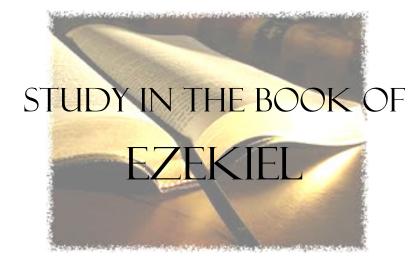
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Lecturer : Bishop Warwick Cole-Edwardes

Section 1 – Ezekiel Call (1:1 - 3:27)

Study 1

The Man and the Times

Introduction

Of all the prophetical books, Ezekiel is one that has been neglected the most. Many people are put off the book, especially by the visions of the early chapters. They find Ezekiel difficult to understand, and therefore go no further.

But 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 tell us;

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

And this includes the book of Ezekiel.

I) Background

Because of her continued idolatry, Israel (the 10 tribes in the north) was defeated by the Assyrian army in the year 722 BC. But the southern kingdom of Judah and Benjamin was spared for 200 years.

There was a revival under King Hezekiah, but sadly, under his son Manasseh everything was lost. King Josiah brought about a reformation, but it was too late.

The Babylonians were now the superpower and they defeated the Assyrians in 612 BC, and then also Judah in 586 BC.

The people were into Babylon to exile.

II) Author

The author of the book is Ezekiel. He was the son of the priest Buzi, he began his work in 593 BC, and continued to 571 BC. Ezekiel ministry lasted for 23 years.

III) Date

593 BC to 571 BC

IV) Message

1) Ezekiel had a wonderful understanding of the nature of God

a) God is holy, and glorious (1:25-28)

25 And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings.

26 And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. 27 And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of fire, and there was

brightness around him. 28 Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around.

Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

b) God in his powerful (3:12-27)

12 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great earthquake:" Blessed be the glory of the Lord from its place!" 13 It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, and the sound of a great earthquake. 14 The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the Lord being strong upon me. 15 And I came to the exiles at Tel- Abib, who were dwelling by the Chebar canal, and I sat where they were dwelling. And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days. 16 And at the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me: 17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 18 If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. 20 Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. 21 But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul."

22 And the hand of the Lord was upon me there. And he said to me, "Arise, go out into the valley, and there I will speak with you." 23 So I arose and went out into the valley, and behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory that I had seen by the Chebar canal, and I fell on my face. 24 But the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and he spoke with me and said to me, "Go, shut yourself within your house. 25 And you, O son of man, behold, cords will be placed upon you, and you shall be bound with them, so that you cannot go out among the people. 26 And I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God. ' He who will hear, let him hear; and he who will refuse to hear, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.

c) God is in control of all nations (25:1-32:32)

See Bible

d) God cares for His people like a Good Shepherd (34:11-16)

11 "For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will be the shepherd of

my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. 16 I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

e) God gives new life (36:25-32)

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. 28 You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29 And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. 30 I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the Lord God; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel. 33 "Thus says the Lord God:On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. 34 And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. 35 And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited. ' 36 Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the Lord; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it.

2) Ezekiel had a clear understanding of this seriousness of sin

a) Ezekiel brought a messenger of judgement which at times was hard and unfeeling (20:9)

9 But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt.

b) The people had defiled God's temple (5:11)

11 Therefore, as I live, declares the Lord God, surely, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will withdraw. My eye will not spare, and I will have no pity.

c) They were idolaters (20:7)

7 And I said to them, Cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.

d) They broke God's law (44:6)

6 And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: O house of Israel, enough of all your abominations,

3) There was the necessity for judgement

a) Judgment could not be avoided (7:14-27)

14 "They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but none goes to battle, for

my wrath is upon all their multitude. 15 The sword is without; pestilence and famine are within. He who is in the field dies by the sword, and him who is in the city famine and pestilence devour. 16 And if any survivors escape, they will be on the mountains, like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, each one over his iniquity. 17 All hands are feeble, and all knees turn to water. 18 They put on sackcloth, and horror covers them. Shame is on all faces, and baldness on all their heads. 19 They cast their silver into the streets, and their gold is like an unclean thing. Their silver and gold are not able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord. They cannot satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs with it. For it was the stumbling block of their iniquity. 20 His beautiful ornament they used for pride, and they made their abominable images and their detestable things of it. Therefore I make it an unclean thing to them. 21 And I will give it into the hands of foreigners for prey, and to the wicked of the earth for spoil, and they shall profane it. 22 I will turn my face from them, and they shall profane my treasured place. Robbers shall enter and profane it.

23 "Forge a chain! For the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence. 24 I will bring the worst of the nations to take possession of their houses. I will put an end to the pride of the strong, and their holy places shall be profaned. 25 When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there shall be none. 26 Disaster comes upon disaster; rumour follows rumor. They seek a vision from the prophet, while the law perishes from the priest and counsel from the elders. 27 The king mourns, the prince is wrapped in despair, and the hands of the people of the land are paralyzed by terror. According to their way I will do to them, and according to their judgments I will judge them, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

4) Ezekiel looked forward to Jesus Christ

a) He would transformed their hearts (36:25-27)

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

b) He would establish an eternal covenant with them (37:23)

23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

c) They would be led by the Davidic Messiah (37:24-28)

24 "My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. 25 They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." Throughout the book we see Ezekiel as a watchman for Israel, warning of the coming judgement, but urging them to return to the LORD.

