israel would do their best to persuade the citizens that the attack was futile. God would not allow this special city of Jerusalem to be damaged. It was His pride and joy. They could not have been more mistaken. The attack would be successful.

Ezek 21:24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand.

God explained through Ezekiel that the sins of His people were too serious to further cover. The land would be conquered. The people would be taken by the hand of the Lord. They would meet tragedy.

Ezek 21:25 And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,

God's grace and mercy had been tested to the breaking point. Israel had gone too far. Zedekiah's day had arrived. He would face the wrath of Jehovah. His sins would come to an end.

Ezek 21:26 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not

be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

Things would be reversed in the land. The king would lose his crown. Those who had been of little power would be raised up to more powerful levels. Those who had possessed great power would be brought down.

Jesus Christ predicted just such a reversal in the Kingdom of God. The humble would be exalted. The exalted would be humbled.

Ezek 21:27 I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

When the Lord repeats a warning three times He is not joking. Zedekiah and his most powerful nobles were to be removed from power and replaced by others whom God would favor.

Ezek 21:28 And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword is drawn: for the slaughter it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering:

These last few verses of the chapter indicate that God had not forgotten the sins of the Ammonites. He had only decided to punish Jerusalem first than then turn His attention to the other group. The sword had not been put away. It was still sharp and flashing. It's task was not yet completed.

Ezek 21:29 Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of them that are slain, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity shall have an end.

The false prophets could predict lies as long as they chose. The wicked of both Jerusalem and Ammon would die. Their rebellion against the will of Jehovah was to be cut off.

Ezek 21:30 Shall I cause it to return into his sheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity.

There was no reason to place the sword back into its sheath. Yes, Jerusalem had been judged before Ammon. That did not make Ammon immune. God's sword would cut a swath through their territory just as it did in the land of Israel.

Ezek 21:31 And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, and skilful to destroy.

We do not have detailed information as to just how God carried out His punishment of the Ammonites. We can be assured that it was carried out.

Ezek 21:32 Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no more remembered: for I the LORD have spoken it.

The Ammonites would suffer greatly. The fire that swept across the land would consume them and their lives would be lost. Their power would be erased and their memory whittled down to practically nothing. God promised, and God keeps His promises.

It does not pay to set one's self up against the Lord of glory!

Chapter 22

God desires that Ezekiel be very specific now with respect to the kind and degree of sin of which Jerusalem has been guilty. All will be carefully spelled out. God had not dealt impulsively with His people. He had been most charitable. That time has passed. The reader will find the discussion repulsive, but when compared with the troubles which lay ahead for Israel and Jerusalem in particular the reader's discomfort will be only that while the agony Jerusalem will feel is to be disastrous.

Ezek 22:1 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 22:2 Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations.

Yes Jerusalem could well be called a "bloody city." Those who were in power did not hesitate to take advantage of those with lesser degrees of influence. Such behavior was not pleasing to Jehovah. It was to be punished.

Ezek 22:3 Then say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD, The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself.

Not only was there bloodshed in the city, the people had fastened their affections on the idols and false gods of the heathen who lived around them and within them. They had failed to drive the idolators out when they came in, as God had commanded.

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**Ezek 22:4 Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries.**

The divine patience had come to an end. The city of Jerusalem which had been the apple of God's eye for some time was to be made an example of the results of setting God's instructions aside as if they were no more than man's advice.

Other nations were to take a good close look and learn by that which they saw. Jerusalem herself would be made a laughing stock among other countries. To some degree, this condition has lasted for centuries. The word "Jew" is a term of dishonor in the minds of large numbers of persons of a variety of nations.

**Ezek 22:5 Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous and much vexed.**

Those in the near neighborhood of Jerusalem would look down on her. They would take pleasure in making her uncomfortable. This feeling would not be confined to those nearby. Far and wide those who observed the condition of this disobedient people would belittle her.

**Ezek 22:6 Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood.**

Ezekiel was to point out sins which the different types of people had committed. The princes, or rulers of the

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people had decided they would use their power to kill any opposition which might stand in their way.

Ezek 22:7 In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow.

A horrible number of serious sins had been committed “in thee.” Parents had been disregarded. Any who were not well known were made objects of persecution. The poor and needy such as widows and orphans were allowed to go hungry. Altogether too many were interested only in their own pleasure and power. They were living by a survival of the fittest system.

Ezek 22:8 Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths.

The city was polluted. The sacrifices were taken lightly. The sabbaths which God had given to man that he might have a period of rest, and an opportunity to remember that God is the Creator, were treated as if they were just one more day of the week.

Does some of this sound familiar to the ears of modern day persons? A large percent of the population of so-called Christian nations do not even take the time to attend a worship service on the first day of the week. Among those who do take that time, there are many who put their own pleasures ahead of the service of the Lord for other days of the week, and sometimes even on that first day.

As we sow, so shall we reap.

Ezek 22:9 In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.

We get the impression from this verse that the tales which men were carrying were harmful gossip, and were intended to do injury to the victims of the tales. Even if true, it is often wise to refrain from spreading damaging reports about those who might be sorry for the sins they have done.

Ezek 22:10 In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution.

A man or woman has sunken mighty low who stoops to sexual relations with their own parent or step parent. The same is true of a man who would insist on intercourse with a wife who was in the midst of her menstrual period.

Ezek 22:11 And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter.

This list of sins makes one wish to vomit. When a man and woman have sworn to keep themselves to one another and forsake all others the insult is not only to the betrayed partner. It is the same to the Lord Himself. A mother, a neighbor's wife, a son's wife, or his sister, are all off limits to decent men.

Ezek 22:12 In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD.

It is a terrible sin to kill another person in a fit of anger over some injury done to ourselves. How much worse it

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is to agree to take pay for murdering someone who has never injured us!

Usury is interest which can be collected just because the one who needs the loan is at the loaner's mercy. Extortion is the use of power to deprive others of that which one has no right to have. All of the sins listed in this verse are vile in the sight of God, and will receive punishment, either in this world or in that which is to come.

**Ezek 22:13 Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee.**

Sometimes we see a person slap the fist of one hand into the open palm of the other. This is a sign of disgust and usually a sign that something is going to be done to remedy the offending act. God is ready to act in defense of the oppressed.

**Ezek 22:14 Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it.**

No man can stand in opposition to the God of heaven when He determines that the man is to be punished for his sins. There is no man strong enough to fight against Jehovah. It may be that the punishment will come soon after the sin is committed. It may be that the punishment will await the final judgment day. But, God will deal with all such thoughts, words and actions. His dealings will be as unpleasant as the supposed pleasure which was associated with the sin.

**Ezek 22:15 And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee.**

Israel had enjoyed great blessings from the hand of the Lord. One of the greatest of these was the concentration of the descendants of Jacob in the land of Canaan. That blessing was to be reversed. The Jews were to be scattered abroad in many countries. There were vital lessons to be learned. This was God's way of making certain they were learned.

**Ezek 22:16 And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.**

As the people of Israel were scattered abroad, the only inheritance they could take with them would be that which they could carry with them. The land of Canaan would be overrun by heathen. When such took place Israel would have the opportunity to reflect upon their sinful lives. Those who would repent would realize the serious nature of their condition.

**Ezek 22:17 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 22:18 Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver.**

On and on goes the expression of God's hatred of their sins. That which was supposed to be precious to Him had proven to be mixed with that which was abominable in His sight. Dross is the impurities which are drawn off

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in the smelting of precious metals. God's people were to Him as precious gold when they remained pure. They had so polluted themselves that they more closely resembled brass, tin, iron or even lead than they did pure gold. It was so serious that they could even be compared to the impurities which would be thrown out to achieve pure silver, to say nothing of gold.

Ezek 22:19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

Since they had rendered themselves as nearly worthless, He would take care of the matter by removing them from the land.

Ezek 22:20 As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you.

The solution in the case of impure metals was to raise the smelting furnace to intense heat. When it was melted the pollutants could be removed and cast away. Thus it would happen to Israel. They would be exposed to corrective procedures for a period of time until they came to their senses and turned to righteousness.

Ezek 22:21 Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof.

The things which they were to be made to endure would not be sheer coincidence. They would be the heat of

God's anger bearing upon them. This would continue until they were made pure. The difficulty of the task would determine the length of time necessary to achieve it.

Ezek 22:22 As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.

This writer at one time worked in a factory where iron gears were produced for automobiles. You may be assured that the heat required to purify metals is more than you might wish to experience. The inside of the furnace turns white hot.

Ezek 22:23 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 22:24 Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.

Another picture is drawn for Ezekiel to present to Israel. They are like land which is nonproductive. It is as if no rain had fallen and no preparations had been made for raising a crop. God had made extensive preparation and blessed His people far beyond what might have been expected. Yet they almost completely failed to meet His expectations.

Ezek 22:25 There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

God had already spoken of the selfish greed of the princes of the land. Now He turned to the ills of the prophets. They spoke that which the people wanted to hear rather than that which the Lord intended for them to receive. They had received valuable gifts for their lying prophecies. These were materials which could have been used for the support of widows.

Ezek 22:26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

The priests were no better. They had treated that which was not specified by the Lord to be sanctified for the use of holy purposes. Probably one of the most serious of these objects was their own souls. They were not worthy to be offering the sacrifices; therefore they did not see any reason for refusing to offer that which was unfit for honoring God.

Ezek 22:27 Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

When persons such as the nobles of the land decide to use their power and influence to feather their own nests, they more closely resemble wild beast than they do public servants. The princes of Israel were destroying both bodies and souls of others in order to obtain that which was not rightfully theirs.

Ezek 22:28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and

divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.

The prophets of Jerusalem had seen the faults in the people of Israel. Instead of pointing out those faults and insisting on correcting them, the prophets presented lies as if they were presenting the Word of the Lord.

Ezek 22:29 The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

In nearly every way that could be imagined, those who had influence had used that influence to take from others when it was intended by the Lord that their positions as priests, prophets and princes should have been used to the advantage of all the nation as God was honored by all. The Great Physician above had the medicine needed for the healing of the deadly disease of greed, but Israel was unwilling to swallow it.

Ezek 22:30 And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

In all of the land of Israel there was no man, nor any group of men who had the courage to stand up for righteous living. That man for whom the Father in heaven was searching was to be greater than either Ezekiel or Jeremiah. These two were honorable. They tried with great effort to stop the infiltration of pollution into the land. Only when the Son of God Himself arrived on the scene was there One who was both pure enough

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and powerful enough to redeem the people from their plight.

**Ezek 22:31 Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.**

How does a weak and fallible commentator such as the one who is writing these words find a way to penetrate the minds of those who wish to use religion as a means of self gratification instead of an avenue of service to his Creator? He can only present the truth which God has entrusted to we weak mortals and pray diligently for those truths to be appreciated and made use of.

Israel failed in their responsibilities. They paid a monstrous price in seeing God's grace replaced by His wrath. Will we do better??

## Chapter 23

We have come to one of the most repulsive portions of the holy scriptures. It is my opinion that the Lord wished to make the situation so disgusting the those who read it in these latter days will begin to understand just how such sins appear to Him. One has to force himself to continue studying the material if he is to do so.

**Ezek 23:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 23:2 Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother:**

God apparently felt that it was necessary to repeatedly remind us that Ezekiel was only a spokesman for Him. All who teach the Word of the Lord should remember to be as careful as Ezekiel was to keep this in their own mind as well as that of the readers or listeners.

This chapter is sometimes called the “Parable of the Two Sisters.” They were not the nicest of ladies. They had both been exposed to the same maternal environment. Their mother was Israel before the division of the kingdom.

**Ezek 23:3 And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity.**

Their immoral ways had begun very early. Way back in the land of Egypt they had betrayed their husband Jehovah. While they were just beginning to mature as a nation they were attracted by the immorality and idolatry of the society around them.

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The language in this chapter is bold enough that almost every writer avoids direct use of the same terms as the Lord used in picturing the scenes. Women should be proud of their beauty. It was given to them for a very good reason. How foolish it is for them to flaunt their bodies before the eyes of those whom they know full well will be tempted to pursue them.

Ezek 23:4 And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.

These two sisters had similar names. This was not unusual in that part of the world at that time. The meaning of the two names tells something about their nature. Aholah was the name given to the portion of the land which looked to Samaria as it's center. The name is said to mean "his tabernacle." The name of the younger sister was Aholibah. That name is said to be "my tabernacle in her." Both names appear to imply that the two were expected to be holy representatives of Jehovah. The name Aholibah dealt with the portion of Israel which saw Jerusalem as it's central point. Thus we are being presented with the nature of the two grand divisions of the once united twelve tribes of Israel.

Ezek 23:5 And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours,

Samaria in the north was first to turn her eyes to others than her Lord. She began to admire the Assyrian neighbors who came from the northwest.

Ezek 23:6 Which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses.

Oh how gallant these Assyrians were as they marched through the lands arrayed in splendorous military uniforms and often riding upon magnificent horses. The reader may recall that Solomon had been warned about the collection of horses and chariots. The northern portion of God's people should have remembered that warning. God's people are expected to impress others through their own holy nature rather than through military power.

Ezek 23:7 Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted: with all their idols she defiled herself.

Samaria broke down. She found that Jehovah was not providing everything she wanted. It seemed that Assyria might fill her supposed needs. Thus she turned to the worship of the idols which the Assyrians held dear. She played the harlot with Assyria. This was very likely both spiritual and fleshly. The worship of the idols involved sexual activities of the most vivid nature.

Ezek 23:8 Neither left she her whoredoms brought from Egypt: for in her youth they lay with her, and they bruised the breasts of her virginity, and poured their whoredom upon her.

Ezek 23:9 Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted.

Just as Aholah had joined in the worship of idols in Egypt, she did the same again with the Assyrians. She did not hesitate to make herself the lover of others in place of her True Lord.

Ezek 23:10 These discovered her nakedness: they took her sons and her daughters, and slew her with the sword: and she became famous among women; for they had executed judgment upon her.

Those who allow themselves to become the pawn of the devil will finally find that they have made friends with the worst of enemies. After Satan has deluded them into worldly pleasures, they find themselves paying a monstrous price for their folly. Aholah became known as a fallen woman. She was trash!

Ezek 23:11 And when her sister Aholibah saw this, she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she, and in her whoredoms more than her sister in her whoredoms.

How could Aholah's sister, Aholibah follow in the footprints of that sister after seeing that the end of the road was corruption? Yet she did. The southern kingdom of Judah went even farther into sin than had her northern sister. Her spiritual husband Jehovah also left her unfulfilled. She must have more! Do we in the present day world learn anything from this record?

Ezek 23:12 She doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men.

Those Assyrians with all of their glory promised her just what she wanted. She turned her face away from God and toward the idols and the artificial glory of Assyria.

Ezek 23:13 Then I saw that she was defiled, that they took both one way,

Ezekiel saw that both Samaria and Judah had chosen the pleasures of sin for a season over the eternal hope of a home with the Lord.

Ezek 23:14 And that she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion,

Even the images which were painted on the walls of the cities excited her no end. She had played around with the Assyrians. Now she decided the Babylonians promised that which the Assyrians had not provided. You see, the lying attractions of Satan fade quickly, but are usually replaced by others just as strong and just as dangerous.

Ezek 23:15 Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity:

Babylonia became the most noted nation of that portion of the world for a time. They could be seen with one's eyes and heard with one's ears. God did not present Himself in the same way. She said to herself, "Why not? This is here and now. God is later and far away."



Ezek 23:16 And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea.

It did not take long for the attractions of the Babylonians to reach into the heart of Jerusalem. She even sent to Babylon, or Chaldea, to invite them into God's land. Surely now she would satisfy her illicit desires.

Ezek 23:17 And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them.

The Babylonians did not hesitate to answer the call. They came with their idols and their sexual licentiousness. Her mind was alienated from God and fastened on the handsome riders on their prancing steeds.

Ezek 23:18 So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister.

To say Jerusalem had discovered her whoredoms and discovered her nakedness does not mean she had not known of them all the time. However, now she had revealed her pollution before both God and men. God placed her in the same category as her older sister Samaria. They had both proven to be harlots.

Ezek 23:19 Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

Note that the text does not say she added to her whoredoms. She multiplied them. She was acting just like she did way back in Egypt when idolatry took over her heart. After all the time which had passed, she had failed to learn from her experiences. She will have to have another unpleasant lesson.

Ezek 23:20 For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses.

What a horrifying passage this is to lie in the midst of the Holy Book of the Heavenly Father!

Ezek 23:21 Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth.

Ezek 23:22 Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side;

God was ready to bring those same lovers back to her, but this time it would be for quite another reason. The Babylonians despised her now and felt that they could easily overrun her. God would permit them to move in with very little resistance. Not only did the Babylonians despise Jerusalem; those of Jerusalem now hated the Babylonians. They had not satisfied her any more than had the Assyrians.

Ezek 23:23 The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them: all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses.

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All of those upon whom God's people had fastened their affections while they ignored His blessings would now be surrounded by the very ones whom they had previously loved, but now despised.

**Ezek 23:24 And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments.**

The Lord was ready now to turn His people over to the ones with whom they had fraternized. His disapproval would be made known by revealing to Jerusalem just what they had been flirting with.

**Ezek 23:25 And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.**

Are we dealing with something literal here, or are these figurative words? Sadly, they could have been literal. Harlots sometimes were punished by cutting off their nose and their ears. Jerusalem would see their young sons and daughters taken into captivity. The land would be burned and those who were not taken into captivity would meet the edge of a sword.

**Ezek 23:26 They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels.**

The Babylonians would not be kind to the harlot after having abused her. They would take everything she had and leave her exposed. That which she had used to attract the attention of possible lovers would be removed from her possession.

**Ezek 23:27 Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more.**

The evil habits she had learned while still a youngster in the land of Egypt would be made vile in her sight. When God had finished with her she would abominate the very things she had been drawn to before.

**Ezek 23:28 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated:**

This would be accomplished by letting her be taken into the control of the Babylonians. She would not be so pleased with their company now as she had been when she abandoned the Lord to go to their bed.

**Ezek 23:29 And they shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labour, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.**

All the world would hear of the way Jerusalem had been treated. She would be turned into a slave. She would





be left exposed to not just the Babylonians, but to persons of many nations for centuries to come.

**Ezek 23:30 I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols.**

It is made perfectly plain why God would allow such misery to fall upon His precious city of Jerusalem. She had preferred the heathen idols to her own True Lord. She had become filthy in His eyes and needed to be made clean before He could claim her once more.

**Ezek 23:31 Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand.**

As a result of not having learned from seeing what had happened to the older sister, this one would have to endure the same type of misery. The main difference would be that Jerusalem would have an even larger cupful to drink than did Samaria.

**Ezek 23:32 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much.**

The embarrassment would be terrible. The once proud people would find themselves ridiculed beyond belief. That cup which she was about to tip up to her mouth had poison in it.

**Ezek 23:33 Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria.**

Here are four words used to describe the consequences of her misbehavior. She would become drunk. She would suffer great sorrow. Astonishment would open her eyes to the truth of sin's harvest. She would not be able to cry out to God because she had abandoned Him for worldly pleasure.

**Ezek 23:34 Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.**

The bitter cup would not only be tipped for a swallow or two. It would be drained to the last drop. The faithless harlot would be so ashamed of herself that she would tear her womanly attractions from her. They would have disgusted her because of the company they had drawn to her.

**Ezek 23:35 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.**

God's city had turned her back on Him in an indication that she no longer had need of Him. The result of that way of life would be that she would have to solve her own problems related to her association with the heathen nations.

**Ezek 23:36 The LORD said moreover unto me; Son of man, wilt thou judge Aholah and Aholibah? yea, declare unto them their abominations;**

It was the unpleasant task of Ezekiel to pronounce God's sentence upon the harlot people. I think the reader can just begin to understand just how revolting the assignment must have been to the prophet.

**Ezek 23:37 That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them.**

This adultery they had committed was both fleshly and spiritual. They had also been responsible for the loss of both spiritual life and physical life by many of their kinsfolk. They had even offered the children which had been placed in their care to false gods such as Molech. They had actually burned them up as sacrifices to that which was no true god.

**Ezek 23:38 Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths.**

God's sanctuary would be the tabernacle where the people gathered to worship the real God. The sabbaths which He had appointed as a rest day to memorialize Him and rejuvenate themselves was placed on the same level as any other day of the week. The lesson Jerusalem was to learn should ring through the hearts of many in the present day who find recreation and partying more attractive than worshiping the Lord.

**Ezek 23:39 For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house.**

Just imagine what was going on! They would take one of their own children and burn it as a sacrifice to a false god, and then would come to the tabernacle of Jehovah that same day and pretend to worship Him.

**Ezek 23:40 And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments,**

They had actually sent a messenger to Babylon to invite Jehovah's rivals to come and revel with them. They prepared in numerous ways to make themselves as attractive to these visitors as they could.

**Ezek 23:41 And satest upon a stately bed, and a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil.**

They prepared their bed and added sweet smelling incense to make a sensuous impression.

**Ezek 23:42 And a voice of a multitude being at ease was with her: and with the men of the common sort were brought Sabeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads.**

She proved to be quite successful in her efforts to bring lovers to her bed. They came from different directions, decked out in finery which would lead to union with God's unfaithful harlot.

**Ezek 23:43 Then said I unto her that was old in adulteries, Will they now commit whoredoms with her, and she with them?**

Ezekiel tried his best. He asked her if she really desired to share in whorishness with these people who

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were of low morality and were midgets in spiritual stature. It seemed nearly impossible that she would think of participating in such depravity.

Ezek 23:44 Yet they went in unto her, as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot: so went they in unto Aholah and unto Aholibah, the lewd women.

But she did!! The strangers played with both Aholah and Aholibah as if they were fascinating toys. Both Samaria and Jerusalem were humbled as the basest sort of women would be.

Ezek 23:45 And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands.

The truly righteous have seen these lawless women as just what they were; worldly and selfish spiritual adulteresses.

Ezek 23:46 For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled.

Jehovah was not about to listen to the pleas of such sinful people. He would permit them to be removed from His land of Canaan and would allow their properties to be seized.

Ezek 23:47 And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch them with their swords;

they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire.

They would be murdered by both stoning and butchering with swords. The Babylonians would kill their children and would burn their houses. It may well be safe to consider other miseries which God did not take the time to list here.

Ezek 23:48 Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness.

Their attraction to idols would disappear. Any who wanted to follow their way of life could easily see what the future would hold for them.

Ezek 23:49 And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

God would use the Assyrians and Babylonians to make His jealousy known. Both the idols and those who worshiped them would have ample evidence that Jehovah is the only Creator and Lord of all.

Chapter 24

There are two basic divisions in chapter twenty-four. The first is the parable of the polluted pot. The second is the lesson taught at the death of the prophet Ezekiel's wife.

Ezek 24:1 Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezekiel had been preaching repentance to the rebellious people of the land for over three years. There had been little noticeable change in their attitude toward the word of the Lord. God would now begin to follow up His warnings with action. Jerusalem was to be attacked by the Babylonians.

Ezek 24:2 Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

Ezekiel was to inform those in captivity that the precise day in which they presently lived was the day the attack would begin. The king of Babylon would put extreme heat on those who still remained in the very special city of the Lord. He could only have known of the event through a personal revelation to himself. This, when it was learned that he had spoken the truth would be absolute proof that he spoke at the command of God.

Ezek 24:3 And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it:

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He was to instruct the people through a combination of a parable which came as a sign. They were to obtain a pot and set it up where water could be put into it and heated. The pot was to represent the city of Jerusalem.

**Ezek 24:4 Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones.**

They were then to take an animal, probably a sheep, and place the choicest portions of it in the pot. These choice pieces represented the people who still dwelt in the city and had not yet been taken to Babylon.

**Ezek 24:5 Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein.**

The larger bones of the animal were to be used to help provide fuel for the fire. The fire was to be set and the contents of the pot were to be raised to the boiling point and then allowed to continue in that condition for a time. This time of seething was to signify the time in which the people of Jerusalem were to feel the heat of the Babylonian attack.

**Ezek 24:6 Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.**

After the period of boiling, the scum which represented the polluted condition of God's people would be readily seen. The pieces of meat were to then be removed piece by piece. These were the individual people of the city. They

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were to be removed without any consideration to their level of influence. The mighty and influential would be treated just the same as the lowly and humble. All would feel the heat of God's wrath.

Ezek 24:7 For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust;

The city had not been ashamed of the atrocities which she had done. Blood of the dead was not supposed to be left in sight. Even the blood of animals which had been slain was to be covered. Jerusalem had been unconcerned about the bloodshed which had taken place within her walls. It was in plain sight.

Ezek 24:8 That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.

God did not have any intention of overlooking the wickedness of those who were supposed to be subject unto Him. He would pour out His vengeance upon them and would let all know it was the result of their spiritual pollution.

Ezek 24:9 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great.

Jerusalem had become a bloodthirsty city. It was to be cleansed of this scum. The fuel would be piled up in order that the pot would be certain to boil for some time.

Ezek 24:10 Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned.

Are the words of this verse those of a loving and caring God? At first glance it may seem to be just the opposite. But, let the reader remember that this was only happening after Jehovah had given them every opportunity to turn back to Him and cease their infatuation with idolatry. They had refused to heed His guiding voice. It was necessary to use harsher methods.

Ezek 24:11 Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed.

Contents of the pot were to be heated to such a point that the scum and filthiness could be consumed and leave only that which was pure. The process would indicate just what part of the people were faithful and what part were saturated with filthy scum.

Ezek 24:12 She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire.

She should have listened to God's warnings through His prophet. That had not occurred. She had preferred lies over the truth. The filth had continued in spite of God's warnings. Now it would be removed through the fire of His wrath.

Ezek 24:13 In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou

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**shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.**

The patience of the Lord had come to an end. It was not His fault that the city still remained polluted. His warnings were now being replaced with much more unpleasant methods of purification.

**Ezek 24:14 I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.**

Mercy was no longer a part of the picture. The people might deceive themselves into believing Jehovah would never allow the city which was such an apple of His eye to be devastated and left in ruins. They were in for a monstrous surprise. Jerusalem would be burned to ashes.

**Ezek 24:15 Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

We now move into the second division of the chapter in which God takes away the wife of the prophet in death, and in doing so tells Ezekiel not to mourn in any way. This was not pleasant for the prophet. It would not be pleasant for the people of Jerusalem or those in captivity. It is not pleasant reading for those of us who examine it a long range in both distance and time. Sin is not a delightful manner of life.

**Ezek 24:16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet**

**neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.**

God was about to take away from Ezekiel something which he prized very dearly. What was it that was the desire of his eyes? It was his wife! What was more is that God commanded him not to shed a tear when he lost her. He was not to allow his grief to be detected in any way.

**Ezek 24:17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.**

None of the signs of mourning which were commonly seen were to be seen in the case of the prophet. He was not to put a turban on his head. He was to put on his shoes, which was just the opposite of what the mourners usually did. He was not to put a covering over his lower face. He was not to take part in the food which would be brought by friends and neighbors to show their understanding of his loss.

**Ezek 24:18 So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.**

As was his usual practice Ezekiel moved out among the people to speak to them of the things of the Lord. The same evening his wife died. The following morning he did exactly as God had commanded. He did not change his routine to mourn the loss of his wife.

**Ezek 24:19 And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?**

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It seems that the people of the captivity were accustomed to strange actions on the part of this man of God. They realized there was some reason for his unusual behavior. They wished to know what it was that was on his mind.

Ezek 24:20 Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 24:21 Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.

He then explained to them that God had left a message that he was to pass on to them. God was about to allow the Babylonians to turn the temple in Jerusalem into a pile of ruins. This had been source of spiritual strength to His people. They had rejoiced in it's beauty. Those who had been left behind in the city of God would suffer death at the point of the sword. God had seen that which He loved turned to rubble. His people were to Him as Ezekiel's wife was to him. It hurt!

Ezek 24:22 And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.

God had accepted the loss without a demonstration of the seriousness of His own loss. He wished for the people to learn what it was like. to watch that which was dearest in life be taken away and simply watch it happen.

Ezek 24:23 And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not

mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another

The people of Israel who were in captivity could do nothing to prevent the destruction in their home land. They were to go on just as Ezekiel had done at the loss of his wife. God had plans for the future and they would be used to further those plans.

Ezek 24:24 Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

It would be a while before messengers would come and report the destruction of the city. When they did arrive, the captives in Babylon would know Jehovah is GOD. He knew what it would take them many days to hear of.

Ezek 24:25 Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters,

When the city back in Canaan had lost its temple, its glory and beauty, and had even seen the death of those sons and daughters of the captives who had been left behind, the grief would be unbounded.

Ezek 24:26 That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears?

Some few would escape the destruction. They would come to Babylon, either as captives or at their own free



will and would report the amount of devastation which had come upon their precious city. The report would not be just a rumor. It would be the tragic truth.

Ezek 24:27 In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel had been struck dumb during the time from the death of his wife to the coming of the messengers. He could not speak of what he felt inside. When the people were told of the plight of their city, they would know why Ezekiel had been silent. They would join the prophet in the realization that sin is horrible and God hates it.

Chapter 25

After having described the coming destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, God turned His attention to the surrounding nations which had taken delight in the difficulties in which His chosen people had found themselves. These nations had gained the mistaken notion that Israel's God was not able to match wisdom and power with their own false gods.

It would be necessary to prove to those nations that they were in at least as serious condition as was Israel. You cannot mock Jehovah and walk away without scars.

Ezek 25:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

Ezek 25:2 Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them;

Seven nations will be included in the predictions of destruction which God is to pour out on those who had rejoiced in Israel's troubles and had even contributed to them by practicing their own idolatrous worship where it would be tempting to Jehovah's people. The seven nations are:

1. Moab
2. Edom
3. Ammon
4. Philistia
5. Tyre
6. Sidon
7. Egypt

The Ammonites are the first to be listed. They were the descendants of the incestuous union between Lot and his own daughter. The ungodly behavior did not stop

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with this initial conduct but passed on down through the entire tribe produced by that union.

Rabbah was a prominent city in the land of the Ammonites. It was to become no more than a stable.

**Ezek 25:3 And say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity;**

It had pleased the Ammonites no end that the sanctuary of God had been profaned and the city of Jerusalem turned to tatters. Their “Aha!” had not gone unnoticed by the Lord and He was prepared to demonstrate that they were not the final judge of the nations.

**Ezek 25:4 Behold, therefore I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk.**

Those from the east, such as the Babylonians would take possession of their land. They would have the opportunity to share in the misfortune which had befallen Israel.

**Ezek 25:5 And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching place for flocks: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.**

**Ezek 25:6 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with**

**the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel;**

**Ezek 25:7 Behold, therefore I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.**

When the Lord was finished with Ammon, they would have disappeared as a nation. The clapping of the hands, the stomping of the feet and the cries of “Aha!” would all have been removed. They would know that Jehovah is Lord.

**Ezek 25:8 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen;**

The Moabites were next in line for divine attention. Just as the Ammonites were the result of Lot's incest with one of his daughters, the Moabites were the product of the same incestuous relationship with a second daughter. (See Genesis 19.)

The Moabites were convinced that the people of Judah were not different from any other group of people, and that Jehovah, their God, was no different from any of the false gods of the heathen. In fact the king of Moab boasted that Chemosh, who was the god he worshiped was stronger than Jehovah and had defeated Him.

**Ezek 25:9 Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Bethjeshimoth, Baalmeon, and Kiriathaim,**

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Jehovah promised that He would tear away any defenses of Moab and allow invasion by their neighbors. The most prized portions of their land would be possessed by their enemies.

Ezek 25:10 Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites, and will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations.

Ezek 25:11 And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

The result of the invasion by these men from the east, the Ammonites would disappear from the known nations of the earth. Moab would join Ammon as memories of history.

Ezek 25:12 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them;

Ammon, Moab and Edom lay on the east side of the Jordan River with the Ammonites farthest north, the Moabites just south of them and the Edomites the southernmost of the three.

Edom had refused to allow Israel to pass through their territory when they arrived in the area after the long trek through the wilderness. The Edomites were descendants of Esau. Jacob and Esau were jealous of one another from many years back.

Ezek 25:13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make

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**it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.**

**Ezek 25:14 And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.**

Because of the intolerance of the Edomites toward Israel and the vengeance taken by Edom upon Israel, the Lord would take His own vengeance upon the Edomites. Both man and beast would fall and the land would become a deserted wilderness.

**Ezek 25:15 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred;**

The Philistines are the third of the heathen nations to be included in God's list of those who had made life difficult for Israel. They were located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They were a fierce and warlike people. Goliath was a Philistine giant. Israel made the very serious mistake of not driving all of the Philistines from the land as God commanded them to do. This led to an extended hatred between the two groups.

**Ezek 25:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast.**

One of these nations after another who had caused Israel to turn to false gods, or had fought with them over

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the land ultimately found themselves on the receiving end of the wrath of God

Ezek 25:17 And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.

Even in this twenty-second century in which I write these words, there are large numbers of the people of the earth who know there is a God called Jehovah, but who have set themselves against Him and in favor of those which are no gods. Woe—Woe.

Chapter 26

In chapters 26 through most of 28 the attention of the Lord as presented by Ezekiel turns to the two port cities of Tyre and Sidon. Although they were not nations they were very much involved in the ridicule heaped upon Israel when God brought the Assyrians and the Babylonians in upon her. After having warned Ammon, Moab and the Philistines of the sad future they faced God assures Tyre and Sidon that they will suffer a similar fate.

Yes, Israel had felt the strong arm of the Lord striking His fear into her for having turned to idolatry and immorality. But the heathen nations and cities which had contributed to her disobedience were not to escape a share of His wrath.

Ezek 26:1 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 26:2 Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:

Tyre competed with Jerusalem for control of merchandise exchange. Tyre was a seaport and controlled much of the shipping which passed from the west of Europe into the middle east. Jerusalem was at the crossway of three continents, Asia, Africa and Europe. Much of the merchandise which traveled over land passed through that city of Palestine. There was much rivalry between the two cities.

Now that Jerusalem had been laid in ruins, Tyre felt she would inherit the riches which Jerusalem had piled up, and would become even more prosperous then before.

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She had clapped her hands, stomped her foot and cried out “Aha.”

**Ezek 26:3 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.**

Jehovah was extremely unhappy with the stance Tyre had taken. She had placed herself in opposition to the city which He so hated to discipline as He had His holy city. Tyre’s rejoicing was completely out of order. She deserved punishment just as Jerusalem had suffered.

God declared that He would send one nation after another to buffet her even as the waves roll in from the sea. He did that. He brought Babylon, Greece and Rome, plus others to prove His point. It took a period of over three hundred years to allow Tyre to feel the power of the waves, but before it was over she did come to know the truth of God’s statement.

**Ezek 26:4 And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.**

At that time it would have been nearly impossible to understand how a city with the hustle and bustle of Tyre would find herself no more than a bald rock upon which fishermen might spread their nets to dry in the sun. She was one of the most materialistic cities of the world. Her riches were coming to her from as far away as Tarshish in Spain.

**Ezek 26:5 It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken**

**it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.**

Conditions would be completely reversed. Rather than collecting wealth from other nations, Tyre would become a plunder which would feed the pride of many of those same nations.

**Ezek 26:6 And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I am the LORD.**

Her daughters which were in the field would likely have been those centers which fed off her prosperity and enriched themselves in much the same manner as she had. They would join her in the chastisement which was to come upon their “mother” city.

**Ezek 26:7 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.**

The name Nebuchadrezzar is identical with Nebuchadnezzar. It is just an alternative spelling of the name of this powerful ruler of Babylon. It is possible that this man was the most powerful ruler in the world at the time. He is called a king of kings. Other kings bowed down before his authority.

He would come against Tyre from the north with a mighty fighting force made up of horses, chariots and a multitude of military men. He was not accustomed to defeat and would be determined to conquer the seaport city.

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Ezek 26:8 He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

The most interesting portion of the previous verse is the statement that this king of kings would build a mount against the city. It seems that Tyre consisted of two parts. There was a mainland city and also an island city separated from the mainland. The mount which Nebuchadnezzar was going to build was a causeway between the mainland city and that on the island.

Ezek 26:9 And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

Tyre's great wealth and material possessions would have little effect upon the powerful military forces of the king of Babylon. He would break down the walls and the watchtowers, leaving the mainland city without defenses.

Ezek 26:10 By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

This would have been a terrifying sight to those of Tyre. Clouds of dust, the rumbling of chariot wheels on the ground and the breaking down of the city walls was not something these people had experienced before.

Ezek 26:11 With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

After having entered the city Nebuchadnezzar would march through the city without opposition. He would kill the inhabitants without mercy. Any resistance which Tyre might present would be useless.

Ezek 26:12 And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.

The wealth which Tyre had amassed at the expense of others less fortunate would be removed and placed in the treasure of the Babylonians. The buildings of the city, of which those of Tyre were so proud would be turned to rubble and scraped off into the sea.

Ezek 26:13 And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.

Music and dancing many times go along with riches. It is a shame that mankind seems unable to gain material possessions without turning to partying. The harps and the singing would become silent in the defeated city.

Ezek 26:14 And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

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Those who have visited the site of the old mainland city of Tyre tell us that it is no more! The only remnants of the city are found on the island to which the citizens fled when the mainland city walls were broken down. The island village is said to consist of about six thousand persons at the present time.

**Ezek 26:15 Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?**

The fall of Tyre would be so impressive that for many miles around the impact of the fall would astonish those who heard of it. The sons and the music which had entranced them before would be replaced with cries of the wounded and dying.

**Ezek 26:16 Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee.**

The shock would be so great that the more powerful men of the entire area would grieve over what had taken place. The riches which they had built up would be in danger just as those who Tyre had been plundered. A new merchandising center would have to be built if the wealth was to continue to flow into their hands.

**Ezek 26:17 And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned**

**city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it!**

How incredible it was that such a great city would be made desolate! Both the city and those who had inhabited it had been destroyed. The destruction was so horrifying that others wondered when a similar experience would fall upon them.

**Ezek 26:18 Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.**

**Ezek 26:19 For thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee;**

When Jehovah describes the result of His punishment of the once wealthy city, it strikes our minds as a lesson that we shall not want to find Him displeased with us as He was with those of Tyre.

**Ezek 26:20 When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living;**

Is this the pit of hell, or the pit of the grave which is spoken of? Although hell is not unknown in the pages of the Old Testament, it is more likely that this verse is talking about the pit of the grave. Those of Tyre would join those of days gone by who had left the land of the living and lay in the depths of the earth.



**Ezek 26:21 I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD.**

It is true that there is a small village on the island a short distance from the coast. However, the city which impressed those of more than one continent is gone. God states that it will not recover.

## Chapter 27

The glory of Tyre at the time of Ezekiel is the topic of our present chapter. This will be contrasted with her later condition, after Jehovah has used His chastening rod against her. The reader would do well to compare her glory to that of London, New York or Paris in the present world marketing scene.

**Ezek 27:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 27:2 Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus;**

Ezekiel is not the one originating these thoughts. They are from his tongue or pen, but they are from the mind of the Lord God.

Ezekiel is commanded to picture the sadness of Tyre and of those who profited by her prosperity. There will be many tears flowing as a result of her humiliation.

**Ezek 27:3 And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.**

The message is not intended for the king of Tyre alone. It is addressed to the famous city as a whole. She was one of the richest centers in the entire world. Her buying and selling of material goods, and even the slave trade had made this possible. She was so successful in her own eyes that she could look in her mirror and say she was a picture of unblemished beauty.

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Ezek 27:4 Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty.

It could almost be said that she had no borders. Her influence extended from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, and also into many interior nations.

Ezek 27:5 They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee.

The materials for her sailing ships were taken from the finest lumber which was produced from the majestic fir and cedar trees of well known forests. None had any finer.

Ezek 27:6 Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim.

There was oak for the oars and ivory for the furniture of those ships. Other nations could only sit back and envy her.

Ezek 27:7 Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee.

It was not cotton from which her said was made. It was fine linen. The finest dyes and paint were used for decoration.

It is interesting to note the use of the singular here as the “sail” is referred to. Sometimes it sounds as though

Tyre is pictured as a merchandising center. At other times such as this one, it seem that a ship is used for a figure of the riches of the city.

Ezek 27:8 The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots.

Only the finest of mariners were used to man this ship of beauty. She was in the best hands that could be found.

Ezek 27:9 The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.

The “caulkers” could mean those who caulked the figurative ship, or they could be taking about those who caulked any of the ships used to carry the merchandise traded in the city. They were also extremely well qualified for their duties.

Ezek 27:10 They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness.

Ezek 27:11 The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect.

Her warriors had been enlisted from nations noted for their military effectiveness. Such soldiers had their

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equipment available if needed for the defense of the city. Surely these would be sufficient in any invasion. But they were not sufficient when Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city. It took thirteen years for his forces to drive it from the mainland to the island offshore, but he did succeed.

**Ezek 27:12 Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.**

**Ezek 27:13 Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market.**

Both men and metals were among the goods traded. The purchasers came from far and near. The products were as valuable as the souls of men.

**Ezek 27:14 They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules.**

Animals were included in the wares which were traded. The beasts mentioned here were of great value at that time. They were not only used for field labor, but also for military ends.

**Ezek 27:15 The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony.**

**Ezek 27:16 Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and brodered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate.**

There was ivory and ebony from Dedan, as well as fine cloth, jewels and ornamental objects of many types. Syria is added to the list of merchants doing business in the city.

**Ezek 27:17 Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants: they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm.**

There were agricultural products from the land of Israel. Wheat, honey and olive oil were among these items.

**Ezek 27:18 Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool.**

**Ezek 27:19 Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market.**

**Ezek 27:20 Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots.**

**Ezek 27:21 Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these were they thy merchants.**

**Ezek 27:22 The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold.**

**Ezek 27:23 Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were thy merchants.**

**Ezek 27:24 These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and broidered work, and**

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in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise.

The list of merchants and goods goes on and on and on. But has the reader noted that all is centered on the material and not on the spiritual. Tyre had everything which could be desired in the way of physical comforts. It seems however, that their desires did not extend into the eternal values.

Ezek 27:25 The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.

Throughout much of the known world at the time, the fame of this fantastic trading center had been made known. If the reader is not exhausted in reviewing the list which has been given, it might be useful to make an enumerated list of the merchants, and another of the products offered in the market at Tyre.

Ezek 27:26 Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.

Those who guided the ship of Tyrus had guided her into waters that were going to be entirely too rough for her survival. An east wind was going to surround her and leave her in ruins. The east wind was the army of Nebuchadnezzar which would move in from over on the east side of the Jordan River.

Ezek 27:27 Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and

all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin.

What a vast change was going to take place. Everything which the world prizes so highly would be taken from this pride filled concentration of selfishness and it would sink into the sea of the world population to disappear forever.

Ezek 27:28 The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots.

Those who heard of the crash would tremble in their shoes when they heard of it. Those who had guided the city into the catastrophe would cry out with such anguish that her customers would hear from afar.

Ezek 27:29 And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land;

All who depended upon the health of Tyre would be hesitant to continue in their endeavors. They would step back and try to deal with the fall of their mother ship.

Ezek 27:30 And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes:

Some have taken this verse to mean that after Tyre's crash, those who had dealt with her turned against her. That is incorrect. The cries which went up were

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the kind men and women utter at the funeral of a dear friend.

**Ezek 27:31 And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.**

These weepers were tearing out their hair, putting on sackcloth and wailing at her demise.

**Ezek 27:32 And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?**

The cries were most pitiful. Who could believe that a city so great and famous would sink into the midst of the sea of people and meet destruction?

**Ezek 27:33 When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise.**

It was particularly the rich and powerful of the earth that were shocked the most. They had built up a means of constantly increasing both their riches and their power. That system had been demolished.

**Ezek 27:34 In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall.**

**Ezek 27:35 All the inhabitants of the isles**

**shall be astonished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in their countenance.**

**Ezek 27:36 The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt be any more.**

Tyre would never rise again! Her day of false glory would sink into the sea of mankind and Babylon would succeed her.

I hope that the reader will realize the importance of the lengthy quote of the entire eighteenth chapter of the book of Revelation which is given below. As ancient Tyre was replaced by political Babylon, spiritual Babylon which has been a tool of the Antichrist, will experience a similar destruction before the final judgment. I have taken the liberty to bold some of the material in Revelation to make the comparison even more evident.

*Rev 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.*

*Rev 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

*Rev 18:3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

*Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

*Rev 18:5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*

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Rev 18:6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

Rev 18:7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Rev 18:8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Rev 18:9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

Rev 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Rev 18:11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

Rev 18:12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

Rev 18:13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

Rev 18:14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

Rev 18:15 The merchants of these things, which were

made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

Rev 18:16 And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

Rev 18:17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

Rev 18:18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

Rev 18:19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Rev 18:20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Rev 18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

Rev 18:22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

Rev 18:23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

Rev 18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

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## Chapter 28

We now have a continuation of the lamentation over Tyre. This time it centers on the ruler of that evil city. He is so pride filled over the wealth and reputation of the city that he fancies himself to be god. He will come crashing down from his egotistical ways.

**Ezek 28:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 28:2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:**

Ezekiel is of course the one addressed as the son of man. He is instructed to present what were to be some unwelcome truths to the prince of Tyre. He is to tell the prince that he may think he is a god, but he is but a man among men. That which he imagines and that which is real are two vastly different things.

**Ezek 28:3 Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:**

**Ezek 28:4 With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures:**

The prince of Tyre has convinced himself that there is no man wiser than himself. He believes that everything which has been accomplished in accumulating riches and power is due to his own great intelligence. The truth is

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that it is only due to the God in heaven that the prince lives and moves and has his being.

Ezek 28:5 By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:

Certainly it is not wrong that the plans and arrangements the prince has made played a part in the gathering of the riches and power. But when he convinced himself in his heart that he was a god, he had readied himself for a tremendous fall.

Ezek 28:6 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God;

Ezek 28:7 Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.

The strangers which the Lord was going to bring in upon the prince were from afar in the land of Babylon. When these strangers drew the sword and flashed it in the direction of the prince, he would find his beauty turned to ashes and the brightness of his glory would fade drastically. Nor would it be but one nation which caused the downfall. The plural is used here. There would be others who would take advantage of the defeat and would lend their efforts to his defeat.

Ezek 28:8 They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.

The pit to which the prince would be brought down would be the grave. He would die the same kind of death as all other humans.

Ezek 28:9 Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee.

Where would all the bluster be when he faced those who had greater power than himself and were about to kill him? Would he still proclaim that he was a god? Certainly not!

Ezek 28:10 Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

It was not only death he would face. He would find himself among those who died as enemies of the True God. His death would come through others who were also such enemies of Jehovah.

Ezek 28:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 28:12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

This portion of the chapter appears to deal with a higher power than that of the prince who was the object of verses one through ten. The figurative nature of the prophetic scriptures sometimes leaves us wondering if our understanding of them is complete. This is one of those cases. Is this the same person discussed above, or is the

prince only a type of the devil? I am going to suggest that the latter is the truth, and that the prince of Tyre had allied himself with Satan. The following words seem to reach into that higher spiritual level.

This king of Tyre thinks of himself as the epitome of all beauty and wisdom. Satan made that mistake and found himself condemned by the One who is actually the holder of those characteristics. Jehovah has no equal in beauty, wisdom or power.

Ezek 28:13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

In the beginning of time Satan had been in the midst of the beauty of God's presence. There is no way words can describe the wonders of that environment. Even Satan himself was capable of making sweet music in praise of his Creator. The word "created" is extremely important. Satan was not eternal. He had a beginning. He was created with the ability to choose between good and evil.

Ezek 28:14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Satan was pure and undefiled at the time of his creation. He was an angel who had special duties under the supervision of God. He was privileged to be a part of

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the ruling power structure which is called here “the holy mountain of God.”

But what are the “stones of fire?” There are two very important functions of stones pictured in the Word of God. The first is that of stoning humans to death. Stonings were used, for example to punish an adulterous woman. The second usage of stones is that of precious jewel stones which flash as kind os color when exposed to light. God walks among the precious stones of fire as His beauty is presented in His holy Word. Satan was so close to Jehovah before his fall that he could share a small portion of that beauty.

**Ezek 28:15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.**

The devil was created as a perfect being. He had no sin when he came into being. This did not last. He set himself up against God, as shown by his deception of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He was still active in the time of Ezekiel as he ruled through the heart of the proud prince of Tyre.

**Ezek 28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.**

Children in elementary school used to play a game called “king of the mountain.” One boy would climb up to the top of a small hill and proclaim himself to be the king. Others would try to push him off the mountain and

take his place. Satan had been cast out of the mountain of God and removed from the stones of fire. He was not yet finished. He would try over and over again to prove himself equal or superior to the Lord. He was trying to do that in the case of the city of Tyre.

