

# The Book of Ezekiel

He Illustrated His Sermons With  
Dynamic Object Lessons

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# Ezekiel

## OVERVIEW:

A computer can be programmed to respond at your command. And by conditioning a dog with rewards and punishments, you can teach it to obey. But as every parent knows, children are not so easily taught. People have wills and must choose to submit, to follow the instructions of their parents and leaders. Surely discipline is part of the process—boys and girls should know the consequences of disobedience—but there is a choice to be made. They are not machines or animals.

God’s children must learn to obey their heavenly Father. Created in his image, they have a choice, and God allows them to choose.

Ezekiel was a man who chose to obey God. Although he was a priest (Ezekiel 1:3), he served as a Jewish “street preacher” in Babylon for 22 years, telling everyone about God’s judgment and salvation, and calling them to repent and obey. And Ezekiel *lived* what he preached. During his ministry God told him to illustrate his messages with dramatic object lessons. Some of these acts included (1) lying on his side for 390 days during which he could eat only one eight-ounce meal a day cooked over manure, (2) shaving his head and beard, and (3) showing no sorrow when his wife died. He obeyed and faithfully proclaimed God’s word.

God may not ask you to do anything quite so dramatic or difficult; but if he did, would you do it?

The book of Ezekiel chronicles the prophet’s life and ministry. Beginning with his call as a prophet and commissioning as a “watchman for the house of Israel” (Ezekiel 1-3), Ezekiel immediately began to preach and demonstrate God’s truth, as he predicted the approaching siege and destruction of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 4-24). This devastation would be God’s judgment for the people’s idolatry. Ezekiel challenged them to turn from their wicked ways. In the next section, he spoke to the surrounding nations, prophesying that God would judge them for their sins as well (Ezekiel 25-32).

The book concludes with a message of hope, as Ezekiel proclaimed the faithfulness of God and foretold the future blessings for God's people (Ezekiel 33-48).

As you read this exciting record, watch Ezekiel fearlessly preach the word of God to the exiled Jews in the streets of Babylon and hear the timeless truth of God's love and power. Think about each person's responsibility to trust God, and about the inevitability of God's judgment against idolatry, rebellion, and indifference. Then commit yourself to obey God, whatever, wherever, and whenever he asks.

## **THE BLUEPRINT**

### **A. MESSAGES OF DOOM (Ezekiel 1:1-24:27)**

While Jeremiah was prophesying in Jerusalem that the city would soon fall to the Babylonians, Ezekiel was giving the same message to the captives who were already in Babylon. Like those in Jerusalem, the captives stubbornly believed that Jerusalem would not fall and that they would soon return to their land. Ezekiel warned them that punishment was certain because of their sins and that God was purifying his people. God will always punish sin, whether we believe it or not.

1. Ezekiel's call and commission
2. Visions of sin and judgment
3. Punishment is certain

### **Ezekiel 1:1-24:27**

On July 31 of my thirtieth year, while I was with the Judean exiles beside the Kebar River in Babylon, the heavens were opened to me, and I saw visions of God. [2] This happened during the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity. [3] The Lord gave a message to me, Ezekiel son of Buzi, a priest, there beside the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians, and I felt the hand of the Lord take hold of me.

[4] As I looked, I saw a great storm coming toward me from the north, driving before it a huge cloud that flashed with lightning and shone with brilliant light. The fire inside the cloud glowed like gleaming amber. [5] From the center of the cloud came four living beings that looked human, [6] except that each had four faces and two pairs of wings. [7] Their legs were straight like human legs, but their feet were split like calves' feet and shone like burnished bronze. [8] Beneath each of their wings I could see human hands. [9] The wings of each living being touched the wings of the two beings beside it. The living beings were able to fly in any direction without turning around. [10] Each had a human face in the front, the face of a lion on the right side, the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle at the back. [11] Each had two pairs of outstretched wings—one pair stretched out to touch the wings of the living beings on either side of it, and the other pair covered its body. [12] They went in whatever direction the spirit chose, and they moved straight forward in all directions without having to turn around.

[13] The living beings looked like bright coals of fire or brilliant torches, and it looked as though lightning was flashing back and forth among them. [14] And the living beings darted to and fro like flashes of lightning.

[15] As I looked at these beings, I saw four wheels on the ground beneath them, one wheel belonging to each. [16] The wheels sparkled as if made of chrysolite. All four wheels looked the same; each wheel had a second wheel turning crosswise within it. [17] The beings could move forward in any of the four directions they faced, without turning as they moved. [18] The rims of the four wheels were awesomely tall, and they were covered with eyes all around the edges. [19] When the four living beings moved, the wheels moved with them. When they flew upward, the wheels went up, too. [20] The spirit of the four living beings was in the wheels. So wherever the spirit went, the wheels and the living beings went, too. [21] When the living beings moved, the wheels moved. When the living beings stopped, the wheels stopped. When the living beings flew into the air, the wheels rose up. For the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels.

[22] There was a surface spread out above them like the sky. It sparkled like crystal. [23] Beneath this surface the wings of each living being stretched out to touch the others' wings, and each had two wings covering its body. [24] As they flew their wings roared like waves crashing against the shore, or like the voice of the Almighty, or like the shouting of a mighty army. When they stopped, they let down their wings. [25] As they stood with their wings lowered, a voice spoke from beyond the crystal surface above them.

[26] Above the surface over their heads was what looked like a throne made of blue sapphire. And high above this throne was a figure whose appearance was like that of a man. [27] From his waist up, he looked like gleaming amber, flickering like a fire. And from his waist down, he looked like a burning flame, shining with splendor. [28] All around him was a glowing halo, like a rainbow shining through the clouds. This was the way the glory of the Lord appeared to me. When I saw it, I fell face down in the dust, and I heard someone's voice speaking to me.

[2:1] "Stand up, son of man," said the voice. "I want to speak with you." [2] The Spirit came into me as he spoke and set me on my feet. I listened carefully to his words. [3] "Son of man," he said, "I am sending you to the nation of Israel, a nation that is rebelling against me. Their ancestors have rebelled against me from the beginning, and they are still in revolt to this very day. [4] They are a hard-hearted and stubborn people. But I am sending you to say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says!' [5] And whether they listen or not—for remember, they are rebels—at least they will know they have had a prophet among them.

[6] "Son of man, do not fear them. Don't be afraid even though their threats are sharp as thorns and barbed like briars, and they sting like scorpions. Do not be dismayed by their dark scowls. For remember, they are rebels! [7] You must give them my messages whether they listen or not. But they won't listen, for they are completely rebellious! [8] Son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not join them in being a rebel. Open your mouth, and eat what I give you."

[9] Then I looked and saw a hand reaching out to me, and it held a scroll. [10] He unrolled it, and I saw that both sides were covered with funeral songs, other words of sorrow, and pronouncements of doom.

[3:1] The voice said to me, "Son of man, eat what I am giving you—eat this scroll! Then go and give its message to the people of Israel." [2] So I opened my mouth, and he fed me the scroll. [3] "Eat it all," he said. And when I ate it, it tasted as sweet as honey.

[4] Then he said, "Son of man, go to the people of Israel with my messages. [5] I am not sending you to some foreign people whose language you cannot understand. [6] No, I am not sending you to people with strange and difficult speech. If I did, they would listen! [7] I am sending you to the people of Israel, but they won't listen to you any more than they listen to me! For the whole lot of them are hard-hearted and stubborn. [8] But look, I have made you as hard and stubborn as they are. [9] I have made you as hard as rock! So don't be afraid of them or fear their angry looks, even though they are such rebels."

[10] Then he added, "Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself. [11] Then go to your people in exile and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says!' Do this whether they listen to you or not."

[12] Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard a loud rumbling sound behind me. (May the glory of the Lord be praised in his place!) [13] It was the sound of the wings of the living beings as they brushed against each other and the rumbling of their wheels beneath them.

[14] The Spirit lifted me up and took me away. I went in bitterness and turmoil, but the Lord's hold on me was strong. [15] Then I came to the colony of Judean exiles in Tel-abib, beside the Kebar River. I sat there among them for seven days, overwhelmed.

[16] At the end of the seven days, the Lord gave me a message. He said, [17] "Son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman for Israel. Whenever you receive a message from me, pass it on to the people immediately. [18] If I warn the wicked, saying, 'You are under the penalty of death,' but you fail to deliver the warning, they will die in their sins. And I will hold you responsible, demanding your blood for theirs. [19] If you warn them and they keep on sinning and refuse to repent, they will die in their sins. But you will have saved your life because you did what you were told to do. [20] If good people turn bad and don't listen to my warning, they will die. If you did not warn them of the consequences, then they will die in their sins. Their previous good deeds won't help them, and I will hold you responsible, demanding your blood for theirs. [21] But if you warn them and they repent, they will live, and you will have saved your own life, too."

[22] Then the Lord took hold of me, and he said to me, "Go out into the valley, and I will talk to you there." [23] So I got up and went, and there I saw the glory of the Lord, just as I had seen it in my first vision by the Kebar River. And I fell face down in the dust.

[24] Then the Spirit came into me and set me on my feet. He talked to me and said, "Go, shut yourself up in your house. [25] There you will be bound with ropes so you cannot go out among the people. [26] And I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so you won't be able to pray for them, for they are rebellious. [27] But whenever I give you a message, I will loosen your tongue and let you speak. Then you will say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says!' Some of them will listen, but some will ignore you, for they are rebels."

[4:1] "And now, son of man, take a large brick and set it down in front of you. Then draw a map of the city of Jerusalem on it. [2] Build siege ramps against the city walls. Surround it with enemy camps and battering rams. [3] Then take an iron griddle and place it between you and the city. Turn toward it and demonstrate how the enemy will attack Jerusalem. This will be a warning to the people of Israel.

[4] "Now lie on your left side and place the sins of Israel on yourself. You are to bear their sins for the number of days you lie there on your side. [5] You will bear Israel's sins for 390 days—one day for each year of their sin. [6] After that, turn over and lie on your right side for 40 days—one day for each year of Judah's sin.

[7] "Meanwhile, continue your demonstration of the siege of Jerusalem. Lie there with your arm bared and prophesy her destruction. [8] I will tie you up with ropes so you won't be able to turn from side to side until the days of your siege have been completed.

[9] "Now go and get some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt, and mix them together in a storage jar. Use this food to make bread for yourself during the 390 days you will be lying on your side. [10] Ration this out to yourself, eight ounces of food for each day, and eat it at set times. [11] Then measure out a jar of water for each day, and drink it at set times. [12] Each day prepare your bread as you would barley cakes. While all the people are watching, bake it over a fire using dried human dung as fuel and then eat the bread. [13] For this is what the Lord says: Israel will eat defiled bread in the Gentile lands, where I will banish them!"

[14] Then I said, "O Sovereign Lord, must I be defiled by using human dung? For I have never been defiled before. From the time I was a child until now I have never eaten any animal that died of sickness or that I found dead. And I have never eaten any of the animals that our laws forbid."

[15] "All right," the Lord said. "You may bake your bread with cow dung instead of human dung." [16] Then he told me, "Son of man, I will cause food to be very scarce in Jerusalem. It will be weighed out with great care and eaten fearfully. The water will be portioned out drop by drop, and the people will drink it with dismay. [17] Food and water will be so scarce that the people will look at one another in terror, and they will waste away under their punishment.

[5:1] "Son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a razor to shave your head and beard. Use a scale to weigh the hair into three equal parts. [2] Place a third of it at the center of your map of Jerusalem. After acting out the siege, burn it there. Scatter another third across your map and slash at it with a sword. Scatter the last third to the wind, for I will scatter my people with the sword. [3] Keep just a bit of the hair and tie it up in your robe. [4] Then take a few of these hairs out and throw them into the fire, burning them up. A fire will then spread from this remnant and destroy all of Israel.

[5] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: This is an illustration of what will happen to Jerusalem. I placed her at the center of the nations, [6] but she has rebelled against my regulations and has been even more wicked than the surrounding nations. She has refused to obey the laws I gave her to follow. [7] So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Since you have refused to obey my laws and regulations and have behaved even worse than your neighbors,

[8] I myself, the Sovereign Lord, am now your enemy. I will punish you publicly while all the nations watch. [9] Because of your detestable idols, I will punish you more severely than I have punished anyone before or ever will again. [10] Parents will eat their own children, and children will eat their parents. And I will punish you by scattering the few who survive to the far reaches of the earth.

[11] "As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I will cut you off completely. I will show you no pity at all because you have defiled my Temple with idols and vile practices. [12] A third of your people will die in the city from famine and disease. A third of them will be slaughtered by the enemy outside the city walls. And I will scatter a third to the winds and chase them with my sword. [13] Then at last my anger will be spent, and I will be satisfied. And when my fury against them has subsided, all Israel will know that I, the Lord, have spoken to them in my jealous anger.

[14] "So I will turn you into a ruin, a mockery in the eyes of the surrounding nations and to everyone who travels by. [15] You will become an object of mockery and taunting and horror. You will be a warning to all the nations around you. They will see what happens when the Lord turns against a nation in furious rebuke. I, the Lord, have spoken!

[16] "I will shower you with the deadly arrows of famine to destroy you. The famine will become more and more severe until every crumb of food is gone. [17] And along with the famine, wild animals will attack you, robbing you of your children. Disease and war will stalk your land, and I will bring the sword of the enemy against you. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

[6:1] Again a message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, look over toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them. [3] Give the mountains of Israel this message from the Sovereign Lord. This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills and to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring war upon you, and I will destroy your pagan shrines. [4] All your altars will be demolished, and your incense altars will be smashed. I will kill your people in front of your idols. [5] I will lay your corpses in front of your idols and scatter your bones around your altars. [6] Wherever you live there will be desolation. I will destroy your pagan shrines, your altars, your idols, your incense altars, and all the other religious objects you have made. [7] Then when the place is littered with corpses, you will know that I am the Lord.

[8] "But I will let a few of my people escape destruction, and they will be scattered among the nations of the world. [9] Then when they are exiled among the nations, they will remember me. They will recognize how grieved I am by their unfaithful hearts and lustful eyes that long for other gods. Then at last they will hate themselves for all their wickedness. [10] They will know that I alone am the Lord and that I was serious when I predicted that all this would happen to them.

[11] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Clap your hands in horror, and stamp your feet. Cry out, 'Alas!' because of all the evil that the people of Israel have done. Now they are going to die from war and famine and disease. [12] Disease will strike down those who are far away in exile. War will destroy those who are nearby. And anyone who survives will be killed by famine. So at last I will spend my fury on them. [13] When their dead lie scattered among their idols and altars, on every hill and mountain and under every green tree and great oak where they offered incense to their gods, then they will know that I alone am the Lord.

[14] I will crush them and make their cities desolate from the wilderness in the south to Riblah in the north. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

[7:1] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, this is what the Sovereign Lord says to Israel: The end is here! Wherever you look—east, west, north, or south—your land is finished. [3] No hope remains, for I will unleash my anger against you. I will call you to account for all your disgusting behavior. [4] I will turn my eyes away and show no pity, repaying you in full for all your evil. Then you will know that I am the Lord!

[5] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: With one blow after another I will bring total disaster! [6] The end has come! It has finally arrived! Your final doom is waiting! [7] O people of Israel, the day of your destruction is dawning. The time has come; the day of trouble is near. It will ring with shouts of anguish, not shouts of joy. [8] Soon I will pour out my fury to complete your punishment for all your disgusting behavior. [9] I will neither spare nor pity you. I will repay you for all your detestable practices. Then you will know that it is I, the Lord, who is striking the blow.

[10] "The day of judgment is here; your destruction awaits! The people's wickedness and pride have reached a climax. [11] Their violence will fall back on them as punishment for their wickedness. None of these proud and wicked people will survive. All their wealth will be swept away. [12] Yes, the time has come; the day is here! There is no reason for buyers to rejoice over the bargains they find or for sellers to grieve over their losses, for all of them will fall under my terrible anger. [13] And if any merchants should survive, they will never return to their business. For what God has said applies to everyone—it will not be changed! Not one person whose life is twisted by sin will recover.

[14] "The trumpets call Israel's army to mobilize, but no one listens, for my fury is against them all. [15] Any who leave the city walls will be killed by enemy swords. Those who stay inside will die of famine and disease. [16] The few who survive and escape to the mountains will moan like doves, weeping for their sins. [17] Everyone's hands will be feeble; their knees will be as weak as water. [18] They will dress themselves in sackcloth; horror and shame will cover them. They will shave their heads in sorrow and remorse.

[19] "They will throw away their money, tossing it out like worthless trash. It won't buy their deliverance in that day of the Lord's anger. It will neither satisfy nor feed them, for their love of money made them stumble into sin. [20] They were proud of their gold jewelry and used it to make vile and detestable idols. That is why I will make all their wealth disgusting to them. [21] I will give it as plunder to foreigners from the most wicked of nations, and they will defile it. [22] I will hide my eyes as these robbers invade my treasured land and corrupt it.

[23] "Prepare chains for my people, for the land is bloodied by terrible crimes. Jerusalem is filled with violence. [24] I will bring the most ruthless of nations to occupy their homes. I will break down their proud fortresses and defile their sanctuaries. [25] Terror and trembling will overcome my people. They will look for peace but will not find it. [26] Calamity will follow calamity; rumor will follow rumor. They will look in vain for a vision from the prophets. They will receive no teaching from the priests and no counsel from the leaders.

[27] The king and the prince will stand helpless, weeping in despair, and the people's hands will tremble with fear. I will bring against them the evil they have done to others, and they will receive the punishment they so richly deserve. Then they will know that I am the Lord!"

[8:1] Then on September 17, during the sixth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, while the leaders of Judah were in my home, the Sovereign Lord took hold of me. [2] I saw a figure that appeared to be a man. From the waist down he looked like a burning flame. From the waist up he looked like gleaming amber. [3] He put out what seemed to be a hand and took me by the hair. Then the Spirit lifted me up into the sky and transported me in a vision of God to Jerusalem. I was taken to the north gate of the inner courtyard of the Temple, where there is a large idol that has made the Lord very angry. [4] Suddenly, the glory of the God of Israel was there, just as I had seen it before in the valley.

[5] Then the Lord said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." So I looked, and there to the north, beside the entrance to the gate of the altar, stood the idol that had made the Lord so angry.

[6] "Son of man," he said, "Do you see what they are doing? Do you see the great sins the people of Israel are doing to drive me from my Temple? But come, and you will see even greater sins than these!" [7] Then he brought me to the door of the Temple courtyard, where I could see an opening in the wall. [8] He said to me, "Now, son of man, dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and uncovered a door to a hidden room.

