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# The Living Creatures and the Glory of the Lord - Ezekiel 1:1-28

*Topics:* Angels, Appearance, Awe, Glory, God, Holy Spirit, Light

## Open It

- \* 1. What experience can you say has left you awestruck?
- 2. What is your favorite mythical creature? Why?

## Explore It

- 3. How old was Ezekiel and where was he living when he saw visions of God? (1:1)
- \* 4. How long had the people of Judah been in exile in Babylonia when Ezekiel had his vision? (1:2-3)
- 5. To what natural occurrence did Ezekiel liken what he saw coming toward him? (1:4)
- \* 6. What were the human and nonhuman features of the living beings Ezekiel described? (1:5-11)
- 7. How were the creatures positioned in relation to one another? (1:9-11)
- 8. What was remarkable about the way the creatures moved? (1:12)
- 9. To what did Ezekiel compare the light, or brightness, coming from the creatures? (1:13-14)
- 10. What unique characteristics did Ezekiel notice in the wheels that accompanied the creatures? (1:15-18)
- 11. Why would it not be accurate to say that the “wheels” were vehicles used by the creatures? (1:19-21)
- 12. How did Ezekiel describe the sound of the wings of the four creatures? (1: 24)
- 13. How did Ezekiel describe the person who spoke from the “expanse” above the creatures? (1:25-28)
- 14. What did Ezekiel realize he was seeing? (1:28)
- \* 15. How did Ezekiel respond when he saw the “likeness of the glory of the Lord”? (1:28)

## Get It

- \* 16. What is notable about the fact that God was still speaking to His people through prophets although they were in a foreign land?
- 17. Why do you suppose Ezekiel thought it important to record his visions in such detail?
- 18. How would you respond to an opportunity to peer into the throne room of God from this side of the grave?
- \* 19. What spiritual benefit can we glean from other people’s visions of the glory of God?
- 20. What sorts of emotions would move a person to lie prostrate on the ground?
- 21. Why are you glad that you worship a God who is not the product of human hands?

## Apply It

- 22. What hymn or song based on Ezekiel’s vision could you commit to memory this week as a tool of worship?
- \* 23. In what secular association in your life (school, work, or community) can you be available and listening for what God might want to say to or through you?

## Ezekiel's Call and Warning to Israel - Ezekiel 2:1-3:27

**Topics:** Accountability, Anger, Awe, Bitterness, Death, Evil, Fear, Glory, God's Will, Heart, Holy Spirit, Instructions, Listening, Mourning, Perseverance, Prophecy, Rebellion, Righteousness, Salvation, Silence, Sin, Stubbornness, Words

### Open It

1. What task have you had to perform even though it seemed unlikely to produce results?
- \* 2. What were some of the ways you manifested youthful rebellion?
3. How would you describe the longest period you have ever maintained silence?

### Explore It

- \* 4. What mission did God assign to the prophet Ezekiel? (2:3-5)
5. What images did God use to describe the reception Ezekiel was likely to get for his message? (2:6)
- \* 6. What warning did God give Ezekiel concerning his own behavior? (2:8)
7. What did God command Ezekiel to do with the scroll He presented to him? (2:8-9; 3:1-2)
8. How did the scroll taste to Ezekiel when he ate it? (3:3)
9. Who did God know would have been more receptive to His word than His own people? (3:5-7)
- \* 10. What did God promise to do for Ezekiel in the face of the stubbornness of the Jews? (3:8-9)
11. Where were the Jews to whom Ezekiel carried God's message? (3:10-11)
12. What was Ezekiel's experience of the glory of God when God had finished speaking to him? (3:12-13)
13. How did Ezekiel describe his state of mind after being commissioned by God? (3:14-15)
14. What was Ezekiel's role in relation to Israel? (3:17)
15. How did God explain Ezekiel's accountability for speaking God's Word to a wicked man? (3:18-19)
16. Under what circumstances would Ezekiel be accountable for the death of a righteous person? (3:20-21)
17. What experience did Ezekiel have again after his seven days of mourning? (3:22-23)
18. How did God establish when Ezekiel was to speak or remain silent? (3:24-27)

### Get It

19. In what ways could your church share God's characterization of Israel as "obstinate" and "hardened"?
20. How does your concern for the reactions of others affect your desire to do what God wants?
21. What is most difficult about confronting someone about his or her faults?
22. Why do you suppose the scroll containing God's words of "lament and mourning and woe" tasted good to Ezekiel?
- \* 23. What is the Christian's responsibility with regard to unbelievers or believers who fall into sin?
24. Why was it appropriate for Ezekiel to follow the traditional actions of mourning?
- \* 25. Why is it important that God emphasizes the responsibility of individual choice?

### Apply It

26. What nagging area of rebellion can you ask God to change in you this week?
- \* 27. For what rebellious or unbelieving friend or neighbor can you begin to pray, looking for an opportunity to warn him or her of God's righteous judgment and tell him or her of God's mercy?

## Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized - Ezekiel 4:1-5:17

*Topics:* Death, Despair, Idolatry, Law, Prophecy, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Sin, Suffering

### Open It

1. What sorts of predictions do we count on in our everyday decisions and actions?
- \* 2. Why do you think illustrations or dramatizations are useful in getting a verbal message across to an audience?

### Explore It

3. What model did God instruct Ezekiel to build in order to illustrate his first message? (4:1-3)
4. What was the duration of God's punishment of Israel as predicted by Ezekiel's symbolic action? (4:4-5)
5. How long did Ezekiel lie on his right side to illustrate the punishment of Judah? (4:6-8)
6. What were Ezekiel's cooking and eating habits supposed to illustrate about what would happen in Jerusalem? (4:9-13)
7. How did God respond when Ezekiel didn't want to defile himself in order to illustrate the extent of the famine? (4:15)
- \* 8. According to God, why would Israel and Judah suffer so much? (4:17)
9. What was Ezekiel to do with each third of the hair he shaved from his own head? (5:1-4)
10. How had Jerusalem repaid the favor that God had shown? (5:5-7)
11. How did Jerusalem compare to the pagan nations around her? (5:7)
12. How was God's coming punishment to compare with those of the past and the future? (5:9)
13. To what depths did God predict that people would descend when He punished them? (5:10)
- \* 14. What sin prompted God to destroy each third of the people of Jerusalem in the manner predicted by Ezekiel? (5:11-12)
- \* 15. What did God say the people would know after He vented His wrath? (5:13)
16. How would other nations respond to the people once favored by God? (5:14-15)
17. What various forms of suffering and destruction did God predict for His people? (5:16-17)

### Get It

18. How do you think Ezekiel might have been viewed in his own time?
- \* 19. In what different ways might people have responded to Ezekiel's dramatized prophecies?
20. What are some of the worst aspects of a prolonged siege?
- \* 21. What qualities does a person need in order to do unpopular things in the name of God?
22. Why might people assume that God's favor toward a person or a nation is irrevocable?

### Apply It

- \* 23. What step of obedience might you ask God to give you the courage to carry through?
24. What spiritual word of warning do you need to take seriously this coming week?

## A Prophecy against the Mountains of Israel - Ezekiel 6:1-14

*Topics:* Adultery, Anger, Death, Escape, Idolatry, Lust, Prophecy, Punishment, Sovereignty

### Open It

- \* 1. What is it about calamity that can heighten our fear of God?
- 2. What is your closest experience of war in your lifetime?

### Explore It

- 3. Against what geographical feature did Ezekiel prophesy (figuratively)? (6:1-3)
- 4. What did God promise that Israel would see at all the sites of pagan worship? (6:4-6)
- 5. What knowledge would come out of the devastation to be visited on Israel? (6:7)
- 6. What would happen to those who escaped death by the sword? (6:8)
- \* 7. What would become apparent to the exiles about God and about themselves? (6:9)
- 8. By carrying through on His Word, what was God proving about His threats? (6:10)
- 9. What attitude and emotion did God command Ezekiel to demonstrate? (6:11)
- \* 10. How was God going to express His wrath against Israel? (6:12)
- \* 11. Where would the greatest concentration of the dead be found when God judged Israel? (6:13)
- 12. What was the primary purpose of God's wrath and judgment? (6:14)

### Get It

- \* 13. Why did God feel such hatred for the "high places" to be found in Israel?
- 14. What message would be communicated by a smashed altar?
- \* 15. Why is it important for God's people to "know that I am the Lord"?
- 16. What are the modern-day idols (false gods) that divert us from worshiping of the one true and living God?
- 17. How often do you find yourself grieving and mourning over personal or societal sin?

### Apply It

- \* 18. What would be an appropriate way for you to express to God your grief over sin in your life?
- 19. What has God done lately that gives rise to praise and lets you know that He is Lord?

## The End Has Come - Ezekiel 7:1-27

**Topics:** Accountability, Anger, Death, Despair, Escape, Grieving, Idolatry, Judgment, Law, Lost, Mercy, People, Pride, Punishment, Shame, Sin, Sovereignty, Timing, Wealth

### Open It

- \* 1. What is one of the most helpless feelings you've ever experienced?
- 2. What is one thing you'd love to have that money can't buy?