**Ezek 28:17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.**

Satan and the prince of Tyre were so closely allied that when the prince of Tyre was cast down to the ground, Satan shared in that downfall. The kings of the earth of that day and even down to the present age can learn from the fall of Tyre. Pride comes before a fall.

**Ezek 28:18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.**

The emphasis now turns back in the direction of the prince. Satan is still there but the words are pointed in the direction of the prince. He has separated himself from all that is holy. His materialistic goals were like a fire in his belly. That fire would finally devour him and leave him no more than a pile of ashes to be abhorred by all who knew of it.

**Ezek 28:19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.**

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The amazement of seeing the difference between what Tyre had been, and what it was to become, would leave men terrified at the thought of sharing in such a fate. The only way that Tyre would strike fear into the hearts of men again would be that fear which arose when they contemplated falling into the same pit.

Ezek 28:20 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 28:21 Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it,

These last few verses of the chapter give attention to the fate of Zidon, or Sidon. It was but a very few miles up the coast from Tyre and also needed to be taught a lesson about pride and materialism.

Ezek 28:22 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her.

Just as the sins of Tyre had resulted in her downfall, Zidon was to receive a similar punishment. She had profited by her association with Tyre. Now she was to be punished by the same Almighty hand of the Lord. To be sanctified is to be separated from evil. Zidon would far slightly better than Tyre, but would feel a large share of the same misery. Zidon can be located at the present time. The mainland city of Tyre is no more than rubble.

Ezek 28:23 For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon

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**her on every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD.**

Disease and death were to fall upon this sister of Tyre. The invading armies would approach her from every direction. When that happened, she and many others would come to understand that the prince of Tyre was not God. Jehovah alone held that position.

**Ezek 28:24 And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.**

Neither Tyre nor Zidon would have the satisfaction of making life unbearable for the people of Israel. Her future was far more secure than her past and her present.

**Ezek 28:25 Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob.**

Satan will not succeed in his long range efforts to delude God's chosen people. He may even succeed in making wreckage of the fleshly seed of Abraham, but the spiritual family which is related to the Lord by the faith of such as Abraham and David will be the family of the Father in heaven. They will be gathered through the call of the gospel to turn their ways back toward the mountain of God and the stones of fire which Satan left behind when he turned in the opposite direction.

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Ezek 28:26 And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God.

The faithful of all the ages will enjoy a special security in the knowledge that God is their Provider and Protector. Satan may try with all of his power to corrupt them. But in connection with this conclusion of the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, it would be a great comfort to place it beside the passage found in Romans 8:31-39.

Rom 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Rom 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Rom 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Rom 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Rom 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Rom 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chapter 29

The focus of attention now turns to Egypt. Egypt had been a nation of considerable power in days prior to this. That is about to come to an end. God will allow Nebuchadnezzar to bring his forces into Egypt and tame the wild crocodile of the Nile. Egypt was to become a has-been nation.

Ezek 29:1 In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Many of the dates given in this portion of the Bible date from the beginning of the captivity of Israel in Babylon. This was in the latter part of the tenth year of that captivity.

Ezek 29:2 Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt:

At a time when Israel was looking toward Egypt for help in fending off the attack of Nebuchadnezzar, God caused Ezekiel to predict Egypt's demise in power. It is amazing that Israel would even consider an alliance with the nation which kept her in bondage until God used the plagues in the time of Moses to release from that horrible condition. It would have far wiser for Israel to depend upon the Lord for assistance instead of looking toward her former slavemaster. Egypt and Babylon both eyed Israel as a juicy morsel which would be very tasty.

Ezek 29:3 Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of

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**Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.**

The crocodile which lived in the Nile River was a symbol for the nation of Egypt. As the leader of the nation of Egypt, God used the national symbol to point out Pharaoh. Pharaoh had so much pride that he liked to think of the Nile as a creation which he had brought into being and which belonged to him.

**Ezek 29:4 But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.**

The Lord was ready to catch the crocodile leader of the Egyptians and lift him from the security of the Nile. When Pharaoh was lifted from his place of security, those who had been hanging to him would be drawn out along with him. Israel would find that relying upon Egypt as an ally would be a perilous mistake.

**Ezek 29:5 And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven.**

This was not the kind of burial ceremony Egyptians doted on. Funerals were times of dignified ceremony. It would not be that way this time. They would be unceremoniously dumped into the wilderness and left

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there to provide food for the scavenger birds.

Jehovah remembered, even if Israel seemed to have forgotten just what troubles His people had suffered in that land of Egypt. This was no time to turn to one who had been so unmerciful in times past.

Ezek 29:6 And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

A staff is a sturdy wooden rod which aids one in walking. When Israel had leaned upon Egypt in the past they had found that staff to be no more than a flexible reed which betrayed their confidence.

Ezek 29:7 When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

One might expect that even a bent and broken reed would do no serious damage to the one who depended upon it. Instead, Egypt had broken and had pierced their shoulder. They had found themselves unable to walk at all when they called upon the land of the Nile for help.

Ezek 29:8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee.

The sword which the Lord was to bring against Egypt was that of Nebuchadnezzar. His forces would leave Egypt as a second rate nation. It would never climb back to it's position of dominance in the area.

Ezek 29:9 And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it.

Egypt was to discover who was the master of the Nile. Pharaoh had not brought it into being. Pharaoh would not be able to protect it from the armies of the Babylonians.

Ezek 29:10 Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia.

The river, the beasts, and land and the people of the land would find that when God is against one, the future becomes dim indeed. Saying that the land would become desolate from the tower of Syene to the border of Ethiopia was like using the term “from Dan to Beersheba in Israel. There would be no exemptions.

Ezek 29:11 No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.

Some have tried to work out the arithmetic of these forty years. It is quite possible that this is one of those numbers in the scriptures which refer to a long period of time, even though not without end. Egypt is still a second rate nation.

Ezek 29:12 And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are

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**laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.**

The Jews were to be scattered into many countries of the world. The Jews had met the same fate. Their cities would be turned from bustling marketplaces to collections of poor and huddled masses. Her pride would be severely bruised.

**Ezek 29:13 Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered:**

**Ezek 29:14 And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom.**

For an extended period of time the Egyptians would find themselves scattered and powerless. After that time they would be permitted to return to their native land. But when that return took place, they would have been reduced to insignificance.

**Ezek 29:15 It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.**

We have walked on the streets of modern Egypt. We have seen the buildings which exist there now. These sights can hardly be called impressive. Egypt no longer looks down at other nations. It must look up to see them.

**Ezek 29:16 And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.**

Egypt would be of very little help to Israel. Nebuchadnezzar left her in such a humbled condition that she could neither hinder nor help the Jews. All that Egypt could do was to remind Israel of their sins of the past. Instead of depending upon Egypt, Israel should have known that Jehovah was the only true source of help for her.

**Ezek 29:17 And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

From the tenth year of the exile to the twenty-seventh year the struggle went on. Nebuchadnezzar finally conquered both the city of Tyre and the Egyptians. Ezekiel was then given another message which could be passed on to the people of Israel.

**Ezek 29:18 Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it:**

God had made use of Nebuchadnezzar to chastise Tyre for its pride and for its treatment of His own people. He had caused those of Tyre to shave their heads and do other things which revealed the grief they felt over the plight of their once proud city.





Nebuchadnezzar had performed a service to Jehovah in punishing Tyre and he had received very little in return.

**Ezek 29:19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.**

It is quite possible that much of the wealth of Tyre had been turned over to Egypt to keep it out of the hands of the Babylonians. God was going to see that some of the riches which had found their way to Egypt fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. That would serve as remuneration for his services.

**Ezek 29:20 I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD.**

**Ezek 29:21 In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.**

Some wish to apply this last verse to the days of the Messiah. Horns represent power. The promise from the Lord is that Ezekiel will be free to give glory to God for having protected His people so that the spiritual Israel which is the present day Kingdom of Jesus Christ, could bud and blossom throughout the world.

## Chapter 30

God is continuing to show the consequences of attempts to injure His chosen nation. Egypt and her allies have joined the rest of the heathen who are trying to show that their false gods are equal of superior to Jehovah. They are not, and the Lord will prove that fact.

**Ezek 30:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 30:2 Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day!**

When we reach the beginning of every main division of the book of Ezekiel, we find this same declaration that the words are not those of the prophet. They are delivered to him from the Lord and he intends to do that which the Lord commanded him to do.

What day is this that God proclaims to be a day of woe and howling? In this case it is the day that Egypt and those who would joint her in preventing the Babylonians from chastising Israel. Israel had become immoral and idolatrous. They were due to be punished for their sins. Babylon was the sword the Lord was ready to use for that purpose. Israel had appealed to Egypt for assistance and Egypt had greedily agreed to help, probably with the ulterior motive of taking control of the territory of Canaan.

This was not going to succeed in warding off the Babylonian attack. What it would do was to bring great sorrow to all concerned.

**Ezek 30:3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.**

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Clouds are a signal that a storm is on the way. This time the storm is about to howl around the heads of those who resist God's purposes in the punishment of His wayward people.

Ezek 30:4 And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.

Ethiopia and Egypt were ready to come to the aid of Israel in the face of the attack of Nebuchadnezzar and his forces. Many of the soldiers of those two countries would be killed in the battle. Large numbers of the people of those nations would be removed from their land and their strength would be toppled.

Ezek 30:5 Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

In addition to Egypt and Ethiopia, several other smaller nations would suffer as a result of their sympathies with those two. Libya, Lydia and Chub would be humbled as well. Jehovah is the only True God. These nations needed to become aware of that truth. Jehovah had determined to punish Israel, and that punishment would take place in spite of any and all efforts to prevent it.

Ezek 30:6 Thus saith the LORD; They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord GOD.

By upholding Egypt, these allied nations were in actuality standing up against Jehovah. The pride of Egypt would be brought down to such a level that all the world would recognize the drastic change in her influence and prestige.

Ezek 30:7 And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted.

Egypt was the center of the insurrection against the will of God. She would be made desolate in the midst of any countries who followed her example. All of them would find themselves desolated just as Egypt was.

Ezek 30:8 And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and when all her helpers shall be destroyed.

This is not a literal fire which is discussed here. Fire is known for its ability to leave burned ashes in its wake. When God is finished with Egypt and her allies they will find themselves in a ruined condition.

Ezek 30:9 In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh.

Neither Egypt nor the Ethiopians were aware of it yet, but both would find themselves grieving together. The wrath of God would come!

Ezek 30:10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon.

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The tool which the Lord would use to teach all of these nations of His ability to punish when punishment was due would in this case be Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon.

**Ezek 30:11 He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.**

**Ezek 30:12 And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken it.**

To make the Nile and its network of canals dry was to dry up the life of the land of Egypt. That land is absolutely dependent upon the irrigating power of the great river Nile. The land would be so weakened that the Babylonian forces would find it relatively easy to take possession.

**Ezek 30:13 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.**

The entire land of Egypt would feel the drastic effects of their uprising. They were proud of their idols and images and felt that Israel was threatened because her God was inferior to those they worshiped. The Lord would prove that such a belief was fatal. He would change their mockery to trembling.

**Ezek 30:14 And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No.**

Pathros is the name applied to what is sometimes called “upper” Egypt. This can be confusing in view of the fact that we normally think of north as “upper” on the map. In this case that is not true. Upper Egypt was the southern portion of that nation. No was the capital of upper Egypt. Zoan was located in the delta region of the Nile river.

**Ezek 30:15 And I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No.**

**Ezek 30:16 And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph shall have distresses daily.**

**Ezek 30:17 The young men of Aven and of Pibeseth shall fall by the sword: and these cities shall go into captivity.**

**Ezek 30:18 At Tehaphnehes also the day shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity.**

The various sites mentioned in the above verses were associated with the false gods which were worshiped in Egypt. It is not difficult to determine that Jehovah was bearing down upon these cities in a deliberate effort to point out the worthlessness of those whom the Egyptians called gods.

**Ezek 30:19 Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I am the LORD.**

God gives a direct statement through the tongue of Ezekiel that He was underlining the truth that there is no God but Him.

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Ezek 30:20 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 30:21 Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword.

Ezek 30:22 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand.

The intervention of the Lord had “broken the arm” of the Egyptian Pharaoh. It would not even be brought back to its original capabilities if it were to be put in a support to enable it to swing another sword. Egypt very quickly failed in her attempts to relieve Israel. Jeremiah tells us of that failure in Jeremiah 37:5.

Ezek 30:23 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

We do not know the details of this scattering of the Egyptians among the nations. It is highly probable that one of those nations was Babylon. It was a common practice at that time for a conquering nation to relocate large masses of the people of a defeated nation to prevent a further uprising. A number of nations were sometimes used to keep the transported persons from getting together and reorganizing.

Ezek 30:24 And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand:

but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man.

Ezek 30:25 But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt.

Ezek 30:26 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Again the reader is invited to skim over the previous material and count the number of times God declared that "They shall know that I am the Lord." There will be many in the world in these latter days who will discover that their infatuation with materialism leads to precisely the same end. Too late they will discover that "JEHOVAH IS THE LORD."

Chapter 31

There is some degree of controversy over the identity of the great cedar tree which falls. Some believe it to be Egypt. Others see it as Assyria. I take the position that it is Assyria. Egypt is being told that if she continues to be arrogant and pit herself against God's purposes, she will fall in the same manner as did Assyria.

Ezek 31:1 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

This date is after the fall of Assyria and before the defeat of Egypt at the hands of the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar. The warning fits the circumstances very well.

Ezek 31:2 Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness?

It will be noted that the question asked here by Ezekiel at the command of the Lord is "Whom art thou like in thy greatness?" The following verses of the chapter will be God's answer to His own question. The basic thrust of the answer is that Egypt is like Assyria, which fell even though it looked as if such a fall was completely impossible.

Ezek 31:3 Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.

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We are to be told how great the Assyrians were before they fell. Cedar trees are larger and more impressive than the lesser trees and vegetation which surrounds them in the forests of that part of the world. Their appearance is majestic, and they cast a shadow over all that which is near to them.

Assyria was a majestic empire which stood tall among the nations of the entire area. Many lesser nations were dependent upon her for their own prosperity. If Assyria fell, they would suffer with her.

**Ezek 31:4 The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent her little rivers unto all the trees of the field.**

The heart of Assyria was between the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers. They provided the moisture needed for the productivity of that land. The water ran throughout the land and fed not only the great cedar of Assyria, but also the surrounding less powerful nations.

**Ezek 31:5 Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.**

Being blessed as it was through the natural advantages such as an abundant water supply, the Assyrians became the envy of that part of the world. It grew greater and more powerful than any other people.

**Ezek 31:6 All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all**

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the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.

We are reminded of the dependency many other nations have on the health and wealth of the United States of America in our own day. The collapse of the United States would have sharp echoes in much of the present day world.

Ezek 31:7 Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters.

Ezek 31:8 The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty.

Ezek 31:9 I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.

It seemed that even the vegetation of the wonderful Garden of Eden would be dwarfed by the grandeur of the cedar of Assyria. This did not just happen by accident. The reader will notice that verse nineteen tells us “God” had made Assyria fair.

Again we should not miss the parallel. It is “God” who has made the United States fair among the trees of the present day world.

Ezek 31:10 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height;

After having described the pride of the Assyrians, God now tells His reaction to the pride which those Assyrians paraded before the entire world. The blessing from the hand of the Lord had produced pride rather than gratitude.

Ezek 31:11 I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness.

This verse speaks of what had been done in the past to Assyria, and not what was in the near future for Egypt. Nevertheless, it would be extremely wise for Egypt to learn a lesson from the fall of Assyria. A similar fate awaited her if she followed the same prideful path Assyria had followed.

Ezek 31:12 And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him.

We see the proud Assyrian tree cut down and lying crushed and broken amidst the blessings which she should have used for service to Jehovah. Her branches are broken and crushed as she lies flat on the ground. Those who had been dependent upon her had turned to other sources of help.

Ezek 31:13 Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches:

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Instead of feeding upon those less fortunate than himself, Assyria would find that it was being made food for others. The birds and the beasts which fed upon the fallen tree were the people who had previously lived in the shadow of those branches.

**Ezek 31:14 To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.**

The powerful leaders of Assyria and his lesser neighbors were doomed to destruction. Death had been his fate. He would never rise again to the heights of the past.

**Ezek 31:15 Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him.**

Great mourning took place at the destruction of the Assyrians. The events listed in this verse simply refer to the monstrous changes which took place when Assyria fell to the Babylonians. Political alliances had to be rearranged. The history of the entire planet was redirected.

**Ezek 31:16 I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with**

**them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.**

The word which is translated as “hell” here is the Hebrew word Sheol. It is the place of the dead. When the Lord allowed Assyria to disappear into the pit of nonexistence.

But why is the word “comforted” used here to speak of the condition of those in the nether parts of the earth? Assyria was evil. Even the rich man who died along with Lazarus found himself in torment rather than comfort. Frankly, I do not know why this connection is made.

**Ezek 31:17 They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.**

Assyria and all of those who sympathized with that nation were to be sent to the same unhappy fate. Fame had been replaced by a great fall!

**Ezek 31:18 To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.**

It seems to the present writer that the entire chapter has the purpose of warning Pharaoh and the land of Egypt that they were far from invincible. They were in precisely

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the same position as Assyria had been. If Egypt were to continue to stand between God and His intention to punish Israel for it's idolatry and immorality, they would find themselves crashing down to a like end.

Chapter 32

God continues His accusations against Egypt. That land deserves severe punishment for casting greedy eyes upon Israel. She would have pretended she was interested in the protection of Israel against the invading Babylonians. What she really wanted was to regain control of God's chosen nation. Pharaoh was to find himself condemned to the pit of sheol where he would find himself in the company of a number of other evildoers who had behaved in the same way in past days.

Ezek 32:1 And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 32:2 Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.

Ezekiel is very careful to present the dates of his pronouncements. This is helpful to those of us who are interested in the time spread of old testament history.

God commanded Ezekiel to predict dire times ahead for the ruler of the Egyptians. Pharaoh is compared to a vicious lion who preys upon the less powerful. He is also compared to a monster which is found in the waters. This animal lives in the rivers and by his actions stirs up mud, leaving the water riled. It is probable that the crocodile is the animal mentioned rather than the whale. Whales do not inhabit the rivers. They swim the sea. The Egyptians



are known to have worshiped the crocodile. So whether on land or water, Egypt feasted upon others and caused much disturbance for many people.

Ezek 32:3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net.

The Lord intended to call a halt to these abuses. He would treat Egypt as she had treated others. He would bring a large number of people into that land of the Nile and would take Pharaoh in His own net.

Ezek 32:4 Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee.

Egypt was to be drawn out of the waters and would be cast out where she would be a feast for flesh eating birds and beasts. Of course the birds and beasts represent those who would invade the land and take possession of whatsoever they found desirable. Egypt would lie helpless before these predators.

Ezek 32:5 And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height.

What a horrid picture we have here of the destruction of Pharaoh and his land. The lion and the crocodile would find the tables reversed and they would find themselves at the mercy of those who were stronger than they were.

Ezek 32:6 I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimst, even to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee.

There would be no place in the land where the death struggles of Egypt were unable to be seen. From the heights of the mountains to the depths of the rivers her flesh and blood would be strewn.

Ezek 32:7 And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.

Ezek 32:8 All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD.

The darkening of the heavens normally means the dimming out of the power of high rulers in the political field. Pharaoh and his henchmen would lose their glory and the land would be left in confusion and disarray.

Ezek 32:9 I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known.

The disturbance caused by the downfall of Egypt would be felt by other nations which Egypt had not even brought under her dominion. Egypt has not been known as an international power from that day to the present. She is still recognized as a nation, but certainly not the nation before which many other nations trembled at the time of Ezekiel.

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**Ezek 32:10 Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee, when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they shall tremble at every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall.**

Others who had observed the power and wealth of Egypt would have the opportunity to learn the folly of feeding upon others who had less power. Those nations would tremble with fear for their own future. If Egypt could suffer such punishment, so could they.

**Ezek 32:11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.**

The basic cause of Egypt's fall was to be the army of the Babylonians. They would come with mighty weapons. They would make Egypt a victim.

**Ezek 32:12 By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall, the terrible of the nations, all of them: and they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed.**

Mighty Egypt would find one mightier than herself. The Egyptian military forces would be overcome and the glory of that land would be almost completely extinguished. Massive numbers of the people would lose their lives at the hands of the Babylonians.

**Ezek 32:13 I will destroy also all the beasts thereof from beside the great waters; neither shall**

**the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them.**

Figures of speech are sometimes vivid and sometimes difficult to see through. May we suggest that the beasts were not lions and crocodiles, but were men who acted like these beasts. The waters would then be the ordinary people who were troubled by these beasts. The troubles would be drastically reduced.

**Ezek 32:14 Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD.**

Instead of being riled and muddy, the waters would become a great deal calmer and flow more smoothly than when the Pharaoh was splashing around so viciously.

**Ezek 32:15 When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I am the LORD.**

When the Egyptians who had idolized false gods and goddesses saw the disastrous condition of their once powerful land, they would realize that the objects of their worship had been no more than their own imaginations at work. Their false gods had been unable to protect them in this hour of trial.

**Ezek 32:16 This is the lamentation wherewith they shall lament her: the daughters of the nations**

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shall lament her: they shall lament for her, even for Egypt, and for all her multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

The lamentation would not be confined to Egypt. Others who knew of her plight would be anxious about their own future. Would they suffer as Egypt had suffered?

Ezek 32:17 It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 32:18 Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.

This is not the pit of eternal torment that we presently call "HELL." It is the place of the dead who await the final judgment. We know very little of the details concerning the difference between the condition of the wicked dead between the time of their death and their condition after having been sentenced to "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Whatever those details are, this writer is trying to avoid either sheol or HELL.

Ezek 32:19 Whom dost thou pass in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised.

Oh how glorious Pharaoh and his people had been. This would now come to an end. The high and the mighty would be reduced to equality with the weak and lowly. The uncircumcised are those who do not obey God's commands. Pharaoh would find himself in the company

of a host of like minded souls. It is not a pleasant company.

Ezek 32:20 They shall fall in the midst of them that are slain by the sword: she is delivered to the sword: draw her and all her multitudes.

Ruler after ruler and nation after nation has swung the sword at others. Those that live by the sword shall die by the sword. That had been the case with these whom Pharaoh was to join when he was laid down in the pit of sheol.

Ezek 32:21 The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

It would be too late at this point to reverse the path which had been followed. The wicked are all there together. They have lived and died in opposition to the will of Jehovah. They shall share each other's company when the pit of sheol has closed over them.

Ezek 32:22 Asshur is there and all her company: his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword:

We are now given an itemized list of some of the great earthly powers who misused both their own lives and the lives of others around them. Asshur is the first in the list. This is but another name for Assyria. She had exulted in her power. She had later been dethroned by Babylon.



Ezek 32:23 Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living.

This is quite a congregation. Asshur is there with all those who profited in life as a result of their association with her. She had struck terror into the hearts of many during her existence. Now the entire league of nations, of which she was the leader have found their place in discomfort.

Ezek 32:24 There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit.

Ezek 32:25 They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of them that be slain.

Elam lay to the east of the Tigris river. It had been a major power in Mesopotamia until it's defeat by the Assyrians. They had lived by the same rule of life as had Assyria and as had Pharaoh.

Ezek 32:26 There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living.

Ezek 32:27 And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

Meshech, Tubal and those of her time had swung the conquering sword at those they wished to manipulate. Now their swords had been laid to rest as pillows in sheol.

Ezek 32:28 Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shalt lie with them that are slain with the sword.

Egypt would find all of the above who had lived to prey upon others had already been placed in the pit of the dead.

Ezek 32:29 There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which with their might are laid by them that were slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit.

Much of the same characteristics that were pictured in the case of the Assyrians are also assigned to the Edomites. They lived by the power of the sword. They had also died by the power of the sword. They had been laid to rest in a bedroom filled with others of similar nature. Pharaoh would have an opportunity to learn lessons he should have learned while defying the Lord. It would now be too late.

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**Ezek 32:30 There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain; with their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit.**

This list of powers of the past is but a sample of those who had lived and died by the sword. As a summary there were:

Assyria, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, princes of the north and the Zidonians. Who would wish to spend time in the midst of such a rogues gallery?

**Ezek 32:31 Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord GOD.**

I find it difficult to apply this verse. I understand that the Bible is telling us Pharaoh would be consoled to find that he was not alone in the pit of sheol. Would it really be a source of comfort to know that others had been appointed to the same tragic end as one's self? I would certainly have taken no consolation in hanging on one side of the cross to find that there was another evil person hanging on the other side of the Holy Son of God. The comfort Pharaoh found is certainly not the kind of comfort most of us would seek.

**Ezek 32:32 For I have caused my terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that are slain with the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.**

Lazarus and the rich man died and found themselves in two different places. One rested in peace. The other was in torment. Would we not abhor the thought that we might find ourselves in the company of those who had lived the life of the opposition to God. Would we not look forward to being in the company of those who loved the Lord and kept His commandments? If the latter is our dream, let us act like it!!

## Chapter 33

Some say the latter part of the book of Ezekiel is much brighter and happier than the early portion, and that the happier part begins here in chapter 33. Perhaps that is true, but it is still a bit before sunrise. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem is not a cheerful event unless one realizes that a new spiritual city of Jerusalem with the church as its temple is to replace the former earthly city.

In this chapter Ezekiel is reminded that as a watchman, he is to warn the people of the danger which lies ahead for all who ignore the commandments of the Lord.

**Ezek 33:1 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 33:2 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:**

We will not be allowed to forget that Ezekiel is relaying the Word of God, and that he is but a prophet. He is not the true Author of the facts he is presenting.

God is about to bring a sword against the city of Jerusalem and the land which He had offered to His people. A watchman had been set up to alert those who would listen to what lay ahead. In those days a watchman was placed on the wall of defense which surrounded many of the larger cities. When foes approached, that watchman was to cry out a warning.

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Ezek 33:3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

Ezek 33:4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

If the watchman blew his warning trumpet and did not take the warning seriously, their captivity or their death would be their own fault.

Ezek 33:5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

Those who did take heed of the warning and did their best to prepare for what was ahead would not be at blame for any misfortune which befell them.

Ezek 33:6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

But let us suppose that the watchman saw the approaching danger and failed to blow the warning trumpet. In that case the people of the city would not be alerted. Those who were taken captive or who were killed would then still suffer. However, the watchman would be held guilty for not giving the warning.

Ezek 33:7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore

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**thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.**

Jehovah had set Ezekiel up as a watchman for Israel. He was now informing Ezekiel that great danger was not far away and that the prophet must sound the warning. If he did not give the warning, he would be found “guilty.”

**Ezek 33:8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.**

**Ezek 33:9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.**

How could Jehovah have made the situation any clearer than He had made it? If Ezekiel did warn the people, and they continued in their sinful ways, they would die, but Ezekiel would be found “not guilty.”

**Ezek 33:10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?**

Both Ezekiel and the people of Israel had their responsibilities. Ezekiel’s was to warn the people of their sins. The people must then turn from those sins. If either or both failed in their response, death would follow.

**Ezek 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the**

**wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?**

Did this mean the Lord was taking pleasure in seeing the souls of men perish? Not at all! That was why he had appointed Ezekiel as a watchman. The warning could be given and the death might be avoided.

**Ezek 33:12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.**

Next we are to consider the case of those who are living sin filled lives when the sword of the Lord arrives. Can these look back upon any righteous actions of the past as proof that they should not die? No, they may not. If he or she is living in wickedness when the sword comes the past days of righteous life will not cancel the present wickedness.

**Ezek 33:13 When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.**

God's position is repeated for emphasis. God is not interested in placing the righteous actions on the left side



of the balance and the wicked actions on the right side to see which will outweigh the other. He is interested in the condition of the individual at the time of the reckoning.

**Ezek 33:14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;**

Looking at it from the viewpoint of the one who has been wicked in the past, but who has repented of his wickedness; that wickedness of the past will not cause his death if he has done everything he could to make amends for his sin.

**Ezek 33:15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.**

**Ezek 33:16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.**

These words are great news for any person of the days of Ezekiel, or the present day. They present a reason for turning from sinful to righteous conduct. Sin can be forgiven if man will turn and serve God with his whole heart.

**Ezek 33:17 Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.**

God knew exactly what the people would say when the above position was presented to them. They would

say that even though they were presently sinful, their past righteousness would more than even the balances. God was not being fair.

After all they were the descendants of Abraham. God had made a promise that Abraham's seed would inherit the promised land. Surely that would protect them from deadly danger. God did not agree. Each individual must answer for himself. Being the seed of the "father of the faithful" would not remove their individual guilt. It was not God who was unreasonable. It was those who had chosen wickedness over a life of faith.

**Ezek 33:18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.**

If a person turned from righteousness to wickedness, that person would have chosen the way of death.

**Ezek 33:19 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.**

If a person turned from wickedness to righteousness, that person had chosen life.

**Ezek 33:20 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.**

The decision would not be made on the claim that any person was a part of the nation which descended from Abraham. It would be made on the basis of his or her own choice between the way of life and the way of death.



**Ezek 33:21 And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.**

The amount of time which elapsed from the time of the attack on Jerusalem had occurred until the messenger came to Ezekiel who was in Babylon with the captives has disturbed some. It seems that the word should have arrived sooner than is stated when the attack took place. The important thing is not the time taken to report the event. It is the fact that the captives were told of the unhappy news.

**Ezek 33:22 Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.**

Just the evening before the messenger arrived, God had opened the mouth of Ezekiel. He had been restricted to charging the foes of Israel up to that time. He was now encouraged to speak to Israel.

**Ezek 33:23 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 33:24 Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance.**

God had informed Ezekiel of the claims of those who had remained in Canaan after the others had

been removed to Babylon. They were saying that if God promised the land to Abraham, who was just one faithful man, He would most certainly allow the many who were even then descendants of Abraham to maintain a presence in that land. God would not break His promise to Abraham when so many of his seed were still existent.

**Ezek 33:25 Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land?**

Ezekiel was given an answer to these claims that God would not break His promise. That promise was conditional. He was to be their only God. Idolatry and immoral were not to be embraced. They had turned to idols. They had eaten meat with the blood still in it. They had murdered others. They had no right to claim the promise made to faithful Abraham.

**Ezek 33:26 Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land?**

They had lived by the false belief that "might makes right." Adultery was common. All sorts of wickedness had been a part of their way of life. Yet they claimed God was unfair. This was ridiculous.

**Ezek 33:27 Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence.**

It would not matter where those who had been left in Jerusalem or in the land of Canaan attempted to evade destruction. They had not been allowed to remain in the land because of their ancestry. They would be discovered and would die by the sword, by wild beasts and by diseases. God's punishment would find it's way to every nook and cranny of the land.

**Ezek 33:28 For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through.**

Along with the destruction of Jerusalem, God would bring about the complete humbling of those who should have received the promise, but did not cherish that promise by loving and obeying Him.

**Ezek 33:29 Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed.**

The people of Israel had doubted the Word of the Lord, as given to them by Ezekiel. The result of their attitude was that Ezekiel had been rendered dumb for a period of time and not allowed to further warn them. Now that the city of Jerusalem was being laid in ruins, they would be more apt to accept the truth of what His watchman had told them.

**Ezek 33:30 Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come,**

**I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD.**

Though there was now ample reason for those of the captivity to believe that which Ezekiel had prophesied, they still spoke against him in the secrecy of their own houses and to their closest kinsfolk. They pointed out just how ridiculous they considered Ezekiel's truthful report. They called upon their fellowmen to gather around and hear what they supposed was impossible.

**Ezek 33:31 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.**

Those who heard what their fellow Israelites were saying did go to hear the prophet. They gathered as people will do when an interesting speaker is entertaining them. They acted as if they were entranced by what Ezekiel was saying. The truth was that they were like many of the present day who attend worship services as if the Word of God was the most precious thing available. Then they walk out of the services and live no different than the atheists and agnostics. That attitude will leave men condemned to spiritual death.

**Ezek 33:32 And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.**

Oh what a preacher! Listen to the sincerity with which he speaks. He is worth listening to just because of his

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orating skill. He uses his voice like a musician plays on his harp. But in private we will do just as we please. His warnings are but pretty words. God will not leave Israel and Canaan desolate. BUT HE DID!

Ezek 33:33 And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

They would have occasion to change their tune when the desolation came. Then they would know Ezekiel was more than just a man with a golden tongue. He was a divinely appointed watchman and a prophet of the God of heaven.

Chapter 34

How wonderful it is to reach this thirty-fourth chapter of the book of Ezekiel. The thirty-three chapters which came before this were almost entirely gloomy and dark. Now we have arrived at a description of brighter day. The Messiah comes marching into the scene, bringing with Him promises of showers of blessing for those who love and obey the Lord. Join us as we begin a survey of some of those promises.

Ezek 34:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 34:2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

Ezekiel states again that these are the Words of the Lord, and not his own. At this beginning of the chapter it does not appear that the Sunshine is about to break through. Woes are pronounced upon the self serving and so-called shepherds of Israel. They had been charged by the Lord with feeding His sheep. They had failed to comply with His assignment. They did not feed the flocks of God. They used their office to feed themselves and left the flocks to starve.

The shepherds are the priests, prophets, princes, etc. The flocks are those of Israel who were dependent upon those leaders for providing the spiritual food for the necessities of the life God had made available..

Ezek 34:3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

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The false shepherds butchered the choicest of the flock that they might feed upon those helpless ones. They fleeced the flock to clothe themselves in comfort while the flock shivered from a shortage of wool which had been taken from their back.

**Ezek 34:4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.**

Those who were suffering from spiritual disease had not received cures. The members of the flock who had been separated from the rest by howling wolves in sheep's clothing had been left in the clutches of those sinful wild beasts. Those who had just wandered away from the body of the flock had been left in a lost condition.

Jesus had quite a different attitude toward His sheep. He left the ninety and nine to seek out the one who had strayed away. These false shepherds knew nothing of that kind of attitude.

**Ezek 34:5 And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.**

While the shepherds of Israel glutted themselves with the fat of the finest sheep, they closed their eyes to the bleating of those that had been scattered.

**Ezek 34:6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock**

**was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.**

Of course the flock of God had been riddled at the time of Ezekiel by having part of it scattered in various areas of the Babylonian empire. Some had been left in Jerusalem. We do not know where else the people may have been taken. It seemed that no one cared about their plight. This situation would last for a lengthy period of time until Cyrus issued his decree for the return of the Jews to Canaan.

**Ezek 34:7 Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;**

**Ezek 34:8 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;**

God was ready to make it abundantly clear that He did not appreciate the lack of concern which the leaders of Israel had shown for the welfare of His sheep. They still concentrated on their own satisfactions and ignored the needs of those they were charged with pastoring.

**Ezek 34:9 Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;**

**Ezek 34:10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.**

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The time had arrived when the careless priests, prophets and princes of the people would cease to enrich their own lives at the expense of God's beloved sheep.

Ezek 34:11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

Ezek 34:12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

Since the abominable shepherds would not take the responsibility for protecting the welfare of the flock of God, He would personally seek out His scattered sheep from all of the places to which they had been scattered. His sheep would hear His voice and come when He called. It had been a very dark day for the sheep. That was to change.

Ezek 34:13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

When God informs us through Ezekiel that "I" will bring them out from the people among whom they have been scattered, it is He who is to gather them from many countries and bring them back to the mountains of their home land. The symbolism continues. God was to do this through His Son Jesus Christ. That Son is one of the three persons in the Godhead. The land to which Christ was to bring them home is the Kingdom of God.

Ezek 34:14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

In contrast to the troubles the sheep had experienced while scattered abroad, they will be gathered back into the finest of sheepfolds where they shall feed in His own rich pasture.

Ezek 34:15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

It would be most difficult to overlook the number of times God says, "I will—." From far back Israel had demanded a king like the nations around them. God had finally agreed to provide for their request. But He warned them what this would mean. Their trust should have been in HIM as King. The earthly kings which ruled over them had done just as they were now seeing. These earthly rulers would feather their own nests at the expense of those over whom they ruled. The people would one day be ready to accept The second person of the Godhead as a spiritual Shepherd. This was to take several centuries before God was ready to offer His own Son, but He would do so.

Ezek 34:16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

When the New King came He would do all those things which the hateful false shepherds had failed to do. He

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would seek out the lost. He would heal the broken hearts and heal the diseased souls.

That was but one side of the picture. He would destroy those who fed upon others of the flock. They would find themselves judged for their sins.

**Ezek 34:17 And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats.**

It was one thing for those who were not a part of the flock to meet judgment. It was another for those who were a part of the flock to meet the King of kings in the court of judgment. When that happened there would be no misadministration of justice. Those who had proven themselves to be goats rather than sheep would be treated as offenders.

**Ezek 34:18 Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?**

How was it that they could gobble up the good things which the Great Shepherd had offered, and then walk all over that which they did not eat so that it would be ruined for the ones who should have shared in it? How could they drink of the Living Water and then muddy it so seriously that the needy could not quench their spiritual thirst.

**Ezek 34:19 And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.**

God's flock had to eat that which the false shepherds had left trampled and drink that which had been mixed with mud. Did the false shepherds think this could continue forever? If they did, they were to be much surprised. A New Pasture would be arranged.

**Ezek 34:20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle.**

**Ezek 34:21 Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad;**

It would not be fallible human judgment which would hold the wicked in contempt. Those who had abused others by pushing them aside and scattering them far and wide would find that their ways would come back to haunt them eternally.

**Ezek 34:22 Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.**

**Ezek 34:23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.**

The One Shepherd who was to be set over the flock would be a descendant of David. He would come as a Servant instead of a cruel and selfish dictator.

**Ezek 34:24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.**

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This one who was to come from the line of David would be The Good Shepherd, The Great Shepherd, the Great Shepherd. At the same time He would be “Prince” of peace. He was to be the kind of king which Israel should have accepted from the beginning, and had turned from for weak human substitutes.

Ezek 34:25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

Within the Kingdom of God there would be an escape from the wild beasts that roamed the old earthly kingdom. The sheep would find themselves safe from the attacks of those who masqueraded as shepherds, but who were truly wolves among the flock.

Ezek 34:26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

Israel is a land which has been dependent upon the former and latter rains for fertility of their pastures. The New Pasture would also need showers of blessing. God knew this was the case and He was ready to see that they were forthcoming.

Ezek 34:27 And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

In this new covenant of peace which Christ was to make with God's flock, the trees would bear much fruit. The fields would be fertile. The people would be cared for by the Messiah Himself. The power of the self-serving shepherds would be removed.

My friends, it is dangerous to apply all of these blessings in a literal sense and confine them to the land of Canaan. The covenant of peace is the form of government which the Messiah offers. It is spiritual in nature and the peace is that which exists when He is allowed to be the Great Shepherd, and they hear His voice and follow Him.

Ezek 34:28 And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.

Christ has said, "Fear not, for I am with thee." Physical harm may come. Spiritually, the flock of God is safe from spiritual danger from ravening wolves and false shepherds.

Ezek 34:29 And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

The plant of renown is the tree of life. There shall be a plenteous supply of life giving fruit from the BRANCH. Jesus the Messiah.

Ezek 34:30 Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD.

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When the true followers of God find themselves enjoying these spiritual blessings in the Kingdom of God and ruled over by the One who came as a Servant and offered His life for His own subjects.

**Ezek 34:31 And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.**

Those who follow the Christ need never fear for their spiritual life. Their Shepherd King loves them!

## Chapter 35

There had been great joy in the hearts of the Edomites because Israel had been taken into captivity in Babylonia. Our present chapter declares that God would react to both the exultation of the Edomites, and the distress of the captives. He would bring curses to Edom and blessing to Israel.

**Ezek 35:1 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 35:2 Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it,**

Israel had their Mount Zion. Edom had their Mount Seir. Ezekiel was to proclaim the future for both groups of people. Edom would cease her mockery of Jehovah and His people. Edom's joy would come to a decisive end as she discovered that her stand against the will of Jehovah was very much misplaced.

**Ezek 35:3 And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate.**

Again we have "I will" repeated many times. Jehovah wishes to leave no doubt as to who is in control of heaven and earth. Edom has set themselves in opposition to His will. Since they have determined to be against Him, He will also be against them. When He has stretched out His hand against them, they will find their own land is to become a desolation.

Those who have visited that land these many centuries later can vouch for the truth of this pronouncement. There

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is very little of value in that territory which was once Edom.

Ezek 35:4 I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

Ezek 35:5 Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end:

The Lord proceeded to explain clearly just why He took those steps and placed such a curse upon that land. From the times of Jacob and Esau, the descendants of Esau, the Edomites, had hated the descendants of Jacob. They had fought against them and had shed their blood. When God decided it was time to punish Israel for their iniquity, Edom had joined forces of Nebuchadnezzar. Their rejoicing at the bloodshed of the Israelites was sinful. It was to be punished.

Ezek 35:6 Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee.

Since Edom had enjoyed seeing the blood of the Israelites flow so freely, the Lord would give them more sight of blood than they wanted. It would be their own blood. Their blood would flow just as that of Israel had done.

Ezek 35:7 Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth.

Mount Seir was the center of power of the Edomites. It would have been the site of idolatrous worship of their false gods. It would be changed from a place where people passed back and forth in great multitudes, to a place where there was no activity.

Ezek 35:8 And I will fill his mountains with his slain men: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword.

The bloodshed would be so great that no part of that land would escape it. From the mountains to the valleys to the rivers the sword would cut it's path of destruction. The slain would be everywhere.

Ezek 35:9 I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

This desolation which God was to bring upon Edom would not be a temporary condition. It would last throughout the centuries. Edom had proclaimed Jehovah to be unable to protect His people. They had contended that their false gods were more powerful than He. This was not true. He was ready to prove that to them.

Ezek 35:10 Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the LORD was there:

The Edomites had looked with covetous eyes toward Samaria and Judah. They had every intention of taking control of the whole of Canaan. It mattered little to them that Jehovah claimed that land. God did not appreciate



these sinful people making preparation to possess the land which He had given to Israel. It was true of course that He had allowed Israel to be removed from Canaan, but that was not because of a lack of power on His part. That would also be proven. He would bring Israel back from Babylon to Canaan.

Ezek 35:11 Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee.

Jehovah lives. He has always lived. He lived in the time of the Edomites. He lives today, and will continue to exist eternally. As certain as He lives, the Edomites were to feel His wrath for their envy and hatred of His people Israel.

Ezek 35:12 And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume.

The Lord not only lives. He HEARS. He had heard their proud remarks that they would take the mountains of Israel in the absence of anyone to defend them. They believed they had free run of the land they had coveted for so long. They could not have been more mistaken.

Ezek 35:13 Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them.

Edom had been extremely outspoken about the weakness of Jehovah. They had done more than just speak these things. They had repeated them until the Lord was ready to stick those words right back down their throat. He was “fed up.”

Ezek 35:14 Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.

A time was coming when the nations of the earth would rejoice. There are two possible thoughts intertwined here. One is that the Messiah was a part of God's eternal plan. When Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross the world would have reason to shout, “Joy to the word. The Lord has come.”

There may however be another time of rejoicing ahead. Without contending for a literal personal reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth for precisely one thousand years, as the premillennialists believe, I do think the Bible teaches a time is ahead in which the preaching of the gospel will spread around the world and there will be a victory for spiritual Israel. This is to be followed by a time in which the Devil will be loosed for a short time just before the Son of God returns in the final judgment.

(See Revelation 20:1-3.)

Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Rev 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Rev 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years

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*should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

**Ezek 35:15 As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD.**

The rejoicing of Edom at the misery of Israel would be turned to grief when they suffered an even more severe punishment because of their gloating.

## Chapter 36

God promises to build a new life for those who have suffered shame at the hands of the Edomites and the Babylonians. The mountains of Israel would be provided with a cleansed people with new hearts and new spirits. The captivity is not in vain. It is to result in a new spiritual kingdom in which Jehovah is given greater respect than had been true in the past.

**Ezek 36:1 Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD:**

Ezekiel is told to prophesy to the mountains of Israel as if they were humans who could hear and respond to His words of encouragement. The conditions in the land at the time were miserable. That misery would later be turned to great joy as a renewed Israel would be glorified and those who mocked God would be excluded.

**Ezek 36:2 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession:**

The Babylonians and the Edomites had gloated over the misfortune of the captives. They had claimed the places of worship of Jehovah had been delivered into their hands. The God of the Israelites could not even prevent His followers from being deported.

**Ezek 36:3 Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the**

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heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people:

The talk of the nations had become centered around the supposed collapse of the people of Israel. The name of Jehovah was being defamed on every side. This was reason for the Lord to demonstrate the falsehood of the gossip.

Ezek 36:4 Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about;

Residue is that which is left after the desirable portions have been taken away. The residue of the heathen was that portion which at the time occupied the land which was once occupied by God's chosen nation. God was ready to rejuvenate that land by populating it with an Israel which had been allowed to see the folly of idolatry.

Ezek 36:5 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.

God had been fired up with jealousy over the boasting of those who took over the land while the Israelites were scattered abroad. The enemy had convinced themselves that they had finally taken possession of that which had been their heart's desire.

Ezek 36:6 Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:

Ezek 36:7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame.

The land would not forever have to submit to the blasphemous remarks of the heathenish invaders. They would find themselves exposed for what they truly were—religious imposters. Their insolence was to be quieted. Many a school teacher has lifted up a hand to quiet a classroom. God's hand is far more capable of hushing the heathen than is the hand of a teacher bringing the youngsters to attention.

Ezek 36:8 But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.

When the heathen had learned that the Lord was not as weak as they were picturing Him, He would turn to the prosperity of the promised land. Like a healthy fruit tree, it would branch out and become filled with desirable fruit rather than the garbage which had been covering the mountains, etc.

Ezek 36:9 For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown:

A field which has been allowed to grow up in weeds can be brought back to a fruitful condition. Even so, the



land of Israel could be weeded out and prepared for the return of the captives who had been scattered.

Ezek 36:10 And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded:

This is a puzzling verse. Ezekiel is told to inform the land that ALL of the house of Israel will be brought back. The cities will be bustling with activity and the desolated land will blossom like a rose bush. This did not happen to that literal land. Only a small portion of the Israelites returned when Cyrus the Persian ruler extended permission for them to reoccupy Canaan.

This usually explained by commentators as being the result of Israel's failure to do their part in obeying the statutes of the Lord. They contend that every promise of God is conditional upon the loyalty of His people. It is true that many times God did make conditional promises, but He ordinarily made the conditions as clear as crystal. The promise is made here without conditions.

Does this mean that the promise was intended to be applied to the Christian age and that the Kingdom of God was the one being discussed here? I leave the reader to ponder the matter.

Ezek 36:11 And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

The promise reaches out to both man and beast. The prosperity of the kingdom was to be greater than it was before the captivity began. There could be no doubt in

the minds of God's land or of God's people that He is the LORD.

Ezek 36:12 Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men.

Israel was to receive an inheritance from the Lord. The land and the people of God would never again be separated. As I write these words, there is a land called Israel and a people who claim to be special in the eyes of God. It has been well over two thousand years since the promise was given through Ezekiel. Does the existence of that nation in Palestine verify God's promise? There is reason to believe the seemingly literal promise holds an overriding spiritual application which finds its fulfillment in the Kingdom over which Christ reigns at the right hand of God.

Ezek 36:13 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations:

Ezek 36:14 Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD.

The land of Canaan had been looked upon with covetous eyes many times in the past. One nation after another had claimed those hills, valleys, rivers and cities for their own. Each of those nations had been uprooted and replaced by others. It seemed that the land was destined to forever eat up those who claimed it.

That was to be proven wrong. A nation would be established in the land and would nevermore be removed.

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When that occurred, it would be the people of God who possessed it for their inheritance. I am going to assume that this prophecy finds it's fulfillment in the Kingdom of God. The meek shall inherit the earth.

**Ezek 36:15 Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD.**

God's credibility was to be proven beyond reasonable doubt. One nation would no longer be replaced by others, only to see them replaced by others. The nation which God would set up would be perpetual. It would be born in Jerusalem and citizenship would include men and women from every part of the globe.

**Ezek 36:16 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 36:17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.**

A removed woman was one who had an issue of blood. It might be her menstrual period, or it might be some other condition which caused such an issue. Whichever was the case, the woman was to be considered unclean for seven days. Even that which she touched was defiled. If the issue continued past the normal menstrual period, she was to be considered unclean until seven days after the blood had ceased. The background for this can be found in the entire 15th chapter of Leviticus. The whole chapter is not quoted because of the length of it.

*Lev 15:19 And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.*

*Lev 15:20 And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean.*

**Ezek 36:18 Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it:**

The reader should not fail to notice the connection between the issue of blood in the woman, and the separation period which was to be observed. The issue of blood which Israel had poured out may have been the blood of those slain by the sword, or it may have been the sacrifices which they offered with the blood remaining in them. They had polluted themselves in both idolatry and in such issues of blood. That had been the reason for their separation from the land. It was not because Jehovah was incapable of defending them from enemies who bowed before false gods.

