

Ezekiel 8-12 • Chapter Study

INTRO

Let's do a quick **recap** then a thumbnail sketch of where we're going . . .

Chs. 1–3 describes Ezekiel's **call** to be a prophet.

It isn't really a narrative of **how** the Lord called him, so much as a **description** of the glory of God he saw & God's solemn charge that the 30 year old Ezekiel **repeat**, not just God's **Word**, but duplicate His **tone**.

God Also warned him ahead of time that overall, his message would not be heeded.

Unlike Jeremiah back in Jerusalem who was totally rejected and even beaten & tossed into a prison pit, the Jewish exiles in Babylon Ezekiel was called to speak to who honor him as a prophet – but they wouldn't wholly heed his message.

Which seems ridiculous to us – but there it is!

How many people **today** love a Chuck Smith, an Alistair Begg or a John McArthur, lauding them as great Bible teachers & preachers – but don't really follow through on what they hear them teach?

This was the warning God gave Ezekiel.

He wasn't to alter his message or give up announcing it just because people weren't diggin' or doin' it.

Then chs. 4-7 is an **overview** of the judgments God will bring on Jerusalem.

Chs. 8–39 goes into the specifics.

Chs. 8–11 are a continuous vision & message that shows **what** God is going to do to Jerusalem and **why**.

Ezekiel's vision was meant to cut thru any sentimentality the exiles had on why God should spare the holy city.

In reality, it was a place of hideous paganism.

Now, **spoiler alert**: I'm going to tell you ahead of time what we're going to see tonight.

Ezekiel is given a vision of God's glory **leaving** the temple in Jerusalem.

That bright, shining cloud of golden light called the **Shekinah** had dwelt in the Holy of holies in the Temple since the day Solomon dedicated it nearly 500 yrs before.

But because of the abominations being carried out there, God was going to leave.

And w/His departure, judgment comes.

As God's glory departs, Ezekiel asks what will become of His people.

So God tells him that while the temple might fall and Jerusalem is razed to the ground, God **HIMSELF** would be the exiles' sanctuary.

In fact, **that's** exactly how the book ends.

The **true** temple of those who lived by genuine faith had **always** been God himself.

And his people could dwell in that temple anywhere on earth.

Ch. 8

Since we looked at all of ch, 8 Sunday, we'll just summarize tonight.

As soon as Ezekiel's 14 month long acted sermon & object lesson of lying on his side was completed, he returns to his house.

The Jewish elders are impressed & come to him for counsel.

As he seeks what to tell them, he gets a vision that lasts all the way thru ch. 11.

In the vision he journeys 500 miles as the crow flies, from Babylon to the temple in Jerusalem where he sees several idols set up inside the holy grounds.

He's even given a vision into the inner imaginations of the kingdoms leaders.

It shakes poor Ezekiel to his core.

It ends v.18 / God says; in light of all the atrocious idolatry . . .

¹⁸ Therefore I also will act in fury. 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.”

Ch. 9

¹ Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice,

This isn't something hidden or secret. It's time now for full disclosure.

saying, “Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each *with* a deadly weapon in his hand.” ² And suddenly 6 men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces N, each with his battle-ax in his hand.

One man among them *was* clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

These are probably angels tasked with watching over Jerusalem.

Whereas ***up till now*** their job has been to ***protect*** the city, now they'll ***turn against*** it.

What this one angel with the inkhorn's job is we'll see in a moment.

Remember that when God judged Sodom & Gomorrah it only took 2 angels.

Jerusalem gets 6. It's not looking good for the City.

³ Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple.

The Shekinah glory cloud marking God's presence among His people hovered above the lid on the Ark of covenant.

That lid was called the Mercy Seat and on top of it were 2 golden cherubim.

The Shekinah now leaves there for the first time in 500 yrs & moves to the door of the temple.

And He [God] called to the man clothed with linen, who *had* the writer's inkhorn at his side; ⁴ and the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

He was to mark them as being ***grieved*** by the people and kingdom's rejection of God.

⁵ To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. ⁶ Utterly slay old *and* young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom *is* the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who *were* before the temple. ⁷ Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city. ⁸ So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left *alone*; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord God! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?" By the ***remnant***, Ezekiel means ***the faithful***; those who've ***not*** turned their backs on God.

