



# KINGDOM PROPHET

## PART FIVE

Forty Daily Devotions  
from The Book of Ezekiel  
Chapters 1-25  
(Based on the NKJV)

## Introduction

Although we primarily think of Ezekiel as a prophet, the book that bears his name clearly identifies him first as a priest (Ezekiel 1:3). The name, Ezekiel, means “God strengthens” or “strengthened by God.” God’s strength was something that Ezekiel, and the people to whom he preached and ministered, were going to need! When Nebuchadnezzar transported the second group of exiles from the Promised Land to Babylon, Ezekiel and his contemporaries were among them. The lives of Ezekiel and his fellow Jews were marked by four things: chastisement, confusion, change, and comfort. I can think of no greater change for an Israelite than to be removed from the land that God had promised to them and then to be relocated to a land that did not even believe in their God! What we will read in this powerful book is a story of how God used a priest-turned-prophet to convict and then comfort His people during some very difficult times in their lives.

## Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Ezekiel 1:1-14	03/04/21
2	Ezekiel 1:15-28	03/05/21
3	Ezekiel 2:1-10	03/06/21
4	Ezekiel 3:1-15	03/07/21
5	Ezekiel 3:16-27	03/08/21
6	Ezekiel 4:1-17	03/09/21
7	Ezekiel 5:1-17	03/10/21
8	Ezekiel 6:1-14	03/11/21
9	Ezekiel 7:1-13	03/12/21
10	Ezekiel 7:14-27	03/13/21
11	Ezekiel 8:1-18	03/14/21
12	Ezekiel 9:1-11	03/15/21
13	Ezekiel 10:1-22	03/16/21
14	Ezekiel 11:1-25	03/17/21
15	Ezekiel 12:1-16	03/18/21
16	Ezekiel 12:17-28	03/19/21
17	Ezekiel 13:1-23	03/20/21
18	Ezekiel 14:1-23	03/21/21
19	Ezekiel 15:1-8	03/22/21
20	Ezekiel 16:1-14	03/23/21

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Ezekiel 16:15-30	03/24/21
22	Ezekiel 16:31-43	03/25/21
23	Ezekiel 16:44-63	03/26/21
24	Ezekiel 17:1-24	03/27/21
25	Ezekiel 18:1-18	03/28/21
26	Ezekiel 18:19-32	03/29/21
27	Ezekiel 19:1-14	03/30/21
28	Ezekiel 20:1-17	03/31/21
29	Ezekiel 20:18-32	04/01/21
30	Ezekiel 20:33-49	04/02/21
31	Ezekiel 21:1-17	04/03/21
32	Ezekiel 21:18-32	04/04/21
33	Ezekiel 22:1-16	04/05/21
34	Ezekiel 22:17-31	04/06/21
35	Ezekiel 23:1-16	04/07/21
36	Ezekiel 23:17-31	04/08/21
37	Ezekiel 23: 32-49	04/09/21
38	Ezekiel 24:1-14	04/10/21
39	Ezekiel 24:15-27	04/11/21
40	Ezekiel 25:1-17	04/12/21

## Day 1: Ezekiel 1:1-14

*“The word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.” (Ezekiel 1:3)*

### *A Change of Plans*

The first words to this amazing prophecy are, “Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year” (v. 1). Some are inclined to believe this means that it was during the “thirtieth year” in the life of “Ezekiel the priest” that God came to him with a drastic change of plans for his life. Since Ezekiel was a “priest,” we know he was of the tribe of Levi and he was scheduled to begin his ministry in the priesthood at the time God called him to be a prophet. Numbers 4:3 clearly states that a priest was to serve “from thirty years old...to fifty years old.” So, the first thing we see in the life of Ezekiel is that God had something different for Ezekiel than that for which he had probably been preparing and expecting. Two other men were priests-turned-prophets in the Bible. They were Zechariah and Jeremiah (Zechariah 1:1 and Jeremiah 1:1). It is interesting to note that all three of these men ministered during and immediately after the exile of the Jews. These three men preached to God’s people during a time of definite and drastic change in their lives. Doesn’t it make sense for God to call a man who had experienced a drastic change in his own life to preach to His people who were experiencing confusion and change in their lives?

**Prayer Emphasis:** Give God complete veto power in your life. **Realize** that His *Plan B* is infinitely better than our *Plan A*! **Believe** that God can use your own personal experiences to help you minister to others. **Remember** that even Jesus prayed, “nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39).

## Day 2: Ezekiel 1:15-28

*“Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.” (Ezekiel 1:28)*

### *An Expanded Vision*

In yesterday’s verses we read where Ezekiel attempted to describe some angelic, living creatures that he saw in what he described as “visions” (v. 1). In his attempts to describe those creatures, he used the word “likeness” four times and the word “appearance” three times. As the “visions” continued, Ezekiel was shown other heavenly things that he, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, tried to describe in human terminology. In today’s verses we see the word “likeness” six times and the word “appearance” eleven times. We cannot help but notice something of great interest. It seems that the longer Ezekiel looked, the more he saw! He may not have understood everything about what he saw, but at least he knew he was seeing something that only God could show him! Some of the language in today’s verses remind us of the Apostle John’s vision of Christ that is recorded for us in the Book of The Revelation. Re-read Ezekiel 1:24 and note just some of the similarities between Ezekiel’s Old Testament vision and John’s New Testament vision. Verse 28 states that Ezekiel saw “the glory of the LORD.” We will see phrases about God’s glory 16 times throughout this book. Watch for them as you read.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Refuse to allow the difficulty of the message to distract you from the Messenger! We may not understand everything that we read in the Bible, but we do understand that the Bible is the Word of God! **Remember**, the more we look, the more we will see!

## Day 3: Ezekiel 2:1-10

*“Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me.” (Ezekiel 2:2)*

### “He Spoke to Me”

Chapter one contained some “visions” that Ezekiel saw but could barely find words to describe. I am sure Ezekiel did not understand everything that he saw, just like I am sure we did not understand everything that we read! However, chapter one concluded with Ezekiel saying, “When I *saw* it, I fell on my face” (v. 28). He did not say, “When I *understood* it, I fell on my face.” As we read through this very heavenly book, we must realize that God wants us to see these visions through the eyes of Ezekiel and then respond to the message in the same way the prophet did in those days. We must fall on our faces before God and worship Him! As we read, God will speak to us. And when God speaks to us, we are filled more and more with His Spirit. Ezekiel said, “Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me.” After God spoke to Ezekiel, he “set” him on his “feet.” Immediately after that, God said, “Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel” (v. 3). The remainder of today’s reading describes the pitiful spiritual condition of the people to whom Ezekiel was to preach. In verse six, God told Ezekiel not to be “afraid” or “dismayed” by the way these people would respond to the message, adding this: “hear what I say to you” (v. 8).

**Prayer Emphasis: Re-read** God’s command to Ezekiel that is found in verse seven: “You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse.” We may speak (witness) to some people that we will not win to Christ, but we will very likely never win anyone to whom we do not speak (witness)!