[9] "Go in," he said, "And see the unspeakable wickedness going on in there!" [10] So I went in and saw the walls engraved with all kinds of snakes, lizards, and hideous creatures. I also saw the various idols worshiped by the people of Israel. [11] Seventy leaders of Israel were standing there with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan in the middle. Each of them held an incense burner, so there was a thick cloud of incense above their heads.

[12] Then the Lord said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the leaders of Israel are doing with their idols in dark rooms? They are saying, 'The Lord doesn't see us; he has deserted our land!' "[13] Then he added, "Come, and I will show you greater sins than these!"

[14] He brought me to the north gate of the Lord's Temple, and some women were sitting there, weeping for the god Tammuz. [15] "Have you seen this?" he asked. "But I will show you even greater sins than these!"

[16] Then he brought me into the inner courtyard of the Lord's Temple. At the entrance, between the foyer and the bronze altar, about twenty-five men were standing with their backs to the Lord's Temple. They were facing eastward, worshiping the sun!

[17] "Have you seen this, son of man?" he asked. "Is it nothing to the people of Judah that they commit these terrible sins, leading the whole nation into violence, thumbing their noses at me, and rousing my fury against them? [18] Therefore, I will deal with them in fury. I will neither pity nor spare them. And though they scream for mercy, I will not listen."

[9:1] Then the Lord thundered, "Bring on the men appointed to punish the city! Tell them to bring their weapons with them!" [2] Six men soon appeared from the upper gate that faces north, each carrying a battle club in his hand. One of them was dressed in linen and carried a writer's case strapped to his side. They all went into the Temple courtyard and stood beside the bronze altar.

[3] Then the glory of the God of Israel rose up from between the cherubim, where it had rested, and moved to the entrance of the Temple. And the Lord called to the man dressed in linen who was carrying the writer's case. [4] He said to him, "Walk through the streets of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of all those who weep and sigh because of the sins they see around them."

[5] Then I heard the Lord say to the other men, "Follow him through the city and kill everyone whose forehead is not marked. Show no mercy; have no pity! [6] Kill them all—old and young, girls and women and little children. But do not touch anyone with the mark. Begin your task right here at the Temple." So they began by killing the seventy leaders. [7] "Defile the Temple!" the Lord commanded. "Fill its courtyards with the bodies of those you kill! Go!" So they went throughout the city and did as they were told.

[8] While they were carrying out their orders, I was all alone. I fell face down in the dust and cried out, "O Sovereign Lord! Will your fury against Jerusalem wipe out everyone left in Israel?"

[9] Then he said to me, "The sins of the people of Israel and Judah are very great. The entire land is full of murder; the city is filled with injustice. They are saying, 'The Lord doesn't see it! The Lord has forsaken the land!' [10] So I will not spare them or have any pity on them. I will fully repay them for all they have done."

[11] Then the man in linen clothing, who carried the writer's case, reported back and said, "I have finished the work you gave me to do."

[10:1] As I looked, I saw what appeared to be a throne of blue sapphire above the crystal surface over the heads of the cherubim. [2] Then the Lord spoke to the man in linen clothing and said, "Go in between the whirling wheels beneath the cherubim, and take a handful of glowing coals and scatter them over the city." He did this as I watched. [3] The cherubim were standing at the south end of the Temple when the man went in, and the cloud of glory filled the inner courtyard. [4] Then the glory of the Lord rose up from above the cherubim and went over to the door of the Temple. The Temple was filled with this cloud of glory, and the Temple courtyard glowed brightly with the glory of the Lord. [5] The moving wings of the cherubim sounded like the voice of God Almighty and could be heard clearly in the outer courtyard.

[6] The Lord said to the man in linen clothing, "Go between the cherubim and take some burning coals from between the wheels." So the man went in and stood beside one of the wheels. [7] Then one of the cherubim reached out his hand and took some live coals from the fire burning among them. He put the coals into the hands of the man in linen clothing, and the man took them and went out. [8] (All the cherubim had what looked like human hands hidden beneath their wings.)

[9] Each of the four cherubim had a wheel beside him, and the wheels sparkled like chrysolite. [10] All four wheels looked the same; each wheel had a second wheel turning crosswise within it. [11] The cherubim could move forward in any of the four directions they faced, without turning as they moved. They went straight in the direction in which their heads were turned, never turning aside. [12] Both the cherubim and the wheels were covered with eyes. The cherubim had eyes all over their bodies, including their hands, their backs, and their wings. [13] I heard someone refer to the wheels as "the whirling wheels." [14] Each of the four cherubim had four faces—the first was the face of an ox, the second was a human face, the third was the face of a lion, and the fourth was the face of an eagle.

[15] Then the cherubim rose upward. These were the same living beings I had seen beside the Kebar River. [16] When the cherubim moved, the wheels moved with them. When they rose into the air, the wheels stayed beside them, going with them as they flew. [17] When the cherubim stood still, the wheels also stopped, for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels.

[18] Then the glory of the Lord moved from the door of the Temple and hovered above the cherubim. [19] And as I watched, the cherubim flew with their wheels to the east gate of the Lord's Temple. And the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

[20] These were the same living beings I had seen beneath the God of Israel when I was by the Kebar River. I knew they were cherubim, [21] for each had four faces and four wings and what looked like human hands under their wings. [22] Their faces, too, were just like the faces of the beings I had seen at the Kebar, and they traveled straight ahead, just as the others had.

[11:1] Then the Spirit lifted me and brought me over to the east gateway of the Lord's Temple, where I saw twenty-five prominent men of the city. Among them were Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, who were leaders among the people.

[2] Then the Spirit said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who are responsible for the wicked counsel being given in this city. [3] They say to the people, 'Is it not a good time to build houses? Our city is like an iron pot. Inside it we will be like meat—safe from all harm.' [4] Therefore, son of man, prophesy against them loudly and clearly."

[5] Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and he told me to say, "This is what the Lord says to the people of Israel: Is that what you are saying? Yes, I know it is, for I know every thought that comes into your minds. [6] You have murdered endlessly and filled your streets with the dead.

[7] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: This city is an iron pot, but the victims of your injustice are the pieces of meat. And you are not safe, for I will soon drag you from the city. [8] I will expose you to the war you so greatly fear, says the Sovereign Lord. [9] I will drive you out of Jerusalem and hand you over to foreigners who will carry out my judgments against you. [10] You will be slaughtered all the way to the borders of Israel, and then you will know that I am the Lord. [11] No, this city will not be an iron pot for you, and you will not be the meat, safe inside. I will judge you even to the borders of Israel,

[12] and you will know that I am the Lord. For you have refused to obey me; instead, you have copied the sins of the nations around you."

[13] While I was still speaking, Pelatiah son of Benaiah suddenly died. Then I fell face down in the dust and cried out, "O Sovereign Lord, are you going to kill everyone in Israel?"

[14] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [15] "Son of man, the people still left in Jerusalem are talking about their relatives in exile, saying, 'They are far away from the Lord, so now he has given their land to us!' [16] Therefore, give the exiles this message from the Sovereign Lord: Although I have scattered you in the countries of the world, I will be a sanctuary to you during your time in exile. [17] I, the Sovereign Lord, will gather you back from the nations where you are scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel once again.

[18] "When the people return to their homeland, they will remove every trace of their detestable idol worship. [19] And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their hearts of stone and give them tender hearts instead, [20] so they will obey my laws and regulations. Then they will truly be my people, and I will be their God. [21] But as for those who long for idols, I will repay them fully for their sins, says the Sovereign Lord."

[22] Then the cherubim lifted their wings and rose into the air with their wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them. [23] Then the glory of the Lord went up from the city and stopped above the mountain to the east.

[24] Afterward the Spirit of God carried me back again to Babylonia, to the Judeans in exile there. And so ended the vision of my visit to Jerusalem. [25] And I told the exiles everything the Lord had shown me.

[12:1] Again a message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, you live among rebels who could see the truth if they wanted to, but they don't want to. They could hear me if they would listen, but they won't listen because they are rebellious. [3] So now put on a demonstration to show them what it will be like to go off into exile. Pack whatever you can carry on your back and leave your home to go on a journey. Make your preparations in broad daylight so the people can see you, for perhaps they will even yet consider what this means, even though they are such rebels. [4] Bring your baggage outside during the day so they can watch you. Then as they are watching, leave your house in the evening, just as captives do when they begin a long march to distant lands. [5] Dig a hole through the wall while they are watching and carry your possessions out through it. [6] As they watch, lift your pack to your shoulders and walk away into the night. Cover your face and don't look around. All of these actions will be a sign for the people of Israel."

[7] So I did as I was told. In broad daylight I brought my pack outside, filled with the things I might carry into exile. Then in the evening while the people looked on, I dug through the wall with my hands and went out into the darkness with my pack on my shoulder.

[8] The next morning this message came to me from the Lord: [9] "Son of man, these rebels, the people of Israel, have asked you what all this means.

[10] Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: These actions contain a message for Zedekiah in Jerusalem and for all the people of Israel.' [11] Then explain that your actions are a demonstration of what will soon happen to them, for they will be driven from their homes and sent away into exile.

[12] "Even Zedekiah will leave Jerusalem at night through a hole in the wall, taking only what he can carry with him. He will cover his face, and his eyes will never see his homeland again. [13] Then I will spread out my net and capture him in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Babylonians, though he will never see it, and he will die there. [14] I will scatter his servants and guards to the four winds and send the sword after them. [15] And when I scatter them among the nations, they will know that I am the Lord. [16] But I will spare a few of them from death by war, famine, or disease, so they can confess to their captors about how wicked they have been. Then they will know that I am the Lord!"

[17] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [18] "Son of man, tremble as you eat your food. Drink your water with fear, as if it were your last. [19] Give the people this message from the Sovereign Lord concerning those living in Israel and Jerusalem: They will eat their food with trembling and sip their tiny portions of water in utter despair, because their land will be stripped bare on account of their violence. [20] The cities will be destroyed and the farmland deserted. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

[21] Again a message came to me from the Lord: [22] "Son of man, what is that proverb they quote in Israel: 'Time passes, making a liar of every prophet'? [23] Give the people this message from the Sovereign Lord: I will put an end to this proverb, and you will soon stop quoting it. Now give them this new proverb to replace the old one: 'The time has come for every prophecy to be fulfilled!'

[24] "Then you will see what becomes of all the false visions and misleading predictions about peace in Israel. [25] For I am the Lord! What I threaten always happens. There will be no more delays, you rebels of Israel! I will fulfill my threat of destruction in your own lifetime, says the Sovereign Lord."

[26] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [27] "Son of man, the people of Israel are saying, 'His visions won't come true for a long, long time.' [28] Therefore, give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: No more delay! I will now do everything I have threatened! I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"

[13:1] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, speak against the false prophets of Israel who are inventing their own prophecies. Tell them to listen to the word of the Lord. [3] This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Destruction is certain for the false prophets who are following their own imaginations and have seen nothing at all!

[4] "O people of Israel, these prophets of yours are like jackals digging around in the ruins. [5] They have done nothing to strengthen the breaks in the walls around the nation. They have not helped it to stand firm in battle on the day of the Lord. [6] Instead, they have lied and said, 'My message is from the Lord,' even though the Lord never sent them. And yet they expect him to fulfill their prophecies! [7] Can your visions be anything but false if you claim, 'This message is from the Lord,' when I have not even spoken to you?"

[8] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because what you say is false and your visions are a lie, I will stand against you, says the Sovereign Lord. [9] I will raise my fist against all the lying prophets, and they will be banished from the community of Israel. I will blot their names from Israel's record books, and they will never again see their own land. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord!

[10] "These evil prophets deceive my people by saying, 'All is peaceful!' when there is no peace at all! It's as if the people have built a flimsy wall, and these prophets are trying to hold it together by covering it with whitewash! [11] Tell these whitewashers that their wall will soon fall down. A heavy rainstorm will undermine it; great hailstones and mighty winds will knock it down. [12] And when the wall falls, the people will cry out, 'Where is the whitewash you applied?'

[13] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will sweep away your whitewashed wall with a storm of indignation, with a great flood of anger, and with hailstones of fury. [14] I will break down your wall right to the foundation, and when it falls, it will crush you. Then you will know that I am the Lord! [15] At last my anger against the wall and those who covered it with whitewash will be satisfied. Then I will say to you: "The wall and those who whitewashed it are both gone. [16] They were lying prophets who claimed peace would come to Jerusalem when there was no peace. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"

[17] "Now, son of man, also speak out against the women who prophesy from their own imaginations. [18] This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Destruction is certain for you women who are ensnaring the souls of my people, both young and old alike. You tie magic charms on their wrists and furnish them with magic veils. Do you think you can trap others without bringing destruction on yourselves? [19] You turn my people away from me for a few handfuls of barley or a piece of bread. By lying to my people who love to listen to lies, you kill those who should not die, and you promise life to those who should not live.

[20] "And so the Sovereign Lord says: I am against all your magic charms, which you use to ensnare my people like birds. I will tear them from your arms, setting my people free like birds set free from a cage. [21] I will tear off the magic veils and save my people from your grasp. They will no longer be your victims. Then you will know that I am the Lord. [22] You have discouraged the righteous with your lies, when I didn't want them to suffer grief. And you have encouraged the wicked by promising them life, even though they continue in their sins. [23] But you will no longer talk of seeing visions that you never saw, nor will you practice your magic. For I will rescue my people from your grasp. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

[14:1] Then some of the leaders of Israel visited me, and while they were there, [2] this message came to me from the Lord: [3] "Son of man, these leaders have set up idols in their hearts. They have embraced things that lead them into sin. Why should I let them ask me anything? [4] Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: I, the Lord, will punish the people of Israel who set up idols in their hearts so they fall into sin and then come to a prophet asking for help. [5] I will do this to capture the minds and hearts of all my people who have turned from me to worship their detestable idols.

[6] "Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign Lord: Repent and turn away from your idols, and stop all your loathsome practices. [7] I, the Lord, will punish all those, both Israelites and foreigners, who reject me and set up idols in their hearts so they fall into sin, and who then come to a prophet asking for my advice. [8] I will turn against such people and make a terrible example of them, destroying them. Then you will know that I am the Lord. [9] And if a prophet is deceived and gives a message anyway, it is because I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet. I will stand against such prophets and cut them off from the community of Israel. [10] False prophets and hypocrites—evil people who claim to want my advice—will all be punished for their sins. [11] In this way, the people of Israel will learn not to stray from me, polluting themselves with sin. They will be my people, and I will be their God, says the Sovereign Lord."

[12] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [13] "Son of man, suppose the people of a country were to sin against me, and I lifted my fist to crush them, cutting off their food supply and sending a famine to destroy both people and animals alike. [14] Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were there, their righteousness would save no one but themselves, declares the Sovereign Lord.

[15] "Or suppose I were to send an invasion of dangerous wild animals to devastate the land and kill the people. [16] Even if these three men were there, the Sovereign Lord swears that it would do no good—it wouldn't save the people from destruction. Those three alone would be saved, but the land would be devastated.

[17] "Or suppose I were to bring war against the land, and I told enemy armies to come and destroy everything. [18] Even if these three men were in the land, the Sovereign Lord swears that they could not save the people. They alone would be saved.

[19] "Or suppose I were to pour out my fury by sending an epidemic of disease into the land, and the plague killed people and animals alike. [20] Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were living there, the Sovereign Lord swears that they could not save the people. They alone would be saved by their righteousness.

[21] "Now this is what the Sovereign Lord says: How terrible it will be when all four of these fearsome punishments fall upon Jerusalem—war, famine, beasts, and plague—destroying all her people and animals. [22] Yet there will be survivors, and they will come here to join you as exiles in Babylon. You will see with your own eyes how wicked they are, and then you will feel better about what I have done to Jerusalem. [23] When you meet them and see their behavior, you will agree that these things are not being done to Israel without cause, says the Sovereign Lord."

[15:1] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, how does a grapevine compare to a tree? Is a vine's wood as useful as the wood of a tree? [3] Can its wood be used for making things, like pegs to hang up pots and pans? [4] No, it can only be used for fuel, and even as fuel, it burns too quickly. [5] Vine branches are useless both before and after being put into the fire!

[6] "And this is what the Sovereign Lord says: The people of Jerusalem are like grapevines growing among the trees of the forest. Since they are useless, I have set them aside to be burned! [7] And I will see to it that if they escape from one fire, they will fall into another. When this happens, you will know that I am the Lord. [8] And I will make the land desolate because my people have been unfaithful to me, says the Sovereign Lord."

[16:1] Then another message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her loathsome sins. [3] Give her this message from the Sovereign Lord: You are nothing but a Canaanite! Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite! [4] When you were born, no one cared about you. Your umbilical cord was left uncut, and you were never washed, rubbed with salt, and dressed in warm clothing. [5] No one had the slightest interest in you; no one pitied you or cared for you. On the day you were born, you were dumped in a field and left to die, unwanted.

[6] "But I came by and saw you there, helplessly kicking about in your own blood. As you lay there, I said, 'Live!' [7] And I helped you to thrive like a plant in the field. You grew up and became a beautiful jewel. Your breasts became full, and your hair grew, though you were still naked. [8] And when I passed by and saw you again, you were old enough to be married. So I wrapped my cloak around you to cover your nakedness and declared my marriage vows. I made a covenant with you, says the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine.

[9] "Then I bathed you and washed off your blood, and I rubbed fragrant oils into your skin. [10] I gave you expensive clothing of linen and silk, beautifully embroidered, and sandals made of fine leather. [11] I gave you lovely jewelry, bracelets, and beautiful necklaces, [12] a ring for your nose and earrings for your ears, and a lovely crown for your head. [13] And so you were made beautiful with gold and silver. Your clothes were made of fine linen and were beautifully embroidered. You ate the finest foods—fine flour, honey, and olive oil—and became more beautiful than ever. You looked like a queen, and so you were! [14] Your fame soon spread throughout the world on account of your beauty, because the splendor I bestowed on you perfected your beauty, says the Sovereign Lord.

[15] "But you thought you could get along without me, so you trusted instead in your fame and beauty. You gave yourself as a prostitute to every man who came along. Your beauty was theirs for the asking! [16] You used the lovely things I gave you to make shrines for idols, where you carried out your acts of prostitution. Unbelievable! How could such a thing ever happen? [17] You took the very jewels and gold and silver ornaments I had given you and made statues of men and worshiped them, which is adultery against me. [18] You used the beautifully embroidered clothes I gave you to cover your idols. Then you used my oil and incense to worship them. [19] Imagine it! You set before them as a lovely sacrifice the fine flour and oil and honey I had given you, says the Sovereign Lord.