⁹ Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!' ¹⁰ And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their deeds on their own head." ¹¹ Just then, the man clothed with linen, who *had* the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, "I have done as You commanded me."

Remember this was a vision of ***coming*** judgment. It hadn't started yet.

God was showing Ezekiel the ***certainty*** of what was ***to come***.

What we see here reinforces what we saw last week

While it was too late for the kingdom / nation; ***it wasn't for individuals***.

If they would make a conscious decision to step back from the world, back from the decadence & spiritual perversion of their time, & renew their faith in God, they'd be spared the brunt of the judgments coming on their city & time.

Look at what God told the searcher to look for in v. 4

Put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it

That is, the City of Jerusalem, center & capital of the kingdom.

The people marked so they're spared don't ***participate in*** or ***celebrate*** the wickedness of their time; they ***lament*** it.

It ***distresses*** them & ***moves them to tears***.

Rather than me doing the typical pastorly, preachy thing & moving to specific application that details all the ways good, Christians ought to lament the decadence of our age,

Instead, let's just let the HS speak to us & apply it to our lives.

How ought this passage affect what we're ***entertained*** by?

What we ***celebrate***, what we ***laud, applaud, praise, laugh at?***

What we allow ourselves to be ***motivated by, encouraged with, put value in?***

Those marked & spared from judgment were those who stepped back from the decadence & perversions of their time to ***grieve over what grieved God.***

May the Spirit work the same kind of heart in us in the perverse age we live in.

Ch. 10

¹ And I looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne.

A crystal throne that glows with a bluish radiance.

This hints back at the vision of God's throne-chariot Ezekiel had in ch. 1. Look

² Then He [God] spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, "Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter *them* over the city." And he went in as I watched.

³ Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court.

The idea is this: God has moved from the Holy of holies to the door of the temple.

His ***ride***, that is His throne chariot, has parked nearby on the south side of the temple.

To get an idea of what's happening here, let's pretend we had ***valet parking*** at CCO.

You're sitting in here right now.

When study's over, you get up & go to the front door where you pause –

Because your chauffeur is sitting in your car & as soon as he sees, you pulls out and drives up so you can get in and drive away.

That's the idea here. God's gone to the door and the cherubim have lined up right there ready to transport Him away.

⁴ Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, *and paused* over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory.

The idea here is that whereas before the glory was contained in a smaller cloud, now it expands to enfold the entire inner courtyard & temple building.

It's like God is saying, "All this is mine! It's supposed to belong to me alone. My glory is meant to be all over it."

⁵ And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard *even* in the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks. ⁶ Then it happened, when He commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, "Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim," that he went in and stood beside the wheels. ⁷ And the cherub stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire that *was* among the cherubim, and took *some of it* and put *it* into the hands of the *man* clothed with linen, who took *it* and went out.

Ezekiel inserts a long parenthesis here describing the cherubim.

It's a virtual repeat of his description of them in the first chs.

¹⁸ Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. ¹⁹ And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels *were* beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house, and the glory of the God of Israel *was* above them.

God steps away from the door to mount His throne-chariot.

He then drives over to the Eastern Gate of the outer court.

This is its last stopping place before leaving the City altogether.

Ezekiel then repeats this ***really was*** the glory & presence of God – just as he'd seen it in his original vision of God.

²⁰ This *is* the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they *were* cherubim.

²¹ Each 1 had 4 faces and each 1 -- 4 wings, and the likeness of the hands of a man *was* under their wings. ²² And the likeness of their faces *was* the same *as* the faces which I had seen by the River Chebar, their appearance and their persons. They each went straight forward.

The point of ch. 10 is that the judgment coming on Jeruz was from the hand of God.

The "***coals***" the angel was told to secure from the cherubim suggests the manner of Jeruz's destruction in 586 bc,

which was by burning.

The defenses & walls of Jeruz were formidable & gave the invading Babylonians real grief.

But they'd learned from earlier conquests that once they took a city, they could disable its defenses by staking wood next to the walls and then setting them ablaze.

The intense heat weakened the stones, cracking them and making them easy to demolish.

This is precisely what the Babylonians did to the walls of Jeruz, burning many of the people in the flames.