## Day 4: Ezekiel 3:1-15

*“Moreover He said to me, ‘Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.’” (Ezekiel 3:1)*

### “Speak”

In the NKJV Bible, the word “speak” is found three times in today’s Scripture reading. This word, “speak,” is sometimes translated “speak,” “say,” “tell,” “pronounce,” and even “command” in other places in the Bible. This word translated “speak” in today’s reading is found in 63 verses in the Book of Ezekiel. As you read, watch for it in its different forms and realize how important it was to God that Ezekiel communicate His truth to the people of his time. At the same time, realize that it is very important to God that we speak His truth to the people of our time. God warned Ezekiel that Israel would “not listen” to him because they were “impudent and hard-hearted” (v. 7). However, God commanded Ezekiel to be as stubborn as his listeners were and to keep speaking to them even though they were a “rebellious” people (v. 9). There were two important things to note about Ezekiel’s speaking: 1) He was to “speak” the words that God put in his mouth, and 2) He was to speak words that the people needed to hear. To do that, Ezekiel needed to know just where the people were both spiritually and emotionally. No doubt that is why Ezekiel went to where the people were and “sat where they sat” (v. 15).

**Prayer Emphasis: Notice** that, after Ezekiel “sat” where the people “sat,” he was “astonished” at where they were spiritually and emotionally (v. 15). **Realize** that we live in a needy world and among some very

needy people. Whether they know it or not, God’s Word is what they are so desperately needing in their lives.

## Day 5: Ezekiel 3:16-27

“*Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them a warning from Me:’*” (Ezekiel 3:17)

### The Three “W’s”

If you have ever heard me preach a sermon, you know that I love to use alliteration in my main points. As I read today’s focus verse, I could not help but notice the three “W’s” contained therein! First, Ezekiel was told to be a “watchman.” The priest-turned-prophet did not have to ask how he was to become a “watchman” because God said, “*I have made you a watchman.*” Then, God told Ezekiel to “hear a word from My mouth.” Ezekiel was to receive divine instructions and then share them with God’s people – whether they wanted to hear them or not! Finally, God directed Ezekiel to “give them a warning from Me.” As such, Ezekiel was to be a watchman who heard God’s Word and then issued a clear warning to the people. God clearly told His prophet there would be severe consequences for him if he *refused* to issue the warning as well as upon those who *rejected* hearing God’s warning (vs. 18-19). Ezekiel then had another vision of God’s glory that was very similar to what he saw earlier “by the River Chebar” (compare v. 23 and 1:1). Ezekiel’s reaction to this newest vision was the same as his reaction to the first one. He said, “I fell on my face” (compare v. 23 and 1:28).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Notice the warning that God’s “watchman” was to deliver to the people was to be, “Thus says the LORD GOD” (v. 27). If Ezekiel refused to issue God’s warning words to the people, then he was to ultimately be held accountable for their lost condition. Consider your own accountability to share God’s word with others and do the right thing the next time you have an opportunity to witness.

## Day 6: Ezekiel 4:1-17

“*...take a clay tablet and lay it before you, and portray on it a city, Jerusalem.’*” (Ezekiel 4:1)

### A Visual Aid

Chapters like today’s reading can sometimes be very difficult to understand. I am sure what we have read is no more difficult for us to understand than it was for God’s people when they saw and heard the things God told Ezekiel to do before His sinning, rebellious people. First, Ezekiel was to take a clay tablet and engrave an image of the city of Jerusalem upon it. Then the prophet was directed to create a model of a siege surrounding the image of Jerusalem to illustrate Jerusalem’s fate. The “iron plate” mentioned in verse three could indicate the hardness of the people’s hearts against God’s message of warning or the separation their rebellion had caused between them and God. When Ezekiel would lie on his “left side” he was probably facing north and, thereby, addressing God’s judgment upon “the house of Israel” (v. 4). When he laid on his “right side” he was most likely facing south and was definitely addressing the sins of “the house of Judah” (v. 6). While Ezekiel laid on his side, he was restrained (some translations read, “tied by ropes”) to represent the confinement that a siege brings upon a city (v. 8). The meager rations that Ezekiel was to allow himself during those times was to represent the scarcity of food and water that came soon after a siege against a city began (vs. 10-11).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Notice that God had Ezekiel to be very creative in the way that he tried to convey His message to the people. **Seek** creative ways to direct conversations toward God and His Word. **Realize** that we may have to “think outside the box” if we are going to help our world out of its mess!

## Day 7: Ezekiel 5:1-17

“*And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations.*” (Ezekiel 5:9)

### A “Hairy” Situation

Chapter five of Ezekiel is a continuation of a conversation that God began with His prophet back in chapter three. In the first verse of chapter five, God told Ezekiel to “take a sharp sword” and to use it “as a barber’s razor” to shave his head and beard. We see the word “sword” over 80 times in the Book of Ezekiel. It is a word that God often used to refer to the destruction of the rebellious nations – including the nation of His own people. In Old Testament times, the shaving of one’s head was generally a sign of mourning (Job 1:20) or humiliation (2 Samuel 10:4-5). Ezekiel was directed to take the hair that he had shaved from his head and beard and divide it into three portions. Verse 2 tells us the prophet was told to take “one-third” of the hair into the “midst of the city” and “burn” it. A second third was to be chopped to pieces by “the sword.” Another third was to be scattered “in the wind.” These actions were clearly explained in verse 12 where God said: “One third” of the people would “die of the pestilence” or be “consumed with famine.” Another third of the people would “fall by the sword.” Of the last third of the people of Jerusalem God said, “I will scatter” them to “all the winds.”

**Prayer Emphasis:** Believe God’s Word is always true and accurate. The people of Jerusalem either died from disease and famine, were killed by the sword, or were driven out of the city and taken into captivity. It was surely something that God had “never done” and would “never do again”. **Realize** that a just God cannot allow sin and rebellion to go unpunished.

## Day 8: Ezekiel 6:1-14

“*And they shall know that I am the LORD; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them.*” (Ezekiel 6:10)

### God’s Purpose for Chastisement

As their loving Father, God warned His children that they had been, and would be, chastised for their sin and rebellion. God’s promise to discipline His children remains in force today. Proverbs 3:11-12 says, “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.” Those verses are quoted in Hebrews 12:5-6 and are preceded by these words, “And you have forgotten the exhortation *which speaks to you as to sons.*” We will do well to remember that God’s chastening hand always comes with *correction* in mind. God’s intention for His disciplinary actions against His people was clearly stated in His words, “And they shall know that I am the LORD.” In today’s closing verse God said, “So I will stretch out My hand against them and make the land desolate, yes, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblah, in all their dwelling places. *Then* they shall know that I am the LORD” (v. 14). The phrase “in all their dwelling places” literally means “throughout all their lands” and is a clear indicator that God’s disciplinary action was against the nation as a whole and not just against Jerusalem.

**Prayer Emphasis: Accept** God’s disciplinary actions as a sign of His love for you. **Discipline** your own children in a way that will express love rather than anger. **Refuse** to allow our enemy, the devil, to ever convince you that God is not always acting in your best interest.

## Day 9: Ezekiel 7:1-13

“...no one will strengthen himself who lives in iniquity.” (Ezekiel 7:13)

### No Exceptions!

Ezekiel seven begins with God telling His rebellious people that “the end” had “come upon the four corners of the land” (v. 2). Again, God is emphasizing that what was happening to His rebellious people in Jerusalem was going to be happening on a nation-wide basis. God told Ezekiel to tell the people that He would “send” His “anger against” them and “judge” them “according to (their) ways” (v. 3). His promise to His people was, “My eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity; but I will repay your ways.” After those words God once again said, “Then you shall know that I am the LORD” (v. 4)! The word “singular” in verse five indicates that what was happening in the city of Jerusalem was only an indication of what was to happen on a national basis. In verse nine, God repeats His promise of chastisement that He made earlier in verse four, but this time amends His closing statement to read, “Then you shall know that I am the LORD who strikes.” God continued to explain that His judgment was falling upon the entire nation when He said, “For wrath is on their whole multitude” and “the vision concerns the whole multitude.” God’s conclusion was that “no one” would be able to “strengthen himself” because of their “iniquity” (vs. 12-13).