VI) <u>Outline</u>

I) Ezekiel's Call (1:1-3:27)

- 1) The date (1:1-3)
- 2) The vision of the living creatures (1:25-28)
- **3)** The glory of the LORD (1:25-28)
- 4) Ezekiel receives his commission (2:1-3:15)
- 5) He is to bring a warning to Israel (3:16-27)

II) Prophecies of Judgement on Jerusalem (4:1-12:28)

- 1) Pictures of the siege of Jerusalem (4:1-5:17)
- 2) Prophecy against Israel's mountains (6:1-14)
- **3)** The end has come (7:1-27)
- 4) Idolatry in the Temple (8:1-9:11)
- 5) God's glory leaves the Temple (10:1-22)
- 6) Punishment for Israel's leaders (11:1-15)
- 7) A renewed Israel will return (11:16-25)
- 8) Pictures of the Exile (12:1-28)

III) The Sins of Israel and Jerusalem (13:1-24:7)

- 1) False prophets are condemned (13:1-23)
- 2) Idolaters are condemned (14:1-11)
- 3) Judgment cannot be avoided (14:12-23)
- 4) Jerusalem is like a useless vine (15:1-8)
- 5) Jerusalem is like a prostitute (16:1-63)
- 6) A parable of two eagles and a vine (17:1-24)
- 7) Individual responsibility for sin (18:1-32)
- 8) A lament for Israel's princes (19:1-14)
- 9) Israel's rebellious past (20:1-29)
- **10)** God's judgment and restoration (20:30-44)
- **11)** Judgement by fire and sword (20:45-21:32)

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- 12) Jerusalem has sinned greatly (22:1-31)
- 13) Israel and Judah are two adulterous sisters (23:1-49)
- 14) Jerusalem is like a rusty cooking pot (24:1-14)
- **15)** Ezekiel's wife dies (24:14-27)

IV) Prophecies Against the Nations (25:1-32:32)

- 1) Against Ammon (25:1-7)
- 2) Against Moab (25:8-11)
- **3)** Against Edom (25:12-14)
- **4)** Against Philistia (25:15-17)
- 5) Against Tyre (26:1-28:19)
- 6) Against Sidon (28:20-26)
- 7) Against Egypt (29:1-32:32)

V) Prophecies which Look to the Future (33:1-13 9:29)

- 1) Ezekiel the watchman (33:1-20)
- 2) Jerusalem's fall is explained (33:21-33)
- 3) The Good Shepherd replacing the bad shepherds (34:1-31)
- 4) Edom's treachery will be repaid (35:1-15)
- 5) New hope for Israel's mountains (36:1-38)
- 6) New life for dry bones (37:1-14)
- 7) A renewed nation with a new king (37:15-28)
- 8) A prophecy against Gog (38:1-39:20)
- 9) God's purpose for Israel (39:21-29)
- VI) Plans for the New Jerusalem (40:1-48:35)
 - 1) The new Temple (40:1-42:20)
 - 2) God's glory returns to the Temple (43:1-12)
 - 3) Arrangements for worship (43:13-46:24)
 - **4)** The life-giving river of (47:1-12)
 - **5)** The division of the land (47:13-48:35)

Conclusion

Although Ezekiel is seldom read it is a book for today, he brings us back to the doctrine of God, and it teaches the need for a new heart. Amen

STUDY 2

EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION

(Ezekiel 1:1 - 3:27)

THE VISION OF GOD'S GLORY

(Ezekiel 1:1-28)

Ezekiel gives us a wonderful description of the vision he received, which God used to call him into His ministry.

For 5 years he has been in exile. He is now 30 years, and the most important thing for him was his understanding about God.

I) THE SETTING OF THE VISION (1:1-3)

1) Date

v. 1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

The Ezekiel is very specific in giving us the date. It was in the 5th year of the exile; 593 BC.

An Old Testament priest began his ministry at the age of 30, and Ezekiel has now reached that age.

Numbers 4: 23 From thirty years old up to fifty years old, you shall list them, all who can come to do duty, to do service in the tent of meeting... 30 From thirty years old up to fifty years old, you shall list them, everyone who can come on duty, to do the service of the tent of meeting.

2) Place

He was among the exiles, by the Kebar River in Babylon.

3) Recipient

v. 3 the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar canal, and the hand of the Lord was upon him there.

Ezekiel was well acquainted with the Mosaic covenant and all the functions of a priest in the temple.

4) Circumstances

Two things happened to Ezekiel:

i) The Word of the LORD came to him

This phrase occurs throughout the book:

3: 22 And the hand of the Lord was upon me there. And he said to me, "Arise, go out into the valley, and there I will speak with you."

8: 1 In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord God fell upon me there.

33: 22 Now the hand of the Lord had been upon me the evening before the fugitive came; and he had opened my mouth by the time the man came to me in the morning, so my

mouth was opened, and I was no longer mute.

37: 1 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones.

40: 1 In the twenty- fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down, on that very day, the hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me to the city.

3: 16 And at the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me

ii) The Hand of the LORD was upon him

3: 14 The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the Lord being strong upon me.

Isa 25: 10 For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain, and Moab shall be trampled down in his place, as straw is trampled down in a dunghill.

This brings out the idea of God's strength upon him. The name "Ezekiel" means "God strengthens".

While in exile at a time of change and despair, God called Ezekiel.

II) THE DESCRIPTION OF THE VISION (1:4-28)

1) The living beings (v.4-14)

v. 4 As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. 5 And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness...