### Explore It

- 3. What was the first two-word message that God told Ezekiel to proclaim? (7:1-3)
- 4. What did God resolve that He would not do this time, as He had so often in the past? (7:4)
- \* 5. What different words did God use to describe what was about to happen to Israel? (7:5-7)
- 6. What was God poised to "repay"? (7:8-9)
- 7. What would the people know about the origin of the disaster from the sheer magnitude of the disaster? (7:9)
- 8. What human vices did God say would run rampant, causing much misery? (7:10-11)
- 9. In what resource had the people come to trust, which would now fail them? (7:12-13)
- 10. What other potential defense would be stopped by God's wrath? (7:14)
- 11. What did Ezekiel say about the possibility of escaping from the coming wrath of God? (7:15-16)
- \* 12. What were some of the dramatic evidences of helplessness in Ezekiel's prophecy? (7:17-19)
- 13. What was God going to allow to happen to the riches and edifices in which Israel took pride? (7:20-22)
- 14. For what crimes against their fellow humans did God hold Israel accountable? (7:23)
- \* 15. What did Ezekiel predict that the people would do to try to avert God's wrath? (7:24-27)
- 16. What lesson did God realize Israel would learn from the disaster that was about to come upon them? (7:27)

### Get It

- 17. If you were going to dramatize this chapter in a contemporary setting, where would your "Ezekiel" be speaking and whom would he be addressing?
- \* 18. How hard or easy do you think it was for Ezekiel's listeners to visualize a time when the temple would be desecrated and they would view their gold as "unclean"?
- 19. What was the most important thing that God wanted to get across to His people through the coming disasters?
- 20. What is your first reaction when you hear of someone predicting economic or social collapse, or even the "end of the world"?
- 21. What evidences do you see that people today are trusting in affluence, military might, and cultural accomplishments?
- \* 22. Why do you think people will look to God in times of calamity but scoff at Him in times of prosperity?

### Apply It

- \* 23. When can you set aside an hour to ask God to help you take an honest inventory of the things and people in whom you put your trust?
- 24. What friend or acquaintance should you encourage to fear God while there is still time to experience His mercy?

## Idolatry in the Temple - Ezekiel 8:1-18

*Topics:* Anger, Darkness, Earth, Evil, Glory, Heaven, Idolatry, Jealousy, Leadership, Listening, Mercy, Mourning, Prophecy, Worship

### Open It

- \* 1. The last time you had reason, or thought you had reason, to feel jealousy over a close relationship, how did it feel?
- 2. What feelings would rise up in you if you were to see a pagan rite being observed in your church building?

### Explore It

- 3. Where was Ezekiel when the vision from God came to him? (8:1)
- 4. How did Ezekiel describe the figure who appeared before him? (8:2)
- \* 5. Where was Ezekiel transported in his vision? (8:3)
- 6. What was the first thing that the man called to Ezekiel's attention? (8:5)
- \* 7. What would soon be the effect of the detestable things that were being done in the temple? (8:6)
- 8. What did Ezekiel observe in an inner room after digging through a wall? (8:7-10)
- 9. What were the elders of Israel doing in the inner room with the pictures on the walls? (8:11)
- \* 10. Why weren't the elders afraid of introducing idol worship into the temple? (8:12)
- 11. What was going on at the entrance to the north gate? (8:14)
- 12. What did the man repeat after each situation he showed to Ezekiel? (8:15)
- 13. What were twenty-five men doing in the inner court of the temple? (8:16)
- 14. Besides the practices in the temple, what sin did God hold against Jerusalem? (8:17)
- 15. What did God promise to do to Jerusalem because of its great sin? (8:18)

### Get It

- 16. Why would Ezekiel and the elders of Judah with him not have been aware of everything that was going on in the temple?
- 17. Why do we associate brightness and fire with the holiness of God?
- 18. Why would Ezekiel call the pagan gods "idols of jealousy"?
- 19. What was the effect of showing Ezekiel one abomination at a time, each worse than the previous one?
- \* 20. Why does God refuse to share His house with other gods?
- 21. Why is it impossible for us to do anything that the Lord does not see?
- \* 22. What important aspects of the character of God were either unknown to or ignored by the people of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's time?
- 23. Why is it unwise to presume upon the pity of the Lord for sinners?

### Apply It

- \* 24. In what area of your life can you ask God to show you how you may have divided loyalties?
- 25. If you are in any kind of leadership as a Christian, how can you prevent yourself from leading others into unrighteousness?



## **Idolaters Killed - Ezekiel 9:1-11**

*Topics:* Call, Complacency, Death, Glory, Grieving, Judgment, Mercy, Punishment

### **Open It**

- \* 1. What sorts of wrongs particularly stir your sense of outrage and make you long for justice?
- 2. When the decision is up to you, do you lean more toward justice or mercy for people who do wrong? Why?

### **Explore It**

- 3. As Ezekiel watched, whom did God summon before Him? (9:1-2)
- 4. What occurrence must have emphasized God's power and holiness for Ezekiel? (9:3)
- \* 5. What instruction did the Lord give to the man with the writing kit? (9:4)
- \* 6. What characteristics was God looking for in the people who would receive the mark? (9:4)
- \* 7. What orders were given to the six men with deadly weapons? (9:5)
- 8. Which people were to be spared from the general slaughter in Jerusalem? (9:6)
- 9. What did God command to be done to the temple? (9:7)
- 10. What emotion did Ezekiel express when he was alone before the Lord? (9:8)
- 11. Why was God driven to such extreme action against Jerusalem? (9:9-10)
- 12. What did the man with the writing kit report back to God? (9:11)

### **Get It**

- \* 13. Ultimately, from where does justice and judgment for sin come, regardless of how it is carried out?
- 14. Why was it necessary for God to defile the temple as well as punish the idolaters?
- \* 15. Why does it matter to God whether we are grieved by the sin around us, even though we might be unable to change it on our own?
- 16. In what way is it appropriate to feel sorrow or elation when a wicked person "gets what he deserves"?
- 17. Why do you suppose injustice and bloodshed in particular are evils that God must punish?

### **Apply It**

- \* 18. What is a concrete way in which you can show God that you are grieved by sin?
- 19. What Christian brother or sister, surrounded by evil, needs your prayers right now?

## The Glory Departs from the Temple - Ezekiel 10:1-22

*Topics:* Abandon, Angels, Appearance, Glory, Instructions, Judgment, Punishment

### Open It

1. How would you describe a specific experience of being awestruck?
- \* 2. What, in your mind, is spiritual emptiness or dryness, and how do you feel when you experience it?

### Explore It

3. How did Ezekiel attempt to describe what he saw in the presence of God? (10:1)
- \* 4. What did God command his servant to do with the coals he was to take from between the wheels of the cherubim? (10:2)
- \* 5. As Ezekiel watched, what movement took place first with the cloud that represented God's glory? (10:3-4)
6. How far did the radiance and sound of God's glory extend? (10:4-5)
7. How did one of the cherubim assist the man in white with the coals? (10:6-7)
8. What new detail did Ezekiel learn about the cherubim as he watched? (10:8)
9. What did Ezekiel notice about the wheels of the cherubim? (10:9-11)
10. What unique feature virtually covered the cherubim? (10:12)
11. What did the four faces of the cherubim look like to Ezekiel? (10:14)
12. How were the wheels related to the creatures Ezekiel called cherubim? (10:15-17)
- \* 13. What specific movements of the glory of the Lord did Ezekiel witness? (10:18-19)
14. Where had Ezekiel seen the living creatures before? (10:20-22)
15. What features of the cherubim especially stood out in Ezekiel's mind? (10:21-22)

### Get It

16. What do you think motivated Ezekiel to describe everything he saw in such detail?
17. Why was it valuable to Israel that the presence of the Lord inhabited the temple?
- \* 18. How do you suppose it felt for a faithful servant of God to watch the glory depart from the temple?
- \* 19. How would you characterize the idol worshippers' awareness of the glory of the Lord and His departure?
20. Why do people sometimes take the presence of God for granted?

### Apply It

- \* 21. How can you take advantage of your status as a child of God to cultivate and enjoy the presence of God?
22. For what nation or nationality do you feel moved to pray for renewal?

## Judgment on Israel's Leaders - Ezekiel 11:1-25

*Topics:* Advice, Complacency, Consequences, Death, Disobedience, Evil, Fear, Glory, Judgment, Law, Leadership, Murder, Obedience, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Self-righteousness, Sin

### Open It

- \* 1. Why is there such a strong temptation for leaders to consider themselves “above the law”?
- 2. What would be difficult about being exiled from your homeland?

