

# Ezekiel: An Introduction

**Ezekiel 1:1** In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. <sup>2</sup> On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), <sup>3</sup> the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar canal, and the hand of the Lord was upon him there.

(Ezekiel 1:1-3)

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## The Garden of Eden

HAVE YOU EVER FELT FAR FROM GOD, like an exile in a strange land? On a related point, we all yearn for a perfect home, a place of peace. Enter on both counts—Eden, “Paradise” as it is translated in the LXX. It is where God originally put the man he had made from the dust of the earth. “And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed” (Gen 2:8). It contained the proto-typical garden. That garden was located at the base

of a majestic **mountain** (**Ezek 28:13-14**). It had **walls and gates** (**Isa 60:10**). A **river** that divided into four headwaters originated from the high slopes to water its pristine steppe (**Gen 2:10**). And **two trees** were located at its center—trees that were to regulate all of mankind’s life.

When God made the man and put him in the garden, he was given **a job**. This job was an extension of the “**dominion**” mandate that he originally created man and woman to share. Carrying out dominion was the chief function of **the image bearer**. “**Let us make man in our *image*, after our *likeness*. And let them have *dominion* over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth**” (**1:26**). Adam began to carry out his dominion before God created Eve. God brought every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens to the man and the man **named** them (**2:19**), thereby showing his power and authority over them, for this is what the act of naming is.

Earlier, God had taken the man and “**put**” (*sîm*) **him in the garden** of Eden (**15**), much like Moses “put” the blood and put it on the washing basins of the **tabernacle** (**Ex 24:6**) or the various items of the tabernacle were “put” in their commanded place by the priests after they were fashioned by their

makers (28:12; 39:19; Lev 8:8-9; Deut 10:2 etc.). In fact, the verse continues by saying that God put the man in the Garden to “... work it and keep it.” While the surface context points to Adam being assigned the task of **gardener**, the two verbs here are actually identical to those given to the Levites to “**serve**” (*'avad*) and “**guard**” (*shamar*) the tabernacle (cf. Num 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chron 23:32; Ezek 44:14). Greg Beale says, “When these two words occur together later in the OT, without exception they have this meaning and refer either to Israelites ‘serving and guarding/obeying’ God’s word (about 10 times) or, more often to priests who ‘serve’ God in the temple and ‘guard’ the temple from unclean things entering it.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, God is placing **Adam** in his creation-temple to serve as **his priest** to serve and to guard and otherwise maintain the sanctity of this holy place.

The Garden of Eden is **a holy place**? Indeed it is likened directly to the temple by Isaiah. “**Heaven is my throne, earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?**” (Isa 66:1). And throughout the rest of the Bible, the Garden of Eden becomes the model after which all other sanctuaries, including the tabernacle and temple are built.

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<sup>1</sup> **Gregory K. Beale**, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 1 (2005): 8.

# Ezekiel, an Introduction

Today, we are going to have an introduction and beginning reading of the book of **Ezekiel**. Ezekiel is **48 chapters** and **1,274 verses** comprised of **22,000 words**. This makes it the **fifth longest** book of the Bible by both chapter<sup>2</sup> and word count.<sup>3</sup> In other words, this book is a beast.

But that isn't only true because of its size. This is a bewildering book to most people who read it. According to the Rykens, it is **a visionary writing**, another term for which is "**fantasy**."<sup>4</sup> That doesn't mean it is fake, but rather that it is fantastical to how we usually perceive our world. The book is also full of symbolic reality, prophecy, oracles of judgment and blessing, satire, apocalyptic eschatology, prose, and poetry, all of which come to us in the form of individual units that are woven together into one great book, making it "**one of the most complex books in the Bible**," and therefore daunting to both understand and to preach.

In order to begin to grasp what this book is ultimately about, I've given you an introduction about the beginning two chapters of the Bible. I've long said that the **whole Bible**

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<sup>2</sup> Behind Psalms (150), Isaiah (66), Jeremiah (52), and Genesis (50).

<sup>3</sup> Behind Jeremiah (33,000), Genesis (32,000), Psalms (30,000), Isaiah (25,000).