Ezekiel sees what appears to be a raging electrical storm; and in the storm he sees 4 figures.

Each one looked like a man, had 4 faces and 4 wings.

There was the intelligence of a man, the boldness of a lion, the strength of an ox, and the soaring qualities of an eagle.

In v.9, 23 these wings are all joined together; and these 4 creatures could only move when they were moved by the Spirit.

2) The wheels (v.15-21)

In addition to the 4 creatures, he sees a high wheel sparkling like a precious diamond full of eyes on its rim. He notices that the wheel and the creatures all move together as they are moved by the Spirit.

v. 9 their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went... 12 And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went... 17 When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went.

3) The expanse (v.22-28)

He looks above the four creatures and the wheels;

v. 22 Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining

like awe- inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads.

And in the midst of that expanse was someone like a man.

v. 26 And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. 27 And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. 28 Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around.

Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

CONCLUSION

This incredible vision was intended to represent the majestic and awesome glory of God. And at the beginning of his ministry, Ezekiel understands four things about God:

- i) God is present
- ii) God is holy
- iii) God is powerful
- iv) God rules

Right at the beginning if his ministry this was very important.

Throughout the centuries, revival has always been accompanied with a renewed sense of the majesty of God. Prayer for that in our lives today.

Study 3

SOUND THE ALARM (4:1 – 7:27)

Introduction

The first 3 chapters dealt with the call which came to Ezekiel, and also his commission to serve as a prophet. These next few chapters will highlight what the call involved. They give very little to encourage us. The people were hard, indifferent, and apathetic. He is called now to preach at a time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ch.4 opens in the year 593 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar has come and laid siege on Jerusalem.

I) The Siege of Jerusalem (4:1 – 5:17)

Not only does Ezekiel preach, but he also is told to perform some visual aids.

1) Build a model of Jerusalem (v.1-3)

He must take a clay tablet, place a picture of Jerusalem on it, build ramps on the side of it, and then get an iron pan and hold it between the clay tablet and himself.

The lesson is not difficult to understand; that Jerusalem is about to be destroyed. The Babylonians will climb on the ramps and capture the city, but God was going to hide His face from the people.

Deut 31:17,18 - Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' 18 And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.

2) A Bed of Woe (4:4-8)

Now Ezekiel must lie on his left side for 390 days, and then for 40 days on his right side. These would represent the years from the time of Solomon's apostacy to the end of the Babylonian Exile.

3) Famine (4:9-17)

Then Ezekiel had to cook a meal, and things were so bad during the siege, that he had to use human excrement to heat the fire.

4) Sword of the Lord (5:1-17)

Then Ezekiel must shave off his head and his beard, and divide the hair into 3 parts, a third was to die from disease, a third from the sword, and a third would be exiled.

The lesson is incredibly clear; that God's patience has run out.

In 5:9 God is provoked by their idols, and 5:11 He hates the vile images.

These 4 visual aids Ezekiel carries out perfectly.

II) The day of the Lord (6:1-7:27)

As the day of the Lord drew near, there were 3 serious sins among the people which God now exposes:

1) Syncretism (6:1-14)

(That's when you live in a society when every religion is equal.)

a) Curse of apostate religion

Ex 20:3 makes it very clear, "thou shalt have no other gods before me".

For them they were worshipping the Canaanite gods. Today we worship the gods of sex, stomach, and shekels.

b) Nature of apostasy

We see this in ch.6:3,4,6,9; they made these altars and burnt incense to them.

c) God's assessment

God regards them as evil and detestable.

d) The penalty

The Babylonians are going to take you away into exile.

2) God's Wrath

This theme of judgement continues through ch.7

a) It is Personal

Ez 7:8,9 - Now I will soon pour out my wrath upon you, and spend my anger against you, and judge you according to your ways, and I will punish you for all your abominations. 9 And my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. I will punish you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the Lord, who strikes.

b) It is Not Capricious

Eze 7:3 - Now the end is upon you, and I will send my anger upon you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will punish you for all your abominations...

c) Related to the C...(7:3,4)

Eze 7:4 - And my eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity, but I will punish you for your ways, while your abominations are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

d) Not Partial (7:26,27)

Eze 7:26, 27 - Disaster comes upon disaster; rumor follows rumor. They seek a vision from the prophet, while the law perishes from the priest and counsel from the elders. 27 The king mourns, the prince is wrapped in despair, and the hands of the people of the land are paralyzed by terror. According to their way I will do to them, and according to their judgments I will judge them, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

He was preaching at a time of God's wrath.

3) Spiritual Amnesia

The people spiritually had fallen asleep.

Spiritually they had become disobedient.

a) This arose from an Arrogant Heart

Eze 7:24 - I will bring the worst of the nations to take possession of their houses. I will put an end to the pride of the strong, and their holy places shall be profaned.

b) Self-confidence

Eze 7:14, 17 - "They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but none goes to battle, for my wrath is upon all their multitude.... 17 All hands are feeble, and all knees turn to water."

c) Love of wealth

Eze 7: 9 - And my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. I will punish you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the Lord, who strikes.

d) The Curse of Delay

Eze 7: 25 - When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there shall be none.

Conclusion

These chapters teach us two main lessons:

- 1) The dedication and faithfulness of Ezekiel.
- 2) He explains God's wrath against syncretism and the worship of other gods.