### Explore It

- 3. What did God show Ezekiel at the east gate of the temple? (11:1)
- 4. What did God tell Ezekiel about the leaders of Jerusalem? (11:2)
- \* 5. What was the attitude of the twenty-five leaders of Jerusalem toward their plight and their future? (11:3)
- 6. What did the Spirit command Ezekiel to do in relation to the twenty-five leaders? (11:4)
- 7. What was God's accusation against the leaders of Jerusalem? (11:5-6)
- \* 8. What did God predict would happen to the leaders of Jerusalem who felt they were safe? (11:7-10)
- 9. In what sense did the leaders of Israel fail to understand the nature of God? (11:11-12)
- 10. What happened to one of the leaders even as Ezekiel was prophesying? (11:13)
- 11. What attitude did the people of Jerusalem hold toward Ezekiel and the other exiles? (11:15)
- 12. What ray of hope did God offer to the exiles? (11:16)
- 13. What did God promise about the future of the exiled Israelites? (11:17)
- \* 14. What internal difference did Ezekiel foresee in the Jews who would return to the land? (11:18-20)
- 15. How did God determine the punishment for those who insisted on idolatry? (11:21)
- 16. When the glory departed from Jerusalem, where did Ezekiel go? (11:22-25)

### Get It

- 17. Why would the leaders who were left in Jerusalem after many were exiled to Babylon assume that they were “safe”?
- \* 18. If the meat in the cooking pot represents a position of privilege, why did Jerusalem's leaders view themselves in this way?
- 19. How do you explain Ezekiel's reaction when God struck down one of the leaders before his eyes?
- 20. What evidence do you see that many of the people of our world do not know that God is the Lord?
- 21. Why would it not be effective for God to return the exiles to Jerusalem with their heart unchanged?
- \* 22. What are the characteristics of a “heart of flesh” as opposed to a “heart of stone”?

### Apply It

- \* 23. In what area of your life can you pray that God will soften your heart to His will and His ways?
- 24. In what area can you pray that your nation will acknowledge the lordship of God Almighty before He has to demonstrate it in a devastating way?

## The Exile Symbolized - Ezekiel 12:1-28

**Topics:** Complacency, Delay, Despair, Doubt, Fear, Future, Instructions, Listening, Obedience, People, Punishment, Questions, Rebellion, Slavery, Understanding, Witnessing

### Open It

1. When have you discovered—too late—that you were wrong to assume that you or your belongings were safe?
- \* 2. What is your favorite (stage, television, movie) drama, and why do you find it compelling?

### Explore It

3. What was God's description of the rebelliousness of Israel? (12:1-2)
4. What did God command Ezekiel to do in order to "act out" the prophecy he was giving? (12:3-6)
5. How did Ezekiel report that he responded to God's command? (12:7)
6. How did God tell Ezekiel to interpret his actions to make them clear to the people? (12:8-11)
7. According to the prophecy, what would happen to the prince of Jerusalem? (12:12-14)
- \* 8. What point did God wish to make by scattering the inhabitants of Jerusalem? (12:15)
- \* 9. For what purpose did God intend to spare a few people from "sword, famine and plague"? (12:16)
10. What was the symbolic meaning of the way God told Ezekiel to eat his food? (12:17-20)
11. What proverb was heard frequently in the city of Jerusalem at the time? (12:22)
- \* 12. How did God promise to respond to the false proverb that was common in Jerusalem? (12:22-25)
13. How did God tell Ezekiel to respond to the common wisdom that Ezekiel's prophecies were about a time in the distant future? (12:26-28)

### Get It

14. Why do you think God wanted Ezekiel to "act out" his prophecies?
15. What was revealed about the Israelites in exile when they didn't understand Ezekiel's actions?
- \* 16. Why does God bother to speak to human beings when He knows we are rebellious?
- \* 17. Why is it dangerous to fail to take God's Word seriously, even when we don't see the immediate fulfillment or importance of it?
18. About which commands of God do you tend to think, "That doesn't mean me," or "That doesn't mean now"?
19. What is God's part in enabling us to know His will, and what does He leave up to us?

### Apply It

- \* 20. How can you be sure that you have "eyes to see" and "ears to hear" whenever you read or hear God's Word?
21. In what concrete way can you "act out" God's message through your relationships this week?

## False Prophets Condemned - Ezekiel 13:1-23

*Topics:* Anger, Death, Deceit, Discouragement, Foolishness, Freedom, Judgment, Listening, Lying, Occult, Opposition, Peace, Power, Prophecy, Righteousness, Salvation, Suffering

### Open It

1. For what different reasons do people listen to fortune-tellers and psychics?
- \* 2. When have you refused to face reality in a specific situation?

### Explore It

3. To whom did God tell Ezekiel to prophesy? (13:1-2)
- \* 4. Where did the false prophets get the message they were preaching? (13:2)
5. What had the prophets of Israel actually seen? (13:3)
6. To what animal did Ezekiel compare the false prophets? (13:4)
- \* 7. What had the false prophets not done that God expected of His prophets? (13:5)
8. What verbal “signature” did the prophets use to give their words more weight? (13:6-7)
9. What attitude did God take toward the false prophets? (13:8)
10. In what way did the Lord promise to silence the false prophets? (13:9)
11. With what pleasing message were Israel’s prophets leading the people astray? (13:10)
12. What did God predict about the flimsy wall covered with whitewash? (13:11-12)
13. What imagery did God use to portray the fate of the false prophets and their lies? (13:13-16)
14. What practices did God condemn in the prophetesses of Israel? (13:17-19)
15. What did God promise to do for the people who had been ensnared by the prophetesses? (13:20-21)
- \* 16. How did the false prophets have justice completely reversed? (13:22)
17. What would God prove by delivering His people from the false prophets? (13:23)

### Get It

18. Why is it a temptation for human beings to pass off their own ideas as God’s?
19. What do you suppose the false prophets were telling the people of Jerusalem about their relationship with Babylon and their hope for the future?
- \* 20. Why should we be wary of any Christian teacher who makes us feel complacent and self-satisfied?
- \* 21. What forms of “flimsy, whitewashed walls” do you see being offered today for material or spiritual security?
22. If the prophets were at fault for leading the people astray, for what weakness of character did God hold the people responsible?
23. Why do we prefer to deliver good and flattering news rather than painful and difficult news?

### Apply It

- \* 24. What false security offered to you by the world should you renounce before God in order to remain faithful to Him?
25. How can you be sure that, when you speak the Word of the Lord, you are accurate to His intent?

## Idolaters Condemned - Ezekiel 14:1-11

*Topics:* Answers, Deceit, Evil, Example, Guidance, Guilt, Heart, Idolatry, Leadership, Opposition, People, Prophecy, Punishment, Repentance, Separation, Sin, Temptation

### Open It

- \* 1. In what areas of life do you tend to consider all your options before making a commitment?
- 2. What feelings would go along with finding out that a friend or spouse had been unfaithful?

### Explore It

- 3. Who had come to visit and inquire of Ezekiel the prophet? (14:1)
- 4. What did God reveal to Ezekiel about the elders who came to him? (14:3)
- \* 5. What message was Ezekiel instructed to give the elders about their duplicity? (14:4)
- \* 6. What did God hope to accomplish by answering the elders Himself? (14:5)
- 7. What did God call the people to do immediately? (14:6)
- 8. What promise did God reiterate about people who tried to seek Him without giving up their idols? (14:7-8)
- 9. How would God treat any prophet who would presume to answer a double-minded seeker? (14:9-10)
- \* 10. What did God desire from His people? (14:11)

### Get It

- \* 11. When can we inquire of God and receive an answer?
- \* 12. What did the elders fail to take into account when they consulted God in the presence of Ezekiel?
- 13. Where does all idolatry actually take place?
- 14. What would it mean for an Israelite to be cut off from God's people?
- 15. What are some examples of "wicked stumbling blocks" you see in society?
- 16. What sort of things can become idols of the heart?

### Apply It

- \* 17. What are some practical ways to discover whether you have set up any idols in your heart?
- 18. What common object can you imagine to remind you that God sees into every corner of your heart and mind?

## Judgment Inescapable - Ezekiel 14:12-23

*Topics:* Actions, Anger, Children, Danger, Death, Judgment, Punishment, Righteousness, Salvation, Sickness, Sin, Suffering, Unfaithfulness, War

### Open It

- \* 1. Whom do you consider to be exemplary, godly people?
- 2. What are the different responses that people can make to extreme hardship and suffering?

### Explore It

- 3. What was the cause of God's judgment in the first example given to Ezekiel? (14:12-13)
- 4. What form did God's judgment take in the first hypothetical example? (14:13)
- \* 5. What three great servants of God are used for Ezekiel's examples of faithfulness? (14:14)
- \* 6. In a circumstance that required God's judgment, how many could be saved by exemplary men of faith? (14:14)
- 7. What was the second example of judgment that God gave to Ezekiel? (14:15)
- 8. What family members could Noah, Daniel, or Job save from God's judgment by their own righteousness? (14:16)
- 9. What was a third example of a means of punishment God might use against unfaithfulness? (14:17)
- 10. What expression in this word from God illustrates the certainty of it? (14:18)
- 11. What was the fourth calamity that God might use to execute justice? (14:19)
- 12. If Noah, Daniel, and Job were present in God's hypothetical country, who would be saved by his or her righteousness? (14:20)
- \* 13. How did God portray the prospects for Jerusalem in comparison to the examples He had given? (14:21)
- 14. When the exiled Jews encountered the survivors of Jerusalem, what would they know about the justice of God's punishment of Jerusalem? (14:22-23)

### Get It

- 15. What would move God to judge a nation and destroy it?
- 16. Why do you think God had Ezekiel repeat the same refrain with a variety of calamities that might be visited on a nation?
- 17. What sorts of calamities might God use as His instrument of judgment?
- \* 18. Why does God give us the stories of great men and women of faith?
- \* 19. Why is it unwise to trust in another person, even a righteous person, for your own salvation?