**Ezek 36:19 And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.**

Israel had trifled with the commandments of the Lord and had substituted their own way for His. They had polluted themselves and had been punished by separation from the land which should have been kept pure.

**Ezek 36:20 And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.**

When they were taken captive, they brought shame upon the name of the Lord because those who saw what had happened concluded Jehovah was too weak to protect them. The real reason was quite different. It was the result of their spiritual pollution. They had demonstrated a desire to direct their own steps. They were to be thrust out and allowed to see just what the results would be.

**Ezek 36:21 But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went.**

The Lord had decided to return Israel to the land from which she had been excluded. He did not want the heathen to gloat over the weakness they thought they saw in the captivity of His people.

**Ezek 36:22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.**

But Ezekiel was to make it clear that their return was not brought about by their righteous conduct. It was done to prevent further blasphemy on the part of the people where they had been sent.

**Ezek 36:23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.**

God had made plans for the future which would turn matters around. The time would come when both His own people and also those who had belittled His name would glorified as it should be. This would come into fruition when a holy Israel arose before their eyes.

**Ezek 36:24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.**

Beginning at this point we have a description of the cleansing power of God. He will reach out into every country to which His people had been scattered. He would bring them in from the fields of sin and settle them in a new spiritual kingdom.

**Ezek 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.**

Sprinkling is not baptism. Sprinkling was a part of the cleansing ceremony used by the priests of the Mosaic dispensation. Water was mixed with the ashes of a heifer and sprinkled upon sacrifices.

**Ezek 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take**

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away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

The polluted Israel of the past had possessed a hard heart. They had followed their own ways and refused to honor the way of the Lord. God was preparing them for a transplant. That old stony hard heart was to be replaced by a heart which loved and obeyed Him.

Ezek 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

A spirit is the ingredient which brings about the action of the body. The new spirit which God intended to place within His people would result in their keeping His judgments. Those who received this new Spirit would act in holiness and avoid pollution.

Ezek 36:28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

A beautiful picture is now presented of that land to which God intended to bring His people back when He gathered them. The very first thing about it was that there would be a much better relationship between Him and His subjects. They would obey Him. In return, He would bless them.

Ezek 36:29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

Sin is deadly. God was going to offer a way in which the spiritual pollution with which they had covered

themselves could be washed away. The corn represents the spiritual food which would be abundant in the refurbished land. There would be no need for men to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Ezek 36:30 And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.

Those of the countries to which Israel had been taken had laughed at the lack of physical food which they suffered. That laughter would be halted when the new kingdom appeared. There would be manna from heaven sufficient to feed all of the hungry souls.

Ezek 36:31 Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.

There would be genuine repentance. The old sinful lives would be dedicated to the God in whose image they had been created. The pollution would be left behind.

Ezek 36:32 Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

They would be making a mistake if they concluded that this cleansing was due to their own efforts, separate and apart from the power of God. In order to share in this new way of life they must see the filthiness of sin and abhor it.

Ezek 36:33 Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

Literal Canaan sits today as just the opposite of the picture which is drawn in these present verses. most of the soil is shallow with great rocks rearing their ugly heads into the air. The trees are scrubby in appearance. It is not covered with crops on both sides of the road. Nor are many of the cities bustling with happy people. If this is a literal description of what God was going to do for Israel, it has yet to be done. I conclude that the fulfillment must be found in the Kingdom of Christ in a spiritual manner.

Ezek 36:34 And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

Ezek 36:35 And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.

The book of Genesis gives us no such picture of the Garden of Eden before the fall of man. There is however a land that is brighter than day which awaits the faithful servants who trust and obey the Creator. That land is harmonious with the scene of this new Canaan promised to the redeemed from heathenish ways.

Ezek 36:36 Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.

The time factor is of critical importance in any effort to come to a satisfactory understanding of what God is promising. The words do not tell us all of this was to be done in the time of Cyrus. They do not tell us that all of these blessings will be showered upon men in the beginning of the Christian age. They do say that the changes will happen. Let those who long for this new land develop the trust, hope and patience which the Lord expects of those who set their hearts upon life in such a land.

Ezek 36:37 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

Israel had not shown such a desire for fellowship with the Lord in the past. God promises that a multitude of faithful will seek Him out in anticipation of that new Israel with the hearts of flesh and the Holy Spirit.

Ezek 36:38 As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Jerusalem was a busy place during the solemn feasts celebrated by the Jews. There were flocks of sheep and cattle. There were people by the thousands. If was to be that way in the New Jerusalem, however the sheep would be those who followed the Great Shepherd and offered themselves as living sacrifices.

Chapter 37

God informs Ezekiel in this chapter that the darkest of days can be replaced by magnificent beauty. Israel is to come to life. This new life will come when they shall know that He is the LORD.

Ezek 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

The chapter is a vision. In this vision Ezekiel found himself transported to a valley filled with dry bones. We are not given the identity of the valley. Some of Israel were left in Jerusalem when the captives were removed. The captives had been taken to Babylonia. They were said to have been scattered among the nations. The key point here is that they were like a skeleton which had deteriorated to the point that the bones had separated from one another with very little resemblance to a living individual. Israel was about as dead as dead can be.

Ezek 37:2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

Ezekiel was given the opportunity to take a good close look at these bones. There were great numbers of them and they were not just dry. They were very dry. The chance that they would ever show any signs of life was impossible from the natural point of view.

Ezek 37:3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

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The Lord asked Ezekiel a question to which most of us would probably given an immediate answer. NO! Ezekiel knew better. When the Lord was involved, that which appeared to be impossible might well turn out to be just the opposite. He very honestly admitted that he did not know.

There are many questions which you and I cannot answer. It would be best if we were as honest as Ezekiel was. God knows many answers which we do not know. God can do many things which we would see as impossible.

**Ezek 37:4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.**

Ezekiel was told to speak the word of the Lord to the bones. He was to tell those bones to listen well.

Ezekiel not only had a message for the dry bones. He presented a lesson which every man or woman who ever lived must hear and heed. GOD HATH SPOKEN.

**Ezek 37:5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:**

The word which is translated as “breath” is the same as the one translated as “spirit” in many other scriptures. God was making a promise to the bones that they would live again. His people might appear to be lifeless. A time would come when His Spirit would cause them to be renewed.

**Ezek 37:6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.**

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We can almost see the procedure take place. First the bones were to come together as a complete skeleton. Next, flesh and various tissues such as ligaments and skin were to cover the skeletons. Then God would cause the breath of life to enter into those dead bodies. They would take their place among the living. And, just as important was the fact that the rejuvenation would prove to this renewed people that Jehovah is God. The worship of idols is foolishness. Only God can take the spiritually dead and bring them back to life.

Ezek 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

Ezek 37:8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

Ezekiel did as he was commanded. That which followed was precisely what God had said would happen. The bones came together and were covered with flesh and tissues, but this was only a corpse. Oh how many pretending Christians are as spiritually dead as were the corpse which Ezekiel saw. These persons have bodies, and even have natural life, but if they were ever truly born again, they gave up that spiritual life and are in the sight of God as corpses.

Ezek 37:9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Long ago when man was created God used a similar series of events to bring man into physical life. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.

Ezek 37:10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

When the prophet had given the command which the Lord gave him, what had been no more than a corpse came to life. That whole valley of dry bones was filled with a great army of soldiers of the Lord. These soldiers were not only alive. They were ready to do battle.

Ezek 37:11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

Now we are coming directly to the point. Those many dry bones were the nation of Israel. They had been removed from their land. They had lost their king. They had lost their temple and the opportunity to worship God freely. They had lost their hope!

Ezek 37:12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

The present writer is convinced that there is a double prophecy here. Israel was to be allowed to return to the

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land of Canaan and to the city of Jerusalem. However, the things which are discussed in the remainder of this chapter cannot be confined to that rebirth. There was to be a new Kingdom, a new King, a new Mount Zion and a new covenant. Israel and the Gentile world would both be invited to live again and follow the King of kings and Lord of lords. This was to come about through the life of the Son of God and the preaching of his apostles, beginning on the day of Pentecost in what remained of the old Jerusalem.

**Ezek 37:13 And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,**

Does the reader believe with all his or her heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? If so, and the person has been ready to repent and be baptized for the remission of sin, and to present his body as a living sacrifice, that person can be raised from the spiritually dead and be born again. Fleshly Israel can be a part of this great resurrection.

**Ezek 37:14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.**

This is the HOLY SPIRIT dear reader. The land which is given is the Kingdom of God. The King is Christ. Note that it does tell how the Holy Spirit is put within the revitalized Christian. But it does say that Spirit is put within. The Spirit of God gives life to the body. Without that Spirit the person is spiritually as dead as those dry bones which Ezekiel saw in the vision.

God in effect said, "The proof is in the pudding." You will know when you are given the Spirit of God, and you will begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

**Ezek 37:15 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,**

**Ezek 37:16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions:**

From the time the fall of the united kingdom at the death of Solomon, Israel had been divided into two parts. In the north was Samaria. In the south was Judah. In the new Israel there would be no such division. There would be but one Kingdom and one King. Ezekiel was to point this out by an object lesson. He was to take two sticks and write the identifying names of the northern kingdom on one stick and those of the southern kingdom on the other.

**Ezek 37:17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.**

He was then to join the two sticks and make one from them. We are not given the details of how the joining was done. He could have simply twisted them around each other. He could have used some type of glue. The how is not the important point. The joining is very important. Can you not see the puzzled looks on the faces of those who watched as Ezekiel united the two sticks? Object lessons with mystery behind them demand attention.



**Ezek 37:18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?**

The Lord knew beforehand that the captive Israelites who saw the procedure would be compelled to ask Ezekiel what was meant. They had by this time learned that the prophet often used such means to introduce important messages from God.

**Ezek 37:19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.**

Ezekiel was told to explain to them that when the dry bones came to life, there would no longer be a northern and southern kingdom. All Israel would be one nation. That nation would be God's Kingdom, the church of Jesus Christ.

**Ezek 37:20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.**

**Ezek 37:21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:**

**Ezek 37:22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.**

God was going to break the bands of the heathen in order that His newborn nation could live in the freedom of their own land. That promise might in a preliminary way be the return to Canaan through the decree of Cyrus. Far greater importance must be placed on the escape of sinners from the grasp of the world. They would hear the invitation of the Lord and follow Him.

**Ezek 37:23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.**

Yes, it is true that after the return from captivity Israel did not hunger after idols made of stone, wood or gold. But it is also true that Christians who are true to Jehovah will abstain from idolizing such things as bank accounts, grand titles and mansions. Those who have been brought to spiritual life will be washed whiter than snow. They will have but One God. They will keep their eye focused upon a mansion in heaven.

**Ezek 37:24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.**

David had been dead for many years when Ezekiel wrote these words. Christ as of the lineage of David. As David tended his sheep in the fields of Palestine, Christ would lead His followers in the observing of the statutes of God. They would not just hear or read them. They would walk in them, turning neither to the right nor to the left.

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Ezek 37:25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

What is this land which God gave to Jacob, and where the fathers of the Israelites had dwelt? We are right back again to the double nature of this prophecy. The Jews were given permission to return to Canaan, but the earth shall come to an end one day. They will then live in the final resurrection if they have been faithful. That life is forever.

Ezek 37:26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

There was to be a NEW covenant. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace would be the Administrator of that new covenant. As men and women are converted to Christ, they agree to live in peace with God and with one another. Not all do that, but they have a commitment to do so.

Ezek 37:27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The tabernacle of old was a temporary place of worship. For a time these who had come to spiritual life would worship the Lord in the church on this earth. They would love and serve Him. His part was to care for

them with his truth and providential assistance. The impact of this arrangement would be noted throughout the world.

Ezek 37:28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

To sanctify is to make pure and holy. Even those who defy God know that those who are His true children have turned from sin as a result of His Holy Word and the example of His Perfect Son

Chapter 38

In this chapter we have God's promise to Israel that a victory will be won over Gog, of the land of Magog. I take the position that Magog represents the forces of evil which are constantly arrayed against God's people. There is much speculation that Russia has a major part in this opposition. I rather believe that Gog and his land of Magog have been in existence long before Russia ever appeared as a nation. The latter part of the book of Revelation presents a picture of the defeat of the antichristian forces. The picture is much the same as that described in the present chapter.

Ezek 38:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek 38:2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

Ezek 38:3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

It is clear that Ezekiel is to state prophecy which is opposed to Gog and his land. If Ezekiel is to prophesy against Gog it must be that Gog and his forces are against God and His people. Those who hold that this is Russia point out that the names Meshech and Tubal sound very much like the name of Moscow and other cities. Some of the translations render "the chief prince" as "Rosh," which means "on top." These arguments are highly speculative.

What is clear in these first few verses is that the prophecy is aimed at those who are against Jehovah.

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**Ezek 38:4 And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:**

Gog will come with a formidable army which will be armed with the finest weapons available in the time Ezekiel prophesies against them. The army of the antichrist of Revelation also comes with intimidating numbers and much reason to think it is invincible. But, it was not.

**Ezek 38:5 Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:**

**Ezek 38:6 Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.**

Gog comes with soldiers from the north, south, east and west of Canaan. In other words they are from the four quarters of the earth. God's opponents are not limited to Russia or any other single nation.

**Ezek 38:7 Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.**

Who is it that is being warned to prepare himself? Is it Israel, or is it Gog and his forces? I believe it is Gog. He is very overconfident that he is capable of defeating any imaginable opposition. In his opinion Israel will fall! He will prove to have been sadly mistaken.

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Ezek 38:8 After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.

For some time it may appear that Gog has won the victory. But in the latter times God will gather His people from various nations of the world and will cause his people to live safely in spite of all the efforts of the great army of Gog.

Ezek 38:9 Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

When a hurricane approaches the sky is filled with dark clouds and almost turns the day to night. It was to be so with the army of Gog. There would seem to be no way in which Israel could survive. In fact, at the time of Israel's prophecy the majority of Israel were scattered abroad.

Ezek 38:10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:

Ezek 38:11 And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,

Gog would not be satisfied with just marching across the land. He had much grander visions of what might be accomplished. With all of God's people being brought back from their scattering, they would be a prize for the taking. Their cities would not be protected because they would see no need for such protection. Their confidence in Jehovah would result in relaxation.

Ezek 38:12 To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

The mind of Gog was to go wild. He would undo all that Jehovah had done in bringing back His people. The land would be taken and that which they had accumulated in peace would be taken from them.

Ezek 38:13 Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?

From all quarters of the earth the question would be, "What is the fate of Israel to be? Will anything be left or will the army of Gog leave nothing at all when they overcome the people of the Lord?"

Ezek 38:14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?

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The Lord instructs Ezekiel to tell Gog he is in for a revelation. He may know that Israel is not possessed of a monstrous army with the latest military weapons. That fact will only cause the final result to leave no doubt that it was Jehovah who caused Gog's defeat.

**Ezek 38:15 And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:**

**Ezek 38:16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.**

The capabilities of the army of Gog were to be absolutely undeniable. That magnificent army would be ungloriously defeated. That would leave the ungodly heathen under all heaven to conclude that the Lord is the True Ruler of the heavens and the earth, and that no earthen army or combination of all earthly forces can withstand the power of the Divine throne. Jehovah is LORD!

**Ezek 38:17 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?**

The ultimate victory of righteousness over unrighteousness has been presented to man from the time of Adam, and it will continue to be pronounced until the end of earthly time.

But this verse contains a strange thought. Will God be in charge of this army of Gog? He says here that HE would bring Gog and his forces against Israel. This is spoken of only in the sense that God was to permit Gog and his forces to attack Israel. Long before Gog had assembled his followers, God knew this would happen. He had good reasons for allowing it to occur.

**Ezek 38:18 And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face.**

It does not pay to make God mad. One of the best ways to make that happen is to try to injure His children. You can depend upon it that with every blow you strike against His children, you will be slapping Him in the face. That will cause His face to become red with fury and wrath. He will strike back!

**Ezek 38:19 For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;**

God's jealousy toward those who look with greed upon that which belongs to Him will find that a storm will follow. At times a husband or wife will find that the awakening of their mate from peace and comfort brings on a fit of anger. When God's wrath is aroused there will be a great trembling of everything involved.

**Ezek 38:20 So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall**

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shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

From the fish in the sea, to the animals which roam the earth, to the birds of the air, all life will tremble at the events which are to take place when Gog makes his fatal mistake of declaring war against that which God holds precious.

It will be as if the greatest earthquake nature has ever experienced will follow. Mountains and cliffs of rock will be leveled. Not a wall shall remain standing.

Ezek 38:21 And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother.

Gog had thousands of swords to swing in the direction of Israel. God had but one. That one is the fiercest and the sharpest of all. It is more than the equal of every and all the swords unbelievers have ever unsheathed against the Lord. The confusion will be so great that Gog will begin fighting amongst themselves. Armies that see such infighting are headed for defeat. That will be the case with Gog.

Ezek 38:22 And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

Long ago the Egyptians found that God has weapons mightier than the sword. Disease and bloodshed, floods and hailstones, meteorites and blazing fire are forces

God's enemies must contend with. With the help of the Lord, God's children were protected from the horses and chariots of Pharaoh. Gog will find the same humiliating end. God is not mocked.

Ezek 38:23 Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

There have been, and will be in the future, a great host of men who belittle God. Unless they repent, they will see the opposite. When God has won the battle, He will be magnified and known to be perfectly holy. Both His children and His foes shall have learned a basic lesson. Jehovah is LORD.

Chapter 39

This is a chapter predicting a major defeat of Gog at the hands of the Lord. It is to be even more decisive that the use of the ten plagues to deliver Israel from the power of the Egyptians. The predicted victory over Gog could not possibly be won apart from the power of Jehovah.

Ezek 39:1 Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

It is not news that God is against Gog. That had been made very clear in the previous chapter. It is to be made even more plain as we move along.

We are not terribly concerned over the geographical location of Meshech and Tubal. The main point is that they have proven they are enemies of the Lord. They feel He is not competent to protect His people or they could never have been taken into captivity. God will change that mistaken attitude.

Ezek 39:2 And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel:

Their attempted plunder of Israel will end in complete disaster. They will not every one be eliminated, but five sixths of them will be lost, with only one sixth fleeing in defeat. God would allow this monstrous army to enter into the land of His people, but when they have arrived in that land He will demonstrate His own power. That power will be undeniable to any and all.

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**Ezek 39:3 And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.**

Soldiers would normally hold the bow in the left hand and the arrows would be put into place with the right hand. The arrows would never leave the bow because they would never reach the bowstring. The archers would be helpless.

**Ezek 39:4 Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.**

The soldiers of Gog would be strewn over the mountains of Israel and would provide food for the scavenger birds and beasts. Those who were once so proud and greedy would not feed off the land. The land would feed off them. The reader would be well advised to avoid enrolling in the army of Gog. Being eaten by vultures is not the most magnificent of burial ceremonies.

**Ezek 39:5 Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.**

What would be the cause of their fall? That will be answered in the next few verses. It would not be the result of overwhelming strength on the part of the Israelites. It would be the WORD of God which brought it about. You will recall that it was this same God who said in the beginning, "Let there be light." And there was light.

**Ezek 39:6 And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD.**

God once used fire and brimstone to destroy Sodom. He promises to do this again in the case of the islands of Magog. The followers of Gog who did survive to return to their land would find it scorched. Not only would massive numbers of these wicked servants of Satan lose their lives on the mountains of Israel. The lands of their origin would see ruin.

**Ezek 39:7 So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.**

Through the defeat of Gog and his army Israel would have reason to glorify Jehovah. The enemies of Israel would be prevented from further abusing them and there would be no more reason for either friend or foe to question the power of God's throne.

**Ezek 39:8 Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken.**

This is said in the prophetic past tense. It is as good as done even though it is still in the future at the time of Ezekiel's delivery of the prophecy. God had spoken!!

**Ezek 39:9 And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the**

**bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years:**

There would be a massive clean up task following the defeat of Gog's forces. God's followers would require seven years just to burn the weapons which had been left by the invaders.

**Ezek 39:10 So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD.**

There would be no need to go to the forest to cut wood for fuel. All that would be necessary would be to collect it from the places where the weapons had fallen from the hands of the dead.

Statements like these are embarrassing for those who believe every word in these account should be taken literally. A 300 million man army that carries enough wooden weapons to provide firewood for Israel for seven years is a typical declaration. The army of Gog could only have been defeated at the Word of the Lord.

**Ezek 39:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamongog.**

A gigantic cemetery was to be arranged for those of Gog who had lost their lives in Israel. They were to be

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buried in the land which they had intended to take as prey. Israel was located east of the Mediterranean Sea. Some see the sea mentioned here as the Dead Sea. In my opinion the Mediterranean fits the entire picture more accurately.

The stench of the dead would be so offensive that it would cause those who traveled in the area to catch their breath. The name of the valley would be Hamongog, or “The multitude of Gog.”

Ezek 39:12 And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land.

It would take seven years to burn up all the discarded weapons. Now it is added that seven month would be required to bury the corpses. Again, the point is that there was a great imbalance between the numbers of the army of God and the lesser numbers of Israel.

Ezek 39:13 Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezek 39:14 And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search.

The removal of the dead would require the labor of all Israel. Men would be employed full time just to see to the job. Even some who pass through the land would be enlisted to help in the burial procedure.

All of this would result in an understanding that God is supremely powerful. He will only allow His grace and

mercy to be strained so far. Then He will remove that which offends Him.

Ezek 39:15 And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamongog.

Anyone who was passing through Israel was to watch for bones which still lay bare in the sunlight. That person was to mark the presence of the exposed bone or bones so they could be buried with the rest of those in Hamangog.

Ezek 39:16 And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land.

The word Hamonah means "the multitude." It is the city of the multitude of the dead. By burying the last bones of the dead the land was considered clean.

Ezek 39:17 And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.

Ezekiel was to call out to the scavenger birds and beasts in order to invite them to a great feast. Ordinarily it was man who made sacrifices to God. This time it was God who was offering a sacrifice of men to the birds and beasts. Sacrifices consisted of flesh and blood. The flesh and blood of the dead invaders was to be consumed by these creatures.

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**Ezek 39:18 Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.**

The sacrificial feast would not be limited to the lowly. The mighty and the princes would take the place of the rams, lambs, goats and calves which were normal sacrifices. They would include the choicest of the enemy.

**Ezek 39:19 And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you.**

The scavengers would have a sufficient amount of flesh and blood to fill their stomachs and become drunk.

**Ezek 39:20 Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.**

God's dining table for the scavengers would be covered with horses and chariots, as well as the soldiers of Gog. They would be dead and helpless.

**Ezek 39:21 And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.**

The power and glory of Jehovah would be exalted to the point that no one could overlook it. The heathen unbelievers would see. That does not mean they would bow in submission. Some who oppose God are so hard hearted

that nothing can change the direction of their lives. They will walk straight into the jaws of Hamongog.

**Ezek 39:22 So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward.**

Israel would never be able to forget that Jehovah is God. To the very day that I write these words, Israel must never forget her obligation to the LORD.

**Ezek 39:23 And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword.**

**Ezek 39:24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.**

The enemies of God had concluded that He did not have the power to prevent Israel from being taken into captivity. After the results of the invasion of Gog they would be forced to understand it was no lack of power on the part of the Lord which caused Israel to be captivated. It was God's way of allowing them to learn the consequences of transgressing His will.

God will be there always for those who trust and obey. When that trust and obedience dissolves, He will hide his face. His providential help will be lost.

**Ezek 39:25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;**

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Israel was still in captivity at the time of these last words. That would not continue forever. When God knew the punishment had fulfilled it's purpose, His people would be rescued and He would defend them to protect the honor of His name.

Ezek 39:26 After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.

The sequence of events was to be that first they must serve in shameful captivity until they knew the meaning of rebellion. They would then be released and allowed to return to safety in their own land where they would have no fear.

What land is this in which they were to be planted? Is it Palestine? Is it the Kingdom of God? Very likely it is both. The last three verses of this chapter leave that impression.

Ezek 39:27 When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations;

The Israel of old and also the spiritual Israel of today possess a land which God has made theirs. He will gather old Israel from Babylon to Palestine. He will gather spiritual Israel from throughout the nations of the world. Thus for those who seek the truth, He will be seen to be Holy and worthy of worship.

Ezek 39:28 Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into

captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.

When those who have been rescued from the clutches of the world are persuaded to be loyal to the LORD their God, He will honor His promise to be their God. Every one will have that assurance. Every one will have the power of the Almighty as a guide, a spiritual sword and a shield from Gog.

Ezek 39:29 Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

My friend. Do not turn your face away from God. If you keep your eyes on Him, He will never abandon you to the enemy.

One last very important conclusion must be made clear. The battle between Gog and God is far more than an invasion of the nation of Israel by the Russians. It is the attack of the proud and ungodly forces which fight against God until the end of time when the last battle will be won by the 144,000 faithful of the Lord.

Now please compare the following scripture with that which we have just examined. Surely the battle which Ezekiel describes is intended to warn all who will listen to avoid enrollment in the army of Gog.

Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Rev 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

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*Rev 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.*

*Rev 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

*Rev 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

*Rev 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

*Rev 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;*

*Rev 19:18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.*

*Rev 19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.*

*Rev 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

*Rev 19:21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

*Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*

*Rev 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,*

*Rev 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

*Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

*Rev 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

*Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

*Rev 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,*

*Rev 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

*Rev 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

*Rev 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

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Chapter 40

We now enter a study of the last nine chapters of the book of Ezekiel. It is agreed by most that they are among the most difficult chapters of the entire Bible to completely comprehend. All agree that there are symbolic terms and passages. Practically none are agreed on what percentage of these nine chapters are literal and what percentage are symbolic.

There are some persons who have devoted their lives to the study of religion. There are others who have done the same with science. A much lesser number have attempted to comprehend the truth through a study of the written Word of God in the Bible and the truths which the heavens declare of the glory of God and His handiwork. Isaac Newton was one of the greatest minds in both of these fields. After extensive wrestling with the truths presented in these chapters of Ezekiel concerning the temple of God, Newton still believed he had much to learn. It is evident from reading many commentaries that those who have expounded with great confidence in other portions of the scriptures abbreviate their comments sharply when they arrive here.

Psa 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Psa 19:2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

God's book of nature reveals His glory and His handiwork.

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

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*John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

God's book of Holy Scripture reveals the way, the truth and the life.

Your present commentator believes that the reason these last chapters of Ezekiel were written as they were is that the Lord was presenting a message of hope to the Jews who were in Babylonian captivity, and also to the followers of God in the centuries from that time on until the final victory of Christ over the forces of Satan. The Jews in Babylon would not have had the experiences those of the Christian age have had that would allow them to fully understand these latter days. Those of us who live in the Christian age have difficulty in understanding the need the Jews felt for a replacement of the temple which had been laid in ruins. God spoke in these chapters to the fleshly Jew in Babylon and He spoke to the seekers for truth in the days until the ultimate victory.

Thus we will follow the lead of many other authors and emphasize principles rather than details.

One more point that I will add is that the many details which are offered may be meant to tell us God has instruction for every age which are to be followed carefully. If they are neglected we may suffer the same fate as Uzzah did when he reached out and touched the ark and died because God had commanded that it not be touched by human hands. Let us learn the instructions He has provided for our own day and see that we respect them.

**Ezek 40:1 In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither.**

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The Jews were taken into captivity in 587 B.C. This means that Ezekiel is discussing these matters in the year 562 B.C. Jerusalem had been demolished fourteen years before this time in the year 548 B.C. The temple in Jerusalem was leveled. Even if the Jews had returned, their precious temple would not be there.

Ezekiel is said to have been taken to Jerusalem by the hand of the Lord. Some think he was actually transported in the flesh. The text below seems to provide proof that he received a vision rather than a literal transport of his body from among the captives in Babylon to the land of Israel and the site of Jerusalem.

Ezek 40:2 In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south.

Mount Zion is probably meant, though it is not an extremely high peak in comparison with other physical mountains. However, the Bible uses mountains to refer to centers of power. Using that application Mount Zion had been the center of power for the Lord in His dealings with the Jews of that day.

But even this early in our discussion of these chapters we can see a reference to both the Jerusalem of old and the New Jerusalem which was to come later. Both were power centers of spirituality.

In his vision Ezekiel saw a city located on the south side of the mountain. The Jew would have thought of their beloved city which had been destroyed. The Christian's thoughts look forward to the New heavenly Jerusalem

Ezek 40:3 And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was

like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate.

This man whose appearance was like polished brass stood in the gate of the city. He had an important message for Ezekiel. The message was clearly from God. The person may have been an angel. The Bible does not tell us whether he was a part of the Godhead, or was but a spokesman for the Lord.

Ezek 40:4 And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.

The term “Son of man” reveals that this person was not a human. He was from above.

Ezekiel is told to pay close attention to what he is about to see and hear. That was the reason he had been allowed to learn from the experience. He was to go back to his people and tell the captives what he had seen. Just as Christians are commanded to tell the story of Jesus to the entire world, Ezekiel is to share the vision of the temple, etc. with his fellowman.

Ezek 40:5 And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.

The man whom Ezekiel saw held a measuring reed which was six cubits in length. It is explained that this

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was the cubit with an extra hand breadth. This causes us to believe that the cubit spoken of was the eighteen inch cubit. An extra hand's breadth would make it about twenty-one inches. Thus if the measuring reed was six of these extra length cubits it would be six times twenty-one inches, or one hundred twenty-six inches in total length. This would be ten and one half feet. This reed would be the standard by which the dimensions of the wall, gates, courts and chambers are later to be given.

The house which was surrounded by the wall was the temple which would replace the one which had been destroyed. It is true that the temple was rebuilt after the Jews returned from Babylon, but that temple was far from as magnificent as the one built in the time of Solomon. Also we must remember that Ezekiel's message is to those of us who live in these latter days. That house which the prophet saw tells us of the house of God today, which is infinitely more magnificent than even the one which is called "Solomon's temple."

**Ezek 40:6 Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and measured the threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad; and the other threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad.**

The measuring reed was to be used for determining the dimensions of the gates of the wall. The man first measured the thresholds of the gate which was on the eastern portion of the surrounding wall. Each of the thresholds was one reed, or ten and one half feet wide. Since steps had to be climbed to enter the gate, the level inside the gate must have been above that of the surrounding mountain.

**Ezek 40:7 And every little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers were five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within was one reed.**

According to the seventeenth verse there were thirty of the small chambers mentioned here. The grouping of these chambers is not clear, except that there were three on each side of the east gate. See verse ten. Each chamber was square, one reed each direction.

There were one hundred five inches of space between each of the chambers. We do not know the use of these chambers for certain.

According to Ezekiel 46:21-24 there were four kitchens, one in each corner of the outer court. Sacrifices were prepared in these kitchens.

**Ezek 40:8 He measured also the porch of the gate within, one reed.**

**Ezek 40:9 Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and the posts thereof, two cubits; and the porch of the gate was inward.**

There was a porch inside the east gate which extended one reed inward from the gate itself. There were two posts which were two cubits, or forty-two inches either in height or in diameter. We are not told which.

**Ezek 40:10 And the little chambers of the gate eastward were three on this side, and three on that side; they three were of one measure: and the posts had one measure on this side and on that side.**

There were six of the chambers on the inner side of the east wall. Three were on one side of the gate and

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three on the other side. Each of the six had the same measurements as the other five. The two posts associated with the east gate also had the same measurements.

Ezek 40:11 And he measured the breadth of the entry of the gate, ten cubits; and the length of the gate, thirteen cubits.

At this point I must frankly admit that I cannot follow all of the details. I believe when time has ended and judgment has taken place more of these measurements may become meaningful. Right now I have my doubts that the human mind is capable of seeing every application.

Ezek 40:12 The space also before the little chambers was one cubit on this side, and the space was one cubit on that side: and the little chambers were six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side.

Ezek 40:13 He measured then the gate from the roof of one little chamber to the roof of another: the breadth was five and twenty cubits, door against door.

Ezek 40:14 He made also posts of threescore cubits, even unto the post of the court round about the gate.

Ezek 40:15 And from the face of the gate of the entrance unto the face of the porch of the inner gate were fifty cubits.

Ezek 40:16 And there were narrow windows to the little chambers, and to their posts within the gate round about, and likewise to the arches: and windows were round about inward: and upon each post were palm trees.

Ezek 40:17 Then brought he me into the outward court, and, lo, there were chambers, and a pavement

made for the court round about: thirty chambers were upon the pavement.

Ezek 40:18 And the pavement by the side of the gates over against the length of the gates was the lower pavement.

Ezek 40:19 Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate unto the forefront of the inner court without, an hundred cubits eastward and northward.

We are ready now to move to the north gate.

Ezek 40:20 And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north, he measured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof.

Ezek 40:21 And the little chambers thereof were three on this side and three on that side; and the posts thereof and the arches thereof were after the measure of the first gate: the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

Just as there were three chambers on each side of the east gate, there are three on each side of this north gate.

Ezek 40:22 And their windows, and their arches, and their palm trees, were after the measure of the gate that looketh toward the east; and they went up unto it by seven steps; and the arches thereof were before them.

Similar items were found associated with the north gate to those found at the east gate. There were palm trees and arches at both.

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**Ezek 40:23** And the gate of the inner court was over against the gate toward the north, and toward the east; and he measured from gate to gate an hundred cubits.

**Ezek 40:24** After that he brought me toward the south, and behold a gate toward the south: and he measured the posts thereof and the arches thereof according to these measures.

From the north gate Ezekiel's vision moves us to the south gate of the outer wall.

**Ezek 40:25** And there were windows in it and in the arches thereof round about, like those windows: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

**Ezek 40:26** And there were seven steps to go up to it, and the arches thereof were before them: and it had palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts thereof.

**Ezek 40:27** And there was a gate in the inner court toward the south: and he measured from gate to gate toward the south an hundred cubits.

**Ezek 40:28** And he brought me to the inner court by the south gate: and he measured the south gate according to these measures;

There were items associated with the south gate which were quite similar to those of the east and north gates.

**Ezek 40:29** And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to these measures: and there were windows in it and in the arches thereof round about: it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.

**Ezek 40:30 And the arches round about were five and twenty cubits long, and five cubits broad.**

**Ezek 40:31 And the arches thereof were toward the utter court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof: and the going up to it had eight steps.**

The “utter court” here is the same as the outer court.

**Ezek 40:32 And he brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures.**

**Ezek 40:33 And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, were according to these measures: and there were windows therein and in the arches thereof round about: it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.**

**Ezek 40:34 And the arches thereof were toward the outward court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it had eight steps.**

The relationship between the posts and the palm trees was that the palm trees were placed upon the two posts.

**Ezek 40:35 And he brought me to the north gate, and measured it according to these measures;**

Notice the similarity in verses twenty-eight, thirty-two and thirty-five.

**Ezek 40:36 The little chambers thereof, the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, and the windows**

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to it round about: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

Ezek 40:37 And the posts thereof were toward the utter court; and palm trees were upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it had eight steps.

One moved upward in passing from the outer court to the inner court. The upward movement may mean the vision is drawing closer to the Most Holy where the Divine Presence is greatest.

Ezek 40:38 And the chambers and the entries thereof were by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering.

There were chambers within the three gates leading into the inner court. In this area the burnt offerings were washed before being offered.

Ezek 40:39 And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering.

Ezek 40:40 And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, were two tables; and on the other side, which was at the porch of the gate, were two tables.

Ezek 40:41 Four tables were on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables, whereupon they slew their sacrifices.

Each of the three gates leading into the inner court had two tables on each side used in the killing the burnt offerings. This gives a total of twelve tables used for this purpose.

Ezek 40:42 And the four tables were of hewn stone for the burnt offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice.

Each of the twelve tables was made of hewn stone. Each was a cube one and one half cubits, or thirty-one inches each direction, wide long and high. The tools used for killing the offerings were placed upon the tables.

Ezek 40:43 And within were hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables was the flesh of the offering.

Sizable hooks were available for hanging up the flesh until it was taken down to be offered. The flesh then could be found where the animal was dressed, and also on the hooks waiting to be offered.

Ezek 40:44 And without the inner gate were the chambers of the singers in the inner court, which was at the side of the north gate; and their prospect was toward the south: one at the side of the east gate having the prospect toward the north.

There were chambers for the singers in the inner court.

Ezek 40:45 And he said unto me, This chamber, whose prospect is toward the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house.

One of the chambers was designated for the priests who kept the house in proper order.

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**Ezek 40:46 And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him.**

Another chamber was for the priests who tended to the activities going on at the altar of sacrifice. These descendants of Zadok were privileged to approach closer to the Most Holy where the Lord dwelt in a very special way.

**Ezek 40:47 So he measured the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar that was before the house.**

The inner court was a bit more than 150 feet long and wide. It was a perfect square. The altar of burnt offering stood right in front of the steps leading up to the Holy Place.

**Ezek 40:48 And he brought me to the porch of the house, and measured each post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side: and the breadth of the gate was three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side.**

In his vision Ezekiel was then brought to the very porch of the temple itself. The “house” is mentioned over and over. This was not just any house. It was the one where God was to be worshiped. The porch of that house may well indicate a need for solemnity in prayer and song when the sacrifice of praise is given in any age.

**Ezek 40:49 The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits, and he brought me by the steps whereby they went up to it: and there were pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.**

Both inside and out the temple of the future was to be a majestic sight. As the reader can tell by now, if minds of the caliber of Newton, Adam Clarke and others have disagreed as to the details of the temple description I may perhaps be excused if I do not have a perfect comprehension of the temple plan.

## *Chapter 41*

Chapters 41 through 43 continue along the same line as chapter 40. There is to be a replacement for the temple which lay in ruins back in Jerusalem. For the captives in Babylon this meant a rebuilding of the temple erected in the time of Solomon. At the same time God was pointing toward the future and the spiritual temple which we know as the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who find themselves captives to sin and ungodly companions may have hope of escaping that life and entering His spiritual temple, the church.

Pulpit ministers and others who proclaim the gospel are hesitant to deal with the prophets. They wish to be one hundred percent certain as to the truths presented. This is an honorable position, but it appears that Jehovah left some degree of mystery with respect to events of the future. The symbolism which causes some to avoid the prophets is a means by which God can prove His foreknowledge and at the same time stimulate His servants to prepare for that which is to come!

**Ezek 41:1** **Afterward he brought me to the temple, and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, which was the breadth of the tabernacle.**

The reader might be well advised to make a comparison between the diagrams of the temple area which are found on page 704 of Volume 4 of the Hastings Bible Dictionary, and on page 531 of Volume 4 of Adam Clarke's Bible Commentary Series. Just remember that Hastings, Clarke and Stancliff are not divinely inspired. **THE BIBLE IS!**

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In chapter forty the prophet had given attention to the porch connected with the east gate of the temple itself. Now he goes farther and discusses the east gate itself. The gate had folding doors.

Ezek 41:2 And the breadth of the door was ten cubits; and the sides of the door were five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side: and he measured the length thereof, forty cubits: and the breadth, twenty cubits.

Ezek 41:3 Then went he inward, and measured the post of the door, two cubits; and the door, six cubits; and the breadth of the door, seven cubits.

The gate had a main section of ten cubits or approximately fifteen feet. On each side of the main door there were supporting structures that were about seven and one half feet in width. The entire gate area was thus twenty cubits, or about thirty feet in width.

Ezek 41:4 So he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he said unto me, This is the most holy place.

I must admit that I do not understand why we are told that the most holy place was before the temple. What is clear is that the most holy place was twenty cubits in both length and breadth, which is about thirty feet in each direction.

Ezek 41:5 After he measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the breadth of every side chamber, four cubits, round about the house on every side.

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The outer wall of the temple itself was about nine feet in thickness. Lining the outer wall were thirty side chambers on three sides of the outer court where there were gates; that is the north, south and east walls. The west wall had no gate. There were three stories of five chambers on each side of the three gates, giving a total of thirty.

**Ezek 41:6 And the side chambers were three, one over another, and thirty in order; and they entered into the wall which was of the house for the side chambers round about, that they might have hold, but they had not hold in the wall of the house.**

An exterior view of the Temple of Solomon

**Ezek 41:7 And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers: for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house: therefore the breadth of the house was still upward, and so increased from the lowest chamber to the highest by the midst.**

The walls were arranged so that they formed ledges upon which the upper chambers could rest.

**Ezek 41:8 I saw also the height of the house round about: the foundations of the side chambers were a full reed of six great cubits.**

**Ezek 41:9 The thickness of the wall, which was for the side chamber without, was five cubits: and that which was left was the place of the side chambers that were within.**

**Ezek 41:10 And between the chambers was the**

**wideness of twenty cubits round about the house on every side**

**Ezek 41:11 And the doors of the side chambers were toward the place that was left, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south: and the breadth of the place that was left was five cubits round about.**

It is not difficult to see why Isaac Newton pondered much over the construction and the spiritual meaning of each of the parts. Artists drawings many centuries after show contrasting views.

**Ezek 41:12 Now the building that was before the separate place at the end toward the west was seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about, and the length thereof ninety cubits.**

**Ezek 41:13 So he measured the house, an hundred cubits long; and the separate place, and the building, with the walls thereof, an hundred cubits long;**

The chapter before us is very difficult to envision. As a consequence most commentators either treat the chapter extremely lightly, or skip it entirely. If the present reader has some artistic or architectural talent he or she might attempt to make either a plan or a drawing using the dimensions given.

For most of us the main profit will be a result of noticing the amount of detail given by the Lord. Today the temple of the Lord is His church. He wanted great care taken to meet his specifications in the temples of old. We may assume that He wants the same careful attention given to the organization and activities He has given to us who live in this Christian age.

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Ezek 41:14 Also the breadth of the face of the house, and of the separate place toward the east, an hundred cubits.

Ezek 41:15 And he measured the length of the building over against the separate place which was behind it, and the galleries thereof on the one side and on the other side, an hundred cubits, with the inner temple, and the porches of the court;

Ezek 41:16 The door posts, and the narrow windows, and the galleries round about on their three stories, over against the door, cieled with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows were covered;

Ezek 41:17 To that above the door, even unto the inner house, and without, and by all the wall round about within and without, by measure.

Ezek 41:18 And it was made with cherubims and palm trees, so that a palm tree was between a cherub and a cherub; and every cherub had two faces;

Cherubim were angelic objects that were always associated with the relationships between man and God. Today we use the word “cherub” to indicate a small baby. It was much more than that in the days of Solomon. I will not venture a reason for each of them having two faces.

Ezek 41:19 So that the face of a man was toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side: it was made through all the house round about.

One of the two faces of each cherubim was the face of a man. That face was turned toward a palm tree on

one side of the cherubim. The other face was that of a young lion. That face was turned toward a palm tree on the other side of the cherubim.

Ezek 41:20 From the ground unto above the door were cherubims and palm trees made, and on the wall of the temple.

From the ground to the top of the door of the temple these cherubim and palm trees alternated. The same arrangement could be seen on the wall of the temple. It is not clear as to whether this was true only of the front outside wall, or whether it was found on all of the walls. We may well suppose that the display was most impressive to all who laid eyes on it.

Ezek 41:21 The posts of the temple were squared, and the face of the sanctuary; the appearance of the one as the appearance of the other.

Most readers would assume that the posts of the temple were the same as the pillars. We usually think of pillars as being round. These posts are said to have been square rather than round.

Ezek 41:22 The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the table that is before the LORD.

The altar of wood was the same as the altar of incense. We have what is known as the "Lord's table" today. This altar of incense was the "Lord's table" of that day.

Ezek 41:23 And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors.

Ezek 41:24 And the doors had two leaves apiece, two turning leaves; two leaves for the one door, and two leaves for the other door.

I shall assume that the two doors were side by side and that each of the doors had two portions which allowed persons to walk through either side of a central post.

Ezek 41:25 And there were made on them, on the doors of the temple, cherubims and palm trees, like as were made upon the walls; and there were thick planks upon the face of the porch without.

Ezek 41:26 And there were narrow windows and palm trees on the one side and on the other side, on the sides of the porch, and upon the side chambers of the house, and thick planks.

Cherubim are angelic servants of the Lord. We can assume that God knew just how much His servants were capable of comprehending at that time. Is it not true that all these centuries later, His faithful should have advanced to higher levels? In these latter days men and women should have been able to build upon the faith of those former days and become “Living temples”, or at least bricks in the one Living Temple which is the church of the Living God!

Is it not a wondrous privilege to have the history of God and His followers from the Garden of Eden through the times of Moses and the Israelites, and on through the Christian age until the present time?

As we close this chapter, may I also add that, SWEET ARE THE PROMISES for those of every age who LIVE and DIE loving and serving HIM!

Chapter 42

The material found in this forty-second chapter has given much difficulty to the best of the minds who have attempted to deal with it. If you find that there are difficulties in following my own explanations, be assured that I am not alone. Remember that this is a description of a vision which Ezekiel was privileged to see. There may well be portions of it that will have to wait for future events to take place before these portions are completely understood.

Some commentators practically ignore the chapter. I shall try not to follow their example. There are reasons for the presence of every chapter of the Holy Book. Both you and I may have to wait until the new heaven and earth come into being. Since God saw it best to include the material, I will do my best to understand it, and to transmit this to the reader. I pray for divine help and that Jehovah will aid the honest seeker for ultimate truth in order that both the writer and the reader will find the truth which they seek to incorporate into their lives.

Ezek 42:1 Then he brought me forth into the utter court, the way toward the north: and he brought me into the chamber that was over against the separate place, and which was before the building toward the north.

Ezekiel had entered through the north gate. This placed him in the “utter”, or outer court of the city. He was then taken to a chamber that was “over against” the separate place. The word “over” may cause English readers some difficulty. Over does not mean “above.” It is more in line with our meaning when we say “over” there. Now remember that Solomon’s temple had been

destroyed at this time and that this is a vision in which Ezekiel is seeing a symbolic temple which may have much in common with the church, which is the temple of God in the Christian age.

Ezek 42:2 Before the length of an hundred cubits was the north door, and the breadth was fifty cubits.

Ezek 42:3 Over against the twenty cubits which were for the inner court, and over against the pavement which was for the utter court, was gallery against gallery in three stories.

A three story gallery was just inside the outer wall of the city. This is not the city of Jerusalem. It is the city of God which is particularly related to the Holy Temple.

Ezek 42:4 And before the chambers was a walk to ten cubits breadth inward, a way of one cubit; and their doors toward the north.

Ezek 42:5 Now the upper chambers were shorter: for the galleries were higher than these, than the lower, and than the middlemost of the building.

The outer edges of the lowest tier of chambers were extended a short distance beyond those of the middle and upper tiers.

Ezek 42:6 For they were in three stories, but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts: therefore the building was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground.

The second tier of chambers rested upon the first tier, and the third rested upon the second.

Ezek 42:7 And the wall that was without over against the chambers, toward the utter court on the forepart of the chambers, the length thereof was fifty cubits.

Ezek 42:8 For the length of the chambers that were in the utter court was fifty cubits: and, lo, before the temple were an hundred cubits.

The length of the entire set of chambers on the north wall of the city was fifty cubits. From the chambers on the outer wall to the temple itself was a distance of one hundred cubits.

Ezek 42:9 And from under these chambers was the entry on the east side, as one goeth into them from the utter court.

Ezek 42:10 The chambers were in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, over against the separate place, and over against the building.

Ezek 42:11 And the way before them was like the appearance of the chambers which were toward the north, as long as they, and as broad as they: and all their goings out were both according to their fashions, and according to their doors.

A somewhat similar arrangement existed on the east wall of the city.

Ezek 42:12 And according to the doors of the chambers that were toward the south was a door in the head of the way, even the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one entereth into them.

Ezek 42:13 Then said he unto me, The north

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**chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place is holy.**

As the present commentator envisions the situation, the separate place was the area of the Holy Place and the Most Holy.

**Ezek 42:14 When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they are holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people.**

Any time the priests moved out of the Holy Place into the area of their chambers, or into the area of space between their chambers and the inner court, they were to remove the priestly garments and leave them in the inner, holy areas and put on other garments not used in their priestly duties.

**Ezek 42:15 Now when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect is toward the east, and measured it round about.**

This concluded the discussion of the inner portions of the city. The man with the measuring reed moved to the outer wall on the east and began to measure it.

**Ezek 42:16 He measured the east side with the measuring reed, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.**

The length of the eastern wall was found to be five hundred reeds. Since each reed was six cubits in length, and the cubit used in such cases as this one was a hand breadth greater than the eighteen inch standard cubit, we have a reed which is six times 21 inches. The wall, which was measured here would then have been 500 x 21 inches, which would amount to 10,500 inches or 875 feet.