[20] "Then you took your sons and daughters—the children you had borne to me—and sacrificed them to your gods. Was it not enough that you should be a prostitute? [21] Must you also slaughter my children by sacrificing them to idols? [22] In all your years of adultery and loathsome sin, you have not once thought of the days long ago when you lay naked in a field, kicking about in your own blood.

[23] "Your destruction is certain, says the Sovereign Lord. In addition to all your other wickedness, [24] you built a pagan shrine and put altars to idols in every town square. [25] On every street corner you defiled your beauty, offering your body to every passerby in an endless stream of prostitution. [26] Then you added lustful Egypt to your lovers, fanning the flames of my anger with your increasing promiscuity. [27] That is why I struck you with my fist and reduced your boundaries. I handed you over to your enemies, the Philistines, and even they were shocked by your lewd conduct! [28] You have prostituted yourselves with the Assyrians, too. It seems you can never find enough new lovers! And after your prostitution there, you still were not satisfied. [29] You added to your lovers by embracing that great merchant land of Babylonia—but you still weren't satisfied!

[30] "What a sick heart you have, says the Sovereign Lord, to do such things as these, acting like a shameless prostitute. [31] You build your pagan shrines on every street corner and your altars to idols in every square. You have been worse than a prostitute, so eager for sin that you have not even demanded payment for your love! [32] Yes, you are an adulterous wife who takes in strangers instead of her own husband. [33] Prostitutes charge for their services—but not you! You give gifts to your lovers, bribing them to come to you. [34] So you are the opposite of other prostitutes. No one pays you; instead, you pay them!

[35] "Therefore, you prostitute, listen to this message from the Lord! [36] This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because you have exposed yourself in prostitution to all your lovers, and because you have worshiped detestable idols, and because you have slaughtered your children as sacrifices to your gods, [37] this is what I am going to do. I will gather together all your allies—these lovers of yours with whom you have sinned, both those you loved and those you hated—and I will strip you naked in front of them so they can stare at you. [38] I will punish you for your murder and adultery. I will cover you with blood in my jealous fury. [39] Then I will give you to your lovers—these many nations—and they will destroy you. They will knock down your pagan shrines and the altars to your idols. They will strip you and take your beautiful jewels, leaving you completely naked and ashamed. [40] They will band together in a mob to stone you and run you through with swords. [41] They will burn your homes and punish you in front of many women. I will see to it that you stop your prostitution and end your payments to your many lovers.

[42] "Then at last my fury against you will be spent, and my jealous anger will subside. I will be calm and will not be angry with you anymore. [43] But first, because you have not remembered your youth but have angered me by doing all these evil things, I will fully repay you for all of your sins, says the Sovereign Lord. For to all your disgusting sins, you have added these lewd acts. [44] Everyone who makes up proverbs will say of you, 'Like mother, like daughter.' [45] For your mother loathed her husband and her children, and so do you. And you are exactly like your sisters, for they despised their husbands and their children. Truly your mother must have been a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

[46] "Your older sister was Samaria, who lived with her daughters in the north. Your younger sister was Sodom, who lived with her daughters in the south. [47] But you have not merely sinned as they did—no, that was nothing to you. In a very short time you far surpassed them! [48] As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, Sodom and her daughters were never as wicked as you and your daughters. [49] Sodom's sins were pride, laziness, and gluttony, while the poor and needy suffered outside her door. [50] She was proud and did loathsome things, so I wiped her out, as you have seen.

[51] "Even Samaria did not commit half your sins. You have done far more loathsome things than your sisters ever did. They seem righteous compared to you! [52] You should be deeply ashamed because your sins are so terrible. In comparison, you make your sisters seem innocent!

[53] "But someday I will restore the fortunes of Sodom and Samaria, and I will restore you, too. [54] Then you will be truly ashamed of everything you have done, for your sins make them feel good in comparison. [55] Yes, your sisters, Sodom and Samaria, and all their people will be restored, and at that time you also will be restored. [56] In your proud days you held Sodom in contempt. [57] But now your greater wickedness has been exposed to all the world, and you are the one who is scorned—by Edom and all her neighbors and by Philistia. [58] This is your punishment for all your disgusting sins, says the Lord.

[59] "Now this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will give you what you deserve, for you have taken your solemn vows lightly by breaking your covenant. [60] Yet I will keep the covenant I made with you when you were young, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. [61] Then you will remember with shame all the evil you have done. I will make your sisters, Samaria and Sodom, to be your daughters, even though they are not part of our covenant. [62] And I will reaffirm my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the Lord. [63] You will remember your sins and cover your mouth in silence and shame when I forgive you of all that you have done, says the Sovereign Lord."

[17:1] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, tell this story to the people of Israel. [3] Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: A great eagle with broad wings full of many-colored feathers came to Lebanon. He took hold of the highest branch of a cedar tree [4] and plucked off its topmost shoot. Then he carried it away to a city filled with merchants, where he planted it.

[5] "Then he planted one of its seedlings in fertile ground beside a broad river, where it would grow as quickly as a willow tree. [6] It took root there and grew into a low, spreading vine. Its branches turned up toward the eagle, and its roots grew down beneath it. It soon produced strong branches and luxuriant leaves. [7] But then another great eagle with broad wings and full plumage came along. So the vine sent its roots and branches out toward him for water. [8] The vine did this even though it was already planted in good soil and had plenty of water so it could grow into a splendid vine and produce rich leaves and luscious fruit.

[9] "So now the Sovereign Lord asks: Should I let this vine grow and prosper? No! I will pull it out, roots and all! I will cut off its fruit and let its leaves wither and die. I will pull it out easily enough—it won't take a strong arm or a large army to do it.

[10] Then when the vine is transplanted, will it thrive? No, it will wither away completely when the east wind blows against it. It will die in the same good soil where it had grown so well."

[11] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [12] "Say to these rebels of Israel: Don't you understand the meaning of this riddle of the eagles? I will tell you, says the Sovereign Lord. The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, took away her king and princes, and brought them to Babylon. [13] He made a treaty with a member of the royal family and made him take an oath of loyalty. He also exiled Israel's most influential leaders, [14] so Israel would not become strong again and revolt. Only by keeping her treaty with Babylon could Israel maintain her national identity.

[15] "Nevertheless, this man of Israel's royal family rebelled against Babylon, sending ambassadors to Egypt to request a great army and many horses. Can Israel break her sworn treaties like that and get away with it? [16] No! For as surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, the king of Israel will die in Babylon, the land of the king who put him in power and whose treaty he despised and broke. [17] Pharaoh and all his mighty army will fail to help Israel when the king of Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem again and destroys the lives of many. [18] For the king of Israel broke his treaty after swearing to obey; therefore, he will not escape.

[19] "So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: As surely as I live, I will punish him for breaking my covenant and despising the solemn oath he made in my name. [20] I will throw my net over him and capture him in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and deal with him there for this treason against me. [21] And all the best warriors of Israel will be killed in battle, and those remaining in the city will be scattered to the four winds. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken these words.

[22] "And the Sovereign Lord says: I will take a tender shoot from the top of a tall cedar, and I will plant it on the top of Israel's highest mountain. [23] It will become a noble cedar, sending forth its branches and producing seed. Birds of every sort will nest in it, finding shelter beneath its branches. [24] And all the trees will know that it is I, the Lord, who cuts down the tall tree and helps the short tree to grow tall. It is I who makes the green tree wither and gives new life to the dead tree. I, the Lord, have spoken! I will do what I have said."

[18:1] Then another message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Why do you quote this proverb in the land of Israel: 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, but their children's mouths pucker at the taste'? [3] As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, you will not say this proverb anymore in Israel. [4] For all people are mine to judge—both parents and children alike. And this is my rule: The person who sins will be the one who dies.

[5] "Suppose a certain man is just and does what is lawful and right, [6] and he has not feasted in the mountains before Israel's idols or worshiped them. And suppose he does not commit adultery or have intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period. [7] Suppose he is a merciful creditor, not keeping the items given in pledge by poor debtors, and does not rob the poor but instead gives food to the hungry and provides clothes for people in need.

[8] And suppose he grants loans without interest, stays away from injustice, is honest and fair when judging others, [9] and faithfully obeys my laws and regulations. Anyone who does these things is just and will surely live, says the Sovereign Lord.

[10] "But suppose that man has a son who grows up to be a robber or murderer and refuses to do what is right. [11] And suppose that son does all the evil things his father would never do—worships idols on the mountains, commits adultery, [12] oppresses the poor and helpless, steals from debtors by refusing to let them redeem what they have given in pledge, worships idols and takes part in loathsome practices, [13] and lends money at interest. Should such a sinful person live? No! He must die and must take full blame.

[14] "But suppose that sinful son, in turn, has a son who sees his father's wickedness but decides against that kind of life. [15] Suppose this son refuses to worship idols on the mountains, does not commit adultery, [16] and does not exploit the poor, but instead is fair to debtors and does not rob them. And suppose this son feeds the hungry, provides clothes for the needy, [17] helps the poor, does not lend money at interest, and obeys all my regulations and laws. Such a person will not die because of his father's sins; he will surely live. [18] But the father will die for the many sins he committed—for being cruel and robbing close relatives, doing what was clearly wrong among his people.

[19] " 'What?' you ask. 'Doesn't the child pay for the parent's sins?' No! For if the child does what is right and keeps my laws, that child will surely live. [20] The one who sins is the one who dies. The child will not be punished for the parent's sins, and the parent will not be punished for the child's sins. Righteous people will be rewarded for their own goodness, and wicked people will be punished for their own wickedness. [21] But if wicked people turn away from all their sins and begin to obey my laws and do what is just and right, they will surely live and not die. [22] All their past sins will be forgotten, and they will live because of the righteous things they have done.

[23] "Do you think, asks the Sovereign Lord, that I like to see wicked people die? Of course not! I only want them to turn from their wicked ways and live. [24] However, if righteous people turn to sinful ways and start acting like other sinners, should they be allowed to live? No, of course not! All their previous goodness will be forgotten, and they will die for their sins.

[25] "Yet you say, 'The Lord isn't being just!' Listen to me, O people of Israel. Am I the one who is unjust, or is it you? [26] When righteous people turn from being good and start doing sinful things, they will die for it. Yes, they will die because of their sinful deeds. [27] And if wicked people turn away from their wickedness, obey the law, and do what is just and right, they will save their lives. [28] They will live, because after thinking it over, they decided to turn from their sins. Such people will not die. [29] And yet the people of Israel keep saying, 'The Lord is unjust!' O people of Israel, it is you who are unjust, not I.

[30] "Therefore, I will judge each of you, O people of Israel, according to your actions, says the Sovereign Lord. Turn from your sins! Don't let them destroy you! [31] Put all your rebellion behind you, and get for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O people of Israel? [32] I don't want you to die, says the Sovereign Lord. Turn back and live!

[19:1] "Sing this funeral song for the princes of Israel:

[2] 'What is your mother?

A lioness among lions!

She lay down among the young lions  
and reared her cubs.

[3] She raised one of her cubs  
to become a strong young lion.

He learned to catch and devour prey,  
and he became a man-eater.

[4] Then the nations heard about him,  
and he was trapped in their pit.

They led him away in chains  
to the land of Egypt.

[5] 'When the mother lion saw  
that all her hopes for him were gone,  
she took another of her cubs  
and taught him to be a strong lion.

[6] He prowled among the other lions  
and became a leader among them.

He learned to catch and devour prey,  
and he, too, became a man-eater.

[7] He demolished fortresses in nearby nations  
and destroyed their towns and cities.

Their farms were desolated,  
and their crops were destroyed.

Everyone in the land trembled in fear  
when they heard him roar.

[8] Then the armies of the nations attacked him,  
surrounding him from every direction.

They spread out their nets for him  
and captured him in their pit.

[9] With hooks, they dragged him into a cage  
and brought him before the king of Babylon.

They held him in captivity,  
so his voice could never again be heard  
on the mountains of Israel.

[10] 'Your mother was like a vine  
planted by the water's edge.

It had lush, green foliage  
because of the abundant water.

[11] Its branches became very strong,  
strong enough to be a ruler's scepter.

It soon became very tall,

towering above all the others.  
It stood out because of its height  
and because of its many lush branches.  
[12] But the vine was uprooted in fury  
and thrown down to the ground.  
The desert wind dried up its fruit  
and tore off its branches.  
Its stem was destroyed by fire.  
[13] Now the vine is growing in the wilderness,  
where the ground is hard and dry.  
[14] A fire has come from its branches  
and devoured its fruit.  
None of the remaining limbs  
is strong enough to be a ruler's scepter.'

This is a funeral song, and it is now time for the funeral."

[20:1] On August 14, during the seventh year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, some of the leaders of Israel came to request a message from the Lord. They sat down in front of me to wait for his reply. [2] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [3] "Son of man, give the leaders of Israel this message from the Sovereign Lord: How dare you come to ask for my help? As surely as I live, I will tell you nothing. This is the word of the Sovereign Lord!

[4] "Son of man, bring judgment against them and condemn them. Make them realize how loathsome the actions of their ancestors really were. [5] Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: When I chose Israel and revealed myself to her in Egypt, I swore that I, the Lord, would be her God. [6] I promised that I would bring her and her descendants out of Egypt to a land I had discovered and explored for them—a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the best of all lands anywhere. [7] Then I said to them, 'Each of you, get rid of your idols. Do not defile yourselves with the Egyptian gods, for I am the Lord your God.'

[8] "But they rebelled against me and would not listen. They did not get rid of their idols or forsake the gods of Egypt. Then I threatened to pour out my fury on them to satisfy my anger while they were still in Egypt. [9] But I didn't do it, for I acted to protect the honor of my name. That way the surrounding nations wouldn't be able to laugh at Israel's God, who had promised to deliver his people. [10] So I brought my people out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness. [11] There I gave them my laws so they could live by keeping them. Yes, all those who keep them will live! [12] And I gave them my Sabbath days of rest as a sign between them and me. It was to remind them that I, the Lord, had set them apart to be holy, making them my special people.

[13] "But the people of Israel rebelled against me, and they refused to obey my laws there in the wilderness. They wouldn't obey my instructions even though obedience would have given them life. And they also violated my Sabbath days. So I threatened to pour out my fury on them, and I made plans to utterly consume them in the desert.

[14] But again I held back in order to protect the honor of my name. That way the nations who saw me lead my people out of Egypt wouldn't be able to claim I destroyed them because I couldn't take care of them. [15] But I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land I had given them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful place on earth. [16] I told them this because they had rejected my laws, ignored my will for them, and violated my Sabbath days. Their hearts were given to their idols. [17] Nevertheless, I pitied them and held back from destroying them in the wilderness.

[18] "Then I warned their children and told them not to follow in their parents' footsteps, defiling themselves with their idols. [19] 'I am the Lord your God,' I told them. 'Follow my laws, pay attention to my instructions, [20] and keep my Sabbath days holy, for they are a sign to remind you that I am the Lord your God.'

[21] "But their children, too, rebelled against me. They refused to keep my laws and follow my instructions, even though obeying them would have given them life. And they also violated my Sabbath days. So again I threatened to pour out my fury on them in the wilderness. [22] Nevertheless, I withdrew my judgment against them to protect the honor of my name among the nations who had seen my power in bringing them out of Egypt. [23] But I took a solemn oath against them while they were in the wilderness. I vowed I would scatter them among all the nations [24] because they did not obey my laws. They scorned my instructions by violating my Sabbath days and longing for the idols of their ancestors. [25] I gave them over to worthless customs and laws that would not lead to life. [26] I let them pollute themselves with the very gifts I had given them, and I allowed them to give their firstborn children as offerings to their gods—so I might devastate them and show them that I alone am the Lord.

[27] "Therefore, son of man, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign Lord: Your ancestors continued to blaspheme and betray me, [28] for when I brought them into the land I had promised them, they offered sacrifices and incense on every high hill and under every green tree they saw! They roused my fury as they offered up sacrifices to their gods. They brought their perfumes and incense and poured out their drink offerings to them! [29] I said to them, 'What is this high place where you are going?' (This idol shrine has been called Bamah—'high place'—ever since.)

[30] "Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign Lord: Do you plan to pollute yourselves just as your ancestors did? Do you intend to keep prostituting yourselves by worshiping detestable idols? [31] For when you offer gifts to them and give your little children to be burned as sacrifices, you continue to pollute yourselves to this day. Should I listen to you or help you, O people of Israel? As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I will not give you a message even though you have come to me requesting one.

[32] "You say, 'We want to be like the nations all around us, who serve idols of wood and stone.' But what you have in mind will never happen. [33] As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I will rule you with an iron fist in great anger and with awesome power. [34] With might and fury I will bring you out from the lands where you are scattered. [35] I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations, and there I will judge you face to face.

[36] I will judge you there just as I did your ancestors in the wilderness after bringing them out of Egypt, says the Sovereign Lord. [37] I will count you carefully and hold you to the terms of the covenant. [38] I will purge you of all those who rebel and sin against me. I will bring them out of the countries where they are in exile, but they will never enter the land of Israel. And when that happens, you will know that I am the Lord.

[39] "As for you, O people of Israel, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: If you insist, go right ahead and worship your idols, but then don't turn around and bring gifts to me. Such desecration of my holy name must stop! [40] For on my holy mountain, says the Sovereign Lord, the people of Israel will someday worship me, and I will accept them. There I will require that you bring me all your offerings and choice gifts and sacrifices. [41] When I bring you home from exile, you will be as pleasing to me as an offering of perfumed incense. And I will display my holiness in you as all the nations watch. [42] Then when I have brought you home to the land I promised your ancestors, you will know that I am the Lord. [43] You will look back at all your sins and hate yourselves because of the evil you have done. [44] You will know that I am the Lord, O people of Israel, when I have honored my name by treating you mercifully in spite of your wickedness, says the Sovereign Lord."

[45] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [46] "Son of man, look toward the south and speak out against it; prophesy against the fields of the Negev. [47] Give the southern wilderness this message from the Sovereign Lord: Hear the word of the Lord! I will set you on fire, O forest, and every tree will be burned—green and dry trees alike. The terrible flames will not be quenched; they will scorch everything from south to north. [48] And all the world will see that I, the Lord, have set this fire. It will not be put out."

[49] Then I said, "O Sovereign Lord, they are saying of me, 'He only talks in riddles!'"

