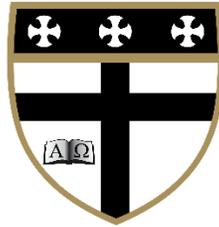


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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“Ezekiel’s Prophecy: A Prologue to the New Testament”¹

by

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² Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). www.roderickford.org.

Introduction

Ezekiel (c. 622 – 570 BC) lived during the 6th century BC in the Kingdom of Judah. He preached during the reigns of kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. He lived during the two decades leading up to the Babylonian Captivity in 597 BC, and also during the Jewish exile in Babylon.

The themes or subjects within the Book of Ezekiel cover this broad period: first, Ezekiel speaks as if the Jews had not yet gone into captivity and thus gives his forewarnings; and, secondly, Ezekiel also speaks as if the Jews had already gone into captivity, and thus he gives them hope of God's future redemption of a "restored" Israel.

In the Prophet Ezekiel's prophetic mission, we find God's special charge to preachers and prophets, as follows:

When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood.³

The prophet and the preacher, then, has the *duty to warn* his neighbors and countrymen of community-wide and national sins, because if he does not, then his countrymen will suffer disastrous consequences and God will certainly hold the prophet and the preacher accountable for those disastrous consequences.

The first two-thirds of the Book of Ezekiel constitute prophetic warning through the usage of allegorical symbolism. Allegory is thus the primary method which Ezekiel uses to get his message across, primarily because the LORD communicates to Ezekiel through the usage of symbolism through several visions. As this symbolism is revealed, its imagery is interpreted and given meaning.

For example, throughout the entire book, Ezekiel gives clear reasons for the Jews suffering: it was because they had become like, figuratively speaking, a lewd and lascivious prostitute. Both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah had, according to

³ Ezekiel 3:18 [NIV].

Ezekiel's prophecy, prostituted themselves to the surrounding nations whom they sought to emulate: Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, etc.

In chapter twenty-two of the Book of Ezekiel, the prophet attributes the kingdom of Judah's failure to establish social justice as a manifestation of its wickedness. This lack of social justice includes oppression, extortion, exploitation of the poor, bribery, and the shedding of innocent blood. This wickedness is the real nature of Judah's prostitution to sin. For this reason, Ezekiel informs his audience that the southern kingdom of Judah is beyond repair. The LORD God has made up his mind and will utterly execute His divine punishment upon Judah.

But for the sake of LORD's holy name, no remnant of Israel or Judah would be saved. But Ezekiel's famous prophecy of the "dry bones" informs his audience that God shall display grace towards Israel, His namesake, and restore it to eternal splendor and greatness.

This restored Israel will bring together the remnant of Israel that is disbursed throughout the nations. And this restored Israel will rejoin the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and again have one head, David their king.

But Ezekiel's prophecy goes further than all of the others in describing the war of Armageddon which we subsequently find in the Book of Revelation. After the restoration Israel occurs, the city-state of "Gog," within the land of "Magog," will be aroused with hatred towards this restored Israel.

Gog and Magog are described as being located geographically in the "far north"; they shall gather many nations together, and they shall put together an army of great hordes; and they shall revolt against the mountain of this restored Israel.⁴ However, the Almighty LORD shall crush Gog and Magog; and soon thereafter the proverbial "New Jerusalem," which is revealed in Ezekiel's vision, shall emerge.

According to Reformed theology, the Book of Ezekiel is clearly Christocentric, because throughout this book, Christ himself speaks and deals directly with the Prophet Ezekiel. The cherubim, the valley of the dry bones, the

⁴ Geographically, "Gog and Magog" are located in the "far north" which some have placed in Europe and Asia. "Historically speaking, Magog was a grandson of Noah (Genesis 10:2). The descendants of Magog settled to the far north of Israel, likely in Europe and northern Asia (Ezekiel 38:2). Magog seems to be used to refer to 'northern barbarians' in general, but likely also has a connection to Magog the person. The people of Magog are described as skilled warriors (Ezekiel 38:15; 39:3-9)." <https://www.gotquestions.org/Gog-Magog.html>.

restoration of Israel, etc., are all allegorical symbols and themes which the Early Church interpreted to be reflections of Jesus Christ and his Church.

From the prophecy of Ezekiel we find many of the same allegorical symbols—e.g., the “prostitute,” “the great war against the city of God,” “Gog and Magog,” and the “new holy city”—that are presented in the Christian Book of Revelation.

Finally, the Book of Ezekiel describes a theological system which the Apostle Peter describes in his epistle⁵ and which Augustine of Hippo expressly adopted in *The City of God*.⁶ Ezekiel forewarned his fellow Jews and even other surrounding nations that the Almighty God is a god of divine punishment and that He will execute his divine judgment upon the nations. However, at the same time, Ezekiel describes the “justice” of God as distinguishing between the just and the unjust. Ezekiel explains that God shall take no pleasure in the punishment of the wicked; but that the wicked may “Turn! Turn from sin and be saved!”

Here in the Book of Ezekiel, the theology of Oxford Methodism—without objections to Calvin’s corollary on predestination—is plainly demonstrated. As humans experience reality in the created world, some of those person who are outwardly wicked turn towards goodness and holiness; and some of those persons who are outwardly holy turn towards wickedness and sin. Moreover, Ezekiel proclaims that God takes no pleasure in destroying the wicked and desires that they turn away from their wickedness. Hence, the Book of Ezekiel is an “Arminian-Augustinian-Wesleyan” theological discourse on universal atonement, although some Reformed theologians such as John Calvin have held that Ezekiel’s theology is not inconsistent with the “orthodox Calvinistic” doctrine of predestination.⁷

⁵ 2 Peter 3:9 (“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**”)

⁶ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library), p. 479 (“For in each individual, as I have already said, there is first of all that which is reprobate, that from which we must begin, but in which **we need not necessarily remain**....”).

⁷ Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible (Ezekiel 18:24):

In what sense, then, does Ezekiel mean that the just fall away? That question is easily answered, since he is not here treating of the living root of justice, but of the outward form or appearance, as we commonly say. Paul reminds us that God knows us, but adds, that this seal remains. (2 Timothy 2:19.) **God therefore claims to himself alone the difference between the elect and the reprobate, since many seem to be members of his Church who are only outwardly such.** And that passage of Augustine is true, that there are many wolves within, and many sheep without. For before God demonstrates his election, the sheep wander, and seem altogether strangers to the hope of salvation. Meanwhile **many hypocrites make use of the name of God, and openly boast themselves pre-eminent in the Church, but inwardly they**

Chapter One

“Allegorical Symbolism”

Reformed theology—and particularly that of Augustine of Hippo—includes that of allegorical interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.⁸

To be sure, the Book of Ezekiel is an “allegorical” theological discourse on the Babylonian captivity and the restored Israel.

Allegory requires that the reader of the Scriptures understand the meaning of “symbols,” and these may be understood from the usage of the same symbols or words in other parts of the Sacred Scriptures— leading to a common understanding amongst the ancient Israelites, Jews, and even nearby nations.

This entire prophetic book is designed to provide spiritual insight into real historical events through allegory—it is not a history lesson; it is not a historical or grammatical hermeneutical discourse.

For example, through the visions of the cherubim, Ezekiel sees an allegorical symbol the glory and power of the LORD.

Through prophecy against “the Mountains of Israel,” Ezekiel refers to the kingdom of Judah.

God tells Ezekiel to perform various symbolic activities, such as drawing the city of Jerusalem on a clay tablet, and putting together a simulated siege of that city (i.e., clay tablet). This simulation was designed to demonstrate to Ezekiel’s fellow Jews that the city of Jerusalem would be besieged. Ezekiel 4:1-17.

God told Ezekiel to bare the burdens of the sins of “the house of Judah” by eating “defiled” food, in order to demonstrate the coming hardship and strain upon Judah. Ezekiel 4:1-18.

are wolves. But because it often happens that some make the greatest show of piety and justice, the Prophet very properly says, that if such fall away, they cannot boast of their former righteousness before God, since its remembrance will be bloated out.

⁸ The “allegorical” method of interpretation was established at Alexandria, Egypt during the second and third centuries, BC. Origen was a great champion of this method of Scriptural hermeneutics.

God told Ezekiel to shiver and shake while he ate his food, in order to demonstrate that the Jews would soon experience great anxiety as they ate and drank. Ezekiel 4:1-17.

God told Ezekiel that when his wife dies, not to mourn her death, in order to symbolize the fact that during the days of Jerusalem's destruction, the Jews would not have time to bury or mourn their dead. Ezekiel 24:15-27.

God told Ezekiel that cook food in a pot, but to remove the food from the pot, and place the pot upon hot coals, so that the impurities would melt away. However, the heavy deposit left from the purities and which could not be removed from the pot, symbolized the sins of Judah. Ezekiel 24:1-12.

The LORD God continued to speak to Ezekiel through the cherubim through a series of various visions, and Ezekiel is shown the destruction of Jerusalem and the southern kingdom of Judah. The reasons given are varied, but it is clear that the Jews have become utterly sinful and filthy in the sight of the LORD, stating:

Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: You have been more unruly than the nations around you and have not followed my decrees or kept my laws. You have not even conformed to the standards of the nations around you.

Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself am against you, Jerusalem, and I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of the nations.⁹

Ezekiel frequently refers to the kingdom of Judah as an allegorical symbol of the "prostitute."

For instance, through the allegorical symbols of two sisters named Oholah and Oholibah, the northern kingdom of Israel (i.e., Samaria) was described as a prostitute to the Assyrian kingdom; the southern kingdom of Judah was described as a prostitute to Babylon. Accordingly, the LORD turned both of these kingdoms over to their oppressors. Ezekiel 23:1-49.

⁹ Ezekiel 4:7-8.

Ezekiel prophesies of a “Gog and Magog” which is a future reference to nations in the “far north,” or perhaps throughout the four corners of the world, that will rebel against the mountains of a restored Israel. Ezekiel 39. “Gog and Magog,” it may be understood, is a historical reference to northern nation-states in Europe and Asia, and (or) a combination of nations (such as in North Africa, Ethiopia, the Middle East, etc.) in league with these nations “from the far north.” See, e.g., Ezekiel 39.

Perhaps the most important allegorical expression in the Book of Ezekiel is the “Valley of the Dry Bones,” whereby Ezekiel’s vision describes the restoration of the southern kingdom of Judah with the northern kingdom of Israel under the leadership of “My servant David [who] will be king over them, and they will have on shepherd.” Ezekiel 37:24.

And, finally, Ezekiel’s “Temple,” which is described in the last several chapters of his book, is an allegorical symbol of the “New Jerusalem,” which Christians believe to be described in the Book of Revelation.¹⁰

¹⁰ Revelation 21:1-27.

Chapter Two

“The Word of the LORD (i.e., Christ)”

In the Book of Ezekiel, in the first verses of, and throughout, several chapters, Ezekiel says frequently that “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me.”¹¹

Likewise, in the Book of Genesis, “the **word of the LORD** came to Abraham [i.e., Abraham].” And in the Book of Jeremiah, chapter 1, contains the same words, to wit: 1:2-4, stating “The **word of the LORD** came to him.... The **word of the LORD** came to me....”

The expression “word of the LORD,” which is utilized throughout the Old Testament, is a metonym for “Christ.”

Thus, Christ speaks to the prophets, and throughout the Old Testament, and is called the “word of the LORD,” which the Gospel of John later identifies with Jesus Christ, to wit:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.¹²

¹¹ See, e.g., Ezekiel 6:1; 7:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:2; 14:12; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1; 20:45; 21:1; 21:8; 22:1; 23:1; 24:1; 24:15; 25:1; 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 28:11; 28:20; 29:1; 30:1; 31:1; 32:1; 33:1; 34:1; 35:1; 37: 15; 38:1, etc.

¹² John 1:1-4.

“Ask the Rabbi”¹³

Jesus Christ said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56).

The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" (John 8:57).

'Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (John 8:58).

Jesus Christ is the Word of God. Rev 19:13 'And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God.

The Old Testament: Gen 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD (Yahweh) came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.."

And Abram said, "O Lord (Adonay) God (Yahweh), what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless...

Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.

And He (the word of the LORD) took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them."

The word of the LORD here is Jesus Christ. He appeared to Abram in a vision, He spoke to him, and He took Abram outside.

It was also Jesus Christ who appeared as one of the three 'men' who visited Abraham (Gen chapter 18).

That the word of the LORD in Genesis 15:1 is Jesus Christ has not gone unrecognized. Excerpt: Clarke's Commentary on the Bible The word of the

¹³ "The 'word of the LORD' in Gen 15:1 is Jesus Christ (incarnation, Jehovah)," www.city-data.com/forum/christianity/1526439-word-lord-gen-15-1-jesus.html

Lord came unto Abram - This is the first place where God is represented as revealing himself by his word. Some learned men suppose that the דבר יהוה debar Yehovah, translated here word of the Lord, means the same with the λογος του Θεου of St. John, John 1:1, and, by the Chaldee paraphrases in the next clause, called מימרי meimeri, "my word," and in other places מימרא דיי meimera daiya, the word of Yeya, a contraction for Jehovah, which they appear always to consider as a person; and which they distinguish from פתגמא pithgama, which signifies merely a word spoken, or any part of speech.

Genesis 15:1 Bible Commentary Excerpt: Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision; Christ, the essential Word, appeared to Abram in an human form, visible to him, and with an articulate voice spoke unto him: Genesis 15:1.

Bible Commentary Jesus Christ is the revealed Person of the Godhead, and it was He who appeared to Abram and declared Himself to be 'God Almighty.'

Likewise, Reformed theology holds that Christ spoke to the Old Testament prophets, including the prophet Ezekiel, as Reformed theologian John Calvin concluded:

Since, then, it is certain that Christ was beheld by him, he is Jehovah, that is, Eternal God; and although he is distinct from the person of the Father, yet he is entirely God, for the Father is in him: for the essence cannot be divided without impiety, although the persons must be distinguished.¹⁴

A Christocentric interpretation of the Book of Ezekiel thus demonstrates that Christ (i.e., the word of the LORD) speaks continuously throughout the this prophetic work.

¹⁴ Calvin's Commentaries on the Bible (Ezekiel 1:28).