<sup>4</sup> The following paragraph is taken from **Crossway Bibles**, *ESV Literary Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 1279-81.

is but a commentary on Genesis 1-3, and Ezekiel is one of the finest examples of this maxim, as you are about to see.

## *Author*

The book does not actually tell us that **Ezekiel wrote it** in so many words. However, it is so full of first person commentary that it would either be Ezekiel who wrote it or who commissioned it to be written by a scribe whom he oversaw, such as Jeremiah dictating to Baruch (**Jer 36:4**). From the introduction we learn that Ezekiel, whose name contains the element “God” or “El” means “**Strength of God.**” He was a **priest**. That’s our first connection to Eden, and make no mistake, Ezekiel knew that full well. “**The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi...**” (**Ezek 1:3**). Ezekiel likely came from the priestly line of **Zadok** (**40:46; 43:19; 44:15-16; 48:11**), but it’s worth noting that **Buzi** means “**contempt**” or “**despised**” and because of this and a supposed genealogy where both men were descendants of Joshua through his marriage with Rahab, some Rabbis said he was the son of Jeremiah.<sup>5</sup> That’s all speculative though.

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<sup>5</sup> “Ezekiel,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 12 Volumes Isidore Singer, ed. (New York; London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901–1906), 314.

We learn later that Ezekiel was [married](#) ([24:15-18](#)). Later Christian traditions that priests mustn't get married do not reflect biblical norms. The marriage idea clearly calls to mind [Adam and Eve](#) and their task in the Garden. Ezekiel is called a “[watchman](#)” ([3:17](#)), [guarding](#) God's people like Adam was to guard the garden, calling them to repentance to restore their covenant with God. Ezekiel lived in a house of his own ([3:24; 8:1](#)) which became a gathering place for elders. And he was, of course, [a prophet](#). He likely knew Daniel ([Ezek 14:14, 20; 28:3](#)).<sup>6</sup> As we see throughout the book, his life was marked by personal hardship, including the [death of his wife](#) as a prophetic sign to Israel, where God actually forbids him to mourn publicly, and [physical afflictions](#) that likewise became signs of Israel's impending judgment.

## *Date*

The [time frame](#) Ezekiel lived and prophesied begins “[in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of](#)

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<sup>6</sup> There is debate as to whether Ezekiel is talking about the Biblical Daniel or the non-Israelite hero Danel. But see also [Shir HaShirim \(Song of Songs\) Rabbah 7:8](#) where, curiously, the story goes that when Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abednego) consulted Daniel as to what to do about the image, he told them to go talk to Ezekiel who told them at first that they would not receive a miracle, but after becoming overwhelmed with grief, God told him that he would not abandon them men to die in the fire.

the month ... (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin)” (Ezek 1:1-2). This puts us around 593 BC (2Kg 24:12-15). “Thirtieth year” likely refers to Ezekiel’s age, as priests began their ministry at age 30 (Num 4:3; cf. Luke 3:23) and thus this becomes his official prophetic call as we read in vs. 3, “The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel ... and the hand of the Lord was upon him there.” “Word” and “Hand” were terms used by the Jews to refer to the Second Power in Heaven, that is the Second Person of the Trinity, the God of Israel, the Angel of the LORD.

If thirtieth year refers to his age, then Ezekiel was born around 623 BC. Other dates are also given (Ezek 8:1, sixth year or 592 BC; 20:1, seventh year or 591 BC; 24:1, ninth year or 588 BC; 29:1, tenth year or 587 BC; 29:17, twenty-seventh year or 572 BC), thus giving us a range between 593 to 571, a prophetic activity that lasted at least 22 years.

### *Provenance*

Now, the first deportation of captives to Babylon occurred in 597 BC. This was when Jehoiachin the grandson of Josiah surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and was taken captive along with the royal family, nobles, priests, and ar-

tisans—around 10,000 people. This takes us to **the provenance of the book**—that is, where the book was written from as well as its setting: *Babylon*. Ezekiel tells us that the timing of his call was “**as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal**” (1:1), “**in the land of the Chaldeans**” (3), that is the neo-Babylonian empire in modern day Iraq.