[21:1] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, look toward Jerusalem and prophesy against Israel and her sanctuaries. [3] Give her this message from the Lord: I am your enemy, O Israel, and I am about to unsheath my sword to destroy your people—the righteous and the wicked alike. [4] Yes, I will not spare even the righteous! I will make a clean sweep throughout the land from south to north. [5] All the world will know that I am the Lord. My sword is in my hand, and it will not return to its sheath until its work is finished.

[6] "Son of man, groan before the people! Groan before them with bitter anguish and a broken heart. [7] When they ask you why, tell them, 'I groan because of the terrifying news I have heard. When it comes true, the boldest heart will melt with fear; all strength will disappear. Every spirit will faint; strong knees will tremble and become as weak as water. And the Sovereign Lord says: It is coming! It's on its way!'"

[8] Then the Lord said to me, [9] "Son of man, give the people this message from the Lord: A sword is being sharpened and polished. [10] It is being prepared for terrible slaughter; it will flash like lightning! Now will you laugh? Those far stronger than you have fallen beneath its power! [11] Yes, the sword is now being sharpened and polished; it is being prepared for the executioner!

[12] "Son of man, cry out and wail; pound your thighs in anguish, for that sword will slaughter my people and their leaders—everyone will die! [13] It will put them all to the test! So now the Sovereign Lord asks: What chance do they have?"

[14] "Son of man, prophesy to them and clap your hands vigorously. Then take the sword and brandish it twice, even three times, to symbolize the great massacre they will face! [15] Let their hearts melt with terror, for the sword glitters at every gate. It flashes like lightning; it is polished for slaughter! [16] O sword, slash to the right, and slash to the left, wherever you will, wherever you want. [17] I, too, will clap my hands, and I will satisfy my fury. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

[18] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [19] "Son of man, make a map and trace two routes on it for the sword of Babylon's king to follow. Put a signpost on the road that comes out of Babylon where the road forks into two— [20] one road going to Ammon and its capital, Rabbah, and the other to Judah and fortified Jerusalem. [21] The king of Babylon now stands at the fork, uncertain whether to attack Jerusalem or Rabbah. He will call his magicians to use divination. They will cast lots by shaking arrows from the quiver. They will inspect the livers of their animal sacrifices. [22] Then they will decide to turn toward Jerusalem! With battering rams they will go against the gates, shouting for the kill. They will put up siege towers and build ramps against the walls to reach the top. [23] The people of Jerusalem will think it is a mistake, because of their treaty with the Babylonians. But the king of Babylon will remind the people of their rebellion. Then he will attack and capture them.

[24] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Again and again your guilt cries out against you, for you are not ashamed of your sin. You don't even try to hide it! Wherever you go, whatever you do, all your actions are filled with sin. So now the time of your punishment has come!

[25] "O you corrupt and wicked prince of Israel, your final day of reckoning is here! [26] Take off your jeweled crown, says the Sovereign Lord. The old order changes—now the lowly are exalted, and the mighty are brought low. [27] Destruction! Destruction! I will surely destroy the kingdom. And it will not be restored until the one appears who has the right to judge it. Then I will hand it over to him.

[28] "And now, son of man, prophesy concerning the Ammonites and their mockery. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: My sword is drawn for your slaughter; it is sharpened to destroy, flashing like lightning! [29] Your magicians and false prophets have given false visions and told lies about the sword. And now it will fall with even greater force on the wicked for whom the day of final reckoning has come. [30] Should I return my sword to its sheath before I deal with you? No, I will destroy you in your own country, the land of your birth. [31] I will pour out my fury on you and blow on you with the fire of my anger. I will hand you over to cruel men who are skilled in destruction. [32] You are fuel for the fire, and your blood will be spilled in your own land. You will be utterly wiped out, your memory lost to history. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

[22:1] Now this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, are you ready to judge Jerusalem? Are you ready to judge this city of murderers? Denounce her terrible deeds in public, [3] and give her this message from the Sovereign Lord: O city of murderers, doomed and damned—city of idols, filthy and foul— [4] you are guilty of both murder and idolatry. Your day of destruction has come! You have reached the end of your years. I will make you an object of mockery throughout the world. [5] O infamous city, filled with confusion, you will be mocked by people both far and near.

[6] "Every leader in Israel who lives within your walls is bent on murder. [7] Fathers and mothers are contemptuously ignored. Resident foreigners are forced to pay for protection. Orphans and widows are wronged and oppressed. [8] Inside your walls you despise my holy things and violate my Sabbath days of rest. [9] People accuse others falsely and send them to their death. You are filled with idol worshipers and people who take part in lewd activities. [10] Men sleep with their fathers' wives and have intercourse with women who are menstruating. [11] Within your walls live men who commit adultery with their neighbors' wives, who defile their daughters-in-law or who rape their own sisters. [12] There are hired murderers, loan racketeers, and extortioners everywhere! They never even think of me and my commands, says the Sovereign Lord.

[13] "But now I clap my hands in indignation over your dishonest gain and bloodshed. [14] How strong and courageous will you be in my day of reckoning? I, the Lord, have spoken! I will do what I have said. [15] I will scatter you among the nations and purge you of your wickedness. [16] And when you have been dishonored among the nations, you will know that I am the Lord."

[17] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [18] "Son of man, the people of Israel are the worthless slag that remains after silver is smelted. They are the dross that is left over—a useless mixture of copper, tin, iron, and lead. [19] So give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: Because you are all worthless slag, I will bring you to my crucible in Jerusalem. [20] I will melt you down in the heat of my fury, just as copper, tin, iron, and lead are melted down in a furnace. [21] I will gather you together and blow the fire of my anger upon you, [22] and you will melt like silver in fierce heat. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have poured out my fury on you."

[23] Again a message came to me from the Lord: [24] "Son of man, give the people of Israel this message: In the day of my indignation, you will become like an uncleared wilderness or a desert without rain. [25] Your princes plot conspiracies just as lions stalk their prey. They devour innocent people, seizing treasures and extorting wealth. They increase the number of widows in the land. [26] Your priests have violated my laws and defiled my holy things. To them there is no difference between what is holy and what is not. And they do not teach my people the difference between what is ceremonially clean and unclean. They disregard my Sabbath days so that my holy name is greatly dishonored among them. [27] Your leaders are like wolves, who tear apart their victims. They actually destroy people's lives for profit! [28] And your prophets announce false visions and speak false messages. They say, 'My message is from the Sovereign Lord,' when the Lord hasn't spoken a single word to them. They repair cracked walls with whitewash!

[29] Even common people oppress the poor, rob the needy, and deprive foreigners of justice.

[30] "I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I found no one. [31] So now I will pour out my fury on them, consuming them in the fire of my anger. I will heap on them the full penalty for all their sins, says the Sovereign Lord."

[23:1] This message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, once there were two sisters who were daughters of the same mother. [3] They became prostitutes in Egypt. Even as young girls, they allowed themselves to be fondled and caressed. [4] The older girl was named Oholah, and her sister was Oholibah. I married them, and they bore me sons and daughters. I am speaking of Samaria and Jerusalem, for Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem.

[5] "Then Oholah lusted after other lovers instead of me, and she gave her love to the Assyrians, her neighbors. [6] They were all attractive young men, captains and commanders dressed in handsome blue, dashing about on their horses. [7] And so she prostituted herself with the most desirable men of Assyria, worshiping their idols and defiling herself. [8] For when she left Egypt, she did not leave her spirit of prostitution behind. She was still as lewd as in her youth, when the Egyptians satisfied their lusts with her and robbed her of her virginity. [9] And so I handed her over to her Assyrian lovers, whom she desired so much. [10] They stripped her and killed her and took away her children as their slaves. Her name was known to every woman in the land as a sinner who had received what she deserved.

[11] "Yet even though Oholibah saw what had happened to Oholah, her sister, she followed right in her footsteps. And she was even more depraved, abandoning herself to her lust and prostitution. [12] She fawned over her Assyrian neighbors, those handsome young men on fine horses, those captains and commanders in handsome uniforms—all of them desirable. [13] I saw the way she was going, defiling herself just like her older sister.

[14] "Then she carried her prostitution even further. She fell in love with pictures that were painted on a wall—pictures of Babylonian military officers, outfitted in striking red uniforms. [15] Handsome belts encircled their waists, and flowing turbans crowned their heads. They were dressed like chariot officers from the land of Babylonia. [16] When she saw these paintings, she longed to give herself to them, so she sent messengers to Babylonia to invite them to come to her. [17] So they came and committed adultery with her, defiling her in the bed of love. But later, she became disgusted with them and broke off their relationship.

[18] "So I became disgusted with Oholibah, just as I was with her sister, because she flaunted herself before them and gave herself to satisfy their lusts. [19] But that didn't bother her. She turned to even greater prostitution, remembering her youth when she was a prostitute in Egypt. [20] She lusted after lovers whose attentions were gross and bestial. [21] And so, Oholibah, you celebrated your former days as a young girl in Egypt, when you first allowed yourself to be fondled and caressed.

[22] "Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will send your lovers against you—those very nations from which you turned away in disgust. [23] For the Babylonians will come with all the Chaldeans from Pekod and Shoa and Koa. And all the Assyrians will come with them—handsome young captains, commanders, chariot officers, and other high-ranking officers, riding their horses. [24] They will all come against you from the north with chariots, wagons, and a great army fully prepared for attack. They will take up positions on every side, surrounding you with men armed for battle. And I will hand you over to them so they can do with you as they please.

[25] I will turn my jealous anger against you, and they will deal furiously with you. They will cut off your nose and ears, and any survivors will then be slaughtered by the sword. Your children will be taken away as captives, and everything that is left will be burned. [26] They will strip you of your beautiful clothes and jewels. [27] In this way, I will put a stop to the lewdness and prostitution you brought from Egypt. You will never again cast longing eyes on those things or fondly remember your time in Egypt.

[28] "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will surely hand you over to your enemies, to those you loathe. [29] They will deal with you in hatred and rob you of all you own, leaving you naked and bare. The shame of your prostitution will be exposed to all the world. [30] You brought all this on yourself by prostituting yourself to other nations, defiling yourself with all their idols. [31] Because you have followed in your sister's footsteps, I will punish you with the same terrors that destroyed her.

[32] "Yes, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: You will drink from the same cup of terror as your sister—a cup that is large and deep. And all the world will mock and scorn you in your desolation. [33] You will reel like a drunkard beneath the awful blows of sorrow and distress, just as your sister Samaria did. [34] In deep anguish you will drain that cup of terror to the very bottom. Then you will smash it to pieces and beat your breast in anguish. For I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken! [35] And because you have forgotten me and turned your back on me, says the Sovereign Lord, you must bear the consequences of all your lewdness and prostitution."

[36] The Lord said to me, "Son of man, you must accuse Oholah and Oholibah of all their awful deeds. [37] They have committed both adultery and murder—adultery by worshiping idols and murder by burning their children as sacrifices on their altars. [38] Then after doing these terrible things, they defiled my Temple and violated my Sabbath day! [39] On the very day that they murdered their children in front of their idols, they boldly came into my Temple to worship! They came in and defiled my house!

[40] "You sisters sent messengers to distant lands to get men. Then when they arrived, you bathed yourselves, painted your eyelids, and put on your finest jewels for them. [41] You sat with them on a beautifully embroidered couch and put my incense and my oil on a table that was spread before you. [42] From your room came the sound of many men carousing. They were lustful men and drunkards from the wilderness, who put bracelets on your wrists and beautiful crowns on your heads. [43] Then I said, 'If they really want to sleep with worn-out, old prostitutes like these, let them!' [44] And that is what they did. They slept with Oholah and Oholibah, these shameless prostitutes, with all the zest of lustful young men.

[45] But righteous people will judge these sister cities for what they really are—adulteresses and murderers. They will sentence them to all the punishment they deserve.

[46] "Now this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Bring an army against them and hand them over to be terrorized and plundered. [47] For their enemies will stone them and kill them with swords. They will butcher their sons and daughters and burn their homes. [48] In this way, I will put an end to lewdness and idolatry in the land, and my judgment will be a warning to others not to follow their wicked example. [49] You will be fully repaid for all your prostitution—your worship of idols. Yes, you will suffer the full penalty! Then you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord."

[24:1] On January 15, during the ninth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, write down today's date, because on this very day the king of Babylon is beginning his attack against Jerusalem. [3] Then show these rebels an illustration; give them a message from the Sovereign Lord. Put a pot of water on the fire to boil. [4] Fill it with choice meat—the rump and the shoulder and all the most tender cuts. [5] Use only the best sheep from the flock and heap fuel on the fire beneath the pot. Bring the pot to a boil, and cook the bones along with the meat.

[6] "Now this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Destruction is certain for Jerusalem, the city of murderers! She is a pot filled with corruption. So take the meat out chunk by chunk in whatever order it comes, [7] for her wickedness is evident to all. She murders boldly, leaving blood on the rocks for all to see. She doesn't even try to cover it! [8] So I will splash her blood on a rock as an open expression of my anger and vengeance against her.

[9] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Destruction is certain for Jerusalem, the city of murderers! I myself will pile up the fuel beneath her. [10] Yes, heap on the wood! Let the fire roar to make the pot boil. Cook the meat well with many spices. Then empty the pot and burn the bones. [11] Now set the empty pot on the coals to scorch away the filth and corruption. [12] But it's hopeless; the corruption remains. So throw it into the fire! [13] It is the filth and corruption of your lewdness and idolatry. And now, because I tried to cleanse you but you refused, you will remain filthy until my fury against you has been satisfied. [14] I, the Lord, have spoken! The time has come and I won't hold back; I will not change my mind. You will be judged on the basis of all your wicked actions, says the Sovereign Lord."

[15] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [16] "Son of man, I am going to take away your dearest treasure. Suddenly she will die. Yet you must not show any sorrow. Do not weep; let there be no tears. [17] You may sigh but only quietly. Let there be no wailing at her grave. Do not uncover your head or take off your sandals. Do not perform the rituals of mourning or accept any food brought to you by consoling friends."

[18] So I proclaimed this to the people the next morning, and in the evening my wife died. The next morning I did everything I had been told to do. [19] Then the people asked, "What does all this mean? What are you trying to tell us?"

[20] So I said to them, "A message came to me from the Lord, [21] and I was told to give this message to the people of Israel. This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will desecrate my Temple, the source of your security and pride. Your sons and daughters in Judea will be slaughtered by the sword. [22] Then you will do as Ezekiel has done. You will not mourn in public or console yourselves by eating the food brought to you by sympathetic friends. [23] Your heads must remain covered, and your sandals must not be taken off. You will not mourn or weep, but you will waste away because of your sins. You will mourn privately for all the evil you have done. [24] Ezekiel is an example for you to follow; you will do as he has done. And when that time comes, you will know that I am the Lord."

[25] Then the Lord said to me, "Son of man, on the day I take away their stronghold—their joy and glory, their heart's desire, their dearest treasure—I will also take away their sons and daughters. [26] And on that day a refugee from Jerusalem will come to you in Babylon and tell you what has happened. [27] And when he arrives, your voice will suddenly return so you can talk to him, and you will be a symbol for these people. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

## **B. MESSAGES AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONS (Ezekiel 25:1-32:32)**

Ezekiel condemns the sinful actions of seven nations. The people in these nations were saying that God was obviously too weak to defend his people and the city of Jerusalem. But God was allowing his people to be defeated in order to punish them for their sins. These pagan nations, however, would face a similar fate, and then they would know that God is all-powerful. Those who dare to mock God today will also face a terrible fate.

### **Ezekiel 25:1-32:32**

Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, look toward the land of Ammon and prophesy against its people. [3] Give the Ammonites this message from the Sovereign Lord: Hear the word of the Sovereign Lord! Because you scoffed when my Temple was desecrated, mocked Israel in her desolation, and laughed at Judah as she went away into exile, [4] I will allow nomads from the eastern deserts to overrun your country. They will set up their camps among you and pitch their tents on your land. They will harvest all your fruit and steal your livestock. [5] And I will turn the city of Rabbah into a pasture for camels, and all the land of the Ammonites into an enclosure for sheep. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

[6] "And the Sovereign Lord says: Because you clapped and stamped and cheered with glee at the destruction of my people, [7] I will lift up my fist against you. I will give you as plunder to many nations. I will cut you off from being a nation and destroy you completely. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

[8] "And the Sovereign Lord says: Because the people of Moab have said that Judah is just like all the other nations, [9] I will open up their eastern flank and wipe out their glorious frontier cities—Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim. [10] And I will hand Moab over to nomads from the eastern deserts, just as I handed over Ammon. Yes, the Ammonites will no longer be counted among the nations. [11] And in the same way, I will bring my judgment down on the Moabites. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

[12] "And the Sovereign Lord says: The people of Edom have sinned greatly by avenging themselves against the people of Judah. [13] Therefore, says the Sovereign Lord, I will raise my fist of judgment against Edom. I will wipe out their people, cattle, and flocks with the sword. I will make a wasteland of everything from Teman to Dedan. [14] By the hand of my people of Israel, I will accomplish this. They will carry out my furious vengeance, and Edom will know it is from me. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!

[15] "And the Sovereign Lord says: The people of Philistia have acted against Judah out of revenge and long-standing contempt. [16] Therefore, says the Sovereign Lord, I will raise my fist of judgment against the land of the Philistines. I will wipe out the Kerethites and utterly destroy the people who live by the sea. [17] I will execute terrible vengeance against them to rebuke them for what they have done. And when I have inflicted my revenge, then they will know that I am the Lord."

[26:1] On February 3, during the twelfth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, Tyre has rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem, saying, 'Ha! She who controlled the rich trade routes to the east has been broken, and I am the heir! Because she has been destroyed, I will become wealthy!'"

[3] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am your enemy, O Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the waves of the sea crashing against your shoreline. [4] They will destroy the walls of Tyre and tear down its towers. I will scrape away its soil and make it a bare rock! [5] The island of Tyre will become uninhabited. It will be a place for fishermen to spread their nets, for I have spoken, says the Sovereign Lord. Tyre will become the prey of many nations, [6] and its mainland villages will be destroyed by the sword. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

[7] "For the Sovereign Lord says: I will bring King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon—the king of kings from the north—against Tyre with his cavalry, chariots, and great army. [8] First he will destroy your mainland villages. Then he will attack you by building a siege wall, constructing a ramp, and raising a roof of shields against you. [9] He will pound your walls with battering rams and demolish your towers with sledgehammers. [10] The hooves of his cavalry will choke the city with dust, and your walls will shake as the horses gallop through your broken gates, pulling chariots behind them. [11] His horsemen will trample every street in the city. They will butcher your people, and your famous pillars will topple.