Chapter Three

“The Cherubim”

In chapter one of the Book of Ezekiel, we are introduced to a description of a cherubim.¹⁵

The Israelite cherubim are described as fulfilling a variety of functions – most often, they are described as bolstering the throne of Yahweh. Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim also emulate this, as the conjoined wingspan of the four cherubim is described as forming the boundary of the divine chariot. Likewise, on the ‘mercy seat’ of the Ark of the Covenant, two cherubim are described as bounding the ark and forming a space through which Yahweh would appear – however, aside from the instruction that they be beaten out of the sides of the ark, there are no details about these cherubim specified in the text. The status of the cherubim as constituting a sort-of vehicle for Yahweh is present in Ezekiel's visions, the Books of Samuel, the parallel passages in the later Books of Chronicles, and passages in the early Psalms: for example, ‘and he rode upon a cherub and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind.’ The traditional Hebrew conception of cherubim as guardians of the Garden of Eden is backed by the Semitic belief of beings of superhuman power and devoid of human feelings, whose duty it was to represent the gods, and as guardians of their sanctuaries to repel intruders; these conceptions in turn are similar to an account found on Tablet 9 of the inscriptions found at Nimrud.¹⁶

The Prophet Ezekiel described the cherubim as follows:

- Flashing light, surrounded by Brilliant light
- Center of fire there was glowing metal
- Center of fire was 4 living creatures
- 4 living creatures had the form of a “man”

¹⁵ “The Cherubim,” <https://www.concordant.org/expositions/unveiling-jesus-christ/15-the-cherubim/>

¹⁶ “Cherub,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherub>.

- Each of the 4 living creatures had 4 faces and 4 wings
- Legs straight; feet like a calf, that gleamed like burnished bronze
- Under the wings were hands of a man
- The wings of 4 living creatures touched one another
- Each of the 4 living creatures moved straight ahead, and did not turn as they moved
- The 4 living creatures had the face of a Man
- Right side of face: lion
- Left side of face: ox
- Each had the face of an eagle Ezekiel 1:4-11 [NIV].
- Fire moved back and forth among the creatures
- A wheel was on the ground beside each creature. Each wheel looked like a wheel intersection a wheel. The wheels had eyes all around.
- “When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved.” Ezekiel 1:19.
- “the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels” Ezekiel 1:20
- Above the heads of each creature was an “expanse.”
- When the creatures moved, the sound of the “roar of rushing waters.” Ezekiel 1:24. When they stopped, they lowered their wings.

Reformed theologian John Calvin (1509 – 1564) concluded that where Ezekiel referenced this cherubim in his vision, that he actually saw Christ himself, stating:

At length he says, this was a vision of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah, and by these words confirms what I have said before, that the glory, of God was so beheld by the Prophet, that God did not appear as he really is, but as far as he can be beheld by mortal man. For if the angels tremble at God's glory, if they veil themselves with their wings, what should we do who creep upon this earth? We must hold, then, that as often as the Prophets and holy fathers saw God, they saw as it were the likeness or aspect of the glory of God, but not the glory itself, for they were not fit for it; for this would be to measure with the palm of our hands a hundred thousand heavens, and earths, and worlds. For God is infinite; and when the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, how can our minds comprehend him? But although God has never appeared in his immeasurable glory, and

has never manifested himself as he really exists, yet we must nevertheless hold that he has so appeared as to leave no doubt in the minds of his servants as to their knowing that they have seen God. And this is the purport of those phrases which sometimes appear difficult. I have seen God face to face, says Jacob. (Genesis 32:30.) But was he so foolish as to think that he saw God like a mortal? by no means; but that appearance convinced him of its certainty, as if he had said that no specter by which he could be deceived was presented to his view; for the devil deludes us unless we are attentive and cautious. Therefore Jacob here distinguishes the vision which he enjoyed from all prodigies in which profane nations delighted. Familiar knowledge, then, is the meaning of seeing face to face. At the same time, as I have said, God never gave the Fathers a sight of himself except according to their capacity. He always had respect to their faculties, and this is the meaning of the phrase, this was a vision of the splendor of Jehovah's glory. **Since, then, it is certain that Christ was beheld by him, he is Jehovah, that is, Eternal God; and although he is distinct from the person of the Father, yet he is entirely God,** for the Father is in him: for the essence cannot be divided without impiety, although the persons must be distinguished.¹⁷

The “cherub” is thus an allegorical symbol of God Himself. This allows Christian theologians to also find Christ allegorically symbolized in the “cherub,” as did the Reformed theologian John Calvin.

¹⁷ *Calvin's Commentaries on the Bible* (Ezekiel 1:28).

Chapter Four

“Divine Providence”

Like Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Prophet Ezekiel’s message is not restricted to the Israelites or the Jews. Rather, his prophetic message is directed to several other nations as well and thus describes God’s divine Providence over them.¹⁸

During the middle of the Book of Ezekiel, at chapter 25, up to the prophecy of the restoration of Israel in chapter 36, the Prophet directs his attention to the following Gentile nations:

- Ammon;
- Moab;
- Edom;
- Philistia;
- Trye; and,
- Egypt

Ezekiel’s prophecy against Trye, a great commercial and trading center in the ancient world, is noteworthy for modern-day readers, because many of its commercial sins remain a troublesome feature of modern life.¹⁹

Ezekiel’s prophecy against Egypt is noteworthy because it marks the historical period when Egypt ceased to exercise imperial influence in the ancient

¹⁸ See, e.g., “The Bible Says,” <https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/amos/amos-1/amos-13-5/>, stating:

In this case, God Himself is making the judgement. Although God delegated authority to human governments to execute justice (Romans 13:4), He is still the ultimate judge.

See, also, St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 158 (“God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence.”)

See, also, the American Declaration of Independence, to wit:

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of **divine Providence**, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

See, also, *Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible* (Amos, Chapter 1).

¹⁹ See, e.g., John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Economics of Innocent Fraud: Truth for Our Time* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004).

world, leading up to the time when it was annexed by the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans.²⁰

All of these other nations—not just the kingdom of Judah—are under the Almighty God’s sovereign jurisdiction and authority. These nations will be punished, not because they did not follow the Mosaic law, which they did not have, but because they committed national sin when they knew how to do otherwise.

Here we may infer from the Book of Romans that Ezekiel means to say that there is one God who is God of both Jew and Gentile,²¹ and “[a]ll who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.”²²

In sum, the Book of Ezekiel describes *divine Providence* as the supreme governor over the political and constitutional affairs of all nations and for all time.

²⁰ See **Appendix**, The Book of Ezekiel: Notes and Chapter Summaries, Chapters 29 through 32.

²¹ Romans 3:29-31.

²² Romans 2:12.

Chapter Five

“Social Justice”

A central theme in the Book of Ezekiel is the city of Jerusalem’s failure to dispense true justice— and especially social justice.

To this very point, the Prophet Ezekiel wrote:

See how each of the **princes of Israel** who are in you **uses his power to shed blood.**

In you they have **treated father and mother with contempt**; in you they have **oppressed the foreigner** and **mistreated the fatherless and the widow.**

You have despised my holy things and desecrated my Sabbaths.

In you are slanderers who are bent on **shedding blood**; in you are those who eat at the mountain shrines and commit lewd acts.

In you are those who **dishonor their father’s bed**; in you are those who **violate women** during their period, when they are ceremonially unclean.

In you one man commits **a detestable offense with his neighbor’s wife**, another shamefully defiles his daughter-in-law, and another violates his sister, his own father’s daughter.

In you are people who **accept bribes to shed blood**; you take **interest and make a profit from the poor**. You **extort unjust gain from your neighbors**. And you have forgotten me, declares the Sovereign LORD.

“I will surely strike my hands together at **the unjust gain you have made** and at **the blood you have shed in your midst.**

Will your courage endure or your hands be strong in the day I deal with you? I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.

I will disperse you among the nations and scatter you through the countries; and I will put an end to your uncleanness.

When you have been defiled in the eyes of the nations, you will know that I am the LORD.”²³

Thus, the failure to establish *social justice* was one of the major reasons God considered the people of Judah and Jerusalem to be “unclean” and “wicked,” and thus He subjected them to the Babylonian captivity.

²³ Ezekiel 22:6-15.

Chapter Six

“Prophecy of the Church”

We next turn to the Prophet Ezekiel’s general description of what may be called the new covenant Christian Church.

In Chapter 34 of the Book of Ezekiel, we find the following description:

Chapter 34, Verses 11-31 [NIV]

11 “For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I myself** will search for my sheep and look after them.

12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, **so will I look after my sheep**. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.

13 **I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land**. I will pasture them on **the mountains of Israel**, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.

14 I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.

15 **I myself will tend my sheep** and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord.

16 **I will search for the lost** and bring back the strays. **I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak**, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. **I will shepherd the flock with justice**.

17 “As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I will judge between one sheep and another**, and between rams and goats.

18 Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?

19 Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

20 “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, **I myself will judge** between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.

21 Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away,

22 **I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge** between one sheep and another.

23 **I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.**

24 **I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them.** I the Lord have spoken.

25 “I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety.

26 I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing.

27 The trees will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them.

28 **They will no longer be plundered by the nations,** nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid.

29 I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations.

30 Then **they will know that I, the Lord their God,** am with them and that they, **the Israelites, are my people,** declares the Sovereign Lord.

31 **You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord.”**

Augustine of Hippo has interpreted this passage to mean a prophecy of “Christ, speaking of Him in the prophetic manner as David because He assumed flesh of the seed of David, and on account of that form of a servant in which He was made man.”²⁴

²⁴ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library 1950), p. 642.

In Chapter 36 of the Book of Ezekiel, we find the following description:

Chapter 36, Verses 22-38 [NIV]

22 “Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: **It is not for your sake, people of Israel**, that I am going to do these things, **but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. 23 **I will show the holiness of my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

24 “For **I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.** 25 **I will sprinkle clean water** on you, and you will be clean; **I will cleanse you from all your impurities** and from all your idols. 26 **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;** I will remove from you your **heart of stone** and **give you a heart of flesh.** 27 **And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.** 28 Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; **you will be my people, and I will be your God.** 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. 31 **Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.** 32 I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign Lord. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, people of Israel!

33 “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: **On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt.** 34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. 35 They will say, “This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited.” 36 **Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate.** I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.’

37 “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Once again I will yield to Israel’s plea and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, 38 as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed festivals. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

Here, Ezekiel’s expression of the “sprinkling of the water” to wash away impurities may be symbol of the sacrament of baptism.

Ezekiel’s expression of the “new heart” and the “heart of flesh” and the “new spirit” is a reference to becoming “born again” in John 3:1-16.

Ezekiel’s expression of the taking “out of the nations... gather you from all the countries” is a reflection of the “catholic” nature of the restored Israel (i.e., the reformed “catholic” Israel; i.e., the “Christian” Church).

All the nations will know of this God of Israel by virtue of this new “catholic” or universal Church (i.e., the restored Israel): “Then all the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate.” Ezekiel 36:36.

And finally, in Ezekiel’s prophecy of the “**Valley of the Dry Bones**,” he describes the “restored” Israel as follows:

Chapter 37, Verses 20-28 [NIV]

20 Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on 21 and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land.** 22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. **There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.** 23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding,[a] and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

24 “**My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.** 25 They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever, and **David my servant will be their prince forever.** 26 **I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant.** I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. 27 My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. 28 **Then the nations**

will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.”

The Early Church interprets this passage to mean Christ and the Church.

Again, the Prophet Ezekiel expressly informs us that this is the “covenant of peace... an everlasting covenant”;²⁵ and the “restored” Israel will be “a land that has recovered from war, **whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel**, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety.”²⁶

The Early Church clearly embraced that description, as reflected in the Book of Ezekiel, as the designation of the Christian Church.

To that end, the Apostle Paul adopted the same general theological conclusion, where he wrote: “[f]or he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”²⁷

Similarly, Augustine of Hippo adopted the same general theological conclusion— as the Prophet Jeremiah described the new covenant faithful— stating that such persons who have God’s laws written in their minds and hearts belong to a “heavenly fellowship, **to the true Israelites**, the citizens of the country that is above.”²⁸

And these “true Israelites,” concluded Augustine, come from “**all nations**” and form “a society of pilgrims of all languages, not scrupling about diversities in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained....”²⁹

²⁵ Ezekiel 37:26 [NIV].

²⁶ Ezekiel 38:8 [NIV].

²⁷ Romans 2:28-29. But see, also, Deuteronomy 30:6 (“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”)

²⁸ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 658.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 698.

Here again the “internationalization” of orthodox Judaism, whereby many nations shall be drawn to Jerusalem to pay homage to the LORD, that is reflected in the Book of Ezekiel,³⁰ lends great credence to the Christocentric interpretation of that sacred text.

³⁰ Ezekiel 37: 28. [NIV] (“Then the **nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy**, when my sanctuary is among them forever.”) and Ezekiel 38:23 [NIV] (“And so I will show my greatness, and **I will make myself known in the sight of many nations**. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”)

Chapter Seven

“The Last Days”

The Prophet Ezekiel is the only Old Testament prophet who describes, in allegorical terms, “the city of **Gog**, of the land of **Magog**,” which shall rise up and attack the “restored” Israel.

This he does in chapters 38 and 39 of the Book of Ezekiel. “Gog and Magog” are described as a “place **in the far north**, you and **many nations** with you... a great horde, a mighty army”³¹ that shall rise up against “a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety.”³²

“Historically speaking, Magog was a grandson of Noah (Genesis 10:2). The descendants of Magog settled to the far north of Israel, likely in Europe and northern Asia (Ezekiel 38:2). Magog seems to be used to refer to ‘northern barbarians’ in general, but likely also has a connection to Magog the person. The people of Magog are described as skilled warriors (Ezekiel 38:15; 39:3-9).”³³

Augustine’s *The City of God* describes this revolting against the land of Israel as the persecution of the Church during the last days (i.e., Armageddon), which is also described in the Book of Revelation. Augustine writes that “Gog and

³¹ Ezekiel 38:15 [NIV].

³² Ezekiel 38:8 [NIV].