**Prayer Emphasis: Avoid** the counsel of this world when it says, “You have to do what *you* think is best for you.” **Realize** that we are sometimes clueless when it comes to knowing what is best for us! The times may change, but God’s truth never changes! **Adhere** to this wise counsel: “We have to do what *God* says and thinks is best for us!”

## Day 10: Ezekiel 7:14-27

“...I will do to them according to their way, and according to what they deserve I will judge them; then they shall know that I am the LORD!” (Ezekiel 7:27)

### A Recurring Phrase

After today, we will have read through seven chapters in Ezekiel, and we have read where God said people “shall know that I am the LORD” seven times! By the time we have finished this book we will have read this same phrase 60 times! In the first part of verse 27, when God said, “The king will mourn,” he was probably speaking of Jehoiachin who was already in captivity in Babylon. In that same verse he mentions a “prince” who would be “clothed with desolation.” That “prince” was probably Zedekiah, the puppet king that ascended to the throne after Jehoiachin was taken into captivity. (Ezekiel refers to Zedekiah as “the prince” later in 12:10 & 12 and then again in 21:25.) We will later read in Ezekiel that Zedekiah made a “covenant” with the king of Babylon and then “despised” that covenant when he sent “ambassadors to Egypt” seeking help in his fight against his enemies (17:13-16). This traitorous behavior incited Nebuchadnezzar to the point that he eventually besieged and destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Now God was ready to deal with this evil king, and all his followers, “according to their way, and according to what they deserve.”



**Prayer Emphasis:** Thank God for His mercy that prevents us from getting what we deserve! **Remember** that the difference between grace and mercy is that grace is *getting what we don't deserve* while mercy is *not getting what we do deserve!* **Listen** for opportunities to share those definitions with someone that you meet along the way today!

## Day 11: Ezekiel 8:1-18

*“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.” (Ezekiel 8:18)*

### “Fury”

The events described in chapters 8-11 are visions that God gave Ezekiel as he “sat in (his) house with the elders of Judah sitting before” him. There, in this meeting with “the elders...the hand of the LORD fell upon” Ezekiel and he “looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire” (vs. 1-2). This “likeness” was obviously of a person because Ezekiel adds, “from the appearance of *His* waist and downward, with fire; and from *His* waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber” (v. 2). Further evidence that this vision from God was of a person is found in the fact that Ezekiel said, “He stretched out the form of a hand” that “lifted (him) up between earth and heaven” and by way of “visions” transported the prophet to “the door of the north gate of the inner court.” There, Ezekiel saw “the seat of the image of jealousy” sitting where no idol should have been (v. 3). It was sitting “north of the altar gate...in the entrance” (v. 5). This “image” was a violation of the second commandment and obviously provoked God to “jealousy.” This “image” was not the only violation of God’s commandment about graven images. God showed Ezekiel other “abominations” that were inciting Him to “act in fury” against His people (vs. 17-18).

**Prayer Emphasis:** Note that verse 10 of today’s reading mentions that images of “every sort of creeping thing” and “beasts” were portrayed “all around on the walls” of the court. Have we ever stopped to **consider** what God sees when He looks at the inner courts of our hearts, homes, and lives?

## Day 12: Ezekiel 9:1-11

*“Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, ‘Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand.’” (Ezekiel 9:1)*

### A Second Vision

It is important to remember that the things described in chapters 8-11 are things God showed Ezekiel in visions and these were not things Ezekiel saw happening in real life. The word “suddenly” gives us the idea that this second vision came immediately after the first one concluded. The second vision was of “six men” who “came from the direction of the upper gate.” Each of the men had a “battle-ax in his hand” (v. 2). Our focus verse describes these weapons as “deadly.” These “six men” may or may not have been angelic beings. Whatever they were, Ezekiel clearly saw them and saw that they were powerful beings. God told one of these “six men” to “go through the midst of the city” and to “put a mark on the foreheads” of the people who were grieving over Israel’s involvement with the abominations that Ezekiel saw in the previous vision (v. 4). God then told the remaining men to “go after” (follow) the first man and “kill” anyone who the first man had not marked. God told the men, “begin at My sanctuary. So, they began with the elders who were before the temple” (vs. 5-6). Ezekiel said, as he watched this vision play out before his

eyes, “I fell on my face and cried out” to God asking if there was going to be even a “remnant of Israel” left alive (v. 8).

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember**, this is a vision that God gave Ezekiel to show him how furious He was over Israel’s idolatry. God is a jealous God. He fully expects His people to “have no other gods before” Him (Exodus 20:3). **Ask** yourself, “Does God have any right to be jealous over anything in my life today?”

## Day 13: Ezekiel 10:1-22

*“Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub...and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD’s glory.” (Ezekiel 10:4)*

### “Brightness”

We see the phrase, “the glory of the LORD” in our focus verse again today. This will make the sixth time that we have read phrases about the appearance of God’s glory, and we will see similar phrases seven more times as we continue our reading of Ezekiel. We will see two more in this chapter (vs. 18-19). Our focus verse reveals that, when “the glory of the LORD” appeared “the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD’s glory.” The word used to describe “the LORD’s glory” in verse four is translated “radiance” or “brilliance,” “shining,” and even “blazing presence” in other translations. The first time that this word is found in the Bible is in a song of praise that David sang “to the LORD” where he, under inspiration, spoke of “the brightness before Him” when the “coals of fire were kindled” (2 Samuel 22:1, 13). Several rather amazing things that Ezekiel saw in this vision are mentioned in today’s chapter. He saw “the cherubim” (angelic beings) and the “likeness” of God’s “throne” (v. 1). He then saw “the temple” and its “inner court” (v. 3). However, I am sure none of those things compared to “the brightness of the LORD’s glory.”

**Prayer Emphasis: Imagine** seeing the things that Ezekiel saw and then having to explain them in words. **Thank God** for the inspiration of the Bible and the confidence that we have God’s complete, inspired, inerrant Word to read and share with others. **Mention** something from the Bible in a conversation that you have today.

## Day 14: Ezekiel 11:1-25

*“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.” (Ezekiel 11:23)*

### “The Mountain”

In case you are counting, we see the phrase “the glory of the LORD” for the tenth time in today’s focus verse. This will be the last time we will see it in the chapters covered by this devotional guide, but we will see it six more times when we read the concluding chapters of the book that will be covered in our next devotional. This occasion for the use of the phrase is not a very pleasant one. It tells us that “the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city (Jerusalem) and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.” Although “the mountain” of which Ezekiel speaks is not named here, it is certain that the geographical description, “on the east side of the city,” means that God’s “glory” left Jerusalem to stand over the Mount of Olives. This “mountain” is the same Mount of Olives from which Jesus ascended from this world to heaven after His death and resurrection (Acts 1:9-12), and it is the same “mountain” to which He will return at the time of His second coming (Acts 1:11, Zechariah 14:4). After this vision, God “the

Spirit” took Ezekiel, via another vision, to “Chaldea,” where he shared all the things “the LORD had shown” him with “those in captivity” there (vs. 24-25).