[12] "They will plunder all your riches and merchandise and break down your walls. They will destroy your lovely homes and dump your stones and timbers and even your dust into the sea. [13] I will stop the music of your songs. No more will the sound of harps be heard among your people. [14] I will make your island a bare rock, a place for fishermen to spread their nets. You will never be rebuilt, for I, the Lord, have spoken! This is the word of the Sovereign Lord.

[15] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says to Tyre: The whole coastline will tremble at the sound of your fall, as the screams of the wounded echo in the continuing slaughter. [16] All the seaport rulers will step down from their thrones and take off their royal robes and beautiful clothing. They will sit on the ground trembling with horror at what they have seen. [17] Then they will wail for you, singing this funeral song:

'O famous island city,  
once ruler of the sea,  
how you have been destroyed!  
Your people, with their naval power,  
once spread fear around the world.

[18] Now the coastlands tremble at your fall.  
The islands are dismayed as you pass away.'

[19] "For the Sovereign Lord says: I will make Tyre an uninhabited ruin. You will sink beneath the terrible waves of enemy attack. Great seas will swallow you. [20] I will send you to the pit to lie there with those who descended there long ago. Your city will lie in ruins, buried beneath the earth, like those in the pit who have entered the world of the dead. Never again will you be given a position of respect here in the land of the living. [21] I will bring you to a terrible end, and you will be no more. You will be looked for, but you will never be found. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"

[27:1] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, sing a funeral song for Tyre, [3] that mighty gateway to the sea, the trading center of the world. Give Tyre this message from the Sovereign Lord: You claimed, O Tyre, to be perfect in beauty. [4] You extended your boundaries into the sea. Your builders made you glorious! [5] You were like a great ship built of the finest cypress from Senir. They took a cedar from Lebanon to make a mast for you. [6] They carved oars for you from the oaks of Bashan. They made your deck of pine wood, brought from the southern coasts of Cyprus. Then they inlaid it with ivory. [7] Your sails were made of Egypt's finest linen, and they flew as a banner above you. You stood beneath blue and purple awnings made bright with dyes from the coasts of Elishah.

[8] "Your oarsmen came from Sidon and Arvad; your helmsmen were skilled men from Tyre itself. [9] Wise old craftsmen from Gebal did all the caulking. Ships came with goods from every land to barter for your trade. [10] Men from distant Persia, Lydia, and Libya served in your great army. They hung their shields and helmets on your walls, giving you great honor. [11] Men from Arvad and from Helech stood on your walls as sentinels. Your towers were manned by men from Gammad. Their shields hung on your walls, perfecting your splendor.

[12] "Tarshish was your agent, trading your wares in exchange for silver, iron, tin, and lead. [13] Merchants from Greece, Tubal, and Meshech brought slaves and bronze dishes. [14] From Togarmah came riding horses, chariot horses, and mules. All these things were exchanged for your manufactured goods. [15] Merchants came to you from Dedan. Numerous coastlands were your captive markets; they brought payment in ivory tusks and ebony wood.

[16] "Aram sent merchants to buy your wares. They traded turquoise, purple dyes, embroidery, fine linen, and jewelry of coral and rubies. [17] Judah and Israel traded for your wares, offering wheat from Minnith, early figs, honey, oil, and balm. [18] Damascus traded for your rich variety of goods, bringing wine from Helbon and white wool from Zahar. [19] Greeks from Uzal came to trade for your merchandise. Wrought iron, cassia, and calamus were bartered for your wares. [20] Dedan traded their expensive saddle blankets with you.

[21] "The Arabians and the princes of Kedar brought lambs and rams and goats in trade for your goods. [22] The merchants of Sheba and Raamah came with all kinds of spices, jewels, and gold in exchange for your wares. [23] Haran, Canneh, Eden, Sheba, Asshur, and Kilmad came with their merchandise, too. [24] They brought choice fabrics to trade—blue cloth, embroidery, and many-colored carpets bound with cords and made secure. [25] The ships of Tarshish were your ocean caravans. Your island warehouse was filled to the brim!

[26] "But look! Your oarsmen are rowing your ship of state into a hurricane! Your mighty vessel flounders in the heavy eastern gale. You are shipwrecked in the heart of the sea! [27] Everything is lost—your riches and wares, your sailors and helmsmen, your ship builders, merchants, and warriors. On that day of vast ruin, everyone on board sinks into the depths of the sea.

[28] "Your cities by the sea tremble as your helmsmen cry out in terror. [29] All the oarsmen abandon their ships; the sailors and helmsmen come to stand on the shore. [30] They weep bitterly as they throw dust on their heads and roll in ashes. [31] They shave their heads in grief because of you and dress themselves in sackcloth. They weep for you with bitter anguish and deep mourning. [32] As they wail and mourn, they sing this sad funeral song:

'Was there ever such a city as Tyre,  
now silent at the bottom of the sea?

[33] The merchandise you traded  
satisfied the needs of many nations.

Kings at the ends of the earth  
were enriched by your trade.

[34] Now you are a wrecked ship,  
broken at the bottom of the sea.

All your merchandise and your crew  
have passed away with you.

[35] All who live along the coastlands  
are appalled at your terrible fate.

Their kings are filled with horror  
and look on with twisted faces.

[36] The merchants of the nations  
shake their heads at the sight of you,  
for you have come to a horrible end  
and will be no more.' "

[28:1] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, give the prince of Tyre this message from the Sovereign Lord: In your great pride you claim, 'I am a god! I sit on a divine throne in the heart of the sea.' But you are only a man and not a god, though you boast that you are like a god. [3] You regard yourself as wiser than Daniel and think no secret is hidden from you. [4] With your wisdom and understanding you have amassed great wealth—gold and silver for your treasuries. [5] Yes, your wisdom has made you very rich, and your riches have made you very proud.

[6] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because you think you are as wise as a god, [7] I will bring against you an enemy army, the terror of the nations. They will suddenly draw their swords against your marvelous wisdom and defile your splendor! [8] They will bring you down to the pit, and you will die there on your island home in the heart of the sea, pierced with many wounds. [9] Will you then boast, 'I am a god!' to those who kill you? To them you will be no god but merely a man! [10] You will die like an outcast at the hands of foreigners. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"

[11] Then this further message came to me from the Lord: [12] "Son of man, weep for the king of Tyre. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: You were the perfection of wisdom and beauty. [13] You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone—red carnelian, chrysolite, white moonstone, beryl, onyx, jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald—all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. [14] I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire.

[15] "You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you.

[16] Your great wealth filled you with violence, and you sinned. So I banished you from the mountain of God. I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire. [17] Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings. [18] You defiled your sanctuaries with your many sins and your dishonest trade. So I brought fire from within you, and it consumed you. I let it burn you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. [19] All who knew you are appalled at your fate. You have come to a terrible end, and you are no more."

[20] Then another message came to me from the Lord: [21] "Son of man, look toward the city of Sidon and prophesy against it. [22] Give the people of Sidon this message from the Sovereign Lord: I am your enemy, O Sidon, and I will reveal my glory by what happens to you. When I bring judgment against you and reveal my holiness among you, everyone watching will know that I am the Lord. [23] I will send a plague against you, and blood will be spilled in your streets. The attack will come from every direction, and your people will lie slaughtered within your walls. Then everyone will know that I am the Lord. [24] No longer will Israel's scornful neighbors prick and tear at her like thorns and briars. For then they will know that I am the Sovereign Lord.

[25] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: The people of Israel will again live in their own land, the land I gave my servant Jacob. For I will gather them from the distant lands where I have scattered them. I will reveal to the nations of the world my holiness among my people. [26] They will live safely in Israel and build their homes and plant their vineyards. And when I punish the neighboring nations that treated them with contempt, they will know that I am the Lord their God."

[29:1] On January 7, during the tenth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, turn toward Egypt and prophesy against Pharaoh the king and all the people of Egypt. [3] Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: I am your enemy, O Pharaoh, king of Egypt—you great monster, lurking in the streams of the Nile. For you have said, 'The Nile River is mine; I made it for myself!' [4] I will put hooks in your jaws and drag you out on the land with fish sticking to your scales. [5] I will leave you and all your fish stranded in the desert to die. You will lie unburied on the open ground, for I have given you as food to the wild animals and birds.

[6] "All the people of Egypt will discover that I am the Lord, for you collapsed like a reed when Israel looked to you for help. [7] Israel leaned on you, but like a cracked staff, you splintered and stabbed her in the armpit. When she put her weight on you, you gave way, and her back was thrown out of joint. [8] So now the Sovereign Lord says: I will bring an army against you, O Egypt, and destroy both people and animals. [9] The land of Egypt will become a desolate wasteland, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.

"Because you said, 'The Nile River is mine; I made it,' [10] I am now the enemy of both you and your river. I will utterly destroy the land of Egypt, from Migdol to Aswan, as far south as the border of Ethiopia. [11] For forty years not a soul will pass that way, neither people nor animals. It will be completely uninhabited. [12] I will make Egypt desolate, and it will be surrounded by other desolate nations. Its cities will be empty and desolate for forty years, surrounded by other desolate cities. I will scatter the Egyptians to distant lands.

[13] "But the Sovereign Lord also says: At the end of the forty years I will bring the Egyptians home again from the nations to which they have been scattered. [14] I will restore the prosperity of Egypt and bring its people back to the land of Pathros in southern Egypt from which they came. But Egypt will remain an unimportant, minor kingdom. [15] It will be the lowliest of all the nations, never again great enough to rise above its neighbors.

[16] "Then Israel will no longer be tempted to trust in Egypt for help. Egypt's shattered condition will remind Israel of how sinful she was to trust Egypt in earlier days. Then Israel will know that I alone am the Sovereign Lord."

[17] On April 26, during the twenty-seventh year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, this message came to me from the Lord: [18] "Son of man, the army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon fought so hard against Tyre that the warriors' heads were rubbed bare and their shoulders were raw and blistered. Yet Nebuchadnezzar and his army won no plunder to compensate them for all their work. [19] Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He will carry off their wealth, plundering everything they have to pay his army. [20] Yes, I have given him the land of Egypt as a reward for his work, says the Sovereign Lord, because he was working for me when he destroyed Tyre.

[21] "And the day will come when I will cause the ancient glory of Israel to revive, and then at last your words will be respected. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

[30:1] This is another message that came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, prophesy and give this message from the Sovereign Lord: Weep, [3] for the terrible day is almost here—the day of the Lord! It is a day of clouds and gloom, a day of despair for the nations! [4] A sword will come against Egypt, and those who are slaughtered will cover the ground. Their wealth will be carried away and their foundations destroyed. The land of Ethiopia will be ravished. [5] Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, and Arabia, with all their other allies, will be destroyed in that war.

[6] "For this is what the Lord says: All of Egypt's allies will fall, and the pride of their power will end. From Migdol to Aswan they will be slaughtered by the sword, says the Sovereign Lord. [7] Egypt will be desolate, surrounded by desolate nations, and its cities will be in ruins, surrounded by other ruined cities. [8] And the people of Egypt will know that I am the Lord when I have set Egypt on fire and destroyed all their allies. [9] At that time I will send swift messengers in ships to terrify the complacent Ethiopians. Great panic will come upon them on that day of Egypt's certain destruction.

[10] "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Through King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, I will destroy the hordes of Egypt. [11] He and his armies—ruthless among the nations—have been sent to demolish the land. They will make war against Egypt until slaughtered Egyptians cover the ground. [12] I will dry up the Nile River and hand the land over to wicked men. I will destroy the land of Egypt and everything in it, using foreigners to do it. I, the Lord, have spoken!

[13] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will smash the idols of Egypt and the images at Memphis. There will be no rulers left in Egypt; anarchy will prevail throughout the land! [14] I will destroy Pathros, Zoan, and Thebes, and they will lie in ruins, burned up by my anger. [15] I will pour out my fury on Pelusium, the strongest fortress of Egypt, and I will stamp out the people of Thebes. [16] Yes, I will set fire to all Egypt! Pelusium will be racked with pain; Thebes will be torn apart; Memphis will live in constant terror. [17] The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis will die in battle, and the women will be taken away as slaves. [18] When I come to break the proud strength of Egypt, it will be a dark day for Tahpanhes, too. A dark cloud will cover Tahpanhes, and its daughters will be led away as captives. [19] And so I will greatly punish Egypt, and they will know that I am the Lord."

[20] On April 29, during the eleventh year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, this message came to me from the Lord: [21] "Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. His arm has not been put in a cast so that it may heal. Neither has it been bound up with a splint to make it strong enough to hold a sword. [22] Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am the enemy of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt! I will break both of his arms—the good arm along with the broken one—and I will make his sword clatter to the ground. [23] I will scatter the Egyptians to many lands throughout the world. [24] I will strengthen the arms of Babylon's king and put my sword in his hand. But I will break the arms of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he will lie there mortally wounded, groaning in pain. [25] I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, while the arms of Pharaoh fall useless to his sides. And when I put my sword in the hand of Babylon's king and he brings it against the land of Egypt, Egypt will know that I am the Lord. [26] I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

[31:1] On June 21, during the eleventh year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, give this message to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and all his people: To whom would you compare your greatness? [3] You are as Assyria was—a great and mighty nation. Assyria, too, was once like a cedar of Lebanon, full of thick branches that cast deep forest shade with its top high among the clouds. [4] Deep springs watered it and helped it to grow tall and luxuriant. The water was so abundant that there was enough for all the trees nearby. [5] This great tree towered above all the other trees around it. It prospered and grew long thick branches because of all the water at its roots. [6] The birds nested in its branches, and in its shade all the wild animals gave birth to their young. All the great nations of the world lived in its shadow. [7] It was strong and beautiful, for its roots went deep into abundant water. [8] This tree became taller than any of the other cedars in the garden of God. No cypress had branches equal to it; no plane tree had boughs to compare. No tree in the garden of God came close to it in beauty. [9] Because of the magnificence I gave this tree, it was the envy of all the other trees of Eden, the garden of God.

[10] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because it became proud and arrogant, and because it set itself so high above the others, reaching to the clouds, [11] I handed it over to a mighty nation that destroyed it as its wickedness deserved. I myself discarded it. [12] A foreign army—the terror of the nations—cut it down and left it fallen on the ground. Its branches were scattered across the mountains and valleys and ravines of the land. All those who lived beneath its shadow went away and left it lying there. [13] The birds roosted on its fallen trunk, and the wild animals lay among its branches. [14] Let no other nation proudly exult in its own prosperity, though it be higher than the clouds, for all are doomed. They will land in the pit along with all the proud people of the world.

[15] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When Assyria went down into the grave, I made the deep places mourn, and I restrained the mighty waters. I clothed Lebanon in black and caused the trees of the field to wilt. [16] I made the nations shake with fear at the sound of its fall, for I sent it down to the grave with all the others like it. And all the other proud trees of Eden, the most beautiful and the best of Lebanon, the ones whose roots went deep into the water, were relieved to find it there with them in the pit. [17] Its allies, too, were all destroyed and had passed away. They had gone down to the grave—all those nations that had lived in its shade.

[18] "O Egypt, to which of the trees of Eden will you compare your strength and glory? You, too, will be brought down to the pit with all these other nations. You will lie there among the outcasts who have died by the sword. This will be the fate of Pharaoh and all his teeming hordes. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"

[32:1] On March 3, during the twelfth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, mourn for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and give him this message: You think of yourself as a strong young lion among the nations, but you are really just a sea monster, heaving around in your own rivers, stirring up mud with your feet.

[3] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will send many people to catch you in my net and haul you out of the water. [4] I will leave you stranded on the land to die. All the birds of the heavens will land on you, and the wild animals of the whole earth will gorge themselves on you. [5] I will cover the hills with your flesh and fill the valleys with your bones.

[6] I will drench the earth with your gushing blood all the way to the mountains, filling the ravines to the brim. [7] When I blot you out, I will veil the heavens and darken the stars. I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give you its light. [8] Yes, I will bring darkness everywhere across your land. Even the brightest stars will become dark above you. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!

[9] "And when I bring your shattered remains to distant nations that you have never seen, I will disturb many hearts. [10] Yes, I will bring terror to many lands, and their kings will be terrified because of all I do to you. They will shudder in fear for their lives as I brandish my sword before them on the day of your fall.

[11] "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: The sword of the king of Babylon will come against you. [12] I will destroy you with the swords of mighty warriors—the terror of the nations. They will shatter the pride of Egypt, and all its hordes will be destroyed. [13] I will destroy all your flocks and herds that graze beside the streams. Never again will people or animals disturb those waters with their feet. [14] Then I will let the waters of Egypt become calm again, and they will flow as smoothly as olive oil, says the Sovereign Lord. [15] And when I destroy Egypt and wipe out everything you have and strike down all your people, then you will know that I am the Lord. [16] Yes, this is the funeral song they will sing for Egypt. Let all the nations mourn for Egypt and its hordes. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"

[17] On March 17, during the twelfth year, another message came to me from the Lord: [18] "Son of man, weep for the hordes of Egypt and for the other mighty nations. For I will send them down to the world below in company with those who descend to the pit. [19] Say to them, 'O Egypt, are you lovelier than the other nations? No! So go down to the pit and lie there among the outcasts.' [20] The Egyptians will fall with the many who have died by the sword, for the sword is drawn against them. Egypt will be dragged away to its judgment. [21] Down in the grave mighty leaders will mockingly welcome Egypt and its allies, saying, 'They have come down; they lie among the outcasts, all victims of the sword.'

[22] "Assyria lies there surrounded by the graves of all its people, those who were slaughtered by the sword. [23] Their graves are in the depths of the pit, and they are surrounded by their allies. These mighty men who once struck terror in the hearts of people everywhere are now dead at the hands of their enemies.

[24] "Elam lies there buried with its hordes who descended as outcasts to the world below. They terrorized the nations while they lived, but now they lie in the pit and share the humiliation of those who have gone to the world of the dead. [25] They have a resting place among the slaughtered, surrounded by the graves of all their people. Yes, they terrorized the nations while they lived, but now they lie in shame in the pit, all of them outcasts, slaughtered by the sword.

[26] "Meshech and Tubal are there, surrounded by the graves of all their hordes. They once struck terror into the hearts of all people. But now they are outcasts, all victims of the sword. [27] They are not buried in honor like the fallen heroes of the outcasts, who went down to the grave with their weapons—their shields covering their bodies, and their swords beneath their heads. They brought terror to everyone while they were still alive.

[28] "You too, Egypt, will lie crushed and broken among the outcasts, all victims of the sword.

[29] "Edom is there with its kings and princes. Mighty as they were, they also lie among those killed by the sword, with the outcasts who have gone down to the pit. [30] All the princes of the north and the Sidonians are there, all victims of the sword. Once a terror, they now lie there in shame. They lie there as outcasts with all the other dead who have descended to the pit.