### Apply It

- \* 20. How can you discern whether the righteous people you know are serving as proper examples of faith, or whether you are counting on their goodness to spill over onto you regardless of your effort?
- 21. What biblical hero or heroine can serve as your model for faith and life this coming week?

## Unfaithful Jerusalem - Ezekiel 15:1-17:24

**Topics:** Adultery, Anger, Atonement, Beauty, Children, Comparisons, Complacency, Escape, Evil, Gifts, Greed, Growth, Humiliation, Husbands, Idolatry, Jealousy, Judgment, Leadership, Life, Lust, Perfect, Pride, Promises, Punishment, Rebellion, Rejection, Remembering, Revenge, Righteousness, Running, Sacrifice, Salvation, Shame, Sin, Trust, Unfaithfulness, Value, Weaknesses, Wealth, Wives, Youth

### Open It

1. What is one of your favorite love stories? Why?
- \* 2. In what ways are you most like one or both of your parents?

### Explore It

3. Why did God vow to treat the remnant of His people in Jerusalem like a vine thrown into the fire? (15:6-8)
4. What reception did the allegorical Jerusalem get at the time of her birth? (16:3-5)
5. Into what relationship did God enter with the woman when she was grown? (16:8)
6. How are God's blessings to His people described in the allegory Ezekiel told? (16:9-14)
- \* 7. How did Jerusalem respond to God's love and her good fortune? (16:15-19)
8. With what nations did Jerusalem prostitute herself? (16:23-29)
- \* 9. What punishment does God detail for Jerusalem's unfaithfulness? (16:35-43)
10. How would God reverse the fortunes of the Jews and the Canaanites in order to humble them? (16:53-58)
11. What did God promise to do for Israel in the final analysis? (16:59-63)
12. What is described in the parable told by Ezekiel? (17:1-6)
13. How did the vine respond to the appearance of another eagle? (17:7-8)
14. What fate did God predict for the "unfaithful" vine? (17:9-10)
15. How did God explain the allegory of the two eagles and the vine? (17:11-15)
- \* 16. What did God say would happen to the king who turned to Egypt for help? (17:16-21)
17. After all of this destruction, what did God intend to do with a "shoot"? (17:22-24)

### Get It

18. How can some woods be useful even after they are burned?
19. According to the parable of the baby turned woman, what chance did Jerusalem have to thrive apart from God's grace and favor?
20. What were the allegorical equivalents of some of the blessings enjoyed by Jerusalem as God's people?
- \* 21. In what ways is idolatry portrayed in the parable of the woman?
22. What do you think is the greatest condemnation in the parable of the woman?
23. How do you imagine it felt to Jews to be compared unfavorably to Sodom?
- \* 24. What will likely happen if we seek earthly recourse for the bad circumstances God has allowed to happen to us?
25. How can we be certain that God will carry through on His words?

### Apply It

26. How many ways can you list that God has blessed you as He blessed Israel?
- \* 27. How can you guard against the temptation to seek earthly allies rather than turning to God?



## The Soul Who Sins Will Die - Ezekiel 18:1-32

**Topics:** Accountability, Adultery, Change, Children, Death, Evil, Fairness, Generosity, Greed, Guilt, Heart, Idolatry, Injustice, Judgment, Justice, Law, Life, Parents, Punishment, Questions, Remembering, Repentance, Right, Righteousness, Salvation, Sin, Unfaithfulness

### Open It

- \* 1. Why do we like to have a ready excuse for our failings should they come to light?
- 2. What examples do you know of parents of poor character who have had children of excellent character?

### Explore It

- 3. What parable was current in Israel that God wanted to correct? (18:1-3)
- \* 4. Whose sin did God say has the power to condemn a person to death? (18:4)
- 5. From what sinful activities does God's "righteous man" abstain? (18:5-8)
- 6. What positive activities are part of the righteous person's life? (18:5-9)
- 7. What will happen to the "violent son" of a righteous person who commits the sins his or her father avoided? (18:10-13)
- 8. In Ezekiel's story, how does the violent son's son respond to what he sees in his father? (18:14-17)
- 9. How would God judge the son who did not follow the evil practices of his father? (18:17)
- 10. Whose actions are the final determiner of every soul's fate? (18:19-20)
- 11. How does God feel about a wicked person who repents? (18:21-23)
- \* 12. What happens to a righteous person's good deeds if he or she later turns to sin? (18:24)
- 13. By what logic does God explain His justice through Ezekiel? (18:25-29)
- \* 14. What does God call each person to do in light of His coming judgment? (18:30)
- 15. What new things does a repentant person possess? (18:31)
- 16. What does God desire for each soul He has created? (18:32)

### Get It

- 17. What can we infer about why the Jews of Ezekiel's day felt they were suffering?
- 18. How would it affect our motivation to live a righteous life if we could indeed be punished for our parents' misdeeds?
- 19. What excuse is eliminated if we know that God does not punish us for our parents' sins?
- \* 20. What is the difference between suffering because of the mistakes of our forebears and paying for them?
- \* 21. Why is God more concerned with the way we live today than with our previous mistakes or accomplishments?
- 22. Based on God's attitudes, how should we feel about the misfortunes of nonbelievers?

### Apply It

- 23. What fruits of righteousness can you cultivate this coming week?
- \* 24. How can you help young people to take responsibility for their own soul, regardless of where their parents stand with God?

## Judgment and Restoration for Israel - Ezekiel 19:1-20:44

**Topics:** Acceptance, Anger, Beauty, Blasphemy, Children, Covenant, Evil, Expectations, Fear, Fruit, Gifts, Grace, Honor, Idolatry, Image, Judgment, Law, Leadership, Life, Listening, Mourning, Obedience, Parents, Punishment, Purity, Rebellion, Rejection, Rest, Sacrifice, Serving, Strength, Swearing, Unfaithfulness

### Open It

- \* 1. What do you think determines whether a person will learn from his or her mistakes?
- 2. When would a fresh start have been very timely for you? Why?

### Explore It

- 3. What picture did Ezekiel use to portray Judah's princes in his lament? (19:1-9)
- 4. How did Ezekiel use the image of a vine to sketch a "before and after" picture of Judah? (19:10-14)
- 5. What was God's reaction to the elders' request? (20:2-3)
- 6. What was the first instance of His love and favor with which God confronted the elders of Israel? (20:4-7)
- \* 7. How did Israel respond when God delivered them out of Egypt? (20:8)
- 8. How did God bless Israel in spite of their unfaithfulness? (20:9-12)
- 9. Even after they had been delivered from Egypt, how did Israel treat God and His law? (20:13)
- \* 10. What was God's concern for His name? (20:14)
- 11. What punishment did the generation of the Exodus suffer for their sin? (20:15-16)
- 12. How did God show His pity to the elder generation and offer a new start to the younger generation? (20:17-20)
- 13. What was to be the punishment for the second generation's rebellion? (20:23)
- 14. To what pagan practice did God "give them over"? (20:25-26)
- 15. Once they had taken possession of the Promised Land, how did Israel continue to rebel against God? (20:27-29)
- \* 16. What practices of the current generation led God to swear that He would not allow their elders to inquire of Him? (20:30-31)
- 17. Why did God say that they would never worship "wood and stone" as they seemed to desire? (20:32-38)
- 18. What would be different about the Israel that God would gather from their exile in the future? (20:39-42)
- 19. What would Israel realize about God and about themselves when He accomplished His final deliverance? (20:43-44)

### Get It

- 20. What events in the recent history of Judah were portrayed in Ezekiel's lament of the lioness?
- 21. According to the lament of the vine, what was left of Israel following God's judgment?
- \* 22. Why did the elders who came to Ezekiel need a history lesson?
- 23. How often did Israel get everything she deserved in terms of punishment?
- 24. Why did God not allow Israel to go her own way in the long run, serving gods of wood and stone?
- \* 25. Like Israel, what do we need in order to assess rightly our condition before God and to obey Him?

### Apply It

- \* 26. When in the next week or two can you take an hour for a historical overview of your life and God's working in it?
- 27. What spiritual issues should you always take care of before you come to God asking for favors or insight?



## Babylon, God's Sword of Judgment - Ezekiel 20:45-21:32

*Topics:* Anger, Death, Doubt, Evil, Fear, Grief, Guidance, Guilt, Heart, Idolatry, Judgment, Lying, Mourning, Opposition, Prophecy, Punishment, Purity, Questions, Rebellion, Restoration, Sin, Testing, War

### Open It

1. Do you consider yourself a pessimist or an optimist? Why?
- \* 2. From what calamities that confront other people do you consider yourself basically immune?