**Prayer Emphasis: Imagine** Ezekiel’s amazement at how God’s Spirit enabled him to share God’s Word with all the people. **Trust God** to get you to where you need to be to witness to those who desperately need a message from Him. **Take care** not to waste any opportunity that the Lord provides!

## Day 15: Ezekiel 12:1-16

“*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.*” (Ezekiel 12:2)

### “A Rebellious House”

The first verse of today’s reading finds Ezekiel saying, “Now the word of the LORD came to me.” God had Ezekiel use these words to introduce many of the things that he was to share with the people in chapters 12-19. God told Ezekiel that he dwelt “in the midst of a rebellious house.” The primary indication that God’s people had become “rebellious” was that they had “eyes to see” but did not see and “ears to hear,” but they did not hear. Note carefully that God did not say that His people *could not* see or hear, but that they *would not* see or hear. In Jeremiah 5:21, God had Jeremiah call His people a “foolish people...who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not.” Jesus would later describe His Jewish listeners as those who fulfilled Isaiah’s similar prophecy (see Isaiah 6:9-10) by refusing to hear His teachings (Matthew 13:14-15). Not so very long after that, the Apostle Paul would also use those words from Isaiah to describe those who “disbelieved” the things that he had taught them “concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets” (Acts 28:23-24). God said that He would “scatter to every wind” those who attempted to help His rebellious people avoid their pending judgment (v. 14).

**Prayer Emphasis: Read** God’s Word and choose to “see” and “hear” the things He is saying to you. I am sure that you, like me, have read some things in Ezekiel that you could not understand. I am sure we are not alone in that. However, **commit** to focusing on the things that you *can* see and the things that you *can* hear as you seek to follow and serve the Lord today.

## Day 16: Ezekiel 12:17-28

“*Son of man, look, the house of Israel is saying, ‘The vision that he sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.’*” (Ezekiel 12:27)

### A Second Sign

In yesterday’s reading we saw where God spoke to His rebellious people through the sign of Ezekiel’s packed baggage. He told Ezekiel to pack his bag and act as if he was going away on a long journey. As such, that was to be a sign to the people that their time in exile was going to be long. In today’s verses we read about a second sign. In verse 18, we read where God told His prophet to “eat (his) bread with quaking” and to “drink (his) water with trembling and anxiety.” This second sign was to reveal to the people that the time of their captivity would be fearful. Obviously, the people clearly understood this second sign, but refused to believe it. Instead of saying that the time of the exile was near, they said, “The days are prolonged” (v. 22). Even though His people were not hearing Him, God was clearly hearing His people! He told Ezekiel, “The house of Israel is saying, ‘The vision that he sees is for many days from

now, and he prophesies of times far off” (v. 27). People have been hearing us speak of the rapture and the second coming of Christ for a long time, but they have refused to believe that those events are ever really going to happen. How sad for them!

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that God earlier told Ezekiel that he was to be like a “watchman” (3:17). **Be** a faithful and ever alert “watchman” for those you associate with every day. **Faithfully warn** them of the sad times that are to come for those who refuse to believe the message of the gospel.

## Day 17: Ezekiel 13:1-23

*“Thus says the LORD GOD: ‘Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!’” (Ezekiel 13:3)*

### “Foolish Prophets”

In verse two, God told Ezekiel that one of the problems with the false prophets of his day was that they prophesied “out of their own heart.” Some translations use the word “imagination” here to describe what God was saying. The Bible in Basic English describes the words of those prophets as “the invention of their hearts.” Then, in verse three, God called these people, “foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing.” Note that the word there is spirit and not Spirit, as in the Holy Spirit. These men were not receiving visions and messages from God but were delivering messages that were conceived in their own hearts and minds. So, God likened them to “foxes in the deserts” and builders who had “not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel” (vs. 4-5). God called their imagined messages “nonsense” and “lies” and told them that He was “against” them (v. 8). The “untempered mortar” mentioned in several of today’s verses represented the poor job that the messages of these “foolish prophets” were doing in helping to repair the moral decay of God’s people. Instead of re-building a wall, they just patched it up and whitewashed it to make it *appear* strong and sound.

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:15-16). **Follow** spiritual leaders that live the truth and love you enough to preach nothing but the truth. **Pray** for pastors and preachers today, asking God to strengthen them in their work for Him.

## Day 18: Ezekiel 14:1-23

*“‘That the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me... but that they may be My people and I may be their God,’ says the LORD GOD.” (Ezekiel 14:11)*

### God’s Great Desire

Even though God knew that His people had “set up idols in their hearts,” He still longed for a day when they would return to Him (v. 3). He readily admitted their disloyalty when He said, “they are all estranged from Me by their idols” (v. 5). He longed for the day that “Israel” would “no longer stray” from Him and again be His “people” and He would be “their God” (v. 11). But Israel was far from turning back to God at that time. In fact, the sinful Israelites had practically become unreachable. God concluded that, “Even if... Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it (Israel), they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness” (v. 14). Noah was known for his faithfulness and obedience during some of the darkest days in man’s history. Daniel was known for his boldness to faithfully serve God in the face of great adversity. Job was known

for his righteousness and his commitment to serve God during many dark days of trials and sufferings. God determined to send “four severe judgments on Jerusalem” (v. 21) revealing that there was a “remnant” in Israel whose “ways” and “doings” would bear witness that they had returned to Him (v. 22).

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Believe** that it is God’s great desire that we walk with Him and serve Him faithfully. **Refuse** to allow anything to come before God in your life. **Express** your love, loyalty, and appreciation for Him and all that He does for you daily.

## Day 19: Ezekiel 15:1-8

*“Thus I will make the land desolate, because they have persisted in unfaithfulness,” says the LORD GOD.” (Ezekiel 15:8)*

### “They...Persisted in Unfaithfulness”

Yesterday we read where God said to Ezekiel, “when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness” that He would “stretch out” His “hand against it” (14:13). Obviously, even though Israel was experiencing God’s chastisement, they “persisted in unfaithfulness.” Some translations simply state that Israel had been “unfaithful” or had “acted faithlessly.” Our text today reveals that this state of “unfaithfulness” was just a continuation of a long-standing problem among God’s people. Because of Israel’s sin, God said He would “make the land desolate” (v. 8). One translation reads, “I will make the land a waste.” The parable of the vine (vs. 1-4) was intended for the people to see that they were no longer “useful” to God or His service. In verses 6-8, God likened the burned up, useless vine to the city of Jerusalem. Because God’s glorious seat of government had stopped bearing fruit for Him, she was now “useless” to Him. In Psalm 80:8, Israel sang of themselves as “a vine out of Egypt” that God had “planted” in the Promised Land. In Isaiah 5:1 God described Israel as “His vineyard” that was set “on a very fruitful hill.” Now God is saying, “I will set My face against them” (v. 7). And then He added, “I will make the land desolate because they have persisted in unfaithfulness.”

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Ask** God, and yourself, “Is there any sin or wrong action in which I have persisted because of my unfaithfulness to God?” **Listen** closely for God’s answer. If He reveals an area of concern in your life, **take** immediate action to make things right with Him by asking Him to change your wrong behaviors.