[31] "When Pharaoh arrives, he will be relieved to find that he is not alone in having his entire army killed, says the Sovereign Lord. [32] For I have caused my terror to fall upon all the living. And Pharaoh and his hordes will lie there among the outcasts who have died by the sword. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!"

## C. MESSAGES OF HOPE (Ezekiel 33:1-48:35)

After the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel delivered messages of future restoration and hope for the people. God is holy, but Jerusalem and the temple had become defiled. The nation had to be cleansed through 70 years of captivity. Ezekiel gives a vivid picture of the unchangeable holiness of God. We too must gain a vision of the glory of God, a fresh sense of his greatness, as we face the struggles of daily life.

1. Restoring the people of God
2. Restoring the worship of God

### Ezekiel 33:1-48:35

Once again a message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, give your people this message: When I bring an army against a country, the people of that land choose a watchman. [3] When the watchman sees the enemy coming, he blows the alarm to warn the people. [4] Then if those who hear the alarm refuse to take action—well, it is their own fault if they die. [5] They heard the warning but wouldn't listen, so the responsibility is theirs. If they had listened to the warning, they could have saved their lives. [6] But if the watchman sees the enemy coming and doesn't sound the alarm to warn the people, he is responsible for their deaths. They will die in their sins, but I will hold the watchman accountable.

[7] "Now, son of man, I am making you a watchman for the people of Israel. Therefore, listen to what I say and warn them for me. [8] If I announce that some wicked people are sure to die and you fail to warn them about changing their ways, then they will die in their sins, but I will hold you responsible for their deaths. [9] But if you warn them to repent and they don't repent, they will die in their sins, but you will not be held responsible.

[10] "Son of man, give the people of Israel this message: You are saying, 'Our sins are heavy upon us; we are wasting away! How can we survive?' [11] As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die?

[12] "Son of man, give your people this message: The good works of righteous people will not save them if they turn to sin, nor will the sins of evil people destroy them if they repent and turn from their sins. [13] When I tell righteous people that they will live, but then they sin, expecting their past righteousness to save them, then none of their good deeds will be remembered. I will destroy them for their sins. [14] And suppose I tell some wicked people that they will surely die, but then they turn from their sins and do what is just and right.

[15] For instance, they might give back a borrower's pledge, return what they have stolen, and obey my life-giving laws, no longer doing what is evil. If they do this, then they will surely live and not die. [16] None of their past sins will be brought up again, for they have done what is just and right, and they will surely live.

[17] "Your people are saying, 'The Lord is not just,' but it is they who are not just. [18] For again I say, when righteous people turn to evil, they will die. [19] But if wicked people turn from their wickedness and do what is just and right, they will live. [20] O people of Israel, you are saying, 'The Lord is not just.' But I will judge each of you according to your deeds."

[21] On January 8, during the twelfth year of our captivity, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has fallen!" [22] The previous evening the Lord had taken hold of me and opened my mouth, so I would be able to speak when this man arrived the next morning.

[23] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [24] "Son of man, the scattered remnants of Judah living among the ruined cities keep saying, 'Abraham was only one man, and yet he gained possession of the entire land! We are many; surely the land should be given to us as a possession.' [25] Now give these people this message from the Sovereign Lord: You eat meat with blood in it, you worship idols, and you murder the innocent. Do you really think the land should be yours? [26] Murderers! Idolaters! Adulterers! Should the land belong to you?

[27] "Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: As surely as I live, those living in the ruins will die by the sword. Those living in the open fields will be eaten by wild animals. Those hiding in the forts and caves will die of disease. [28] I will destroy the land and demolish her pride. Her arrogant power will come to an end. The mountains of Israel will be so ruined that no one will even travel through them. [29] When I have ruined the land because of their disgusting sins, then they will know that I am the Lord.

[30] "Son of man, your people are whispering behind your back. They talk about you in their houses and whisper about you at the doors, saying, 'Come on, let's have some fun! Let's go hear the prophet tell us what the Lord is saying!' [31] So they come pretending to be sincere and sit before you listening. But they have no intention of doing what I tell them. They express love with their mouths, but their hearts seek only after money. [32] You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they don't do it! [33] But when all these terrible things happen to them—as they certainly will—then they will know a prophet has been among them."

[34:1] Then this message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: Destruction is certain for you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? [3] You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. [4] You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the broken bones. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with force and cruelty. [5] So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd. They are easy prey for any wild animal. [6] They have wandered through the mountains and hills, across the face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them.

[7] "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: [8] As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, you abandoned my flock and left them to be attacked by every wild animal. Though you were my shepherds, you didn't search for my sheep when they were lost. You took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve. [9] Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. [10] This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I now consider these shepherds my enemies, and I will hold them responsible for what has happened to my flock. I will take away their right to feed the flock, along with their right to feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths; the sheep will no longer be their prey.

[11] "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search and find my sheep. [12] I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places to which they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. [13] I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers in all the places where people live. [14] Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in lush mountain pastures. [15] I myself will tend my sheep and cause them to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign Lord. [16] I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes—feed them justice!

[17] "And as for you, my flock, my people, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will judge between one sheep and another, separating the sheep from the goats. [18] Is it not enough for you to keep the best of the pastures for yourselves? Must you also trample down the rest? Is it not enough for you to take the best water for yourselves? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? [19] All that is left for my flock to eat is what you have trampled down. All they have to drink is water that you have fouled.

[20] "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will surely judge between the fat sheep and the scrawny sheep. [21] For you fat sheep push and butt and crowd my sick and hungry flock until they are scattered to distant lands. [22] So I will rescue my flock, and they will no longer be abused and destroyed. And I will judge between one sheep and another. [23] And I will set one shepherd over them, even my servant David. He will feed them and be a shepherd to them. [24] And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among my people. I, the Lord, have spoken!

[25] "I will make a covenant of peace with them and drive away the dangerous animals from the land. Then my people will be able to camp safely in the wildest places and sleep in the woods without fear. [26] I will cause my people and their homes around my holy hill to be a blessing. And I will send showers, showers of blessings, which will come just when they are needed. [27] The orchards and fields of my people will yield bumper crops, and everyone will live in safety. When I have broken their chains of slavery and rescued them from those who enslaved them, then they will know that I am the Lord. [28] They will no longer be prey for other nations, and wild animals will no longer attack them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid.

[29] "And I will give them a land famous for its crops, so my people will never again go hungry or be shamed by the scorn of foreign nations. [30] In this way, they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them. And they will know that they, the people of Israel, are my people, says the Sovereign Lord. [31] You are my flock, the sheep of my pasture. You are my people, and I am your God, says the Sovereign Lord."

[35:1] Again a message came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, turn toward Mount Seir, and prophesy against its people. [3] Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: I am your enemy, O Mount Seir, and I will raise my fist against you to destroy you completely. [4] I will demolish your cities and make you desolate, and then you will know that I am the Lord. [5] Your continual hatred for the people of Israel led you to butcher them when they were helpless, when I had already punished them for all their sins. [6] As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, since you show no distaste for blood, I will give you a bloodbath of your own. Your turn has come! [7] I will make Mount Seir utterly desolate, killing off all who try to escape and any who return. [8] I will fill your mountains with the dead. Your hills, your valleys, and your streams will be filled with people slaughtered by the sword. [9] I will make you desolate forever. Your cities will never be rebuilt. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

[10] "For you said, 'The lands of Israel and Judah will be ours. We will take possession of them. What do we care that the Lord is there!' [11] Therefore, as surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I will pay back your angry deeds with mine. I will punish you for all your acts of anger, envy, and hatred. And I will bring honor to my name by what I do to you. [12] Then you will know that I, the Lord, have heard every contemptuous word you spoke against the mountains of Israel. For you said, 'They have been destroyed; they have been given to us as food to eat!' [13] In saying that, you boasted proudly against me, and I have heard it all!

[14] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: The whole world will rejoice when I make you desolate. [15] You rejoiced at the desolation of Israel's inheritance. Now I will rejoice at yours! You will be wiped out, you people of Mount Seir and all who live in Edom! Then you will know that I am the Lord!

[36:1] "Son of man, prophesy to Israel's mountains. Give them this message: O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord! [2] This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Your enemies have taunted you, saying, 'Aha! Now the ancient heights belong to us!' [3] Therefore, son of man, give the mountains of Israel this message from the Sovereign Lord: Your enemies have attacked you from all directions, and now you are possessed by many nations. You are the object of much mocking and slander. [4] Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord. He speaks to the hills and mountains, ravines and valleys, and to ruined wastes and long-deserted cities that have been destroyed and mocked by foreign nations everywhere. [5] This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My jealous anger is on fire against these nations, especially Edom, because they have shown utter contempt for me by gleefully taking my land for themselves as plunder.

[6] "Therefore, prophesy to the hills and mountains, the ravines and valleys of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: I am full of fury because you have suffered shame before the surrounding nations. [7] Therefore, says the Sovereign Lord, I have raised my hand and sworn an oath that those nations will soon have their turn at suffering shame. [8] But the mountains of Israel will produce heavy crops of fruit to prepare for my people's return—and they will be coming home again soon!

[9] See, I am concerned for you, and I will come to help you. Your ground will be tilled and your crops planted. [10] I will greatly increase the population of Israel, and the ruined cities will be rebuilt and filled with people. [11] Not only the people, but your flocks and herds will also greatly multiply. O mountains of Israel, I will bring people to live on you once again. I will make you even more prosperous than you were before. Then you will know that I am the Lord. [12] I will cause my people to walk on you once again, and you will be their inheritance. You will never again devour their children.

[13] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Now the other nations taunt you, saying, 'Israel is a land that devours her own people!' [14] But you will never again devour your people or bereave your nation, says the Sovereign Lord. [15] I will not allow those foreign nations to sneer at you, and you will no longer be shamed by them or cause your nation to fall, says the Sovereign Lord."

[16] Then this further message came to me from the Lord: [17] "Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their evil deeds. To me their conduct was as filthy as a bloody rag. [18] They polluted the land with murder and by worshiping idols, so I poured out my fury on them. [19] I scattered them to many lands to punish them for the evil way they had lived. [20] But when they were scattered among the nations, they brought dishonor to my holy name. For the nations said, 'These are the people of the Lord, and he couldn't keep them safe in his own land!' [21] Then I was concerned for my holy name, which had been dishonored by my people throughout the world.

[22] "Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign Lord: I am bringing you back again but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, which you dishonored while you were scattered among the nations. [23] I will show how holy my great name is—the name you dishonored among the nations. And when I reveal my holiness through you before their very eyes, says the Sovereign Lord, then the nations will know that I am the Lord. [24] For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land.

[25] "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. [26] And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart. [27] And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command.

[28] "And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God. [29] I will cleanse you of your filthy behavior. I will give you good crops, and I will abolish famine in the land. [30] I will give you great harvests from your fruit trees and fields, and never again will the surrounding nations be able to scoff at your land for its famines. [31] Then you will remember your past sins and hate yourselves for all the evil things you did. [32] But remember, says the Sovereign Lord, I am not doing this because you deserve it. O my people of Israel, you should be utterly ashamed of all you have done!

[33] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I cleanse you from your sins, I will bring people to live in your cities, and the ruins will be rebuilt. [34] The fields that used to lie empty and desolate—a shock to all who passed by—will again be farmed. [35] And when I bring you back, people will say, 'This godforsaken land is now like Eden's garden! The ruined cities now have strong walls, and they are filled with people!' [36] Then the nations all around—all those still left—will know that I, the Lord, rebuilt the ruins and planted lush crops in the wilderness. For I, the Lord, have promised this, and I will do it.

[37] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am ready to hear Israel's prayers for these blessings, and I am ready to grant them their requests. [38] I will multiply them like the sacred flocks that fill Jerusalem's streets at the time of her festivals. The ruined cities will be crowded with people once more, and everyone will know that I am the Lord."

[37:1] The Lord took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley filled with bones. [2] He led me around among the old, dry bones that covered the valley floor. They were scattered everywhere across the ground. [3] Then he asked me, "Son of man, can these bones become living people again?"

"O Sovereign Lord," I replied, "you alone know the answer to that."

[4] Then he said to me, "Speak to these bones and say, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord! [5] This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Look! I am going to breathe into you and make you live again! [6] I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.' "

[7] So I spoke these words, just as he told me. Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley. The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as they had been before. [8] Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them.

[9] Then he said to me, "Speak to the winds and say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so that they may live again.' "

[10] So I spoke as he commanded me, and the wind entered the bodies, and they began to breathe. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army of them.

[11] Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, 'We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone.' [12] Now give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. [13] When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the Lord. [14] I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live and return home to your own land. Then you will know that I am the Lord. You will see that I have done everything just as I promised. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

[15] Again a message came to me from the Lord: [16] "Son of man, take a stick and carve on it these words: 'This stick represents Judah and its allied tribes.' Then take another stick and carve these words on it: 'This stick represents the northern tribes of Israel.' [17] Now hold them together in your hand as one stick. [18] When your people ask you what your actions mean, [19] say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the northern tribes and join them to Judah. I will make them one stick in my hand.' [20] Then hold out the sticks you have inscribed, so the people can see them. [21] And give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: I will gather the people of Israel from among the nations. I will bring them home to their own land from the places where they have been scattered. [22] I will unify them into one nation in the land. One king will rule them all; no longer will they be divided into two nations. [23] They will stop polluting themselves with their detestable idols and other sins, for I will save them from their sinful backsliding. I will cleanse them. Then they will truly be my people, and I will be their God.

[24] "My servant David will be their king, and they will have only one shepherd. They will obey my regulations and keep my laws. [25] They will live in the land of Israel where their ancestors lived, the land I gave my servant Jacob. They and their children and their grandchildren after them will live there forever, generation after generation. And my servant David will be their prince forever. [26] And I will make a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant. I will give them their land and multiply them, and I will put my Temple among them forever. [27] I will make my home among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. [28] And since my Temple will remain among them forever, the nations will know that I, the Lord, have set Israel apart for myself to be holy."

[38:1] This is another message that came to me from the Lord: [2] "Son of man, prophesy against Gog of the land of Magog, the prince who rules over the nations of Meshech and Tubal. [3] Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: Gog, I am your enemy! [4] I will turn you around and put hooks into your jaws to lead you out to your destruction. I will mobilize your troops and cavalry and make you a vast and mighty horde, all fully armed. [5] Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya will join you, too, with all their weapons. [6] Gomer and all its hordes will also join you, along with the armies of Beth-togarmah from the distant north and many others.

[7] "Get ready; be prepared! Keep all the armies around you mobilized, and take command of them. [8] A long time from now you will be called into action. In the distant future you will swoop down on the land of Israel, which will be lying in peace after her recovery from war and after the return of her people from many lands. [9] You and all your allies—a vast and awesome horde—will roll down on them like a storm and cover the land like a cloud.

[10] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: At that time evil thoughts will come to your mind, and you will devise a wicked scheme. [11] You will say, 'Israel is an unprotected land filled with unwalled villages! I will march against her and destroy these people who live in such confidence! [12] I will go to those once-desolate cities that are again filled with people who have returned from exile in many nations. I will capture vast amounts of plunder and take many slaves, for the people are rich with cattle now, and they think the whole world revolves around them!' [13] But Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish will ask, 'Who are you to rob them of silver and gold? Who are you to drive away their cattle and seize their goods and make them poor?'

[14] "Therefore, son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: When my people are living in peace in their land, then you will rouse yourself. [15] You will come from your homeland in the distant north with your vast cavalry and your mighty army, [16] and you will cover the land like a cloud. This will happen in the distant future. I will bring you against my land as everyone watches, and my holiness will be displayed by what happens to you. Then all the nations will know that I am the Lord.

[17] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: You are the one I was talking about long ago, when I announced through Israel's prophets that in future days I would bring you against my people. [18] But when Gog invades the land of Israel, says the Sovereign Lord, my fury will rise! [19] For in my jealousy and blazing anger, I promise a mighty shaking in the land of Israel on that day. [20] All living things—all the fish, birds, animals, and people—will quake in terror at my presence. Mountains will be thrown down; cliffs will crumble; walls will fall to the earth. [21] I will summon the sword against you throughout Israel, says the Sovereign Lord. Your men will turn against each other in mortal combat. [22] I will punish you and your hordes with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur! [23] Thus will I show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. Then they will know that I am the Lord!

[39:1] "Son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: I am your enemy, O Gog, ruler of the nations of Meshech and Tubal. [2] I will turn you and drive you toward the mountains of Israel, bringing you from the distant north. [3] I will knock your weapons from your hands and leave you helpless. [4] You and all your vast hordes will die on the mountains. I will give you as food to the vultures and wild animals. [5] You will fall in the open fields, for I have spoken, says the Sovereign Lord. [6] And I will rain down fire on Magog and on all your allies who live safely on the coasts. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

[7] "Thus, I will make known my holy name among my people of Israel. I will not let it be desecrated anymore. And the nations, too, will know that I am the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. [8] That day of judgment will come, says the Sovereign Lord. Everything will happen just as I have declared it.

[9] "Then the people in the towns of Israel will go out and pick up your small and large shields, bows and arrows, javelins and spears, and they will use them for fuel. There will be enough to last them seven years! [10] They will need nothing else for their fires. They won't need to cut wood from the fields or forests, for these weapons will give them all they need. They will take plunder from those who planned to plunder them, says the Sovereign Lord.

[11] "And I will make a vast graveyard for Gog and his hordes in the Valley of the Travelers, east of the Dead Sea. The path of those who travel there will be blocked by this burial ground, and they will change the name of the place to the Valley of Gog's Hordes. [12] It will take seven months for the people of Israel to cleanse the land by burying the bodies.

[13] Everyone in Israel will help, for it will be a glorious victory for Israel when I demonstrate my glory on that day, says the Sovereign Lord. [14] At the end of the seven months, special crews will be appointed to search the land for any skeletons and to bury them, so the land will be made clean again. [15] Whenever some bones are found, a marker will be set up beside them so the burial crews will see them and take them to be buried in the Valley of Gog's Hordes.

[16] (There will be a town there named Hamonah—which means 'horde.') And so the land will finally be cleansed.

[17] "And now, son of man, call all the birds and wild animals, says the Sovereign Lord. Say to them: Gather together for my great sacrificial feast. Come from far and near to the mountains of Israel, and there eat the flesh and drink the blood! [18] Eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of princes as though they were rams, lambs, goats, and fat young bulls of Bashan! [19] Gorge yourselves with flesh until you are glutted; drink blood until you are drunk. This is the sacrificial feast I have prepared for you. [20] Feast at my banquet table—feast on horses, riders, and valiant warriors, says the Sovereign Lord.