### Explore It

3. Where did God tell Ezekiel to direct his prophecy? (20:45-46)
4. What image of natural disaster did God use to illustrate what was about to happen to Judah? (20:46-48)
- \* 5. What did Ezekiel tell God that the people were likely to say about his prophecy? (20:49)
6. What new image did God use to describe the destruction to come? (21:3)
7. Which of the people were to be "cut off" from the land of Judah and Jerusalem? (21:3-4)
8. What did God intend for the people to understand through the immensity of disaster? (21:5)
9. What sign was Ezekiel to give through his behavior? (21:6-7)
- \* 10. How would the scepter of Judah (symbol of nationhood) stand up to the sharpened sword of God's judgment? (21:8-10)
11. What emotion was Ezekiel portraying by wailing and beating his breast? (21:11-12)
12. According to the prophecy, what was going to become of the scepter of Judah? (21:13-17)
13. What did God reveal in advance that the king of Babylon would decide to do, guided by pagan divination? (21:18-22)
14. Since the people felt they were safe, how would they respond to the approach of the army of Babylon? (21:23)
- \* 15. Why were the people of Jerusalem going to be taken captive? (21:24)
16. What did Ezekiel say it would take to restore the throne of Judah? (21:27)
17. How would the Ammonites be judged for their insulting delight in the destruction of Judah? (21:28-32)

### Get It

- \* 18. Why did the prophecies contain images of total destruction?
19. With what reasoning did the people who heard Ezekiel tend to minimize or explain away his words?
20. What nation was represented in the prophecy as the sharpened sword?
21. Why did God conquer Israel's enemies, even when Israel was in need of discipline?
22. What gloomy predictions do you tend to minimize? Why?
- \* 23. What can you deduce about Ezekiel's popularity among the exiles from the messages that he delivered?
24. How would you describe God's wrath, once kindled?

### Apply It

25. In what relationships do you need to ask God to strengthen you to be unpopular (if necessary) for His sake?
- \* 26. How can you reduce the security you feel in your circumstances and increase your dependence upon God?

## Jerusalem's Sins - Ezekiel 22:1-31

**Topics:** Anger, Consequences, Death, Deceit, Dishonesty, Guilt, Holiness, Idolatry, Immorality, Injustice, Judgment, Lying, Murder, Oppressed, Parents, Power, Purity

### Open It

- \* 1. In your opinion what are the conditions that contribute to the moral decline of a nation?
- 2. How would you describe the way you feel about the suffering of the innocent versus the suffering of the guilty?

### Explore It

- \* 3. What, according to Ezekiel, had made Jerusalem guilty and defiled? (22:1-4)
- 4. What consequences had Jerusalem brought upon herself by her sin? (22:4-5)
- 5. What accusation did Ezekiel bring against the princes of Israel? (22:6)
- 6. What direct contradictions of God's laws were taking place in Jerusalem? (22:7-12)
- 7. What was the chief thing Israel had "forgotten"? (22:12)
- 8. What did God predict about the courage and strength of Judah in the face of His judgments? (22:13-16)
- 9. What image did God use to illustrate how He would purify Israel? (22:17-22)
- \* 10. What particular sins did God hold against the civil and religious leaders of the people? (22:23-29)
- \* 11. Before He decreed the destruction of Jerusalem, for whom did God look? (22:30)
- 12. Whom did God hold responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem? (22:31)

### Get It

- \* 13. What are the potential benefits and potential dangers of the presence of believers in morally dark places?
- 14. Why would someone claim that God had said something He didn't say?
- \* 15. If God had found a person to "stand in the gap," what do you think that person would have done about the rampant sin of the people?
- 16. How do Christians sometimes rationalize behavior contrary to God's commands?
- 17. Why is injustice to our fellow human beings contrary to proper worship of the living God?

### Apply It

- \* 18. How might you be a light in a morally dark place not far from you?
- 19. How can you speak up for oppressed groups who might not be able to speak for themselves?

## Two Adulterous Sisters - Ezekiel 23:1-49

**Topics:** Adultery, Anger, Consequences, Hatred, Idolatry, Immorality, Lust, Preparation, Punishment, Remembering, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Shame, Sin, Sorrow

### Open It

- \* 1. In what ways are you and your siblings alike or different?
- 2. In your opinion how difficult is it to change patterns of behavior that are developed during your youth?

### Explore It

- \* 3. Who was represented by the two sisters in Ezekiel's parable? (23:1-4)
- 4. Where were the two sisters first guilty of unfaithfulness and prostitution? (23:3)
- 5. After what nation's warriors did the first sister, representing Samaria, lust? (23:5-8)
- 6. What other sin followed along with "prostitution"? (23:7)
- 7. To what judgment did God hand over Oholah, the first sister? (23:9-10)
- 8. How did the one woman behave when she saw what happened to her sister? (23:11-13)
- \* 9. In what way did Oholibah (Judah) go farther than Oholah in her sin? (23:14-21)
- 10. What did God promise would happen to Oholibah? (23:22-24)
- 11. Whose standards of punishment would be applied against Judah? (23:24-26)
- 12. What words are used to describe what would be Judah's condition after she was judged? (23:28-34)
- 13. What attitude toward God compelled Him to allow Judah's suffering? (23:35)
- 14. What sins did the Lord list that He held against Israel and Judah? (23:36-41)
- 15. To whom did even the children of prostitutes belong? (23:37)
- \* 16. How would the two sisters be treated by evil men and righteous men, respectively? (23:42-45)
- 17. How did God intend to put an end to the prostitution of His people? (23:46-48)

### Get It

- \* 18. How might the people of Judah have felt about being told they were worse than Israel, which had already suffered God's judgment?
- 19. When have you wanted something that, once attained, ultimately disappointed you?
- 20. How can we expect to be treated by others if we treat ourselves with contempt?
- \* 21. Why, once we have given into one sin, does it become easier to go on to something worse?
- 22. How does God feel about little ones, regardless of the circumstances of their conception or birth?
- 23. In what sense was the Babylonian invasion and exile an instance of God's people bearing the consequences of their own actions?

### Apply It

- 24. What negative pattern from your childhood or youth do you need to "unlearn" with God's help?
- \* 25. When you feel the lure of power, wealth, or inordinate pleasure, how can you counteract it and remain faithful to God?

## The Cooking Pot and Ezekiel's Wife - Ezekiel 24:1-27

*Topics:* Actions, Affections, Anger, Children, Glory, Grief, Guilt, History, Immorality, Joy, Mourning, Murder, Pride, Purity, Revenge, Silence, Sin, Suffering, Timing, War

### Open It

- \* 1. What was it that dirtied the most difficult pot or pan you've ever had to scrub clean?
- 2. What do you consider the most difficult aspect of the death of a loved one?

### Explore It

- \* 3. Of what cataclysmic event did God inform Ezekiel on the very day it was taking place far away? (24:1-2)
- 4. What procedures of a normal sacrificial meal did God detail at the beginning of the cooking pot prophecy? (24:3-5)
- 5. What did God call the city of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's day? (24:6)
- 6. According to the prophecy, what was wrong with the "cooking pot" of Judah? (24:6-8)
- 7. Why did God intend to take the "cooking" far beyond the point where it would give pleasure to the people? (24:9-12)
- \* 8. What would be necessary in order for Judah to be "clean" once again? (24:13)
- 9. What would be the basis of God's judgment against Judah? (24:14)
- 10. What unusual command did the Lord give Ezekiel along with a disturbing prediction? (24:15-17)
- 11. What did Ezekiel do when his wife died as God had predicted? (24:18)
- 12. What question did the exiles ask Ezekiel about his unusual behavior? (24:19)
- 13. What intention did God declare to the exiles? (24:20-21)
- 14. What attitude had the exiles had toward the city of Jerusalem and its leaders who remained there? (24:21)
- 15. What did God predict that the exiles would do in response to the news about Jerusalem? (24:22-24)
- \* 16. When would Ezekiel be released from the command to remain silent except when he had a word from the Lord? (24:25-27)

### Get It

- 17. What might the people have thought when Ezekiel named an exact day for the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem?
- 18. How did Ezekiel's prophecy put a different slant on the assumption of the people left in Jerusalem that they were somehow favored over the exiles?
- \* 19. What did God mean when He said that the cooking pot had "frustrated all efforts" to cleanse it?
- 20. What are some examples from your experience of God's efforts to purify an individual short of destroying him or her?
- 21. When Ezekiel took some sort of unusual action (or inaction), what had the people come to know about the significance of it?
- \* 22. Which of your relationships would be the most difficult for you to disrupt in order to be obedient to God?
- 23. Why was the arrival of a fugitive from Jerusalem to confirm the news of its downfall going to be a turning point in Ezekiel's ministry?

### Apply It

- 24. What relationships do you want to subjugate to God's commands with a prayer now?
- \* 25. In what practical way could you cooperate with God's efforts to cleanse your life in the coming days?





## Prophecies against the Nations - Ezekiel 25:1-26:21

**Topics:** Anger, Blasphemy, Death, Enemies, Fear, Guilt, Joy, Opposition, Power, Prophecy, Punishment, Revenge, War, Wealth

### Open It

- \* 1. When have you experienced a setback and known that someone who disliked you was glad to see it?
- 2. What violent people of whom you're aware have met a violent end in recent years?