Amen

Studies in Ezekiel

STUDY 4

REVELATIONS OF THE TEMPLE

(Ezekiel 8:1 - 9:11)

INTRODUCTION

Fourteen months have now passed since Ezekiel received his 1st vision (8:1). The 420 days of his lying down is now finished, and all the elders have gathered around Ezekiel. To ask for an explanation as to why he did what he did; when suddenly he receives another vision.

The date is in September 592 B.C.

III) ABOMINATIONS IN THE TEMPLE (8:1-18)

The Lord now shows Ezekiel 4 terrible things which were taking place in the temple.

1) The image of jealousy (v.1-6)

In v.3 it says, "where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood".

This probably was an image of Ashera who was the lustful Canaanite goddess of love.

2 Kings 21:7 - And the carved image of Asherah that he had made he set in the house of which the Lord said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever.

Any idol provokes God to act.

Ex 20:5 - You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,

Ex 34:14 - (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),

The tragedy was that an image to a Canaanite god was in the temple.

2) The idolatry of art (v.7-13)

Now Ezekiel is led away from this idol to the door of the inner court. He enters into a secret chamber, and then he finds on the walls that it was full of paintings, and murals that was depicting creatures. But the worst is in v.11 where Jaazaniah and 70 elders are worshiping the art.

It was further idolatry. And they said in v.12 "the Lord does not see us."

The lesson here is huge; that behind the art of our day lays another philosophy.

3) The worship of Tamuz (v.14-15)

There was one further image which Ezekiel saw. They worshiped Tamuz, the Babylonian god of plants.

4) The worship of the sun (v.16-18)

The 4th and the final abomination takes place in the inner court of the temple, where only the

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priests were allowed to go. And he sees 25 elders with their back to the temple facing to the east, and worshipping the sun.

v.17 says, "Is it a small matter for the house of Judah to do these detestable things?"

God now responds in v.18, "therefore, I will deal with them in anger".

When God's patience runs out, His judgements are fearful.

Heb 10:31 - It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

IV) THE EXECUTIONERS (9:1-11)

Having been shown the idolatry in the temple, Ezekiel is now a witness of a scene of execution.

1) The executioners are to have no pity (v.5)

v. 5 And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity.

2) It must begin with leaders

In the same way that Luke says in;

Luke 12:48 - But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

And...

1 Peter 4:17 - For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

3) Only a remnant to be saved (v.4)

4 And the Lord said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it."

4) Ezekiel's concern

We are moved by Ezekiel's response, and we need a burden for souls like he had. The certainty of coming judgement should make us fall own and plead for God's mercy.

There was only one more step; and that is, when Ezekiel watches the temple, he sees the glory of God depart. And across the temple Ichabod is written (the glory of God departs).

<u>Ezekiel</u>

STUDY 5

ICHABOD

(Ezekiel 10:1 - 11:25)

INTRODUCTION

For many people Ezekiel is very depressing. It is all about judgement and doom. It certainly has been. But this section will now conclude section 2 of Ezekiel; which has dealt with prophesies of judgement on Jerusalem, and Ezekiel will now reach the most tragic picture of all, as the glory of God departs.

When God departs, hell begins.

I) COALS OF FIRE ON JERUSALEM (10:1-7)

Ch. 10 is very similar to ch.1; it is a vision of God in His glory. He sees this throne above the cherubim, and he gives a very difficult task to the man in linen.

He is to take the coals of fire and throw them over Jerusalem, and as Ezekiel focuses on the cherubim, he notices that God's glory slowly departing.

The most treasured gift we have is the presence of God.

God is with us,

Mat 28:2 - I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Around us,

Psalm 34:7 - The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

In us,

John 14:17 - even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

And near us,

Psalm 148:14 - 14 He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the Lord! When before Ezekiel the glory of God departs. Very similar to 1 Sam 4:21

Once again the name of Ichabod is written over Jerusalem.

II) CHERUBIM AND ICHABOD (10:8-22)

The description of God's throne is almost identical to the early chapters, and why it is being reemphasised is to show us how dreadful it is for God to depart.

God's patience has now been exhausted, and 10:18

18 Then the glory of the Lord went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim.

In this chapter Ezekiel now speaks to the self-righteous leaders who are still in Jerusalem. When Nebuchadnezzar took the people away into exile, most of the leaders were taken; only a few were left.

The Lord now gives the 2 reasons why He has judged Jerusalem and the leadership:

1) They had disobeyed (v.12)

12 and you shall know that I am the Lord. For you have not walked in my statutes, nor obeyed my rules, but have acted according to the rules of the nations that are around you."

This is very similar to

1 John 3:4 - Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

The consequences of disobedience.

2) They had become worldly

The leadership were no longer separated people, they lived like pagans – like their neighbours.

It is all very discouraging, so Ezekiel asks if there will be any hope?

11:13 - And it came to pass, while I was prophesying, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell down on my face and cried out with a loud voice and said, "Ah, Lord God! Will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?"

IV) GOD'S NEW WORK (11:14-25)

He explains to Ezekiel that there is hope; there is going to be a remnant who will be saved.

God promises that He will do something new in the future

11:18-20 - And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations.

19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

20 that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

This is nothing less than the promise of the gospel through our Lord Jesus Christ.

V) LESSONS

1) Christian concern is recorded

We need to recapture the heart of Ezekiel who had a deep concern for his people.

2) Christian prayer and intercession effective

In the midst of judgement Ezekiel shows us the part that we play in prayer.

3) Christian response welcomed

How we as believers should be deeply concerned for what is happening around us.