## Day 20: Ezekiel 16:1-14

*“Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,” says the LORD GOD.” (Ezekiel 16:14)*

### “Splendor”

In the opening verses of today’s chapter, Jerusalem’s past is pictured as that of an unwanted child. He likened them to a pitiful child who, “on the day” it was “born” it was neglected and had not received the typical, loving care of a parent. No caregiver had “cut” its “navel cord,” “washed” it in water, “rubbed” it “with salt,” or “wrapped” it “in swaddling clothes” (v. 4). However, since God led David to make Jerusalem His capital city, God treated this former alien city as His very own – and treated her as a loving father would treat his child. In verse eight, God said, “When I passed by you...and looked upon you...I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness.” In other words, God said that He had taken this seemingly unwanted child and made it His very own. In that same verse He went on to say that He had

made “a covenant with” them and they “became” His. I hope that we can all clearly see that this is exactly what our loving God has done for us! He has come to us in our darkest moments, in our deepest sins, and said, “I want you for My own!” He has washed us, cleansed us, and made us whole through the blood of His own Son!

**Prayer Emphasis:** Take the time to re-read verses 6-12 and count the times that you see the personal pronoun “I” in those verses. In my NKJV I count 14 times that God used that one-letter word to indicate all that He had done for His people. **Note** that a 15<sup>th</sup> “I” is found in verse 14 where God reminded the people that He, as a loving Father, had “bestowed” His “splendor” on them.

## Day 21: Ezekiel 16:15-30

*“You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them.” (Ezekiel 16:17)*

### A Very Sad Situation

God told His people that, after He had taken them in, cleaned them up, and adorned them in splendor, they had “trusted” in their “own beauty” and had “played the harlot” with everyone who would have them (v. 15). They “took some of” the beautiful “garments” in which He had “adorned” them and decorated their “high places” with them (v. 16). “High places” were areas for the worship of false gods and were usually situated on hills. Then, just as their forefathers had done back in Exodus 32:2-4, God’s people took their “jewelry” made from the “gold” and “silver” He had provided for them and created false gods. God likened their worship of false gods to spiritual harlotry and adultery. They had taken the “food” with which God “fed” them and “set it before” their false gods as offerings (v. 19). “Moreover,” (meaning, “even above that”), God said that they had taken their “sons and...daughters” and sacrificed them to pagan gods (v. 20). Few people may know this, but by Ezekiel’s time, child sacrifice was openly practiced among God’s people. Second Kings 21:6 is the first reference to this type of wickedness, and Jeremiah 7:31 confirms that this is what was happening among God’s people!

**Prayer Emphasis:** Love your children and lead them in the ways of God! **Refuse** to allow them to become offerings to the prevalent evil in our day. **Pray** for your children and grandchildren daily and **express** your love to them as often as you can!

## Day 22: Ezekiel 16:31-43

*“Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry. You are the opposite of other women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot....” (Ezekiel 16:33-34)*

### Worse Than a Harlot

As if being likened to a harlot was not insult enough, God had Ezekiel tell His people that they had been even worse than a harlot. A harlot usually received payment from the men who frequented her home and tasted of her pleasures. God’s people were not receiving any benefit from anyone that was hindering them from having a right relationship with Him. Notice the way that God’s people were going from a very low place to what must have been the lowest place of all. First, they are compared to a harlot – a woman who was usually compensated for her affections. Then, they are likened to “an adulterous wife” who would

lavish her affections on “strangers instead of her husband” (v. 32). This woman was committing the same sin as the harlot, but for reasons other than compensation. Finally, God likened His adulterous people to a woman who “gave payment” while “no payment was given” to her (v. 34). It sounds like God is likening His people to a woman who is so desperate for a relationship that she is willing to lose all her pride to gain just a little bit of attention, even if it is from the wrong people.

**Prayer Emphasis: Believe** that there is no alternative to God and that there is no other source of happiness but Him for His children. **Refuse** to settle for second best. **Embrace** God and **commit** your life to living in a wonderful, fulfilling relationship with Him.

## Day 23: Ezekiel 16:44-63

*“Your elder sister is Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, is Sodom and her daughters.” (Ezekiel 16:46)*

### A Wicked Sister

In yesterday’s verses we read where God had Ezekiel compare His people to a wicked, adulterous wife. In today’s verses we read where God then had Ezekiel compare His people to an evil, wicked sister. In the first part of this chapter, God led Ezekiel to remind His people that their ancestors were “from the land of Canaan” and they were, therefore, descendants of pagans (16:3). God then reminded the people that “Samaria” was their sister “to the north” while “Sodom” was their sister “to the south.” The Bible story is filled with Jerusalem’s prejudices against the people of Samaria, even in Jesus’ days. And what self-respecting Israelite did not know about Sodom and all her evils. Imagine the shock and dismay that must have come upon God’s people when He said, “You became more corrupt than they in all your ways” (v. 47). God had Ezekiel elaborate on “the iniquity” of “Sodom” and how her people had been “haughty” and “committed abomination” before Him (vs. 49-50). God reminded the Israelites that He, “took them away as (He) saw fit” (v. 50). He closed this discussion of Israel’s sister cities by adding, “Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they” (v. 51).

**Prayer Emphasis: Imagine** what our holy God must think of the world in which we live today. **Read** Romans 12: 2 and **refuse** to conform to the pattern that this world, and our current society, presents to us. **Allow** God to transform you into the kind of person that only He can. **Seek** His help daily, asking Him to equip you with what it takes to be a victorious Christian in our day.

## Day 24: Ezekiel 17:1-24

*“And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, pose a riddle and speak a parable to the house of Israel,’” (Ezekiel 17:1-2)*

### “A Riddle” and “A Parable”

The “riddle” or “parable” that God wanted Ezekiel to speak to His people is recorded for us (vs. 3-10). While it may seem a little vague to us, we can be sure that the people of Ezekiel’s day had some idea as to what God was wanting them to see in it. The story mentions two eagles. The “great eagle with large wings” that “came to Lebanon and took from the cedar the highest branch” (v. 3) was representative of Nebuchadnezzar, who had attacked Jerusalem. The “topmost young twig” that Babylon’s king had “carried” away was speaking of Jerusalem’s leaders, including King Jehoiachin, who had been taken away into captivity (v. 4). Nebuchadnezzar had taken the “topmost” part of Israel’s family tree and “it grew and

became a spreading vine of low stature” with “its branches turned toward him” instead of God (v. 6). The second “great eagle” was representative of Egypt, to whom King Zedekiah “bent” their “roots toward” when they reached out to Egypt for help (v. 7). In this story about a “vine” (God’s people) reaching out to Egypt instead of Him, God had to ask, “Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots, cut off its fruit, and leave it to wither?” (v.9). One thing was clear, Israel was helpless without God.

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that Jesus also likened us (His followers) to vines, and clearly told us that without being rooted in Him, we would wither and become unproductive (John 15). **Accept** God’s plan for your life and **choose** to thrive where He has planted you.

## Day 25: Ezekiel 18:1-18

“*What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.”*” (Ezekiel 18:2)

### A “Proverb”

According to the first verse in chapter 18, “The word of the LORD came to (Ezekiel) again” in the form of a question. The question was in the form of a “proverb” with which many Israelites might have been somewhat familiar. I say the people might have been familiar with this “proverb” because God directed Jeremiah to tell it to His people earlier (See Jeremiah 31:29-30). The message within this “proverb” was that the children were suffering now because of the past sins of “the fathers.” While the message seems very clear to us now, it might not be as clear as it seems. The idea that God wanted Ezekiel to convey to His people was that they were now blaming their suffering and chastisement on the sins of others (“the fathers”) and not on their own sins. Tomorrow we will read where the people were believing that they were being punished unjustly and saying, “The way of the LORD is not fair” (v. 25). By choosing to blame others for their situation, the people were denying any accountability of their own. In the second half of today’s reading, God had Ezekiel present three arguments for the case of personal accountability. Take the time to read them again from verses 5, 10, and 14.