³³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Gog-Magog.html>. See, also, David Parsons, “Is Ukraine war the onset of Gog and Magog?” *The Jerusalem Post* (March 11, 2020)(“Here’s why Christians are connecting Gog and Magog to the Ukraine war”) <https://www.jpost.com/christianworld/article-701004>; “Gog and Magog and the Promised Messiah,” *The Weekly Al Hakam* (April 10, 2020) <https://www.alhakam.org/gog-and-magog-and-the-promised-messiah/> (“Earlier scriptures revealed to the Israelite prophets clearly show and in fact, it is specifically mentioned that Gog and Magog refers to **the Christian nations of Europe**. This statement exists in such books with such clarity that it cannot be denied in any way.”) See, also, “Gog and Magog,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia) (“Romanized Jewish historian Josephus knew them as the nation descended from Magog the Japhetite, as in Genesis, and explained them to be the Scythians. In the hands of Early Christian writers they became apocalyptic hordes.... Some contemporary Muslim historians and geographers regarded **the Vikings** as the emergence of Gog and Magog....”) And, finally, see “THE BATTLE OF GOG AND MAGOG,” *The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry* (December 10, 2021) <https://www.foi.org/2021/12/10/the-battle-of-gog-and-magog/> (The battle of Gog and Magog described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is perhaps one of the most debated events in biblical prophecy....In summary, the battle of Gog and Magog is the future invasion of a coalition of nations, including **Russia, Turkey, Iran, Sudan, and Libya (Algeria/Tunisia)**, against Israel near the midpoint of the Tribulation, motivated by acquisition of material wealth.”)

Magog” represent the nations in the “four corners of the earth,” which “surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves.”³⁴

The Early Church thus conceptualized itself as the object of great scorn by all of the surrounding nations of the earth.

The Prophet Ezekiel’s vision of “Gog and Magog” and the New Temple is thus similar to, or the same as, the Apostle John’s vision of “Gog and Magog” and the New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation.³⁵

³⁴ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 729-730, stating, “Of Gog and Magog, who are to be roused by the devil to persecute the Church, when he is loosed in the end of the world.” See Appendix, below, “The Book of Ezekiel: Notes and Chapter Summaries,” chapters 38 and 39.

³⁵ Romans 20:7-10.

Conclusion

The Book of Ezekiel is of primary concern to present-day Christian lawyers, judges, and public officials, precisely because it describes, in chapter twenty-two, *social justice* as the fulcrum upon which divine Providence rewards or punishes nations, and also because it describes “Gog and Magog” as the source of a future rebellion against the “restored” Israel (i.e., the Christian Church).

Significantly, the Book of Ezekiel acknowledges that unholiness and the failure to establish *social justice* is the major reason for the downfall of the kingdom of Judah. God’s judgment on the destruction of Judah is final. The social injustices and wickedness in both Judah and Jerusalem are so great that God will not reconsider the execution of his divine judgment.

The Book of Ezekiel must be read with an understanding of allegorical biblical hermeneutics, because it is a book that is saturated with allegorical symbolism from the beginning to the end.

The Prophet Ezekiel is described as having had a series of visions, and each vision is designed to provide a spiritual insight into real world events leading up to, and during, the Babylonian captivity.

For this reason, the Book of Ezekiel may be correctly described as a spiritual interpretation of historical events during the reigns of kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah of Judah.

But the Book of Ezekiel is much more than history, because it is also political science and foretells future political events that have not yet occurred. For instance, it contains a spiritual interpretation of a “restored” kingdom of Israel under the leadership of David (i.e., Christ); the war of Armageddon, and the rise of Gog and Magog in opposition to the restored Israel (i.e., the Christian Church); and the institution of a new Temple (i.e., the New Jerusalem).

Ezekiel’s allegorical theology thus provides the backdrop of the Apostles’ understanding of Christ’s earthly ministry as well as of His future reign as king. The Apostle John’s Book of Revelation, which is a revelation of Christ, is, in many ways, a Christocentric restatement of the Ezekiel’s prophetic book.

THE END

APPENDIX

“Notes and Chapter Summaries on the Book of Ezekiel”

By

Roderick O. Ford, J.D., LL.D.

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL (Chapter Themes)



Chapter 1

“Ezekiel Sees the Cherubim and Beholds the Image of God’s Glory”

- Ezekiel, son of Buzi, saw a vision while he was among the Jewish exiles in Babylon
- This was during the 5th year of the exile of King Jehoiachin. Ezekiel 1:2
- Ezekiel saw the following vision:
 - Flashing light, surrounded by Brilliant light
 - Center of fire there was glowing metal
 - Center of fire was 4 living creatures
 - 4 living creatures had the form of a “man”
 - Each of the 4 living creatures had 4 faces and 4 wings
 - Legs straight; feet like a calf, that gleamed like burnished bronze
 - Under the wings were hands of a man
 - The wings of 4 living creatures touched one another
 - Each of the 4 living creatures moved straight ahead, and did not turn as they moved
 - The 4 living creatures had the face of a Man
 - Right side of face: lion
 - Left side of face: ox
 - Each had the face of an eagle Ezekiel 1:4-11 [NIV].
 - Fire moved back and forth among the creatures
 - A wheel was on the ground beside each creature. Each wheel looked like a wheel intersection a wheel. The wheels had eyes all around.
 - “When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved.” Ezekiel 1:19.
 - “the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels” Ezekiel 1:20
 - Above the heads of each creature was an “expanse.”
 - When the creatures moved, the sound of the “roar of rushing waters.” Ezekiel 1:24. When they stopped, they lowered their wings.
- “Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went.” Ezekiel 1:12, 19 [NIV].

- A voice came from over the “expanse.” Above the “expanse” was a “**throne of sapphire**, and high above on the throne was a **figure like that of a man**. The man’s “waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD**, when I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.” Ezekiel 1:27-28.³⁶

Chapter 2 “The Image of God’s Glory Commands Ezekiel” (Part 1)

- This figure of a Man, who is in likeness of the Glory of God, speaks to Ezekiel—but he speaks as though he is God.
- He tells Ezekiel, go to the Israelites, for they are a “rebellious nation that has rebelled against me.” Ezekiel 2:3.
- He tells Ezekiel to say, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says.” Ezekiel 2:4.
- Do not be afraid
- “You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious.” Ezekiel 2:7
- “Open your mouth and eat what I give you.” Ezekiel 2:8.

³⁶ *Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible* (Ezekiel 1:28) says that “man” beheld by the Prophet Ezekiel is Christ (“Since, then, **it is certain that Christ was beheld by him**, he is Jehovah, that is, Eternal God; and although he is distinct from the person of the Father, yet he is entirely God, for the Father is in him: for the essence cannot be divided without impiety, although the persons must be distinguished. The rest I shall put off till tomorrow.”)

- Ezekiel receives a scroll, and on both sides were “words of lament and mourning and woe.” Ezekiel 2: 10.

Chapter 3 “The Image of God’s Glory Commands Ezekiel” (Part 2)

- Ezekiel is commanded to eat the scroll. He eats it, “and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.” Ezekiel 3:3.
- Ezekiel is told to go and speak God’s words.
- Ezekiel is sent to his “countrymen in exile,” to say, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says, whether they listen or fail to listen.” Ezekiel 3:11. “...for they are a rebellious house.” Ezekiel 3:27.
- Ezekiel is given this prophetic charge (Ezekiel 3:18-21) [NIV]:

18 When I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for[a] their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 19 But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself.

20 “Again, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before them, they will die. Since you did not warn them, they will die for their sin. The righteous things that person did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 21 But if you do warn the righteous person not to sin and they do not sin, they will surely live because they took warning, and you will have saved yourself.”

Chapter 4

Symbolization of the Siege of Jerusalem

- [God, or the LORD, or the *Man sitting on the throne that is surrounded by Cherubims*]³⁷ tells Ezekiel that He will cause a famine in Judah
- “Son of man, I will cut off the supply of food in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin.” Ezekiel 4:16.
- [God, the LORD, or the Man sitting on the throne] tells Ezekiel to draw a picture of Israel upon a clay tablet of stone.
- [God, the LORD, or the Man sitting on the throne] tells tells Ezekiel to erect a siege against the clay tablet; this symbolizes Judah’s coming famine.
- The House of Israel has sinned 390 years; therefore Ezekiel is instructed to lie on his left side for 390 days, during which time he will “bear the sins of the house of Israel.” Ezekiel 4:4.
- The House of Judah has sinned 40 years; therefore Ezekiel is instructed to lie on his right side for 40 days. Ezekiel 4:6. He is instructed to bear the sin of the House of Judah for 40 days. “Turn your face toward the siegn of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her.” Ezekiel 4:7.
- It is not clear as to whether Ezekiel is putting on a sort of “stage” performance, in order convey the LORD’s message. Ezekiel 4:1-8. Is he doing this in public or in private? The Scriptures do not say.
- In any event, if Ezekiel is doing this in private, then this must be a form of ministry preparation, and a form of spiritual, Nazarene-like form of discipline, whereby the LORD is preparing Ezekiel to “take on the sins” of

³⁷ Calvin’s *Commentaries on the Bible* (Ezekiel 1:28) says that “man” beheld by the Prophet Ezekiel is Christ (“Since, then, **it is certain that Christ was beheld by him**, he is Jehovah, that is, Eternal God; and although he is distinct from the person of the Father, yet he is entirely God, for the Father is in him: for the essence cannot be divided without impiety, although the persons must be distinguished. The rest I shall put off till tomorrow.”)

both Israel and Judah, for a certain number of day, which corresponds to the number of years that Israel and Judah have sinned.

- God asks Ezekiel to eat defiled food, cooked on human excrement (later He changes it to “cow manure”), in order to symbolize the coming famine upon Judah. Ezekiel 4:9-15.

Chapter 5 Symbolization of the Siege of Jerusalem (Part 2)

- [God, or the LORD, or the *Man sitting on the throne that is surrounded by Cherubims*]³⁸ continues to instruct Ezekiel.
- The LORD tells Ezekiel to shave his head and beard.
- When the days of his “staged” siege is ended (340 days + 40 days), he is instructed to (a) burn 1/3 of his hair with fire inside of the mock city of Jerusalem;
- He is instructed to take 1/3 of his hair and “strike it with a sword all around” the mock city. Ezekiel 5:1-2.
- He is instructed to take 1/3 of his hair and “scatter a third to the wind.” Ezekiel 5:1-2.
- He is instructed to take a few strands of hair and tuck them away the folds of his garment.
- This 1/3 symbolism is as follows: “A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine inside you; a third will fall by the sword

³⁸ Calvin's *Commentaries on the Bible* (Ezekiel 1:28) says that “man” beheld by the Prophet Ezekiel is Christ (“Since, then, **it is certain that Christ was beheld by him**, he is Jehovah, that is, Eternal God; and although he is distinct from the person of the Father, yet he is entirely God, for the Father is in him: for the essence cannot be divided without impiety, although the persons must be distinguished. The rest I shall put off till tomorrow.”)

outside your walls; and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with drawn sword.” Ezekiel 5:12.

- Judah is greatly sinful. “Yet in her wickedness she has rebelled against my laws and decrees more than the nations and countries around her. She has rejected my laws and has not followed my decrees.” Ezekiel 5:6.
- Siege of Jerusalem/ the Babylonian Captivity is designed to Teach the Nations:
 - Make Judah “a reproach among the nations” Ezekiel 5:14.
 - Make Judah “a warning and an object of horror to the nations” Ezekiel 5:15.
 - “I will inflict punishment on you **in the sight of the nations.**” Ezekiel 5:8
- The LORD’s concern for the other nations of the earth is reflected in the fact that He uses the Siege of Jerusalem and the fall of Judah as “**a warning**” to the nations.
- This “**warning**” to the nations is the essence of the Gospels (i.e., it is a sort of internationalization of Judaism—a “reformed” Judaism that is manifested in the moral lessons taught from the “warning” to the nations.
- Therefore, LORD’s **dealing with Judah** is not simply to teach Judah a lesson, but to serve as a “**warning**” to the nations and, thus, to teach all the nations.

Chapter 6 The Mountains of Israel

- [God, or the LORD, or the *Man sitting on the throne that is surrounded by Cherubims*]³⁹ continues to speak to, and instruct, Ezekiel.

³⁹ Calvin’s *Commentaries on the Bible* (Ezekiel 1:28) says that “man” beheld by the Prophet Ezekiel is Christ (“Since, then, **it is certain that Christ was beheld by him**, he is Jehovah, that is, Eternal God; and although he is distinct from the person of the Father, yet he is entirely God, for the Father is in him: for the essence cannot be divided without impiety, although the persons must be distinguished. The rest I shall put off till tomorrow.”)

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁴⁰ Ezekiel 6:1.
- Ezekiel is instructed to prophesy against the “mountains of Israel,” and by that we understand to be symbolically represent the political and religious leadership of Judah—those who are in high places, high positions throughout the body politic and religious establishment. Ezekiel 6:1-7; 6:11-14.
- Remnant of Israel/ Judah: Ezekiel foretells of a remnant; for the LORD will “spare some.” Ezekiel 6:8.
- Remnant: These will be “scattered among the lands and nations.” Ezekiel 6:8.
- Remnant: Where, among the nations, they shall be captives, they will remember the LORD. Ezekiel 6:9.
- Remnant: “They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices.” Ezekiel 6:9.

Chapter 7 “End Has Come”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁴¹ Ezekiel 7:1.
- The END has come.

⁴⁰ **Ezekiel, Chapter 5:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

⁴¹ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- “Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says to the land of Israel: The end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land.” Ezekiel 7:2.
- “The day is here...” Ezekiel 7:10. The Destruction of Jerusalem is here!
- Nothing of wealth or value will be left. Ezekiel 7:10.
- Gold and Silver will not save Judah. Ezekiel 7:19.
- The merchants, buying and selling will cease. Ezekiel 7:12-13.
- Those in the country will die by the sword; those in the city will die from famine and disease. Ezekiel 7:15.
- “I will bring the most wicked of all nations [Babylon] to take possession of their houses; I will put an end to the pride of the mighty, and their sanctuaries will be desecrated.” Ezekiel 7:24.
- “I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will surely repay you for your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” Ezekiel 7:3-4.
- “I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices.” Ezekiel 7:8
- “I will deal with them according to their conduct, and by their own standards I will judge them.” Ezekiel 7:27.
- **Warning/ Moral Lesson/ Divine Judgment:** “Then you will know that it is I the LORD who strikes the blow.” Ezekiel 7:9. “Then they will know that I am the LORD.” Ezekiel 7:27.

Chapter 8

Judah Has Become Idolatrous

- **Ezekiel sees a Vision—i.e.,** spiritual insight; spiritual interpretation of political and historical events leading up to the Babylonian captivity.
- **Ezekiel sees “a figure like that of a man.”** Ezekiel 8:2. From his waist down was “like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal.” Ezekiel 8:3.
- **The man** “took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of inner court, where the **idol that provokes to jealousy stood.**” Ezekiel 8:4.
- The idol of jealousy sat in the inner court of the Temple.
- Apostasy in the Temple; among the 70 elders, who worship their own private idols and who say, “The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land.” Ezekiel 8:12.
- The women in the north gate of the house of the LORD, worship “Tammuz.” Ezekiel 8:14.
- 25 men have their “backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east,” as they bowed down to the sun. Ezekiel 8:16.