4) Be careful of nominalism

Ezekiel

STUDY 6

PREACHERS WITH NOTHING TO SAY

(Ezekiel 12:1 - 14:23)

INTRODUCTION

A community is only as strong as its leadership, and a church is only as strong as its ministry. Throughout church history one lesson has stood out clearly: when the standard of preaching goes down, so does the quality of Christian faith and life.

In Ezekiel's day this was the problem: the preachers were watering down the Word of God. And Ezekiel will now speak to these issues.

Ch.8-11 we saw how Ezekiel was concerned mainly with the temple, but now in Ch.12-14 he is concerned about the king and the preachers.

This section will also conclude the 2nd major division of Ezekiel.

Section 1 = the Call of Ezekiel (1-3)

Section 2 = Prophecies of Judgement on Jerusalem (4-12)

I) THE KING (12:1-20)

v.1 The word of the Lord came to me:2 "Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not, for they are a rebellious house.

Now Ezekiel is told to carry out another visual aid. He had to collect all his belongings, pack them up as if he was about to go on a journey (v.3-6)

1) The king (v.1-16)

3 As for you, son of man, prepare for yourself an exile's baggage, and go into exile by day in their sight. You shall go like an exile from your place to another place in their sight. Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious house. 4 You shall bring out your baggage by day in their sight, as baggage for exile, and you shall go out yourself at evening in their sight, as those do who must go into exile. 5 In their sight dig through the wall, and bring your baggage out through it. 6 In their sight you shall lift the baggage upon your shoulder and carry it out at dusk. You shall cover your face that you may not see the land, for I have made you a sign for the house of Israel."

In the evening when the crowd had gathered, he made a hole in the wall, and climbed through the wall – and the following day he returned.

This pathetic story is told in 2 Kings 25, where Zedekiah tried to make an escape at night, only to be captured. So Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled.

2) The people (v.17-20)

They are now going to reap what they have sown.

v.19 - And say to the people of the land, Thus says the Lord God concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the land of Israel: They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink water in dismay. In this way her land will be stripped of all it contains, on account of the violence of all those who dwell in it.

II) THE PROBLEM OF THE PREACHERS (13:1-23)

Now Ezekiel will speak to the preachers, and he gives them six observations:

1) Never rose higher than their own minds

v.3 - Thus says the Lord God, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

v.6 - ... They say, 'Declares the Lord, ' when the Lord has not sent them, and yet they

All their sermons were humanistic; there was nothing of God in their sermons.

2) Deceived their hearers by their language

v.6 - They have seen false visions and lying divinations. They say, 'Declares the Lord, ' when the Lord has not sent them, and yet they

3) No practical or useful effect

v.4 - Your prophets have been like jackals among ruins, O Israel. 5 You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the day of the Lord.

Their preaching saw no change in the people.

4) Offered cheap grace and false peace

v.10 - Precisely because they have misled my people, saying, 'Peace,' when there is no peace, and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear it with whitewash,

5) Endorsed latest worldview

In v.10 & 15 Ezekiel uses the word, "whitewash"...they covered the walls with whitewash.

v.15 - Thus will I spend my wrath upon the wall and upon those who have smeared it with whitewash, and I will say to you, <u>The wall is no more, nor those who smeared it</u>,

6) Results

In v.17-23 Ezekiel explains the results of this useless preaching. Jerusalem was in a mess.

v.19 - You have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, putting to death souls who should not die and keeping alive souls who should not live, by your lying to my people, who listen to lies.

But also there was an increase in spiritualism and superstition.

Whenever preaching goes down, society too goes down.

III) THE ELDERS (14:1-23)

The elders now come to question what Ezekiel has said.

1) Idolatrous enquirers (v.1-11)

Their leaders thought that they could worship these foreign gods and at the same time pray to God.

2) Judgement (v.12-23)

It is now clear says Ezekiel, that the country is going to be judged.

CONCLUSION

The 2nd major division is now over, he has very clearly preached, and demonstrated that all that now awaits Judah and Jerusalem is judgement.

Ezekiel

STUDY 7

A VINE, PROSTITUTE AND TWO EAGLES

(Ezekiel 15:1 - 17:24)

INTRODUCTION

In the following chapters 17-23 Ezekiel is going to use a wide variety of illustrations.

In section 3 (ch.13-24) Ezekiel is exposing the sins of Jerusalem and Israel.

I) VINE (useless is fruitless) (15:1-8)

A huge vine decorated the temple gates; and it had grape clusters which were 2m long. This always was a reminder that Israel was the true vine of God which He had taken out of Egypt and then planted in a choice land.

Psalm 18:8 - Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. 9 He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. 10 He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. 12 Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. 14 And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them.

Isa 5:1 - Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. 2 He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. 6 I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

In the N.T. Jesus gives us 5 parables of the vine – and even calls Himself the true vine.

John 15:1 - "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

But very sadly although God the Father had looked after the vine well, only bitter fruit came up – and it must be cut off.

In this passage, instead of comparing Israel to the grapes, He compares Israel to the wood, and in v.4 Ezekiel says that even this was of a little value.

4 Behold, it is given to the fire for fuel. When the fire has consumed both ends of it, and the middle of it is charred, is it useful for anything?

In order to bear fruit there are two essentials.

1) Pruning

See John 15:2-5

Dead wood must be cut away.

2) Abiding

Jesus taught the same in the N.T.

John 15:4 *ff* – Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me...

Therefore the main lesson is; that if it is fruitless, it is useless.