**Ezek 42:17 He measured the north side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.**

**Ezek 42:18 He measured the south side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed.**

**Ezek 42:19 He turned about to the west side, and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed.**

**Ezek 42:20 He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.**

From the above we can see that the outer court was five hundred reeds or 875 feet in length and breadth. This made it possible to have a distance or separation between the chambers of the priests and the sanctuary itself.

Jehovah our Lord is absolutely holy. That holiness was to be respected by keeping a distance between the center of His Holy Temple and the areas where the common people and the Gentiles could approach Him.

Through the cleansing power of the blood of the Saviour men are permitted to approach Him in this

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Christian age. Through His Son the Lord has reached down to us. If we will allow ourselves to be baptized into Christ we may come to God in the arms of His Son. We do not have to bring a calf or a lamb with us when we approach Him. He will treat us as children when we unite ourselves with His Son, the perfect sacrifice.

Chapter 43

We are now to be given a picture of the glory of God returning to shine on Israel. Those days in Babylon were not an accident. They had a divine purpose. God's covenant with His people was to be a partnership. They were to obey His will. When that was the case, He would bless them as their God. He is ready now to give them another opportunity to serve and obey Him. If they do that He will bless them. That partnership still holds true. He will bless if His people will obey.

Ezek 43:1 **Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east:**

There were three main gates; one on the north, one on the south and one on the east. There was none on the west. The messenger from God took Ezekiel to the east gate, where the sun arises. God's glory is sometimes compared to the glory of the rising sun.

Ezek 43:2 **And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.**

In the vision, the glory of God is seen as returning to the people. The entire earth was enlightened by that glory. The entire earth can be enlightened by the glory of God today. It all depends on two factors. One is the willingness of His people to proclaim His glory. The other is the willingness of the world to take heed and obey! God has taken the initiative. Men must respond in thought, word and action.

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**Ezek 43:3 And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.**

God was reaffirming His promise to see a new temple which would replace the one destroyed by the Babylonian army. Ezekiel was so overcome by the importance of the vision that he fell flat upon the ground there at the east gate.

**Ezek 43:4 And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.**

In the vision Ezekiel saw the glory of Jehovah move from the east gate of the city to the restored temple and enter into that temple. It is difficult for us to imagine the joy which must have come to Ezekiel at the thought of pardon and blessing which the vision brought.

**Ezek 43:5 So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.**

The Spirit of God then caught up Ezekiel and transported Him to the inner court of the restored temple. God's glory was there. He was ready to do His part.

**Ezek 43:6 And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me.**

The voice of the Lord has already been described as being like many rushing waters. Ezekiel would have been greatly humbled as God spoke.

**Ezek 43:7 And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.**

Note that God promised to never depart again. But also notice that He said, Israel must no longer defile His holy name. If Israel defiled His holy name, they could no longer expect His continual blessings.

But what did the Lord have in mind when He spoke of defiling His holy name? He explained His statement. They had been idolizing the carcasses of their dead kings. They had thus been placing something else before Jehovah in their thoughts. As a husband is furious when he finds his wife has been unfaithful to him, God had also been grieved. He was ready to forgive if Israel would turn from idolatry.

**Ezek 43:8 In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.**

Israel had placed other objects of worship on the same basis as their Lord and Creator. Any part of the creation which is placed on the same plane of importance as the Creator Himself is the utmost folly. The reason for their captivity was their spiritual adultery. God had been justified in His jealousy. It was for their welfare as much as for His own glory.

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Ezek 43:9 Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.

This was not to be a one sided agreement. Israel was to be true to their Spiritual Husband. He would then be their Caregiver.

Ezek 43:10 Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.

What was Ezekiel to do in this situation? Why had God spoken to him? It was because Ezekiel had the responsibility to tell the people of God's will, and of their own need to repent and measure their thoughts and actions by His standards.

Ezek 43:11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

God was ready to show what He expected of His people. He would tell them how the new temple would be built and what would be expected of those who entered into it. Ezekiel was to see that these ordinances were made clear to them in order that they might render obedience to God's will.

There are two temples under consideration. One is that which was to be rebuilt in Palestine. The other is the Church of Jesus Christ. Ezekiel was to make it easier for men to understand just what God wanted.

Ezek 43:12 This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

When God declared that "This is the law of the house." He was telling Ezekiel just what He expected if He was to bless Israel with His providential care. Do not think that there is any less need for modern man to pay attention to "the law of God's house." It is true that we are no longer under the law of Moses, but it is not true that the spiritual temple of our own day is to be held less important than that of Ezekiel's time.

First, the entire top of the mountain where the temple stood was to be holy ground. To defile the area of the temple was to place one's self under the curse of God.

Ezek 43:13 And these are the measures of the altar after the cubits: The cubit is a cubit and an hand breadth; even the bottom shall be a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about shall be a span: and this shall be the higher place of the altar.

The present writer has the distinct feeling that there are mysteries here which shall only be unfolded by the passage of time. Both the restored temple in Jerusalem, and the temple of the church are a part of the divine plan. I shall do my best to draw lessons which I believe to be implied in the pattern. However, I am convinced that



there is much more involved and that all of us have much to learn until time shall disappear into eternity.

The cubit used here is what is sometimes called the long cubit. The usual cubit was about eighteen inches. The long cubit was closer to twenty-one inches

Ezek 43:14 And from the bottom upon the ground even to the lower settle shall be two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle even to the greater settle shall be four cubits, and the breadth one cubit.

Ezek 43:15 So the altar shall be four cubits; and from the altar and upward shall be four horns.

The altar was to be four cubits in height, or around eighty-four inches. Extending upward from the base there were four pointed corners which may have been for the purpose of keeping the sacrifice upon the altar.

Ezek 43:16 And the altar shall be twelve cubits long, twelve broad, square in the four squares thereof.

The upper surface of the altar as a whole was to be a square about two hundred fifty-two inches each way.

Ezek 43:17 And the settle shall be fourteen cubits long and fourteen broad in the four squares thereof; and the border about it shall be half a cubit; and the bottom thereof shall be a cubit about; and his stairs shall look toward the east.

Ezek 43:18 And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon.

This was not the altar of incense. It was the altar of the burnt offerings. It was to be approached by stairs from the east.

Ezek 43:19 And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering.

The priests who attended the altar of burnt offering were to be of the tribe of Levi and from the family of Zadok.

They were to be provided with a young male of the cattle. This was to be offered once a day for a sin offering.

Ezek 43:20 And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it.

The blood of the animal was then to be placed on the four horns of the altar and in various other places in order to cleanse or purify it.

Ezek 43:21 Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary.

The animal was then to be placed upon the altar and burned outside the temple.

Ezek 43:22 And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse it with the bullock.

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The next day a young goat was to be offered in the same manner as was the calf. The altar was to be cleansed again with the blood of the goat just as it was with the calf.

**Ezek 43:23 When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish.**

A young male calf was also to be offered on the second day along with an adult male sheep. All of these animals were to be free of defects. One is not to offer God that which is second rate. He is to be offered the best we have.

**Ezek 43:24 And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the LORD.**

The priests were to cast salt upon the calves, sheep and goats which were to be offered. Salt is known for two qualities. It increases flavor, and it helps to preserve that which is salted. God's people understood that these were symbols of the expected pleasure and durability of the covenant with their Lord.

**Ezek 43:25 Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish.**

These same three sacrifices were to be repeated each day for a period of seven days. A calf, a young goat and a

young sheep were all to be offered each of the seven days. After all, those calves goats and sheep had first been given to the people by God. It was quite proper that this be a means of expressing thanksgiving to Him.

**Ezek 43:26 Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves.**

These seven days of preparation and purging of the altar with the blood of the animals was but the beginning of the sacrificial ceremonies which were to be resumed upon the return of the Israelites to the land from which they had been taken.

**Ezek 43:27 And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.**

From the purification period on into the future the priests were to offer such sacrifices. They were to be a means of demonstrating the desire of the Israelites to keep peace with Jehovah and let Him know of their gratitude for His blessings.

The book of Hebrews tells us that the blood of Jesus Christ has taken the place of the blood of bulls and goats in the time of Ezekiel. In addition, each Christian is to live in such a way that his or her life is a continuous sacrifice to God. When one sacrifices his or her life to God, that person will realize far more in blessings from God than he could ever offer to God.

## Chapter 44

Our account now takes us to the matter of maintaining the purity of the Holy Mount. It is an offense to the Lord to pollute it in any way. Instructions are given as to how this pollution may be prevented or avoided.

**Ezek 44:1 Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut.**

**Ezek 44:2 Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.**

The outward sanctuary had three entrances just as the courtyard wall did. The Lord brought Ezekiel to the east gate and caused him to see that the gate was shut. No one was given permission to enter through that gate. It was reserved for the entry of the Lord Himself. Mortal men were not to place themselves in a position of equal importance with the God of Israel.

**Ezek 44:3 It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.**

Now we are told that there is a Prince who may enter through that east gate. We have just been told that no man is to enter through that gate. Who then is the Prince who is qualified to do so? May I suggest that this Prince was not a mortal man, but was the Son of the Creator of the universe. Since He is one of the three persons of the

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Godhead and there was no sin found in Him, He may enter through the east gate.

Ezek 44:4 Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face.

Ezekiel was then taken to the north gate from which he could get a view of the temple proper. When he looked at it he could see that the glory of God had filled it. The vision was so impressive that Ezekiel fell flat upon the ground in recognition of the difference between himself and the God of all heaven and earth.

Ezek 44:5 And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.

It was made clear to the prophet that the upcoming instructions were of great importance and were to be given his utmost attention. Only if God's laws and ordinances were observed could Israel expect His blessings to be showered down upon them.

Ezek 44:6 And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations,

The rebellious were those who had ignored God's instructions in previous days. He had taken note of

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these sins and they had already gone farther than they should have. This disrespect for the temple grounds must cease!

**Ezek 44:7 In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.**

There were at least two kinds of strangers to God that had been allowed to enter into the holy grounds. Some were gentiles, uncircumcised in the flesh. Others were Jews who had been circumcised in the flesh, but were not circumcised in heart. They still placed their own will and desires above those spelled out by Jehovah. These polluted persons were an insult to the holy mount and it's temple.

**Ezek 44:8 And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves.**

Rather than restricting the persons who handled the objects and activities of the temple to those God had specified, Israel had allowed gentiles and those who were profane among the Jews to take part in the services. This must be discontinued. God had spoken.

**Ezek 44:9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.**

These unqualified strangers to the Lord were not to mix their wicked desires with the purity of God's holy house. This had been done in Ezekiel's day, and it is still being done. God despises it.

**Ezek 44:10 And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity.**

The Levites had entered into the sinfulness of Israel in those days which had brought about the Babylonian captivity. Even though they were of the priestly tribe, they were to be prevented from handling some of the more important tasks of the restored temple.

**Ezek 44:11 Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.**

Only certain of the tribe of Levi were to be allowed to participate in the more critical areas of service. These who had proven weak in the past were to be gatekeepers and butchers of the sacrifices.

**Ezek 44:12 Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.**

These weaker Levites had actually taken charge during times the Israelites had bowed in worship to idols.

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Their example had caused others to disrespect the will of God. This demanded some restrictions to remind them of the damage they had done.

Ezek 44:13 And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

Ezek 44:14 But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

Those who had fallen away and caused others to follow their example were not to be recognized as priests of the Lord. They were to keep the temple grounds in order, but not to offer sacrifices to the Holy God.

Ezek 44:15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:

There were some of the priests of the past who had remained true to the will of God. The sons of Zadok had not strayed. Since they had proven themselves in time past, they were to be the choice for the tasks of higher importance.

Ezek 44:16 They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.

The sons of Zadok would offer the sacrifices and would take charge of the sacrificial ceremonies.

Ezek 44:17 And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

Ezek 44:18 They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat.

Woolen garments were not to be worn by the priests. They were apt to cause the production of sweat and this was repulsive to God. Linen was derived from plants instead of animals. It was cooler and perhaps less apt to become unsightly.

The restriction placed upon the priests in the time of Ezekiel may be responsible for the custom of linen garments for priests in certain religious orders of our own time. Since every Christian is a priest today, this would be a completely different picture. In addition, air conditioning would drastically reduce the production of sweat.

Ezek 44:19 And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

The utter court was the outer court. When the priests passed out of the inner court they were to remove the

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linen garments and put on other types of clothing while they were mixing among those who were being ministered to.

**Ezek 44:20 Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads.**

These priests were neither to let their hair grow long, nor to shave it. They were to keep it orderly, perhaps as an inspiration to others toward neatness.

**Ezek 44:21 Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court.**

It is a bit surprising that the priests were allowed to drink wine at any time. Wine contains alcohol which has an effect upon the mental processes. If that effect was negative when the priest entered the inner court, it seems that it would be negative at any time. The Christian of today would be wise to abstain from the use of wine at all times.

**Ezek 44:22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.**

It appears that sexual relations with one who had been married previously left the woman in a polluted condition. If she had been married to a priest, the priest was unpolluted, therefore her relationship with him did not leave her polluted.

**Ezek 44:23 And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and**

**cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.**

Only those who had shown they knew the difference between the clean and the unclean were qualified to teach others that distinction. Those who had crumbled in the face of temptation were not properly prepared to teach others of purity.

**Ezek 44:24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.**

The sons of Zadok were to take the lead in solving contention between others. They had proven their knowledge of right and wrong. Thus they were capable of making judgments in other's conflicts.

**Ezek 44:25 And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves.**

The priests were not to touch the dead. Only in the case of situations where the dead were closely related to them could they make such contact.

**Ezek 44:26 And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days.**

Even if the individual who had been touched was closely related, the priest who touched that dead person

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was to undergo a period of cleansing for seven days before he could return to his priestly duties.

Ezek 44:27 And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD.

Then after the period of seven days of abstinence from priestly duties, the priest was still required to offer a sin offering before resuming his normal duties.

Ezek 44:28 And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I am their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I am their possession.

The priests were not to inherit property. They were to be supported through the offerings which others gave to the Lord. This is somewhat similar to the use of money contributed on the first day of the week in the Christian age to support those who preach the gospel.

Ezek 44:29 They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering: and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs.

The food eaten by the priests was to be from the offerings of the rest of the people. Meat offerings, sin offerings and trespass offerings were all appropriate for the table of the priests.

Ezek 44:30 And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also

give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.

The firstfruits were not necessarily the first to ripen. They were first in the sense of being high in quality. The service of the priesthood was of high value. The reward for such service should also be of the same nature.

Ezek 44:31 The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

Animals which had died of injury, old age or disease was unfit for consumption by the priests. The type of restrictions described in this chapter were to insure that God's people remained aloof from that which could possibly contaminate them. Every effort must be taken by God's people to remain pure.

Chapter 45

A discussion of the division of the land follows here. It begins with that part which was to be particularly devoted to the activities associated with the temple and the worship of Jehovah.

Ezek 45:1 Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about.

God intended for the people to place Him in the forefront of their entire livelihood. They were to receive a portion of the land which would be distributed by lot. However, before the lots were cast the portion for the temple area was to be determined. It was to be twenty-five thousand reeds in length, and ten thousand reeds in width. This entire portion was to be holy and used for the support of the divine government

Ezek 45:2 Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred in length, with five hundred in breadth, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof.

For the temple and its grounds there was to be a square five hundred cubits on each side. A fifty cubit width was to extend completely around this square to act as a border.



Ezek 45:3 And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanctuary and the most holy place.

Ezek 45:4 The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the LORD: and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary.

The priests who cared for the services of the temple were to have choice living sites near the area where they were to execute their duties.

Ezek 45:5 And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers.

The Levites who were not priests were also to have twenty chambers where they also could be near the work which they were to do.

Ezek 45:6 And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy portion: it shall be for the whole house of Israel.

It has been suggested that this measurement covered a space of sixty square miles. But we must remember that this was a sizable portion of the entire population of the nation. Also, the values are not certain in terms of our own present day units. It is probably best to see the

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importance which the Lord placed on making certain the requirements of the worship area stood out.

**Ezek 45:7 And a portion shall be for the prince on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy portion, and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy portion, and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward: and the length shall be over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border.**

The prince, as used here would have been the present human ruler or governor of the nation. The prince was to have a portion assigned to him on each side of the temple area.

**Ezek 45:8 In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.**

God had warned very early that if Israel would not be satisfied until they had a human king, such kings would take advantage of them. This warning had proven correct time and time again. The statement given here was to the effect that the king was to be satisfied with that portion assigned to him and not attempt to enrich himself with that which belonged to the people.

**Ezek 45:9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD.**

**Ezek 45:10 Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath.**

Those in power always had the temptation to twist justice in such a manner that they enlarged their own pockets.

Does the reader possibly recognize any such selfish attitudes in the public officials of his own time?

**Ezek 45:11 The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer.**

**Ezek 45:12 And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.**

Weighted scales, etc. were to be out of order. Merchandising was to be fair and honest. The ephah and the bath were to be equal quantities of measurement. It would require ten ephahs to make one homer. It would also require ten baths to equal one homer.

We need definitions of the various units of weight and measure which are found in these verses.

Bath ~ A liquid measurement equal to 9 gal.

Ephah ~ A dry measure of about one bushel.

Homer ~ A dry measure containing about 11 bushels.

Gerah ~ A weight the twentieth part of a bushel.

Maneh ~ A weight containing fifty shekels, or about two pounds.

Shekel ~ A measure of weight and also a coin. A gold shekel was worth about ten dollars.

We can see from the above that God was much concerned about His people being fair and honest in their business transactions. A godly man or woman of the present time will be just as careful about such things as the Israelites were cautioned to be. Since these regulations had particular significance for those in power, those in power today should have the same care. Honesty is the best policy. God is looking.

**Ezek 45:13 This is the oblation that ye shall offer; the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley:**

**Ezek 45:14 Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, ye shall offer the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, which is an homer of ten baths; for ten baths are an homer:**

**Ezek 45:15 And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD.**

**Ezek 45:16 All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel.**

The people were first to make these offerings to the prince.

**Ezek 45:17 And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.**

**Ezek 45:18 Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary:**

After receiving these offerings from the people, the prince was to see that the offerings were passed on to the Lord through the priesthood.

**Ezek 45:19 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court.**

**Ezek 45:20 And so thou shalt do the seventh day of the month for every one that erreth, and for him that is simple: so shall ye reconcile the house.**

Even those who were mentally retarded were to have offerings made for those infractions of God's laws which they had broken without knowing of it.

**Ezek 45:21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.**

This was one of the three main feasts of the Jews. Along with the feast of tabernacles and the feast of Pentecost, it marked a very special time of the year. For seven days, beginning on the fourteenth day of the first month of the year no leaven was to be included in the bread. Unleavened bread is heavier than leavened bread in that it does not rise. The Jews were reminded by this that they were to restrict some of the pleasures of life in order that they might devote their days to the service of the Lord.

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Ezek 45:22 And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering.

Ezek 45:23 And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering.

Ezek 45:24 And he shall prepare a meat offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah.

Ezek 45:25 In the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil.

In summary then, there were two days of the year, one on the fourteenth day of the first month and another on the fifteenth day of the seventh month that this same set of sacrifices was to be made. During the captivity these had not been observed. Now they were to be resumed.

The sin offering served to remind Israel that sin was horrible in the sight of God.

The burnt offering indicated a complete dedication of the body and soul to God.

The meat offering indicated a grateful heart toward God for the provisions of life.

It was appropriate that each of these purposes be repeatedly memorialized.

Chapter 46

Chapter forty-six is a reminder that those who lead the public are expected by the Lord to set an example spiritually. The prince, or ruler of the people in Ezekiel's vision was to be in the forefront of the worship each sabbath day and each first day of the month.

How wonderful it would be if the rulers of every nation on earth were to sense their obligation to the One who gave them life and breath. Unfortunately that is not the way it is. The rulers are more often interested in expanding their own importance. The result is war after war over the face of the earth.

Ezek 46:1 Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

Throughout the year the east gate of the inner court was to be kept shut during the six working days of the week. Every sabbath day it was to be opened and on the first day of each month it was to be opened. These were very special days in which God was especially honored. We have some reminder of this in our own first day of each week. It is a day in which men come together to worship Him.

Ezek 46:2 And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.

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The prince was to present himself at the porch of the east gate and wait there until his own offerings had been made at the hands of the priests. After His offerings had been made he was to leave the gate, but it was not to be closed for the rest of the day.

**Ezek 46:3 Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.**

The common people were to come before this east gate to present their sacrifices on the same days the ruler offered his. They were to follow his example.

**Ezek 46:4 And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.**

The prince was to offer his burnt offering each sabbath day. It was to be six lambs and one ram. Each was to be unblemished. God expects the best.

**Ezek 46:5 And the meat offering shall be an ephah for a ram, and the meat offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.**

The meat offering which accompanied the ram was to be an ephah of meal. That which accompanied the six lambs was determined by the that which he was able to give. One hin of oil was to be mixed with each ephah of meal.

There is some difficulty in determining the size of a hin of oil. It seems that two different measures have been

suggested. One was about one and one half gallons. The other was about half that quantity.

**Ezek 46:6 And in the day of the new moon it shall be a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram: they shall be without blemish.**

The sacrifice offered by the prince on the first of each month was different. It consisted of one young male calf, six lambs and one ram. Again, each of these was to be physically perfect.

**Ezek 46:7 And he shall prepare a meat offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and for the lambs according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah.**

The prince also was to offer a meat offering and oil at the rate given in verse five.

**Ezek 46:8 And when the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of that gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof.**

When the prince had concluded his offerings, he was to leave by the same gate through which he had entered.

**Ezek 46:9 But when the people of the land shall come before the LORD in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it.**



On those times when the people of the land gathered to worship, they were not to leave by the same gate as they entered. They were to enter either by the south gate or the north gate. Then they were to leave by the opposite one. The prince could not leave by the opposite gate since there was no west gate and he entered through the east gate.

**Ezek 46:10 And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth.**

When the people entered, the prince was to enter with them. He had already presented his own offerings, but was to encourage the people by his presence among them as they presented theirs.

**Ezek 46:11 And in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.**

**Ezek 46:12 Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the LORD, one shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth one shall shut the gate.**

It was possible also for the prince to make voluntary offerings in addition to those on the sabbaths and new moons. When these additional offerings were made he was to enter through the east gate and leave by the same. The gate was then to be shut.

**Ezek 46:13 Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt offering unto the LORD of a lamb of the first year without blemish: thou shalt prepare it every morning.**

Nothing is said here about a lamb sacrifice every evening. This is a change from what had been the case in earlier days.

**Ezek 46:14 And thou shalt prepare a meat offering for it every morning, the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; a meat offering continually by a perpetual ordinance unto the LORD.**

**Ezek 46:15 Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meat offering, and the oil, every morning for a continual burnt offering.**

The chapter now turns to inheritance regulations.

**Ezek 46:16 Thus saith the Lord GOD; If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it shall be their possession by inheritance.**

There was a difference in the passing of a gift by the prince to his sons, and one given to one of his servants. The son could receive such a gift as an enduring inheritance. The servant must not make a long range claim on a gift of this kind. The inheritance of the prince must be returned to his own descendants at the time of the jubilee year. This avoided the permanent change in the possessions of the prince.

The Lord did not wish for the prince to lose the inheritance which had been assigned to him as a ruler,

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nor was he to set out to gain that which had not been assigned as the ruler's portion. Rulers are sometimes careless with their possessions and lose them. At other times a ruler may attempt to endlessly add to what was assigned to him.

Ezek 46:17 But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them.

Ezek 46:18 Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.

God wished for the inheritance assignments to remain within the bounds which were set at the beginning. Land grabbers were not a part of the divine plan.

Ezek 46:19 After he brought me through the entry, which was at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north: and, behold, there was a place on the two sides westward.

Ezek 46:20 Then said he unto me, This is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, where they shall bake the meat offering; that they bear them not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people.

A place on both sides of the priest's chambers in the north of the area was to be used for the preparation of the offerings. These offerings were not to be taken out into the outer court for such processing.

Ezek 46:21 Then he brought me forth into the utter court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and, behold, in every corner of the court there was a court.

In the vision, Ezekiel was then taken out to the outer court where he was shown a smaller court in each of the four corners of that larger one.

Ezek 46:22 In the four corners of the court there were courts joined of forty cubits long and thirty broad: these four corners were of one measure.

Each of the four corners had smaller courts with dimensions of forty by thirty cubits. All were identical in size.

Ezek 46:23 And there was a row of building round about in them, round about them four, and it was made with boiling places under the rows round about.

These smaller courts were for the purpose of boiling the sacrifices of the common people.

Ezek 46:24 Then said he unto me, These are the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people.

Although not made clear at this point, it is believed that these were places where those who were unable to provide for themselves could share with others who were more fortunate. God gave His Only Son for us in this Christian age. He urges us to care for those who needy.

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## Chapter 47

As we draw to the close of this very figurative book of Ezekiel, we come to one of the most impressive of all the scenes in the book. This time it is a fountain of living water which flows out of the presence of God and into the world. It will provide for the needs of the spiritually thirsty. No person will be forced to drink from it, but those who choose to do so will find refreshment for their souls.

Such waters are mentioned in other places in the holy scriptures. There are similar passages in Zechariah 14, Joel 3, John 4 and Revelation 22.

**Ezek 47:1** Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

Has the reader notice the many times the direction east is mentioned in this book of Ezekiel. God is light. Light is associated in the Bible with the sunrise. The river described in this chapter originates from under the threshold of the east side of the temple.

**Ezek 47:2** Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

This stream moved toward the outer east gate of the temple grounds and ran out at the right side of that gate.

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Ezek 47:3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ancles.

The man with the measuring line measured off one thousand cubits, or about 1600 feet from the gate and found the water to be ancle deep.

Ezek 47:4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

One might have expected the stream to become smaller as it moved from the source. The opposite was true. After another one thousand cubits was measured it had become knee deep. The question arises as to why this river would become deeper as it moved out from the source. We shall suggest an answer in just a moment.

Ezek 47:5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

After another one thousand cubit was measured off the depth of the water had become deep enough that one could swim in them. This was certainly a most impressive increase.

Ezek 47:6 And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

Ezekiel was then asked if he had paid close attention to the happenings. He was escorted to the very brink of the river where it could be examined closely.

Ezek 47:7 Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

When he reached the bank of the river, Ezekiel could see many, many trees being fed by the water of the river. They could be seen on both sides of the river. Wherever the river flows life flourishes.

Ezek 47:8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

Ezek 47:9 And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

As the river flowed on it moved through the desert and onward to the sea. The desert bloomed and the sea which was dead came to life with a multitude of fish.

We must ask ourselves about the nature of this sea. Was it a literal sea of drinking water, or was it a sea of human souls which were in need of the water of life as presented in the Word of God. The latter seems far more probable.

Ezek 47:10 And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto

Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

Jesus Christ once told His apostles that He would cause them to become fishers of men. Does that statement not harmonize well with the scene we are considering in this chapter?

Ezek 47:11 But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

But what are these miry places which continue to be salty and marshy even when the water of life is available? Are they not those souls which refuse to absorb the precious water from the throne of Jehovah?

Ezek 47:12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Any serious student of the Bible will immediately make a comparison between the Garden of Eden and the area which flourishes here because it is watered by this amazing stream. The body of man may grow feeble and unable to be maintained. It is not necessary that the soul follow the same path. There is both food and medicine for the soul of man. How foolish it is to refuse it!

Ezek 47:13 Thus saith the Lord GOD; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions.

The topic of the chapter now turns to the division of the land of Canaan. How is it to be distributed among the tribes?

Ezek 47:14 And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance.

Your present writer has little doubt that the material given in the last part of this chapter has application to both the land of Canaan after the return from captivity, and also to the eternal inheritance which is to replace this old heaven and earth when time has run its course.

Ezek 47:15 And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad;

The borders of the promised land are given here. They are the same as those mentioned in the twenty-fourth chapter of Numbers. Israel had already received that inheritance. There was a greater inheritance ahead for the faithful.

(See Numbers 21:43-45 and Numbers 23:14-16., Also Joshua 21 and 23.)

Ezek 47:16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim, which is between the border of Damascus and the border

of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran.

Ezek 47:17 And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side.

Ezek 47:18 And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side.

Ezek 47:19 And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward.

Ezek 47:20 The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west side.

Ezek 47:21 So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel.

Ezek 47:22 And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.

Ezek 47:23 And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.

There is to be a new heaven and earth. The new Israel embraces both those of fleshly Israel who choose to drink of the living waters which have been provided by the gospel and also those who are gentiles by natural birth,

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but have become a part of the new Israel of God through the second birth. God's river of life runs throughout the Bible. Drink freely of it dear reader. Never forget that the real goal of every soul alive should be to rest in that eternal promised land.

## Chapter 48

This last chapter deals with the allotment of the land after the captivity has ended. Although the boundaries of the tribes are given in literal terms, the overlying impact is that there will be an inheritance which shall be eternal in the new heaven and earth.

**Ezek 48:1** Now these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; a portion for Dan.

**Ezek 48:2** And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Asher.

**Ezek 48:3** And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Naphtali.

**Ezek 48:4** And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Manasseh.

**Ezek 48:5** And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Ephraim.

**Ezek 48:6** And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Reuben.

**Ezek 48:7** And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Judah.

**Ezek 48:8** And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand reeds in breadth, and in length as one of the other

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parts, from the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it.

The Lord's portion of the new inheritance is to be a major part of the whole. All depends upon Him. All glory, honor and power are to be recognized in Him.

Ezek 48:9 The oblation that ye shall offer unto the LORD shall be of five and twenty thousand in length, and of ten thousand in breadth.

Ezek 48:10 And for them, even for the priests, shall be this holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand in length, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof.

Ezek 48:11 It shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

Ezek 48:12 And this oblation of the land that is offered shall be unto them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

Ezek 48:13 And over against the border of the priests the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length shall be five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand.

Ezek 48:14 And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firstfruits of the land: for it is holy unto the LORD.

Ezek 48:15 And the five thousand, that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a profane place for the city, for

dwelling, and for suburbs: and the city shall be in the midst thereof.

Ezek 48:16 And these shall be the measures thereof; the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred.

Ezek 48:17 And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty.

Ezek 48:18 And the residue in length over against the oblation of the holy portion shall be ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward: and it shall be over against the oblation of the holy portion; and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that serve the city.

Ezek 48:19 And they that serve the city shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel.

Ezek 48:20 All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city.

Ezek 48:21 And the residue shall be for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city, over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for the prince: and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house shall be in the midst thereof.

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**Ezek 48:22** Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince.

**Ezek 48:23** As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side unto the west side, Benjamin shall have a portion.

**Ezek 48:24** And by the border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west side, Simeon shall have a portion.

**Ezek 48:25** And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar a portion.

**Ezek 48:26** And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun a portion.

**Ezek 48:27** And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad a portion.

**Ezek 48:28** And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be even from Tamar unto the waters of strife in Kadesh, and to the river toward the great sea.

**Ezek 48:29** This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord GOD.

**Ezek 48:30** And these are the goings out of the city on the north side, four thousand and five hundred measures.

**Ezek 48:31** And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi.

**Ezek 48:32** And at the east side four thousand and five hundred: and three gates; and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan.

**Ezek 48:33** And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun.

**Ezek 48:34** At the west side four thousand and five hundred, with their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali.

**Ezek 48:35** It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be The Lord is There.



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**The Book Of  
DANIEL**



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# *Introduction To Daniel*

## **I. Daniel – A Book Surrounded by Controversy**

It is a great tragedy that the book of Daniel has become a battleground upon which students of the Scriptures have fought. Yet, that is precisely what has taken place. Liberal theologians have attacked the book with great fury. They doubt its authorship, its integrity and its place within the inspired books. Conservative scholars have defended it with equal energy. The conflict has raged for more than a century.

The consequences of this controversy have been serious. More than one promising student in theological seminaries has first abandoned his confidence in the book of Daniel, only to follow this with a similar retreat from other portions of the Bible. My own personal experience includes acquaintance with a teaching colleague who followed just such a pattern as I have pictured. He no longer believes in a hell where the smoke ascends for ever and ever; where the fire is not quenched and their worm dieth not.

I am thankful there are still those who drink deeply from the spiritual fountain which God has made available through this grand book. They stand, along with Isaac Newton, in the conviction that he who gives up the book of Daniel also give up the Christian religion.

I have previously gained much from examination of this book. I have taught it in coursework in a school of Bible and have organized outlined notes on each of the

chapters. Now, I look forward to an even deeper study in which I may apply the experience which has been gained in some six decades of examination and application of the Word of God. I do not expect my faith to be shattered. I expect it to burn even more brightly when the work has been completed.

## **II. Background for the Book**

### **A. Political background**

Great political powers were rising to prominence and then being replaced by others during the time of Daniel. Among them were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, to be followed by Greece and then the Roman Empire. In the midst of these upheavals, the relatively small nation of the Jews was caught in the middle.

God had made a covenant with his people at Mount Sinai. He had agreed to be their God and they had agreed to be his people. It was not long before they began to weaken in their commitment. They flirted with idols of the lands around them. They became enamored with themselves. They sank into immorality, injustice and greed.

Judges were raised up to deliver them from the predicaments into which they wandered. Prophets were sent to warn them of the consequences of their misconduct. It did little good. They continued to follow their own ways.

Finally, God allowed the Assyrians to invade the land and take the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity. Then he brought Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon and caused the people of the southern kingdom of Judah to be removed to that far off land.

The people had become extremely wicked after the

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reign of Hezekiah. Josiah had made attempts to reform them. There was some success outwardly; however, the hearts of the people remained corrupt. When Josiah died in a battle between the Egyptians and the Babylonians, chaos took over. Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, was installed as king, but was soon replaced by Jehoiakim who was appointed by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt. When Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took control, Jehoiakim was to become nothing more than a vassal to him.

After a few years, Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar then marched through Palestine, defeating Pharaoh-Necho, and took Daniel, along with many other of the citizens of Judah to Babylon. This occurred in 605 B.C.

Jehoiakim lost his life in the strife and Jehoiakin, his son, became king. This lasted only three months before he was taken captive to Babylon along with the prophet Ezekiel and others. This took place in 597 B.C.

Zedekiah was then made ruler and reigned until 586 B.C. when the Chaldeans came into Jerusalem and demolished it. Only a few of the weakest and least desirable specimens of Judah were left in the land. Most of the Jews were removed to Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

B. Social Background

There was very little room for exultation on the part of the captives in Babylon. The 137th Psalm describes their mental attitude when it says,

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us

one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

The once great and powerful people of God, who had thrived in the time of Solomon, now found themselves far from home. They were enslaved by powerful foreigners. Their proud city of Jerusalem had been overthrown and the temple of God had been torn apart block by block.

Over the years some of the Jews intermarried with the Babylonians. When they were given the choice of returning to their land after the captivity was over, many of them had so completely lost their Jewish pride that they chose to stay in the land of Babylon. Many of them spoke the Aramaic language when they returned. So true was this that Jesus and his apostles probably often used the Aramaic in conversation.

C. Religious Background

At first there was an unwillingness to believe the stay would be extended. They felt that surely God would not allow his people to suffer such ignominy for more than a few years. Jeremiah, who had warned them they had gone past the point of no return before they were taken captive, later informed them they could expect to remain in captivity for seventy years.

Word came to them that the city had been destroyed

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and the temple desecrated. At that point they could no longer even turn their faces toward the temple and pray. There was no temple. In place of the temple, they began to meet in synagogues where they could study the scriptures. All of these events were a part of the plan of God. His people must be chastised for their unfaithfulness. In addition, the Gentiles were being prepared for inclusion as a part of the family of God in the latter days.

### **III. Daniel as a Person**

Some skeptics would even deny the historical reality of such a person as Daniel. To do so, they must reject the clear teaching of the Bible. The book of Daniel claims he was a youth of noble birth. He is said to have been among those of the princes, the king's seed.

Ezekiel makes reference to him in Ezekiel 14:14 when he says, Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness. Ezekiel recognized him as being a man of exceedingly high character. This is in spite of the liberals claim that the Daniel mentioned by Ezekiel was not the Daniel of the book of Daniel. It is difficult to think that the Daniel who could be mentioned in the same class as Job and Noah was any other than the Daniel of the book under study.

Not only does Ezekiel mention Daniel. Jesus Christ did the same in Matthew 24:25. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Daniel was a man endowed with supernatural gifts. He was capable of receiving dreams and visions, and was also capable of interpreting those of his own as well as others. With the help of Jehovah, he astounded all of the

astrologers and magicians of the kings court.

He was a man of tremendous faith and character. When placed under pressure such that most men would have caved in, Daniel maintained his composure. God would be with him. He need fear no man.

It is sometimes said that Daniel does not belong in the list of the prophets. This is ridiculous. He stands as an equal beside Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel and John who wrote the Revelation. His concern for his people and his ability to foretell future events demand that he be included.

There is strong reason to believe that Daniel entered Babylon with the very first group of captives, that he stayed for the full seventy years of captivity, and that he remained behind when others returned and died in the land of Babylon.

#### **IV. The Nature and Style of the Book of Daniel**

A. Daniel is Apocalyptic in nature and similar to Revelation.

Daniel is sometimes called the “apocalypse of the Old Testament”. Apocalyptic literature bears certain characteristics. It is normally written in a time of severe stress. It bemoans the present difficulties. It speaks of a time of judgment when God will have sufficiently punished his people and will then judge the oppressors. After this time of judgment, the apocalyptic writers look forward to a greater day. There is a present evil day. This is followed by judgment. Then comes the latter glory. There are two well known apocalyptic books in the Bible. One is Daniel. The other is Revelation.

Liberal theologians would like to class Daniel with



a number of spurious books written in the time of the Maccabees. However, there are only two true apocalyptic books in the Bible. Portions of Zechariah are apocalyptic as are chapters 24 through 27 of the book of Isaiah. There are hints of such in many of the other prophets.

There is much similarity in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Both begin with historical settings, then move into heavy symbolism. Each book reaches a dividing point somewhere near the middle, with the latter part of the book showing strong contrast with the earlier portion. The similarities in the two books leave anyone who has done heavy study of either of them dissatisfied until he has given lengthy attention to the other. I mentioned Isaac Newton earlier. Newton is, of course, most well known for his work in physics. Yet, Newton wrote much religious material. Included was a brief commentary on Daniel and the Apocalypse (Revelation).

### B. Language Considerations

The book is written in two different languages. Chapter one and the first three verses of chapter two are written in Hebrew. Beginning with verse four of chapter two, the language is Aramaic. Then, from the beginning of chapter eight to the end of the book, the language returns to Hebrew.

This has caused much discussion. Why should the author, or authors, decide to enfold the middle of the book with a beginning and ending written in another language?

The most plausible explanation which I have seen is that in the portion of the book which is written in Aramaic, the author was describing the frailty of human kingdoms. This material may well have been written in Aramaic because that was a language which would

have been understood by the very rulers who were to be overthrown. Other prophets aimed their words more directly at the people of God. Daniel wrote as much for the heathen rulers as he did for his own kinsmen.

There are many picky arguments made by so-called scholars. Many of these arguments are designed more for the exhibition of the mental powers of the scholar than for the explanation of the Word of God.

## **V. Author of the Book**

The author of the book is Daniel. He repeatedly uses the phrase, "I Daniel." Such use of the first person is found in 7:2, 15; 8:1, 15, 27; 9:2, 22; 10:1, 2, 7, 11, 12; and 12:5. Some have pointed out that the first person is not used in the first half of the book. They consider this proof of more than one author. This is hardly conclusive evidence. It is not unusual for a writer to switch from the first person to third person and then move back again. The person who has confidence in the scriptures will find no difficulty in this at all. Daniel says, "I, Daniel." I leave it at that.

I refer you again to the fact that Christ acknowledge Daniel to be the author. In Christ's statement, he speaks of Daniel as having written a book, and as being a prophet.

## **VI. The Date of Writing**

Conservative scholars agree in placing the date of writing sometime during the life of Daniel. This would mean somewhere between 605 B.C. and 520 B.C. Leupold suggests a date between 538 and 528 B.C. Many other conservatives appear to agree with this time slot.

The liberal scholars believe the book was written about



166 or 167 B.C. in the time of the Macabees. They believe they can see the character of Antiochus Epiphanes in both the descriptions of Darius and Nebuchadnezzar.

There are three basic arguments made by the critics who favor the latter day. First, there is the linguistic argument. The Aramaic used in Daniel is said to be in the style of the second century rather than that of the sixth century before Christ. If this is true, it is still not definite proof the book was written at the late date. It could well be that revisions were made bringing the language into the style at the time of the revision.

The second argument is historical. The Jews placed the book in the hagiography or holy writings rather than in the prophets. Those who favor the later date see this as an indication that the book was composed in the time of the writings rather than in the time of the prophets. Yet, some of the writings are also very ancient. This is a very weak case.

The third argument is theological. Those who hold out for this argument have made the assumption that predictive prophecy is impossible. Since the book of Daniel describes events which occurred later than the sixth century, these critics are convinced it must have been written later than that time. However, if one refuses to accept predictive prophecy, it would be wise to spend his time in other pursuits than Bible study. The heart of the Bible lies in the foreknowledge of Jehovah.

## **VII. The Integrity of the Book of Daniel**

The liberal critics imagine they see many glaring inconsistencies and mistakes of various kinds in the book. They find it difficult to believe a book could have a divine origin and contain numerous errors.

As an example, they would point out a contradiction

between Daniel 1:1 and Jeremiah 25:1. Daniel 1:1 says Jehoiakim submitted to Nebuchadnezzar in Jehoiakim's third year. Jeremiah 25:1 says the submission occurred in Jehoiakim's fourth year. The answer lies in the fact that the two references are talking about two different things. One is the formal submission of Jehoiakim. The other deals with the destruction of the temple and the city.

Some wonder why Daniel is not mentioned in literature outside the Bible. If he was such an important person in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, they feel his name should be found in many other places. Yet, these same persons would hardly deny the historicity of Jesus Christ, and his name is barely mentioned in extra-Biblical literature.

The pagan writer, Porphyry, wrote many books against Christianity. Porphyry attacked the book of Daniel. This is cited as evidence against it. Porphyry is dead. The Messiah whom Daniel predicted is resurrected and ruling from the throne of God today. I prefer to take the side of the Saviour.

## **VIII. Purpose of the Book**

There can be little discussion over the purpose of the book. God's people are suffering. They agonize over their condition while heathen powers seem to be healthy and growing ever stronger. But, there is an answer. It is the same as that found in the 37th Psalm. Fret not thyself because of evil-doers. They shall be cut off and the righteous shall inherit the earth.

God has a remnant. He will use them to overcome every enemy.



## **IX. Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls**

Several fragments from the book of Daniel were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Qumran community. Here is a short list.

- One containing Daniel 1:10-17 and 2:2-6
- One containing Daniel 3:22-30
- One containing Daniel 2:19-35
- One containing Daniel 7:28-8:1
- One containing Daniel 8:16-17, 20-21;  
10:8-16; 11:33-36, 38

There are some who believe these fragments, though small, are important in that they could reach back to less than a century from the original writing of the Biblical book.

## **X. Outline of the Book.**

### Chapter 1

- A. Daniel and his friends are taken as captives to Babylon.
- B. They are give special treatment by the king.

### Chapter 2

- A. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream about a great image.
- B. Daniel gives the interpretation of the dream.

### Chapter 3

- A. The king orders everyone to bow before a golden image.
- B. Daniel's friends refuse to bow and are cast into the fiery furnace.

Chapter 4

- A. Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a great tree which is hewn down.
- B. Daniel gives the interpretation of the dream.

Chapter 5.

- A. Belshazzar sees part of a hand writing upon the wall.
- B. Daniel interprets the writing as the downfall of Babylon.

Chapter 6

- A. King Darius is trapped into making a foolish decree.
- B. Daniel is cast into a den of lions for praying to Jehovah.

Chapter 7

- A. Daniel sees a vision of four beasts.
- B. The interpretation of the four beasts is given.

Chapter 8

- A. Daniel sees a vision of a ram and a he-goat.
- B. The interpretation of the vision is given.

Chapter 9

- A. Daniel offers a prayer of confession for himself and his people.
- B. God answers with a prophecy of seventy heptads.

Chapter 10

- A. Daniel has a vision of the latter days.
- B. Daniel's reaction to the vision is given.

Chapter 11

- A. Division of the Persian empire is predicted.
- B. Great conflict occurs between the kings of the north and the south.

Chapter 12

- A. Times of great tribulation lie ahead.
- B. An order of events is predicted.
- C. Resurrection, reward and punishment are foretold.



## *Chapter 1*

**DAN 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.**

The first chapter of Daniel builds the foundation for that which is to follow in the rest of the book. Daniel will interpret dreams and visions of Nebuchadnezzar and others. His ability to do this is explained by the events recorded in this chapter. This unity of the book has been a matter of concern to the liberal scholars who would like to attribute the work to multiple authors.

The third year of the reign of Jehoiakim occurred in 605 B.C. God had become exasperated with the behavior of his people. He had sent prophet after prophet to warn them of the consequences of rebellion. They had not responded to the warnings. First, the northern kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Then, after giving Judah the opportunity of seeing her sister nation punished, God sent Jeremiah to tell his people he was sending Nebuchadnezzar to take them captive also. It would be useless to resist. The simplest thing to do would be surrender and take their medicine. The leaders of Judah considered Jeremiah to be a traitor for his pronouncements. They should have listened. Jeremiah's words were true.

Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah. When Josiah died on the battlefield while trying to intervene in the march of the Egyptians toward the north, the people chose Jehoahaz to replace him. This did not last long. Pharaoh-Necho deposed Jehoahaz and replaced him with Jehoiakim who was his brother, and thus also a son of Josiah. Jehoiakim began his reign in 608 B.C. and reigned for eleven years. It was in 605 B.C. that Nebuchadnezzar

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marched through the land as Jeremiah had predicted would happen. This verse indicates the event occurred in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign.

Too much has been made of a supposedly conflicting statement by Jeremiah that this event took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. This difference is probably explained by the fact that Jehoiakim came to the throne toward the latter part of a year. Jeremiah may have counted this as a year while Daniel discounted it and counted the first year of Jehoiakim as his first full year.

DAN 1:2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

This verse is important in that it prepares us for a better understanding of the drunken feast which takes place in chapter five when Belshazzar uses the vessels of the temple for drinking wine. Nebuchadnezzar had taken these vessels to his own land and placed them in the treasury of his own god. The god was no doubt Marduk who is mentioned later in the book.

Shinar is first mentioned in the scriptures in Genesis 10:10 where it is used to speak of Babylon. This is good evidence that the book of Daniel was written at the earlier date rather than in the time of the Macabees when the name Shinar would not have been as likely to have been used.

On a trip to Istanbul I had the opportunity to see a magnificent display of treasure, consisting of gold and other precious jewels. One is made to wonder if some of this gold originated in Egypt and was carried into the

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wilderness by the Israelites, used in the tabernacle, then in the temple of Solomon, and finally moved into the regions of Iran and Turkey from Babylon. I am aware that some of these vessels were carried with the people when they returned after the seventy years. Yet, I wonder if some of that gold could have been retained in Babylon.

**DAN 1:3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;**

King Nebuchadnezzar knew he had some fine specimens of humanity included in the group of captives. It has been the practice of effective leaders to surround themselves with capable assistants. The king has been in the practice of training the best of his own countrymen to be wise men in the court. Now he has a new source of talent.

Does this verse mean Daniel and his friends were of noble birth and descendants of royalty, or does it only mean they were selected to be trained along with others chosen from among the nobility of the Babylonians? I do not know. Whichever of these is true, Daniel and his friends were to keep company with the best educators and the best students the king was able to gather together.

They were placed under the care of Ashpenaz, the master of the eunuchs. This may mean we are seeing the fulfilment of the prophecy made by Isaiah. Hezekiah had boastfully shown the men from Babylon everything which was in the king's house. Isaiah informed him that was a mistake and predicted dire results.

*2Kings 20:16-18 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that*

*is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.*

Daniel and his friends were then placed under the supervision of the master of the eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon. This seems more than coincidental. Some point out that some such as Joseph's master in Egypt were called eunuchs, even though married. The word eunuch seems to have had some broader meaning than its primary one; a castrated man. Still, the prophecy and the present event seem to fit like hand in glove.

There are other objections to seeing Daniel as having been castrated. The next verse indicates that the ones chosen were to be without blemish. Certainly castration would be considered a blemish by the Jews. One who had been wounded in the stones or had his privy member cut off could not enter into the temple of God. He was blemished. In answer it might be pointed out that the Babylonians may not have considered castration to be a blemish. Another consideration is that in dealing with livestock, a castrated animal becomes much less aggressive and tends to gain weight and become stodgy. This might well have worked against the purposes of the king who needed the most alert individuals he could muster.