### Explore It

- 3. What was the first foreign nation against which Ezekiel was instructed to prophesy? (25:1-2)
- 4. What attitude did God hold against the people of Ammon? (25:3)
- 5. To what group did Ezekiel prophesy that Ammon would fall victim? (25:4-5)
- \* 6. How did Ezekiel describe the reaction of the Ammonites to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of God? (25:6)
- \* 7. What point did God desire to make by the destruction of Ammon? (25:7)
- 8. What blasphemy was uttered by Moab and Seir? (25:8)
- 9. Who was God's instrument to punish Moab? (25:9-11)
- 10. What was the source of Edom's guilt before God? (25:12)
- 11. What people did God intend to use to express His vengeance against Edom? (25:14)
- 12. How did God feel about the long-standing hostility of the Philistines against Judah? (25:15-17)
- \* 13. What bad news about Jerusalem did the people of Tyre assume to be good news for them? (26:1-2)
- 14. What sorts of destruction did God decree for Tyre? (26:3-6)
- 15. What king is named as the final destroyer of Tyre? (26:7-11)
- 16. What specific components of the wealth of Tyre were slated for destruction? (26:12-13)
- 17. How lasting was the judgment against Tyre? (26:14)
- 18. What reaction of foreign princes would underline the extent of the destruction in Tyre? (26:15-18)
- 19. In what way was the end of the kingdom of Tyre going to be the worst of those described? (26:19-21)

### Get It

- \* 20. How did God defend His name and the distinctiveness of His people even as He punished Israel?
- \* 21. Ultimately, which of the peoples of the earth are uniquely accountable to the Lord?
- 22. Why are violent people more likely than peace-loving people to meet a violent end?
- 23. How would you describe the ways in which God is expressing His wrath toward His enemies in modern society?
- 24. Why does it matter to God what conclusions unbelievers draw about His nature from His interactions with His people?
- 25. What do you think is God's opinion of human arrogance?
- 26. Why do you suppose we can be "horrified" by extreme human misfortune, even if the sufferers deserve punishment?
- 27. What would be a godly reaction to the downfall of a wicked person?

### Apply It

- \* 28. How can you ask God to prepare your heart for the next time you hear of the downfall of a fellow Christian?
- 29. What can be your response if you feel that the name of God is being maligned?

## Prophecies against Tyre and Sidon - Ezekiel 27:1-28:26

**Topics:** Beauty, Dishonesty, Enemies, Fear, Glory, Greatness, Grief, Heart, Holiness, Mourning, Neighbor, Pain, Perfect, Possessions, Pride, Punishment, Reputation, Revenge, Sin, Understanding, Wealth, Wisdom

### Open It

1. For what era in the past do you feel nostalgic? Why?
- \* 2. What do you consider the most beautiful city you have ever visited?
3. What do you consider to be an ideal relationship with your neighbors?

### Explore It

- \* 4. For what city outside of Israel did God instruct Ezekiel to “take up a lament”? (27:1-2)
- \* 5. With what riches and skills was Tyre generously endowed? (27:3-9)
6. From what countries did some of Tyre’s soldiers hail? (27:10-11)
7. What were some of the exotic products that were traded through Tyre? (27:12-24)
8. What disaster did Ezekiel predict would bring an end to Tyre? (27:25-36)
9. To whom was Ezekiel instructed to speak God’s Word? (28:1-2)
10. What chain of events brought the ruler of Tyre to his current estimation of himself? (28:2-5)
- \* 11. What judgment did God declare for the ruler who thought of himself as a god? (28:6-10)
12. What were some of the glories of Tyre for which people would mourn? (28:11-14)
13. What “before” and “after” pictures are presented of the character of the king of Tyre? (28:15-19)
14. What other trading kingdom besides Tyre was to come under God’s judgment? (28:20-24)
15. What reversal of fortunes would eventually take place between Israel and her neighbors? (28:25-26)

### Get It

16. How would you characterize a person with the description Ezekiel gives of Tyre’s former “model” state?
17. What do you suppose is meant by the title of “guardian cherub” used to describe Tyre?
- \* 18. In what ways can God’s punishment of an individual or society influence the attitudes and actions of those who observe?
- \* 19. What choice do we have about how we view our prosperity?
20. In what way does pride separate us from God?

### Apply It

- \* 21. What test can you devise to determine whether the good gifts God has given you are being used to His glory?
22. What blessing might become a temptation to seek security outside of God alone?

## Prophecies against Egypt - Ezekiel 29:1-32:32

**Topics:** Abandon, Anger, Beauty, Covenant, Darkness, Death, Envy, Evil, Fear, Greatness, Hell, History, Idolatry, Judgment, Mourning, Opposition, Power, Pride, Prophecy, Punishment, Rejection, Shame, Sin, Slavery, Sovereignty, Strength, Suffering, War, Weaknesses, Wealth, Youth

### Open It

- \* 1. What is one of the most grandiose and self-important statements you've heard anyone make?
- 2. What are the various traumatic events of life that we can buy insurance to try to soften?

### Explore It

- \* 3. What attitude or belief on the part of Pharaoh king of Egypt brought him under God's judgment? (29:3)
- 4. What figure of speech is used to describe the power and extent of God's judgment on Egypt? (29:4-5)
- 5. How had Egypt hurt God's people Israel most recently? (29:6-7)
- 6. Over what crucial resource did God want to demonstrate that He had power? (29:10)
- 7. How long was the devastation of the land going to last? (29:11-12)
- 8. Following the initial punishment, what would be the fate of the kingdom of Egypt? (29:13-15)
- \* 9. What false promise of assistance did God want to eliminate for Israel? (29:16)
- \* 10. About what foreign war did God inform Ezekiel because of its bearing on Egypt? (29:17-20)
- 11. What did Ezekiel prophesy about the greatness and wealth of Egypt? (30:1-4)
- 12. What great cities, along with their idols, were doomed to destruction? (30:13-19)
- 13. In the third word to Ezekiel concerning Egypt, what physical image was used to illustrate how unreliable she was to become as an ally for Israel? (30:20-26)
- 14. What formerly great nation is described as a comparison for Egypt? (31:1-9)
- 15. Why was Assyria judged like a huge tree that is cut down and abandoned? (31:10-13)
- 16. According to the allegory, how did the smaller nations fare who had allied themselves with Assyria? (31:15-17)
- 17. To what powerful animals did Ezekiel liken Egypt in his lament? (32:1-8)
- 18. What reaction to Egypt's downfall was predicted for other peoples and nations? (32:9-10)
- 19. What was the consistent complaint against the nations God had already consigned to "the pit"? (32:22-30)

### Get It

- 20. Why would it be a temptation for Israel to be drawn to Egypt as a source of protection?
- 21. Why would Pharaoh want to claim that he owned (indeed had made) the Nile River?
- \* 22. In what ways do we tend to take credit for things that only God can do?
- 23. What do Ezekiel's prophecies make clear about the rise of Babylon as a conquering power?
- 24. How might the exiled Jews, who hoped to be rescued by Egypt, have responded to Ezekiel's lament for Egypt?
- 25. How does God feel about great civilizations that are brought low by pride?
- \* 26. Why didn't God want His people to rely on Egypt as their salvation from the Babylonian threat?
- 27. How should God's sweeping judgments of nations in the Old Testament shape our responses to Him today?

### Apply It

- \* 28. In what great person, idea, tradition, etc., might you be placing too much of your hope, rather than relying solely on the Lord?
- 29. For what accomplishment or role do you want to give God credit and glory today?



## Ezekiel and the Fall of Jerusalem - Ezekiel 33:1-33

**Topics:** Accountability, Adultery, Danger, Death, Deceit, Disobedience, Escape, Evil, Hypocrisy, Justice, Life, Pleasure, Pride, Prophecy, Remembering, Repentance, Righteousness, Salvation, Silence, Sin, Trust

### Open It

1. How much interest do you sense in the people around you in talking about God, heaven, and hell?
- \* 2. The last time you were one of the only Christians in a social, academic, or work setting, what expectations did people have of you because of that role?

### Explore It

3. In the event of a threat to a city, what is the responsibility of the watchman and the people? (33:1-6)
4. What title and picture of his duties did God give to Ezekiel? (33:7-9)
- \* 5. What result did God want from the warnings given by His “watchman”? (33:10-11)
- \* 6. How did God say He would judge a righteous person who turns and does evil? (33:12-13)
7. What concrete steps might a wicked person take to demonstrate true repentance? (33:14-16)
8. What “argument” did God have with the exiles regarding justice? (33:17-20)
9. At what point in his exile did Ezekiel receive confirmation of the fall of Jerusalem? (33:21)
10. What restriction on the prophet was lifted at about the time of the fall of Jerusalem? (33:22)
11. What assumption was made by those who were left in Judah after the first deportation from Jerusalem? (33:23-24)
12. Why did God say that the remaining Jews did not deserve to possess the land? (33:25-26)
13. What judgment did God pronounce on the remnant who had stayed in Jerusalem? (33:27-29)
14. What did God inform Ezekiel that the people were saying about him? (33:30)
- \* 15. What was the difference between what the people heard and what they did? (33:31-32)
16. What did God say would vindicate Ezekiel in the eyes of his fellow exiles? (33:33)

### Get It

- \* 17. In what sense are Christians appointed “watchmen” for our world?
- \* 18. Why does God focus on the current condition of our heart rather than on the good or evil we have done in the past?
19. Who does God say is in control of each individual’s choice of spiritual life or death?
20. What does God expect of every person who hears His Word?
21. What indications do you see that our society likes to hear religious thoughts but does not want to put them into practice?
22. In what way is God more interested in what we do in our daily life than in what we say we believe?
23. What conflicting emotions do you imagine Ezekiel felt when the fall of Jerusalem, which he had predicted for so long, finally took place?