II) UNFAITHFUL WIFE (favoured but faithless) (16:1-63)

Chapter 16 is very similar to chapter 23, where Ezekiel speaks of Israel's prostitution.

1) Past

16:2 speaks of Israel's detestable practices. Jerusalem's father and mother are described in v.3 as Amorites.

3 and say, Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.

And then Jerusalem is compared to an abandoned baby girl.

4 And as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.

2) Present

15 "But you trusted in your beauty and played the whore because of your renown and lavished your whorings on any passerby; your beauty became his.

In v.15 Ezekiel says that Jerusalem grew up to be come a prostitute; this began in the days of Solomon.

1 Kings 11:1 - Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, 2 from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. 3 He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. 4 For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

And after this she went even further into her idolatry;

1 Kings 16:17 - So Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. 18 And when Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house over him with fire and died, 19 because of his sins that he committed, doing evil in the sight of the Lord, walking in the way of Jeroboam, and for his sin which he committed, making Israel to sin.

3) Future

Her present and her past are terrible, and v.42 Ezekiel says she is to be attacked and left naked;

42 So will I satisfy my wrath on you, and my jealousy shall depart from you. I will be calm and will no more be angry.

In other words there is hope for the future,

v.60 - yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant.

The main lesson of point II, is that Israel was favoured, but Fatherless.

Ezekiel now comes with another illustration: there is a huge eagle which lands in a cedar tree in Lebanon. This allegory will describe the story of Judah's history; from the time of the 1st exile on 598 -586 B.C. The whole Babylonian empire would come against Judah and take her into exile.

But 17:22 says;

22 Thus says the Lord God: "I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

This prophecy was going to be wonderfully fulfilled at the coming of Jesus.

Conclusion

We admire Ezekiel's faithfulness; he had spoken about the vine, the prostitute, and the two eagles. Judah was going to be defeated. They had turned their backs on god and would now face the consequences.

But there is hope: the election by grace, whereby there would be through Jesus a new covenant and a new Israel.

Studies in Ezekiel

Study 8

I) Individual Responsibility For Sin (18:1-32)

Introduction

The prophet Ezekiel has clearly exposed the sins of Israel, and that of Jerusalem; and that it is easy to sometimes hide behind people. In chapter 18 Ezekiel makes very clear that each person is responsible for their own sin.

v. 20 The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

We are all responsible for our own sin. Not only does Ezekiel expound individual responsibility, but he also has the ultimate penalty for sin is death. The soul that sins is the one who will die.

He then gives our list of some of the sins committed in the land:

1) Sexual Immorality

v. 6 if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity,

a) Robbery

v. 7 does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment,

b) False Religion

v. 11 (though he himself did none of these things), who even eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife,

Conclusion

Ezekiel will close chapter 18 by giving us a lovely summary of the heart of God:

- (i) God is sovereign
- (ii) God commands
- (iii) God has an evangelistic heart

v. 30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin.

II) A Lament For Israel's Princes (19:1-14)

This chapter has been compared to a funeral psalm. The Ezekiel is crying because of the life of Israel's princes. He demonstrates the wickedness of the kings of Judah; and as a result of this wicked leadership judgment was now coming on the land.

III) Israel's rebellious past (20:1 - 29)

25

Ezekiel again looks back over their past. He will describe the disobedience and Egypt:

v. 5-8; their disobedience in the wilderness is described here.

5 and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: On the day when I chose Israel, I swore to the offspring of the house of Jacob, making myself known to them in the land of Egypt; I swore to them, saying, I am the Lord your God. 6 On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands. 7 And I said to them, Cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the Lord your God. 8 But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me. None of them cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt.

v.9-26 and times there was an even child sacrifice, and sadly it did not end there;

v.27-29; their rebellion continued even in the promised land.

From this survey it is very clear how rebellion has marred their past.

v.30-44 here he now speaks about god's judgment of and restoration;

33 "As I live, declares the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out I will be king over you. 34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out.

IV) Judgement By Of Fire And Sword (20:45-22:31)

Here Ezekiel will speak about the Lord's judgement that will come by fire and by sword – he exposes for us some of the characteristics of the current day society; it was a society characterised by violence.

In 22v.3 there was a idolatry;

3 You shall say, Thus says the Lord God: A city that sheds blood in her midst, so that her time may come, and that makes idols to defile herself!

In 22v.6 power was used for of selfish gain;

6 "Behold, the princes of Israel in you, every one according to his power, have been bent on shedding blood.

In 22v.8 they have despised the Sabbaths.

8 You have despised my holy things and profaned my Sabbaths.

In 22v.12 if they contacted people to commit murder;

12 In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and profit and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; but me you have forgotten, declares the Lord God.

Therefore it is a city waiting for the sword.

Chapter 22 continues then to summarise what Ezekiel has said in the previous chapters; Jerusalem has sinned greatly.

V) Israel And Judah Are Two Adulterous Sisters (23:1-49)

26

VI) Jerusalem Is Like A Rusty Cooking Pot (24:1-14)

It is clear, there is only judgement that awaits Jerusalem.

Section two and three have been difficult because the message is one of judgement and sin – but there was one more sad note;

VII) Ezekiel's Wife Dies (24:15-21)

16 "Son of man, behold, I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you at a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down. 17 Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban, and put your shoes on your feet; do not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men."

Chapter 24 ends the section, where Ezekiel has exposed the sins of Israel and of Jerusalem. In section four Ezekiel moves away from his people and will preach against the nations.