There seems to be proof in the records of the Babylonians that such training began about the fourteenth year and continued for a period of three years. If Daniel was fourteen at the time, it does seem a little late for castration, which would normally have been done before puberty.

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DAN 1:4 Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

Those chosen for the king's training were to be intellectually superior. Three words are used here. Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge. Understanding requires insight into abstract matters. These young men were to be capable of learning facts, analyzing those facts and applying the information accurately. They were to be impressive in both physical and mental attributes if they were to serve in close proximity to the king.

DAN 1:5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

It was common for the officials of the king's court to partake of the choice food appointed for the king. These trainees were to be given every opportunity to develop both physically and mentally. They were to be the close assistants of the king himself. He wanted only the best. For three years they were to be cultivated for such service. Few persons in the land would receive such favors.

DAN 1:6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

The use of the word children here does not mean they were of tender age. It simply indicates they were descendants of the tribe of Judah. Their names are

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Jewish names and each name is related to Jehovah in some manner. The “el” ending of Daniel and Mishael are derivatives of the word elohim. The “iah” on the names of Hananiah and Azariah are derivatives of the word Yahweh.

- Daniel — God is Judge.
- Mishael — Who is what God is?
- Hananiah — Yahweh has been gracious.
- Azariah — Yahweh has helped.

**DAN 1:7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.**

Religion was very much a part of the lives of both the Babylonians and the Jews. Names of children usually carried religious significance. The prince of the eunuchs apparently decided the Jewish names, which gave glory to Jehovah, were not appropriate in the land of Babylon. He gave them new names which honored the Babylonian gods, or at least removed the references to Jehovah. The meanings of the new names were:

- Belteshazzar — Bel protects his life.
- Shadrach — The command of Aku.
- Meshach — Who is this?
- Abednego — Servant of the god Nabu.

The prince of the eunuchs probably felt all was in order. Everything was moving in the direction of service to the king of Babylon. Education was ready to begin. Names had been altered to fit the situation. Food and



drink were ready for insuring that both the minds and the bodies of the trainees would be molded as desired.

**DAN 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.**

Here is a mark of tremendous maturity for a youth of the age of these four Jews. If we are correct that they were about fourteen, we must stand in awe of this kind of faith.

Daniel and his friends felt they would be defiled before Jehovah if they ate from the table of the king. This probably had little to do with the fact that the king was serving meat. It more likely dealt with the fact that the food was related to idol worship. Often the pagans would offer a portion of food to the idol god, and would then eat the rest of it in honor of the god. Daniel would have wanted no part of such activities. His God was Jehovah.

**DAN 1:9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.**

This is the second time within ten verses that we are told God was working behind the scenes. In verse two, we were told God gave Jehoiakim into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. We will find this pattern reappearing many times before we conclude our study of this book. It was not happenstance which had placed the Jews in the land of Babylon. God had predicted it would happen. He would use it for his purposes, and then he would

see that his people were released and allowed to return to Palestine. The Saviour was to come from the Jews. Jehovah was not through with them.

There are many similarities in the lives of Daniel and Joseph. Both are prime examples of what God can do with faithful men. The reader will remember that Joseph was brought into favor with his supervisors on more than one occasion. The same is true of Daniel.

This time Daniel is favored by the prince of the eunuchs. This allowed the entire scenario to develop. If this had not been true, Daniel could not have refrained from eating the king's food. God is able to care for those who are called according to his purposes.

I recently read a debate between a homosexual and a faithful preacher of the Word of God. The homosexual was determined to find justification for his sinful behavior. He had found a number of places in the scripture where it said one man loved another. In each case he interpreted this to mean the two men had sexual relationships with one another. One of the references he used was this one. The prince of the eunuchs is said to have had a tender love toward Daniel. What blasphemy it is to twist that which is holy into a defence for the filth of homosexual sin! Cannot two men have a tender love for one another without expressing that love in illicit sex. No truth in the Bible is clearer than God's hatred for sodomy and homosexuality.

The affection of the eunuch for Daniel was upright and unrepachable.

**DAN 1:10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.**

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The prince of the eunuchs had his orders from the king. Daniel's request that he not partake of the king's food could not be honored without risking the wrath of the king. If the eunuch altered the diet of the four Hebrews and they fell behind the other trainees in their development, the king might well investigate the reasons and the prince of the eunuchs could lose his life.

The prince of the eunuchs had genuine reason to fear such consequences. Nebuchadnezzar was capable of dishing out very severe punishment to those who opposed him. Later, when the three Hebrews refused to bow down before an idol, the king flew into a rage and had them cast into a fiery furnace. The prince of the eunuchs was wise to use caution in disobeying him.

DAN 1:11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

Daniel had been appealing to the prince of the eunuchs before. Now, it seems he turns to a subordinate. The word Melzar is a bit vague in the Hebrew. Daniel has a plan. His suggestion will assure those who have him under supervision that they will not find themselves in danger.

DAN 1:12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

Daniel's request is for a very short period of time. Surely, this would not be sufficient deprivation that the king would find serious damage because of the change in diet. Yet, Daniel is fully persuaded it is enough time for a demonstration of the wisdom of the plan which he has suggested.

What was pulse? There are various suggestions. The simplest one seems to be to turn to the literal meaning of the Hebrew word. It means "that which is sown." This would clearly limit it to vegetation rather than animal products. Does this indicate all men should go to a vegetarian diet to be acceptable to God? It does not. Peter was told to consider the animals which were let down in the sheet to be clean (Acts 10:10-15). The very fact that God has given a classification of clean and unclean meat is proof that animal products are not forbidden in general.

By limiting their diet to vegetables, the four Hebrews were avoiding the food which had been sacrificed to idols, and thereby protecting themselves from defilement in honoring an idol.

Recently, I have recently studied with a Seventh Day Adventist gentleman. When I asked him about God classifying some meat products as clean, he admitted that if a doctor were to tell him to eat meat for his health, he would do so and would not consider this to be a sin. He simply felt it was expedient to eat only vegetables.

DAN 1:13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

At the end of the ten days, Melzar was to examine the four and see if they had suffered any damage when compared with the rest of the group. If they were less healthy, Melzar could take whatever action he deemed necessary.

If Christians today had the faith of a grain of mustard seed, they would be able to stand before the pressures of the day. Admittedly, we do not have the opportunity to see

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the power of God operating in as direct a fashion as Daniel and his friends. On the other hand, we have centuries and centuries of history to examine. The hammers of the atheists lie useless in the grave. The anvil of God's promises continues undaunted. Let us take a lesson from the faith of this great servant of God.

**DAN 1:14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.**

Melzar realized he was in a safe position. Daniel's request was to be honored. In ten days he was to view the entire situation and make a decision as to further directions.

I have found this to be an excellent example of what scientists call a controlled experiment. It becomes increasingly difficult to even mention the Bible in a public school classroom. However, I think it would be difficult for opponents of Christianity to accuse one of proselyting if they make use of this little experiment. Scientists like to keep all of the factors in a situation constant except for one cause and effect relationship. They then vary the one cause and watch to see what the effect will be. Daniel's friends were to be different from the rest of the group only in the matter of avoiding the king's food. Then the effect of altering that cause was to be looked at.

I think it would be wise for Bible class teachers to recognize the nature of this experiment and utilize its teaching value in showing possible harmony between science and the scriptures.

**DAN 1:15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.**

The results must have been amazing to Melzar. Rather than suffering a loss of energy and fine appearance, Daniel and his friends were healthier and more attractive than the rest of the selectees who had feasted on the food from the kings's table.

There is a slight problem in the phrasing of the issue. Today, we like fat pigs and fat beef cattle, but we are not all that enamored with fat people. Most of us would rather not be labeled as fat. The answer lies in the change of meaning of the word fat. Often in the Bible, the word refers to a general healthy appearance rather than an excessive amount of weight. The fat was the best part of an animal. It was the fat which God expected to be offered to him.

**DAN 1:16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.**

Since no harm had been done by the change of diet, Melzar felt comfortable in permanently switching their diet to pulse and water. They must have rejoiced in escaping from a very difficult problem.

When God gives directions for his children, he is faithful to provide the support needed for following those directions. There are many commands God has given to men in the Christian age. We would do well not to shrug these command off as impossible. God will see that we are enabled to accomplish the tasks he has placed before us.

**DAN 1:17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.**





Now we come to the heart of the matter. All four of the Hebrew youths are given exceptional skill in both factual information and in applying that information. There is a difference between wisdom and understanding. One may possess excellent memory and comprehension, and at the same time fail miserably in the application of that information. The Hebrews had both understanding and wisdom.

Notice that this verse does not say Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were gifted with the same abilities as Daniel. It seems that in addition to the wisdom and understanding which they had, Daniel was also able to interpret visions and dreams. This ability will be applied several times before our study of this book is completed.

**DAN 1:18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.**

At the end of the three year period of education, the trainees were to stand for examination to see how well they had fared. Melzar now seems to have faded from the picture, and the prince of the eunuchs is to bring them in for presentation to the king. It is my contention that the four Hebrews were supremely confident that they would be approved by the king. God's people need not tremble under scrutiny.

**DAN 1:19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.**

Success! Not only did the four pass the examination by the king. They stood at the head of the class. Now why was this true. Was it because of the vegetarian diet which they had consumed? I do not know that a vegetarian diet would lead to a lack of health. However, the reason these four were found so able was that God had rewarded them for abstaining from defilement in eating meat which had been offered to idols.

Because of their commitment to God, they were in position to take positions of authority in the land.

**DAN 1:20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.**

The gap between the condition of the four Hebrews and the rest of the group was not just marginal. They were superior by a factor of ten. The king's magicians and astrologers were left in the dust by their abilities.

Later, we will find that the king called for his magicians and astrologers rather than asking for the assistance of the four. Sceptics again rejoice that they have found food for ridicule of the veracity of the Bible. They need not be so smug. Those in authority often show just such voids of judgment. It would have been wise had the king recalled the superiority of these four when he needed such help. The Bible indicates he did not. Let us accuse the king of folly rather than criticize the truthfulness of the Word of God.

**DAN 1:21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.**

The chapter closes with a statement that Daniel was still around in the first year of Cyrus. This meant

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Daniel held important positions in the land of Babylon throughout the entire period of the captivity. He served under Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus.

Our friends with the microscopes focus upon another supposed contradiction between this verse and a statement found in 10:1. There it is found that Daniel was still alive in the third year of Cyrus. The problem with their criticism is that this verse does not say Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus. It simply tells that he was still alive in that year. The first year of Cyrus is a very important year in the history of Israel. Cyrus was the one who issued the decree for them to return to their own land and take the vessels of the temple with them. Daniel lived through the entire seventy year period of the captivity.

This first chapter has roots from which the other eleven chapters of the book will draw nourishment. The honest student will see the book of Daniel for what it truly is; a unified presentation of God's future plans for not only release from Babylonian captivity, but for release of all the faithful from the bondage of sin through the sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah.

Chapter 2

DAN 2:1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

The critics again bark at this verse. According to 1:5, the four Hebrews were supposed to undergo a three year period of training under the supervision of the prince of the Eunuchs. If this began in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, it would not have been completed until the fourth year. Now, we find events taking place in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign which appear to have occurred after the four have appeared before him and passed their test with flying colors.

The answer — In Daniel 1:1 we are told that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. If Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon and entered their training period in Jehoiakim's third year we could have portions of three years involved by the latter part of Nebuchadnezzar's second year.

There is also some unnecessary concern over whether Nebuchadnezzar dreamed one dream, or several dreams. What difference does it make? If he dreamed several dreams and his anxiety came about because of one of those dreams, we have a perfect fit to the account as given. It is probable that the king was concerned daily over his future. He had achieved a place of great glory and power. Was he to continue in that influential position, or was he in danger of being replaced by another. The dream he asked to be interpreted may well have been a particularly vivid one which troubled him excessively.

At any rate, he woke from his sleep and found himself in a state of great concern.

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**DAN 2:2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.**

We have already seen that the king had a class of highly able men trained in all of the wisdom of the Babylonians. They were at his beck and call at all time. If he was unable to solve a problem, he could turn to them for assistance. He was in just such a position. Therefore, he called four groups of wise men to alleviate his difficulties. We need to pause for a moment to explore the nature of each of these groups.

The magicians of those days were men who had enough knowledge of the world around them to deceive the common people. We see this happening during the plagues of Egypt. See Exodus 7 and 8.

The astrologers were very likely individuals who claimed to have divine inspiration in making predictions through the study of the positions of the stars and planets in the heavens.

The sorcerers are an interesting class, as used in the scriptures. Here in Daniel 2:2 the Hebrew word which is translated as sorcerers is mechashephim. Literally, it means “to whisper a spell.” In the New Testament the word sorcerer is translated from two root words in the Greek. One is magus, which we can easily see is related to our English word “magic.” The other is pharmakos, which we can also easily see is related to our English word “pharmacy.” I think we can gather from this that the sorcerers attempted to work on the mind of their clients through the use of chemicals or other means. The use of drugs to affect the human mind is as old as history. Simon the sorcerer was obviously operating in opposition to the will of God, as his story is related in Acts 8:14-24.

In Revelation 22:15, it is made clear that sorcerers will not find their way into the eternal city of God.

The Chaldeans were not simply men from the land of the Chaldees. They were a specially trained group of wise men. They had been trained in the most advanced knowledge of the Babylonian culture.

What King Nebuchadnezzar had done was to call all of what he considered the most capable wise men of his court to inquire concerning the dream which he had dreamed. These men claimed to be capable of feats beyond those of the common man. Perhaps they would give him his answer.

**DAN 2:3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.**

One particular dream had disturbed him beyond measure. He had to know more about it. Later, when we see the nature of the dream, we can well understand why his spirit was troubled. The dream had to do with his future security as ruler of the known world.

**DAN 2:4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.**

From this verse to the end of chapter 7, the language changes from Hebrew to Aramaic, or Syriac, which was the language of the Babylonians. This is strange. However, this portion of the book may well have been written with the express intention of demonstrating the insecurity of all human government, including that of the Babylonians. This would help to explain the use of the Aramaic tongue.

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The wise men will be delighted to tell the king what the dream means if he will only tell them what the dream was. Obviously, they were artists at this kind of thing. They would provide him with a quantity of double talk which would satisfy him and they could go on with other matters. The Greek oracles were famous for such pronouncements. A king would inquire as to whether or not he should enter into battle with an enemy army. The oracle would reply that if he went into battle, a great victory would be won. Then, when he was defeated, they would explain that they did not say whether the victory would be his or that of his enemy.

DAN 2:5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

The king became furious! He claimed he had forgotten the dream. But, if they were all they claimed to be, they would have no difficulty in telling him both the dream and the interpretation. If they were unable to do both, they would have proven to be fakers and the punishment would be hideous. Their arms, legs and head would be cut off and their houses would be turned into public toilets. Not a very pretty future!!

DAN 2:6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

In contrast, if they were able to tell him both the dream and the interpretation, they would be showered with valuable gifts and great honor.

He then made it clear they had better produce — immediately.

DAN 2:7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

They stalled for time. Again, they explained their willingness to give him an interpretation if they were supplied with the matter to be interpreted. They could, no doubt, have provided him with at least a dozen interpretations under those conditions.

DAN 2:8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

Nebuchadnezzar concluded that they were procrastinating in an effort to wait until he had forgotten about the whole deal.

Some believe the king had not even had a dream in the first place; that he only claimed to have had a dream in order to test his wise men. That does not harmonize with the later events in which Daniel actually does what the king was demanding. Others feel the king had experienced the dream, but only claimed to have forgotten it. This would also provide a test for the truthfulness and abilities of the wise men. If they could tell the dream, he could depend upon the interpretation. If they could not tell the dream, he would have no confidence in the interpretation.

I believe he had a dream and had forgotten much of the detail. I have had the same experience. Upon awaking, I know I have had a dream, but I can only vaguely remember it. The details are gone.

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**DAN 2:9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.**

The punishment has already been spelled out. If he does not receive a satisfactory response from the wise men, the punishment will be carried out.

Not only will he know they are presently dishonest; he will know they have been lying to him in the past.

**DAN 2:10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.**

Things are getting desperate! What is their defense to be? They decide their plea must be that the king has asked the impossible. Never has any ruler asked his wise men to do such a thing as they were being asked to do.

They have another problem. Suppose the king has had a dream and remembers what the dream was. If they tell him the dream and their telling does not agree with what he knows he has dreamed, they are still in serious trouble.

**DAN 2:11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.**

Their conclusion is that what they have been asked to do is humanly impossible. It would take superhuman

wisdom to satisfy Nebuchadnezzar. God's might be able to do these things, but god's do not speak through the bodies of men.

This is revealing. They are admitting they do not have divine inspiration. That is precisely what Daniel is later going to claim for himself.

**DAN 2:12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.**

The king is ready to carry out his decree that the wise men be dismembered and dishonored. He is not just aiming at the wise men whom he has confronted. He is prepared to kill every wise man in the land. This, of course, includes Daniel and his friends, since they have been trained in the palace of the king.

**DAN 2:13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.**

The victims must be found in every corner of the land. While the hunt is going on, the search came to the four Hebrews. Unless something occurred to alter the plans, the four of them would lose their lives.

**DAN 2:14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:**

The man in charge of seeking out and killing the wise men was Arioch, the captain of the king's guard. He was in for a surprise when he came to Daniel. Daniel had a shocking piece of information to make known.

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DAN 2:15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

Daniel's question to Arioch was, "Why is the king acting so impulsively?" This resulted in Arioch explaining the entire situation to Daniel.

DAN 2:16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

This verse makes it appear that Daniel bypassed the court manners in Babylonia and barged in to see the king without being announced. I do not think this happened. When Esther was asked by Mordecai to request that the Jews not be slain, she explained that one did not go in to see the king without being given permission to do so. If the king did not approve, even his wife might lose her life for being so presumptuous.

When we are told Daniel went in and desired of the king that he would give him time, I think we should understand that he made this request through the proper channels.

I do not know why the king was willing to allow Daniel time to go and consult with his three friends. Perhaps the providence of God is shown here.

DAN 2:17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

Daniel immediately went to his house where he met with his companions. We can see here that they were no

longer living under the supervision of the prince of the eunuchs. The four of them shared the same house.

The names used here are the Hebrew names rather than the names given by the king. Remember, those names were Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego.

DAN 2:18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel and his friends did not go into a panic. They maintained the same type of composure as Christ and the Apostle Paul did when they were under trial. The reason for such composure was their confidence in the constant care of the God of heaven and earth. If they went to him in prayer, all would be well in the end.

Their prayerful request to God is that the dream of Nebuchadnezzar be revealed to them in order that they not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

DAN 2:19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

God answered their prayer with a "Yes, right now." God does not always answer prayers in such manner. He often says, "No", "Wait a little later", or "I have made a little change." On this occasion, the answer was given in a hurry.

A night vision might or might not be a dream. Visions sometimes took place during waking hours. Let it be added that revealing truth through dreams and visions was not uncommon in the days of the prophets and of the

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apostles. Acts 2 reveals that the apostolic age would have young men seeing visions and old men dreaming dreams. Hebrews 1:1-3 reads,

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*

The Butler, the Baker and Joseph himself all had dreams, as recorded in Exodus.

**DAN 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:**

Daniel was grateful. He blessed Jehovah and desired that his name be held in honor for ever and ever. Daniel well knew that he could not have given Nebuchadnezzar satisfaction through his own abilities. It was God who deserved the credit, and Daniel saw that God received the credit.

**DAN 2:21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:**

God has control of events in this world. The years and the seasons roll by under his direction. If he desires that a king be enthroned or a president elected, he is able to see it done. If he desires that a ruler be removed from office, he can also see that done.

There is no wise man but that God provides him the

intellect to show forth his wisdom. Every man depends upon God for the next breath and the next heartbeat, as well as the next thought which he entertains. If it were not for the talent provided by Jehovah, the doctor of philosophy might well be as incapable as the severely retarded person confined in a mental home. The ability to learn and apply knowledge are gifts. They may be polished, but they are not created by man.

**DAN 2:22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.**

*God understands secrets which are beyond the power of men to search out. The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law (Deut. 29:29).*

God will reveal such information to men as he sees useful to them. In the case of Daniel and his friends, God knew the truths he made available would be properly used for his glory.

**DAN 2:23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.**

Even with Daniel's special training in the palace, he would not have been able to tell the king the dream and its interpretation without the aid of God. We should notice that at the end of his training period Daniel was said to have understanding in all dreams and visions. In

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the light of the present case, I take that to mean he had this understanding through prayer rather than being able to reveal such information on his own.

DAN 2:24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

As soon as he was able, Daniel returned to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, and urgently asked him to refrain from the slaughter of the wise men. The prayer as mentioned in verse eighteen had been that Daniel and the three companions not perish with the rest of the wise men. Since Daniel had been blessed with the secret of the king's dream, he thought of the welfare of others who were also in trouble. This is the mark of a good man.

Daniel asked that Arioch make arrangements for him to be brought before the king. He wished to reveal to the king the interpretation of his dream. This does not mention telling the king his dream itself. However, if Daniel gave the interpretation, he had to also have knowledge of the dream.

DAN 2:25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

Well, well! Arioch had found a man who could make the interpretation to the king. I think we can all understand Arioch's approach. This would not be at all unusual in the business world today, or in the world of

politics. Arioch had an opportunity to make himself look good in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar. He seized it. The truth was that Daniel had found Arioch, rather than vice versa.

At any rate, Daniel was given his audience with Nebuchadnezzar.

DAN 2:26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

The king had given Daniel the name Belshazzar. He referred to him by that name. He does not beat around the bush. Daniel had better be able to tell the king both the dream and the interpretation, and do it pronto!

There is some question as to why the king did not call Daniel and his friends in the beginning, since he had found them ten times more able than the others who were tested. It would only be natural for the king to think first about those who had been his constant advisors over many years before turning to youths who had just finished their training. Daniel and his companions may have still been in their late teens. We tend to be misled by the dignity and poise of this young man.

DAN 2:27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

Daniel's first words were an admission that there was not a wise man in the land who was able to do that which Nebuchadnezzar had asked. The request was clearly impossible for humans, no matter how able they are.

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**DAN 2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;**

However, the foolishness of God is greater than the wisdom of men. Jehovah is able to reveal the meaning of the kings's dream.

The dream had to do with those things which were to take place in the days to come. Nebuchadnezzar had begun to ponder his future. When he laid his head upon his pillow at night, he had naturally dreamed about it. God had used this occasion to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar the very things about which he had been concerned. What would happen to his kingdom in the days ahead?

Latter days is a term which varies in meaning through the Bible. It sometimes has to do with the Christian age. Other times, as it does here, it refers to days to come. At certain times, the latter days include both the days between the event and the coming of Christ, with increasing emphasis upon the Christian age. As we will see, the latter days in this case included the days of the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

**DAN 2:29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.**

Daniel stated that the dream dealt with matter which would occur in the future. God had revealed to Daniel the meaning of the dream and he was ready to make this information known to the king.

**DAN 2:30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.**

At that point Daniel was prepared to present the secret of the king's dream. However, he had to first make it absolutely certain that his ability to do this was not his own. He was doing it through the power of the God of heaven.

Notice the difference between what Daniel did here in comparison with the behavior of Herod when the people cried out that he must be a god, since he had delivered such a great oration. Herod received the glory which did not deserve and was struck dead and eaten by the worms. Daniel gave the credit to God and God gave him honor and glory. God is able to abase the proud and to exalt the humble.

Daniel included his companions with himself in the delivery of the information. He told the king God had provided the interpretation as a means of protecting him and his friends. Certainly more was involved than this protection. Through the centuries, men have observed the unrolling of God's plans for his Kingdom, just as he had predicted through his prophet, Daniel. The information also prepared the heathen kingdoms for their downfall.

**DAN 2:31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.**

The king had dreamed of a monstrous statue. The word "statue" seems more appropriate than image. The

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description is that of a statue rather than a picture. We are not told just how large this statue was; only that it was great. It was extremely bright, perhaps polished to a fine lustre. The king had been awed by its appearance.

It is important that this vision was in the form of a man with head breast, arms, belly, thighs, legs and feet. This will take on greater meaning as we move forward through the chapter. We are talking about temporal human kingdoms. These human kingdoms were to be contrasted with the everlasting Kingdom of God.

DAN 2:32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

Each major portion of the statue was made of a different material. As one moved downward the materials became less expensive; first gold, then silver, then brass and finally iron and clay.

DAN 2:33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

Each of these materials had a special significance in the interpretation of the meaning of the dream.

DAN 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

While Nebuchadnezzar gazed at the wondrous statue in great awe, a stone, which had not been formed by human hands, appeared and struck the image in the feet, breaking them into pieces.

DAN 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Not only were the feet broken; the entire statue was broken to pieces. These were not large chunks, as we might expect. The pieces were so fine as to be like the chaff from threshed wheat. After the crushing took place, the wind carried them away and they ceased to exist.

But that was far from the end of the dream. The stone which had crushed the image then began to grow into a great mountain and filled the entire earth.

DAN 2:36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

Daniel concluded his revelation. This was the part the wise men of the land were unable to do because only the gods were able to do such things, and the gods did not dwell in flesh.

They were right on one count and wrong on another. No human, without the help of Jehovah, could do what Daniel had done. However, Jehovah had spoken through the mouth of Daniel and revealed the secret of the king's dream. We are also reminded that Jesus Christ is described in John's account of the gospel as "the Word which became flesh and dwelt among us."

Since the dream had been made clear, Daniel was then ready to give the king the meaning of his dream. This meaning was not only important to Nebuchadnezzar; it is

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extremely important to all men of all the ages. We proceed to Daniel's explanation of the meaning of the dream.

**DAN 2:37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.**

Daniel spoke the truth. This was not flattery. Nebuchadnezzar was a powerful ruler who had conquered one king after another. He could correctly be called a king of kings. This in no way makes him the equal of Jesus Christ whom God himself labels King of kings and Lord of lords.

It was added immediately that the reason Nebuchadnezzar held such a position of power was that it was given him by the Almighty. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Nebuchadnezzar's introduction that fact of life was only beginning at that point in time.

**DAN 2:38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.**

Statements like this must take into consideration the fact that the known world where men dwelt in the days of Nebuchadnezzar did not include either the Orient or the New World. Nevertheless, he was the ruler over both man and beast in the world with which he was acquainted.

The head of the statue which he had seen in his dream was made of gold. It represented his own Babylonian kingdom. Gold is the most desirable material of the various ones composing the entire image. The kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest of the group.

I find it notable that Assyria was not included in the parts of the statue. If this statue was to represent the great human empires, it would seem that Assyria fit the definition. Probably the reason it was not included is that the statue was to represent only those empires from Nebuchadnezzar to the Kingdom of God.

**DAN 2:39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.**

Daniel did not identify the empire which was to follow Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian regime. However, the identification is made later in the book when, in chapter eight, the second of the kingdoms is said to be the Medes and Persians.

Daniel was to live to see the beginning of the Medo-Persian dominance. The book of Esther has its setting during this period of time. Darius and Cyrus were rulers of note. The metal representing Greece is silver. Silver is less decorative than gold, but may represent an emphasis upon economic strength.

The third kingdom, as identified in the eighth chapter of the book, is Greece. This kingdom was represented by brass. I believe we can see a steadily decreasing emphasis upon beauty and a steadily increasing emphasis upon power, as we move from the head to the feet of this statue or image. Alexander the Great was to extend his empire over an even greater portion of the earth than either the Babylonians or the Medes and Persians.

**DAN 2:40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces**

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and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

The fourth kingdom is not identified by name, either in this second chapter, or later in the book of Daniel. Because of this, there have been numerous suggestions as to its identity. However, I think these suggestions may be discounted because verse forty-four tells us the everlasting kingdom will be set up in the days of these kings. The everlasting Kingdom is the Kingdom, of God. It was established in the days of the Roman emperors. Thus the feet and toes of the statue must represent the Roman empire.

Rome was much better known for its tremendous military strength than for its riches. The Romans crushed any opposition quickly and completely when they were at the height of their power.

DAN 2:41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

Verse forty-one and forty-two contrast the strength and the weakness of the Roman Empire. Verse forty-one emphasizes the strength of the iron. For a long period of time this strength was evident.

DAN 2:42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

The time came, however, when Rome had extended itself beyond its ability to unify its government. It

crumbled from both within and without. Morality declined and lethargy set in. Invaders wreaked havoc in various parts of the empire.

DAN 2:43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

There were attempts to solidify the empire through intermarriage with the people of the areas where difficulty had arisen. The efforts were unsuccessful. The iron strength of the Romans was weakened by the character of the nations whom they desired to integrate.

I believe the divided state of the toes is not an indication of the exact number of nations developing from the Roman Empire. It is more likely simply a picture of many powers existing side by side rather than one single unified force. It may well be that the toes of the image are still with us today as remnants of the once great power of Rome.

DAN 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Then Daniel revealed that in the days of these kings, the God of heaven was to set up his Kingdom which would never be destroyed. The question then is, What is meant by "these kings." Were these kings the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks and the Romans? Or, were they only the kings represented by the feet of the image?

I believe the intention is to say that in the days of the kings represented by the iron and the clay, the God of

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heaven was to set up his everlasting kingdom. Each of the previous kingdoms had fallen to another. Even the last of these kings was to be supplanted. The difference was that the final supplanter would be an eternal kingdom which would never see another take its place.

Still, we must recognize that the entire image was broken in pieces by the stone which was cut out without hands. Even though it struck the image in the feet, it was to break the entire image into pieces and consume them. It must be that some characteristics of each of the previous kingdoms had found their way into the succeeding kingdoms. It seems to me that the overriding characteristic is to be found in the fact that the entire statue was that of a man. All of the world empires represented by the image were based upon human wisdom and power. When the stone, cut out without human hands, and thus representing divine wisdom and power, struck the image in its feet, it also demolished the entire structure built with human hands.

The student of the scriptures should quickly recollect the words of Revelation 11:15 where we read, And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

We also need to skip a few chapters of the book to chapter seven where we read the following words in verses eighteen and twenty-seven:

*But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever (Dan. 7:18).*

*And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to*

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the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him (Dan. 7:27).

A number of other passages may be related. For example:

Isa 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Zech 9:10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Rev 20:1-4 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

I would also refer the reader to Psalm 37 which repeatedly speaks of a time when the blessed meek shall inherit the earth. Has that time come??

There was clearly a time to come after Daniel in

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which a great victory would be won by the Saints of God. However, there is great difficulty in determining whether that time came with the victory of Christ over the principalities and powers at the time of his crucifixion, whether it came with the establishment of the church, or whether there is still a great change to come between our own day and the coming of Christ, as men respond to the preaching of the gospel in large numbers. I personally believe the wonderful picture presented by such scriptures as those above has not yet been realized on this earth. I look for a very much brighter day for God's children before Christ returns.

**DAN 2:45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.**

These must have been strange words to the mighty king of Babylon. His kingdom would fall. Three others would also follow his and fall. But one would come which would not fall. The one whose kingdom would not fall was the very one who had given Daniel the secret of the king's dream.

Daniel spoke with absolute surety. There is a king far greater than Nebuchadnezzar. It is he who rules in the affairs of men. Nebuchadnezzar had only begun to grasp the significance of that truth.

**DAN 2:46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.**

Nebuchadnezzar was overcome! He fell on his face and proceeded to worship Daniel. He commanded that sacrifices be made to Daniel as a representative of this great ruler of heaven and earth.

There has been harsh criticism of the integrity of the book at this point. The point is that if Daniel was the man he is represented to be, he would have immediately reprimanded the king for falling before him in worship. We do not know that Daniel did not do just that. John the apostle was told to rise when he attempted to worship an angel. Paul and Barnabas rebuked those who would have treated them as gods. I suspect Daniel did speak out without the fact having been recorded. Certainly he had made it clear before this that it was not he who was able to do these things. It was the God of heaven. Nebuchadnezzar knew!

**DAN 2:47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.**

This verse proves that Nebuchadnezzar was really attempting to worship Daniel's God rather than Daniel himself. He praises Jehovah as supreme among the gods and ruler over the mighty men of the earth. This was just a beginning for Nebuchadnezzar. At this point, Jehovah is still only one among many. Nebuchadnezzar was still a polytheist. Later, he would come closer and closer to monotheism.

**DAN 2:48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.**

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The king had issued terrible warnings as to what would happen to the wise men if they failed to tell him his dream and its interpretation. He had also promised great rewards to them if they could do as he asked. He was then ready to keep his promise. He showered gifts upon Daniel's head and made him ruler over the province of Babylon.

This does not mean Daniel was equal in power to Nebuchadnezzar. He was probably set over only one province which was called Babylon. The next verse tells us Daniel still had to request positions of influence for his three Hebrew friends.

DAN 2:49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were honored with high level appointments in the province. However, they were not as exalted as Daniel. He was privileged to sit in the gate of the king. I believe we can say Daniel had control over who entered in to see the king. As ruler of the province and chief of the governors of the wise men, Daniel had a position of tremendous power. The influence of Jehovah would most certainly be felt in the land of the Hebrew captivity.

Chapter 3

DAN 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

We do not know how much time passed between the close of chapter two and the beginning of chapter three. Some believe the time was quite short and that the construction of the image of gold was the direct result of the information supplied through Daniel that the head of gold in the king's dream represented the Babylonian kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. According to these commentators, this information spurred Nebuchadnezzar to make a complete image of gold.

Another approach, however, is that the construction of the image took place several years after Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream, about the time his armies destroyed the city of Jerusalem. This would have provided time for his humility before the God of Daniel to be replaced by the pride shown in this present chapter. The Bible does not reveal the amount of time which passed and there is insufficient evidence to pinpoint it.

Nebuchadnezzar decided to build a monstrous image. The dimensions were approximately 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. There is much speculation that the image was that of Nebuchadnezzar himself. It was not uncommon for powerful monarchs to cause the construction of such images of themselves. As an example, the archeologists have found many images of King Rameses of Egypt. Later, certain of the Roman Emperors also had images of themselves built for self glorification. Once again, the Bible does not give the specific characteristics of the

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image, except to provide its height and width and the fact that it was made of gold.

If the image was of solid gold, the value of the gold would have been awesome. We are talking about amounts of gold which would only be found in such treasuries as Fort Knox in the United States. Perhaps the image was only plated with gold. It could still be properly called an image of gold. We do know certain articles in the temple of Jehovah were plated with gold.

The ratio between the height and the width of the image has caused controversy. It was ten times as tall as it was wide. If the entire image was that of a man, it would have been extremely distorted. A six foot tall man may well be as much as two feet wide. This would be only a three to one ratio. This has caused many to believe the image was that of a man standing on a high pedestal. Turkey today has numerous statues of their hero, Attaturk, riding a horse. The statues are on pedestals as much as twice the height of the horse and rider.

The image was set up in the plains of Dura. Dura was a fairly common name for locations in the area. The most logical location for the Dura mentioned here is about six miles south of Babylon.

**DAN 3:2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.**

Once the image was finished, the king called an impressive array of political bigwigs together for its dedication. The meanings of some of the offices represented are not quite clear. The translators made an

effort to convey the correct ideas; however, they admit they are uncertain. It does seem clear that they are all important officials in the land of Babylon.

By calling such an impressive group together, the king was taking action. He was setting forth the power and strength of his empire. He was also asking the people to honor the gods he felt were responsible for the great accomplishments of his nation. Nebuchadnezzar was not the only one to use such methods to strengthen his rulership.

**DAN 3:3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.**

There are always plenty of yes men available to fortify the ego of powerful rulers. Flattery is amazingly effective in getting favors from these potentates. Nebuchadnezzar seems to have had little difficulty in assembling those who were invited to the dedication.

It must have been an impressive sight to view the great men of the kingdom, all ready to bow down before the image.

Now we come to another quibble by the sceptics of the Bible. They wish to know just what would have happened to the order in the kingdom if all the supervisors were absent from their offices for this period of time. This would have been dangerous had Babylon had outside enemies to worry about. This was not a concern. Babylon was too powerful. Nor would the daily activities of the kingdom have suffered greatly. These men no doubt had

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underlings who could carry on in their absence for a few days while they were away.

DAN 3:4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

A messenger of the king then cried out where all could hear. His message was addressed to people who spoke more than one language. The empire covered much territory. A number of languages would be involved.

DAN 3:5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

Musical instruments of all sorts had been collected and were to be sounded out before the people. Again, the exact nature of each of the instruments is not known. Some are more certain than others. The translators tried to give us some idea of the variety present.

The names of some of the instruments, and some of the offices mentioned above, are Greek. Opponents of the early date for the writing of Daniel use this to support their position. They conclude that Daniel was written in the time period after the Greeks began to dominate the Mediterranean world. That is not a necessary conclusion. The Greek influence began to be spread before Alexander the Great conquered much of the known world.

The king had commanded that, when the musical instruments were sounded, every person was to fall down and worship the golden image. This was and is the common posture for worship in that part of the land. Today, the Muslim people kneel down and

then place their forehead upon the ground as they worship.

DAN 3:6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Anyone who chose not to honor the commandment of Nebuchadnezzar was to be thrown into a heated furnace. You simply did not question the command of a ruler like Nebuchadnezzar. He was perfectly capable of carrying out his proclaimed punishment. He had the men with enough muscle to overcome the rebels, and Nebuchadnezzar had no concern at all about the value of their lives.

DAN 3:7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

The people did as they were commanded. The question now is, were they worshipping Nebuchadnezzar by bowing down before his image? Were they worshipping his gods Marduk and Bel? Were they worshipping both Nebuchadnezzar and his gods? Or, were they simply demonstrating their loyalty to the great kingdom of Babylon?

I believe it was a combination of several things. The people of the various nations worshipped gods peculiar to those nations. They believed the welfare of the their nation was in the hands of those gods. Nebuchadnezzar felt that his success was due to the power of his gods. As the people bowed themselves down before the great

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image, they were recognizing Nebuchadnezzar as a representative of the national gods. They were also indirectly worshipping those gods by worshipping the image.

**DAN 3:8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.**

The three Jews were in real trouble! Certain Chaldeans had been carefully watching the actions of Daniel, Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego from the time they were elevated to positions of influence. There were two reasons for their concern. One was that these men were foreigners. The other was that they had been put in high positions over the other wise men, and probably at a very tender age.

They had finally found the ammunition they needed to demolish the hated Jews.

**DAN 3:9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.**

This is the same praise as that given in England, "Long live the king." The statement did not hurt the plotters chances of getting their wishes accomplished when they spoke humbly before him.

**DAN 3:10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:**

Nebuchadnezzar was reminded that he had made a decree that all should bow before the golden image, and

had specified the punishment which was to be meted out in case there were any who refused to do so.

**DAN 3:11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**

The fiery furnace was apparently active and ready in case there were objectors. The king had spoken. The consequences were certain.

**DAN 3:12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.**

Did the king by any chance remember those pesky Jews whom he so unwisely set in places of prominence? The Chaldeans were very nearly scolding the king for lack of judgment in appointing such men to the positions they were given. It was just as they had suspected. The Jews had no respect for the king, for his kingdom or for the gods who had given them such greatness. They had refused to obey the order to bow down. In doing so, they had insulted both the king and his gods.

**DAN 3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.**

Nebuchadnezzar was furious. How could these Jews have been so ungrateful? He had honored them with high

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places. They enjoyed the benefits of the kingdom. In his eyes, if they had truly refused to bow down, they had made themselves rebellious traitors.

He commanded that they be brought before him immediately to stand for investigation.

DAN 3:14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

The king was ready to give them the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps there was some misunderstanding. He was willing to give them one more chance. He has but one question. Was it really true that they had refused to bow down? Had they deliberately and purposefully opposed his decree?

DAN 3:15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

The musical instruments were to be sounded again. If the three Jews would bow down, their lives would be spared. If they persisted in their opposition, they would be cast into the fiery furnace within the hour. When that took place, the king will find out if their God was sufficiently strong to prevent them from being punished. If so he would deliver them from the furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar should have known better. Pharaoh

had asked much the same question. When God demanded that he release the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage, he wished to know the nature of any God who would challenge his own will and power. When the king of Assyria sent his armies to Jerusalem, his general Rabshakeh informed the Israelites that Sennacherib had run rough-shod over every god who interfered with him. They need not expect Jehovah to successfully oppose him.

DAN 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

There is no way we can be certain about the tone of voice used by the three Hebrews in their reply. Some have seen insolence. Others are convinced there was simply confident trust in Jehovah. I believe they were speaking with the same calm which Jesus possessed when he asked the soldiers in Gethsemane why they had come with spears and staves. I see no insolence; only a calm and confident statement of fact.

To say they were not careful to answer Nebuchadnezzar means they did not intend to hold back the truth. There was no anxiety or any need to have a lengthy consultation before responding. How different this is from the way the Chaldeans had been handling their words.

DAN 3:17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

They had extreme confidence that Jehovah was both able and willing to deliver them from the punishment the king had laid out.

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**DAN 3:18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.**

They were not doubting God’s ability to deliver them in the use of the word “if.” There could have been reasons in the mind of God that they be allowed to die in the fiery furnace. If that was so, they would accept his will. But, in either case, they made it clear, they were not ready to serve the king’s gods, or bow down before the golden image. They had been taught to say, “The Lord our God, is one God.”

**DAN 3:19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.**

This reply stirred Nebuchadnezzar to even greater heights of anger and wrath. When it states that his visage was changed, we are to understand his face turned red and it is very likely that he even gritted his teeth.

These traitors to the nation and the gods were to be shown just how foolish they were to make the choice they had made. Not only would they be thrown into the furnace. The furnace would be made as hot as it was possible to make it. I think we need not worry about them checking the temperature to see if had reached precisely seven times its normal temperature. It was to be brought to the highest heat possible.

One commentator suggested this worked against the kings’ purpose if he intended to make them suffer. Keeping the furnace at a lower temperature would have

caused a more lengthy period of suffering before they were consumed.

**DAN 3:20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.**

It was probably not necessary for the king to call upon the mightiest men in his army to bind them. Nevertheless, he did so. It may be that he wished to make absolutely sure they did not have hidden resources about which he was uninformed. An important point here is to note that they were bound before they were cast into the furnace.

**DAN 3:21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.**

Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego were among the men of high influence whom the king had commanded to come together for the dedication. Like the others, they were no doubt dressed in impressive official garments. The words which are translated as coats and hosen are uncertain. These were certainly clothing of some type.

Criminals were often stripped naked before being burned up in the furnaces. This time the clothing was left on. The urgency the king felt would have caused such a removal of clothing to be dispensed with. The clothing would only cause them to be more combustible.

**DAN 3:22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace**

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exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

I am reminded of an incident which took place while I was still in high school. An oil well had been drilled in the area. It did not produce oil. However, a considerable amount of natural gas was being emitted through the large pipe which had not been capped. There were rumors that enough gas was escaping to heat a small house. One of the high school boys decided to see if the well would act as a giant torch. He walked up to the opening of the pipe and held a lighted match to it. At first nothing happened. He decided the little experiment had fizzled. As he peered into the top of the pipe, the flame which had been sucked down into the pipe, puffed out and singed all the hair off his head. He had no hair at all afterward, nor did he have eyebrows.

Such may have happened in the case of the three Hebrews. The flames may have puffed out of the opening of the furnace just as the Chaldeans were casting the men in. We need not question the veracity of the Bible just because we find an occurrence which seems to us to be improbable.

I am also reminded of the miracle which is reported later in the book when the lions did not attack Daniel, but quickly consumed those who had attempted to destroy him.

DAN 3:23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

I have read complete details of just how this furnace was constructed. I have no confidence that the ones who have provided such detail have had the facts to draw out

such complete details. Suffice it to know the men fell down into the furnace. This could have happened, even if the door of the furnace were at ground level. They may have been cast in through a stack of some type, or they may not. But, they were bound, and they did fall down!

DAN 3:24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

Nebuchadnezzar had stationed himself in position to see what happened to the men. He fully expected to see them burned up like a piece of crumpled paper. He was utterly astonished to find they had not been consumed. Rather than having disappeared, they were now accompanied by a fourth person.

The king quickly asked his counsellors if someone had made a mistake. There were three men who had disobeyed his command. Had the men somehow included another man in the punishment? His counsellors assured him that was not the case. The king was correct in expecting to see only three men in the furnace.

DAN 3:25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Then what is going on, the king wished to know. There were four men in the furnace. In addition, the three Hebrews were no longer bound. They were not lying on the floor of the furnace. They were walking around unhurt.

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The most amazing thing of all was that the fourth man was like a son of the gods. There is debate over this last phrase. The word translated God in the King James Version is plural. This causes some to say this did not refer to the Son of God, Jesus Christ; it only indicated the person had such an impressive appearance he must be of divine nature, like Nebuchadnezzar would have imagined his own gods.

Others reply that the word translated God here is the same word used in Genesis 1:1. The word God in Genesis 1:1 is the word *elohim*, which is in the plural, and may refer to the entire Godhead. The fourth person, walking in the furnace, appeared like unto a son of *elohim*. I will refer back to this matter in the discussion of verse twenty-eight.

**DAN 3:26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.**

Nebuchadnezzar than approached the mouth of the furnace himself. Above the roar of the flames, he called for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to come out of the furnace. As soon as he called, the three exited from the flames. Take note that the king had developed a newfound respect for the God of the three Hebrews. He is now the Most High God. He is still not the only true and living God. But, he is the highest and most powerful of the gods. Nebuchadnezzar is no longer saying, "Who is that God?"

**DAN 3:27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered**

**together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.**

There were a number of witnesses to this powerful miracle. They were men of high intellect. They were princes, governors and captains, etc. God's true miracles are indisputable. They are not like the lies foisted upon the naive today. They were public and they were undeniable.

Three men had been cast into a furnace heated as hot as possible. A fourth appeared in their midst. The fire was unable to consume them. Even more, their hair had not even been singed and there was no smell of smoke on their clothing. Both the clothing and the men were unharmed.

**DAN 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.**

Nebuchadnezzar then knew a little better who that God was! He was the one who sent his angel and delivered the three Hebrews from the most powerful of kings. The king was then ready to bless that God rather than to question who he was.

Here we have a little more information regarding the fourth person who appeared in the furnace. The king speaks of him as an angel. The word angel has the meaning of messenger. We are still left wondering



whether or not this is an appearance of the True Son of God.

We do know the result of his assistance was that the three servants of Jehovah had their confidence confirmed. Nebuchadnezzar recognized that they had offered their very bodies for the God they served. By coming through the experience unharmed, they had been able to overcome the power of the king. He was ready to admit the three deserved his respect.

**DAN 3:29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.**

Nebuchadnezzar liked that little thing about cutting people into pieces and making their houses into dunghills. Previously, he had said he would treat the wise men in that manner if they were unable to tell his dream and give the interpretation. Now, he was ready to dish out the same punishment to anyone who blasphemes the God of the three Hebrews.

The reason was that there was no other god who could accomplish the feats the God of the three Hebrews could accomplish.

**DAN 3:30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.**

The king then promoted all three of the men in the province of Babylon. The word translated promoted means literally “to make to prosper.” The men were already in

extremely high positions. The king very likely made it easier for them to do their job and prevented others from harassing them.

One question which has not been dealt with is, "Where was Daniel when the three refused to bow down?" The Bible does not tell us. He could have been absent by order of the king on business. He could have also refused to bow down, just as the others had and escaped criticism because of his extremely high office. One thing is certain. Daniel proved later, he had the same kind of faith as the three who were thrown into the furnace. Let us not question his integrity now, and then praise his faith after his confrontation with the lions.

## *Chapter 4*

**DAN 4:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.**

We do not know just how much time expired between the end of chapter three and the beginning of chapter four. There is reason to think it may have been a number of years. It seems that the king's memory had been dimmed with respect to Daniel's ability in the interpretation of dreams. It is also possible that Nebuchadnezzar's pride had been fed by military triumphs and that the events of this chapter occurred late in his life.

His message is addressed to all men who dwell on the earth. As far as Nebuchadnezzar was concerned, The portions of the earth which he did not control were insignificant. From his viewpoint, no man matched his power and influence. Eastern potentates were often given to magnification of their dominion.

**DAN 4:2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.**

Jehovah had taught Nebuchadnezzar a strong lesson in humility. He had used the natural world around him to teach that lesson. Nicodemus once said to Jesus, Master, we know thou art a teacher come from God, for no man could do the miracles thou doest except God be with him (John 3:2). Nebuchadnezzar had been made aware of that same truth. There is a God in heaven. He is capable of showing many signs and wonders.

The reference to the high God is not necessarily an admission that Jehovah is the only true and living God.

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It might mean no more than that He is the highest of the God's.

Nebuchadnezzar did feel, however, a responsibility to transfer a record of the miraculous things which had happened to him to every person whom he could reach.