Chapter 9

Vision of Man with a Writing Kit

- ***Ezekiel sees another vision.*** 6 men with weapons in their hands and a Man clothed in linen with a writing kit. Ezekiel 9:2
- Ezekiel heard a voice, “Bring the guards of the city here, each with a weapon in his hands.” Ezekiel 9:1.
- The Cherubim moves to the threshold of the Temple.

- The LORD called the man clothed in linen with the writing kit, and says, “Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.” Ezekiel 9:4. These are the “remnant” who will not be destroyed.
- The LORD tells other 6 men, “Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women, and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark.” Ezekiel 9: 5-6. **[NOTE: GOD saves the just and righteous; there is no indiscriminate killing.]**
- [SOCIAL JUSTICE]. The LORD’S indictment: “**The sin of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of bloodshed and the city is full of injustice.**” Ezekiel 9:9.
- The man in linen with the writing kit reported: “I have done as you commanded.” Ezekiel 9:11.

Chapter 10 **Glory Departs from the Temple.**

- *Ezekiel sees another vision.* He sees a throne of sapphire above the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim. Ezekiel 10:1.
- The LORD told the man clothed in linen to, “Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” Ezekiel 10:2.
- Ezekiel sees the same Cherubim that he had seen by the Kebar River (Chapter 1), to wit:
- Ezekiel saw the following vision:

- Flashing light, surrounded by Brilliant light
 - Center of fire there was glowing metal
 - Center of fire was 4 living creatures
 - 4 living creatures had the form of a “man”
 - Each of the 4 living creatures had 4 faces and 4 wings
 - Legs straight; feet like a calf, that gleamed like burnished bronze
 - Under the wings were hands of a man
 - The wings of 4 living creatures touched one another
 - Each of the 4 living creatures moved straight ahead, and did not turn as they moved
 - The 4 living creatures had the face of a Man
 - Right side of face: lion
 - Left side of face: ox
 - Each had the face of an eagle Ezekiel 1:4-11 [NIV].
 - Fire moved back and forth among the creatures
 - A wheel was on the ground beside each creature. Each wheel looked like a wheel intersection a wheel. The wheels had eyes all around.
 - “When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved.” Ezekiel 1:19.
 - “the spirit of the living creatures was it the wheels” Ezekiel 1:20
 - Above the heads of each creature was an “expanse.”
 - When the creatures moved, the sound of the “roar of rushing waters.” Ezekiel 1:24. When they stopped, they lowered their wings.
- The cherubim “moved to the threshold of the temple. The cloud filled the temple, and the court was full of the radiance of the glory of the LORD.” Ezekiel 10:4.
 - “Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.” Ezekiel 10:18.

Chapter 11

“Judgment on Israel’s Leaders and Promise of Restoration”

- ***Ezekiel sees another vision.*** The Spirit lifted him up, and he saw two of Judah’s leaders among the people: Jaazaniah and Pelatiah. These were evil and wicked men, plotting evil against the LORD. “You have killed many people in this city and filled its streets with the dead.” Ezekiel 11:6.
- “I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel.” Ezekiel 11:10.
- Ezekiel is told to prophesy what the LORD commanded him to say. As he was preaching, Pelatiah fell dead. Ezekiel then explains, “Ah, Sovereign LORD! Will you completely destroy the remnant of Israel?” Ezekiel 11:13.
- **RESTORED ISRAEL:** The LORD responds:

16 “Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.’

17 “Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.’

18 **“They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols.**

19 I will give them **an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.**

20 **Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.**

- The Spirit lifted Ezekiel up and brought him back to the Jewish exiles in Babylon, and there Ezekiel informed them about his vision. Ezekiel 11:24-25.

Chapter 12 “Ezekiel’s Staged Exile and Warning”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁴² Ezekiel 12:1; 12:17; 12:21; and 12: 26.
- The LORD tells Ezekiel to put together a “staged or mock exile” in order to forewarn the Jews of the pending exile. Ezekiel 12:3-10.
- The LORD explains what is doing (Ezekiel 12: 10-16):

10 “Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: This prophecy concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the Israelites who are there.’

11 Say to them, ‘I am a sign to you.’

“As I have done, so it will be done to them. They will go into exile as captives.

12 “The prince among them will put his things on his shoulder at dusk and leave, and a hole will be dug in the wall for him to go through. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land.

13 I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare; I will bring him to Babylonia, the land of the Chaldeans, but he will not see it, and there he will die.

14 I will scatter to the winds all those around him—his staff and all his troops—and I will pursue them with drawn sword.

⁴² **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

15 “They will know that I am the Lord, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries.

16 But I will spare a few of them from the sword, famine and plague, so that in the nations where they go they may acknowledge all their detestable practices. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

- The LORD tells Ezekiel to shake and tremble as he eats his food. This is to symbolize the coming distress of the Jews, who shall drink and eat their food in anxiety. Ezekiel 12: 19-20.
- The proverb in Israel is, “**The days go by and every vision comes to nothing.**” Ezekiel 12:22.
- “Son of man, the house of Israel is saying, ‘**The vision he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies about the distant future.**’” Ezekiel 12:26.
- Therefore, the LORD tells Ezekiel, that “the day of judgment will be fulfilled.” Ezekiel 12:28.

Chapter 13 “False Prophets Condemned”

- Ezekiel addressed the problem of false prophets in Judah.
- The LORD is against the false prophets: they are saying “Peace” when there shall be no peace. Ezekiel 13:10, 16.
- The False prophets are using “false words and lying visions” to deceive the people. Ezekiel 13:8.
- Women are using “magic charms” to deceive the people. Ezekiel 13:18-19.
- By lying and deceiving, the false prophets have “killed those who should not have died.” Ezekiel 13:19.

- The false prophets have “**encouraged the wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives.**” Ezekiel 13:22-23.

Chapter 14 “Idolatry of the Heart”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁴³ Ezekiel 14:2.
- The Elders of Israel came to Ezekiel, but the LORD revealed to Ezekiel that they had “set up **idols in their hearts.**” Ezekiel 14:2-5.
- “Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!”
- The LORD tells Ezekiel that the righteousness of **Noah, Daniel,**⁴⁴ and **Job** would not save a whole nation or city of abject sinners! The righteous persons would only save themselves—not others. Ezekiel 14:12-23.

Chapter 15 “Jerusalem, a Useless Vine”

⁴³ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

⁴⁴ “Who is Ezekiel’s Daniel?” <https://bible.org/article/who-ezekiels-daniel>

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁴⁵ Ezekiel 15:1.
- Jerusalem was useless before the “fire” of divine judgment. How much more useless shall it be after the “fire” of divine judgment. Ezekiel 15:3-7.
- “I will make the land desolate because they have been unfaithful, declares the Sovereign LORD.” Ezekiel 15:8.

Chapter 16 “Unfaithful Jerusalem”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁴⁶ Ezekiel 16:1.
- Ezekiel describes the birth of the nation of Israel as one of neglect and abject poverty: “for on the day you were born you were despised.” Ezekiel 16:5.
- Yet, the LORD took care of this unkept, abandoned infant. Ezekiel 16:6-7.
- The LORD adorned this infant with raiment, silver and gold. When the child grew and became old enough for love, the LORD made a solemn covenant, and adorned Israel with a crown, and great wealth and world renown. “You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen.” Ezekiel 16:13.
- But Israel became a prostitute of the worst kind, even paying others to commit fornication with her. Ezekiel 14-58.
- Israel “made for yourself male idols.” Ezekiel 16:17. It fornicates with all sorts and varieties of nations: Egypt, the Philistines, the Assyrians, and the

⁴⁵ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

⁴⁶ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

Babylonians, etc. “You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!” Ezekiel 16:32.

- Israel is described as being even more lewd and detestable than Sodom. Ezekiel 16:48-50.
- Therefore, “I will sentence you to the punishment of women who commit adultery and who shed blood.... Then I will hand you over to your lovers, and they will tear down your mounds and destroy your lofty shrines.” Ezekiel 16:38-39.
- Ezekiel describes the following nations as Israel’s “sisters:

-- *Samaria* (“older sister”) Ezekiel 16:46.

-- *Sodom* (“sister”) Ezekiel 16:48

-- “However, I will restore the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters and of Samaria and her daughters, and your fortunes along with them....” Ezekiel 16:53. Hence, Ezekiel speaks of a restoration of Samaria, Sodom, and Israel. Ezekiel 16:61.

- RESTORED ISRAEL: But the LORD will establish his New Covenant:

59 “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I will deal with you as you deserve**, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant.

60 Yet **I will remember the covenant** I made with you in the days of your youth, and **I will establish an everlasting covenant with you**.

61 Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed **when you receive your sisters**, both **those who are older than you** and **those who are younger**. I will give them to you as daughters, **but not on the basis of my covenant with you**.

62 So I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the Lord.

63 Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and **never again open your mouth because of your humiliation**, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

Chapter 17 “The Parable of the Eagle and the Twig”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁴⁷ Ezekiel 17:1.
- A parable of an eagle is told. “A great eagle with powerful wings, long feathers and full plumage of varied colors....” Ezekiel 17:3.
- The “eagle” symbolizes King Nebuchadnezzar.
- The eagle flies to the top of a cedar tree. He breaks off the “topmost shoot” from the cedar.
- This “topmost” shoot is the King of Israel.
- The eagle then flies to “a **land of merchants**, where he planted [the topmost shoot] in a **city of traders**.” This land and city symbolizes “**Babylon**.” Ezekiel 17:4
- The eagle the “took some of the **seed**” of Israel and planted it. This “seed” symbolized the “elders” or “nobles” of Israel. Ezekiel 17:6 Presumably, this “seed” was left in Israel, and so it represents those Jewish leaders who remained behind following the early years of the Babylonian captivity (i.e., King Zedekiah and his leaders).
- “But there was another great eagle....” Ezekiel 17:7. This symbolizes Pharaoh.

⁴⁷ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- The “seed” blossomed into a “vine,” and this vine stretched towards the second great eagle (i.e., Pharaoh of Egypt).
- Ezekiel goes on to condemn Judah’s political maneuvering in seeking help from Pharaoh, rather than turning from their wicked ways and seeking help from the Almighty God. Ezekiel 17:9-21.
- The kingdom of Judah will be crushed by both the Babylonians and the Egyptians—the only way forward is to return to God, not political maneuvering betwixt these two superpowers. Ezekiel 17:12-17.

¹² “Say to this rebellious people, ‘Do you not know what these things mean?’ Say to them: ‘The king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and carried off her king and her nobles, bringing them back with him to Babylon.

¹³ Then he took a member of the royal family and made a treaty with him, putting him under oath. He also carried away the leading men of the land, ¹⁴ so that the kingdom would be brought low, unable to rise again, surviving only by keeping his treaty.

¹⁵ But the king rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt to get horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Will he who does such things escape? Will he break the treaty and yet escape?

¹⁶ “‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, he shall die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose treaty he broke.

¹⁷ Pharaoh with his mighty army and great horde will be of no help to him in war, when ramps are built and siege works erected to destroy many lives.

- Ezekiel’s verdict: “All his fleeing troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken.” Ezekiel 17:21.

Chapter 18 “Universal Atonement, Repentance, Falling Away, and Justice”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁴⁸ Ezekiel 18:1.
- The kingdom of Judah will be destroyed; the King of Judah (Zedekiah) will go into captivity in Babylon where he will die. There shall be torment and travail, but is God just? Why does he punish the good with the bad—the just with the unjust?
- “Yet you say, ‘The **way of the Lord** is not just.’ Hear, O house of Israel: is my way unjust?” Ezekiel 18:25.
- Ezekiel then describes a theological system whereby (1) the just persons shall be saved but (2) the wicked persons shall not be saved. Ezekiel 18: 5-24
- Ezekiel’s description of righteous and just persons emphasizes the **SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE** (Ezekial 18:5-9):

⁵ “Suppose there is a righteous man
who **does what is just and right.**

⁶ He does **not eat at the mountain shrines**
or look to the **idols of Israel.**
He does **not defile his neighbor’s wife**
or have sexual relations with a woman during her period.

⁷ He **does not oppress anyone,**
but returns what he took in pledge for a loan.
He does **not commit robbery**
but **gives his food to the hungry**
and provides **clothing for the naked.**

⁴⁸ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

⁸ He does **not lend to them at interest**
or take a profit from them.
He **withholds his hand from doing wrong**
and **judges fairly between two parties.**

⁹ He follows my decrees
and **faithfully keeps my laws.**
That man is righteous;
he will surely live,
declares the Sovereign LORD....

¹⁵ “He does not eat at the mountain shrines
or look to the idols of Israel.
He does **not defile his neighbor’s wife.**

¹⁶ He does **not oppress anyone**
or require **a pledge for a loan.**
He does not commit **robbery**
but **gives his food to the hungry**
and provides **clothing for the naked.**

¹⁷ He withholds his hand from **m mistreating the poor**
and takes **no interest or profit from them.**
He keeps my laws and follows my decrees.

- Ezekiel’s description of wicked and unrighteous persons emphasizes **SOCIAL INJUSTICE**, as follows:

¹⁰ “Suppose he has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things ¹¹ (though the father has done none of them):

“He eats at the mountain shrines.
He **defiles his neighbor’s wife.**

¹² He **oppresses the poor and needy.**
He commits **robbery.**
He does not return what he took in pledge.
He looks to the idols.
He does detestable things.

¹³ He **lends at interest** and **takes a profit**. Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, he is to be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.