Studies in Ezekiel

STUDY 9

HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN

(Ezekiel 25:1 - 28:26)

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 25 begins a new book.

The first 24 chapters have focused mainly on Jerusalem and Judah, but now the focus will be on the surrounding nations.

I) THE CORRUPTING INFLUENCES OF GODLESS NEIGHBOURS

1) Ammon (25:1-7)

Ezekiel has mentioned the Ammonites before;

21: 28 "And you, son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord God concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach; say, A sword, a sword is drawn for the slaughter. It is polished to consume and to flash like lightning— 29 while they see for you false visions, while they divine lies for you—to place you on the necks of the profane wicked, whose day has come, the time of their final punishment. 30 Return it to its sheath. In the place where you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you. 31 And I will pour out my indignation upon you; I will blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, and I will deliver you into the hands of brutish men, skillful to destroy. 32 You shall be fuel for the fire. Your blood shall be in the midst of the land. You shall be no more remembered, for I the Lord have spoken."

Amon & Moab were Lot's two sons, born as a result of his incestuous relationship with his daughters. Amon's crime was that they delighted in the downfall of God's kingdom. They clapped and cheered at the fall of Jerusalem.

2) Moab(25:8-11)

The Moabites occupied the land just south of the Ammonites, they were a threat to Israel, and in the same way they are condemned with Ammon because the rejoiced and cheered at the fall of God's kingdom.

3) Edom (25:12-14)

Edom was where Jacob's twin brother esau went.

Gen 32: 3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom,

And after the siege of Jerusalem, Judah now was powerless to prevent the Edomites raiding the southern kings.

Ezekiel says that their advantadge will be short-lived.

4) Philistia (25:15-17)

The Philistines were a thorn in the

25:15 "Thus says the Lord God:Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of soul to destroy in never- ending enmity,

Their particular sin was that of vengeance.

5) Tyre (26:1 - 28:19)

We now move away from the sins of violence, to the commercial sins, like fraud.

a) A bare rock (reasons for her fall) (26:1-21)

Why will this happen?

i) Tyre's dependence on physical resources

It was a city very well constructed, and was known for it's trade, and abilities at sea. Therefore they trusted in their physical resources; e.g. horses, chariots, wagons, etc.

ii) Tyre put her trust in her leaders

But not in God.

iii) Tyre was materialistic

v. 12 They will plunder your riches and loot your merchandise. They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses. Your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters.

There was a great desire for money and fine beautiful houses.

iv) Tyre was fond of the good life

v. 13 And I will stop the music of your songs, and the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more.

There were lots of noisy songs and music.

Those were the reasons why God is about to judge Tyre.

b) A funeral dirge (27:1-36)

In ch.27 Ezekiel gives a funeral message, because Tyre is to die.

c) Falling from shame and fortune (28:1-19)

28:20-26

Here Ezekiel speaks against the nation of Sidon.

29:1-32:32

He speaks against Egypt.

These 7 nations now come under the spotlight of Ezekiel's preaching.

As we listen to Ezekiel's preaching to the nations, there are 5 lessons that we learn.

i) The scope of God's work.

It includes all the nations.

- ii) Every event in the course of history is under the control of God.
- iii) God's main interest is not the world, but His church.
- iv) Pride comes before a fall.
- v) The reminder is clear; we are to trust in God alone.

Studies In Ezekiel

Section 5

Prophecies Which Look To The Future (33:1-39:29)

Introduction

The previous 8 chapters (25-32) were concerned with the judgement of God on the nations. But the next 5 chapters (33-37) will now return to the main theme; i.e. the fall of Judah to the Babylonians. Bu there is a big difference because rather than being judgemental, these chapters are full of comfort and of promise for renewal and restoration.

I) Ezekiel the watchman (33:1-20)

"Son of man, I have made you a watchman"

The task of a watchman and v.2 was to give them warning of the coming danger.

7 "So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.

Therefore his task was a big one. He had to warn those without God, if he did not do it, their blood would be on themselves.

v.8 If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

But if he did warn the people they would die for their sin, and Ezekiel would save himself.

9 But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

We are called today to be faithful watchmen, to warn the lost.

II) Jerusalem's fall is explained (33:21-31)

This has been a main theme throughout the book, and yet it is tragic to read of how the people responded to Ezekiel with such arrogance. They had become hardened to the gospel.

III) The good shepherd replacing bad shepherds (34:1-31)

This theme is also in the N.T., where the Lord Jesus claims to be the Good Shepherd.

(34:1-10) Ezekiel explain the 3 characteristics of their shepherds (their leaders)

1) They were only interested in themselves (v.2)

- 2) They loved an easy life (v.9)
- 3) They were heartless

However, in contrast to these false shepherds, Ezekiel gives us a wonderful picture of Jesus our true Shepherd.

(v.16) He binds up their wounds.

16 I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in

justice.

(v.11-12) He rescues them from danger.

11 "For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

(15.) He protects for them

15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God.

(v.13-14) He provides for them.

13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.

(11, 16) He guides them.

11 "For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out... 16 I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

Ezekiel then explains in v.23, 24 how the servant of David is to be their Shepherd (v.23-24)

The Lord Jesus is that Good Shepherd.

John 10: 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

1 Peter 5: 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Heb 13: 20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,

1 Peter 2: 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

IV) Edom's treachery will be repaid (35:1-15)

Throughout the Bible the Edomites have been in conflict with the Jewish people; and the prophet Obadiah also speaks of the destruction in;

Obadiah 10 Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever... 14 Do not stand at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives; do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress.