### Apply It

- \* 24. What creative way could you find to “sound the trumpet” of God’s coming judgment to nonbelievers around you who might not otherwise listen?
25. What steps could you take to help insure that you don’t just hear God’s Word, but you also put it into practice?

## Shepherds and Sheep - Ezekiel 34:1-31

*Topics:* Abundance, Accountability, Blessing, Caring, Covenant, Darkness, Fear, Greed, Healing, Judgment, Justice, Leadership, Opposition, Peace, Prophecy, Relationships, Responsibility, Rest, Safety, Salvation, Security, Selfishness

### Open It

- \* 1. What have you noticed about the changes in people's lives when they add the responsibility of a child?
- 2. Why do you think it is common for powerful politicians to live a substantially more comfortable life than the people they govern?

### Explore It

- \* 3. Why was God angry with the "shepherds" of Israel? (34:1-2)
- 4. What comforts and privileges were the rulers taking for themselves? (34:3)
- 5. What needs of the common people were being overlooked by their leaders? (34:4)
- 6. In what condition did God find "His sheep" at this point in Israel's history? (34:5-6)
- \* 7. What did God promise to do on behalf of the helpless sheep? (34:7-10)
- \* 8. How does God describe His care for the flock (that is, His people)? (34:11-16)
- 9. Why did God find it necessary to judge some of the sheep? (34:17-19)
- 10. How would the weak and strong sheep fare under God's one shepherd? (34:20-24)
- 11. What are the various forms of deliverance and blessing promised to God's people? (34:25-29)
- 12. What undeniable conclusion would Israel draw from God's activity on their behalf? (34:30)
- 13. How did God describe His relationship to Israel? (34:31)

### Get It

- 14. What responsibilities go along with the privileges of leadership?
- 15. How do you think church leaders should demonstrate concern for the problems of the less fortunate in the community of faith?
- \* 16. How does God view selfishness and inconsiderateness among His people?
- \* 17. Why do you think God emphasizes that He will take ultimate responsibility for the weak and helpless?
- 18. What will become of selfish and irresponsible leaders?
- 19. What is appealing about the kind of care God gives His sheep?

### Apply It

- \* 20. Which practical needs in your immediate circle of influence might God want to use you to meet?
- 21. What safeguard would you suggest to help Christian leaders remember the least of God's sheep?

## Prophecies to Edom and the Mountains of Israel - Ezekiel 35:1-36:38

*Topics:* Anger, Blessing, Death, Enemies, Evil, Fruit, Hatred, Heart, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Idolatry, Jealousy, Judgment, Law, Name, Obedience, Opposition, Promises, Prophecy, Punishment, Purity, Relationships, Restoration, Selfishness, Shame, Sin, Slavery, Suffering

### Open It

1. What examples do you know of people who took advantage of someone else's misfortune?
- \* 2. With what kinds of suffering do you find it difficult to empathize?

### Explore It

3. What did God promise to do to Mount Seir (Edom)? (35:1-4)
- \* 4. What had the Edomites done to anger God? (35:5-6)
5. What unrighteous attitudes formed the basis for God's judgment of Edom? (35:11)
- \* 6. How did God intend to vindicate His name by turning the tables on Edom? (35:14-15)
7. How did God, through Ezekiel, show that He understood all that had happened to Israel at the hands of their enemies? (36:1-5)
8. What did God promise to do to Israel's enemies in answer to their scorn? (36:6-7)
9. What changes did Ezekiel predict in the land of Israel? (36:8-12)
10. What did God's people do while they were dwelling in the land to defile it and reap God's judgment? (36:16-19)
11. How was God's name slandered by the very judgment He visited on His people? (36:20-21)
12. For whose sake did God act to restore Israel and punish her enemies? (36:22-23)
13. What did God intend to prove to the other nations who had witnessed Israel's punishment? (36:23)
- \* 14. Once God had gathered His people, what internal changes did He promise them? (36:24-28)
15. What calamities did God intend to reverse for Israel? (36:29-30)
16. How would God's people feel about their past rebellion after He restored them? (36:31)
17. What message would the surrounding nations get from God's restoration of Israel? (36:33-36)

### Get It

18. What is good and bad about being "opportunistic"?
- \* 19. Why is it wrong to scorn those who suffer, even if they suffer for their own sins?
20. Why might the pagan nations have assumed that God didn't hear their slander?
21. By scattering the people of Israel in exile in other countries, how did God jeopardize His good name?
22. What was God's biggest reason for the dramatic reversal between the mountains (strength) of Israel and of Seir?
- \* 23. What does God know that we need (in addition to His material blessings) in order to serve Him faithfully?

### Apply It

- \* 24. What group of suffering people can you ask God to help you view from His perspective?
25. The next time you become aware of some conflict or disarray among God's people that damages God's name, what can you do to be God's instrument of healing and wholeness?

## Dry Bones, New Life - Ezekiel 37:1-28

**Topics:** Backslide, Covenant, Death, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Hopelessness, Idolatry, Knowledge, Law, Life, Obedience, Peace, Power, Prophecy, Questions, Salvation, Sin, Sovereignty, Unity

### Open It

- \* 1. When have you been separated from your loved ones for an extended period of time?
- 2. What is one of the most hopeless circumstances in which you've ever found yourself?

### Explore It

- 3. What strange sight was Ezekiel shown in a vision? (37:1-2)
- 4. What question did the Lord ask of Ezekiel, and how did he answer? (37:3)
- 5. What did God promise to do with the dry bones? (37:4-6)
- 6. What happened as Ezekiel began to prophesy to the bones, as God had commanded? (37:7-8)
- 7. How did the restored bodies begin to breathe again? (37:9-10)
- 8. What saying of the people had given rise to the image of "dry bones"? (37:11)
- \* 9. What did God explain to Ezekiel about the meaning of the vision of the valley of dry bones? (37:11-12)
- \* 10. What would God's people know and receive when God acted in their behalf? (37:13-14)
- 11. What visual demonstration did God tell Ezekiel to do with two sticks? (37:15-17)
- \* 12. What good news was contained in Ezekiel's symbolic action with two sticks? (37:18-22)
- 13. What sins would God cleanse in order to make Israel His people again? (37:23)
- 14. According to the prophecy, how was Israel's relationship to God and God's treatment of them going to change? (37:24-28)

### Get It

- 15. What images come to mind about a nation of people symbolized by dry bones?
- \* 16. What did Ezekiel have to know about God in order to see potential in the dry bones?
- 17. What are some key features of the reign of "David" (the Messiah)?
- \* 18. Why is it desirable to have Jehovah God dwell (live) with us?
- 19. In what areas of your community do you see the need for reunification among individuals or groups?

### Apply It

- \* 20. What habits can you cultivate that will make you more likely to see hopeless situations from God's perspective?
- 21. What division between people or nations can you make a matter of earnest prayer this week?



## A Prophecy against Gog - Ezekiel 38:1-39:29

**Topics:** Anger, Compassion, Death, Employment, Enemies, Evil, Fear, Glory, Greatness, Greed, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Intentions, Judgment, Opposition, Peace, Promises, Prophecy, Protection, Punishment, Revenge, Sacrifice, Shame, Sin, Unfaithfulness, War, Wealth, Zeal

### Open It

1. What character, historical or fictional, is the personification of evil in your mind?
- \* 2. What is your favorite story of the triumph of an underdog?

### Explore It

3. To whom was Ezekiel told to address his next prophecy? (38:1-3)
4. What gathering of the enemies of Israel would be accomplished by God “pulling them together”? (38:4-6)
5. What great invasion would be plotted by Gog? (38:7-9)
6. For what purpose would the various nations arrive at an evil scheme? (38:10-13)
7. Why was God going to allow a great assault on Israel? (38:14-16)
- \* 8. For what response would God be poised when Gog threatened Israel? (38:18-23)
9. What did God intend to do to the homeland of the aggressors while they fell in battle on the mountains of Israel? (39:1-6)
- \* 10. What is God prepared to defend in the great battle of the nations? (39:7-8)
11. After God’s intervention in their behalf, what unusual provisions would Israel have for years to come? (39:9-10)
12. How does Ezekiel describe the magnitude of the death and destruction wrought against the forces of Gog? (39:11-16)
13. What gory “sacrifice” would the birds and wild beasts have set before them? (39:17-20)
14. In this demonstration of His glory, what would the nations see and what would Israel understand? (39:21-22)
15. Why did God want the rest of the nations to be clear on His reasons for turning against Israel in the past? (39:23-24)
- \* 16. What are the various ways in which God will show compassion on His people in the future? (39:25-29)

### Get It

17. Where should the people of God turn for help in times of trouble?
18. Of what nations of the earth is God the Lord?
19. In what way is God the Lord of every nation on earth?
20. What comfort can God’s people take in knowing how God will use evil for His purposes?
- \* 21. How should we react if the enemies of God rise up to challenge blessings that He has given to us?
22. Why would the land need to be cleansed after the great battle in which Gog is defeated?
- \* 23. In your opinion, of all the blessings promised to God’s people in this prophecy, which is the greatest? Why?