DAN 4:3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

The New Testament speaks often of signs, wonders and mighty deeds. These manifestations of Jehovah's power establish his unique position in both heaven and earth.

The king not only took note of the power of God; he was also willing to declare his everlasting reign. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar's reign, which would come to an end one day, the reign of Jehovah would outlast the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman empires. The British cry out, Long live the king. The subject sometimes addresses his king with the words, "O king, live forever." Only in the case of Jehovah is this true.

DAN 4:4 I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:

As the record began, Nebuchadnezzar was in a state of great comfort and tranquility. Everything seems to have been going marvelously well. He was at home in his palace.

DAN 4:5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

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Then he dreamed a dream. It was obviously a nightmarish dream. He woke up in a state of great fear. Then, as he lay awake and pondered the dream, his thoughts left him in extreme agitation. I understand the Hebrew word used here for troubled is a strong word which could be translated as panicked.

**DAN 4:6 Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.**

He did as he had done previously when Daniel gave the dream and the interpretation concerning the great image made of gold, silver, brass and iron plus clay. All of the most skillful of his advisors were called together to give him an understanding of what was going on.

**DAN 4:7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.**

I have discussed the nature of each of these classes of wise men back in chapter two. I will not repeat that information here.

This time there was a difference. The king did not tell them he had forgotten the dream. He remembered the dream and asked them only for the meaning of it. Even then they could not furnish what he asked.

**DAN 4:8 But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my God, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,**

When the rest of the wise men were unable to interpret the dream, Daniel came in. Suspicion has been cast on this record because the king did not call Daniel in before consulting the rest of the men. After all, the king had observed Daniel's superior abilities once before. Could he have so easily forgotten that experience? There are several possible explanations of this. I will mention three. First, it is possible that several years had passed since Daniel had given the interpretation of the king's dream of the great image. Second, Daniel may have been away on some type of business. Third, the interpretation of his earlier dream had not been favorable to the king. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar felt he would rather hear a more favorable interpretation this time.

We also have a question here as to why Nebuchadnezzar referred to Daniel by both his Hebrew and his Babylonian name. I am sure the king recognized it was the Hebrew God who had given Daniel his power of interpretation. Yet, the king would have known him as Belteshazzar, the name he had given to him.

**DAN 4:9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.**

Daniel, or Belteshazzar, is now called the master of the wise men. This leads me to think that either Daniel was away on business of some type, or Nebuchadnezzar hesitated to call upon him for an interpretation because he remembered the unwelcome interpretation he had received from Daniel before. If Daniel still held the title of master of the magicians, the king was aware of his abilities.



The king even confessed that Daniel was more able than others. There was no secret which was too difficult for him. The king fully believed Daniel could provide the interpretation because he had divine aid.

The reader will note that the plural “gods” is used in the King James version. There is some controversy over whether this could be rendered in the singular. If it is truly plural, Nebuchadnezzar is still manifesting his polytheistic background.

**DAN 4:10 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.**

Now Daniel is told the content of the dream. A tree growing out of the midst of the earth would certainly mean it held a prominent position. No one could fail to see it. Not only was it in a prominent spot. It was of very great height, which also made it impressive.

**DAN 4:11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:**

As the king watched, the tree grew higher and stronger until it could be seen over the entire earth. Clearly this is impossible in reality; however, in dreams many unusual things may occur.

**DAN 4:12 The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.**

The tree was beautiful to behold and it was filled with fruit. It provided sufficient nutrition for all living things. This was truly a most magnificent source of comfort and welfare for a multitude of those depending upon it.

**DAN 4:13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;**

As the king observed this wonderful tree, some type of being descended from heaven. It is called a watcher. The great tree had been seen by the divine eye. What would the watcher have to report about that which he had seen?

We need to diverge here for a moment to investigate the nature of God's watchers. I believe the watchers are angels. I present the following scripture references for your consideration. In Revelation 4:8 we find a description of four living creatures which are close around the throne of God. They seem to be ready to serve him in any way possible. Each of them is full of eyes and these eyes are never closed. They apparently watch for that which God needs to know. Someone may object that God knows all without the aid of any external assistance. We do not know that much about God. Let us accept the fact that he knows all he needs to know and not worry about just how this is achieved.

Other references include:

*Eccl. 5:6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?*

*1 Cor. 11:10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.*

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Heb. 1:13-14 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Matt. 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Such passages as these show clearly that the human race is being watched by the divine eye. Every thought, word and deed is known to Jehovah. It behooves us to keep this in mind when we are convinced we are alone and unobserved. The great tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was under the surveillance of God.

DAN 4:14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

The great and wondrous tree was to undergo extreme damage. It was no longer to provide sustenance from either its fruit or its shade. In fact, the opposite seems true. It would be wise for those who had previously been dependent upon it to flee away from it before they were endangered by its destruction.

DAN 4:15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be

wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

The tree was not to be completely demolished. Its stump was to be left. Around the stump a band of metal was to be placed, apparently to assure that it would be able to regain some of its past glory.

In this verse there is a change to the pronoun his, indicating the tree represents a man. This man is to be left to roam with the beasts of the field and to be drenched in the dew and the rain.

DAN 4:16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

The man's heart was to be changed to that of a beast. This has to do with the mind rather than the physical heart. This man will cease to think like a man and will start thinking and acting like the cattle of the fields.

This condition was to last until a set period of time passed by. Some are convinced the times here are years. At other points in the scriptures it is true that a time equals one year. One must be careful here. One thing does seem apparent. The seven times were sufficient to accomplish some desired effect in the mental condition of the man.

DAN 4:17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

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The command to hew down the tree was not just a whim. It had been issued in order that all of the living might realize there is a Most High God and that he is in control. God does use events on earth to teach the principalities and powers of his power and majesty. We have confirmation of this in Ephesians 3:10. In that passage, the church is used to bring about such teaching. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

**DAN 4:18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.**

Nebuchadnezzar had revealed the whole of his dream and his subsequent thoughts to Daniel. What would the Spirit filled Daniel reveal to him? The other wise men had failed. The king, however, knew Daniel would be capable of making the dream clear. God would help him. Note that again Nebuchadnezzar used the plural, not the singular. It is gods, not God.

**DAN 4:19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.**

Daniel was not happy with what he was about to have to tell the king. He remained silent for an hour. He was deeply troubled in mind. He had apparently grown fond of Nebuchadnezzar and found it difficult to relay the meaning of the dream to him. It would not please the king. Both Ezekiel and John had a similar problem. They were each told to digest a book and then reveal its contents to men who were wicked. They found it sweet to the taste but bitter in the belly. It is never easy to talk about the wrath of God to our dear ones who are failing to live as they should.

Daniel knew the dream foretold circumstances for Nebuchadnezzar that his enemies would be delighted to hear. It is little wonder Daniel paused for a long time before giving the king this bad news.

**DAN 4:20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;**

**DAN 4:21 Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:**

**DAN 4:22 It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.**

The great tree was Nebuchadnezzar himself. He had grown very powerful and his fame had been extended to the far reaches of the known earth. Many subjects depended upon him for their welfare and protection. He would have been admired by the most powerful men alive.





**DAN 4:23** And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

**DAN 4:24** This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

**DAN 4:25** That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

The decree of the Holy Watcher was that Nebuchadnezzar would be cut down from his place of dignity. He would be driven from the company of other humans and would live in the fields as the beasts, eating grass like an ox.

Commentators make a great effort to take the sting out of this verse by saying surely Nebuchadnezzar was kept under the watchful eye of palace guards within the confines of the palace grounds. This is not what the text implies. It states that he dwelt with the beasts of the field. There is also much said about “lycanthropy”, a mental condition in which men imagine themselves to be animals and act correspondingly. The particular problem which is assigned to Nebuchadnezzar is “boanthropy” in which a man fancies himself to be a cow or an ox.

I tend to disagree with these explanations. I believe

this was a special condition unique to Nebuchadnezzar and brought on by divine action. I do not believe it was a mental disease, found in other men.

Whatever the case, Nebuchadnezzar would be left in such a hideous condition until he was ready to accept Jehovah as the eternal Ruler of the universe. God had allowed him to gain his prominence. God could just as easily remove him from it. Each of us need to reflect upon our own state of mind. It is in Jehovah that we live and move and have our being.

**DAN 4:26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.**

There would be hope for the king. The stump of the tree was left and would grow again. It was the same with Nebuchadnezzar. After he came to himself and learned his lesson, he would regain his glory and power.

**DAN 4:27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.**

Daniel then pleaded with the king to take heed to the words which he had heard. It was possible that if he would cease his proud and wicked ways, God would allow him an extension of time before all this disaster fell upon him. It does not say such repentance would completely avert the disaster. It suggests that it might be postponed to a later date.

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Hezekiah was once granted fifteen more years after pleading with God. The commandment to honor our fathers and mothers is connected to a promise which says our years may be lengthened if we observe that rule of conduct.

DAN 4:28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel was recording the events. He spoke of Nebuchadnezzar in the third person. The following verses will be an expansion of the statement in this verse. That which had been predicted by the Holy Watcher actually came to pass.

DAN 4:29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

Just one year after the prediction had been made, the fulfilment took place. It is likely that the king had almost completely forgotten his dream by the end of the year. He seems to have been taking a stroll in the royal palace, surveying its grandeur and beauty.

DAN 4:30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

As he made his way around the palace grounds, he was overcome with pride in the accomplishments he had produced. Babylon was a very impressive place. The walls of the city were wide enough for chariots to be driven on top of them. The gates were massive and ornate. In Babylon, the king had erected the hanging gardens; one

of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was very easy to forget his dependence upon forces more powerful than himself.

It was not Nebuchadnezzar who had given himself life. It was not he who had provided the materials from which to build the city of Babylon. It was not he who had made it possible for him to rule as the king of this mighty empire.

It would be well for each of us to realize we live and move and have our being in Jehovah. We could be nothing or do nothing without his creative and sustaining power. Paul made these points well in the seventeenth chapter of the book of Acts as he preached to the philosophers at Athens.

DAN 4:31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

He had not completed his statement before word was received from God's throne that his great kingdom had been taken from him. The same God who had allowed him to gain that power removed it from him. This had happened in other cases also. King Saul had the same experience. God allowed him to reign in Israel. Then, when Saul became proud and rebellious, the kingdom was taken from him and given to David.

DAN 4:32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

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In almost the exact words which were used a year before to predict these events, the announcement was heard that they were about to occur. Nebuchadnezzar was to be given a lesson in humility such as has very seldom been equaled.

**DAN 4:33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.**

It did not require months or years to begin the lesson. It began that very hour. I have read numerous explanations as to how the king must have been protected and cared for by his trusted servants, including Daniel, until he returned to his former state of mind.. Let us take such statements as this for what they really say. In this case, the king no longer lived among men in the area of the palace. He roamed the fields, ate grass as the cattle, and was drenched with the rain. His hair was uncut and his fingernails looked like the claws of a parrot.

Under these conditions, it would be very difficult to maintain the arrogant pride which Nebuchadnezzar exhibited.

**DAN 4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:**

One very interesting question must be asked. To what degree did Nebuchadnezzar's mind change during this period of time? We are told he was given the heart of a beast. This must mean he thought and acted like an animal rather than a man. This verse says when he lifted up his eyes unto heaven, his understanding returned unto him. I can only conclude that he still had enough mind during his time of eating grass that he was able to draw a very important conclusion; the conclusion that he was not really the one in charge of the world.

Upon being granted his understanding, he made some statements which many men would do well to emulate. He was ready to glorify and bless Jehovah. He realized God is eternal, and that God's kingdom and his dominion, unlike that of Nebuchadnezzar, lasts forever. As the generations come and go, the kingdom of the Most High remains.

**DAN 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?**

Nebuchadnezzar was also made to realize God's power is boundless. No man has the right to compare his wisdom or his power with that of the Creator. The most powerful man on earth is as nothing before him. Nebuchadnezzar had good reason to know. He was the most powerful man he knew of, and he had been reduced to nothing. No one can stop the mighty outstretched arm of the Almighty. No one has the right to question his methods.

**DAN 4:36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my**

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counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

When thee king was ready to make these admissions, God was ready to restore his glory, his honor and his reputation. Truly the stump had been protected and was able to sprout and grow into a great tree once more. Like Job, it seems Nebuchadnezzar had at least as much after his ordeal as he had when it began. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away!

DAN 4:37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

It may be that Nebuchadnezzar made an honest and complete confession that there is but one true God in heaven. He called him the King of heaven. He spoke of his eternity, his omniscience, his justice and his dominion. It is possible, however, that he still simply saw Jehovah as the most powerful and wise of all the gods in which he believed.

He did seem to make some progress in his understanding of God as time passed and his lessons piled up.

Chapter 5

DAN 5:1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

The student who wishes to follow the actual chronological sequence of events will wish to postpone the examination of this chapter until after chapters seven and eight have been studied. The first verse of chapter seven dates the events of that chapter as the first year of King Belshazzar. The first verse of the eighth chapter date its events as occurring in the third year of King Belshazzar. Since chapter five tells of the events surrounding the death of this Babylonian king, the events of chapters seven and eight must have preceded those of this chapter. The true chronological sequence of chapters would be as follows: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 5, 6, 11, 10, 12 and 9. Dr. Rex Turner follows that order in his fine commentary.

One suggestion as to why these chapters are not in chronological sequence is that the portion of the book which is written in Aramaic rather than Hebrew has been kept together in the present arrangement. That may, or may not be the reason.

It was a common practice for the ancient oriental kings to organize a great feast to demonstrate their power and glory. Their subordinates could be properly impressed by the display. Even foreign dignitaries were often placed in awe of one who could command such a celebration. In some cases, several thousand might gather at the king's invitation.

The king was normally placed in a place of prominence in order that all might witness his pomp and glory. Thus, Belshazzar drank wine in plain view of the entire

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gathering. Archaeological excavations have uncovered a large banquet hall some 50 feet wide and 160 feet long with a niche in one of the sides where this king might have been seated. In addition, a white plaster was found on the wall of the niche area. This harmonizes with the later details of this banquet.

**DAN 5:2 Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.**

Students of the original language indicate that this verse actually indicates that the wine had begun to taste good to Belshazzar. This could well mean he had become a bit drunk.

He brazenly called for the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had captured from the temple in Jerusalem and placed in the treasure house of his own gods. This was pure insolence before the True and Living God. It has been said that Nebuchadnezzar was arrogant, but that Belshazzar was insolent. That may be a proper assessment of the comparative attitudes of the two sinful kings.

The critics have attacked the historical accuracy of this verse. Nebuchadnezzar is called the father of Belshazzar. Even the Bible itself mentions King Evil-Merodach as reigning between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. It is likely that Nebuchadnezzar was the grandfather of Belshazzar and that Nabonidus was Belshazzar's father. This is not out of line with the use of the word father in other Bible passages. The word father is often used in the sense of an ancestor.

**DAN 5:3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.**

In obedience to the command of Belshazzar, the vessels of gold were brought for the king and his guests to use for drinking purposes. When these vessels were first made, they were dedicated to the worship of Jehovah. Any other use of them was an abomination in the sight of God. Now, they were being used for a drunken orgy. We shall find out presently whether the eyes of Jehovah do actually run to and fro throughout the earth.

**DAN 5:4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.**

At this point we see the true purpose of the king's command. He intended to humiliate the God of the Hebrews and glorify his own Babylonian false gods, made by men's hands, out of wood, stone and metal.

**DAN 5:5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.**

Even as they drank, a dramatic event took place. The fingers of a man's hand appeared and began to write on the plaster of the wall near the candlestick which lighted the area near the king. This was even more impressive in that the rest of the body was not seen. To whom did the mysterious hand belong? Clearly, its appearance

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must have been due to powers far greater than those of Belshazzar. The king could see the letters forming on the plaster as the hand wrote.

DAN 5:6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

The effect on Belshazzar was shocking. First, his face changed expression. No doubt it became pale in fear, drained of its blood supply. His thoughts left him in a state of chaos and confusion. The insolent attitude of a few minutes before had turned to terror. The muscles of his lower body became so weak he could hardly stand and his knees knocked together.

What a change God can bring about in just a few moments. Nebuchadnezzar had gone from confident bragging about the great Babylon which he had built, to grazing like an ox on the grass of the fields. The change is Belshazzar is just as amazing. My dear reader, it is not wise to ridicule or ignore the God of heaven and earth.

DAN 5:7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

In a frenzy, the king cried loudly for his wise-men to appear. Some say, since Daniel was at one time the master of the magicians and the king did not call for the magicians, he deliberately omitted the group to which

Daniel belonged. I doubt that this is meaningful. The verse is simply saying the king called for those whom he felt could explain the mystery.

He was ready to offer great rewards to the one who could adequately explain just what had taken place. He would be clothed in scarlet. This was often recognized as one of the colors of majesty. He would have a chain of gold placed about his neck. This also marked the man as one of great dignity. Such chains are said to be worn only by the permission of the king. Lastly, he would be declared third ruler in the kingdom. This is a pretty impressive list of rewards. Since Belshazzar seems to have been a co-ruler with his father, Nabonidus, he was ready to give the person who could explain the events the very highest place in the kingdom which he could confer.

DAN 5:8 Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

None of the wise-men were able to even read the writing, to say nothing of giving the interpretation of it. The question arises as to why the wise-men were unable to read it. It is best that we just accept the fact that they were unable. It is possible that it was written in a language which none of them knew. The fact that Daniel later read it for them in a language they could understand does not mean it was written in that language.

DAN 5:9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

Belshazzar then became even more disturbed. We are told his lords, or honored guests, were astonished.

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We are not told whether they were astonished over the handwriting, or over the vast change in the appearance and attitude of the king. It could be either.

**DAN 5:10 Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:**

The queen was near enough to hear the crying out of the king for his wise men and to hear the puzzled conversations of those who could not read nor interpret the handwriting.

She seems to have been far more composed than any of the rest of the palace population. She assured the king the mystery was not beyond a solution. If an interpretation of the handwriting was all that was troubling Belshazzar, there was a remedy.

Many commentators believe the queen could not have been the wife of Belshazzar because his wives had all been present in the banquet hall. Of course, the queen could have been invited and simply have delayed her appearance.

It does seem, however, that she was older than Belshazzar and that she was a former wife of Nebuchadnezzar, who could remember the days gone by.

**DAN 5:11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;**

The queen informed Belshazzar there was a very wise man who had not yet been consulted. Nebuchadnezzar had been so impressed with his abilities, he had made him the master of all of the wise men. This man had shown such capabilities that his wisdom and understanding could only have come from superhuman sources. He spoke with divine spirit and wisdom.

**DAN 5:12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.**

Because of this great wisdom and understanding Daniel had been able to interpret dreams and visions. He had been able to dissolve mysteries which others had found too difficult. The term “dissolving of doubts” has been interpreted as the “untying of knots.” The queen was absolutely confident Daniel would both read the handwriting and give the interpretation of it.

**DAN 5:13 Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?**

At the advice of the Queen, Daniel was summoned. We now have another question. Why had not Daniel been called before this? A possible explanation is that things moved fast in the politics of the Babylonians. Daniel could have been demoted at any time by those rulers who followed Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was appointed

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as master of the magicians while Nebuchadnezzar still ruled. It could well have been over twenty years since Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded.

We do not know how much Belshazzar knew about Daniel. Had the queen only refreshed his memory, or had she told him things he did not know because of his infatuation with his own gods? Some think his question to Daniel is in sarcastic tone. I think he was sincere in the question. He desired to make certain he had the man the Queen had described. He would have disdained to go to one of the captives of the Jews. But now, it seemed necessary.

DAN 5:14 I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

This verse leaves us just where the previous one did. Belshazzar has heard of Daniel's wisdom and understanding. However, we do not know whether his knowledge of Daniel was long standing, or whether it was the result of the advice of the Queen.

Nor do we know the tone of Belshazzar's words. Was he deadly serious because of the events he had just witnessed, or does his voice contain a note of sarcasm for this wise man from the Hebrew captives?

DAN 5:15 And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing:

Whichever was true, the king had been driven to the point of desperation. The various groups of advisors in

his court were helpless. Belshazzar knew it was going to be impossible for any of them to help.

DAN 5:16 And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

The fact that Daniel was from the despised Hebrew captives did not stand in the way of Belshazzar's request and promise of rewards. If Daniel was able to read the writing and give the interpretation, the king would clothe him in royal apparel, hang a chain of majesty about his neck and declare him to be subservient only to Nabonidus and Belshazzar.

DAN 5:17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

Daniel was pleased to read the writing and give the interpretation of it; but, he would not do it for the purpose of gaining glory or obtaining political power. It was simply the natural thing for him to do as the servant of the Most High God.

Some see Daniel's words here as disrespectful to the king. I do not believe that is the case. Others say it would have mattered little to Daniel anyway, knowing that Belshazzar was to lose his position of authority. I think neither of these is true. Daniel is not

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exercising his abilities for human gain. He was only serving his God.

**DAN 5:18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:**

Belshazzar had to be reminded of the lesson his predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar, learned. Nebuchadnezzar was also filled with false pride. He had been raised to a position of immense honor. This was not his own doing. It came about through the permission of Jehovah.

**DAN 5:19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.**

Practically all of the known world fell at the feet of Nebuchadnezzar. He had the power of life and death over all who surrounded him. Even Belshazzar was no greater than this great king.

**DAN 5:20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:**

His greatness did not save him from the chastisement of the Almighty. In fact, it brought punishment upon him. His pride hardened mind was to be softened.

Great Nebuchadnezzar was removed from his throne and his glory was quenched. Job said, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." Job was quite right. Belshazzar was soon to find the truth of Job's statement.

**DAN 5:21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.**

Daniel reminded Belshazzar of the humiliating position Nebuchadnezzar held after God removed his glory and power. He had lived in the open fields and had eaten grass like the cattle. He was drenched with the rain and the dew. His finger and toenails had grown long like those of the eagles.

It was only when Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses and realized he was not the central point of the creation that he was returned to rulership. His overbearing pride had cost him dearly for an extended period of time.

**DAN 5:22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;**

It had not been so long ago that Belshazzar did not know about Nebuchadnezzar's experiences. Knowing these facts, Belshazzar should have avoided similar chastisement. But, he had not! He had only added insolence to arrogance. He was in line for similar humiliating correction.

**DAN 5:23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver,**

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and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

Daniel pointed out to Belshazzar exactly what his sin was. He had defied the Ruler of the universe. The vessels which were sanctified and dedicated to the service of the temple of Jehovah had been used for the drinking of wine.

The New Testament tells us that we are to be filled with the Spirit of God rather than to be drunken with wine. If Belshazzar had followed such a path, he would have avoided serious humiliation.

Belshazzar had made the same mistake millions of others have made. He placed his gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone in a higher position than the Creator of all things. He had worshipped the creation rather than the Creator. His gods were powerless. They could not see, hear, understand or move about. In the meantime the True God, who had given Belshazzar life itself, had been mocked.

DAN 5:24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

Jehovah had finally become fed up with Belshazzar's haughty spirit and determined to take action. He had caused all in the boisterous banquet hall to see the fingers of a hand writing upon the plaster of the wall. It was God who had brought about the events which had so terrified the king.

DAN 5:25 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

In the language of the king and his guests, the words which were written are now produced. It may be that the original writing was in a language which neither the king nor his wise men had ever been taught. Daniel may have translated the writing into the language of the those who had seen it.

It is true, however, that there is still some mystery about the literal meaning of the words. Some scholars see certain units of measurement in the words. Others think we should limit ourselves to the interpretation given by Daniel.

DAN 5:26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

Then Daniel proceeded to tell the king the shocking news contained in the handwriting. The first of the words meant “numbered.” It was repeated for emphasis. The kingdom of Belshazzar had run its course. Its days were numbered. It was finished!

DAN 5:27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

After having examined the matter closely, Jehovah had found that Belshazzar did not measure up to the standard which God had set. His behavior was short of expectations.

DAN 5:28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

The student may wonder why the word Perez is used here rather than the word upharsin. The explanation is

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that the “u” at the beginning of the word upharsin is a connective like our English word “and.” The rest of the word is a form of the word pharsin.

The King James version translates the word perez as meaning divided. Some have said this means part of it was to be given to the Medes and part to the Persians. Actually the word is more literally translated as shattered. God is saying the glory and power of the kingdom of Belshazzar is to be shattered and is to be transferred to the Medes and Persians.

The Medes and Persians are so interwoven that the kingdom which followed the Babylonians is usually referred to as the Medo-Persian empire.

**DAN 5:29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.**

In spite of the unwelcome news produced by Daniel, Belshazzar did his best to keep his word. Daniel was appointed as the third most powerful man in the kingdom and he was awarded royal clothing and a golden chain was granted him.

All of this meant very little at this point. Belshazzar was to lose his power before it could mean anything of consequence to Daniel. There are those who wonder why Daniel received the gifts when he had previously said he cared nothing for them. I think the answer is that he had made his position clear. He did not read and interpret the writing in order to receive the honors. If the king chose to give them to him knowing they were not the reason for his actions, Daniel would receive them.

**DAN 5:30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.**

This verse is short but not sweet. The Babylonian empire had lasted for about seventy years. It is almost as if God allowed it to come to power for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecy that his people would be kept in Babylonian captivity for seventy years.

Even as Belshazzar and his guests were reveling in their drunken party, the Medes were surrounding the city of Babylon. This was apparently not unknown to the Babylonian rulers. They had met the enemy armies and had suffered setbacks before this. Nevertheless, they thought the city of Babylon was impregnable. It had an unlimited supply of water. Its walls were so massive no one would be able to break them down.

They were wrong. Darius general found a way to divert the water of the river, which ran under the walls of the city. Then he led his soldiers down the shallow waters of the previous channel and into the city. There is reason to believe inside help was available, and that the invading armies were welcomed by unhappy citizens of Babylon. There seems to have been very little opposition or bloodshed. Belshazzar was slain as one might expect. The conquerors would not have enjoyed dealing with him after their victory.

The suddenness of Belshazzar's removal from the throne reminds us of the same suddenness with which Nebuchadnezzar was taken from the throne room to the pastures. When God decides to fight with a man, the battle is over quickly!

**DAN 5:31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.**

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The identity of Darius the Mede is unclear. It is possible that he was also called Ugbaru, a governor of Gutium, and a general under the command of Cyrus. As we have seen in many of the Biblical records, men were known by more than one name in those days. If this is true, it seems that Darius the Mede, or Ugbaru, was slain within the same year that Babylon was taken and was succeeded in governing the city of Babylon by Gubaru, another servant of Cyrus. The reader may wish to exercise his own detective power here.

We have come to the end of the Babylonian Empire and the beginning of the Medo-Persian Empire. The significance of the great image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, with its head of gold, breast of silver, torso of brass and feet of iron and clay had by this time become more evident.

Chapter 6

DAN 6:1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

The events of this chapter occurred very late in the life of Daniel. This great statesman prophet served under Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus. The seventy years of captivity were ended in the first year of the reign of Cyrus. Since Daniel was probably in his teen years at the beginning of those seventy years, he had probably passed the age of eighty at this time.

The identity of Darius is debated. The Darius mentioned here is not mentioned by name in the annals of Medo-Persian history. He is not Darius Hystaspes, who reigned some twenty years later. I am inclined to think he was a subking under Cyrus, and that Cyrus and Darius reigned simultaneously. Cyrus would then have been the supreme ruler with Darius as an underling. This would help to explain the absence of his name in the chronicles of the Medo-Persian government. It might also be wise to remember that for a considerable time the name of Belshazzar was not found in the archeological digs. Yet, today there is no debate over his existence. He was a historical figure. It is interesting how often the critics have been rebuffed in their attacks upon the veracity of the Holy Scriptures.

The one hundred twenty princes which were set up over the whole kingdom agree in number with the record given in Esther. At that time it is said there were one hundred twenty-seven satrapies in the Persian empire. This organization indicates a conviction on the part of Darius that the empire needed considerable supervision.

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**DAN 6:2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.**

Once again we find a man of God demonstrating his superior administrative abilities. Joseph had risen rapidly in Egypt when it was recognized that he was exceptionally able. Honesty, vision and industry are qualities which are often found in God's servants.

The various princes reported to the three presidents. The presidents were then to give account to Daniel, and Daniel was recognized as first among the three. All of this was a precaution to protect the king from either financial or physical damage, perhaps both.

**DAN 6:3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.**

The wise supervisor will very quickly identify administrative potential in those who are under him. It did not take long for Darius to observe this quality in Daniel. Darius knew he would be able to trust in the loyalty and wisdom of this experienced statesman.

Was the excellent spirit which was in Daniel simply his own ability, honed through the years by the experiences of the past, or was it special ability given through the divine power of the living God? Remember, many years before Daniel had been favored by God when he refused to pollute himself through eating the king's food and drink. We have no record that this changed. I believe he still retained the superior abilities he received at that time. God was working through Daniel to accomplish certain

ends which he had planned for the Jews after their return from the captivity. In the meantime, the Babylonians and the Medes and Persians were exposed to the wisdom and power of Jehovah.

**DAN 6:4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.**

Now, we have an often repeated pattern in politics. He who stands at the top must always guard himself from the jealousy and covetousness of those who envy his success. He will find every word and action scrutinized with a magnifying glass. Any weakness will be used against him as those directly under him hunger for his position.

Daniel was unusually efficient. So much so, in fact, that nothing of any significance could be found against him. I must assume that when we are told they could find no occasion or fault, that he was not perfect, but that any minor weaknesses were vastly outweighed by his positive abilities.

**DAN 6:5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.**

Finding no glaring fault in a man does not stop some from attempting to destroy him. These plotters were still ready to move full speed ahead. There are ways by which a good man may be demolished. In the case of Daniel, it was clear that his devotion to Jehovah was unswerving. If they could place him in a dilemma where either choice he made was damaging, they could achieve their evil

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purpose. The plan must be to pit his loyalty to Jehovah against the law of the land.

DAN 6:6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

At this point in the chapter many of the more conservative commentators begin to prepare the way for an explanation of a later difficulty. If all one hundred twenty of the princes and the other two presidents, plus all of their wives and children, were thrown into the den of lions, then there had to be a very large number of lions to consume them.

The reply to this charge from the liberal critics is to claim that not all of the princes and presidents were assembled before the king. This may be true. The next verse indicates that the ones who had assembled claimed to be speaking on behalf of the rest of them.

The words “Live forever” are still echoed in the British people even unto the present day when they call out, “Long live the king.” This is simply a means of expressing their desire that the royalty see good health. In the case of these plotters, they were putting the butter on the bread in preparing the king for the flattering request which was to follow.

DAN 6:7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

Their claim is that every high official in the kingdom had agreed to the establishment of a royal decree. Their statement is not true. Obviously Daniel had not been consulted. There is no way of knowing just how many others were ignored in their evil plans.

The decree was to state that no one in the land would ask a favor of any god or man for thirty days. If any did so, they were to be thrown into a den of lions.

It is necessary for us to make an attempt to understand the attitude toward the gods in ancient days. Almost every nation had its own god. Some had a major god and a number of minor gods. When the nation was successful in war, or prospered in other ways, it was thought that this was the result of their god, or gods, being pleased. Since the common belief was that there were many gods, it seemed to be no serious matter to refrain from praying to their favorite god for a thirty day period. The reader is reminded that the Greeks considered the Christians to be atheists because they would not accept the reality of the Greek pantheon of gods. Also, we might note that down to recent times, the Japanese have held that their emperors have a divine origin.

From non-Biblical sources I understand that King Darius could have been considered a representative for all of the gods. Any request made through him could be thought of as an indirect request to one's favorite god.

DAN 6:8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Perhaps giddy with the flattery of the moment, King Darius signed the decree. It seems almost unbelievable that a man of his position would be so taken in with the

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conniving of underlings. But, such has happened before, and will no doubt happen again.

It is one thing for the laws of Jehovah to be unchanging. It is quite another for the laws of any nation, state or territory to be declared unchanging. God makes no mistakes. Man does! No law of man ought ever to be exempt from modification or revocation. It is clear, however, that the law of the Medes and Persians was irrevocable. We find verification of this in the book of Esther. When a law was passed to eradicate the Jews, that law was set in concrete and was not subject to change (Esther 1:19 and 8:8).

**DAN 6:9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.**

Without the slightest concern over the consequences of the decree, Darius fell into the trap.

**DAN 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.**

I do not know how long it was after the signing of the decree that Daniel found out about it. The discovery must have been a monumental shock to the faithful servant of the king. Nevertheless, it would not deter this man of God from worshipping the true God of heaven. He had been accustomed to go to his place of prayer three times a day. There, before an open window, facing Jerusalem, he would kneel down and commune with Jehovah. There would be no change now. When it came time for him to

pray, he went just as before and knelt down in prayer. Daniel was not being rebellious toward the king. Neither was he being ostentatious that he might be seen of men like the Pharisees of Jesus day. A law of men had been passed which conflicted with the laws of God. Daniel really had no choice. Like the apostles in the book of Acts, he must obey God rather than men.

**DAN 6:11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.**

The men did not just happen to assemble. They knew they had Daniel on the horns of a dilemma. He could either disobey the laws of the land and be cast into the den of lions, or he could reject Jehovah and face the wrath of God. They knew full well which route Daniel would take. It was just a matter of assembling at the right time in order that they could act as multiple witnesses of his behavior.

**DAN 6:12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.**

Before they informed the king of Daniel's disobedience to the decree which the king had signed, they carefully prepared the way. The king was asked if he had not signed an irrevocable decree that any man who prayed to any man or god other than the king must be cast into a den

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of lions. Their primary concern was to make certain the decree had been signed and that the king was fully aware of its permanent nature.

Darius assured them the decree had been properly signed. It was the law of the land and could not be altered.

DAN 6:13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

Everything was ready. They had Daniel within their grasp! With gleeful hearts, they informed the king that his favorite president, Daniel, had violated the decree. Part of the reason for their animosity came to the front in their statement to Darius. Daniel was one of the captives. He was a Jew and not a native citizen of the kingdom. This comes very near being a rebuke to Darius for having been so simple as to appoint one of the captivity to a place so important in the affairs of the land.

Their accusation is that Daniel had committed the serious crime of worshipping Jehovah three times a day, and not making his request through the king.

DAN 6:14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

When Darius heard these words, he was not displeased with Daniel. He was displeased with his own naivety. It is clear to me that he had a great appreciation for Daniel. I think it went farther than approval of his work as an

official in the kingdom. It seems to me that he had a genuine affection for his senior president.

King Darius labored for the remainder of the day in an attempt to evade carrying out the sentence of death in the lion's den. There have been numerous suggestions as to what tactics he might have used. Could he have tried to persuade the Princes and Presidents to ignore the law? Could he have brought up crimes of their own which might be punished if they insisted on the death penalty for Daniel?

DAN 6:15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

Whatever Darius tried, it did not succeed. The jealous officials insisted the law be honored and Daniel be punished as the law prescribed. He must be fed to the lions.

DAN 6:16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

Darius was helpless. There was but one hope remaining. Perhaps Daniel's God was strong enough to protect him from death in the jaws of the lions. Some have wondered whether the King was open and public with his wish that Daniel survive, or whether he whispered these words of hope to his friend as Daniel passed by him toward his punishment.

Later developments show Darius was not very confident of the truth of his words. He only hoped Daniel's God would rescue him.

DAN 6:17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

Some think there were two openings to the den. They envision an opening at a lower level where the lions could be driven into the den, or even a partition between two areas. One of these areas would have housed the lions while the other was being cleaned. In this case, the stone would serve as a barrier to keep the lions out of the part where food was being placed for them or cleaning was going on.

There are not sufficient details given to draw such a complete picture of the den. What we do know is that Daniel was cast into the den and a stone was placed over the mouth to make certain the sentence against Daniel was carried out. With the signature of the king on the stone which sealed the den, there was no chance he would be delivered from his plight.

One can hardly fail to remember the stone which supposedly sealed the body of the Lord in his grave. Neither of these stones was large enough to block the purposes of Almighty God.

DAN 6:18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

In a state of great anxiety, the king returned to his palace. Ordinarily, the placing of a criminal in with the lions would have had little effect upon his mental condition. This time it was different. Sleep was impossible. Nor could he eat his meals. It would have been a common thing for him to have called for entertainment of some kind to induce sleep. However, he had no desire for such diversions.

There is difficulty in the translation of the phrase "instruments of music." Some translators believe the original could have signified concubines. All seem to be agreed the phrase has something to do with diversions which would have taken his mind off his troubles. He apparently tossed and turned all night without ever losing consciousness.

DAN 6:19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

The law had been honored. Daniel had been cast into the den of lions. Now the question was, "Is there any chance the man is alive?" The king can hardly get there fast enough.

DAN 6:20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

In a most piteous voice, the king cried out his question. Can the reader believe these words were spoken only from a concern for the loss of an efficient administrator. I hardly think so. This was the voice of a man grieved over the possibility that he had actually had a part in the horrible death of a close friend.

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Darius called Daniel's God the living God. As the others had before him, Darius recognized Daniel's God as extremely powerful and able to perform unusual feats. His statement, however, did not necessarily mean Darius had accepted Jehovah as the only true and living God.

**DAN 6:21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.**

The impossible had happened! The voice of Daniel could be heard from inside the den. The content of the statement is noteworthy. The king had inquired as to whether Daniel was alive. Daniel's reply gave a positive answer to the question. But, there was more. Daniel expressed his concern over the welfare of the king.

**DAN 6:22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.**

Oh yes! Daniel's God could most certainly tend to his health and security. Who was it that made the mouth of the lion? Who was it that built the need for food into the constitution of all animals? The same can cause the appetite to be appeased and the mouth to be closed.

And what was the reason God protected Daniel in this way? Daniel declared it was because he stood innocent before his Lord. Then, almost as if he were gently rebuking the king for allowing himself to be entrapped as he had been, Daniel reminded him that he also stood innocently before Darius. Because he had neither sinned before God nor injured Darius, God had been with him.

**DAN 6:23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.**

The king was overjoyed. He had hoped, but he hardly dared believe Daniel would still be alive. Not only was he alive. He was found to be in the finest of health.

Notice that here we are told Daniel was taken up out of the den, as if the opening through which he was removed from the den was at a higher elevation than the level where the lions were kept. This leads those mentioned previously to contend there were two openings; one where the lions were allowed to enter the den, and the other at a higher position. As in the case of the fiery furnace, there is a great deal of conjecture.

**DAN 6:24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.**

The king had discharged his obligation. The law which could not be changed had been honored. What was to be done with the criminals who had planned to have the first president of the land murdered? Darius had a quick answer. Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword. These men would be offered to the same lions to which Daniel had been offered. Not only the men, but their wives and children would suffer the same fate.

It was not because the lions had been recently fed that they failed to attack Daniel. As soon as Daniel's

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persecutors were cast into the den, the lions quickly began feeding upon them.

I once had a critic of the Bible ask me if I thought this was the action of a benevolent God. There are two possible answers to that question. First, we do not know that the wives and children were not in on the plot. Second, the Bible does not condone the death of the wives and children. It simply gives us a record of what happened. The punishment of a man's relatives along with himself was not unusual in ancient days.

This is the point where the critics point with ridicule to the casting of one hundred twenty princes, two presidents and all of the wives and children of these men into one den of lions. This might be as many as three or four hundred persons! This objection is similar to the one made against the possibility of getting all of the animals on the ark. We know neither the number of persons, nor the number of lions. When the dust has settled, we will find that God is true and every man a liar.

DAN 6:25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

King Darius was much impressed. So much so that he was ready to issue another decree. This new decree was to be sent out to every part of his dominion. These Persian rulers shared the idea that their territory reached to the end of the earth. They no doubt knew men lived outside their domain; however, they considered such territories of little importance. It is also true that the word which is translated "earth" here can also be translated as "land."

DAN 6:26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear

before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

Darius meant business. Daniel's God was to be respected by every man under his rule. This seems incredible to citizens of free countries today. It seems ridiculous to issue an order to worship a particular deity. One does not worship because he is ordered to do so. One worships because of an acknowledgement that God is God, and man is man. However, such orders have been common. The Roman emperors did not hesitate to exert the power of the state in forcing men to bow down before the gods they chose for their subjects to worship. This even went to the extent of emperor worship.

The reason men were ordered to worship Daniel's God was because he is living and powerful and no one can destroy him. His dominion would last as long as time itself. Darius could see no possibility of a God as powerful as that of Daniel ever being defeated and destroyed.

DAN 6:27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

Darius was certain Jehovah could work his wonders in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath. If he had delivered Daniel, from hungry lions, he could do whatever he pleased.

DAN 6:28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

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It is very possible that Darius and Cyrus reigned simultaneously, and that Darius was subject to Cyrus. I will not take the time and space to discuss the names of Ugbaru, Gubaru, and Gobryas. I simply take it on faith that there was a ruler named Darius who ruled immediately after the death of Belshazzar and who was closely associated with Cyrus.

Daniel had held a position of prominence through almost the entire seventy years of the captivity of Judah. Just as God had used Joseph in the high places of Egypt, he had now used Daniel in the land of the Babylonians, and the Medo-Persians. Soon Cyrus would issue the decree for the release of the Jews and their return to Palestine.

## *Chapter 7*

**DAN 7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.**

Again the reader is reminded that the order of the chapters in the book of Daniel is out of chronological sequence. Chapter seven should follow immediately after chapter four. Chapter seven tells of events taking place during the first year of Belshazzar's reign. Chapter eight records matters which took place in the third year of his reign. Chapter five tells of his death. The proper order of chapters five through eight is seven, eight, five and then six.

There are solid reasons to believe some twenty years had passed since the death of Nebuchadnezzar.

Be careful not to confuse the name Belshazzar with Belteshazzar. Belteshazzar was the Babylonian name for Daniel. Belshazzar is the name of a king of Babylon.

Daniel refers to Belshazzar as king of Babylon. This is another target for criticism by the liberals. For some time no mention of the name Belshazzar could be found in the records of that area. Later, however, evidence has been found that Belshazzar served as co-regent simultaneously with his father, Nabonidus. Nebuchadnezzar was followed on the throne by his son, Evil-Merodach. Then Neriglissar and Laborosoarchod had very short reigns. Nabonidus followed and reigned for sixteen years. He began to reign in 556 B.C. He then made his son Belshazzar co-regent with himself and spent about ten years in activities distant from the capitol of the empire.

Daniel had a dream this time. Previously, the dreams were those of Nebuchadnezzar. This time the dream is

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his own. Dreams and visions were a common way for Jehovah to reveal information to specific individuals in Old Testament days. The prophet Joel spoke of these same two avenues in the days of the apostles (See Joel 2:28-32). Sometimes dreams are experienced during sleep while visions occur while awake. In Daniel's case it seems the two terms may be used almost interchangeably.

After awakening, Daniel wrote down the essence of what he had seen. The sum of the matters probably means that he did not include all of the minor details. His record only told of the critical aspects.

DAN 7:2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

Daniel saw the four winds of the heaven striving with one another and stirring up the sea. The four winds represent forces which bring about changes in the fortunes of mankind. Sometimes these forces are brought about by divine providence. Other times they are the result of human interactions.

I do not understand the great sea to be the Mediterranean. I believe it is the multitude of peoples in every tongue, tribe and nation of the earth. I present three references to support this stand.

Isa 17:12 Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

Jer 46:7-8 Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.

Rev 17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Daniel was about to see kingdom after kingdom arise from among the nations of the earth. God would demonstrate to the prophet that human efforts to organize themselves into power structures will come and go. The only durable organization will be the everlasting dominion of the Son of man.

DAN 7:3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

Just as Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image with four different metals involved, Daniel saw four great beasts. As we move along, we will see the strong parallel between the four metals of the image and the four beasts which rise up out of the sea.

Each of the four beasts is different from the others, just as each of the parts of the image in chapter two were composed of different metals.

Why would God cause two accounts of the same series of kingdoms to be recorded in his word? There is a reason why these two pictures are given. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the image was seen from the standpoint of men. The entire image was that of a very impressive man. In contrast, the beasts which appeared to Daniel were ferocious and greedy. Power hungry and land grabbing human governments would be properly represented by such wild beast in the divine eye.

DAN 7:4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and

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**made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.**

The first beast is represented as a lion. It had wings like an eagle. The lion is the king of the jungle. The eagle is the king of the air. The lion is strong. The eagle is swift. There is reason to believe this first beast stands for the Babylonian empire. It moved quickly and steadily across the land until it was slowed by the punishment visited upon Nebuchadnezzar. Then it had its wings plucked and was made to realize its beastly nature needed to be transformed to a more humane approach. As Nebuchadnezzar was given the heart of a beast, his empire was given the heart of a man.

**DAN 7:5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.**

After the first beast moved across the scene, another, like a bear, rose from the sea. The bear is less regal than the lion. It is more cumbersome and moves less speedily. However, its strength is awesome and it can be very ferocious.

This bear was busy devouring its catch. As Daniel observed it, there were three ribs between its teeth. It raised itself up on one side and prepared to search for more prey.

I think it is useless to attempt identification of the three ribs. The number three may only mean that it had a hefty appetite.

The bear represented the Medo-Persian empire which followed the Babylonian just as the silver breast of the

image of Nebuchadnezzar followed the Babylonian head of gold. The Medes were of less importance in this empire than the Persians. Perhaps that is why the bear raises one side above the other. However, we make too much of such details. It may be that the bear is only rising from its lunch to look for another nation to gobble up.

**DAN 7:6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.**

The third kingdom is compared to a leopard. The leopard is known for its quickness. This one has four wings which indicate extreme rapidity of motion. This is appropriate for the Greek empire. Within a period of about ten years Alexander the Great extended his dominion to all of the known world which he felt was worth capturing.

This third beast corresponds to the belly of brass in the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar. The four heads are thought to be the four generals who divided the empire among them after the death of Alexander.

**DAN 7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.**

The fourth beast is vastly different from the other three. There appears to be no animal so impressive as to warrant comparison with this one. Three adjectives are

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used. It is terrible. It is dreadful. It is strong.

It is my conclusion that the fourth kingdom represented by the iron legs of Nebuchadnezzar's image was that of Rome. It was in the days of the Roman kings that the Kingdom of God was established. This beast with the iron teeth also seems to be the Roman empire. The Romans were stronger than any of the three previous governments. They completely subjugated every nation they conquered. The stamping of the feet is a correct description of their attitude toward their captives.

Horns represent power. I am not particularly impressed with the attempts to identify ten nations of Europe, or ten other governmental power structures which grew out of the Roman Empire. As I examine the various lists, I find a serious lack of conformity in them.

As an example, one scholar lists France, Spain, Germany, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Bohemia and Poland.

Another lists Seleucus Nicator, Antiochus Soter, Antiochus Theos, Antiochus Callinicus, Seleucus Ceraunus, Antiochus the Great, Seleucus Philopater, Laodemon, Antigone and Demetrius.

I think all that was intended by the ten horns is that the powerful Roman Empire gave rise to a multiplicity of less widespread dominions.

DAN 7:8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

As Daniel watched, a little horn appeared among the ten. This little horn succeeded in uprooting three of the

ten horns. This must be some power which arises among the various powers growing out of the Roman Empire. Although being very unimpressive in the beginning, it grew more and more powerful until it was able to overcome nearly one third of these powers.

This informs me that the little horn is able to exert more power than any of the ten. At the same time it is not able to take dominion over all the nations of the earth.

The eyes of a man indicate the ability to perceive and understand much. The mouth speaking great things suggests great boasting and haughty independence. This arrogance, however, is subject to the longsuffering of God, as we will see.

DAN 7:9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

There is a difference of opinion among the various commentators as to whether the thrones were “cast down” or whether they were “placed.” The scene seems to be that of a court of judgment in which seats are placed for the judge and his assistants. It will become clear who occupies the primary seat of judgment; however, the identity of the occupants of the other lesser thrones is not revealed.

The Ancient of Days is Jehovah. He is eternal, therefore older than any. His hair speaks of his ageless nature. His white garments tell of his purity of character. The fiery flames coming from his throne inform us of his ability to visit punishment upon his enemies. The throne with wheels means he can be in more than one location. He is omnipresent.

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The entire picture of God here is similar to the pictures found in Ezekiel 10 and Revelation 4.

**DAN 7:10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.**

One thousand thousands is a million. Since the plural is used in one of these terms, we have millions ministering to Jehovah. Although we are not told these millions are angels, I believe it is most probable.

In addition to the millions of angels there are ten thousand times ten thousand standing before this Great Judge of all. I cannot say whether this vast multitude is identical with the great multitude mentioned in Revelation 7:9 or not. It seems likely that it is. If so, it may be those who have heard and heeded the voice of God and separated themselves from the world, and who have passed through the valley of death into the eternal realm.