**The Chebar canal**, flowing from the Euphrates in the land of exile, also strongly echoes the life-giving **river of Eden** (**Genesis 2:10**) with two of its headwaters being the Tigris and

Euphrates, thus tying Ezekiel's opening setting to the primordial garden. Because this is the setting of the exile, it also reminds us that Jerusalem's temple is far away, much like [Adam who was cast out of Eden](#), and yet God's presence there foreshadows a return to paradise. Indeed, God's glory will appear by the Chebar ([1:28](#)), recalling his presence in Eden and revealing that even in exile, God has not abandoned his people.

## *Structure*

This connection underscores [the book's structure](#). *The Reformation Study Bible* gives a very common [three-fold division](#) of the book ([1. Judgment on Jerusalem, Chs. 1-24](#); [2. Judgment on Foreign Nations, Chs. 25-32](#); [3. Promises of Restoration and Mercy for the Future, Chs. 33-48](#)),<sup>7</sup> *ESV Study Bible* gives us a [five point outline](#) for moving through the book:

- I. Inaugural Vision (1:1-3:27)
- II. Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah (4:1-24:27)
- III. Oracles against Foreign Nations (25:1-32:32)
- IV. After the Fall of Jerusalem (33:1-39:29)
- V. Vision of Restoration (40:1-48:35)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version*, ed. [R. C. Sproul](#) (Orlando, FL; Lake Mary, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2005), 1144.

<sup>8</sup> Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1499–1501.

Some scholars who have dedicated entire books to Ezekiel would rather see it as something like 13 distinct literary units that are set apart by chronological formulas such as “on that day” (Ezek 1:1; 8:1; 40:1) etc.<sup>9</sup> But none of these ways of viewing the book fully do justice to the idea summarized by Odel that Ezekiel shows “a degree of literary coherence unmatched in the canon of biblical prophets.”<sup>10</sup>

To see this in a much more beautiful way, I am intrigued by the idea proposed by several scholars that Ezekiel is arranged chiastically. For those who have not heard me discuss these before or still have a difficult time wrapping their minds around the idea, a chiasm is a repetition device. You can picture it in various ways. You can think of it like an arrow-head, evenly wide at the edges with a sharp point in

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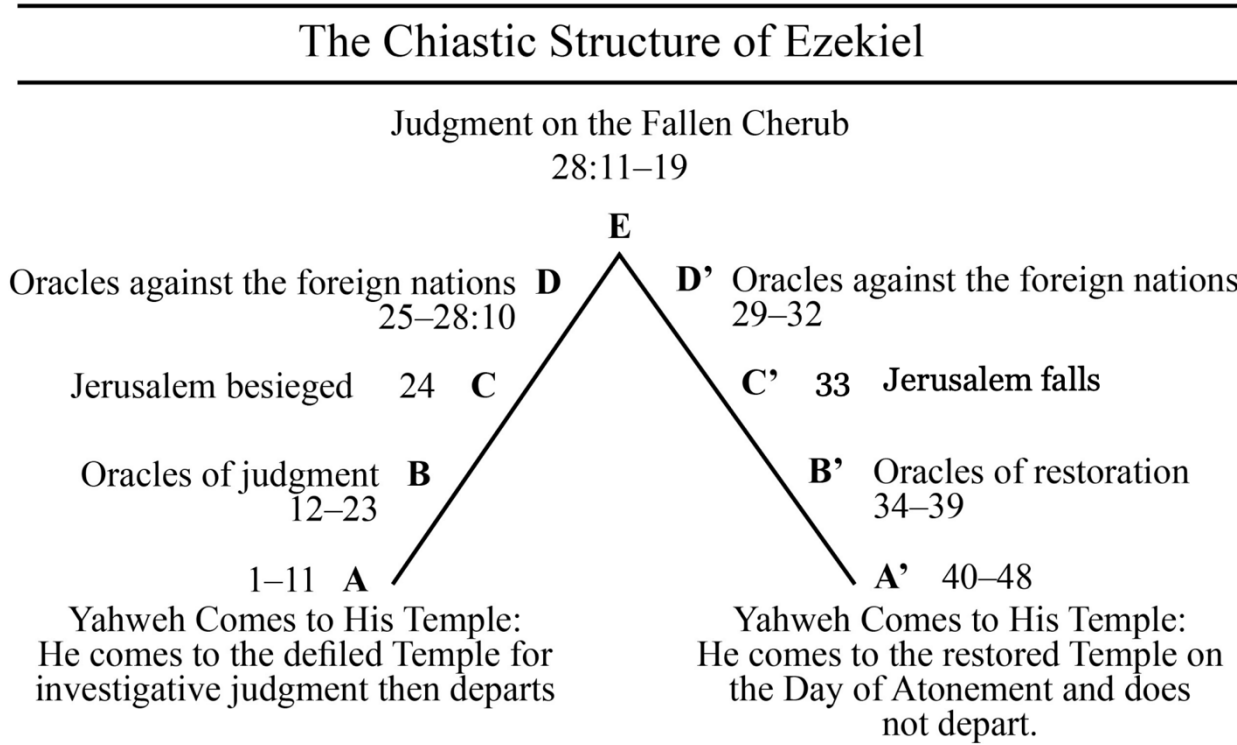
<sup>9</sup> For example, Tyler D. Mayfield, *Literary Structures and Setting in Ezekiel* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010):