[21] "Thus, I will demonstrate my glory among the nations. Everyone will see the punishment I have inflicted on them and the power I have demonstrated. [22] And from that time on the people of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God. [23] The nations will then know why Israel was sent away to exile—it was punishment for sin, for they acted in treachery against their God. Therefore, I turned my back on them and let their enemies destroy them. [24] I turned my face away and punished them in proportion to the vileness of their sins.

[25] "So now the Sovereign Lord says: I will end the captivity of my people; I will have mercy on Israel, for I am jealous for my holy reputation! [26] They will accept responsibility for their past shame and treachery against me after they come home to live in peace and safety in their own land. And then no one will bother them or make them afraid. [27] When I bring them home from the lands of their enemies, my holiness will be displayed to the nations. [28] Then my people will know that I am the Lord their God—responsible for sending them away to exile and responsible for bringing them home. I will leave none of my people behind. [29] And I will never again turn my back on them, for I will pour out my Spirit upon them, says the Sovereign Lord."

[40:1] On April 28, during the twenty-fifth year of our captivity—fourteen years after the fall of Jerusalem—the Lord took hold of me. [2] In a vision of God he took me to the land of Israel and set me down on a very high mountain. From there I could see what appeared to be a city across from me toward the south. [3] As he brought me nearer, I saw a man whose face shone like bronze standing beside a gateway entrance. He was holding in his hand a measuring tape and a measuring rod.

[4] He said to me, "Son of man, watch and listen. Pay close attention to everything I show you. You have been brought here so I can show you many things. Then you will return to the people of Israel and tell them everything you have seen."

[5] I could see a wall completely surrounding the Temple area. The man took a measuring rod that was 10 1/2 feet long and measured the wall, and the wall was 10 1/2 feet thick and 10 1/2 feet high.

[6] Then he went over to the gateway that goes through the eastern wall. He climbed the steps and measured the threshold of the gateway; it was 10 1/2 feet deep. [7] There were guard alcoves on each side built into the gateway passage. Each of these alcoves was 10 1/2 feet square, with a distance between them of 8 3/4 feet along the passage wall. The gateway's inner threshold, which led to the foyer at the inner end of the gateway passage, was 10 1/2 feet deep.

[8] He also measured the foyer of the gateway [9] and found it to be 14 feet deep, with supporting columns 3 1/2 feet thick. This foyer was at the inner end of the gateway structure, facing toward the Temple.

[10] There were three guard alcoves on each side of the gateway passage. Each had the same measurements, and the dividing walls separating them were also identical. [11] The man measured the gateway entrance, which was 17 1/2 feet wide at the opening and 22 3/4 feet wide in the gateway passage. [12] In front of each of the guard alcoves was a 21-inch curb. The alcoves themselves were 10 1/2 feet square.

[13] Then he measured the entire width of the gateway, measuring the distance between the back walls of facing guard alcoves; this distance was 43 3/4 feet. [14] He measured the dividing walls all along the inside of the gateway up to the gateway's foyer; this distance was 105 feet. [15] The full length of the gateway passage was 87 1/2 feet from one end to the other. [16] There were recessed windows that narrowed inward through the walls of the guard alcoves and their dividing walls. There were also windows in the foyer structure. The surfaces of the dividing walls were decorated with carved palm trees.

[17] Then the man brought me through the gateway into the outer courtyard of the Temple. A stone pavement ran along the walls of the courtyard, and thirty rooms were built against the walls, opening onto the pavement. [18] This pavement flanked the gates and extended out from the walls into the courtyard the same distance as the gateway entrance. This was the lower pavement. [19] Then the man measured across the Temple's outer courtyard between the outer and inner gateways; the distance was 175 feet.

[20] There was a gateway on the north just like the one on the east, and the man measured it. [21] Here, too, there were three guard alcoves on each side, with dividing walls and a foyer. All the measurements matched those of the east gateway. The gateway passage was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide between the back walls of facing guard alcoves. [22] The windows, the foyer, and the palm tree decorations were identical to those in the east gateway. There were seven steps leading up to the gateway entrance, and the foyer was at the inner end of the gateway passage. [23] Here on the north side, just as on the east, there was another gateway leading to the Temple's inner courtyard directly opposite this outer gateway. The distance between the two gateways was 175 feet.

[24] Then the man took me around to the south gateway and measured its various parts, and he found they were exactly the same as in the others. [25] It had windows along the walls as the others did, and there was a foyer where the gateway passage opened into the outer courtyard. And like the others, the gateway passage was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide between the back walls of facing guard alcoves. [26] This gateway also had a stairway of seven steps leading up to it, and there were palm tree decorations along the dividing walls. [27] And here again, directly opposite the outer gateway, was another gateway that led into the inner courtyard. The distance between the two gateways was 175 feet.

[28] Then the man took me to the south gateway leading into the inner courtyard. He measured it and found that it had the same measurements as the other gateways. [29] Its guard alcoves, dividing walls, and foyer were the same size as those in the others. It also had windows along its walls and in the foyer structure. And like the others, the gateway passage was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. [30] (The foyers of the gateways leading into the inner courtyard were 8 3/4 feet deep and 43 3/4 feet wide.) [31] The foyer of the south gateway faced into the outer courtyard. It had palm tree decorations on its columns, and there were eight steps leading to its entrance.

[32] Then he took me to the east gateway leading to the inner courtyard. He measured it and found that it had the same measurements as the other gateways. [33] Its guard alcoves, dividing walls, and foyer were the same size as those of the others, and there were windows along the walls and in the foyer structure. The gateway passage measured 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. [34] Its foyer faced into the outer courtyard. It had palm tree decorations on its columns, and there were eight steps leading to its entrance.

[35] Then he took me around to the north gateway leading to the inner courtyard. He measured it and found that it had the same measurements as the other gateways. [36] The guard alcoves, dividing walls, and foyer of this gateway had the same measurements as in the others and the same window arrangements. The gateway passage measured 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. [37] Its foyer faced into the outer courtyard, and it had palm tree decorations on the columns. There were eight steps leading to its entrance.

[38] A door led from the foyer of the inner gateway on the north side into a side room where the meat for sacrifices was washed before being taken to the altar. [39] On each side of this foyer were two tables, where the sacrificial animals were slaughtered for the burnt offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings. [40] Outside the foyer, on each side of the stairs going up to the north entrance, there were two more tables. [41] So there were eight tables in all, four inside and four outside, where the sacrifices were cut up and prepared. [42] There were also four tables of hewn stone for preparation of the burnt offerings, each 31 1/2 inches square and 21 inches high. On these tables were placed the butchering knives and other implements and the sacrificial animals. [43] There were hooks, each three inches long, fastened to the foyer walls and set on the tables where the sacrificial meat was to be laid.

[44] Inside the inner courtyard there were two one-room buildings for the singers, one beside the north gateway, facing south, and the other beside the south gateway, facing north. [45] And the man said to me, "The building beside the north inner gate is for the priests who supervise the Temple maintenance. [46] The building beside the south inner gate is for the priests in charge of the altar—the descendants of Zadok—for they alone of all the Levites may approach the Lord to minister to him."

[47] Then the man measured the inner courtyard and found it to be 175 feet square. The altar stood there in the courtyard in front of the Temple. [48] Then he brought me to the foyer of the Temple. He measured its supporting columns and found them to be 8 3/4 feet square. The entrance was 24 1/2 feet wide with walls 5 1/4 feet thick.

[49] The depth of the foyer was 35 feet and the width was 19 1/4 feet. There were ten steps leading up to it, with a column on each side.

[41:1] After that, the man brought me into the Holy Place, the large main room of the Temple, and he measured the columns that framed its doorway. They were 10 1/2 feet square. [2] The entrance was 17 1/2 feet wide, and the walls on each side were 8 3/4 feet wide. The Holy Place itself was 70 feet long and 35 feet wide.

[3] Then he went into the inner room at the end of the Holy Place. He measured the columns at the entrance and found them to be 3 1/2 feet thick. The entrance was 10 1/2 feet wide, and the walls on each side of the entrance extended 12 1/4 feet to the corners of the inner room. [4] The inner room was 35 feet square. "This," he told me, "is the Most Holy Place."

[5] Then he measured the wall of the Temple and found that it was 10 1/2 feet thick. There was a row of rooms along the outside wall; each room was 7 feet wide. [6] These rooms were built in three levels, one above the other, with thirty rooms on each level. The supports for these rooms rested on ledges in the Temple wall, but the supports did not extend into the wall. [7] Each level was wider than the one below it, corresponding to the narrowing of the Temple wall as it rose higher. A stairway led up from the bottom level through the middle level to the top level.

[8] I noticed that the Temple was built on a terrace, which provided a foundation for the side rooms. This terrace was 10 1/2 feet high. [9] The outer wall of the Temple's side rooms was 8 3/4 feet thick. This left an open area between these side rooms [10] and the row of rooms along the outer wall of the inner courtyard. This open area measured 35 feet in width, and it went all the way around the Temple. [11] Two doors opened from the side rooms into the terrace yard, which was 8 3/4 feet wide. One door faced north and the other south.

[12] A large building stood on the west, facing the Temple courtyard. It was 122 1/2 feet wide and 157 1/2 feet long, and its walls were 8 3/4 feet thick. [13] Then the man measured the Temple, and he found it to be 175 feet long. The courtyard around the building, including its walls, was an additional 175 feet in length. [14] The inner courtyard to the east of the Temple was also 175 feet wide. [15] The building to the west, including its two walls, was also 175 feet wide.

The Holy Place, the Most Holy Place, and the foyer of the Temple were all paneled with wood, [16] as were the frames of the recessed windows. The inner walls of the Temple were paneled with wood above and below the windows. [17] The space above the door leading into the Most Holy Place was also paneled. [18] All the walls were decorated with carvings of cherubim, each with two faces, and there was a palm tree carving between each of the cherubim. [19] One face—that of a man—looked toward the palm tree on one side. The other face—that of a young lion—looked toward the palm tree on the other side. The figures were carved all along the inside of the Temple, [20] from the floor to the top of the walls, including the outer wall of the Holy Place.

[21] There were square columns at the entrance to the Holy Place, and the ones at the entrance of the Most Holy Place were similar. [22] There was an altar made of wood, 3 1/2 feet square and 5 1/4 feet high. Its corners, base, and sides were all made of wood. "This," the man told me, "is the table that stands in the Lord's presence."

[23] Both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place had double doorways, [24] each with two swinging doors. [25] The doors leading into the Holy Place were decorated with carved cherubim and palm trees just as on the walls. And there was a wooden canopy over the front of the Temple's foyer. [26] On both sides of the foyer there were recessed windows decorated with carved palm trees.

[42:1] Then the man led me out of the Temple courtyard by way of the north gateway. We entered the outer courtyard and came to a group of rooms against the north wall of the inner courtyard. [2] This group of structures, whose entrance opened toward the north, was 175 feet long and 87 1/2 feet wide. [3] One block of rooms overlooked the 35-foot width of the inner courtyard. Another block of rooms looked out onto the pavement of the outer courtyard. The two blocks were built three levels high and stood across from each other. [4] Between the two blocks of rooms ran a walkway 17 1/2 feet wide. It extended the entire 175 feet of the complex, and all the doors faced toward the north.

[5] Each of the two upper levels of rooms was narrower than the one beneath it because the upper levels had to allow space for walkways in front of them. [6] Since there were three levels and they did not have supporting columns as in the courtyards, each of the upper levels was set back from the level beneath it. [7] There was an outer wall that separated the rooms from the outer courtyard; it was 87 1/2 feet long. [8] This wall added length to the outer block of rooms, which extended for only 87 1/2 feet, while the inner block—the rooms toward the Temple—extended for 175 feet. [9] There was an entrance from the outer courtyard to these rooms from the east.

[10] On the south side of the Temple there were two blocks of rooms just south of the inner courtyard between the Temple and the outer courtyard. These rooms were arranged just like the rooms on the north. [11] There was a walkway between the two blocks of rooms just like the complex on the north side of the Temple. This complex of rooms was the same length and width as the other one, and it had the same entrances and doors. The dimensions of each were identical. [12] So there was an entrance in the wall facing the doors of the inner block of rooms, and another on the east at the end of the interior walkway.

[13] Then the man told me, "These rooms that overlook the Temple from the north and south are holy. It is there that the priests who offer sacrifices to the Lord will eat the most holy offerings. And they will use these rooms to store the grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings because these rooms are holy. [14] When the priests leave the Holy Place, they must not go directly to the outer courtyard. They must first take off the clothes they wore while ministering because these clothes are holy. They must put on other clothes before entering the parts of the building complex open to the public."

[15] When the man had finished taking these measurements, he led me out through the east gateway to measure the entire Temple area. [16] He measured the east side; it was 875 feet long. [17] He also measured the north side and got the same measurement. [18] The south side was the same length, [19] and so was the west side. [20] So the area was 875 feet on each side with a wall all around it to separate the holy places from the common.

[43:1] After this, the man brought me back around to the east gateway. [2] Suddenly, the glory of the God of Israel appeared from the east. The sound of his coming was like the roar of rushing waters, and the whole landscape shone with his glory. [3] This vision was just like the others I had seen, first by the Kebar River and then when he came to destroy Jerusalem. And I fell down before him with my face in the dust. [4] And the glory of the Lord came into the Temple through the east gateway.

[5] Then the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner courtyard, and the glory of the Lord filled the Temple. [6] And I heard someone speaking to me from within the Temple. (The man who had been measuring was still standing beside me.) [7] And the Lord said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place where I will rest my feet. I will remain here forever, living among the people of Israel. They and their kings will not defile my holy name any longer by their adulterous worship of other gods or by raising monuments in honor of their dead kings. [8] They put their idol altars right next to mine with only a wall between them and me. They defiled my holy name by such wickedness, so I consumed them in my anger. [9] Now let them put away their idols and the sacred pillars erected to honor their kings, and I will live among them forever.

[10] "Son of man, describe to the people of Israel the Temple I have shown you. Tell them its appearance and its plan so they will be ashamed of all their sins. [11] And if they are ashamed of what they have done, describe to them all the specifications of its construction—including its entrances and doors—and everything else about it. Write down all these specifications and directions as they watch so they will be sure to remember them. [12] And this is the basic law of the Temple: absolute holiness! The entire top of the hill where the Temple is built is holy. Yes, this is the primary law of the Temple.

[13] "These are the measurements of the altar: There is a gutter all around the altar 21 inches wide and 21 inches deep, with a curb 9 inches wide around its edge. And this is the height of the altar: [14] From the gutter the altar rises 3 1/2 feet to a ledge that surrounds the altar; this lower ledge is 21 inches wide. From the lower ledge the altar rises 7 feet to the upper ledge; this upper ledge is also 21 inches wide. [15] The top of the altar, the hearth, rises still 7 feet higher, with a horn rising up from each of the four corners. [16] The top of the altar is square, measuring 21 feet by 21 feet. [17] The upper ledge also forms a square, measuring 24 1/2 feet on each side, with a 21-inch gutter and a 10 1/2-inch curb all around the edge. There are steps going up the east side of the altar."

[18] Then he said to me, "Son of man, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: These will be the regulations for the burning of offerings and the sprinkling of blood when the altar is built. [19] At that time, the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who minister before me, are to be given a young bull for a sin offering, says the Sovereign Lord. [20] You will take some of its blood and smear it on the four horns of the altar, the four corners of the upper ledge, and the curb that runs around that ledge. This will cleanse and make atonement for the altar. [21] Then take the young bull for the sin offering and burn it at the appointed place outside the Temple area.

[22] "On the second day, sacrifice as a sin offering a young male goat that has no physical defects. Then cleanse and make atonement for the altar again, just as you did with the young bull. [23] When you have finished the cleansing ceremony, offer another young bull that has no defects and a perfect ram from the flock. [24] You are to present them to the Lord, and the priests are to sprinkle salt on them and offer them as a burnt offering to the Lord.

[25] "Every day for seven days a male goat, a young bull, and a ram from the flock will be sacrificed as a sin offering. None of these animals may have physical defects of any kind. [26] Do this each day for seven days to cleanse and make atonement for the altar, thus setting it apart for holy use. [27] On the eighth day, and on each day afterward, the priests will sacrifice on the altar the burnt offerings and peace offerings of the people. Then I will accept you, says the Sovereign Lord."

[44:1] Then the man brought me back to the east gateway in the outer wall, but it was closed. [2] And the Lord said to me, "This gate must remain closed; it will never again be opened. No man will ever pass through it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, entered here. Thus, it must always remain shut. [3] Only the prince himself may sit inside this gateway to feast in the Lord's presence. But he may come and go only through the gateway's foyer."

[4] Then the man brought me through the north gateway to the front of the Temple. I looked and saw that the glory of the Lord filled the Temple of the Lord, and I fell to the ground with my face in the dust.

[5] And the Lord said to me, "Son of man, take careful notice; use your eyes and ears. Listen to everything I tell you about the regulations concerning the Lord's Temple. Take careful note of who may be admitted to the Temple and who is to be excluded from it. [6] And give these rebels, the people of Israel, this message from the Sovereign Lord: O people of Israel, enough of your disgusting sins! [7] You have brought uncircumcised foreigners into my sanctuary—people who have no heart for God. In this way, you profaned my Temple even as you offered me my food, the fat and blood of sacrifices. Thus, in addition to all your other disgusting sins, you have broken my covenant. [8] You have not kept the laws I gave you concerning these sacred rituals, for you have hired foreigners to take charge of my sanctuary.

[9] "So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: No foreigners, including those who live among the people of Israel, will enter my sanctuary if they have not been circumcised and do not love the Lord. [10] And the men of the tribe of Levi who abandoned me when Israel strayed away from me to worship idols must bear the consequences of their unfaithfulness. [11] They may still be Temple guards and gatemen, and they may still slaughter the animals brought for burnt offerings and be present to help the people. [12] But they encouraged my people to worship other gods, causing Israel to fall into deep sin. So I have raised my hand and taken an oath that they must bear the consequences for their sins, says the Sovereign Lord. [13] They may not approach me to minister as priests. They may not touch any of my holy things or the holy offerings, for they must bear the shame of all the sins they have committed. [14] They are to serve as the Temple caretakers and are relegated to doing maintenance work and helping the people in a general way.