They always wanted to capture Judah & Israel.

Ezekiel highlights their godlessness; their blasphemous boasting, and how one day Edom will be repaid.

V) New hope for Israel's mountains (36:1-38)

This chapter is a wonderful reminder of the gospel. God is going to establish a new covenant. He is going to renew the hearts of His people.

v. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

This is explained by Paul in;

2 Cor 5: 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

He also will sprinkle clean water over them, making them clean.

But the Lord will go further, and put His Spirit in them;

v.27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Once again in v.37, the people will begin to pray.

v.37 "Thus says the Lord God: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock.

VI) New life for dry bones (37:1-14)

This is perhaps the most well known passage in Ezekiel.

In this amazing vision Ezekiel sees a valley of dry bones, they were absolutely dead – a picture of Israel; stone dead spiritually.

v.3 And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know."

And God says they can. There is 4 things:

1) Men of God

2) Who preach the Word of God

4 Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

3) By the Spirit of God

4) Through Prayer

And as a result it says;

v. 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them.

VII) A renewed nation with a new king (37:15-28)

As a result, there would come a brand new Israel; with new life, with new unity, new purity, and new God-consciences. So however dark the present situation may look, Ezekiel 37 tells us that dry bones can live.

VIII) A prophecy against Gog (38:1 – 39:20)

In these verses, Ezekiel reminds us that there would always be opposition from Satan; and you compare that to (Rev 20:8)

He rises like a mighty army against the new Israel, but God is in control (v.4) and gains the victory.

What we must not do, and try and tell us who Gog is – it is rather names that refer to the opposition.

IX) God's purposes for Israel (39:21-29)

This section closes on a note of great hope for the future, for the new Israel. And this will lead us into section 6, the final section of Ezekiel; which gives us the plans for the new Israel.

Section 6

Plans for the New Jerusalem (40:1-48:35)

Introduction

The book of Ezekiel has had 2 main themes:

- i) The threat of judgement
- ii) The restoration of God's people

The teaching on God's judgement reached a climax in ch.11 when the Lord left the temple.

But now in ch.40-48 it is going to speak of restoration. Ezekiel is carried to a high mountain overlooking the New Jerusalem, and there he sees the return of God to the temple (43:1-12).

It is important to determine how you interoperate this section.

- i) Some take it literally. When Ezekiel was anticipating the Temple being rebuilt after the return of the exiles.
- ii) Others see it as a future millennial age; that when Jesus comes back, He will physically rebuilt the temple, and blood sacrifices will be offered again.

Heb 10:8-10 speaks against this.

Heb 10: 8 When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), 9 then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. 10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

i) The third view is that we understand Ezekiel's temple as a picture of the church.

Eph 2: 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

1 Pet 2: 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Heb 3: 6 but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

All of these verses supports this view.

The commentator E.J. Young called this section, "The vision of the church of God upon earth, symbolized by the description of the temple.

II) The new Temple (40:1-42:20)

In this section there is a visit from the angel (v.1-4); followed by a description of the main gates (v.5-16); The outer court (v.17-19);

Inner Court (v.20-47)

Priest's Rooms (41:1-14)

As Ezekiel describes this beautiful picture it teaches us 4 things:

a) Perfection

Everything is made to perfection.

b) Purpose

The purpose is for the glory of God.

c) Beauty

A temple of magnificent Beauty

d) Symbolism

The picture of Jesus' church beautifully described in symbolic language.

III) God's glory returns to the Temple (43:1-12)

In ch.11 we saw the saddest moment in Israel's history, which 1 Sam 4 called Ichabod. Sin had driven the Lord away from His temple. But now with the church the Lord returns, and He lives among His people; and the glory has returned.

IV) Arrangements for worship (43:13-46:24)

Under the continual use of symbolism, Ezekiel describes the altar in ch.43:13-27, which was magnificently fulfilled in Jesus who paid the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

Having described the altar, Ezekiel then describes the priests (ch.44:1-31), and finally the different offerings (45:1-46:24).

V) The life-giving river (47:1-12)

This is another of the well-known passages of Ezekiel. The Bible begins with a description of a river flowing through the Garden of Eden;

Gen 2: 10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. 11 The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. 13 The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. 14 And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The psalmist speaks of a river;

Psalm 46: 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

The prophet Joel speaks of a river;

Joel 3: 18 And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Shittim. Rev 22: 1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The key to understanding this river is found in John 7:37-39;

37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. "" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The river refers to the Spirit.

Ezekiel's vision therefore points to Christ as the true temple, and to the river as the Holy Spirit which Jesus would send to the church.

VI) The division of the land (47:13-48:35)

This was already mentioned earlier.

Conclusion

In ch.48 the name of the new city is called, "the Lord is Present". Therefore the point of this vision has not been to focus on the city of Jerusalem, or on the temple; rather Ezekiel wants his readers to be taken up with God and His presence among His people. At the heart is, "I will be your God, and you will be my people".

Ez 48: 35 ... And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The Lord Is There."

Ex 29: 42 It shall be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. 43 There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory. 44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests.

Deut 12: 5 But you shall seek the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go,

The same words are mentioned in Ezekiel 37.

Therefore, the church is shown under the symbol of a temple with the Holy Spirit coming from the throne. This ends Ezekiel on a magnificent note.