- I: 1–7 (Vision and oracles on Ezekiel’s call)
- II: 8–19 (God’s departure from Jerusalem)
- III: 20–23 (Judgment and promise for Israel)
- IV: 24–25 (Siege of Jerusalem)
- V: 26–28 (Tyre, Sidon, and Israel)
- VI: 29:1–16 (Judgment of Egypt)
- VII: 29:17–30:19 (Fate of Egypt)
- VIII: 30:20–26 (Babylon’s defeat of Egypt)
- IX: 31 (Pharaoh)
- X: 32:1–16 (Lament over Pharaoh)
- XI: 32:17–33:20 (Egypt and watchman)
- XII: 33:21–39:29 (Report and oracles)
- XIII: 40–48 (Vision of the temple)

<sup>10</sup> Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 1.

the middle. You can think of it like **climbing a mountain**. You begin and end at the base camp or car, while the top is the goal and point of the climb. You can think of it like **an hourglass**, which narrows in the middle and through which all the sands must funnel.

In the case of Ezekiel, it begins with the LORD **coming to his temple** as cherubim accompany him (cf. **10:1-3**), reminding us of Eden, and ends with the LORD **restoring his temple** on a “**very high mountain**” (**40:2**), after judging him people in a place with a river of life and a tree of life (**47:1-12**), all reminding us again of Eden.<sup>11</sup>



The most fascinating part of this to me is that the judgment of the “king” of Tyre with its supernatural mirroring of Satan in the Garden of Eden who is cast out for his sin becomes the center of the entire book, structurally speaking. And that takes us, again, right back to Eden, but this time to the fall. In this way, the story of the old serpent becomes the hinge, the tip, the funnel through which the entire book will move from judgment to restoration and a return to something that is even better than Eden, which curiously is exactly how Revelation ends as it actually follows the order of the second half of Ezekiel—echoing, alluding to and even quoting this book as it also ends us back in the Garden and the Tree of Life which belongs to any who repent of their sins and turn to Christ in faith.