**DAN 7:11 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.**

The little horn that spoke so boastfully was located upon the fourth beast. Because of its rebellious attitude, the entire beast was slain and consigned to the flame which issued from the throne of God. Opposition to God brings destruction. Fire is often the Biblical way of showing the wrath of Jehovah. Fire leaves very little of that which is burned. When God visits his judgments upon his opposers, they will be utterly destroyed.

If I am correct that the fourth beast is the Roman Empire, this scene of a judgment which destroys it and consigns it to the flames is a description of the end of that government.

**DAN 7:12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.**

This is a puzzling verse. As the horrible fourth beast, the Roman Empire, with its subsequent ten horns and the little horn is eliminated, we still find remnants of the other three beasts. Apparently the Roman Empire lived no longer, in any sense. Yet, the other three empires lived, even though their dominion was removed. Though the Roman government would fall, human government in general would not be extinguished at that time.

A season and a time simply describe a limited existence which was to be ended relatively soon.

I do not believe the judgment scene here is the final judgment. At the final judgment the old heaven and earth flee away and are replaced by a new heaven and earth. The elements melt with a fervent heat and the heavens pass away with a great noise. In the judgment under consideration here, the heaven and earth do not pass away. The next verse indicates the appearance of the Son of man, who begins his reign after the fourth beast is destroyed.

**DAN 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.**

The one like the Son of man is Jesus Christ. He

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was escorted to the throne of Jehovah, probably by the angels. We notice that his movement was from earth to heaven, not the reverse. This is the same picture which is presented in Revelation 5 where John looked for someone to open the book of the seven seals which was in the right hand of God. As John wondered who would be able to open it, Christ appeared as the Lamb of God and prepared to reveal the mystery of God.

DAN 7:14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Jesus was given dominion, glory and a kingdom. It is an everlasting kingdom and persons from every nation and language are to serve him. Does the Bible tell when Jesus was to receive that kingdom. I believe it does. He received it when he arose from the dead to go to the right hand of his Father. Note the following points.

1. The kingdom and the church are identical.

Matt 16:18-19 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

2. The church was established on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

3. Jesus possessed all power and authority when the great commission was given.

Matt 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

4. Christ had to be glorified before the Holy Spirit was poured out.

John 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

5. Zechariah says Christ is to be a Priest upon his throne.

Zech 6:13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

6. Christ entered into the Most Holy as our High Priest at his death when the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom.

Heb 6:19-20 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7. Christ was sitting upon his throne at the time Peter preached in Acts 2.

Acts 2:33-34 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Jesus Christ received dominion and glory and a kingdom when he made his sacrifice upon the cross and was raised to the right hand of the Father in heaven. He reigns there now and will continue to reign until every enemy is made his footstool, including the last enemy which is death.

It seems to me that, in some sense, the fourth beast with its many horns was judged when Christ was made King of kings. Whatever the little horn was which spoke such great things, it was destroyed when Christ took his seat at God's right hand.

I am then caused to ask, "Did the Roman Empire meet its end when Christ took his throne?" Logic would seem to say, yes. Perhaps the ascension of Christ to his everlasting Kingdom provided the death knell for the Roman Empire, even though it took some time for it to crumble and disintegrate.

DAN 7:15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

Daniel seemed to face the same plight as my own. That is understandable in his case. He did not have the advantage of seeing history unroll through the centuries

as we have had. Daniel's soul was crying out for further understanding.

DAN 7:16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

Daniel appealed to one of those thousands who stood by and asked for help. Perhaps, as we follow the explanation of this one (maybe an angel) we will make some further progress also.

DAN 7:17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.

The words kings and kingdoms are often used interchangeably in the books of Daniel and Revelation. This makes it difficult to tell whether a particular reference is to a person or a governmental organization.

The four beasts described here appear to represent the same four kingdoms that were involved in the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar. This would make them Babylon, MedoPersia, Greece and Rome.

They arise out of the earth rather than out of heaven. They place emphasis upon the organizational abilities of men rather than of God.

DAN 7:18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

Though kingdoms of men rise and fall, the everlasting Kingdom of God will appear and the saints of God will enjoy its blessings for all eternity. It was established at

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Pentecost. It continues until every enemy of Christ is vanquished. Then, when death itself has been destroyed and the New Heaven and Earth have replaced this creation, Christ will present the Kingdom to the Father and the saints shall enjoy its glory eternally.

**DAN 7:19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;**

Daniel's attention was drawn particularly to the mystery of the fourth beast. It varied more from the first three than they did from each other. We do have additional information now. This fourth beast had teeth of iron and nails of brass. It seems to have been absolutely unmerciful in its treatment of its prey. It breaks them in pieces and then stamps the pieces with its feet.

The Roman Empire was known for ruling the conquered nations with an "iron hand."

**DAN 7:20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.**

Daniel wished to know more about the ten horns on the head of the beast, and also of the little horn which uprooted three and spoke very great things.

**DAN 7:21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;**

Particularly, Daniel wished to know more about the war which was to take place between the little horn and the saints of the Most High God. It was disturbing to him that the little horn seemed, for a time, to gain the upper hand.

**DAN 7:22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.**

He did note, however, that this persecution finally came to an end. Judgment was made by the Ancient of Days. And the verdict was in favor of the saints of God. Their possession of the kingdom was at the expense of the little horn of the fourth beast.

**DAN 7:23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.**

Now the angel gave Daniel the interpretation of his dream. This is interesting in that Daniel has previously been the one who gave the interpretation of difficult things to others. Now he was in need of an explanation himself.

The fourth beast was extremely powerful. It was different in its ability to conquer and dominate. Everything in its path was broken in pieces and trampled upon. No other king or kingdom was able to stand before it.

**DAN 7:24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise**

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after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

The ten horns first arise from the original fourth beast. As explained before, I believe these to be lesser governments which dominate the entire inhabited earth. The little horn is explained as a king, or kingdom, arising after the other ten. He succeeds in taking over the power of three of the ten.

This means he gains more power than any of the ten, yet he is not able to establish a single government over all the earth.

DAN 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

The failure of the little horn to dominate the entire earth is not a result of his timidity. He is afraid of nothing. He even speaks out in criticism of God Almighty. He makes life completely miserable to the faithful servants of the Lord.

For a time, it seems he establishes himself in the very place of God. For a time, times and half a time, he gains control of saints and succeeds in altering the decisions of God concerning regulation and changes.

Time, times and half a time is used in both Daniel and Revelation for a time period which shall come to an end and be followed by a sharp change. In the book of Revelation, there are two witnesses who testify for this time. There is a trampling of the Holy City by the Gentiles for this same time. The church is driven into the wilderness for the same period, but is nourished by God with the hope of returning from the wilderness.

At this point it is well to note comparisons between several opponents of Christ and his saints.

A man of sin is mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10. This man of sin sits in the temple of God, claiming to be God. He is also called the son of perdition and the lawless one. His mystery of lawlessness was already working in Paul's day. Christ will slay him with the breath of his coming.

John warned of an antichrist who would come, denying both the Father and the Son. He said there were many antichrists even as he spoke. See 1 John 2:18-23 and 1 John 4:3.

John spoke of a beast out of the sea which blasphemed God and his tabernacle and those who dwell therein. He was to make war against the saints and overcome them for a period of forty-two months. All those upon the earth who were not written in the Lamb's book of life would worship him.

Now, Daniel saw a little horn which would wear out the saints for a time, times and half a time. It would speak against the Most High and would finally be judged by the ancient of Days.

I do not understand all of the details of these passages. I do believe they are related. There is a general movement of events which appears to be described by the combination of Daniel and Revelation. That sequence is:

1. Beginning with Babylon, there will be a series of empires which will follow one another.
2. During the fourth of these empires God will set up his own kingdom which will be everlasting.
3. Satan will attack the Kingdom of God through an uprising of lawlessness and antichristian blasphemy.
4. The saints will be persecuted and the church will be driven into the wilderness and out of the mainstream

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of society for forty-two months (an indefinite period of time known only to God).

5. Then, the forces of Satan will be defeated and the saints will reign.

**DAN 7:26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.**

When God sees fit to bring an end to the boastful attitude of the little horn, he will bring it into judgment. It will lose its power and will be destroyed forever. To destroy the dominion of the little horn unto the end is to utterly demolish it.

**DAN 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.**

Christ will win!! Humanism will lose! The kingdom which is given to the saints of God is the same kingdom over which the Son of God reigns today. As yet, it has not reached the proportions predicted in this chapter and also in the eleventh chapter of the book of Revelation where it is said the kingdoms of the world become of our Lord, or the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, where we are told the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

But the promise is clear. The little horn, and all he stands for, will come to an end through a judgment of God. All dominions will then serve and obey the true King of kings.

**DAN 7:28 Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.**

There was good reason for Daniel to be concerned. He had been given an insight into the terrifying battle which was to last from his own day to the final victory of God over Satan. It is a gigantic conflict which would cause any man who even begins to comprehend it to tremble.

My dear reader. Do not make the mistake of thinking God is helpless before the beast from the sea, the antichrist, the little horn or the man of sin. There is a city just ahead. It has walls of jasper and gates of pearl. None of these forces of the Devil will ever enter it. It is reserved for those who persevere through the forty-two months. Will you be one of them?

## *Chapter 8*

**DAN 8:1 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.**

Chapter eight follows chapter seven, but precedes chapter 5. The dream of chapter seven occurred in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar. This vision takes place two years later. It was not long after this that the drunken feast of chapter five was held and Belshazzar is said to have been slain that same night. The time is about 550 B.C.

Daniel spoke of this vision as being after the first. The first was actually a dream rather than a vision. It seems that he had been asleep when the earlier revelation came to him. This time he seems to have been awake, except for the time when he fell upon his face in a swoon, as described in verse 27.

Notice the strong emphasis upon his own presence. This is almost as if God anticipated the critics attacks upon Daniel as the author of the book. The vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel.

As we enter this chapter the language returns to the Hebrew. From the fourth verse of chapter two to the end of chapter seven, the book was written in Aramaic. As was pointed out in the introduction, this was probably due to the fact that the Aramaic portion of the book placed greater emphasis upon the destiny of the Gentile powers whereas the Hebrew portion is pointed more to the destiny of Israel.

**DAN 8:2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the**

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palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

There is strong disagreement over whether this verse is saying Daniel was actually at the palace in Shushan, or whether he was only transported there in the spirit. Both John and Ezekiel describe similar experiences when they were caught up in the spirit and allowed to see distant places and events. Later in the chapter we are told that after the vision was concluded, Daniel went about the king's business. This leads some to think he was actually present in the palace at Shushan on business for the king.

There is also a difference of opinion as to whether Elam was a province of Babylonia at the time of Daniel's vision. This is not a serious problem in that Elam could have been a province without having been a part of the Babylonian empire.

The province of Elam was located on the east side of the Euphrates River and the river Ulai entered the Euphrates quite some distance north of the mouth of that famous waterway.

DAN 8:3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

Now we begin to share the vision which Daniel saw. The first thing which met his eye was a ram with two horns. They were not ordinary horns. They were most impressive, indicating the ram possessed much strength. Daniel noticed that one of the two horns was higher, or stronger than the other.

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Later, in verse twenty, the ram is identified by the scriptures as the Medo-Persian empire. Scholars have determined that the ram was considered a sort of mascot for the Medes and Persians, just as the lion was associated with the Babylonians. Since Daniel connects the Medes and Persians on the same beast, it is not logical to hold that the Medes and the Persians were two separate empires and that the Greek empire was the fourth empire of Nebuchadnezzar's earlier dream.

The Medes were at first the more dominant of the two groups. Later the Persians became more important. Thus, the Persian horn rose after the Median horn, and also became more prominent.

**DAN 8:4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.**

The Medo-Persian ram butted his way in three directions. He moved westward into Asia Minor. He moved southward into Syria and Palestine. He moved northward into the territory of Armenia. I find it interesting that neither the Medo-Persians nor the Greeks decided to expand their empires into the vast territories of India and China. It has been said that Alexander the Great did not think the land was worth the effort.

The ram in this vision is parallel to the bear in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar. Perhaps the student will remember that the bear had three ribs in its mouth. The three ribs may well correspond to the three directions in which the Persian empire expanded.

The beasts which could not stand before the strength of the ram are obviously nations. None were able to match

the power of the Persians. Cyrus and Darius pretty much had their own way for a number of years.

**DAN 8:5 And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.**

Time is compressed in Daniel's vision. After having had its way for a while, the ram was to meet another beast which was more than its match. The new arrival on the scene is a he-goat, or male goat. It came from the west to meet the Persian ram. And it came so rapidly its feet flew over the ground without even touching it.

Verse twenty-one identifies this he-goat, or rough goat as being the Grecian empire, and its notable horn as the first king of Greece. From our knowledge of history, there can be no doubt that the first king was Alexander the Great.

It was appropriate that Alexander the Great should be symbolized as a notable horn. No general in history accomplished more in the way conquering territory in a given amount of time than did this man. When he was just a lad in his teens, his father placed a small army under his command. By the time he was thirty-three, he had vanquished all of the countries he considered worth possessing.

Alexander the Great and Jesus Christ died at about the same age. Alexander conquered the physical world. Jesus conquered the spiritual principalities and powers. Jesus died on the cross. Alexander died from excessive drinking and debauchery. Jesus will forever shine with the glory of God. Alexander will always live in infamy.

**DAN 8:6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.**

Even as we read from Daniel’s account of the collision between the ram and the he-goat, we are caused to feel the ferocity of the battle. The ram did not wait for the goat to come to him. He rushed furiously upon him as he stood beside the river. The fierceness of men’s battles over power are almost beyond description. Shakespeare once said, “War is a game, which were their subjects wise, kings would not play at.” However, the subjects have never been wise enough to prevent the kings from playing their war games. Because of this multiplied millions of people have perished in a river of blood. The only answer is the doctrine of the Prince of peace and the principles of unselfishness practiced in his everlasting kingdom.

**DAN 8:7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.**

The he-goat was filled with anger toward the ram. We can understand this when we read of the attempts the Persians made to move into the area later represented as Greece. The Persians were not successful, but they made life miserable for the Greeks.

Then, when Alexander the Great summoned enough power to bring his Grecian army into Persia, the emotions ran extremely high. The motive of vengeance was in the forefront. The Persians were helpless before the might of Alexander’s forces.

**DAN 8:8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.**

The Grecian goat galloped over the known world at a pace unheard of in all of history. He ran through the land of the Persians as far as India. He passed through Syria and Palestine and even down into Egypt. Nevertheless, in the height of Alexander's power he was broken through a combination of his own folly and a malady which brought a high fever and death. The great horn of the Grecian goat was broken.

After Alexander's death, several vied for power. After a few years of conflict, four military men emerged as leaders in various parts of the empire. Ptolemy controlled Egypt. Seleucus governed Syria and the former area of Babylon and Assyria. Lysimachus gained control of Thrace and Asia Minor and Cassander ruled what had been Macedonia and Greece. It is accurate to describe the four notable horns as coming up toward the four winds of heaven.

**DAN 8:9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.**

The one of these from which the little horn arose was Seleucus. The little horn is almost certainly Antiochus Epiphanes. This evil man came to power in 175 B.C. and ruled until 163 B.C. He had been taken to Rome as a hostage, but returned to wrest the power away from Heliodorus.

Antiochus set out to force Greek customs upon

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the Jews. He wished to eliminate the Jewish religion completely and pressure them into the worship of Zeus. Josephus and the books of I and II Macabees tell of the demands he made in the attempt to accomplish his ends. Among the persecutions he visited upon the Jews were the following:

1. He forbade the keeping of the Sabbath on penalty of death.
2. He forbade the circumcision of Jewish boys again on penalty of death.
3. He decreed that anyone found with a copy of the law of Moses would be executed.
4. He dedicated both the temple and the city of Jerusalem to Zeus.
5. A sow (unclean for the Jews) was sacrificed on the altar of burnt offering.
6. The feast of Tabernacles was converted into a drunken feast honoring Bacchus, the god of wine.
7. The office of High Priest was auctioned off and thousands of Jews were murdered.

Antiochus Epiphanes name means “manifestation of glory.” Because of their hatred for the man, the Jews referred to him as Antiochus Epimanes which means Antiochus “the madman.”

DAN 8:10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

One’s first impression of this verse is that Antiochus Epiphanes somehow attempted to influence angelic beings. There are reasons, however, to see the host of heaven as dedicated Jews. Antiochus succeeded in forcing many of the Jews to deny their faith. We are told this went so far as to enter into the activities of the gymnasium

where the games were at times played in the nude. It is recorded that some of the Jewish males made an effort to hide their circumcision to avoid persecution.

Some of the modern critics see this passage as evidence of mythological beliefs which connected the stars to the gods. This is not the meaning of the passage. The stars of this verse are no doubt those who shone brightly in their positions in the Jewish religion. Antiochus was able to induce some of the bright lights among the Jews to turn their back on their previous enthusiasm for Jehovah.

Not only did Antiochus cause these luminaries to dim their lights. He took great pleasure in humiliating them, thus stamping upon them.

DAN 8:11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down.

Not satisfied with his attack upon the individual Jews, Antiochus sought to embarrass God himself. It was God who had commanded the building of the sanctuary and the offering of sacrifices. The arrogant king demanded that these sacrifices be discontinued and that the sanctuary itself be polluted with sacrifices to false gods. Although he did not actually demolish the temple, he did render it unfit for the worship of Jehovah.

DAN 8:12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

It was necessary that Antiochus have considerable power to enforce his decrees. God allowed him to amass

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this power because of the transgressions of the Jews. He achieved a large degree of success in his efforts. God was extremely unhappy with the spiritual condition of Israel at this time. One of God's often repeated techniques for punishing Israel for their unfaithfulness was to bring an oppressor upon them. He did this often in the time of the Judges. He also did it through the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

Men would do well to learn how intensely serious God is about transgression of his will. As true as night follows day, men of every age will find themselves captivated if they allow truth to be ignored. Every nation which has had the opportunity to hear the truth and has rejected it has descended into a lesser civilization. Consider Egypt, Asia Minor, Palestine, France, England, Germany and others. America will be no exception!

While the Jews were being punished for their sins, Antiochus was enjoying a temporary prosperity. Through the inspiration of God, Daniel was able to prophesy these events which took place several centuries later.

**DAN 8:13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?**

The word "saint" here means holy one. Daniel is being allowed to hear a conversation between two spiritual beings of some type. One of them asked the other just how long the terrifying conditions of the punishment God had brought upon Israel would last. How long would the temple be under the control of the heathen king, and how long would God's people, Israel, be walked upon by their

persecutors? How long would it be that they would be unable to sacrifice to Jehovah in the temple?

**DAN 8:14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.**

The answer to the question was that God's indignation would be visited upon the people for a period of two thousand and three hundred days. After that time, the sanctuary would be cleansed and sacrifices could be resumed.

This is one of the most difficult passages in the entire book of Daniel. The two thousand and three hundred days do not match obvious historical periods, nor do they match with other prophetic time symbolism. Most commentators make a few remarks which they admit are doubtful, and then they admit their inability to solve the mystery of this time period.

The word which the King James translates as days would be literally translated as evenings-mornings. Some have held that this is 2,300 days, as in Genesis 1 where it is said the evening and the morning were the first day, etc. Others have seen each individual morning and evening separately, with 2,300 half days or 1150 days.

There is difficulty in that nothing of historical significance can be seen beginning and ending with either of these literal time periods. I have not found any satisfactory period of persecution which fits. Nor have I read from any commentator who has found such.

Another possibility is to compare this time period with the seven years which seems to indicate completeness in the prophetic works. The difficulty here is that the 2,300 days is less than seven years. The Jewish year was 360 days. Seven times 360 days is 2520 days. If we consider

a comparison between the 1150 days and the 1260 days mentioned both in Daniel and in Revelation, we are still left with a discrepancy.

The best solution I can see is to think of the 2,300 days as a little less than a full measure of divine wrath. This would make it terrible, but not unending. Israel would thus survive the ordeal.

I must make note of one other position which has been promoted by the Seventh Day Adventists. They apply the day-year principle to this scripture. The 2,300 days are thought to be 2,300 years. They believe the sanctuary mentioned here is the true tabernacle in heaven, mentioned in the book of Hebrews. Their calculations place the end of the 2,300 years in 1844, at which time they believe Christ entered into the tabernacle in heaven to cleanse it. I cannot accept this position because the scriptures teach Jesus entry into the Most Holy at the time of His death when the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom.

I must then join the list of commentators who confess their inability to speak with certainty on this verse.

**DAN 8:15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.**

Daniel was also left in a confused state. It has been suggested that Daniel sought for the meaning through his own logic which was insufficient. Daniel had prayed for help before in similar circumstances. Although the Bible does not say he prayed this time, I would certainly not be surprised.

As he sought for understanding, he saw something

which had the appearance of a man. It was not a man. It was the angel Gabriel, as the next verse proves.

**DAN 8:16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.**

Some person then spoke to Gabriel and gave him a command to help Daniel in his understanding of the vision. This could have been God, speaking with the voice of a man. It could have been another angel.

**DAN 8:17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.**

When Gabriel approached Daniel, the prophet was made to realize his own corrupt condition. Both Isaiah and Ezekiel had similar experiences, as did John in the book of Revelation. Better scholars than myself have said the original Hebrew has Daniel falling to the ground as if he had fainted rather than simply dropping to the prone condition in an orderly manner.

Daniel is called "son of man" to indicate his inferiority to the glory before which he finds himself. Gabriel promised to help him understand these difficult matters.

There are two approaches to the statement made about the time of the end. Some are convinced this time of the end is not the climax of history. They understand the time of the end to be the end of God's punishment through the persecution of Antiochus (the little horn). Others are convinced the end spoken of here is definitely related to the time of Christ's return.

It may be possible that types are involved here and

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that the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes is typical of both the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in A.D. 70 and also of the little season which occurs just before the return of the Lord in judgment.

DAN 8:18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright.

Since this was described as a vision in the early part of this chapter, I believe the sleep mentioned here began when Daniel fell to the ground before the purity of the angel Gabriel. The prophet had apparently lost all of his strength and had to be rejuvenated. The same pattern held when John fell prostrate before the angel. In John's case, he was about to worship the angel and was told not to do so.

DAN 8:19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

The last end of the indignation is referring, at least primarily, to the indignation of God which caused him to allow Antiochus to punish Israel as he had. It seems that the latter part of the verse is saying There will be an end to the suffering when God has decided the chastisement is sufficient.

DAN 8:20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.

Again, the reader is reminded that Media and Persia are treated as one empire with two facets rather than

two separate empires. If two empires had been intended there would have been two animals rather than a single ram.

DAN 8:21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

These details have already been noted, but Daniel is just now receiving the interpretation of the vision.

DAN 8:22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

We have an added piece of information here which we have not previously noticed. The four kingdoms which were to arise in place of the one empire of Alexander the Great would fall short of having the same power which he had. The Greek empire would begin to crumble.

DAN 8:23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

This is the latter part of the period when the four kingdoms of Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy succeeded the one empire of Alexander. During the reign of these four, Antiochus Epiphanes began to manifest his power.

The transgressors who were come to the full are the Jews who had displeased God by their wicked ways. They had learned a hard lesson in Babylonian captivity, but had forgotten it by the time of this chastisement.

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Remember that this is more than three hundred years after the return from captivity.

The king of fierce countenance is Antiochus. His appearance was no doubt terrifying to the Jews upon whom he vented his anger.

He understood craftiness and deceit and made full use of both during his reign of terror. I wonder again if this may not be typical of the attitudes of those in power as the destruction of Jerusalem and in the time of the little season mentioned in Revelation.

**DAN 8:24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.**

No king is any more powerful than God allows him to be. Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar both learned this lesson. Antiochus name may be added to the list.

He was allowed to make life miserable for the Jews only because they had been a disobedient and stubborn people. Until Jehovah determined their punishment was complete, Antiochus was allowed to prosper and destroy them.

**DAN 8:25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.**

Until I began the present study of the book of Daniel, I had thought this verse indicated that under this persecutor the various craftsmen in the land were doing

well in their operations. This is not the meaning of the word craft in the passage. The word “craftiness” could well be substituted in the verse to make it a bit clearer. Antiochus outwardly declared his goal as peace, while his real purpose was the elimination of the Jews religion.

Antiochus made the mistake of shaking his fist in the face of God. The Prince of princes in this verse is not Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is God. As Gamaliel pointed out to those who were persecuting the apostles, it is unwise to be found fighting against God. Antiochus is reported to have died of madness after having failed to plunder the temple of Artemis in order to pay his soldiers.

**DAN 8:26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.**

As pointed out previously the events prophesied in this vision occurred many years after Daniel saw them. The return began in about 536 B.C. and Antiochus began his reign in 175 B.C. Certainly, it was many days. If the material is also typical of events toward the close of the Christian age, there are even more of these “many days.”

Daniel was told to seal up the vision. Many of the commentators deny that this means he was to keep it secret until the days of the fulfilment arrived. They believe it was to be open for study but was to be made secure in order that it not be destroyed. It is interesting, however to compare this verse with the one in Revelation which says Christ was to open a book which was sealed with seven seals, and that the time is at hand.

Compare also Daniel 12:9 which says, “Go thy way Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.”

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DAN 8:27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

I am not surprised that Daniel fainted and became sick. The vision was not a pleasant one. Israel had been in Babylonian captivity for many years. Daniel and his friends had no doubt looked forward to the time when the Jews would be released from their bondage and could return to what he calls the "glorious land." It must have been most discouraging to him to discover a time in the future when they would undergo such trials as he had seen.

We are reminded that Daniel held a place of prominence in the country of Babylon at this time. Though he still did not completely understand the meaning of the vision, even after the explanation by Gabriel, he realized he had an obligation to attend to the duties of his job.

One fascinating thing about prophecy is that it often becomes much clearer after it has been fulfilled. Some have claimed that no one can understand prophecy previous to its fulfillment. I deny this. Daniel knew Jeremiah had prophesied the release of Israel from Babylonian captivity after a period of seventy years. I also know that Jesus Christ will return in the clouds of heaven in like manner to that in which he left. And that I had better be ready!

Chapter 9

DAN 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

The ninth chapter of the book of Daniel has been a launching pad for a variety of conflicting religious views. The differences between premillennial and non-premillennial positions have come to the forefront with vim and vigor at this point.

Most students of the book of Daniel see the Darius mentioned here as being identical with the one mentioned in the first verse of chapter six. In the last verse of chapter five it is said that Darius the Median took the kingdom. This is followed in the first verse of chapter six by saying it pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty princes. Then we find here in the first verse of chapter nine that, in the first year of Darius, Daniel had been examining the works of Jeremiah the prophet. This Darius is said to have been of the seed of the Medes.

However, J.C. Whitcomb in his book on Darius the Mede wrote persuasively that the Darius of 5:31 and the Darius of 6:1 were two different persons. Dr. Rex Turner goes even farther. He believes the Darius of 9:1 was Darius Hystaspis, and was neither the one mentioned in 5:31 nor the one in 6:1. Dr. Turner's logic is that Daniel was examining the works of Jeremiah toward the end of the seventy years of captivity, and that he was counting from the actual ruin of the city in 486 B.C. rather than from the time of the first deportation when Daniel and a small number of others were taken in Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of 606 B.C. Dr. Turner believes Darius Hystaspis was ruling after 521 B.C. and that Daniel's prayer in this chapter was probably uttered about 516 B.C., 70 years

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after the 586 B.C. date. The accuracy of his position depends on whether Daniel's count began in 605 B.C. or in 586 B.C.

If Dr. Turner is correct, Daniel would have been an extremely old man at the time of the events in this ninth chapter. Assuming that Daniel was a lad of fourteen when he was taken to Babylon in 605 B.C., and that the seventy years were to be calculated from 586 B.C. we would have to add 19 yrs to 14 to arrive at his age when the seventy years began. He would have been 33 at that time. Seventy years later he would have been 103. This is possible, but highly questionable.

If this Darius is the one who took the kingdom at the time of the death of Belshazzar, we may be dealing with an earlier date for the events of the ninth chapter. He is called the son of Ahasuerus. This would aid in clarifying the issue if there were but one Ahasuerus. However, such is not the case. There may have been as many as three different kings named Ahasuerus. I tend to think the reference to the Medes indicates the Darius of 9:1 and the Darius of 6:1 are the same.

This Darius is said to have been made king of the realm of the Chaldeans. This may mean he was appointed by someone else. This could have been true if he was placed in his position by Cyrus when Babylon was overthrown.

**DAN 9:2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.**

At any rate, Daniel had become concerned about the possible end of the captivity. He had been reading from

the work of Jeremiah. Jeremiah had made some very clear prophetic statements about the duration of the captivity. God had said long before the captivity that the disobedience of Israel would lead to their dispersion and bondage.

The matter had become very serious in the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Isaiah predicted the sons of Hezekiah would be taken to Babylon and made eunuchs in the palace of the king.

*Isa 39:7 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.*

Jeremiah declared there was no way of avoiding the chastisement. Yet, after having served the seventy years, if they were ready to humble themselves Jehovah would cause them to be released.

In Jeremiah 25:10-11 we have the following:

*Jer 25:10-11 Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*

In Jeremiah 29:10 we read:

*Jer 29:10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.*

What books did Daniel have in hand? Certainly not the entire Old Testament. He was living before 500 B.C.

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The Old Testament prophecy did not come to a close until about 400 B.C. with the prophecy of Malachi. The books Daniel studied were very likely scrolls and may well have included only the work of Jeremiah.

DAN 9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

As we well remember, this was not the first time Daniel had set his face unto the Lord God. His insistence upon prayer to Jehovah had caused him to be cast into the den of lions. At that time he had turned his face toward Jerusalem and prayed several time each day. Although this is not mentioned in the present prayer, it is reasonable to believe it was still the case.

Fasting, sackcloth and ashes were the common means of demonstrating extreme penitence. Job sat in sackcloth and ashes. The Ninevites repented in sackcloth and ashes. Daniel was ready to approach God. He certainly did not wish to cut off the avenue of communication by being self-sufficient. He needed God and he was not hesitant to let his dependency be known.

DAN 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

Daniel was very much aware of the shortcomings of both himself and his people. He was ready to admit his sinful condition and place himself at the mercy of the Lord. He was fearful as he began his prayer. The only hope he had before such a great and powerful God was

that God would be merciful and would keep his side of the covenant, even though the Jews had not.

At the foot of Mount Sinai, God had asked the Israelites if they desired to make a covenant with him. He proposed that they keep his commandments and serve him. In turn, he would protect and bless them. He would be their God and they would be his people. Daniel's hope is that God will still be merciful to them, even though they have no right to expect such mercy.

DAN 9:5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

In as many ways as he can list, the prophet marked Israel's deficiencies. They were sinful. They were filled with iniquity. They were wicked. They were rebellious and they were disobedient. What else could be said?

DAN 9:6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

But he does say more! God had arisen early in the morning and had sent his prophets to them. Jeremiah had made that point very clear.

Jer 7:25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them.

Daniel included everyone in the confession. The guilt extended from the highest to the lowest. From the

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greatest of the kings to the least of the people, they were guilty. Take note that Daniel did not exclude himself. This is interesting in that God praised Daniel as one of three who could have saved only themselves from his wrath if they had been present in the day of his wrath.

*Ezek 14:14 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.*

Daniel's attitude is very often the case with the righteous. They are the ones who see their own sins most clearly. The lukewarm see themselves as righteous while the righteous grieve over their inadequacy.

**DAN 9:7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.**

The contrast was sharp between the righteousness and integrity of God and the wicked sinfulness of his people. Their shame and confusion was not the fault of God. From the pleasant land which had once been their habitation, they had been driven far off into many foreign countries.

Both the northern and the southern kingdoms were included in Daniel's confession. This was not merely a plea for the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. It encompassed all twelve of the tribes.

**DAN 9:8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.**

The kings and princes, as well as the lesser leaders of the people, had taken the lead in abandoning Jehovah. The common people had then followed in their footsteps. One might expect the leaders to have had superior vision and to have seen the consequences of their actions. Neither the leaders nor the people had demonstrated such wisdom.

**DAN 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;**

O how many times God had shed his mercies upon them! And how many times they had forgotten him when they were fat and secure!

Daniel was hoping against hope that God would once more show the same longsuffering which he had shown so many times before. This patient mercy had been one of God's basic characteristics in years gone by. Was there still a chance heartfelt confession and pleas would persuade him to forgive them again?

**DAN 9:10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.**

Over and over again, Daniel repeated his humiliating admission. God had said he would hear if they turned to him with penitent hearts. After Solomon finished the temple, he knelt down and prayed to God that if his beloved people were ever scattered abroad because of their sins, they might pray toward the temple and be heard, provided they humbled themselves. God replied to Solomon, saying he had heard his prayer.

*2 Chron 7:13-15 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.*

Daniel, no doubt, had this promise of God in his mind as he prayed so fervently for the forgiveness of the sins of he and his brethren. He was doing everything within his power to meet the requirements God had presented to Solomon.

**DAN 9:11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.**

The curse and the oath are found in Leviticus 26, and also in Deuteronomy 28 and 29. There, he explained both the blessings and the cursings. Blessings if they obeyed. Cursings if they rebelled. Captivity in a strange land was listed as one of the punishments for disobedience.

**DAN 9:12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.**

God had done exactly as he had said he would. His integrity was unbroken. He had promised rebellion would

result in them becoming a byword and a hissing unto all nations. They had rebelled. The evil which had been described had been poured out upon them. They had no one to blame but themselves.

The punishment was so severe that Daniel could not imagine it having ever been heaped upon any other people at any time. Nowhere, at any time, had anyone suffered as they had. The one hundred thirty-seventh Psalm tells of their terrible grief in Babylon.

**DAN 9:13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.**

Daniel was trying hard in the face of great odds. These punishments had been carefully laid before them before they ever entered the land of Canaan. They had rebelled and the punishments had been laid upon their backs. But, even now, after the seventy years were about to run their course, the people had not repented. What could be done?

**DAN 9:14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.**

I am reminded of the passage in Revelation where God is praised and his righteousness is admitted even though he had brought mighty Babylon down to a heap of smoking ruins (Rev. 19:1-2). God never punishes without providing sufficient warning of the consequences of disobedience. When he does punish, the punishment is justified.

**DAN 9:15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.**

In ancient days nations were associated with their own specific god or gods. If a nation was highly successful in war; if their children were numerous and healthy and their crops produced an abundant harvest, this was thought to be a sign of the power and prestige of their god. As other nations observed the prosperity or adversity of Israel, they either tended to respect or ridicule their God Jehovah.

Jehovah had delivered Israel from the power of the Egyptian Pharaoh. He had sustained his people through the wilderness wanderings and had driven their enemies out from before them as they conquered Canaan. Therefore, the name of Jehovah had been highly esteemed by many nations.

Rather than honoring their Lord, Israel had brought disdain upon the name of Jehovah by making it necessary for him to deliver them into the bondage of Assyria and Babylon. This was not because of his weakness, but because of their disobedience. As long as the captivity lasted, the name of Jehovah would be defamed.

**DAN 9:16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.**

Daniel begged that it might be in harmony with the righteousness of Jehovah to cease from venting his

fury and anger upon Mount Zion, and God's own city Jerusalem. As it was at the time of Daniel's prayer, Israel was a byword and a hissing before all nations. This was in contrast to what should have been the case. God intended that all nations should look toward his holy mountain for guiding light.

**DAN 9:17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.**

To cause his face to shine upon the desolate temple area would have been for God to change his face from frowns of anger and fury to a pleasant and radiant smile. Daniel was not pleading just for the sake of God's people. He was pleading that the people of Israel might once more flourish and thus bring honor and glory to the name of the Lord.

**DAN 9:18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.**

It is God's promise that he will ever hear the prayer of the righteous, though his face is turned away from the sinner. The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous (Prov. 15:29). Again, in John 9:31, Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

It was not that Daniel felt God was not aware of the suffering of his people. It was not that God did not see

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and hear. The prayer was that he might respond to their needs rather than turning his eyes and his ear away.

DAN 9:19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

The prophet closed his prayer with some of the most sublime intensity of feeling recorded anywhere in the Bible. It reminds us of Jesus words in the garden, If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. And again on the cross, “My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me.” Daniel deplored the ridicule which was aimed at Jehovah himself as a result of the lowly condition of his people Israel.

DAN 9:20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

Daniel found that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Even before he concluded his prayer, God was taking action in the heavenly places. Daniel had prayed in accordance with the will of Jehovah and Jehovah was ready to help him understand the plans which were ahead for Mount Zion, for the temple and for the people.

DAN 9:21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

God waits anxiously for man to react to his guidance. For nearly seventy years he had found it necessary to remove his blessings from a stiffnecked and hard hearted Israel. The period of captivity was now nearing an end and God rejoiced to hear the prayer of this righteous man confessing sin and asking for help.

Immediately, he sent Gabriel to communicate with Daniel. Someone has said that Gabriel would have to fly mighty fast to make the trip before some men had said all they could think of.

Angels are capable of appearing in various forms. Gabriel is called a man because he appeared in the form of a man. Gabriel had appeared to Daniel before to explain the vision of the ram and the he-goat. He had been told to help Daniel understand the vision at that time.

Gabriel came about the time of the evening oblation. This would have been about three a.m. A lamb was sacrificed early in the morning. Another was sacrificed in the evening.

Exod 29:38-39 Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even.

Of course the sacrifices had been discontinued with the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C. However, Daniel had continued to offer praise to God at that time of day, even though far off in the land of Babylon.

DAN 9:22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

The angel Gabriel is often listed as the one responsible

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for transferring very important information from God to man. It is true here and it was also true in the cases of Mary and Elizabeth as they were informed of the coming of births of John the baptist and Jesus Christ.

It is interesting that God used this method to inform Daniel of his intentions. He could have caused Daniel to have another dream. Instead, he chose to have Gabriel provide instruction. Still, the next verse tells us God considered what was to take place as a vision. Daniel is told he will be aided in considering the vision. Perhaps angels were even involved in the dreams of Daniel and Joseph.

**DAN 9:23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.**

The commandment mentioned here was a commandment from God for Gabriel to meet Daniel and explain matters which were related to Daniel's fervent prayer for God to remember his name and his people. Daniel was to be granted understanding which would extend far beyond what he had in mind during the course of his prayer. Daniel was concerned about the release of Israel from Babylonian captivity. God's answer would extend to the release of the captives of sin in the Christian age.

We humans know so little in comparison to the infinite understanding of the eternal God! Only the tip of the iceberg is visible to us here in the flesh. Job had terrible difficulty in understanding the horrible experiences to which he was exposed. Because God had such great affection for Daniel as a righteous servant, he decided to open the curtain to the throne room for a moment and allow Daniel to observe his plans.

**DAN 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.**

A period of time described as seventy heptads was decreed or determined upon the Jews. When that time has expired six things were to have been achieved. Each of these six things is directly connected with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Before moving into a discussion of the nature of the six matters, we must look at the time period. The word which is translated in the King James Version as weeks is heptads. Seven has been a number of completeness from the time of the creation itself. God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. The number seven, along with its multiples has been prevalent from Genesis to Revelation. We have the sabbath day, the seventy elders of Israel, the seventy years of captivity, the seventy times seven offenses which are to be forgiven if a man repent, the seven lamps, the seven thunders, the seven vials of God's wrath, etc.

It seems quite clear that the seventy sevens in this verse is not a period of 490 days. Nothing resembling the six things which were to be achieved took place within a year and a half of the time Gabriel appeared to Daniel. The heptads must refer to a period of time which extended until the sacrificial death of Christ

Since Daniel had been concerned with the seventy years of captivity which Jeremiah had prophesied would be visited upon Israel, it seems reasonable to see these seventy sevens as seventy sevens of years. Provided each of the heptads, or sevens was of equal length, this



would make a total of 490 years. I am beginning this discussion with that assumption. Difficulties involved in understanding the meaning of the last half of the seventieth heptad may cause us to alter this position later.

During the seventy heptads six things were to be accomplished. They were:

1. To finish transgression.
2. To make an end of sin.
3. To make reconciliation of iniquity.
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness.
5. To seal up vision and prophecy.
6. To anoint the Most Holy.

I am convinced each of these matters was achieved through the life and death of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. In my opinion those supposed scholars who fail to see the work of the Son of God in each of these six items have missed the mark.

We do need to remember that Gabriel is responding to Daniel's concern about the Jews and their sufferings in captivity. Each of these six items does bear a close relationship to the release of the Jews from their sufferings. However, the Jews are a part of humanity as a whole. The Jews could share in each of these blessings as each of the blessings was made available to every creature through the preaching of the gospel.

Number 1 To finish transgression.

There would, of course, be transgression until the second coming of the Lord. Nevertheless, in a very real sense, the transgression of the Jews would come to an end with their demise as a nation.

Number 2 To make an end of sin.

Through Christ, a way would be provided for the potential forgiveness of all sin. The Jews would not need to carry the guilt of sin forever. It could be removed.

Number 3 To make reconciliation for iniquity.

Iniquity separates men from God. But God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto him. The Jew would be included in this possible reconciliation.

Number 4 To bring in everlasting righteousness.

There was no everlasting righteousness during the Mosaic age. Christ is our righteousness, the everlasting righteousness of God. The Jews, like all other men, may share in that righteousness by uniting himself with Christ through hearing, believing, repenting, confessing and being baptized.

Number 5 To seal up vision and prophecy.

There are over three hundred prophecies in the Old Testament pointing to the Messiah. With the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father, those prophecies met their fulfilment.

Number 6 To anoint the Most Holy.

Jesus Christ is the Most Holy. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism in the Jordan. He was anointed as King of kings when he ascended to take his place at the right hand of the Father.

**DAN 9:25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.**

Daniel was then told the beginning point for the seventy sevens. It was to begin at the time a commandment went forth to restore and build Jerusalem. From that time until the appearance of the Messiah would be a period of sixty-nine heptads or four hundred eighty-three years, if our assumption of a heptad being seven years is correct.

The difficulty is that we do not know for certain which of several commandments is meant. The one which seems most likely at first thought is the decree of Cyrus which was issued in 538 B.C. The Bible mentions this event more than once.

Isaiah foretold of a ruler called Cyrus who would say the city and the temple would be built (Isa. 44:24-28).

*Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

Turning to 2 Chronicles 36:21-23 we read the following:

*To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.*

The book of Ezra, which immediately follows 2 Chronicles, begins with precisely the same thought (Ezra 1:1-4).

*Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place*

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help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

There is, however, a problem here. If we come down through time 490 years from 538 B.C., we arrive at 48 B.C. Clearly, the Messiah had not been born at that time, to say nothing of having been cut off for the sins of the world.

There are other possible beginning points for the 490 years. About eighty years after the decree of Cyrus, or 458 B.C., Artaxerxes Longimanus issued a decree to Ezra, giving him permission to teach the statutes and ordinances of the Law of God in Palestine (Ezra 7:25-26).

And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment (Ezra 7:25-26).

Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances (Ezra 7:10).

Thirteen years after Ezra had received his commission, approximately 445 B.C., Artaxerxes Longimanus gave Nehemiah a commission to build the walls and restore the city.

Neh 2:1-6 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was

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*before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.*

Since the commission to Nehemiah is specifically to build the city of Jerusalem and to replace its gates, some believe this should be the beginning point for the calculation of the seventy sevens. What happens then if we move down through time seventy years from this 445 B.C. decree? There are 445 years down to 0. Another 45 are required to reach the 490 year total. The four year error in the calendar would drop this back to A.D. 41. That is too late. Jesus was cut off in A.D. 29.

Suppose, then, that we begin with the 457 B.C. issuance of the decree to Ezra to establish the law of the Lord in Palestine. Now, we have 457 years B.C. We need another 33 to bring us to the 490 year total. Since the Messiah was to be cut off in the midst of the seventieth week, we are almost exactly on target for A.D. 29.

And so, we have difficulties with all three of the dates. Four hundred ninety years from 538 B.C. is far too early

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for the cutting off of the Messiah. Four hundred ninety years from 445 B.C. is about thirteen years late. Both of these dates look more reasonable in that each of those decrees dealt with the building of the temple and the city walls. Yet, the decree issued to Ezra, which said nothing about the temple or the city walls, fits the date almost exactly.

As in the case of the twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings in the last chapter, we are left scratching our heads. We seem so close to a breakthrough, and yet so far away!!

The seventy heptads were to be divided up into three subdivisions. The first of these was to be seven heptads; a period which would see the temple rebuilt during perilous times. By the year 516 B.C. the temple had been rebuilt. It had not been easy. The Samaritans presented all kinds of difficulties. Finally, the Jews became discouraged and allowed the work to come to a halt for many years. Only when Haggai and Zechariah shamed them for their lack of concern for the house of God did they finish the work. The times were perilous.

DAN 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The three score and two weeks, or heptads, only serve to show how much time intervened from the conclusion of the work on the temple until the glorious week of the Messiah. It is fruitless to search for any special significance in these sixty-two weeks. Adding the seven to the sixty-two gives a total of sixty-nine previous to

the anointing of Christ. According to the next verse, the Messiah would not be cut off right at the end of the sixty-ninth heptad, but in the midst of the seventieth heptad. He would be anointed at the beginning of the seventieth heptad and then would be cut off in the midst of it.

Christ was not to be cut off because of any sins of his own. He was to be bruised for our transgression and beaten for our iniquities. Some translators see this verse as saying he would be cut off with nothing of his own left to him. That was certainly the case. The disciples fled. His garments were parted among the soldiers. His mother was placed in the care of the apostle John. Even the Father in heaven had turned his face away for the moment, causing him to cry out, "Why hast thou forsaken me?"

The Messiah and the prince that shall come are two different persons. The language does not mean that the prince that shall come arrives during the seventieth week. It is possible for him to come after the seventieth week is completed. When he did come, he would bring people with him who would destroy both the city of Jerusalem and the temple. The end of the city and the Jewish nation was to arrive with a flood of Roman soldiers. The war was a furious one and lasted until the city was demolished and the temple leveled to the ground.

DAN 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Now we have a major point of disagreement among the various students of the scriptures. Was it the Messiah

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or the prince that was to come who would confirm the covenant? What covenant was it that was to be confirmed for one heptad? Was it the Messiah, or the prince that was to come who would cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease? Is the consummation mentioned the destruction of Jerusalem, or is it the end of time?

Ordinarily one would refer the pronoun to the nearest antecedent previous to it. If that is done here, the he who confirms the covenant would be the prince that was to come. However, note that the same he who confirms the covenant is the one who also causes the sacrifice and oblation to cease and because of the overspreading of abominations causes the temple area to become desolate until the consummation. All of these actions are clustered as a group.

Premillennialists believe these actions are caused by the prince who was to come. Others are insistent that these actions are brought about by the life and death of the Messiah. I believe it speaks of Christ and that the personal pronoun "he" refers back to the Messiah of verse 26. The entire vision is centered around the redemptive work of the Messiah. When Christ died on the cross, he caused the effectiveness of the oblations and sacrifices to cease. The blood of bulls and goats was no longer required. Jesus Christ actively and personally confirmed the New Covenant or New Testament for a period of three and one half years among the Jews. It was he who was responsible for the outpouring of desolation upon the city and the temple area because of the overspreading of abominations among the Jews.

The consummation is, I believe, not the end of the Christian age. It is the end of the Jewish age. The end of the Jewish nation came with a flood as Titus besieged it with his Roman army in A.D. 70.

One very interesting item is the last half of the

seventieth week. We are told that the Messiah was to be cut off in the midst of the seventieth week. Why then does the prophecy say that seventy weeks are determined upon the Jewish people? What was to happen during that last half of the seventieth week, and what was the historical point of termination for the entire seventy weeks? It seems that most exegetes have severe trouble with this last half week.

I would like to call your attention to the explanation given by Dr. Rex Turner, Sr. Dr. Turner suggests that the seventy weeks came to an end when the gospel began to be preached in earnest to the Gentiles. During the active three and one half year personal ministry of Christ, he gave the limited commission to his apostles. Even after his death, the apostles restricted their preaching to the Jews for some time. Two events mark the end of that restriction. One is the appointment of Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles. The other is the preaching of Philip to the Samaritans. Dr. Turner's suggestion is worthy of attention.

Another possibility is that the last half week of the seventy extends through the entire Christian age, until the return of the Lord. A period of time, times and half a time is mentioned in Daniel 7:24-27. If a year is a time, then a time, times and a half time would be three and one half years or half of seven years.

And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

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And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him (Dan. 7:24-27).

In Revelation 11:2; 11:3 and 12:6 this same time period is mentioned.

Rev. 11:2-3 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

Rev. 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

I believe the student of the scriptures should consider the possibility that this time, times and half a time refers to the entire Christian dispensation, extending from the death of Christ upon the cross to his return in judgment.