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that Romans 15:4 clearly teaches that “whatever things were written before were written for our learning.” It certainly seems that God has been using things that He has said in the past to help His people through their present-day situations for quite some time. **Allow** God’s messages to Israel in Ezekiel’s day to speak to your heart today.

## Day 26: Ezekiel 18:19-32

“*The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son...*” (Ezekiel 18:20)

### A Long-Standing Misunderstanding

I mentioned yesterday that the people had become convinced that they were suffering now for the past sins of their fathers (v. 25). In that same verse, God responded immediately to their claim that His way was “not fair” by saying, “Is it not ...your ways which are not fair?” In the Ten Commandments God had said, “For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations” (Exodus 20:5). He repeated that statement in Exodus 34:7 and then again in Deuteronomy 5:9. We know that we should pay careful attention when God repeats Himself. But the emphasis here should be on the word *careful!* In those statements God was *not* saying that He would



punish a future generation for the sins of a former generation. What God *was* saying in that verse is that the effects of sin are long-lasting and that those effects may last for up to three or four generations. Our focus verse clearly states that God does not punish the innocent for the sins of the guilty. We may suffer as a result of the consequences of a past generation's sins, but God does not place the responsibility for those sins on us.

**Prayer Emphasis: Mark** clearly these words in your Bible: "The soul who sins shall die" (v. 20). **Refuse** to blame your spiritual chastisements on the past sins of others. **Learn to recognize** the difference between consequences and chastisement and blame only yourself for God's need to discipline you or to correct your personal actions.

## Day 27: Ezekiel 19:1-14

*"Moreover take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel..." (Ezekiel 19:1)*

### "A Lamentation"

"Prince" was the title that God had Ezekiel to give to King Zedekiah (See Ezekiel 7:27). Israel's last king, Jehoiachin, had already been taken to Babylon, and the king of Babylon had put Zedekiah in his place. With God's permission, Ezekiel refused to refer to Zedekiah as Israel's king. Since the lamentation in today's reading is "for the princes of Israel," we understand that it was for King Zedekiah and those within his service. By this time Jerusalem had been plundered, and many of its people had been taken to Babylon, but the city had not yet been destroyed. However, the fall of Jerusalem was inevitable. Although Ezekiel was one of that first group taken captive to Babylon, he prophesied to those Israelites who had been left behind in Jerusalem as well as to the ones who were already in Babylon. This message, in the form of "a lamentation" was for all of God's people. It is a very sad story of the "cub" of a "lioness" who once "learned to catch prey, and...devoured men" (v. 3). But now, "the nations" had "trapped" him "in their pit, and they brought him with chains to the land of Egypt" (v. 4). After that, "she took another of her cubs and made him a young lion," but he, too, "was trapped in their pit" (vs. 5 & 8). This last "cub" was none other than King Jehoiachin who was "put in a cage with chains, and brought...to the king of Babylon" (v. 9).

**Prayer Emphasis: Realize** that sin often brings a sad end to a person's or nation's story. **Remember** that God has an answer for that problem and His answer is only found in the Bible. **Read** your Bible every day and allow it to be your life manual. **Believe** that God always has a plan for even our most difficult circumstances and His greatest desire is always for our good.

## Day 28: Ezekiel 20:1-17

*"It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me." (Ezekiel 20:1)*

### A Meeting with the Elders

Today's reading begins with a date. Ezekiel is told to note that this meeting with "certain of the elders" took place "in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month." There are not many dates noted in the Book of Ezekiel, and this is the first one since Ezekiel 8:1. The purpose of their meeting with Ezekiel was clearly stated. They had come "to inquire of the LORD." But, while their purpose was clearly stated, we are never told exactly what they had come "to inquire of the LORD." This was not the first time that the elders visited with Ezekiel (See 8:1 and 14:1), but it would be the last of their visits that

are recorded for us. God's response to these "elders" was short but not very sweet. His response to their inquiries was, "As I live," says the LORD GOD, "I will not be inquired of by you" (v. 3). Rather than answer their questions, God chose to review their past. It seems as if God was saying to them, "If you want to better understand your present situation, you might want to review your past actions!" Even though God treated Israel kindly, they "despised" His "judgments" and refused to "walk in (His) statutes" because their "heart went after their idols" (v. 16).

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Protect** your heart and guard it against allowing anything or anyone to take God's place in your heart. **Believe** that God is a jealous God and that He does not want to be anything but first in our lives. **Commit** to having a "God first" mentality in your life!

## Day 29: Ezekiel 20:18-32

*"I am the LORD your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD..." (Ezekiel 20:19-20)*

### Some Straightforward Instructions

Today's focus verse is a record of at least part of what God said in response to the inquiries of the elders. If you will note, what God said in verses 19-20 is very similar to what He had said in verses 11-12. In verses 11-12 He was speaking of the generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt but refused, because of their unbelief, to cross the Jordan River and take possession of the Promised Land. In verses 19-20, God was speaking of the generation that came after them. Unlike their parents, they had finally crossed the Jordan River, but, obviously, they had not totally forsaken the idols they had learned to worship in Egypt. I have often heard it said that it was easier for God to get Israel out of Egypt than it was to get Egypt out of Israel. The same is true for believers today. God's great salvation plan can easily get us out of the world (our lost condition), but it sometimes takes time to get the world out of us. The answer to Israel's sin problem in Ezekiel's day was the same answer to the sins of the people in Moses' day. It is still the answer that God gives us today. "Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; hallow My Sabbaths" and you will soon "know that I am the LORD."

**Prayer Emphasis:** As I read God's response to the elders that came to inquire of God, I had to think of that old saying, "Keep it simple!" **Keep** things simple, and much better in your life, and the lives of your family, by choosing to be an obedient believer that walks in accordance with the commands of the Lord. **Commit** your life to allowing God to get the world out of your heart!

## Day 30: Ezekiel 20:33-49

*"As I live,' says the LORD GOD, 'surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered..." (Ezekiel 20:33-34a)*

### "A Mighty Hand" and "An Outstretched Arm"

Any Israelite worth his or her salt would well remember the phrases, "a mighty hand" and "an outstretched arm." Those phrases would remind them of how God delivered His people from their past bondage in Egypt. In Exodus 6:6, God had Moses say to the Israelites, "I am the LORD; I will bring you out from the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with *an outstretched*

*arm* and with great judgments.” In Exodus 32:11 the Bible records Moses pleading with God after the case of the golden calf and saying, “LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with *a mighty hand*?” Ezekiel’s message from God and for the people was that God had certainly not changed and He could still do for them what He had done for others. One way in which He would not change was in His constantly reaching out to His people, pleading with them to faithfully follow Him. In verse 36 God said, “Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you.”