- Ezekiel proclaims that the wicked and the unrighteous may repent and return or come the LORD. Ezekiel 18:21 (“But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die.”)⁴⁹ Here, Ezekiel proclaims that a wicked man may be regenerated and reconciled to God, without any other qualifications.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Calvin’s *Commentaries on the Bible* (Ezekiel 18:21), states:

In this sentence God proposes the hope of pardon, and invites and exhorts to penitence all the transgressors of his law. But this doctrine is specially worthy of notice, that God extends his arms, and is prepared to meet and receive all who betake themselves to good fruits: for despair hurls us into madness, and then hardens our hearts by abandoned obstinacy. Hence it is necessary that God should extend his hand towards us, and animate us to penitence. This is the meaning of this passage of the Prophets, as soon as the impious is turned away from his impiety, God will be at peace with him. Now we see that no excuse remains for us if this humane invitation of God does not stir us up when he bears witness that he is propitious to us when we heartily desire to be reconciled to him. But he here requires serious repentance when he says, if the impious has turned away from his impiety, and has kept my statutes, and done justice and judgment, he shall live, says he. For a sort of half conversion is discerned in many who think that in this way they are safe before God, but they are greatly deceived; for many mingle virtues with vices, and imagine their guilt blotted out, if they can only bring forward something as worthy of praise. But this is just as if any one should offer muddy will to his master, because he had mixed it not only with dregs, but even with filth: so are all the works of those who do not put away all depraved desires, and strive to free themselves from all the corruption's of the flesh. Thus what is here taught is worthy of notice, namely, that the beginning of conversion is, when any one renounces himself and his own lusts. But it is necessary to add another part of duty, that when any one bids farewell to his vices, he must devote himself obediently to God. The Prophet joins the two together, therefore, since one cannot be separated from the other. Hence the Spirit here shortly defines what true and legitimate conversion is. He says, that when any one is thus converted, that his life is prepared for God, since God will forget all his sins. This is a confirmation of the doctrine; for God cannot be entreated as long as he imputes our sins to us: hence, that we may determine him to be propitious to us, he promises, as soon as we repent, that all our sins shall be buried, and no longer come into remembrance. But this is the incomparable goodness of God, since he deigns to forget all our sins as soon as he sees us earnestly desirous of returning to him. On the whole, Ezekiel pronounces that all the penitent pass at once from death to life, since God blots out all their transgressions by voluntary oblivion. It afterwards follows --

⁵⁰ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 811, to wit:

It is He who, when He foreknew that man would in his turn sin by abandoning God and breaking His law, did not deprive him of the power of free-will, because He at the same time foresaw what good He Himself would bring out of the evil, and how from this mortal race, deservedly and justly condemned, He would by His grace collect, as now He does, a people so numerous, that He thus fills up and repairs the blank made by the fallen angels, and that thus that beloved and heavenly city is not defrauded of the full number of its citizens, but perhaps may even rejoice in a still more overflowing population.

And, again, at page 711 of the same text, Augustine writes:

- Ezekiel proclaims that just and righteous persons may backslide and become wicked, and, ultimately, will be punished by the LORD God. In fact, this is what has happened to the whole nation of Israel (both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah). Ezekiel 18:24.⁵¹

And men are punished by God for their sins often visibly, always secretly, either in this life or after death, although no man acts rightly save by the assistance of divine aid; and no man or devil acts unrighteously save by the permission of the divine and most just judgment.

And, again, at page 479 of the same text, Augustine writes:

For in each individual, as I have already said, there is first of all that which is reprobate, that from which we must begin, *but in which we need not necessarily remain*; afterwards is that which is well-approved, to which we may by advancing attain, and in which, when we have reached it, we may abide.”

⁵¹ This verse supports the theological argument that “Perseverance of the Saints” is not universally supported throughout the entire Sacred Scriptures; that Ezekiel’s theological system expressly states that the righteous or the just may backslide and fall away from grace.

Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible (Ezekiel 18:24) provides a Calvinistic view of what that verse really means, stating:

As in the last lecture the Prophet offered to sinners a sure hope of pardon if they heartily repented, and promised that God would be propitious to them as soon as they shall seek reconciliation with him: so now, on the other hand, he pronounces, if the just shall decline from his justice, whatever he has hitherto done, shall not come into the account before God. He urged sinners to repentance when he assured them that God was prepared to pardon them: but he now frightens those who profess for the occasion to be pure and sincere worshipers of God, if they fall back in the midst of their course: as Paul says, Let him who stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12.) Besides, we gather from this passage, as Christ teaches, that those only are happy who persevere, (Matthew 24:13;) since a temporary righteousness will never profit those apostates who afterwards turn aside from God. We see, then, how these two clauses unite together, namely, that God invites all who are in danger of perdition with extended arms, and promises them salvation if they heartily return to him. Again, that he may restrain within the bounds of duty those who have made some progress, and correct their sloth and stir up their anxiety, he threatens, that unless they pursue the course of a holy and pious life to the end, their former righteousness will not profit them. But here a question arises, Can a truly just person deflect from the right way? for he who is begotten of God is so free from the tyranny of sin that he devotes himself wholly to righteousness: and then if any do turn aside, they prove that they were always strangers to God. **If they had been of us, says John, they would never have gone out from us. (1 John 2:19.)** And **regeneration is an incorruptible seed: so we must determine that the faithful who are truly regenerate never fall away from righteousness, but are retained by God’s unconquered power: for God’s calling in the elect is without repentance.** (Romans 11:29.) Hence **he continues the course of his grace even to the end.** Nor are they to be listened to, who, in contradiction to Scripture, teach that faith is extinct in the elect, when, through its barrenness, they bring forth no fruit. **In what sense, then, does Ezekiel mean that the just fall away? That question is easily answered, since he is not here treating of the living root of justice, but of the outward form or appearance, as we commonly say.** Paul reminds us that God knows us, but adds, that this seal remains. (2 Timothy 2:19.) **God therefore claims to himself alone the difference between the elect and the reprobate, since many seem to be members of his Church who are only outwardly such.** And that passage of Augustine is true, that there are many wolves within, and many sheep without. [227] For before God demonstrates his election, the sheep wander, and seem altogether strangers to the hope of salvation.

- The PERSONALITY of God is thus described: “For I take no pleasure I the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!” Ezekiel 18:32

Meanwhile **many hypocrites make use of the name of God, and openly boast themselves pre-eminent in the Church, but inwardly they are wolves. But because it often happens that some make the greatest show of piety and justice, the Prophet very properly says, that if such fall away, they cannot boast of their former righteousness before God,** since its remembrance will be bloated out.

In fine, we see that **the word righteousness is referred to our senses, and not to God's hidden judgment;** so that **the Prophet does not teach anything but what we perceive daily:** for those who seem to excel others desert their calling, shake off every yoke, and cast away the fear of God, and sometimes rush on with diabolical fury. When this result occurs we hear what the Spirit pronounces by the mouth of the Prophet, that none of their righteousness shall be taken into account. But weight is added to his words when he says, if you have turned aside from righteousness, and done according to all the abominations of the impious, (or wicked,) shall he live? For the Prophet separates those who desert God and rush into every wickedness from those who fall through infirmity or want of thought, and from those also who would fall headlong into ruin, unless God preserved them, yet do not utterly cast off his fear, and the desire of living piously and righteously. For example: every one is occasionally off his guard; and hence, in numberless ways, we offend God through error: and hence David exclaims, Who can understand his faults? (Psalm 19:12.) **We fall of our own accord, since we are often conquered by temptations,** even when our consciences accuse us; so that, although sanctified, we decline from the path of uprightness through ignorance, and depart from duty through infirmity. But what is far worse, the saints sometimes rush headlong, as though utterly desperate. **For the example of David shows that the elect, although regenerated by God's Spirit, not only sin to a small extent, but, as I have said, plunge into the very lowest abyss. David became a perfidious homicide, and a traitor to the army of God; then that wretched king fell into a series of crimes: yet he failed in only one thing, and showed that God's grace was only suffocated within him, and not altogether extinguished.** For as soon as Nathan reproves him, he confesses that he had sinned, and is prepared to undergo any punishment which God may inflict. **Since, therefore, the saints sometimes fall, the Prophet here stretches forth his hand, lest they should despair, and bears witness that God does not reject them unless they turn aside from their righteousness and commit all the abominations which the impious do.** By these words, as we see, he expresses a complete revolt, and he so mitigates the severity of the sentence, lest the minds of those who had only partially relapsed should despond. Now we see the meaning of this language: If he has done according to all the abominations of the wicked, shall he live? says he; all the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered, because he shall perish. Here the Prophet shows that: a mere temporary righteousness will not profit us unless we persevere unto the end in the fear of God.

Here again the contrast is worthy of notice, **because it enables us to refute a fiction which is current in the schools of the papacy.** They say that guilt is remitted by God, but the punishment is retained. Now what says our Prophet? If the impious turn away from his impiety, I will no longer remember any of his iniquities. Here the papists thrust for-ward the foolish distinction, that God does not remember them as to their guilt, but he does as to their punishment. But what follows a little afterwards? If the just turn away from his justice, his justice shall not be taken into account. But if they do not come into the account as to merit, and yet do as to reward, what is the meaning of the passage? how will the Prophet's meaning stand? But it is necessary thus to receive what the Prophet says; because, if the distinction of guilt and punishment avails, that of merit and reward will avail also. Hence it will follow, that as to merit God forgets all acts of righteousness; but as far as reward is concerned, they are remembered since they are not abolished. Since, then, it is sufficiently clear that the righteousness of the backslider is not taken into account, so as to lead him to hope for reward, it follows, on the other hand, that his sins are abolished not only as to guilt, but also as to punishment. It now follows –

- In many ways, Ezekiel is describing a “reformed Judaism” that is universal and multinational, whereby God’s covenant with Israel will become a new covenant for the whole world.

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- God does not, will not, punish the just with the wicked, but he will save his remnant. Ezekiel 18:20 (“The soul who sins is the one who will die.... The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.”)
 - Universal Atonement. This theological system is explained in Augustine of Hippo’s *The City of God*.⁵²
 - Puritan theological system: this theological system was adopted by 16th-century English Puritans, including Rev. Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691), a leading Protestant theologian.
 - “New Methodism”⁵³: the 16th century English Puritans who adopted this theology on Universal Atonement broke from the “supralapsarian” version of Calvinistic predestination, which held that God created some persons for eternal damnation from eternity. The New Methodists’ theology was similar to the Dutch Arminians, but the New Methodists still considered themselves to be Calvinistic Puritans.
 - General Baptists: the early English Baptists tended to agree with “New Methodist” theology on Universal Atonement.
 - Independents: this would include the Mennonites, the Quakers, the Amish, and simply non-denominational Christians tend to adopt this same theology on Universal Atonement almost by default, because **“orthodox” Calvinistic interpretation of Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Predestination** in much more complicated, nuanced, and difficult to understand.⁵⁴

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ For a brief history on the 16th-century Puritans who were called “New Methodists,” see Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013), pp. 18-21.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., *Calvin’s Commentaries on the Bible* (Ezekiel 18:24), in Footnote above. For it is clear that Calvin’s theology is designed in large measure to answer the objections of the Roman Catholics.

■ **OXFORD METHODISM:** Both the Universal Atonement theology (“Grace”) and the Limited Atonement theology (“Sovereignty”) are correct and compliment one another. In commenting on Ezekiel 18:24, Calvin himself acknowledges this through His explaining the true meaning of Ezekiel’s words.⁵⁵

■ **Ezekiel 33: 1-20** repeats the theology of “Grace” and “Universal Atonement,” so that the practical theology of Puritan “New Methodism” (e.g., Wesleyan-Methodism or Arminianism) certainly has strong biblical support. “Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take not pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.’” **Ezekiel 33:11.**

Chapter 19 “Ezekiel Laments the Fall of Judah”

- “Take up a lament concerning the princes of Israel....” Ezekiel 19:1
- Israel was like a “vine” that was withered and uprooted. Ezekiel 19:10-12.
- Israel was like a “vine” that is “[n]ow planted in the desert, in a dry and thirsty land” (i.e., Babylon). Ezekiel 19:13.
- Israel was like a “vine,”... “no strong branch is left on it fit for a ruler’s scepter.” Ezekiel 19: 14.
- Israel is like a lioness, who raised her cub to become a fierce loin who was captured “[w]ith hooks they pulled him into a cage and brought him to the king of Babylon.” Ezekiel 19:9.

Chapter 20 “Rebellious Israel”

⁵⁵ Ibid. See, also, Don Thorsen, *Calvin v. Wesley: Bringing Belief in Line with Practice* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013).

- Some of the Elders of Israel came to the Prophet Ezekiel to inquire of the LORD.
- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁵⁶ Ezekiel 20:2.
- God is so disappointed with Israel that he will not let the Elders inquire. Ezekiel 20:3, 31.
- The LORD instructs Ezekiel to explain the history of Israel in Egypt and in the desert. Even then, the LORD “swore to them in the desert that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries, because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths.” Ezekiel 20:23-24.
- At this point, the LORD is not interested in speaking the Elders. The execution of Judah is about to take place.
- “For my name’s sake,” however, the LORD will restore on his “holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel.” Ezekiel 20:40.
- Does Ezekiel here refer to the return to Judah and the rebuilding of the Second Temple? Or does he refer to the coming of Christ and the foundation of the Christian Church? [It is possible, as Calvin has explained about another prophet, that Exekiel is referring to the whole process of “restoration,” beginning with the Second Temple to the coming of Christ.].
- The LORD will “bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will show myself holy among you in the sight of the nations.” Ezekiel 20:41.

⁵⁶ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

Chapter 21 “Babylon, God’s Sword of Judgment”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁵⁷ Ezekiel 21:1, 8, 18.
- God’s sword of justice is about to strike Judah, “both the righteous and the wicked.” Ezekiel 21:3.
- “Cry out and wail, son of man, for it is against all the princes of Israel. They are thrown to the sword along with my people. Therefore beat your breast.” Ezekiel 21:12.
- The Lord tells Ezekiel to mark out 2 roads, one leading to Jerusalem and one leading to Rabbah of the Ammonites. These are symbols. When Nebuchadnezzar comes to the fork in the road, he will stop, and cast lots and summon his idols to determine which road to take; and he will pick the road to Jerusalem, where he will besiege that city and slaughter its inhabitants. Ezekiel 21:18-23.
- “Because you people have brought to mind your guilt by your open rebellion, revealing your sins in all that you do—because you have done this, you will be taken captive.” Ezekiel 21;24.
- “O profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Take off the turban, remove the crown. It will not be as it was: the lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low.” Ezekiel 21:25-26.

⁵⁷ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- “I will hand you over to brutal men, men skilled in destruction. You will be fuel for the fire, your blood will be shed in your land, you will be remembered no more; for I the LORD have spoken.” Ezekiel 21:31-32.

Chapter 22 “Jerusalem’s Sins”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁵⁸ Ezekiel 22:1.
- The LORD tells Ezekiel to judge Israel and to speak.
- Judah and Israel to be made an example to the nations: “an object of scorn to the nations and a laughingstock.” Ezekiel 22:4.
- “Those who are near and those who are far away will mock you, O infamous city, full of turmoil.” Ezekiel 22:5.
- **SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE** (Ezekiel 22:6-12):

⁶ “See how each of the princes of Israel who are in you uses his power to shed blood.