Ch. 11

¹ Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the East Gate of the Lord's house, which faces eastward; and there at the door of the gate were 25 men, among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

Ezekiel is transported to the East Gate where God's glory paused for the last time before leaving Jeruz altogether.

It was in the Gate that the city leaders met.

This 25 is not to be confused with the 25 of ch. 8; this is a different group.

These guys are the rulers; the civic leaders of the City.

12 was the standard number for a **council** & came to **represent civil government**.

There's 25 here; that is twice 12, plus 1.

Jeruz was so big & ruling it so complex, they'd doubled the size of the City Council & added a chairman = making 25.

2 of the leaders of this council were singled out because they're representative of the corruption of Jeruz's leaders.

This Jaazaniah is not the same guy we find in ch. 8.

That Jaazaniah was the son of Shaphan, who was one of the few supporters of the prophet Jeremiah.

This Jaazaniah was the son of Azzur, who in Jeremiah was the father of the false prophet Hananiah.

Hananiah gave Jeremiah major grief and said the Babylonians would NOT conquer Jeruz.

His brother Jaazaniah was one of the City leaders.

² And He [God] said to me: "Son of man, these *are* the men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city, ³ who say, '*The time is not near to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the meat.*'

Not the words in italics in v. 3; meaning they're added by translators to clarify the text.

In this case in the King James inserts them in the wrong order.

V. 3 **should** read, "Is **not** this the time to build houses?"

Remember that they were offering wicked advice.

Jeremiah told them it **wasn't** time to build houses, but to weep & repent because judgment was coming.

These guys encouraged people to build – because although the Babylonians were indeed coming, the City walls would be like the iron walls of a cauldron.

They'd be safe within; like meat is protected from the flames.

Which is a really lame illustration, because the meat still gets cooked!

But that's so typical of leaders who turn from God; they end up **being** fools & saying stupid things.

⁴ Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man!" ⁵ Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said to me, "Speak! 'Thus says the Lord: "Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. ⁶ You have multiplied your slain in this city, and you have filled its streets with the slain." ⁷ Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Your slain whom you have laid in its midst, they *are* the meat, and this *city is* the caldron;

Yep, it's going to be as you said – only **not** what you **meant**.

but I shall bring you out of the midst of it.

You **won't** stay safe behind your walls. Your cauldron will crack wide open.

⁸ You have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you," says the Lord God. ⁹ "And I will bring you out of its midst, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and execute judgments on you. ¹⁰ You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord.

That's **exactly** what happened!

When the Babylonians breached the walls & entered the city, they sacked and destroyed it.

They slew most of the inhabitants but kept a remnant to sell as slaves.

These were herded north to the Babylonians HQ at Riblah where they were screened.

Those who could be sold or who had some kind of worth were preserved, while the rest were summarily executed.

Those who faced certain death were the City leaders who'd counseled rebellion against the Babylonians & refused to surrender the City.

Before they were executed, they were tortured mercilessly.

But then, their idiocy had subjected the poor people of Jeruz to the most hideous barbarities as the siege of the city last for 2½ YEARS!

Just imagine how atrocious the conditions inside the walls had to have been when the end finally came.

¹¹ This *city* shall not be your caldron, nor shall you be the meat in its midst. I will judge you at the border of

Israel. ¹² And you shall know that I *am* the Lord; for you have not walked in My statutes nor executed My judgments, but have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which *are* all around you.” ’ ’ ”

In the midst of this vision of these 25 guys sitting in the East Gate of Jeruz, a vision, remember, God had told Ezekiel he was ***to be careful to repeat word for word*** – He sees 1 of the council members keel over dead.

¹³ Now it happened, while I was prophesying,

To the Jewish elders in exile in Babylon -

that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died.

Which he faithfully recounted to the elders in Babylon.

Now – there was regular communications going on between Jeruz and the exiles.

So when Ezekiel said this, the elders only had to wait a maybe a month and news arrived that, guess what

One of the nobles of Jeruz named Pelatiah died.

When? On such & such a day. They do a quick calculation & realize it was at the very same moment Ezekiel told them.

Freaky! It's stuff like that, that encourages the conclusion, Ezekiel's read-deal prophet of God.

But on his part, Ezekiel's reaction is commendable.

As soon as he saw Pelatiah die,

Then I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, and said, “Ah, Lord God! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?”

“Are you going to wipe ***everyone*** out?”