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Believe** that we serve the same God that revealed His “mighty hand” and “outstretched arm” to others in the past. **Believe** that He can, and will, do the same things for us! **Believe** that God loves you and desires His best for you. I guess I am saying, “Just **believe, believe, believe!**”

## Day 31: Ezekiel 21:1-17

“...say to the land of Israel, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I am against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you.”’” (Ezekiel 21:3)

### God’s “Sword”

Because God’s people had sinned against Him, God chose to use Babylon, and its invasion of the Holy Land, as a “sword” against them. But that decision did not come without warning. God had Ezekiel remind the people that God had said, “I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you.” There are several things to note about God’s “sword” in today’s Scripture. First, *it was a drawn sword*. God stood ready to punish His people for their sins and wickedness (v. 3). Second, *it was a dreadful sword*. God had Ezekiel tell the people that His “sword” had been “sharpened to make a dreadful slaughter” and it had been “given into the hand of the slayer” (vs. 10-11). Third, *it was a damaging sword*. Ezekiel was told to warn the people that God’s “sword” would “do double damage” (v. 14). Then, as if enough had not already been said to cause His people to repent, God said that His “sword” *was a deadly sword*. God warned His people that His “sword” was a “sword that slays, the sword that slays the great men, that enters their private chambers” (v. 14). It is obvious that God wanted Ezekiel to remind His people that, when His wrath had finally been unleashed, there was nowhere for men to flee for safety.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Note** that God said, “I have set the point of the sword against all their gates” (v. 15). Since people fled from a city by way of its “gates,” God was saying that His sword, once drawn and deployed, would bring inescapable punishment. **Realize** that it is always best to heed God’s “word” in order to escape God’s “sword.”

## Day 32: Ezekiel 21:18-32

“For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver.” (Ezekiel 21:21)

### A Fork in the Road

As Babylon moved forward in its march against Judah and Ammon, the king’s armies came to a “fork” that became “two roads.” One road would lead the Babylonian army to Tyre, another of its enemies, and the other would lead them to Judah and Ammon. The king of Babylon had a decision to make, and Ezekiel tells us how he came to his decision. When he came to the “fork of the two roads” he stopped “to use divination.” Some translations use the word “omen” here instead of “divination,” while others choose to

use the word “magic.” The three forms of “divination” that he chose to use were the shaking of “the arrows,” the consulting of “the images,” and, the test of “the liver.” The shaking of “the arrows” consisted of placing arrows into a quiver with each one bearing the name of a city. When an arrow was selected, the city whose name was on the selected arrow was believed to be the one that they should attack. Consulting “the images” simply meant to pray to their false gods and idols. The phrase, “looks at the liver” described the ancient practice of looking for signs and direction by examining the liver of a sacrificial animal.

**Prayer Emphasis:** The king of Babylon may have thought that he was receiving his directions from magic, but we know it was God who directed him to attack Judah and Ammon. **Believe** that God is God of all men, and not just those who worship Him. **Realize** that He can use anyone He desires to accomplish His divine purposes. **Volunteer** your services to Him today!

## Day 33: Ezekiel 22:1-16

*“Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Now, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations!’” (Ezekiel 22:1-2)*

### “Abominations”

God came to Ezekiel once more, asking him to “judge the bloody city” of Jerusalem and to “show her all her abominations.” Two of the “abominations” that God wanted His prophet to speak of were bloodshed and idolatry (v. 3). When God had Ezekiel describe Jerusalem as a city that “sheds blood in her own midst,” He was saying that the people of His holy city had become violent, even to their own people. When He stated that “she makes idols within herself,” He was saying they no longer were simply worshipping foreign idols, but they had created their own false gods (v. 3). The story of the golden calf in the book of Exodus testifies to the fact that God’s people were well-skilled at the art of creating idols. When it comes to violence, Ezekiel was led to mention blood or bloodshed seven times in this message to God’s people. Violence and idolatry violated God’s laws regarding His people’s relationships to Him and to other human beings. Jesus later emphasized that God’s law was to not only govern our attitude toward God, but also our attitude toward our fellowman (Matthew 22:37-39). Jerusalem’s name meant “City of Peace,” but it had fallen far from what God desired it to be!

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to become involved in the hateful violence that marks our days. **Obey** God’s commandments to love Him and your fellowman. **Make** God’s priorities your priorities as you live your life before Him and others. **Refuse** to hate and **choose** to love. **Treat** others like you would want them to treat you and you will be a witness to people wherever you are.

## Day 34: Ezekiel 22:17-31

*“The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger.” (Ezekiel 22:29)*

### Some Strong Accusations

God told Ezekiel to warn the people that He was going to turn their city into a furnace of affliction. He told the people, “As men gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt it; so I will gather you in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you” (v. 20). Why was God so angry with His people? The answer to that question is clearly expressed in our focus verse. They “used oppressions, committed robbery...mistreated the poor and needy” and “wrongfully”

oppressed “the stranger.” How could God’s people have fallen into such an evil way of life? Ezekiel’s message tells the people where God placed the blame. In verse 26, He blamed the “priests” who had “violated” God’s law and “profaned” God’s “holy things.” In verse 27, He blames the “princes” (governmental leaders) for their cruel abuses of the people. In verse 28, God places blame on the “prophets” who shared “false visions” and told “lies” to the people. They would say, “‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ when the LORD had not spoken.” So, God “sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before” Him, but sadly, He “found no one” (v. 30).

**Prayer Emphasis: Imagine** what God would have to say to and about America today! **Seek** to make a difference in the world by making a difference right where God has placed you. **Look** for breaches in our spiritual walls and “stand in the gap” (v. 30). **Pray** for America’s pastors and preachers today.

## Day 35: Ezekiel 23:1-16

“*Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother...As for their names, Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah.*” (Ezekiel 23:2 & 4b)

### “Two Women”

The “word of the LORD came again” (v. 1) to Ezekiel in the form of an allegory of “two women.” These women were sisters described as “the daughters of one mother” (v. 2). Their names were Oholah and Oholibah. In verse four, the identities of these “two women” are revealed. We are told that Oholah represented “Samaria,” the capital city of Israel, and Oholibah represented “Jerusalem,” the capital city of Judah. In the first part of verse four God said, “They *were* Mine.” Notice that I emphasized the word “were” in that phrase. By speaking of the people of Samaria and Jerusalem in past tense, God was not saying they were no longer His children, but that they were no longer committed to Him or living under His authority. While they were committed to God, He blessed them with many children (“sons and daughters”) and the cities grew and prospered (v. 4). Samaria (Oholah) “played the harlot” when she aligned herself with the “Assyrians” (v. 5). This happened under the reigns of Jehu, Menahem, and Hoshea (See 2 Kings 10:32-34, 15:19-20, and 17:3-4.) Jerusalem (Oholibah) became even “more corrupt” than her sister (v. 11) when she committed spiritual adultery with the “Assyrians” and the “Babylonians” (vs. 12 and 17).

**Prayer Emphasis: Choose** to remain faithful to God even if others are not. **Note** that God’s own people, the citizens of Jerusalem, were the aggressors in their spiritual adultery with the Babylonians. Verse 16 reveals that “She lusted for them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea.” **Refuse** to be unfaithful to God in any area of your life but expect chastisement if you are.