⁷ In you they have treated father and mother with contempt; in you they have oppressed the foreigner and mistreated the fatherless and the widow.

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

⁹ In you are slanderers who are bent on shedding blood; in you are those who eat at the mountain shrines and commit lewd acts.

⁵⁸ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

¹⁰ In you are those who dishonor their father's bed; in you are those who violate women during their period, when they are ceremonially unclean.

¹¹ In you one man commits a detestable offense with his neighbor's wife, another shamefully defiles his daughter-in-law, and another violates his sister, his own father's daughter.

¹² In you are people who accept bribes to shed blood; you take interest and make a profit from the poor. You extort unjust gain from your neighbors. And you have forgotten me, declares the Sovereign LORD.

- “I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it. I will disperse you among the nations and scatter you through the countries; and I will put an end to your uncleanness.” Ezekiel 22:14-15.
- **SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE (Ezekiel 22:25-29):**

²⁵ There is a conspiracy of her princes within her like a roaring lion tearing its prey; they **devour people**, take treasures and precious things and make **many widows within her**.

²⁶ Her **priests do violence to my law** and profane my holy things; they **do not distinguish between the holy and the common**; they teach that there is **no difference between the unclean and the clean**; and they shut their eyes to the **keeping of my Sabbaths**, so that **I am profaned among them**.

²⁷ Her **officials within her are like wolves** tearing their prey; they **shed blood and kill people** to make **unjust gain**.

²⁸ Her prophets whitewash these deeds for them by false visions and lying divinations. They say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says’—when the LORD has not spoken.

²⁹ The people of the land practice **extortion** and **commit robbery**; they **oppress the poor** and **needy** and **mistreat the foreigner**, denying them **justice**.

- “So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger....” Ezekiel 22:31.

Chapter 23

“Samaria and Judah- 2 Adulterous Sisters”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁵⁹ Ezekiel 23:1.
- Ezekiel writes an illustrative parable or allegory of 2 sisters who became prostitutes in Egypt.
- Oholah = Samaria (oldest sister); prostitute to the Assyrians
- Oholibah = Jerusalem (younger sister); prostitute to the Babylonians
- Therefore, the LORD allowed Oholah (Samaria) to go into captivity to the Assyrians; the LORD allowed Oholibah (Jerusalem) to go into captivity to the Babylonians. “I will stir up your lovers against you, those you turned away from in disgust, and I will bring them against you from every side....” Ezekiel 23:22.
- “They will leave you naked and bare, and the shame of your prostitution will be exposed. Your lewdness and promiscuity have brought this upon you, because you lusted after the nations and defiled yourself with their idols.” Ezekiel 23:29-30.
- “The LORD said to me: ‘Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then confront them with their detestable practices, for they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands.’” Ezekiel 23:36
- “But righteous men will sentence them to the punishment of women who commit adultery and shed blood, because they are adulterous and blood is on their hands.” Ezekiel 23:45.

⁵⁹ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- “So I will put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women may take warning and not imitate you.” Ezekiel 23:48.

Chapter 24 “The Cooking Pot; Ezekiel’s Wife Dies”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁶⁰ Ezekiel 24:1.
- “... the king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.” Ezekiel 24:4.
- Ezekiel thus tells the allegory of the Cooking Pot. “Then set the empty pot on the coals till it becomes hot and its copper glows so its impurities may be melted and its deposit burned away.” Ezekiel 24:11.
- God tells Ezekiel that his wife will soon die, but that he should not engage in any funeral rituals or go through a period of mourning; but that he should continue to prophesy, as though nothing has happened. This is to symbolize the fact that, when Jerusalem falls to sword, the Jews will not have time to bury or mourn their dead. Ezekiel 24: 20-27.

Chapter 25 “Prophecies against Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia”

⁶⁰ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- [NOTE: The God of Judah is also the God of the Gentiles, as he also holds other Gentile nations accountable for national sins.]
- [NOTE: According to Ezekiel’s prophecy, the God of Judah uses the king of Babylon and the Babylonians (i.e., the Chaldeans) to punish several Gentile nations because of their sins. God therefore is not only interested in holding the Israelites accountable, but He also holds every nation of the earth accountable for national sins.]
- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁶¹ Ezekiel 25:1.
- Ezekiel prophesies that God shall punish Ammon for mocking the destruction of God’s sanctuary in Israel. Ezekiel 25:1-7
- Ezekiel prophesies that God shall punish Moab for mocking the fall of Judah, saying, “Look, the house of Judah has become like all the other nations.” Ezekiel 25:8-10.
- Ezekiel prophesies that God shall punish Edom for taking revenge against the house of Judah. Ezekiel 25:12-14.
- Ezekiel prophesies that God shall punish Philistia for taking revenge with malice against Judah. Ezekiel 25:15-17.

Chapter 26 “Prophecy Against Tyre- A Commercial Trading City”

⁶¹ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

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- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁶² Ezekiel 26:1.
- Tyre, a city-state in the kingdom of Phoenicia,⁶³ a sea-faring, commercial kingdom, shall be punished with the same Babylonian captivity at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, because they mocked the Jews during their captivity. Ezekiel 26: 1-21.

Chapter 27 “Prophecy Against Tyre—A Commercial Trading City”

- [NOTE: The God of Judah is also the God of the Gentiles, as he also holds other Gentile nations accountable for national sins.]
- [NOTE: According to Ezekiel’s prophecy, the God of Judah uses the king of Babylon and the Babylonians (i.e., the Chaldeans) to punish several Gentile nations because of their sins. God therefore is not only interested

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⁶³ “**Tyre** (in modern-day Lebanon) is one of the oldest cities in the world, dating back over 4,000 years, during which it has been inhabited almost continuously. It was one of the most important, and at times the dominant, city of Phoenicia, whose citizens claimed it had been founded by the great god Melqart.”
<https://www.worldhistory.org/Tyre/>.

in holding the Israelites accountable, but He also holds every nation of the earth accountable for national sins.]

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁶⁴ Ezekiel 27:1.
- Tyre, a city-state in the kingdom of Phoenicia,⁶⁵ a sea-faring, commercial kingdom, shall be punished with the same Babylonian captivity at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, because they mocked the Jews during their captivity. Ezekiel 27: 1-36.
- “Say to Tyre, situated at the gateway to the sea, merchant of peoples on many coasts....” Ezekiel 27:3. Tyre was a great commercial city that traded with many nations. Ezekiel 27:7-23 list about a dozen nations and kingdoms that traded with Tyre, including Greece, Judah, Israel, Damascus, Arabia, Tarshis, Tubal, Meshech, and Egypt.
- “Your wealth, merchandise and wares, your mariners, seamen and shipwrights, your merchants and all your soldiers, and everyone else on board will sink into the heart of the sea on the day of your shipwreck.” Ezekiel 27:27.
- “The merchants among the nations hiss at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.” Ezekiel 27:36.

Chapter 28

“A Prophecy Against the King of Tyre”

⁶⁴ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

⁶⁵ “**Tyre** (in modern-day Lebanon) is one of the oldest cities in the world, dating back over 4,000 years, during which it has been inhabited almost continuously. It was one of the most important, and at times the dominant, city of Phoenicia, whose citizens claimed it had been founded by the great god Melqart.”
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- [NOTE: The God of Judah is also the God of the Gentiles, as he also holds other Gentile nations accountable for national sins.]
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- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁶⁶ Ezekiel 28:1.
- Ezekiel preaches against pride in commercial success, coupled with ungodly arrogance.
- Interestingly, Tyre (a Gentile city-state) was once blessed and favored before it fell from grace (Ezekiel 28:14-16):

14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub,
for so I ordained you.

You were on the holy mount of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.

15 You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created
till wickedness was found in you.

16 Through your widespread trade
you were filled with violence,
and you sinned.

So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,
and I expelled you, guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.

⁶⁶ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- The King of Tyre obviously thinks that he is a “god” and is wiser than “God.” “By your wisdom and understanding you have gained wealth for yourself and amassed gold and silver in your treasuries. By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth, and because of your wealth your heart has grown proud.” Ezekiel 28:4-5.
- “Are you wiser than Daniel?” ask the prophet. Ezekiel 28:3.
- “By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries... All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.” Ezekiel 28:18-19.
- God shall also punish the Phoenician city-state of Sidon,⁶⁷ one of Israel’s vicious neighbors. Ezekiel 28:20-26.

Chapter 29 “A Prophecy Against Egypt”

- [NOTE: The God of Judah is also the God of the Gentiles, as he also holds other Gentile nations accountable for national sins.]
- [NOTE: According to Ezekiel’s prophecy, the God of Judah uses the king of Babylon and the Babylonians (i.e., the Chaldeans) to punish several Gentile nations because of their sins. God therefore is not only interested in holding the Israelites accountable, but He also holds every nation of the earth accountable for national sins.]
- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁶⁸ Ezekiel 29:1.

⁶⁷ “Sidon is the Greek name (meaning ‘fishery’) for the ancient Phoenician port city of Sidonia (also known as Saida) in what is, today, Lebannon (located about 25 miles south of Beirut). Along with the city of Tyre, Sidon was the most powerful city-state of ancient Phoenicia and first manufactured the purple dye which made Tyre famous and was so rare and expensive that the color purple became synonymous with royalty.”
<https://www.worldhistory.org/sidon/>

⁶⁸ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- “[A]ll who live in Egypt will know that I am the LORD.” Egypt 29:6
- “Because you said, ‘The Nile is mine; I made it,’ therefore I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt a ruin and a desolate waste from Migdol to Aswan, as far as the border of Cush.” Ezekiel 29: 9-10.
- Egypt to be an example to the nations and to Israel:

¹³ “Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were scattered. ¹

¹⁴ I will bring them back from captivity and return them to Upper Egypt, the land of their ancestry. There they will be a lowly kingdom.

¹⁵ It will be the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again exalt itself above the other nations. I will make it so weak that it will never again rule over the nations.

¹⁶ Egypt will no longer be a source of confidence for the people of Israel but will be a reminder of their sin in turning to her for help. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.”

- God sends Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to punish Egypt and to carry off its wealth. Ezekiel 29: 19-21.

Chapter 30 “Lament for Egypt”

- [NOTE: The God of Judah is also the God of the Gentiles, as he also holds other Gentile nations accountable for national sins.]

- [NOTE: According to Ezekiel’s prophecy, the God of Judah uses the king of Babylon and the Babylonians (i.e., the Chaldeans) to punish several Gentile nations because of their sins. God therefore is not only interested in holding the Israelites accountable, but He also holds every nation of the earth accountable for national sins.]
- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁶⁹ Ezekiel 30:1.
- Babylon established as the new world power (Ezekiel 30:10-12, 24-25):

¹⁰ “This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

“I will put an end to the hordes of Egypt
by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

¹¹ He and his army—the most ruthless of nations—
will be brought in to destroy the land.

They will draw their swords against Egypt
and fill the land with the slain.

¹² I will dry up the waters of the Nile
and sell the land to an evil nation;
by the hand of foreigners
I will lay waste the land and everything in it.
I the LORD have spoken....

²⁴ I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a mortally wounded man.

⁶⁹ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

25 I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall limp. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he brandishes it against Egypt.

Chapter 31 “Message to Pharaoh king of Egypt”

- [NOTE: The God of Judah is also the God of the Gentiles, as he also holds other Gentile nations accountable for national sins.]
- [NOTE: According to Ezekiel’s prophecy, the God of Judah uses the king of Babylon and the Babylonians (i.e., the Chaldeans) to punish several Gentile nations because of their sins. God therefore is not only interested in holding the Israelites accountable, but He also holds every nation of the earth accountable for national sins.]
- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁷⁰ Ezekiel 31:1.
- Word to Pharaoh: “Who can be compared with you in majesty?” Ezekiel 31:2.
- Word to Pharaoh: “Consider Assyria, once a cedar in Lebanon...” Ezekiel 21:3. “The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it.... I made it beautiful with abundant branches
- God brought down the kingdom Assyria (Ezekiel 31:10-13):

10 “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because the great cedar towered over the thick foliage, and because it was proud of its height, 11 I gave it

⁷⁰ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

into the hands of the ruler of the nations, for him to deal with according to its wickedness. I cast it aside, 12 and the most ruthless of foreign nations cut it down and left it. Its boughs fell on the mountains and in all the valleys; its branches lay broken in all the ravines of the land. All the nations of the earth came out from under its shade and left it. 13 All the birds settled on the fallen tree, and all the wild animals lived among its branches.

- God, too, will bring down Egypt for the same reasons (Ezekiel 31:18):

18 “Which of the trees of Eden can be compared with you in splendor and majesty? Yet you, too, will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth below; you will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.

“This is Pharaoh and all his hordes, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

- Ezekiel uses the words “I handed it over to the ruler of nations,” which refers to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Ezekiel 31:11.
- Ezekiel’s prophecy against Egypt is reflected in the secular history of the period.⁷¹ His prophecy against Egypt reflects, not the Babylonian captivity

⁷¹ Bassir H. *The Egyptian expansion in the near east in the saite period. J His Arch & Anthropol Sci. 2018;3(2):196–200. DOI: 10.15406/jhaas.2018.03.00081*, stating:

When the Babylonians attacked the Egyptian eastern frontier, the king of Judah, Jehoiakim, became a Babylonian vassal, however, **the Babylonians never succeeded in conquering Egypt and they withdrew**. According to the Babylonian Chronicle, late in 610 BC the king of Assyria, Ashur-uballit II (611-?), with the support of the Egyptian army left Harran in Syria before the arrival of the forces of the Babylonian king Nabopolassar (626-605 BC). The support of the Egyptian was probably sent in the end of the reign of Psamtik I. In 609 BC the Assyrian king Ashur-uballit II retook Harran through the Egyptian support. The Egyptians might have had supremacy over Phoenicia and Lebanon. During his reign, Nekau II probably maintained a general control over South West Asia from the Phoenician coast to Carchemish in the north on the Euphrates, which showed some traces of Egyptian occupation, including Judah. After the retreat of the Assyrians from the Levant, Egypt took over. **In 609 BC the Egyptian army defeated Babylonian forces**. In 606 BC an Egyptian army besieged and occupied Kimuhu, south of Carchemish in Syria, with its Babylonian garrison and later in the year, **Egyptian force crossed the Euphrates and defeated the Babylonian army at the city of Quramati**, south of Kimuhu and east of the Euphrates. **According to the Babylonian Chronicle, the Babylonian crown prince Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Egyptian army. In 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BC) defeated the Egyptian army at Carchemish and destroyed another at Hamath**. As a result, Nekau II abandoned Asia Minor and the Babylonians took over. Nabopolassar attacked the eastern Egyptian border. There is a letter from a ruler of a Phoenician city seeking help from the king of Egypt against the Babylonians. **According to Babylonian, The Chronicle, in December 601/January 600 BC. Nebuchadnezzar II attacked the eastern frontier of Egypt but he was forced to withdraw to home**. However, **there was no clear winner on the battlefield**. Herodotus (Book II: 159) records a campaign of Nekau II in which

of Egypt, but rather the Babylonian's cessation of Egyptian imperialism in the Levant region, followed by a future Persian captivity of Egypt by Cyrus the Great.