Ezekiel 22-48 in Revelation 16-22				
First Column (Ezekiel order)		Second Column (Revelation Order) (see p. 184)		
Ezekiel	Revelation		Revelation	Ezekiel
22:31	16:1		16:1	22:31
24:7	18:24		17:4; 18:16	28:13
26:13	18:22		18:10	26:17
26:16	18:19		18:11, 15	27:36
26:17	18:10		18:12-13	27:12-13
26:21	18:21		18:12-13	27:22
27:12-13	18:12-13		18:17	27:27-29
27:22	18:12-13		18:18	27:32
27:27-29	18:17		18:19	26:16
27:30-34	18:19		18:19	27:30-34
27:30-35	18:19		18:19	27:30-35
27:32	18:18		18:21	26:21
27:36	18:11, 15		18:22	26:13

28:13	17:4; 18:16		18:24	24:7
37:10	20:4		19:6	43:2
37:27	21:3		19:17-18, 21	39:17-20
38:2	20:8		20:4	37:10
38:22	10:9, 10; 21:8		20:8	38:2
39:6	20:8		20:8	39:6
39:17-20	19:17-18, 21		10:9, 10; 21:8	38:22
40:2	21:10		21:3	37:27
40:3	21:15		21:10	40:2
40:5	21:15		21:12-13	48:30-35
43:2	19:6		21:15	40:3
47:1	22:1		21:15	40:5
47:12	22:2, 14, 19		22:1	47:1
48:30-35	21:12-13		22:2, 14, 19	47:12

## Themes

Main themes of Ezekiel include the *holiness and transcendence of God*. Whether through the prophet's actions, angelic messengers, or the very presence of God himself, this is the foundation of everything. Holiness is “otherness,” and that's what transcendence teaches us. God is not us, he is other than us and his otherness is pure holiness. As a result, Israel and the nations have not held up to God's holiness and are full of sin, sin that demands judgment. As such, we see major sections of the book taken up with God's anger at Israel and his anger at the nations for their *sin* as they have violated the covenant. The job of a prophet is always difficult for they must speak difficult truth to people who do not want to hear it.

But the *grace and mercy of God* also shine through this book. In fact, the whole point of that pivot with Satan is that God is going to surprisingly turn the judgment into mercy because he is a gracious God who has plans for good that far outstrip the judgment that is coming upon the world. This will take place primarily through a new covenant that comes with the Messiah, and this too reminds us of Eden, with its covenants of works and grace which are both found in the story.

This in turn takes us to the massive theme of *God's sovereignty*. From scene to scene, God rules over the affairs of all nations. It is absolutely surprising that the glory of God, a picture of the Shekinah-cloud that dwelt in Israel's temple suddenly comes to Babylon! How can this be? The gods of the nations had their own territory and dare not go outside of it. But not the LORD! He is the God of gods and Lord of lords, and he will put his glory to rest upon anyone whom he chooses.

Finally, like parallel tracks on a railroad, the book is also about the *individual responsibility* that people have to repent of their sin and turn to faith in God. Indeed, as the first scene will depict, they must turn to faith in the God who sits on the throne, one like a son of man, the God of Israel—the Word and Angel of the Lord. But amazingly, be it popper

or prince of Israel, all of this is made possible because there is coming a **future Prince** who will rule the world with justice (**34:23-24**) and who will connect, in a way superior to Ezekiel or Adam or any priest in-between, God to his people (**46:1-18**). He will overthrow the cosmic princes like the cherub of Eden or Gog and Magog, and in return he will set his people inside a new temple, one that will radiate with the very glory of God from the inside, something that we find throughout the NT as having an already-not yet fulfillment in Christ and his Church.

## Ezekiel 1-11: A Reading

As we have now done for nearly all of the books we have preached for the last ten years, we are going to **read through Ezekiel** together. It was the practice of both the Jews and the early church to read large portions of text, sometimes even entire books, together. Any why not? After all, *faith comes through hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ* (**Rom 10:27**). As just mentioned and as we will see, Ezekiel is all about Christ. Unfortunately, most readings of this book take 3:30 hours. Therefore, though I wish we could do it all at once, we will simply read the first unit together. This is Ezekiel 1-11.

**1** In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar canal, and the hand of the Lord was upon him there.

As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went. As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. Such were their faces. And their wings were

spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them. As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl. And the four had the same likeness, their appearance and construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel. When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went. And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose. Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those

rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings.

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

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

**2** And he said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.” And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. And he said to me, “Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’ And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.

“But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.” And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. And he spread it before me. And it had writing on the front and on the back, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning and woe.

**3** And he said to me, “Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. And he said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it.” Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.