## Day 36: Ezekiel 23:17-31

“*She revealed her harlotry and uncovered her nakedness. Then I alienated Myself from her, as I had alienated Myself from her sister.*” (Ezekiel 23:18)

### Jerusalem’s Harlotry

Still speaking of Jerusalem, God said to Ezekiel, “The Babylonians came to her...and they defiled her with their immorality” (v. 17). However, we should remember that yesterday we read where Jerusalem’s lovers “came to her” after she “sent messengers to them in Chaldea” (v. 16). After Jerusalem “revealed her harlotry” God “alienated” Himself “from her” as He had with Samaria (v. 18). Even then, she did not change her ways, but “multiplied her harlotry” (v. 19). As you read through today’s Scriptures, you cannot

help but notice that God lists several nations with which Jerusalem played the harlot, namely, Egypt, Babylon, Chaldea, the Assyrians, and others. God then used those same peoples to “come against” Jerusalem (v. 24). God said, “I will delegate judgment to them, and they shall judge you” (v. 24). God also said, “They shall deal furiously with you; they shall remove your nose and your ears” (v. 25). In ancient times, facial mutilation was a way that harlots were punished. If they would not change their ways, then their appearance was changed so that no future lovers would desire them.

**Prayer Emphasis: Imagine** God’s heartbreak and sorrow as He watched His people commit acts that revealed their lack of love and faithfulness to Him. To borrow from yesterday, again I say, **choose** to remain faithful to God even if others are not. **Believe** that Satan and his allies are nothing but liars who would say or do anything to use us to hurt God.

## Day 37: Ezekiel 23:32-49

*“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘You shall drink of your sister’s cup, the deep and wide one; you shall be laughed to scorn and held in derision; it contains much.’” (Ezekiel 23:32)*

### The “Cup”

Yesterday’s Scripture closed with God telling Jerusalem that He was going to take the same “cup” of wrath that He had poured out on Samaria and put it in their “hand” (v. 31). Today’s Scripture begins with God telling Jerusalem: “You shall drink of your sister’s cup.” He warns His people that this cup of His wrath is a “deep and wide one.” Part of Jerusalem’s punishment would be that they would be “laughed to scorn and held in derision.” God went on to say that this “cup” would be “filled with drunkenness and sorrow” and “horror and desolation” (v. 33). The fact that the people of Judah and Jerusalem were going to experience God’s full wrath was found in the words, “You shall drink and *drain* it” (v. 34). The point God was making to the people of Judah was that, since they had so willingly partaken of Samaria’s sin, they would now experience the same judgment. The analogy of God’s wrath as a “cup” is found often in the Bible. Judah had to drink from this “cup” as a “penalty” for her “lewdness and...harlotry” (v. 35). The cup about which Jesus prayed: “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me” was the cup of God’s wrath that He was going to pour out on the sins of mankind as Jesus hung on the cross at Calvary (Luke 22:42).

**Prayer Emphasis: Thank** God for sending Jesus to bear the burden of our sins and drink our cup of wrath while hanging on the cross at Calvary. **Remember** that Jesus “endured the cross” while “despising” its “shame” because of His commitment to doing the will of His Father (Hebrews 12:2). **Commit** your life to fulfilling God’s will regardless of the costs.

## Day 38: Ezekiel 24:1-14

*“Again, in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, write down the name of the day, this very day...’” (Ezekiel 24:1-2a)*

### A Day to Remember

Today’s chapter begins with another of the few verses in Ezekiel that include a date. The reference to “the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month” marks a day of national calamity for Judah. It was the day that “the king of Babylon started his siege against Jerusalem (v. 2). God’s prophet was commanded to “utter a parable” to remind God’s people that this day had come because they had been a “rebellious house” (v. 3). The parable tells of a filth-ridden “pot” in which Judah would be boiled (v. 3).

Verse six tells us that this “pot” had “scum...in it.” Verse 11 tells us that, as God’s people ate the meat cooked in their pot, they were consuming “scum” at the same time. This statement teaches us that God’s people had only cleansed the outside of their “pot” while leaving the inside filthy. Close to 600 years later, Jesus would warn the Jewish leaders that they were doing the same things (See Matthew 23:26). Just as the day that Babylon’s siege against Jerusalem’s gates was to be a memorable one, the day that God’s wrath fell on Jesus on a lonely hill just outside of those gates should be a memorable one for us!

**Prayer Emphasis: Celebrate** the memorable days in your life. **Praise** God for the day that you were saved, baptized, or made your life commitment to Jesus. **Celebrate** your marriage day and the day of the births of your children. **Celebrate** the day that you reached some major milestone in your life and **give** God the glory for all those things. **Celebrate** today because it “is the day the Lord has made” (Psalm 118:24)!

## Day 39: Ezekiel 24:15-27

*“Also the word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor weep...’” (Ezekiel 24:15-16)*

### Ezekiel’s Wife

The last half of Ezekiel 24 contains one of the lesser-known stories in the Bible. It is the story of the death of Ezekiel’s wife. This woman was said to be “the desire” of Ezekiel’s eyes. The phrase “with one stroke,” indicates that her death was sudden and unexpected. In fact, Ezekiel said, “I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died” (v. 18). In what might be one of the strangest commandments that God ever gave to anyone, Ezekiel was told that he was to “neither mourn nor weep” or to allow his “tears” to “run down” (v. 16). The broken-hearted prophet was commanded to “sigh in silence” and to “make no mourning for the dead.” Instead, he was told, “bind your turban on your head, and put sandals on your feet.” He was even banned from eating the “bread of sorrow” (v. 17). This is one of the few prophecies in the book of Ezekiel that is fully explained for us. God tells us that Jerusalem had been the “stronghold” of Judah and their “joy and...glory” (v. 25). Just as Ezekiel’s wife had been “the desire” of his eyes, Jerusalem had been “the desire” of the people of Judah (v. 25). Ezekiel tells us that his wife died “at evening,” and “the next morning” he was sent back out to minister and preach to the people (v. 18).

**Prayer Emphasis: Imagine** Ezekiel’s sorrow at losing “the desire” of his “eyes.” Perhaps God allowed this to happen so that Ezekiel could preach to God’s people with a better understanding of how they felt about losing Jerusalem, which was “the desire” of their eyes. **See** in Ezekiel a picture of our Savior, Jesus, who can “sympathize with our weaknesses” (Hebrews 4:15).

## Day 40: Ezekiel 25:1-17

*“The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites, and prophecy against them.’” (Ezekiel 25:1-2)*

### “The Ammonites”

Although God mainly gave Ezekiel messages for Israel and Judah, He also gave him prophecies to deliver to Gentile nations as well. The message that God had for Israel and Judah’s surrounding nations was, if God did not spare His own people from judgment, then He would not spare the other nations either. We will read about the judgment on the Gentile nations in chapters 25-32. God’s basis for the judgment on

these foreign nations was found in His covenant with Abraham. In that covenant God promised that He would “bless” those who blessed His people and “curse” those who cursed His people. Even though God’s people were seldom faithful to Him, and seldom kept their promises made to Him, God was always faithful to keep His promises to them. The first of those prophecies against other nations is the one “against the Ammonites” that is found here in Ezekiel 25. You might recall that Ezekiel had earlier pronounced judgment on Ammon (21:28-32), but the extent of that judgment is clearly explained now. God’s message of judgment against Ammon was that they “clapped (their) hands” and “rejoiced in heart” when they saw the trouble that came upon Israel (v. 6).

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to rejoice at the trouble of others. Learn to **love** others and treat them as you would want to be treated. Thank you for reading through this devotional guide with us. Please contact us at [office@seminolebc.com](mailto:office@seminolebc.com) or call 850-562-8069 if we can minister to you in any way.