### Apply It

- \* 24. How can you tell at least one other person this week of the Lord’s gracious blessings in your life?
25. What frightening evil power in your life or in your world can remind you throughout the week to praise God for His omnipotence?

## The Architecture of the New Temple - Ezekiel 40:1-42:20

*Topics:* Details, Holiness, Listening, Prophecy, Separation, Temple, Vision

### Open It

- \* 1. What are some of the more impressive examples of architecture that you have seen?
- 2. How difficult would it be for you to find your way around your home blindfolded?

### Explore It

- 3. What was the specific time of Ezekiel's vision of the temple? (40:1)
- 4. Whom did Ezekiel meet when God transported him to Jerusalem in a vision? (40:2-3)
- 5. What instructions did the man have for Ezekiel before they set out on their exploration? (40:4)
- 6. What was impressive about the wall that surrounded the temple Ezekiel saw? (40:5)
- \* 7. What are some examples of how detailed Ezekiel's description of the east gate area becomes? (40:6-16)
- 8. What did the man do each time he stopped at the outer court, the north gate, and the south gate? (40:17-27)
- \* 9. What sorts of rooms did Ezekiel see before he actually came into the temple? (40:28-47)
- 10. What was at the center of the temple structure? (40:48-41:15)
- \* 11. How were the internal parts of the temple decorated? (41:16-26)
- 12. What important activity was to take place in the side rooms around the temple? (42:1-13)
- 13. What specific regulations were given with regard to the priests' garments inside and outside the temple? (42:14)
- 14. How was the whole temple area kept distinct from the "common" parts of the city? (42:15-20)

### Get It

- \* 15. Why do you think the exiles to whom Ezekiel spoke might have "eaten up" every detail of his description of the temple?
- 16. What point did the temple buildings and worship practices make by separating the holy from the common?
- 17. In what respect was Ezekiel a "servant" of the exiled people of Israel?
- \* 18. If someone could bring you a blueprint of heaven, what details would you want it to include?
- 19. How would you describe heaven to someone unfamiliar with the Bible?

### Apply It

- 20. How could you express your gratitude for the care that has gone into the planning and maintenance of your place of worship?
- \* 21. How can the prospect of a new heaven and a new earth inspire you in a specific problem you are presently facing?

## The Glory Returns to the Temple - Ezekiel 43:1-27

**Topics:** Acceptance, Anger, Atonement, Dedication, Faithfulness, Glory, Holiness, Holy Spirit, Home, Idolatry, Law, Name, Plans, Purity, Sacrifice, Separation, Shame, Sin

### Open It

- \* 1. What kinds of places do you find most conducive to worship? Why?
- 2. What do you think is the deepest, commonest human desire?
- 3. Judging from your own observations, what does our society consider holy?

### Explore It

- 4. What did the man of bronze show to Ezekiel after he had toured the whole restored temple area? (43:1-2)
- \* 5. How did Ezekiel describe the return of the glory of God to the temple? (43:3-4)
- 6. Where was Ezekiel transported after his initial vision of the glory of God approaching from the east? (43:5)
- 7. What did the voice from within the temple say? (43:6-7)
- 8. How had Israel angered God and brought on their own destruction? (43:8-9)
- \* 9. What response did God hope to produce in the people when Ezekiel related his vision of the temple? (43:10-11)
- 10. How was Ezekiel instructed to preserve the details and dimensions of the temple God showed him? (43:11)
- 11. How much ground was to be dedicated as holy ground? (43:12)
- 12. How was the altar in the new temple to be constructed? (43:13-17)
- 13. What specific instructions were given for a week-long dedication of the altar? (43:18-26)
- \* 14. How did God promise to respond after the eighth day of sacrifices and offerings? (43:27)

### Get It

- 15. Why was the return of the Lord's presence (described in Ezekiel 43) critical to the overall restoration of God's people?
- \* 16. What emotions do you suppose Ezekiel experienced as he watched the glory of the Lord return to the temple?
- 17. When does a beautiful worship space help us worship, and when is it a distraction?
- 18. Why were Ezekiel's previous visions helpful to him when God showed him other things?
- 19. How could the temple in its symmetry, beauty, and greatness cause the people to be ashamed of their sins?
- \* 20. How can the beauty and perfection of the heavenly worship, communicated to us in the Bible, be an encouragement to us in our present trials?

### Apply It

- 21. Knowing that you are accepted by God, how can you reach out this week in His name to a person who may not feel acceptable?
- \* 22. Where can you go for a brief retreat to remember God's greatness and glory compared to your difficulties?

## Rules Concerning the Temple and Worship - Ezekiel 44:1-46:24

**Topics:** Awe, Blessing, Consequences, Covenant, Death, Details, Devotion, Disobedience, Faithfulness, Fear, Gifts, Glory, Heritage, Holiness, Idolatry, Justice, Law, Listening, Marriage, Possessions, Purity, Rebellion, Responsibility, Sacrifice, Separation, Serving, Shame, Sin, Sovereignty, Unfaithfulness, Work

### Open It

- \* 1. Would you prefer a world where faithfulness and hard work are rewarded or a world where good fortune is dispensed at random? Why?
- 2. Why do you think society dictates that we dress up for certain occasions and not others?

### Explore It

- 3. What special instructions did the guide in Ezekiel's vision have for the east gate to the sanctuary? (44:1-3)
- 4. How did Ezekiel react when he saw the glory of the Lord? (44:4)
- \* 5. To what instructions did God tell Ezekiel to pay particular attention, in order to correct God's people? (44:5-6)
- 6. What practice would God not tolerate in the restored temple? (44:7-9)
- 7. Why were the Levites to be limited only to certain duties within the temple? (44:10-14)
- 8. What group did God designate to serve as priests in the inner court? (44:15-16)
- 9. What were some ways in which the priests were expected to maintain a greater degree of purity in their life than were the common people? (44:17-27)
- 10. What provisions did God make for the sustenance of the priests? (44:28-31)
- \* 11. How did God redraw the map of Jerusalem to provide for the temple, the priests, and the prince in an equitable way? (45:1-8)
- \* 12. What abuses of power by prior rulers did God want to eliminate in the restored kingdom? (45:9-12)
- 13. What sorts of offerings did God specify for special days on the Jewish calendar? (45:13-25)
- 14. How was the opening and closing of certain gates to be a part of the temple ceremonies? (46:1-12)
- 15. What were the required daily offerings? (46:13-15)
- 16. How did God's laws on inheritance insure separateness for His people and justice among them? (46:16-18)
- 17. What practical provision was made in the temple since most of the sacrifices were followed by feasts? (46:19-24)

### Get It

- \* 18. What indications do you see in these three chapters of God's expectations of those in leadership?
- 19. Where in these chapters do you see God's concern for the "little person"?
- 20. How does God's concern for accurate units of measure demonstrate His concern about our life?
- 21. Why is it significant that the land set aside for worship was to be at the center of the restored city?
- 22. Why do you think that purity is so often stressed in situations where human beings approach God?
- 23. How did the temple rituals help the people understand what was important in life?
- 24. How was everyday life brought into the worship of God in the temple?
- 25. For whom do you think the feasts were designed primarily?
- \* 26. How should believers conduct themselves with regard to some of the questionable practices of commerce or society?

### Apply It

- \* 27. What "weights and measures" or "rules and regulations" of daily life should you resolve before God to observe with greater faithfulness?

28. How can you give worship more of a central place in your life?

# The Temple and the Land - Ezekiel 47:1-48:35

*Topics:* Abundance, Divisions, Equality, Fairness, Faithfulness, Gifts, Healing, Holiness, Life, Name, Rewards, Swearing

## Open It

1. What sorts of conflicts have you seen, or would expect to see, surrounding the division of an inheritance?
- \* 2. What particular recollections, positive or negative, do you have regarding rivers?

## Explore It

3. At the end of his tour of the restored temple of God, what did Ezekiel see coming out of the temple? (47:1-2)
4. What happened to the stream of water as it got farther away from the temple? (47:3-6)
- \* 5. What good effects did the river in Ezekiel's vision have along its route? (47:7-12)
6. What were God's instructions for the division of the land among the tribes? (47:13-21)
7. How did God instruct His people to regard aliens who had settled among them for legal purposes? (47:22-23)
8. How specific were God's instructions about which tribe was to receive which piece of land? (48:1-7, 23-29)
- \* 9. For what purposes did God set aside the "special gift" of land at the center of the country? (48:8-22)
10. What different groups were specifically provided for within the special sector of land? (48:8-22)
11. How were the gates of the city of Jerusalem to be named? (48:30-34)
- \* 12. How did the name of the city reflect its reason for being? (48:35)

## Get It

- \* 13. What do you think the river that flowed out of the temple in Ezekiel's vision might represent?
14. How does this passage show us that God's blessings are not for a single ethnic group only?
- \* 15. Why is it important for us to set aside portions of the blessings God gives to us?
16. What conclusions can we draw from the characterization of the new Israel about the fairness and holiness of God?
17. What do you think is the greatest privilege of any nation, city, or individual?

## Apply It

- \* 18. How can you set aside something from the material blessings God has given you in order to honor and thank Him?
19. What source of help, inspiration, and power from God is available to prosper your daily life, and how can you take advantage of it?