[15] "However, the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok continued to minister faithfully in the Temple when Israel abandoned me for idols. These men will serve as my ministers. They will stand in my presence and offer the fat and blood of the sacrifices, says the Sovereign Lord. [16] They are the ones who will enter my sanctuary and approach my table to serve me. They are the ones who will fulfill all my requirements. [17] When they enter the gateway to the inner courtyard, they must wear only linen clothing. They must wear no wool while on duty in the inner courtyard or in the Temple itself. [18] They must wear linen turbans and linen undergarments. They must not wear anything that would cause them to perspire. [19] When they return to the outer courtyard where the people are, they must take off the clothes they wear while ministering to me. They must leave them in the sacred rooms and put on other clothes so they do not harm the people by transmitting holiness to them through this clothing.

[20] "They must neither let their hair grow too long nor shave it off completely. Instead, they must trim it regularly. [21] The priests must never drink wine before entering the inner courtyard. [22] They may choose their wives only from among the virgins of Israel or the widows of the priests. They may not marry other widows or divorced women. [23] They will teach my people the difference between what is holy and what is common, what is ceremonially clean and unclean.

[24] "They will serve as judges to resolve any disagreements among my people. Their decisions must be based on my regulations. And the priests themselves must obey my instructions and laws at all the sacred festivals, and they will see to it that the Sabbath is set apart as a holy day. [25] A priest must never defile himself by being in the presence of a dead person unless it is his father, mother, child, brother, or unmarried sister. In such cases it is permitted. [26] But such a priest can only return to his Temple duties after being ritually cleansed and then waiting for seven days. [27] The first day he returns to work and enters the inner courtyard and the sanctuary, he must offer a sin offering for himself, says the Sovereign Lord.

[28] "As to property, the priests will not have any, for I alone am their inheritance. [29] Their food will come from the gifts and sacrifices brought to the Temple by the people—the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings. Whatever anyone sets apart for the Lord will belong to the priests. [30] The first of the ripe fruits and all the gifts brought to the Lord will go to the priests. The first samples of each grain harvest and the first of your flour must also be given to the priests so the Lord will bless your homes. [31] The priests may never eat meat from any bird or animal that dies a natural death or that dies after being attacked by another animal.

[45:1] "When you divide the land among the tribes of Israel, you must set aside a section of it for the Lord as his holy portion. This piece of land will be  $8 \frac{1}{3}$  miles long and  $6 \frac{2}{3}$  miles wide. The entire area will be holy ground. [2] A section of this land, measuring 875 feet by 875 feet, will be set aside for the Temple. An additional strip of land  $87 \frac{1}{2}$  feet wide is to be left empty all around it. [3] Within the larger sacred area, measure out a portion of land  $8 \frac{1}{3}$  miles long and  $3 \frac{1}{3}$  miles wide. Within it the sanctuary of the Most Holy Place will be located. [4] This area will be a holy land, set aside for the priests who minister to the Lord in the sanctuary. They will use it for their homes, and my Temple will be located within it.

[5] The strip of sacred land next to it, also 8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles wide, will be a living area for the Levites who work at the Temple. It will be their possession and a place for their towns.

[6] "Adjacent to the larger sacred area will be a section of land 8 1/3 miles long and 1 2/3 miles wide. This will be set aside to be a city where anyone in Israel can come and live.

[7] "Two special sections of land will be set apart for the prince. One section will share a border with the east side of the sacred lands and city, and the second section will share a border on the west side. Then the far eastern and western borders of the prince's lands will line up with the eastern and western boundaries of the tribal areas. [8] These sections of land will be the prince's allotment.

"My princes will no longer oppress and rob my people; they will assign the rest of the land to the people, giving an allotment to each tribe. [9] For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Enough, you princes of Israel! Stop all your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Quit robbing and cheating my people out of their land! Stop expelling them from their homes! [10] You must use only honest weights and scales, honest dry volume measures, and honest liquid volume measures. [11] The homer will be your standard unit for measuring volume. The ephah and the bath will each measure one-tenth of a homer. [12] The standard unit for weight will be the silver shekel. One shekel consists of twenty gerahs, and sixty shekels are equal to one mina.

[13] "This is the tax you must give to the prince: one bushel of wheat or barley for every sixty you harvest, [14] one percent of your olive oil, [15] and one sheep for every two hundred in your flocks in Israel. These will be the grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings that will make atonement for the people who bring them, says the Sovereign Lord. [16] All the people of Israel must join the prince in bringing their offerings. [17] The prince will be required to provide offerings that are given at the religious festivals, the new moon celebrations, the Sabbath days, and all other similar occasions. He will provide the sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings, and peace offerings to make reconciliation for the people of Israel.

[18] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: In early spring, on the first day of each new year, sacrifice a young bull with no physical defects to purify the Temple. [19] The priest will take some of the blood of this sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the Temple, the four corners of the upper ledge on the altar, and the gateposts at the entrance to the inner courtyard. [20] Do this also on the seventh day of the new year for anyone who has sinned through error or ignorance. In that way, you will make atonement for the Temple.

[21] "On the fourteenth day of the new year, you must celebrate the Passover. This festival will last for seven days. Only bread without yeast may be eaten during that time. [22] On the day of Passover the prince will provide a young bull as a sin offering for himself and the people of Israel. [23] On each of the seven days of the feast he will prepare a burnt offering to the Lord. This daily offering will consist of seven young bulls and seven rams without any defects. A male goat will also be given each day for a sin offering. [24] The prince will provide a half bushel of flour as a grain offering and a gallon of olive oil with each young bull and ram.

[25] "During the seven days of the Festival of Shelters, which occurs every year in early autumn, the prince will provide these same sacrifices for the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering, along with the required olive oil.

[46:1] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: The east gateway of the inner wall will be closed during the six workdays each week, but it will be open on Sabbath days and the days of new moon celebrations. [2] The prince will enter the foyer of the gateway from the outside. Then he will stand by the gatepost while the priest offers his burnt offering and peace offering. He will worship inside the gateway passage and then go back out the way he came. The gateway will not be closed until evening. [3] The common people will worship the Lord in front of this gateway on Sabbath days and the days of new moon celebrations.

[4] "Each Sabbath day the prince will present to the Lord a burnt offering of six lambs and one ram, all with no physical defects. [5] He will present a grain offering of a half bushel of flour to go with the ram and whatever amount of flour he chooses to go with each lamb. He is to offer one gallon of olive oil for each half bushel of flour. [6] At the new moon celebrations, he will bring one young bull, six lambs, and one ram, all with no physical defects. [7] With the young bull he must bring a half bushel of flour for a grain offering. With the ram he must bring another half bushel of flour. And with each lamb he is to bring whatever amount of flour that he decides to give. With each half bushel of flour he must offer one gallon of olive oil.

[8] "The prince must enter the gateway through the foyer, and he must leave the same way he came. [9] But when the people come in through the north gateway to worship the Lord during the religious festivals, they must leave by the south gateway. And those who entered through the south gateway must leave by the north gateway. They must never leave by the same gateway they came in; they must always use the opposite gateway. [10] The prince will enter and leave with the people on these occasions.

[11] "So at the special feasts and sacred festivals, the grain offering will be a half bushel of flour with each young bull, another half bushel of flour with each ram, and as much flour as the prince chooses to give with each lamb. One gallon of oil is to be given with each half bushel of flour. [12] Whenever the prince offers a voluntary burnt offering or peace offering to the Lord, the east gateway to the inner courtyard will be opened for him to enter, and he will offer his sacrifices just as he does on Sabbath days. Then he will turn and leave the way he entered, and the gateway will be shut behind him.

[13] "Each morning a year-old lamb with no physical defects must be sacrificed as a burnt offering to the Lord. [14] With the lamb, a grain offering must also be given to the Lord—about two and a half quarts of flour with a third of a gallon of olive oil to moisten the flour. This will be a permanent law for you. [15] The lamb, the grain offering, and the olive oil must be given as a daily sacrifice every morning without fail.

[16] "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: If the prince gives a gift of land to one of his sons, it will belong to him and his descendants forever. [17] But if he gives a gift of land to one of his servants, the servant may keep it only until the Year of Jubilee, which comes every fiftieth year. At that time the servant will be set free, and the land will return to the prince. Only the gifts given to the prince's sons will be permanent.

[18] And the prince may never take anyone's property by force. If he gives property to his sons, it must be from his own land, for I do not want any of my people unjustly evicted from their property."

[19] Then the man brought me through the entrance beside the gateway and led me to the sacred rooms assigned to the priests, which faced toward the north. He showed me a place at the extreme west end of these rooms. [20] He explained, "This is where the priests will cook the meat from the guilt offerings and sin offerings and bake the flour from the grain offerings into bread. They will do it here to avoid carrying the sacrifices through the outer courtyard and harming the people by transmitting holiness to them."

[21] Then he brought me back to the outer courtyard and led me to each of its four corners. In each corner I saw an enclosure. [22] Each of these enclosures was 70 feet long and 52 1/2 feet wide, surrounded by walls. [23] Along the inside of these walls was a ledge of stone with fireplaces under the ledge all the way around. [24] The man said to me, "These are the kitchens to be used by the Temple assistants to boil the sacrifices offered by the people."

[47:1] Then the man brought me back to the entrance of the Temple. There I saw a stream flowing eastward from beneath the Temple threshold. This stream then passed to the right of the altar on its south side. [2] The man brought me outside the wall through the north gateway and led me around to the eastern entrance. There I could see the stream flowing out through the south side of the east gateway. [3] Measuring as he went, he led me along the stream for 1,750 feet and told me to go across. At that point the water was up to my ankles. [4] He measured off another 1,750 feet and told me to go across again. This time the water was up to my knees. After another 1,750 feet, it was up to my waist. [5] Then he measured another 1,750 feet, and the river was too deep to cross without swimming.

[6] He told me to keep in mind what I had seen; then he led me back along the riverbank. [7] Suddenly, to my surprise, many trees were now growing on both sides of the river! [8] Then he said to me, "This river flows east through the desert into the Jordan Valley, where it enters the Dead Sea. The waters of this stream will heal the salty waters of the Dead Sea and make them fresh and pure. [9] Everything that touches the water of this river will live. Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will be healed. Wherever this water flows, everything will live. [10] Fishermen will stand along the shores of the Dead Sea, fishing all the way from En-gedi to En-eglaim. The shores will be covered with nets drying in the sun. Fish of every kind will fill the Dead Sea, just as they fill the Mediterranean! [11] But the marshes and swamps will not be purified; they will be sources of salt. [12] All kinds of fruit trees will grow along both sides of the river. The leaves of these trees will never turn brown and fall, and there will always be fruit on their branches. There will be a new crop every month, without fail! For they are watered by the river flowing from the Temple. The fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing."

[13] This is what the Sovereign Lord says: "Follow these instructions for dividing the land for the twelve tribes of Israel: The tribe of Joseph will be given two shares of land. [14] Otherwise each tribe will receive an equal share. I swore that I would give this land to your ancestors, and it will now come to you as your inheritance.

[15] "The northern border will run from the Mediterranean toward Hethlon, then on through Lebo-hamath to Zedad; [16] then it will run to Berothah and Sibram, which are on the border between Damascus and Hamath, and finally to Hazer-hatticon, on the border of Hauran. [17] So the northern border will run from the Mediterranean to Hazer-enan, on the border between Hamath to the north and Damascus to the south.

[18] "The eastern border starts at a point between Hauran and Damascus and runs southward along the Jordan River between Israel and Gilead, past the Dead Sea and as far south as Tamar. This will be the eastern border.

[19] "The southern border will go west from Tamar to the waters of Meribah at Kadesh and then follow the course of the brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean. This will be the southern border.

[20] "On the west side the Mediterranean itself will be your border from the southern border to the point where the northern border begins, opposite Lebo-hamath.

[21] "Divide the land within these boundaries among the tribes of Israel. [22] Distribute the land as an inheritance for yourselves and for the foreigners who have joined you and are raising their families among you. They will be just like native-born Israelites to you, and they will receive an inheritance among the tribes. [23] All these immigrants are to be given land within the territory of the tribe with whom they now live. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!

[48:1] "Here is the list of the tribes of Israel and the territory each is to receive. The territory of Dan is in the extreme north. Its boundary line follows the Hethlon road to Lebo-hamath and then runs on to Hazer-enan on the border of Damascus, with Hamath to the north. Dan's territory extends all the way across the land of Israel from east to west. [2] Asher's territory lies south of Dan's and also extends from east to west. [3] Naphtali's land lies south of Asher's, also extending from east to west. [4] Then comes Manasseh south of Naphtali, and its territory also extends from east to west. [5] South of Manasseh is Ephraim, [6] and then Reuben, [7] and then Judah, all of whose boundaries extend from east to west.

[8] "South of Judah is the land set aside for a special purpose. It will be 8 1/3 miles wide and will extend as far east and west as the tribal territories, with the Temple at the center.

[9] "The area set aside for the Lord's Temple will be 8 1/3 miles long and 6 2/3 miles wide. [10] For the priests there will be a strip of land measuring 8 1/3 miles long by 3 1/3 miles wide, with the Lord's Temple at the center. [11] This area is set aside for the ordained priests, the descendants of Zadok who obeyed me and did not go astray when the people of Israel and the rest of the Levites did. [12] It will be their special portion when the land is distributed, the most sacred land of all. Next to the priests' territory will lie the land where the other Levites will live. [13] The land allotted to the Levites will be the same size and shape as that belonging to the priests—8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles wide. Together these portions of land will measure 8 1/3 miles long by 6 2/3 miles wide. [14] None of this special land will ever be sold or traded or used by others, for it belongs to the Lord; it is set apart as holy.

[15] "An additional strip of land  $8 \frac{1}{3}$  miles long by  $1 \frac{2}{3}$  miles wide, south of the sacred Temple area, will be allotted for public use—homes, pasturelands, and common lands, with a city at the center. [16] The city will measure  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  miles on each side. [17] Open lands will surround the city for 150 yards in every direction. [18] Outside the city there will be a farming area that stretches  $3 \frac{1}{3}$  miles to the east and  $3 \frac{1}{3}$  miles to the west along the border of the sacred area. This farmland will produce food for the people working in the city. [19] Those who come from the various tribes to work in the city may farm it. [20] This entire area—including the sacred lands and the city—is a square that measures  $8 \frac{1}{3}$  miles on each side.

[21] "The areas that remain, to the east and to the west of the sacred lands and the city, will belong to the prince. Each of these areas will be  $8 \frac{1}{3}$  miles wide, extending in opposite directions to the eastern and western borders of Israel. [22] So the prince's land will include everything between the territories allotted to Judah and Benjamin, except for the areas set aside for the sacred lands and the city.

[23] "These are the territories allotted to the rest of the tribes. Benjamin's territory lies just south of the prince's lands, and it extends across the entire land of Israel from east to west. [24] South of Benjamin's territory lies that of Simeon, also extending across the land from east to west. [25] Next is the territory of Issachar with the same eastern and western boundaries. [26] Then comes the territory of Zebulun, which also extends across the land from east to west. [27] The territory of Gad is just south of Zebulun with the same borders to the east and west. [28] The southern border of Gad runs from Tamar to the waters of Meribah at Kadesh and then follows the brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean. [29] These are the allotments that will be set aside for each tribe's inheritance, says the Sovereign Lord.

[30] "These will be the exits to the city: On the north wall, which is  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  miles long, [31] there will be three gates, each one named after a tribe of Israel. The first will be named for Reuben, the second for Judah, and the third for Levi. [32] On the east wall, also  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  miles long, the gates will be named for Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan. [33] The south wall, also  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  miles long, will have gates named for Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun. [34] And on the west wall, also  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  miles long, the gates will be named for Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

[35] "The distance around the entire city will be six miles. And from that day the name of the city will be 'The Lord Is There.' "

## **MEGATHEMES**

### **THEME: God's holiness**

#### **EXPLANATION:**

Ezekiel saw a vision that revealed God's absolute moral perfection. God was spiritually and morally superior to members of Israel's corrupt and compromising society. Ezekiel wrote to let the people know that God was also present in Babylon, not just in Jerusalem.

#### **IMPORTANCE:**

Because God is morally perfect, he can help us live above our tendency to compromise with this world. When we focus on his greatness, he gives us the power to overcome sin and to reflect his holiness.

### **THEME: Sin**

#### **EXPLANATION:**

Israel had sinned, and God's punishment came. The fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile were used by God to correct the rebels and draw them back from their sinful way of life. Ezekiel warned them that not only was the nation responsible for sin, but each individual was also accountable to God.

#### **IMPORTANCE:**

We cannot excuse ourselves from our responsibilities before God. We are accountable to God for our choices. Rather than neglect him, we must recognize sin for what it is—rebellion against God—and choose to follow him instead.

## **THEME: Restoration**

### **EXPLANATION:**

Ezekiel consoles the people by telling them that the day will come when God will restore those who turn from sin. God will be their King and Shepherd. He will give his people a new heart to worship him, and he will establish a new government and a new temple.

### **IMPORTANCE:**

The certainty of future restoration encourages believers in times of trial. But we must be faithful to God because we love him, not merely for what he can do for us. Is our faith in *him* or merely in our future benefits?

## **THEME: Leaders**

### **EXPLANATION:**

Ezekiel condemned the shepherds (unfaithful priests and leaders) who led the people astray. By contrast, he served as a caring shepherd and a faithful watchman to warn the people about their sin. One day God's perfect Shepherd, the Messiah, will lead his people.

### **IMPORTANCE:**

Jesus is our perfect leader. If we truly want him to lead us, our devotion must be more than talk. If we are given the responsibility of leading others, we must take care of them even if it means sacrificing personal pleasure, happiness, time, or money. We are responsible for those we lead.

## **THEME: Worship**

### **EXPLANATION:**

An angel gave Ezekiel a vision of the temple in great detail. God's holy presence had departed from Israel and the temple because of sin. The building of a future temple portrays the return of God's glory and presence. God will cleanse his people and restore true worship.

### **IMPORTANCE:**

All of God's promises will be fulfilled under the rule of the Messiah. The faithful followers will be restored to perfect fellowship with God and with one another. To be prepared for this time, we must focus on God. We do this through regular worship. Through worship we learn about God's holiness and the changes we must make in how we live.

## **TIMELINE**

Jeremiah becomes a prophet to Judah 627 B.C.  
Daniel taken captive to Babylon 605  
Ezekiel taken captive to Babylon 597  
Ezekiel becomes a prophet to exiles 593  
Judah falls; Jerusalem destroyed 586  
Ezekiel's ministry ends 571  
Babylon overthrown by Cyrus 539  
First exiles return to Judah 538

**An invitation is given to open your heart's door.**

**Rev. 3:20**

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

**To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print