And he said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them. For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel—not to many peoples of foreign speech and a hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to such, they would listen to you. But the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me: because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart. Behold, I have made your face as hard as their faces, and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. Like emery harder than flint have I made your forehead. Fear them not, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.” Moreover, he said to me, “Son of man, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears. And go to the exiles, to your people, and speak to them and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ whether they hear or refuse to hear.”

Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great earthquake: “Blessed be the glory of the Lord from its place!” It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, and the sound of a great earthquake. The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the Lord being strong upon me. And I came to the exiles at Tel-abib, who were dwelling by the Chebar canal, and I sat where they were dwelling. And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days.

And at the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous

deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul.”

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

**4** “And you, son of man, take a brick and lay it before you, and engrave on it a city, even Jerusalem. And put siegeworks against it, and build a siege wall against it, and cast up a

mound against it. Set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it all around. And you, take an iron griddle, and place it as an iron wall between you and the city; and set your face toward it, and let it be in a state of siege, and press the siege against it. This is a sign for the house of Israel.

“Then lie on your left side, and place the punishment of the house of Israel upon it. For the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their punishment. For I assign to you a number of days, 390 days, equal to the number of the years of their punishment. So long shall you bear the punishment of the house of Israel. And when you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the punishment of the house of Judah. Forty days I assign you, a day for each year. And you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem, with your arm bared, and you shall prophesy against the city. And behold, I will place cords upon you, so that you cannot turn from one side to the other, till you have completed the days of your siege.

“And you, take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and emmer, and put them into a single vessel and make your bread from them. During the number of days that you lie on your side, 390 days, you shall eat it. And your food that you eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day; from day to day you shall eat it. And water you shall drink by measure, the sixth part of a hin; from day to day you shall drink. And you shall eat it as a barley cake, baking it in their sight on human

dung.” And the Lord said, “Thus shall the people of Israel eat their bread unclean, among the nations where I will drive them.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I have never defiled myself. From my youth up till now I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has tainted meat come into my mouth.” Then he said to me, “See, I assign to you cow’s dung instead of human dung, on which you may prepare your bread.” Moreover, he said to me, “Son of man, behold, I will break the supply of bread in Jerusalem. They shall eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and they shall drink water by measure and in dismay. I will do this that they may lack bread and water, and look at one another in dismay, and rot away because of their punishment.

**5** “And you, O son of man, take a sharp sword. Use it as a barber’s razor and pass it over your head and your beard. Then take balances for weighing and divide the hair. A third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are completed. And a third part you shall take and strike with the sword all around the city. And a third part you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them. And you shall take from these a small number and bind them in the skirts of your robe. And of these again you shall take some and cast them into the midst

of the fire and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will come out into all the house of Israel.

“Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries all around her; for they have rejected my rules and have not walked in my statutes. Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you are more turbulent than the nations that are all around you, and have not walked in my statutes or obeyed my rules, and have not even acted according to the rules of the nations that are all around you, therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, even I, am against you. And I will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. And because of all your abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done, and the like of which I will never do again. Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers. And I will execute judgments on you, and any of you who survive I will scatter to all the winds. Therefore, as I live, declares the Lord God, surely, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will withdraw. My eye will not spare, and I will have no pity. A third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in your midst; a third part shall fall by

the sword all around you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheathe the sword after them.

“Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself. And they shall know that I am the Lord—that I have spoken in my jealousy—when I spend my fury upon them. Moreover, I will make you a desolation and an object of reproach among the nations all around you and in the sight of all who pass by. You shall be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and a horror, to the nations all around you, when I execute judgments on you in anger and fury, and with furious rebukes—I am the Lord; I have spoken—when I send against you the deadly arrows of famine, arrows for destruction, which I will send to destroy you, and when I bring more and more famine upon you and break your supply of bread. I will send famine and wild beasts against you, and they will rob you of your children. Pestilence and blood shall pass through you, and I will bring the sword upon you. I am the Lord; I have spoken.”

**6** The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, and say, You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God! Thus says the Lord God to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys: Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.