The real judgment hadn't even begin yet – yet already leaders are beginning to drop and Ezekiel's thinks, “Will there be anyone left when it's all over?”

¹⁴ Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ¹⁵ “Son of man, your brethren, your relatives, your countrymen, and all the house of Israel in its entirety, *are* those about whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘Get far away from the Lord; this land has been given to us as a possession.’

This is God's answer to Ezekiel's question about whether or not a remnant will be left.

Yes! It'll be made up out of those ***in exile***.

There were Jews from every tribe there and they would be the one form whom God would resurrect the nation.

But, being the fools they were, the Jewish leadership back in Jeruz had written the exiles off.

Because they weren't in the Land, God had forsaken them.

God shows & tells Ezekiel it was precisely the opposite.

He was forsaking Jeruz and was dwelling among the exiles. Look

¹⁶ Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.” ’ ¹⁷ Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from

the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.” ’ ¹⁸ And they will go there,

and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. ¹⁹ Then I will give them 1 heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. ²¹ But *as for those* whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord God. With this promise of return & restoration, Ezekiel witnesses God leaving the temple.

²² So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel *was* high above them. ²³ And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which *is* on the east side of the city.

The Mt. of Olives that overlooks the city from the East.

Some of us have stood in that very place.

²⁴ Then the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. ²⁵ So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the Lord had shown me.

Ch. 12

¹ Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying: ² “Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they *are* a rebellious house. Those who reject God have eyes & ears & a brain like everyone else.

But because they **refuse** to put God at the center of their thoughts, everything they see, hear & think is crazy & mixed up.

Listen, history has proven that once God is ejected, **anything goes**, & eventually will.

Good becomes evil and evil, good Which is precisely where we are today.

So What happens to a society that turn FROM God to such a spiritual & moral reversal?

Well, **what happened to Jeruz?**

Sodom?

Nineveh?

Babylon?

Susa & Persepolis?

Athens?

Rome?

Beijing at the hands of the Mongols?

Berlin?

Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.

Now God tells Ezekiel to enact another of his many object lessons.

³ “Therefore, son of man, prepare your belongings for captivity, and go into captivity by day in their sight. You shall go from your place into captivity to another place in their sight. It may be that they will consider, though they *are* a rebellious house.

In vs. 4-10 God tells Ezekiel to pack up his belongings as though he’s trying to escape; so, whatever he can carry on his back.

Then he’s to go to a wall, dig thru it and crawl through the hole like he’s trying to get away.

This is what the king of Jeruz will do, along with a little group of his family & court.

Toward the end of the siege, when things were really bad, they’d find a spot on the wall they thought was unguarded by the enemy, tunnel thru from the inside, then sneak away in the middle of the night – leaving the people of Jeruz they were supposed to be leading, leaderless.

Creeps!

That’s exactly what King Zedekiah did! He tried to sneak out of the city in the middle of the night.

But the Babylonians caught him, took him to Nebuchadnezzar, put out his eyes with a hot poker, and carried him in chains to Babylon, just as Ezekiel foretold.

¹¹ Say, ‘I *am* a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity.’

¹² And the prince who *is* among them shall bear *his belongings* on *his* shoulder at twilight and go out. They shall dig through the wall to carry *them* out through it. He shall cover his face, so that he cannot see the ground with *his* eyes.

When the Babylonians caught Zedekiah, they put a sack over his head so he couldn’t see.

¹³ I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, *to* the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there.

They poked out his eyes.

Jump to v. 17. Here's another acted sermon . . .

¹⁷ Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ¹⁸ “Son of man, eat your bread with quaking, and drink your water with trembling and anxiety. ¹⁹ And say to the people of the land, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the inhabitants of Jerusalem *and* to the land of Israel: “They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink their water with dread, so that her land may be emptied of all who are in it, because of the violence of all those who dwell in it. ²⁰ Then the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall become desolate; and you shall know that I *am* the Lord.” ’ ”

The idea of this object lesson was that the people would find no comfort in the simple things of life; like eating a meal.

Anxiety is a great appetite suppressant.

But if you live under constant threat, there comes a point when hunger *trumps* the stress and you HAVE to eat.

That's the picture here. The certainty of doom will be so constant people will eat, but in terror.

The rest of ch. 12 will be my message on Sunday the 21st.