- Augustine's *The City of God* mentions the kingdom of Assyria in the same light, as political discourse on divine Providence.⁷²

Chapter 32 "Lament for Pharaoh"

- [NOTE: The God of Judah is also the God of the Gentiles, as he also holds other Gentile nations accountable for national sins.]
- [NOTE: According to Ezekiel's prophecy, the God of Judah uses the king of Babylon and the Babylonians (i.e., the Chaldeans) to punish several Gentile nations because of their sins. God therefore is not only interested

he gained a victory over Magdolos and captured Kadytis (probably Gaza?), without fixing locations or dates. In Judah, King Jehoiakim died before the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem on March 16 597 BC, and his young son Jehoiachin was taken captive to Babylon and replaced by Jehoiakim's uncle, Zedekiah....

The Saite [Egyptian] foreign policy in the Levant in the seventh and sixth centuries BC, (664-526 BC), changed over time due the mosaic nature of the region and the different external players on the Levantine scene, such as Assyria, Babylonia and Persia in addition to Egypt. As always, South West Asia was a source of danger for Egypt and the Saite kings were forced to participate in the complicated politics of their Asiatic neighbors to secure Egypt's interests into the very strategic region of Syria-Palestine. In order to achieve so, the Saite pharaohs utilized some ways to deal with the Levantine affairs which were rapidly changing; and as a result Egypt's foreign policy was not stable over time and was colored by warfare with the powers of the period. The Egyptians were looking for trade and abandoned interference into the internal affairs of the Syro-Palestinian vassal states. The Saite foreign policy in the Levant had many faces, changed over time and was based on warfare, trade and diplomacy. Psamtik I is the Egyptian pharaoh who tried to restore Egypt's interests in the Levant. His successor, Nekaou II Wehemibre had an active military policy in the Levant. Psamtik II also focused on the Levant as well. Apries Haaibre also got involved in the affairs of the Levant. However, Amasis depended on his alliances with the Greeks and the very short-reigned king, Psamtik III, did not have any activity in the Levant.

The assumption of the existence of Egyptian empire in the Levant is hard to be accepted for some reasons. In general the Saite policy toward the Levant was mainly concerned with securing Egypt's trade routes into the region and with defending Egypt's frontiers. Warfare was among the major tools that Egypt employed to achieve its goals in this very important region. The struggle between Egypt and Babylonia over control in the Levant was strong and occupied the whole of the sixth century BC. **However, in 539 BC the Persians, in the reign of Cyrus the Great, invaded Babylonia and ended the power of the Neo-Babylonian Empire and in 526 BC they put an end to the Saite Dynasty and annexed Egypt to their vast empire.**

⁷² St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 610-611, 627.

in holding the Israelites accountable, but He also holds every nation of the earth accountable for national sins.]

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁷³ Ezekiel 32:1.
- The same theme from Chapter 31 is repeated. “You too, O Pharaoh, will be broken and will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.” Ezekiel 32:28.
- The Babylonians ended Egyptian imperialism in the Levant region; the Persians conquered the Babylonians and, subsequently, annexed Egypt to its vast empire.

Chapter 33 “Ezekiel the Watchman”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁷⁴ Ezekiel 33:1.
- The role of the prophet is the duty of a “Watchman.” Ezekiel 33:6.

⁷³ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

⁷⁴ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- The Watchman must warn. If he does not warn, then God will hold him accountable for the sins of those who did not receive the message. Ezekiel 33:8.
- God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Ezekiel 33:11
- God wants the wicked to repent and turn from their wicked ways. Ezekiel 33:11.
- “Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?” Ezekiel 33:11.
- The “righteous” may backslide and turn from doing righteousness. Ezekiel 33:13.
- The “wicked” may repent and turn from doing wickedness. Ezekiel 33:12.
- Jerusalem fell due, in large measure, to its false, ineffective religion (Ezekiel 33:31-33):

31 My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear your words, but they do not put them into practice. **Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.**

32 Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, **for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.**

33 “When all this comes true—and it surely will—then they will know that a prophet has been among them.”

Chapter 34 “God Fires the Shepherds of Israel, a New Covenant and a New Shepherd David to be Instituted”

- Ezekiel says, “[t]he word of the LORD came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ. Ezekiel 34:1.

- The Shepherds of Israel have failed. Ezekiel 34:1-4.
- The Shepherds of Israel have looked out for themselves. Ezekiel 34:1-4.
- The Shepherds of Israel have neglected to strengthen the weak or to heal or bound up the wounds of the injured. Ezekiel 34:1-4.
- The Shepherds of Israel “have ruled them harshly and brutally.” Ezekiel 34:4.
- The Shepherds of Israel have caused the sheep to be “scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.” Ezekiel 34:6.
- “[M]y shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than my flock.” Ezekiel 34:8.
- GOD FIRES THE SHEPHERDS OF ISRAEL: “I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.” Ezekiel 34:10.
- **GOD HIMSELF WILL BECOME THE SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK (Christ, Messiah)**

-- God proclaims that He will takeover the duties of being Shepherd in Israel.

11 “For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I myself** will search for my sheep and look after them.

12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, **so will I look after my sheep**. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.

13 **I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land**. I will pasture them on **the mountains of Israel**, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.

14 I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.

15 **I myself will tend my sheep** and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord.

16 **I will search for the lost** and bring back the strays. **I will bind up the injured** and **strengthen the weak**, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. **I will shepherd the flock with justice.**

17 “As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I will judge between one sheep and another**, and between rams and goats.

18 Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?

19 Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

20 “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, **I myself will judge** between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.

21 Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away,

22 **I will save my flock**, and **they will no longer be plundered. I will judge** between one sheep and another.

23 **I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David**, and **he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.**

24 **I the Lord will be their God**, and **my servant David will be prince among them.** I the Lord have spoken.

25 “I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety.

26 I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing.

27 The trees will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them.

28 **They will no longer be plundered by the nations**, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid.

29 I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations.

30 Then **they will know that I, the Lord their God**, am with them and that they, **the Israelites, are my people**, declares the Sovereign Lord.

31 **You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord.**”

- Ezekiel 34:10-31 is a prophecy of the “remnant of Israel,” the “restored Israel,” a prophecy of Christ and his Church.

Chapter 35 “Prophecy Against Edom”

- [NOTE: The God of Judah is also the God of the Gentiles, as he also holds other Gentile nations accountable for national sins.]
- [NOTE: This prophecy against Edom (“Esau”) echoes the Book of Obadiah’s prophecy against Edom. Here, Augustine of Hippo opines that “Edom,” like “Nineveh” in the Book of Nahum, symbolizes the Gentiles generally.]
- Ezekiel says, “[t]he **word of the LORD** came to me,” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁷⁵ Ezekiel 35:1.

⁷⁵ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- Edom (Essau) is punished, “Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax...” Ezekiel 35:5.
- Ezekiel echoes the Book of Obadiah—a prophecy against Edom (“Essau”).
- “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: While the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate. Because you rejoiced when the inheritance of the house of Israel became desolate, that is how I will treat you. You will be desolate, O Mount Seir, you and all of Edom. Then they will know that I am the LORD.” Ezekiel 35:14-15.

Chapter 36 “Message to the Mountains of Israel Regarding the Restored Israel”

- Ezekiel says, “hear the **word of the LORD**” [NIV, KJV] and we are to understand this “word” to mean Christ.⁷⁶ Ezekiel 36:1.
- Ezekiel has words of comfort for the People of Israel and Judah who are now scattered among the nations.
- These scattered peoples continue to be sinful.
- The Israelites and Jews continue to be sinful; they are also mocked and scorned among the nations. Ezekiel 36:3.

⁷⁶ **Ezekiel, Chapter 6:** Ibid. See, also, John 1:1-3 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

- Nevertheless, God will restore them—not because of anything that they have done, but because of God’s namesake, “for the sake of my holy name.” Ezekiel 36:22.
- Ezekiel describes the restoration of Israel (i.e., “new covenant” Church) as follows (Ezekiel 36: 23-32):

23 **I will show the holiness of my great name**, which has been **profaned among the nations**, the name you have profaned among them. Then **the nations will know that I am the Lord**, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

24 “For **I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries** and **bring you back into your own land**.

25 I will **sprinkle clean water on you**, and you will be clean; **I will cleanse you from all your impurities** and from all your idols.

26 I will give you **a new heart** and **put a new spirit in you**; I will remove from you your **heart of stone** and give you **a heart of flesh**.

27 And **I will put my Spirit in you** and **move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws**.

28 Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

29 **I will save you from all your uncleanness**. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.

30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that **you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations** because of famine.

31 Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.

32 I want you to know that **I am not doing this for your sake**, declares the Sovereign Lord. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, people of Israel!

- Ezekiel’s expression of the “sprinkling of the water” to wash away impurities may be symbol of the sacrament of baptism.
- Ezekiel’s expression of the “new heart” and the “heart of flesh” and the “new spirit” is a reference to becoming “born again” in John 3:1-16.
- Ezekiel’s expression of the taking “out of the nations... gather you from all the countries” is a reflection of the “catholic” nature of the restored Israel (i.e., the reformed “catholic” Israel; i.e., the Christian Church).
- All the nations will know of this God of Israel by virtue of this new “catholic” or universal Church (i.e., the restored Israel): “Then all the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate.” Ezekiel 36:36.

Chapter 37 “Valley of the Dry Bones”

- The Spirit of the LORD took Ezekiel to a valley “full of bones.” Ezekiel 37:1.
- “He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry.” Ezekiel 37:2.
- God asks Ezekiel, “can these bones live?” Ezekiel 37:3.
- God tells Ezekiel to preach to the dry bones. Ezekiel 37:4.
- “I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attached tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” Ezekiel 37:5-6.
- As Ezekiel is preaching, he hears a rattling, and the bones start to come together. He sees a body with flesh but no breathe. Ezekiel 37:7-8.
- God tells Ezekiel to preach to the “breath.” Ezekiel 37:9.

- The breath entered the body, and it came to life—and it was “a vast army.” Ezekiel 37: 10.
- “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.” Ezekiel 37:11.
- Ezekiel prophesies about a restored Israel. Ezekiel 37:12-14.

12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.

14 **I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land.** Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.’”

- Ezekiel prophesies of a restored Israel under “My servant David... king over them. Ezekiel 37:18-28, to wit:

18 “When your people ask you, ‘Won’t you tell us what you mean by this?’

19 say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph—which is in Ephraim’s hand—and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah’s stick. I will make them into a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.’

20 Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on

21 and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land.

22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.

23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding,[a] and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

24 **“My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.**

25 They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever, and **David my servant will be their prince forever.**

26 I will make **a covenant of peace** with them; **it will be an everlasting covenant.** I will **establish them** and **increase their numbers,** and **I will put my sanctuary among them forever.**

27 My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

28 Then **the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy,** when my sanctuary is among them forever.”

- Ezekiel’s description of the “restored” Israel reflect a reformed Judaism involving a new everlasting “covenant,” whereby David will be king over Israel; the said kingdom will “be careful to keep my decrees.” Ezekiel 37:24.

Chapters 38 “Prophecy against Gog and Magog”

- “The word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of **Meschech** and **Tubal.**’ Ezekiel 38: 1-3.
- Who is Ezekiel referring to?⁷⁷

⁷⁷ “Meshech,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meshech>

Meshech is mentioned along with Tubal (and Rosh, in certain translations) as principalities of "**Gog, prince of Magog**" in Ezekiel 38:2 and 39:1, and is considered a **Japhetite tribe**, identified by Flavius Josephus with the **Cappadocian "Mosocheni"** (Mushki, also associated with Phrygians or Bryges) and their capital Mazaca. In Hippolytus of Rome's chronicle (234 AD), the "**Illyrians**" were identified as **Meshech's offspring**. In addition, Georgians have traditions that they, and **other Caucasus people** such as Armenians, share descent from Meshech (**Georgian: Meskheti**), Tubal, and Togarmah.

In 1498, Annio da Viterbo published fragments known as Pseudo-Berosus, now considered a forgery, claiming that Babylonian records had shown a son of Japheth called Samothēs had begun settling what later became Gaul in the 13th year of Nimrod. Later historians such as Raphael Holinshed (1577) identified Samothēs as Meshech, and asserted that he first ruled also in Britain.

Beginning from the 16th century, some European scholars proposed the idea that the Muscovites had stemmed from Meshech. Sir Walter Raleigh (c. 1616) attributes this opinion to Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) and to Benito Arias Montano (1571), and it was also followed later by Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758). Moreover, according to a legend first appearing in the Kievan Synopsis (1674), Moscow (Moskva) was founded by King Mosokh son of Japheth (i.e. Meshech), and was named for him and his wife, Kva. In this legend, they are also said to have had a son, Ya, and daughter, Vuza, who gave their names to the nearby Yauza River.

According to Archibald Sayce, Meshech can be identified with Muska, a name appearing in Assyrian inscriptions, and generally believed to refer to the Mushki.

Most reference books since Flavius Josephus generally identify Meshech in Ezekiel's time as an area in modern Turkey.

See, also, "Gates of Alexander," Wikipedia (online encyclopedia), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gates_of_Alexander, stating:

The Gates of Alexander, also known as the Caspian Gates, were several mountain passes that came to be associated with Alexander the Great....

In the 7th-century Christian Alexander Legend the gates were supposedly transformed to a wall built by Alexander **in the Caucasus** to keep the **apocalyptic nations of Gog and Magog**. A similar narration is mentioned in al-Kahf ("The Cave"), the 18th chapter of the Quran. According to the Quranic narrative, **Gog and Magog** (Arabic: يأجوج ومأجوج Ya'jūj wa-Ma'jūj) were walled off by Dhu al-Qarnayn ("possessor of the Two Horns"), a righteous ruler and conqueror who reached the west and the east....