In conclusion, and in connection with the latter suggestion above, we should consider Jesus answer to the disciples questions about the end of the Jewish nation and the end of the world, as recorded in Matthew 24. Christ and his disciples were close by the temple when they mentioned to him the wondrous stones in the wall of the temple. He then told them the time would come when not one of those stones would be left on another. They were amazed, thinking such an event must only come to reality in the end of the world. Thus, they asked the Lord for details about three matters. First, the signs of his coming.

Second, the destruction of the temple. Third, the end of the world. The interesting thing about his answer is that he answered their one question as three. But, at the same time, he blended the three answers together until it is extremely difficult to tell when he was talking about the end of the Jewish nation and when he was talking about the end of the world.

Long years of studying the Biblical prophets has led me to notice overtones of the Christian age in many of their remarks. There is a certain type and antitype pairing which appears over and over. I find many such overtones in the study of the books of Daniel and Revelation. It is possible that Antiochus Epiphanes, the Roman general Titus, and the antichristian forces of Satan in the last days, may all teach us the same lesson. God allows the forces of Satan a short time to trample upon his people. About the time it seems that Satan has completed his triumph God intervenes and the faithful claim the victory. By this time we should recognize the recurring theme of the entire book of Daniel.

The kingdoms of this world will come and go, but the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is an everlasting kingdom which will never be shaken .

Chapter 10

DAN 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

The last three chapters of the book of Daniel pertain to matters which will affect his people in the latter days. Chapter ten is an introduction. Chapter eleven presents the prophecy itself. Chapter twelve serves as a conclusion.

Daniel experienced this vision in the third year of Cyrus. This means it took place about two years after the first group of Jews was given permission to return to Palestine. Some are concerned that this verse says Daniel saw the vision in the third year, while chapter one tells us Daniel lived until the first year of Cyrus. This is no problem. Chapter one does not say he died in the first year of Cyrus. It says he was still living when Cyrus began to rule.

Why is the name Belteshazzar mentioned? If Daniel wrote this book, why did he not simply refer to himself as Daniel and not use the Babylonian name which was given to him as a captive. I think the answer is that we are being told this Daniel is the same one who had suffered for over seventy years with the rest of his people. The name Belteshazzar tells us which Daniel it was.

Daniel was not hallucinating. The vision was true and was to come to reality. There is a similar statement in the Revelation where Jesus is said to be the true and faithful witness. Still, it would be a long time before the events of the prophecy would occur.

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Through the help of God, Daniel had gained an understanding of several previous visions and dreams. At this point he informed us that before God was through with him, he understood the significance of this vision also. This does not mean he understood the entire vision from the beginning. He did not. He had to receive divine assistance here just as he had found such necessary before.

**DAN 10:2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.**

We are not told why Daniel was mourning. There are two strong possibilities. First, it is likely that the word had come to his ears that those who had returned to Palestine had met resistance from the Samaritans and were not proceeding in the rebuilding of the temple as he had hoped they would.

It is also possible that Daniel was mourning over the sins of both he and his people. The vast majority of them had decided not to return to Palestine when they were given the choice. There are those who make a big point about Daniel apparently remaining in the land of the Medes and Persians while others returned. We should remember that Daniel was an official of the royal court and also was a man of over eighty years of age.

**DAN 10:3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.**

One could live for three weeks without eating the best of food. It seems that Daniel had denied himself the choicest of food and drink and only taken that which





would be necessary to maintain his body.

The bread eaten during the Passover season was sometimes called “bread of affliction (Deut. 16:3). As the Passover season approached, it is probable that Daniel began to mourn the condition of his people, and continued to mourn until several days after it had ended. After all, the people should have been prospering in Palestine for the entire time of the captivity. Instead, they were struggling to go back that land. Even after all the previous visions, Daniel still had reason to be concerned over what the future held for his kindred.

The anointing spoken of here was a cleansing procedure. One anointed himself before moving out into various social interactions. For three weeks Daniel had chastened himself before God.

**DAN 10:4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel;**

The fourteenth day of the first month of the year was the first day of the Passover week. The vision came on the twentieth day of the month. This means Daniel had begun his fast about a week before the Passover week started and continued it until three days afterward.

It is pretty much agreed that the Hiddikel was the river today known as the Tigris.

**DAN 10:5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:**

As he prayed, he looked upward and beheld a wondrous sight. A man appeared clothed in linen. Fine linen represented the most beautiful cloth available in

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his day. It was the fabric worn by the priests and also by the angels during their appearances before men. The area of the loins or hips of the man was encircled by a sash embroidered with gold. Uphaz is mentioned only one other place in the scriptures (Jer. 10:9). Usually fine gold is associated with the name Ophir.

DAN 10:6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

There is some disagreement as to what the color of the beryl was. Present day beryl is related to the element Beryllium and is related to emeralds.

The eyes and face of the man were like flashing lightning or burning torches. This would indicate penetrating power.

His arms and feet shone with the lustre of polished brass. The book of Revelation adds a fact which is not listed here. It speaks of the brass as if it were still shining from the heat of a furnace.

The voice of this man sounds like a vast multitude of people or like the roaring of a waterfall. I am told the Hebrew allows either phrase.

Who is this man? Some suggest Jesus Christ and believe this is another case of theophany, a manifestation of divinity. They base their position on the description of Jesus Christ found in the first chapter of Revelation.

Some hold that the man was Gabriel, since Gabriel had played such an important role in helping Daniel understand the earlier dreams and visions in this book.

Then there are those who believe this was another angel of a very high order similar to Gabriel and Michael.

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I lean personally toward the view that it was the same vision which John saw in the first chapter of Revelation; the Son of God. If not, then I believe Gabriel is the next most logical choice.

**DAN 10:7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.**

We are not told why the men who were with Daniel did not see the vision. We do know that something similar occurred when Saul saw the Lord on the road to Damascus, as reported in Acts 9:3. Saul was able to see and hear that which others could not.

Nevertheless, the others were aware that something awesome was taking place. They were terrified, and trembling with fear they attempted to hide.

**DAN 10:8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.**

Daniel experienced two changes as a result of the vision. That in him which would have impressed others turned to repulsiveness. Every bit of the strength which was in him melted away.

I see Daniel as taking note of the amazing contrast between himself and the purity and strength of the man who had appeared to him. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:25 The foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. We are also told God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. When sinful man is set beside absolute goodness, the beauty of

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holiness and infinite power, he has great reason to see himself as nothing.

DAN 10:9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

When he heard the voice of this majestic person, he lost consciousness and sunk to the ground with his face downward. Until he was commanded to rise, he had neither the power nor the desire to do so.

DAN 10:10 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

Daniel did not see the hand. He felt it touch him. Upon being touched by the hand, he found himself upon his hands and knees. This was the first step in returning to a upright position. If he had not been touched, he would not have had the strength to move from the ground.

DAN 10:11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

The next words must have been very welcome to the trembling prophet. He was told he was greatly beloved. Consequently, he is safe from destruction. He was commanded to understand the prophecy which was about to be revealed to him. That was the reason the man had been sent. Even though Daniel could rest assured of his

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safety, he still stood trembling like a puppy who is afraid of being punished for misbehavior.

He did have strength enough to rise from his kneeling position and stand.

**DAN 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.**

The next information provided to Daniel was that from the very first day of the three full weeks he had been praying, God had heard his prayer and had taken action to answer that prayer. The person in the vision had come because of his prayer.

Here is soothing advice for those who earnestly pray and think God does not know or care. He both knows and cares. His ears are open unto the righteous. But, it may be that for reasons known to him but not to us, he does not respond in a manner which we can perceive. We know so very little about the invisible principalities and powers of the spiritual realm. Dear reader, do not grow faint in making your petitions known to Jehovah. He will hear! And he will answer in his own way and in his own time.

**DAN 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.**

The prince of the kingdom of Persia is not the human ruler of this kingdom. It is someone far more powerful from the angelic world. No human would have the capacity

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to withstand the being Daniel saw in the vision. One angel was able to destroy 185,000 of the choice Assyrian soldiers in a single night. The prince who withstood the one in Daniel's vision had to be of superhuman ability.

This verse is the explanation to Daniel as to why it required twenty-one days from the time he began praying for him to receive a response to his plea.

After Michael came to his assistance it seems they were able to overwhelm the prince of the kingdom of Persia. Then, the man in the vision remained with the kings of Persia to assure that the victory was not reversed.

I cannot help but remember the words of Ephesians 3:8-10.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

There is a long war going on at the spiritual level. It is not a carnal warfare. It is waged in the heavenly places. Satan has rebelled against God and he has succeeded in taking a host of the angels with him. When these angels gain control of the affairs of a major empire such matters as we have been hearing about in this tenth chapter of Daniel take place. The war began before the fall in the Garden of Eden. It has continued from century to century. It will end when Christ has put every enemy under his feet and given the kingdom to the Father that he may be all in all.

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It is not correct to speak of the guardian angels of entire nations. Surely a guardian angel would seek the safety and security of the nation over which he was prince. The prince of the kingdom of Persia was doing just the opposite. He was leading the nation in rebellion against Michael and the man whom Daniel saw.

**DAN 10:14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.**

The man was ready to inform Daniel as to the future of the Jewish people, from the time of Daniel throughout the latter days. Daniel was told that the vision would cover a long period of time. The battle of the ages would not be concluded in a matter of months or a few short years.

The next question is the identity of the “latter days.” Are these the latter days of the Jewish nation, or are they the latter days preceding the final judgment? I am going to suggest that one of these is typical of the other. When Jesus was asked what would be the sign of his coming, of the destruction of the temple and of the end of the world, he left the readers wondering just when he was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and when he was talking about the end of the world.

Numerous times, in the prophets, the latter days refers to the Christian age. Here are a few examples.

*Gen 49:1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.*

*Num 24:14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.*

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Isa 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Hosea 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

Much of the book of Daniel describes the activities from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the crucifixion of Christ, the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the day of Pentecost and the destruction of the Jewish nation. At the same time the abomination visited upon the temple at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes seems typical of the desolation in the time of Titus, and the end of the Jewish nation seems typical of the end of the world.

DAN 10:15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

Daniel was still not able to speak. He simply stared at the ground in dumb silence. It is well that we recall the reputation Daniel had previously established for unfolding mysteries. When all of the wise men of the courts of Babylon and Medo-Persia were incapable of giving explanations, Daniel had been able to do so. When he and his three brethren were examined by the king after their three year training period at the beginning of the captivity, Daniel and his friends were found to be ten times wiser than the others. In spite of this Daniel now found himself stricken dumb before the one who spoke to him. I think this is further corroboration that the man was more than just an angel.

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**DAN 10:16 And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.**

Someone then touched the lips of the prophet. Since the one who touched him is said to have had the similitude of the sons of men, I believe it is the same one who later called himself the Son of man. I think it may also be the same one who walked in the fiery furnace and the one who walked amidst the candlesticks as reported in the first chapter of Revelation.

The touching of his lips gave Daniel strength and courage enough to speak a few words. He called the man Lord. This was the same title Abraham used in addressing the one who remained with him after the other two had gone down into Sodom. I believe Daniel considered his visitor to be of divine nature. Daniel summoned barely enough strength to tell the man his sorrow was so great and his strength so small that he had been silenced.

**DAN 10:17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.**

Daniel felt that he had no right to hold a conversation with one so much greater than himself. Many of us have been in a somewhat similar position, though in a smaller scale. I recall the first three minute speech I was assigned to make in college after coming almost straight off the farm. I truly wondered if I would be able to utter a single word when the appointed time arrived. Daniel's problem was a hundred fold greater than mine.

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DAN 10:18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

I cannot determine whether or not it was the same being who touched Daniel each time. We are not told it was another. It is highly likely that it is the same one. Each time he has the appearance or likeness of a man. Each time Daniel is touched strength is added to him. But the language does not eliminate the possibility that more than one are involved. If it truly is a theophany, then we are no doubt limited to the Son of God.

DAN 10:19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Repeatedly, Daniel is encouraged to be comfortable and to be strong. He finally reached the point that he was able to receive the prophetic information which the man was prepared to offer him. The title "Lord" is still applied.

DAN 10:20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

If I had dealt with every quibble the sceptics wish to make, this commentary would be a good bit longer than it is. Most of them are not worth the time and paper to answer them. This time the critics accuse the author of the book of being redundant. Why ask Daniel whether

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he knows why the man appeared to him since this had already been explained? After serving as a public school teacher for many years, I can assure you that such a question is quite in order. One does not explain a matter once and then assume it is understood. “Do you understand” is one of the most often asked questions in the arsenal of any teacher.

The being who appeared to Daniel had been delayed by the opposition of the prince of Persia some three weeks before he was able to come in answer to Daniel’s prayer. He had finally decided it was possible to leave that scene long enough to communicate with the prophet. It would soon be necessary for him to return to the task of restricting that prince. After leaving Daniel, it would be necessary for him to give attention to the prince of Greece.

More than one of the previous visions had presented the successions of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. These were to be followed by a Kingdom of God which would never be destroyed. The kingdoms and empires of men rise and fall. Often they oppose and hinder the people of God. They must be supervised by the providence of God in order that his purposes be attained. As soon as Medo-Persia declined in power, Greece would ascend to prominence. Daniel’s visitor would still have work to do.

**DAN 10:21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.**

Before the visitor left, he would reveal matters which were foreseen as truth in the records of Jehovah. It is doubtful that the use of the word “scripture” here is

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intended to speak of the prophets of the Old Testament. The writing or scripture is more apt to be that which is recorded in the mind of God; that which is foreknown by him; that which will surely come to pass.

The statement that there is none that holdeth with me in these things could refer to support in the fight against the princes of the Persians and the Greeks, or it could refer to knowledge of the truth of God's scripture. I believe it refers to the knowledge of that which is to come. If that is the case, no other was able to reveal these truths as efficiently as either the visitor or Michael.

Notice that Michael is called your prince. This is not the only time Michael is referred to as the prince of God's people. Consider Daniel 10:13, Daniel 12:1, Jude 9 and Revelation 12:7.

Dan 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Dan 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Jude 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

Michael is no doubt assigned to lead a multitude of

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angels in the supervision of the welfare of God's people. In tending to this assignment, he must see that the forces of Satan are kept under control. These forces sometimes appear under the influence of other angelic princes such as the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece.

The providence of God is one of the major themes of the entire book of Daniel. God knows what is taking place on earth. He hears the prayers of the saints. He has an organization which insures the welfare and ultimate victory of the faithful. Our part is to trust and obey. The records in the books of Daniel and Job assure us God will do the rest.

## *Chapter 11*

**DAN 11:1 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.**

A number of commentators believe the first verse of this chapter is more appropriately attached to the previous chapter. I do not see this as a major point.

The next question with which we must be concerned is whether the speaker strengthened Darius or whether he strengthened Michael. We must remember that Darius was instrumental in encouraging the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem by the returning Jews. To strengthen Darius was to support the general purpose of Jehovah in returning the Jews after their long period of chastening in Babylon.

Again and again, we see the invisible spiritual warfare going on behind the scenes as God intervenes in the political affairs of the nations. The wise student of history will not overlook such powerful forces. Many otherwise inexplicable changes in the current of world events become understandable when such supervision on the part of Jehovah is factored in. As a couple of examples from the time I am writing, I cite the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union.

**DAN 11:2 And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.**

Much of the entire book of Daniel is given to providing Daniel an overview of the destiny of the Jewish people

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until the time of the end. A great deal of debate hinges on whether the time of the end is the time of the end of the Jews as a nation, or the time of the end of the world. In the present discussion, the emphasis seems to be placed on the condition of the Jews during the repeated conflicts between the Ptolemaic and Seluecid rulers who occupied the territories north and south of the land of Canaan.

I readily admit that I feel uncomfortable with the assignment of specific historical events to the numerous symbols found in this chapter of the book of Daniel. I have avoided making such specific assignments in my comments on the book of Revelation, and I believe one can readily build a complete false system upon such assignments. At the same time, I feel such assignment is more valid here than in the book of Revelation. The symbolism and the historical entities and events seem to fit much more acceptably in Daniel than they do in the Revelation.

The present day item by item comparisons accepted by the majority of students hearkens back to the time of Porphyry. Porphyry was a bitter antagonist of Christianity who lived about 250 A.D. This man noted the hand in glove fit between the prophecies of the eleventh chapter of Daniel and the events of the wars between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid rulers. Rather than to admit the validity of the prophecies, Porphyry contended this was proof that the book of Daniel must have been written after these wars took place.

The powerful scholar Jerome would have none of this argument. He agreed with Porphyry that there was a remarkable parallel between the prophecies and the events; however, Jerome argued that this was evidence for the genuineness of the prophecies.

Porphyry's argument will not hold. All that needs to be presented to ruin his stand is that the complete book of

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Daniel was included in the Septuagint translation which was completed before a number of the events prophesied in the book. The Septuagint was translated about 250 B.C. The persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes took place nearly one hundred years before that.

As I said, I still do not feel completely comfortable concerning all the details of the comparisons. Nevertheless, I will go along with the majority since it seems even the critics of the scriptures seem to be silenced by the close parallel.

The verse at hand indicates three kings were to stand up, followed by a fourth who would be known for his riches. Darius was the king standing when Daniel received this information. We look then for three kings following Darius. The three may well be Cambyses, Smerdis and Darius Hystaspis. The fourth ruler who was to be known for his riches appears to be Xerxes. Xerxes is the Ahaseurus of the time of Esther (Ezra 4:6).

**DAN 11:3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.**

This mighty king who was to stand up and rule with great dominion according to his will fits well with the reign of Alexander the Great. Alexander so completely conquered the known world that he is reputed to have wept when there was nothing left worth conquering. The report is that his soldiers rebelled at moving farther into India because the spoils were not sufficient to justify the effort.

The exploits of Alexander the Great were detailed in the discussion of chapters seven and eight. All that remains is to underline the fact that he was able to exert his will over all who stood in his way. Few men in history have dominated so completely.

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DAN 11:4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

I am told that the language of this verse speaks of his kingdom being broken up abruptly, even at the moment when he stands victorious over all. Alexander did not last long. His life of excess caught up with him. Drunken parties and other excesses led to his death at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three.

Alexander the Great had two sons who stood to inherit his empire. Both of these sons were murdered, leaving him without a successor to the throne. At his death there was a power struggle among about twelve of his generals. After a period of time, four of these generals survived and divided the empire among themselves. The four were Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Antigonus.

DAN 11:5 And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

Ptolemy ruled Egypt and southern Syria. He had a very powerful general called Seleucus who later became stronger than he. Seleucus ultimately became ruler over a very large territory east and north of the Mediterranean Sea. The descendants of Seleucus are identified in much of this chapter as kings of the north. The descendants of Ptolemy are labeled as kings of the south. As these two sets of rulers sought to dominate one another, they trampled rough shod over the “pleasant land” of Canaan.

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**DAN 11:6 And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.**

I understand the “end of the years” to mean “after a number of years.” As time rolled by, Ptolemy I was succeeded by Ptolemy II, and Seleucus was succeeded by his son, Antiochus I. In 272B.C. Ptolemy II invaded Syria and was defeated. For several years Syria and Egypt were at odds with one another. When Antiochus II succeeded his father Antiochus I, open hostilities broke out again. A restless peace was declared in 252 B.C. Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II was then married to Antiochus II. Ptolemy II apparently thought this would give him a degree of power in Syria. It did not. Neither Berenice nor Ptolemy II were able to accomplish what the Egyptian monarch desired. Antiochus II had been married to Laodice before his marriage to Berenice. At the time of the marriage, he had put away Laodice to whom he was already married. When Ptolemy II died, Antiochus divorced Berenice and took Laodice back. Laodice feared that Antiochus might go back to Berenice. It is reported that she had Antiochus poisoned, and then caused her son Seleucus II Callinicus to murder both Berenice and her son so Seleucus II could take the throne.

**DAN 11:7 But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:**

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Ptolemy II was succeeded by Ptolemy III (Eurgetes). This man was the brother of Berenice and thus he was a branch of her roots. When it was learned that Berenice had been murdered, along with her son, the Egyptians raised an army and invaded Syria. The Egyptians were very successful in this battle and Laodice was put to death.

DAN 11:8 And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north.

The Egyptians took a number of captives from Syria, along with thousands of idols made of precious metals.

DAN 11:9 So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

Having sufficiently punished the Syrians, the king of Egypt went back to his own land of Egypt.

DAN 11:10 But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress.

The sons who were stirred up must necessarily be the sons of the king of the north, or the Seleucid ruler of Syria. A great Syrian army passed through Palestine and attacked Egyptian fortresses in Gaza and Raphia.

DAN 11:11 And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight

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**with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.**

At first the Egyptian king was satisfied with his victory and took little heed of the Syrians. Then, when he found they had moved through Palestine and were coming closer and closer to Egypt proper, he gathered a great army and challenged the Syrians at Raphia. The two armies were each estimated about 70,000 infantry men, plus horsemen and elephants. The Egyptians inflicted a clear defeat upon the Syrians.

**DAN 11:12 And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.**

When Ptolemy IV had embarrassed the Syrians, he retired to Egypt to continue his life of luxury. Military strategists see his failure to follow up on his victory as a fatal mistake. He did not take advantage of the circumstances.

**DAN 11:13 For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.**

The Syrian ruler, Antiochus III, built up another army and repeated his onslaught through Palestine and toward Egypt.

**DAN 11:14 And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the**

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robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

Antiochus had help in this invasion. He seems to have had the assistance of the Macedonians, as well as support from some of the Jews of the land of Palestine. The “robbers of thy people” may well be Jews who saw an opportunity to ally themselves with Antiochus III in order to share in the spoils.

DAN 11:15 So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

Antiochus III moved through Palestine with little resistance. Fortified cities fell before him and the Jews had insufficient strength to hinder his progress through the “pleasant land.”

DAN 11:16 But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

The “him” of the first part of this verse is the chosen people as mentioned in the previous verse. Antiochus would be able to do anything he wished without fear of opposition from the Jews. He was to take complete control of the land of Palestine.

DAN 11:17 He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give

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**him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.**

Antiochus III then attempted to gain control of Egypt by giving his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy in marriage. Ptolemy was but a child at the time and it was several years before the marriage was consummated. The alliance did not work out as Antiochus III had hoped. Cleopatra sided with her husband rather than her father.

**DAN 11:18 After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him.**

Antiochus decided to turn his attention toward the Grecian islands and extend his power in that direction. Rome declared war on him and Antiochus was soundly defeated.

**DAN 11:19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.**

Antiochus then retreated into Syria where Rome demanded that he pay heavy taxes. In his efforts to raise the money, he plundered the temple of a goddess. He and a number of his soldiers were killed and his life was ended in disgrace.

**DAN 11:20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.**

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The successor of Antiochus III was Seleucus Philopator. He sent his tax collector, Heliodorus, to ransack the temple treasures. Heliodorus is said to have been scared off by a vision of some sort. Later Seleucus mysteriously disappeared and it is thought Heliodorus may have poisoned him.

DAN 11:21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

The vile person is Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He referred to himself as the glorious one. God referred to him as a vile one. He was not in the royal succession and therefore the honor of the kingdom was not given to him. He found it necessary to obtain it through deception.

Flattery is a powerful instrument in the hands of an expert. Antiochus Epiphanes was an expert. He accumulated a great deal of power and is considered by Jews, even today, as one of the most despicable persons who ever lived.

DAN 11:22 And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.

Those who stood in Antiochus path was swept away as if by the current of a great flood. This included, for a time, even the forces of Egypt.

The prince of the covenant would necessarily be a very important and influential figure among the Jews. The covenant referred to here was the Old Testament covenant between God and his chosen people. Some

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believe the prince of the covenant was a High Priest called Onias III.

**DAN 11:23 And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.**

Antiochus had the ability to inspire trust in many people. Then, when the time was right, he would seize greater and greater influence. He began with the comparatively small nation of Syria and was able to build his position up to immense power over Palestine and even into Egypt.

**DAN 11:24 He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.**

The fat places of the provinces are those of the wealthiest circumstances. By gaining plunder from some and giving it to others, Antiochus was able to gain the favor of many supporters. For a time he would be able to overcome strong holds with his deceptive actions.

**DAN 11:25 And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.**



When Antiochus decided the time was ripe, he determined to turn the full force of his power against Egypt. Ptolemy met Antiochus with a vast army; however he was unable to resist the power of Antiochus. Part of the reason for Ptolemy's failure was that his supposed allies turned against him.

**DAN 11:26 Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.**

Those who fed of the portion of his meat were those upon whom Ptolemy had depended for aid. The Egyptian army was then overwhelmed and multitudes of them lost their lives.

**DAN 11:27 And both of these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.**

Apparently Antiochus made an agreement with the king of Egypt that would allow him to remain as ruler, while at the same time turning over much of the wealth of Egypt to the Syrians. This agreement was destined to fail.

**DAN 11:28 Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.**

Antiochus had a lasting hatred for the Jews. As he returned to Syria with his forces, we are reminded of his animosity toward them. This attitude was to erupt in viciousness after a short time.

**DAN 11:29 At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.**

After a brief time Antiochus decided to move again into Egypt. Since he had done according to his will previously, he felt he could do so again. It was not to be so. This time the outcome was disastrous to him.

**DAN 11:30 For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.**

The Romans became concerned about Antiochus exploits in Egypt. They decided to send ships to Egypt to turn him back. Chittim is said to be another name for Cyprus. It seems that Cyprus was a naval base for the Roman fleet. The Septuagint version has Romans in this verse rather than Chittim.

The account which I give next is found in every commentary I have examined. Since it has been so widely discussed, I hope it is a true account.

As Antiochus moved into Egypt, a Roman official is said to have met him and demanded his exit from the country. Antiochus is reported as having asked for some time to think about it. The Roman official is then supposed to have drawn a circle around Antiochus in the sand and advised him to make his decision before he stepped out of the circle. As the account goes, Antiochus left Egypt in raging anger and vented this anger against the Jews while returning to Syria.

To have intelligence with those who forsake the holy

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covenant is to enlist their cooperation in persecution of those who were faithful to God. Antiochus succeeded in turning some of the cowardly Jews to his side.

DAN 11:31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Antiochus had sufficient military power to do just about as he pleased. In every way he could imagine, he desecrated the temple. This resulted in the halting of the morning and evening sacrifices. In addition, he is said to have sprinkled the broth of swine throughout the temple and to have set up an alter to Jupiter in the place of that of Jehovah. This is believed to be the abomination that maketh desolate.

Now this is interesting, because Christ referred to the desolation of abomination spoken of by the prophet Daniel. There is no doubt Christ was pointing to the desecration brought about by the Roman armies under Titus in A.D. 70. I conclude that the desolation of the temple by Antiochus was typical of the desecration which was to be visited upon the temple when the Jewish nation came to an end.

DAN 11:32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

God was highly displeased with the Jews who allowed themselves to be corrupted by the flattery of Antiochus. In contrast, he prophesied that some would be strong enough to resist this flattery. They would become recognized for

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their faith and courage. This came to pass when Judas Maccabeus led a sizable number of Jews in throwing off the oppression of the Romans. These courageous men are still honored by the Jews today for their bravery.

**DAN 11:33 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.**

There is a sharp contrast between the way God's faithful promote their cause and the manner in which men such as Antiochus forge forward. If God had chosen to defeat Antiochus at the time we are discussing with force, he could have called upon ten thousand angels. Instead, he depended upon a few loyal teachers. The teachers fought valiantly with their principles of truth. In the face of death by both sword and fire, and also being cast into prison with the loss of their possessions, they suffered much.

Education was the method of Christ. They that live by the sword shall die by the sword. Temporarily, the sword of steel may win. Eternally, the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God will prevail.

**DAN 11:34 Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.**

I do not know what the nature of the little help was. The later uprising of Judas Maccabeus and his family has been suggested as the source of the help. However, this appeared later, and it seems inaccurate to call it a "little" help. The relief under the Maccabees was more than a little.

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DAN 11:35 And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

The suffering of the faithful would not last forever. For those who endured unto the end, or were faithful unto death, the consequences of their tribulation would be spiritual strength and approval before their Maker. God works on his own schedule. His schedule did not call for swallowing up Antiochus and his soldiers with an earthquake, or raining fire upon them from heaven.

There is a similarity between this verse and Revelation 6:9-11.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

DAN 11:36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

There is great difficulty from verse thirty-six to the end of this chapter. Some of the things which are said about

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this powerful king do not fit Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This causes different channels of explanation. There are those who try desperately to force an application to Antiochus. There are others who believe this king is a powerful individual who shall appear in the last days of the Christian age and to whom they refer as the Antichrist.

There are problems either way. I doubt seriously if the antichrist of the New Testament is an individual. John defines antichrist as the man who denies Jesus has come as the Son of God in the flesh. He states that there are many antichrists and that such antichrists existed even in his day. Notice the following references.

*1John 2:18-19 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

*1John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

*1John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

*2John 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

I consider the antichrist to be a spiritual composite similar to the "man of God" which refers to any man who serves God loyally. The antichrist would then be

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any man who denies Jesus as the incarnate Son of God. This, however, would not cancel out the possibility that Antiochus was a type of antichrist.

I see no great difficulty in applying verse thirty-six to Antiochus. The Jews were unable to successfully oppose his willful ways. The name Epiphanes which he applied to himself indicates his appetite for exaltation. The man saw himself as more powerful than any god, including Jehovah. It is true that he honored Jupiter by placing an idol in the temple area. Some see this as no objection at all, since he may well have associated himself with Jupiter.

Antiochus would be allowed to blaspheme and prosper for a season. When the indignation God had determined against the Jews had run its course, Antiochus would lose his power.

DAN 11:37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

In verse thirty-seven we begin to run into complications. This king is said not to regard the god of his fathers. This sounds like he was a Jew. Antiochus was not a Jew. The term “God of his fathers” is used numerous times throughout the Old Testament to refer to Jehovah.

I think, however, that the use of this phrase may well be just a circumstance in which it applied to Antiochus in a different manner than it did to the Jews. Antiochus may well have been of such an independent nature that he refused to respect the gods which his ancestors honored. The word God is capitalized in the King James version which is usually done when the translators believed it referred to Jehovah. But, I am not sure the capitalization is justified here.

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What is meant by saying this king would not regard the “desire of women?” Some commentators explain this as something which women desire. Others believe it to be the desirability of women. There are still others who consider the “desire of women” to be the Messiah. Let’s say just a word about each of these positions.

Many women in the days of Antiochus worshipped a god called Tammuz. Tammuz would then have been the desire of women in that they were attracted to him as an object of worship.

Those who explain this “desire of women” as being the desirability of women see Antiochus as one who had no respect for womanhood. Where even the vilest of men usually pay some honor to women, Antiochus may have had a complete absence of this quality.

The reproach among Jewish women because of barrenness was proof of the desire they had to be found in the lineage of the coming Messiah. If this is the true explanation, Antiochus would have had no concern for either pregnant Jewish women or for their children.

It seems that only one thing dominated the mind of Antiochus; the thirst for prominence.

**DAN 11:38 But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.**

In the place of the God or gods other men worshipped, Antiochus would have set the god of force. While his ancestors would have offered their gold and silver to their gods in the form of idols, this man used his silver and gold to bribe others, to buy weapons and to pay soldiers.



**DAN 11:39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.**

God would allow Antiochus to prevail over the strongest of fortifications through his god of force. He and his cohorts would revel in the glory accumulated by their philosophy of life. They would succeed in dominating the entire territory.

**DAN 11:40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.**

The complications deepen in these last six verses of the chapter. The “him” of this fortieth verse naturally looks back to the king of the previous verse. If this is Antiochus, then Antiochus can no longer be the “king of the north” as we have been looking at him in his conflicts with the Egyptian “king of the south.”

The king of the north and the king of the south in this verse seem to gang up on “him.” In spite of the resistance from the king of the north and the king of the south, this king continues to do his will. His armies enter into various countries and overflow across them.

Or is it the king of the north who enters into the various countries and whose armies overflow them? If that is the case, we must consider the possibility that the king of the north is the Roman empire. As we well know, Rome became increasingly powerful as God allowed it to

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pave the way for the King of glory, whom it later was to meet head on!

The longer I study these closing verses of chapter eleven, the more I think we are looking at the same sort of thing which is found in various portions of the law and the prophets. An event, or series of events in the time of the prophet foreshadows that which is to come. Such can be seen in the entry of the High Priest into the Most Holy, or the prophecy of the virgin birth found in Isaiah 7:14. Until the Christ came, Isaiah's prophecy would be as difficult to comprehend as these verses of Daniel. After his birth, the shadows turn to reality. The same is true of the entry of the High Priest into the Most Holy. Before the rending of the veil between the Holy and the Most Holy at the time of Christ's death, the shadows obscured the later event. Afterward, we know precisely that toward which God was leading us.

I believe the obscure nature of these verses in Daniel will become clear in the last part of the Christian age. Throughout the entire Christian dispensation antichristian forces will do battle with Christ and his church. At times these forces will be found in the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Again, they may come to the forefront in atheistic Communism or Humanism. Repeatedly, they will run roughshod over the remnant of the woman's seed, as pictured in the latter half of the book of Revelation.

DAN 11:41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

If this latter view is correct, the glorious land no longer represents earthly Canaan. It is the Kingdom of God. The antichristian forces dominate nation after

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nation. The wicked philosophies of Satan will be prevalent in the general attitude of these nations toward the Word of God. Pride and lust will win the day. The horrors of the first chapter of Romans will spread across the earth.

The reason Edom, Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon escape is that they were the continual enemies of Israel. They are in sympathy with the purposes of antichrist. (Note that I did not say the antichrist. This verse would then be saying those organizations which proved themselves to be the persistent foes of the "Israel of God" would be useful to the "him" of these verses.

**DAN 11:42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.**

Egypt was the land of power and great riches in the days of the battles between the Seleucid and Ptolemaic rulers. Such power and riches would be made available to the antichristian power.

**DAN 11:43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.**

The entire area surrounding the city of God would be under the control of this enemy of righteousness. It would appear that the camp of the saints was doomed.

**DAN 11:44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.**

Any rumblings of opposition from any part of the world would catch his attention and he would quickly move to extinguish such disturbances. The world was to wait with held breath for his next command.

**DAN 11:45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.**

The glorious holy mountain may well be the one Isaiah speaks of when he says,

*Isa 2:2-3 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

I remind you the book of Revelation talks about a time when there will be no more sea. The sea in prophetic language seems to mean a heaving mass of confused people of various kindreds, tongues, tribes and nations.

This the antichristian power would seek to invade the very church itself in the effort to destroy the people of God. The effort will not succeed. Both 2 Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 20:8-9 tell of the sudden and complete destruction of such forces at the coming of the Son of God in judgment.

*2 Thess. 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.*

*Rev. 20:8-9 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

HE SHALL COME TO HIS END AND NONE SHALL  
HELP HIM!

## Chapter 12

**DAN 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.**

I believe it to be a serious mistake to apply the entirety of this chapter to the days of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. In Daniel 10:14 we were told that Daniel was to be instructed as to what would befall his people in the latter days. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days, for the vision is yet for many days. Certainly it is true that it was many days before the events occurring in the time of Antiochus; however, it would take a deliberate effort not to see both the general resurrection of all the dead, as well as the final judgment, in the material presented in this present chapter.

The angel Michael clearly had an assignment to take the lead in defending the faithful throughout the battle of the ages between God and Satan. The careful student will recall that Jude tells us Michael contended with Satan for the body of Moses (Jude 1:9). We may well make a mistake when we assume Moses was dead at the time of this contention. Satan was contending for the body of Peter when Jesus told Peter to Get thee behind me Satan (Mt. 16:23). Satan was also contending for the body of Job when he argued that Job would deny God and curse him if Satan was allowed to injure Job's health (Job 2:4-5).

Thus, Michael and his angels fight against the Devil and his angels for both the body and the souls of men. The battle is fierce and the suffering is great. At times it

occurs on the individual level, as in the case of Job. Other times it occurs in national conflicts as it does in the case of the wars between Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. At all levels it demonstrates God's providential care for his own. If thou wilt be my people, then I will be thy God.

The battle will rage fiercely before the end of time. It will be so intense that there was never a time like it from the beginning of history until the end. Personally, I cannot see this limited to the days of Antiochus in the second century B.C., nor can I see it limited to the conditions surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The time discussed here is the battle of Armageddon, in which the entire forces of Satan, including the seductive forces of the world, represented by Babylon, the political forces, represented by the beast and the antichristian forces of sectarianism and humanism, represented by the false prophet, are all thrown against the King of kings and Lord of lords. The 144,000, who are sealed with the Spirit of God in their foreheads will fight alongside Michael and his angels. Their weapons will be spiritual in nature; the helmet of salvation, the girdle of truth, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, etc.

The battle will seesaw. Seducers will wax worse and worse. Even from among the saints false prophets and heresies will arise. The Prince of this world will roam about, seeking whom he may devour. The nineteenth chapter the Revelation then pictures a great victory for Christ, the angels and the saints. For an extended period of time, the saints will prevail, as described in the first few verses of the twentieth chapter of Revelation . Then, for a little season, Satan will regain power. He will be allowed to amass an enormous force. His forces will be so powerful, they will be on the verge of annihilating the people of God. Then, at the sound of a trumpet and

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the voice of the archangel, Jesus Christ will appear to take vengeance in flaming fire upon all them that know not God and obey not the gospel. The dead will be raised and the judgment will take place. The righteous will be invited to the marriage of the Lamb. The wicked will be consigned to the lake of fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

My friends, the times of Antiochus Epiphanes and the destruction of Jerusalem are but minor skirmishes in the spiritual war which is spoken of here in the twelfth chapter of Daniel as coming to pass in the latter days.

Do you object that the events concerning which Daniel was being instructed were to be limited to thy people? I reply that Daniel's people were blended into the larger people consisting of both Jew and Gentile. Michael will not make his stand for the fleshly descendants of Abraham. He will be fighting for the salvation of those who are the children of Abraham by faith in Christ Jesus.

When the battle has finally been won by the Lamb of God, the books will be opened and the righteous, whose names are written in the book of life, will be delivered from this cursed and sin stained world.

DAN 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Notice that there are not two resurrections mentioned in this verse, one being one thousand years previous to the other. When Jesus Christ returns, all of the dead shall arise from the dust of the earth. The first resurrection of Revelation is a resurrection of the cause of those who gave their lives to the service of God. Though their bodies lie in the dust of the ground, they being dead yet speak. The gospel is preached and for an extended time, the

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voice of the Prince of peace is heard and heeded. The thousand years is symbolic rather than literal. The reign is headquartered in heaven, not in earthly Jerusalem.

It is at the end of that period of domination by the forces of Christ that the little season of great wickedness appears, followed by the resurrection of all men, which we find detailed in this present second verse of Daniel twelve.

The sleep is the sleep of death. Jesus said of Lazarus, He sleepeth. At the same time we are told Lazarus was dead. Some few, such as Lazarus and those who rose from the graves and entered into the city of Jerusalem after the resurrection of Christ, were raised before the resurrection spoken of in this verse. Outside of those scattered cases, all man who ever lived will rise from their graves at the same hour to be judged.

Those who have been true to God until the end will wake to a reward which lies far beyond the comprehension of mortal man. I realize that the words Eye hath not seen. Ear hath not heard. Nor has ever entered into the heart of man, that which God has prepared for the faithful, referred to the blessings of the life of the saints within the church here on earth. Nevertheless, these words are very meaningful to me as I consider waking to receive a glorified body. That will be life as God intended it.

In contrast, those who have proven throughout their lifetime that they did not wish to draw close to God, and that they desired to please the Devil and his angels, will be separated from all that is good and holy for ever and ever. That is death as the Devil planned it.

The duration of everlasting shame and contempt will continue in parallel with that of everlasting life. There is no teaching in the Bible that the wicked will be tormented for a period of time corresponding to the seriousness and quantity of their sins. Everlasting means everlasting.

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Which will it be for you dear reader? It is a matter of life and death.

DAN 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

The scriptures promise a new and glorious existence for those who awake to everlasting life. There are two New Testament passages which must be remembered here. One is 1 Corinthians 15:35-50.

1Cor 15:35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

1Cor 15:36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

1Cor 15:37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

1Cor 15:38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

1Cor 15:39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

1Cor 15:40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

1Cor 15:41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

1Cor 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

1Cor 15:43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

1Cor 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

1Cor 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

1Cor 15:46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

1Cor 15:47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.

1Cor 15:48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

1Cor 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

1Cor 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

I think I need make no further remarks upon the relevance of these verses from I Corinthians to Daniel 12:3.

Now let us present the other passage from Romans 8:16-19.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Rom 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Rom 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

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Oh yes! Those who awake to everlasting life will shine as the brightness of the mid-day sun. Movie stars and athletic stars dim out to nothingness before the brightness of those who turn many to righteousness. May I urge you with all my heart to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and then to turn others from the darkness to the light of the Son of Righteousness. Both you and they will shine with a glory which will never be extinguished.

**DAN 12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.**

There are two main currents of explanation for this verse. One emphasizes the fact that the matters discussed in the vision are applicable to the latter days rather than to the days of Daniel. The sealing would then be a matter of keeping these things secret until the days just previous to the resurrection and the judgment.

The other viewpoint is that the sealing is a matter of preservation rather than one of secrecy. Daniel is to see that the truths are protected for men of all ages to study and ponder.

Surely Daniel was not being instructed to close the book which he was to write and keep it from the eyes of men for thousands of years. The book of Daniel was written during his life time and has been available for men to study for over twenty-five hundred years.

At the same time, I cannot help but recall the words of the fifth chapter of Revelation where Jesus Christ proved to be the only one worthy to open the book which was sealed with seven seals. I also remember here the words of the angel of Revelation 10:6, who stood with one foot on the land and the other on the sea and cried out that

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there should be time no longer. Verse seven follows with the words, But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

I believe there is an element of truth in both of the viewpoints previously mentioned. The sealing of the book was not an effort to keep it from the eyes of men. It was a command on the part of God for Daniel to make certain the information revealed to him would be preserved for men to examine until the time of the end. Men were to have it available for study, through the times of great trouble for thy people.

Now what does it mean by saying, men shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased? There are those who say the language here warrants interpreting this as the eyes of man running to and fro across the pages of the book of Daniel and comprehending more and more of its meaning as human history unfolds and learning thus increases. I do not believe it is the eyes of man alone that run to and fro. I believe it has to do with the hustle and bustle of society in general. Transportation, communication, education, scientific and technological developments have all contributed to a beehive of action. Knowledge of both the profane and the spiritual realms has been accumulated. We are being afforded the opportunity to make our choice. When time has run its course and the books are ready to be closed, the mystery of God will be finished. The words of the prophets will then be crystal clear!

DAN 12:5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

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Two other spiritual beings appeared to Daniel. They are no doubt angels who are inquiring into the meaning of the vision. The identity of the river is not provided for us. Perhaps it is the Tigris or Hiddikel which was previously mentioned. Neither do I think the reason for these angels standing on opposite sides of the river can be clarified. Any explanations I have seen are quite obviously mere guesses.

**DAN 12:6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?**

One of the angels asked a question of the man clothed in linen. It is a question Daniel himself must have had in mind. Since these matters were to reach to the time of the end, and since it was for many days, just how much time would elapse before all the events of the vision would be concluded? I must confess that I also am curious.

The fact that one of the two angels asked the man clothed in linen for the answer to his question indicates he is in possession of greater knowledge than either of them.

**DAN 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.**

The man in linen then raised both of his hands toward heaven and swore by God himself that the time which would elapse would be a time, times and an half a time. This is a symbolic period of time. We would be well

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advised not to pin it down to a given number of years. It falls in the same class as the five months of the scorpions stings, the ten days of tribulation, and the thousand years of the martyrs reign with Christ, all found in the book of Revelation.

The same time period is mentioned in Daniel 7:25 where a king is said to arise to persecute the saints and wear them out. It is found in Revelation where it is said the two witnesses testify and the Gentiles tread upon the holy city for this same time. It is found in the twelfth chapter of Revelation where the remnant of the woman's seed, the true church of Christ, is driven into the wilderness and is nourished by God. What is the thread running through all of these references? It is that God's faithful will be exposed to very troubled times because of the opposition of Satan and his servants. However, since it is a broken seven (3 1/2), those who pass successfully through it may look forward to a better day.

At one time I felt the "scattering of the power of the holy people" could just as well be translated as the "spreading of the power of the holy people." I believe the end of Revelation 19 and the beginning of Revelation 20 do indicate a time of dominance for the gospel. This present study of Daniel has convinced me the word which is translated "scatter" here is more accurately given as shattering rather than spreading. As I presently see it, the time, times and half a time is a lengthy period during which the forces of Satan are allowed to persecute the people of God. During this time the two witness, which are the law and the prophets, continue to point to Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of those who will hear his voice. During this time period the church will fight for its very life. It will be driven from the mainstream of human affairs and only continue to exist as a result of the providential care of the Father in heaven. When,

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and only when, God determines that this time of testing is to be concluded, will he see it brought to a close and followed by relief.

**DAN 12:8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?**

Now we have a second question. This time it was not the angel who asked. It was Daniel himself. "What was to be the final outcome of these wondrous things?" The previous question was, "How long would they last?" Now he wished to know the consequences.

**DAN 12:9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.**

This verse makes it clear to me that the sealing has to do with understanding the meaning and consequences of the vision, rather than being limited to the preservation of the information for future generations. There are truths which Daniel would not be able to understand in his day. These things could only be understood when more knowledge had been accumulated through the passing of history. Daniel had to be content with what had been explained to him.

**DAN 12:10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.**

During the time, times and half a time, many would be tried in the fire of tribulation. The first four verses of

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the book of James put it like this, James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:1-4).

Revelation 6 speaks of the souls of the martyrs crying out from under the altar, desiring to know how long those who dwell upon the earth will be allowed to continue their destruction of the righteousness. The answer was that: White robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The wicked will not understand. They take pride in their carnal outlook. As long as they cherish pride and lust, they will view God's children as fools. These are the ones who either by word or by action deny the existence of the Almighty.

The wise are those who love God and his righteousness. They are the ones who have recognized what life is all about. Job explained it in this way. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding (Job 28:28).

DAN 12:11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Is the taking away of the daily sacrifice the cessation of the morning and evening sacrifices caused by Antiochus Epiphanes, or is it the replacement of the sacrifices of the law of Moses by the death of the Lamb of God upon the

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cross of Calvary? Is the setting up of the abomination that makes desolate the erection of an image of Jupiter in place of the altar of God by Antiochus, or is it the gathering of the armies of the Romans around the city of Jerusalem just previous to its destruction?

Again, I believe we are looking at events which successively bring more and more truth to our eyes as history moves onward. The persecution under Antiochus was a preview of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. The gathering of the armies around Jerusalem was similar to the encompassing of the camp of the saints and the beloved city at the end of the little season (Rev. 20:9).

Twelve hundred ninety days is just thirty days longer than twelve hundred sixty days. Those who pass through the time, times and half a time will begin to catch a clearer sight of the street of gold and the river of life, though still not having entered in through the gates into the city.

**DAN 12:12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.**

On beyond the time of great trouble and the short time of hope and anticipation which follows it, the saints shall rest from their labors. They shall enjoy the rest which the writer of Hebrews informed us waits for the steadfast.

*Heb. 4:8-11 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

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DAN 12:13 But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Daniel was to wait patiently until the events of the vision had been completed. Then, at the time of the end, he would be roused from his sleep in the dust of the earth and would receive that lot which God had promised to his faithful.

How similar is this statement to that of Acts 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. I feel confident that the lot of Daniel and Judas' own place were vastly different!

A Brief Summary Of The Book Of Daniel

The basic message of the book of Daniel is quite simple. Daniel was concerned over the future of his Jewish kindred. For some seventy years they suffered the pain of being separated from their land, their city and their temple. Through Daniel God spoke to both the captors and the captives. As a prophet in the palaces of the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians this man of God warned kings and princes that Jehovah was the true God and that his will prevails in the end.

The message God gave Daniel for his own people was that the kingdoms of men rise and fall. During this conflict, God's people would suffer great persecution. But in the latter days Jehovah was to establish a kingdom which would spread throughout the entire earth. Satan would array his antichristian forces against it without success. God's guiding hand would move everything toward a final victory for the saints.

One last point I would like to make has to do with the relationship between the book of Daniel and the book

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of Revelation. Daniel places the major emphasis upon the rise and fall of empires until the establishment of the Kingdom of God. I am not implying that his visions stop with the death of the Saviour, the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost and the destruction of the temple and the Jews as a nation in A.D. 70. They do not. Nevertheless, the emphasis of the book of Daniel is upon the history of God's people previous to the end of the Jewish nation. The book of Revelation is a continuation of the same story after the barrier between the Jews and Gentiles was broken down and those who would hear were invited to become one new man in Jesus Christ. Both Daniel and Revelation conclude with the rest which remains for those who survive the trials of this "vale of soulmaking" called earth.

## **An Abbreviated Bibliography**

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