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One perplexing aspect of the book are the series of actions Ezekiel performs at God’s command. He lies on his side for days on end, eating scant provisions cooked over a fire fueled by dung. This represents the horrible suffering during the siege of Jerusalem (chap. 4). He shaves head and beard with a sword and divides the hair into three piles—one pile is burned, another is cut in fine pieces, the third

is scattered in the wind. This represents the horrors of judgment to befall most of the nation. A few hairs are saved and sewn into the hem of Ezekiel’s garment (chap. 5) These stand for the very small “remnant” that would be saved (cf. 6:8; 14:21-23). In several “enacted prophecies” or “acted parables of judgment” Ezekiel *is* the prophecy—“what he has done you shall do” (see chap. 12).

These judgments were promised by God long before (Deut. 28-30; Josh. 23:14-16; *et. al.*). Many mistook God’s long-suffering (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9) for laxity in performing His promises — a fateful mistake, then and now!



The commission vision of Ezekiel 1 describes four creatures (1:5-14), which are later identified as **cherubim** (10:20). The word **cherub** (plural **cherubim**) appears 91 times in the Bible, but the Bible does not reveal much about them. They are created beings—so much is indicated by the term “living creatures.” They appear early in the Bible record as the guardians of the way to the Tree of Life after man’s fall (Gen. 3:24). In the design for the Holy of holies, golden

cherubim are placed over the mercy seat, which is on top of the ark of the covenant (Exod. 25:18-22; Heb. 9:5). Representations of the cherubim were embroidered on the curtains and the veil of the Tabernacle (Ex. 26:31) and formed part of the lavish decorations of Solomon’s Temple (2 Chron. 3:7; 1 Kgs. 6:26-29). They appear to be attendants of God in Revelation chapters 4 and 5, and they are agents of God’s judgment, as here in Ezekiel. The descriptions we have of them appear to be symbolic representations of heavenly beings. These heavenly beings serve the Lord God devoutly—how much more should the sons of men!

“That You May Grow Thereby...”

A weekly Bible reading plan

Ezekiel 13-24

“I am the LORD Their God”

Chapters 4 through 24 are an unrelenting series of prophetic judgments against Judah’s “multiplied disobedience” and “persistent unfaithfulness” (5:7; 14:12). Specifically, the city of Jerusalem shall be sacked after a lengthy siege. The suffering in the famine would be intense—“*fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers*” (5:7-10; 14:12-14).

At the heart of this section, chapters 8 through 11, Ezekiel is transported by the Spirit to Jerusalem to witness four scenes of abominable idolatry taking place right in the Lord’s Temple! For all this, God says, “*I will act in my fury!*” (8:18). Chapter 9 describes a chilling scene of judgment as six “men” (angels, doubtless) are sent to “*defile the Temple and fill the courts with the slain*” (9:7), after which they slay in the city. Another is commissioned to mark all those “*who sigh and cry over all the abominations done [in Jerusalem]*” (9:3). The six executioners are forbidden to touch those who receive the mark—they will be spared and shall form a faithful remnant in captivity. In chapter 10, God, attended by the cherubim, prepares to vacate the Temple. His holiness will not allow Him to continue in a place, and among a people, given to perpetual disobedience.

False Hopes & False Prophets (Eze. 13)

Nothing is more heart-breaking than people who entertain false hopes for the future (cf. Mt. 7:21-23). God sent His prophets to reveal Judah’s impending judgment and call them to repentance. But false prophets deceived the people with lies and false visions (Ezek. 13; Jer. 28:1-17; 29:4-11). They assured the people that all would be well—Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians would soon cease to be a threat and God so loved His people He would never allow their city and temple to be destroyed! The majority preferred to hear soothing lies from the false prophets, than to act on the calls of repentance from God’s true prophets.

Reading Schedule

Monday: Ezekiel 13-15

Tuesday: Ezekiel 16-17

Wednesday: Ezekiel 18-19

Thursday: Ezekiel 20-22

Friday: Ezekiel 23-24

“They shall know that I am the LORD their God”

This key phrase is used over sixty times in Ezekiel. When God sent wicked King Manasseh affliction, the result was: “*Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God*” (See 2 Chron. 33:1-16). This phrase reveals God is teaching Judah a lesson: He will correct His people—at least those who are correctable (the minority, that is, the remnant). In all these judgments Ezekiel reveals, it is not just vindictive punishment God aims for, but **correction**. The Lord anticipates a day when “*Then you shall know that I am the LORD that you may remember and be ashamed, ...when I provide you an atonement for all you have done*” (Ezek. 16:62-63).

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