Your altars shall become desolate, and your incense altars shall be broken, and I will cast down your slain before your idols. And I will lay the dead bodies of the people of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. Wherever you dwell, the cities shall be waste and the high places ruined, so that your altars will be waste and ruined, your idols broken and destroyed, your incense altars cut down, and your works wiped out. And the slain shall fall in your midst, and you shall know that I am the Lord.

“Yet I will leave some of you alive. When you have among the nations some who escape the sword, and when you are scattered through the countries, then those of you who escape will remember me among the nations where they are carried captive, how I have been broken over their whoring heart that has departed from me and over their eyes that go whoring after their idols. And they will be loathsome in their own sight for the evils that they have committed, for all their abominations. And they shall know that I am the Lord. I have not said in vain that I would do this evil to them.”

Thus says the Lord God: “Clap your hands and stamp your foot and say, Alas, because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel, for they shall fall by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. He who is far off shall die of pestilence, and he who is near shall fall by the sword, and he who is left and is preserved shall die of famine. Thus I will spend my fury upon them. And you shall know that I am the Lord,

when their slain lie among their idols around their altars, on every high hill, on all the mountaintops, under every green tree, and under every leafy oak, wherever they offered pleasing aroma to all their idols. And I will stretch out my hand against them and make the land desolate and waste, in all their dwelling places, from the wilderness to Riblah. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

**7** The word of the Lord came to me: “And you, O son of man, thus says the Lord God to the land of Israel: An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. Now the end is upon you, and I will send my anger upon you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will punish you for all your abominations. And my eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity, but I will punish you for your ways, while your abominations are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

“Thus says the Lord God: Disaster after disaster! Behold, it comes. An end has come; the end has come; it has awakened against you. Behold, it comes. Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the land. The time has come; the day is near, a day of tumult, and not of joyful shouting on the mountains. Now I will soon pour out my wrath upon you, and spend my anger against you, and judge you according to your ways, and I will punish you for all your abominations.

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

“Behold, the day! Behold, it comes! Your doom has come; the rod has blossomed; pride has budded. Violence has grown up into a rod of wickedness. None of them shall remain, nor their abundance, nor their wealth; neither shall there be preeminence among them. The time has come; the day has arrived. Let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn, for wrath is upon all their multitude. For the seller shall not return to what he has sold, while they live. For the vision concerns all their multitude; it shall not turn back; and because of his iniquity, none can maintain his life.

“They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but none goes to battle, for my wrath is upon all their multitude. The sword is without; pestilence and famine are within. He who is in the field dies by the sword, and him who is in the city famine and pestilence devour. And if any survivors escape, they will be on the mountains, like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, each one over his iniquity. All hands are feeble, and all knees turn to water. They put on sackcloth, and horror covers them. Shame is on all faces, and baldness on all their heads. They cast their silver into the streets, and their gold is like an unclean thing. Their silver and gold are not able to deliver them in the day of the

wrath of the Lord. They cannot satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs with it. For it was the stumbling block of their iniquity. His beautiful ornament they used for pride, and they made their abominable images and their detestable things of it. Therefore I make it an unclean thing to them. And I will give it into the hands of foreigners for prey, and to the wicked of the earth for spoil, and they shall profane it. I will turn my face from them, and they shall profane my treasured place. Robbers shall enter and profane it.

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

**8** In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord God fell upon me there. Then I looked, and behold, a form that had the appearance of a man. Below what appeared to be his waist was fire, and above his waist was something like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming metal. He put out the form of a hand and took me by a lock of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the valley.

Then he said to me, “Son of man, lift up your eyes now toward the north.” So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance, was this image of jealousy. And he said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations.”

And he brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked, behold, there was a hole in the wall. Then he said to me, “Son of man, dig in the wall.” So I dug in the wall, and behold, there was an entrance. And he said to me, “Go

in, and see the vile abominations that they are committing here.” So I went in and saw. And there, engraved on the wall all around, was every form of creeping things and loathsome beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel. And before them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, with Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up. Then he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his room of pictures? For they say, ‘The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.’ ” He said also to me, “You will see still greater abominations that they commit.”

Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the Lord, and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. Then he said to me, “Have you seen this, O son of man? You will see still greater abominations than these.”

And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the Lord. And behold, at the entrance of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east, worshiping the sun toward the east. Then he said to me, “Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it too light a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations that they commit here, that they should fill the land

with violence and provoke me still further to anger? Behold, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore I will act in wrath. My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. And though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.”

**9** Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, “Bring near the executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand.” And behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his weapon for slaughter in his hand, and with them was a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub on which it rested to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing case at his waist. And the Lord said to him, “Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.” And to the others he said in my hearing, “Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one on whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before

the house. Then he said to them, “Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out.” So they went out and struck in the city. And while they were striking, and I was left alone, I fell upon my face, and cried, “Ah, Lord God! Will you destroy all the remnant of Israel in the outpouring of your wrath on Jerusalem?”

Then he said to me, “The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great. The land is full of blood, and the city full of injustice. For they say, ‘The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see.’ As for me, my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will bring their deeds upon their heads.”

And behold, the man clothed in linen, with the writing case at his waist, brought back word, saying, “I have done as you commanded me.”

**10** Then I looked, and behold, on the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim there appeared above them something like a sapphire, in appearance like a throne. And he said to the man clothed in linen, “Go in among the whirling wheels underneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.”

And he went in before my eyes. Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the house, when the man went

in, and a cloud filled the inner court. And the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub to the threshold of the house, and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the Lord. And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.

And when he commanded the man clothed in linen, “Take fire from between the whirling wheels, from between the cherubim,” he went in and stood beside a wheel. And a cherub stretched out his hand from between the cherubim to the fire that was between the cherubim, and took some of it and put it into the hands of the man clothed in linen, who took it and went out. The cherubim appeared to have the form of a human hand under their wings.

And I looked, and behold, there were four wheels beside the cherubim, one beside each cherub, and the appearance of the wheels was like sparkling beryl. And as for their appearance, the four had the same likeness, as if a wheel were within a wheel. When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went, but in whatever direction the front wheel faced, the others followed without turning as they went. And their whole body, their rims, and their spokes, their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes all around—the wheels that the four of them had. As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing “the whirling wheels.” And every one had four faces: the first face was the

face of the cherub, and the second face was a human face, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

And the cherubim mounted up. These were the living creatures that I saw by the Chebar canal. And when the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them. And when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the wheels did not turn from beside them. When they stood still, these stood still, and when they mounted up, these mounted up with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in them.

Then the glory of the Lord went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth before my eyes as they went out, with the wheels beside them. And they stood at the entrance of the east gate of the house of the Lord, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them.

These were the living creatures that I saw underneath the God of Israel by the Chebar canal; and I knew that they were cherubim. Each had four faces, and each four wings, and underneath their wings the likeness of human hands. And as for the likeness of their faces, they were the same faces whose appearance I had seen by the Chebar canal. Each one of them went straight forward.

**11** The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the house of the Lord, which faces east. And behold, at the entrance of the gateway there were twenty-five men. And I saw among them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. And he said to me, “Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and who give wicked counsel in this city; who say, ‘The time is not near to build houses. This city is the cauldron, and we are the meat.’ Therefore prophesy against them; prophesy, O son of man.”

And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and he said to me, “Say, Thus says the Lord: So you think, O house of Israel. For I know the things that come into your mind. You have multiplied your slain in this city and have filled its streets with the slain. Therefore thus says the Lord God: Your slain whom you have laid in the midst of it, they are the meat, and this city is the cauldron, but you shall be brought out of the midst of it. You have feared the sword, and I will bring the sword upon you, declares the Lord God. And I will bring you out of the midst of it, and give you into the hands of foreigners, and execute judgments upon you. You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel, and you shall know that I am the Lord. This city shall not be your cauldron, nor shall you be the meat in the midst of it. I will judge you at the border of Israel, and you shall know that I

am the Lord. For you have not walked in my statutes, nor obeyed my rules, but have acted according to the rules of the nations that are around you.”

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