The name Caspian Gates originally applied to the narrow region at the southeast corner of the Caspian Sea, through which Alexander actually marched in the pursuit of Darius III, although he did not stop to fortify it. The name was transferred to **the passes through the Caucasus**, on the other side of the Caspian, by the more fanciful historians of Alexander.

Pliny the Elder (23 AD – 25 August 79 AD) in his Natural History criticises this error, and distinguishes the **Gates of the Caucasus** from the true Caspian Gates through which Alexander passed. He describes the **Gates of the Caucasus** as a vast natural feature in a mountain chain rent asunder. Here, he says gates with iron covered beams have been placed above a horribly odorous river, along with a fortress to bar the passage of the innumerable tribes. These gates divide the world into two portions.

Josephus, a Jewish historian in the 1st century, gives the first extant reference to gates constructed by Alexander, designed to be a barrier against the **Scythians**. According to this historian, the people whom the Greeks called **Scythians** were known (among the Jews) as **Magogites**, descendants of Magog in the Hebrew Bible.

- Ezekiel describes “Gog, and the land of Magog” as coming “from your place **in the far north**, you and many nations with you... a great horde, a mighty army. You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land.” Ezekiel 38:15-16.
- “I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.” Ezekiel 38:3.
- Ezekiel’s Prophecy tells of a conflict **AFTER ISRAEL HAS BEEN RESTORED**.
- God is going to use “Gog, of the land of Magog.”

“I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords.” Ezekiel 38:3.

See, also, “Caucasian Race,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasian_race#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBaum200682-24, stating:

The Caucasian race (also Caucasoid, Europid, or Europoid) is **an obsolete racial classification** of humans based on a now-disproven theory of biological race. The Caucasian race was historically regarded as a biological taxon which, depending on which of the historical race classifications was being used, usually included ancient and modern populations from all or parts of **Europe, Western Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, North Africa**, and the **Horn of Africa**....

The Caucasus as the origin of humanity and the peak of beauty.

In the eighteenth century, the prevalent view among European scholars was that the human species had its origin in the region of the Caucasus Mountains. This view was based upon the Caucasus being the location for the purported landing point of Noah's Ark – from whom the Bible states that humanity is descended – and the location for the suffering of Prometheus, who in Hesiod's myth had crafted humankind from clay.

In addition, the most beautiful humans were reputed by Europeans to be the stereotypical "Circassian beauties" and the Georgian people; both Georgia and Circassia are in the Caucasus region. The "Circassian beauty" stereotype had its roots in the Middle Ages, while the reputation for the attractiveness of the Georgian people was developed by early modern travellers to the region such as Jean Chardin....

In the United States, the root term Caucasian is still in use as a synonym for white or of European, Middle Eastern, or North African ancestry, a usage that has been criticized....

The United States National Library of Medicine often used the term "Caucasian" as a race in the past. However, it later discontinued such usage in favor of the more narrow geographical term European, which traditionally only applied to a subset of Caucasoids.

- **Gog, of the land of Magog, will attack, or make war upon, the restored Israel [i.e., the Church of Jesus Christ]**”

⁷“Get ready; be prepared, **you and all the hordes gathered about you, and take command of them.**

⁸ After many days **you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel**, which had long been desolate. **They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety.**

⁹ **You and all your troops and the many nations with you** will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land....

¹⁴ “Therefore, son of man, prophesy and **say to Gog:** ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In that day, **when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it?**

¹⁵ **You will come from your place in the far north**, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army.

¹⁶ **You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.**

- Ezekiel predicts that when Gog attacks the restored Israel, God himself will demonstrate his greatness (Ezekiel 38: 18-23):

¹⁸ This is what will happen in that day: **When Gog attacks the land of Israel [i.e., the “restored” Israel/ the Christian church]⁷⁸**, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign LORD.

¹⁹ In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be **a great earthquake** in the land of Israel.

²⁰ The fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth **will**

⁷⁸ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 729-730, stating, “Of Gog and Magog, who are to be roused by the devil to persecute the Church, when he is loosed in the end of the world.”

tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground.

²¹ I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign LORD. **Every man's sword will be against his brother. [i.e., a great civil war or global war].**

²² I will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him.

²³ And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'

Chapter 39 “Prophecy Against Gog and Magog”

- CHAPTER 39: Ezekiel continues the same prophesy against Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 39:1-6):

Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of[a] Meshek and Tubal.

I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel.

Then I will strike your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand.

On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals.

You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord.

I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the Lord.

- The LORD says “I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel.” Ezekiel 39:7.
- “Hamon Gog”—the hordes of Gog (i.e., the ungodly nations). Ezekiel 39:11.
- God will destroy this, and the Church will be preoccupied with cleansing the land of their human bones and burying them. Ezekiel 39:14-16.
- The House of Israel will destroy their weapons of war, and use them for fuel. Ezekiel 39:9.
- **ULTIMATE SOCIAL JUSTICE:** “And they will plunder those who plundered them and loot those who looted them...” Ezekiel 39:10, 17-21.

¹⁷ “Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals: ‘Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood.

¹⁸ You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth as if they were rams and lambs, goats and bulls—all of them fattened animals from Bashan.

¹⁹ At the sacrifice I am preparing for you, you will eat fat till you are gluttoned and drink blood till you are drunk.

²⁰ At my table you will eat your fill of horses and riders, mighty men and soldiers of every kind,’ declares the Sovereign LORD.

²¹ “I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see the punishment I inflict and the hand I lay on them.

- Ezekiel foretells of the future, restored Israel (Ezekiel 39:25-29):

²⁵ “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now restore the fortunes of Jacob[d] and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name.

26 They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid.

27 When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of many nations.

28 Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind.

29 I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

- The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 38 and 39, is prophecy of the apocalypse and the restoration of a “new” Israel and a “new” Jerusalem.
- The Early Church’s interpretation of these chapters is reflected in Augustine’s *The City of God*, to wit:

For this persecution, occurring while the final judgment is imminent, shall be the last which shall be endured by the holy Church throughout the world, the whole city of Christ being assailed by the whole city of the devil, as each exists on earth.

For these nations which he names Gog and Magog are not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the world, whether the Getae or Massagetae, as some conclude from the initial letters, or some other foreign nations not under the Roman government. For John marks that they are spread over the whole earth, when he says, ‘The nations which are in the four corners of the earth,’ and he added that these are Gog and Magog. The meaning of these names we find to be, Gog, ‘a roof,’ Magog, ‘from a roof’ – a house, as it were, and he who comes out of the house. They are therefore the nations in which he who comes out of the house. They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil was shut up as in an abyss, and the devil himself coming out from them and going forth, so that they are the roof, he from the roof. Or if we refer both words to the nations, not one to them and one to the devil, then they are both the roof, because in them the old enemy is at present shut up, and as it were roofed in; and they shall be from the roof when they break forth from concealed to open hatred. The words, ‘And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and

encompassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city,' do not mean that they have come, or shall come, to one place, as if the camp of the saints and the beloved city should be in some one place; for this camp is nothing else than the Church of Christ extending over the whole world. And consequently wherever the Church shall be—and it shall be in all nations, as is signified by 'the breadth of the earth'—there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all nations—that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in the straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty, which is signified by the word 'camp.'”⁷⁹

Chapter 40 “The Vision of the Future Temple”

- The “hand of God” is described as “a man whose appearance was like bronze.” Ezekiel 40:3.
- Ezekiel describes a vision whereby this man took him to “the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain.” Ezekiel 40:2.
- The man showed Ezekiel the city and told him to “Tell the house of Israel everything you see.” Ezekiel 40:4.
- The man shows Ezekiel the East Gate of the Outer Court of the Temple. Ezekiel 40:5-16.
- The man shows Ezekiel the Outer Court of the Temple. Ezekiel 40:17-19.
- The man shows Ezekiel the North Gate of the Temple. Ezekiel 40: 20-23.
- The man shows Ezekiel the South Gate of the Temple. Ezekiel 40:24-27.
- The man shows Ezekiel the Inner Court of the Temple. Ezekiel 40:28-37.

⁷⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 729-730.

- The man shows Ezekiel the rooms for preparing sacrifices. Ezekiel 40:38-43.
- The man shows Ezekiel the Rooms for the Priests. Ezekiel 40:44-47.
- The man shows Ezekiel the Portico of the Temple. Ezekiel 40:48-49.

NOTE: There are considerable differences of opinion regarding the meaning of "Ezekiel's Temple," Wikipedia (online encyclopedia), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezekiel%27s_Temple, stating:

Ezekiel's Temple is **an unbuilt temple** structure described in the biblical Book of Ezekiel....

Jewish commentary

Maimonides called it "**the temple that will be built**" and qualified these chapters of Ezekiel as complex for the common reader and even for the seasoned scholar. Bible commentators who have ventured into explaining the design detail directly from the Hebrew Bible text include Rashi, David Kimhi, Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller, and Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michal which all produced slightly varying sketches of the temple envisioned by Ezekiel.

Christian commentary

Some **Christian interpretations of Ezekiel's temple are: it is the temple that Zerubbabel should have built**; a literal temple to be rebuilt during the millennial reign of Christ; **a temple which is symbolic of the worship of God by the Christian church today**; or a symbol of the future and eternal reign of God. A number of Christian commentators also believe that this temple will be a **literal fourth temple**, which will exist during the Millennial Kingdom, following the destruction of a future temple that will be desecrated by the Antichrist.

Other theorists instead see Ezekiel's Temple as **the New Jerusalem described in the book of Revelation**; the bride of the Lamb (whose form and composite materials are similar to the Sanctuary); the **Temple of God being the Christians themselves**, where his Spirit will dwell in them (1 Corinthians 3:16).[7]

Chapter 41 “Vision of the Future Temple”

- Continued from Chapter 40...
- The man shows Ezekiel the “outer sanctuary and measured the jambs” of the Temple. Ezekiel 41:1.
- The man shows Ezekiel the “inner sanctuary and measured the jambs” of the Temple. Ezekiel 41:1. “He said to me, ‘This is the Most Holy Place.’” Ezekiel 41:4.
- The man shows Ezekiel the remaining parts of the out sanctuary.

Chapter 42 “The Vision of the Future Temple”

- Continued from Chapters 40 and 41.
- The man showed Ezekiel the rooms for the priests. Ezekiel 42:1-20.

Chapter 43 “The Vision of the Future Temple”

- Ezekiel sees the Glory of the LORD enter the Temple (Ezekiel 43:1-5):

Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, 2 and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory. 3 The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he[a] came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. 4 The glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east. 5 Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

- A voice from inside the Temple spoke to Ezekiel, saying “Sone of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever. The house of Israel will never again defile my holy name—neither they nor the kings—by their prostitution and the lifeless idols of their kings at their high places.... Now let them put away from me their prostitution and the lifeless idols of their kings, and I will live among them forever.” Ezekiel 43:7-9.
- God tells Ezekiel to tell the Israelites this vision of the new Temple, including all of its designs: “This is the law of the temple: all the surrounding area on top of the mountain will be most holy. **Such is the law of the temple.**” Ezekiel 43:12.
- Ezekiel receives and conveys the measurements of the altar. Ezekiel 43:13-26.
- Ezekiel receives instructions on the performance of the burnt offerings. Ezekiel 43:18-26.

Chapter 44 “The Vision of the Future Temple”

- Ezekiel receives rules and laws that regulate the offices of Levites and Priests.
- Zadok the High Priest during the days of the First Temple of Solomon is mentioned. The descendants of Zadok will still serve in the priestly office. Ezekiel 44: 15.
- “I am to be the only inheritance the priests have.... The best of all the firstfruits and of all your special gifts will belong to the priests. You are to give them the first portion of your ground meal so that a blessing may rest on your household.” Ezekiel 44:28-30.

Chapter 45 “The Vision of the New Israel- Division of Land”

- God tells Ezekiel that when the Israelites return, they must allot a sacred district for the Temple. “It will be the sacred portion of the land for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and who draw near to minister before the LORD.” Ezekiel 45:1-5.
- God tells Ezekiel about land to be devoted to “the prince.” “This land will be his possession in Israel. And my princes will no longer oppress my people but will allow the house of Israel to possess the land according to their tribes.” Ezekiel 45:8.
- SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE: “This is what the Sovereign LORD says, ‘You have gone far enough, O princes of Israel! Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. You are to use accurate scales an accurate ephah and an accurate bath....’” Ezekiel 45:9-10.
- Holy Offerings and Holy Days: the laws of the offerings, the sabbath day, etc. are re-stated. Ezekiel 45:11-25.

Chapter 46 “New Jerusalem: Holy Offerings and Holy Days”

- Continued from Chapter 45.
- Holy Offerings and Holy Days: the laws of the offerings, the sabbath day, etc. are re-stated. Ezekiel 46:1-24.
- The Mosaic laws on the grain offerings, burnt offerings, peace offerings, etc. are restated. Ezekiel 46:1-14.

Chapter 47 “New Jerusalem: The Division of the Land among the 12 Tribes”

- The man shows Ezekiel a great river flowing from the Temple. The water flowed from the Temple to the sea, where the fresh water made the salt water fresh. Ezekiel 47:1-9.
- God tells Ezekiel the respective boundaries of the Israel, on the North side, the East side, the South side, and the West side. Ezekiel 47:13-23.

Chapter 48 “New Jerusalem: The Division of the Land among the 12 Tribes”

- The 11 tribes—Dan, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad—are given the geographical boundaries of their inherited territory. Ezekiel 48:2-29.
NOTE: Levi does not receive an inheritance in the land.
- “This is the land you are to allot as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel, and these will be their portion,’ declares the Sovereign LORD.” Ezekiel 48:29.
- The Book of Ezekiel ends with a brief description of gates, and their location, within the city of [unnamed]. **“And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE.” Ezekiel 48:35.**
- There are 12 Gates of this city:

-- North Gates (Reuben, Judah, and Levi)
 -- East Gates (Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan)
 -- South Gates (Simeon, Issachur, and Zebulun)
 -- West Gates (Gad, Asher, and Naphtali)
 Ezekiel 48: 30-35

- **Cross Reference:** The Book of Revelation, describes the “New Jerusalem,” stating: “It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.” Rev. 21:12-13.

- I believe that Ezekiel's Temple is allegorical symbolism for the triumph of God's law over the nations.

The End

THE END

