

# *Ezekiel*

## *Introduction*

The name Ezekiel means “God strengthen,” or “God is strong.” His ministry as a prophet began in 590 BCE and ended in 570 BCE. His writing was done while he was in captivity in Babylon, writing to the Jews in Jerusalem, in which he described some of the events reported to him during the time of warfare and the fall of Jerusalem. He was a priest and the son of a priest named Buzi. With the Babylonian Captivity he was carried away as a young man, being taken captive along with King Jehoiachin in 598 BCE, a number of years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He lived in Tel-Abib (hill of the storm god) where a Jewish community tried to eke out a living. Tel-Abib was located along the banks of the Chebar. The Chebar is described as a river but actually it was a canal which diverted water toward the north of the Euphrates River. Ezekiel was married but his wife died suddenly just as the siege of Israel began.

In the year 593 BCE he experienced a vision somewhere in Mesopotamia during a thunderstorm in which he experienced a call to be a prophet of God. The first portion of the book of Ezekiel deals with his seeking to establish hope on the part of the exiles that they might deal with their captivity in a foreign land.

News of the fall of Jerusalem (which took place August 15, 586 BCE) reached Ezekiel on January 8, 585 BCE. After this his message became one that sought to reassure the people that Jerusalem and the temple would again be restored and worship, and living on their part, would return to be as it had been in the past.

The book is carefully organized in its planning – the time before the fall, the arrival of the sad news that Jerusalem had fallen and the assurance of the restoration of Jerusalem. The text, however, is not as well organized. In the later 1800s it was felt that Ezekiel was the sole author of the book. In the 1900s critics felt most of the book was the work of editors and very little was actually done by Ezekiel. The difficulty with that concept was that no one knew what might actually have been written by Ezekiel and those who studied the book could come to no conclusions. In more recent studies it is felt that the book is basically the work of Ezekiel but has ‘suffered’ by the additions of a number of editors who did not do justice to Ezekiel’s work.

The text, as the result of the editors work, is unbelievably corrupt. One must turn to the LXX (Septuagint – Greek translation done ca. 300 BCE) for assistance along with other sources among the papyri (Chester Beatty, and John H. Scheide collection) for help along with the Targums. One fragment was found among the books in Cave 1 of the Dead Sea Scrolls but this only has 4:16 – 5:1. The footnotes often have the entry ‘obscure text’ or hint that the translation is an attempt to translate a difficult passage.

Ezekiel’s prophetic message is characterized as a promise of salvation in a new covenant. Ezekiel laid down the conditions necessary to obtain that salvation. He was a caring prophet whose unique and apocalyptic visions provide hope --- then and now.

The book divides into three parts: I. The present sins and the prediction of more deviation of the promised law. II The destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. III Prophecy characterized as a promised salvation in a new covenant. Ezekiel would lay down the conditions necessary to obtain that salvation. The last 8 chapters provide a vision for the future.

# Ezekiel

## I. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem 1:1 – 24:27

### A. Call and Commission 1:1 – 3:27

#### 1. Superscription 1:1 – 3

<sup>1</sup> [When I (Ezekiel) was] thirty years [old] <sup>1</sup> on the fifth day of the fifth month while among the exiled community along the banks of the river Chebar <sup>2</sup> heaven opened, and I saw visions from God. <sup>2</sup> [It was <sup>3</sup> the fifth day of the month --- the fifth year --- (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin.) <sup>4</sup> <sup>3</sup> The word of the Lord came to the priest Ezekiel, the son of Buzi <sup>5</sup> in the land of the Chaldeans along the bank of the river Chebar. I felt the power of the Lord <sup>6</sup> upon me.] <sup>7</sup>

#### e. The Throne-Chariot Vision (or, Theophany) 1:4 – 28 <sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> As I looked, <sup>9</sup> seeing a stormy wind swooping out of the north <sup>10</sup> and a great cloud, enveloped in brightness and fire from which flashes appeared continuously and in the center of the fire <sup>11</sup> these seemed to be radiating like the dazzling splendor of gleaming bronze. <sup>12</sup> <sup>5</sup> From the midst of it there appeared figures that had a resemblance to living creatures (or, seeming to have human form). This is how they looked:

They had the form of human beings. <sup>13</sup> <sup>6</sup> However each had four faces and each had four wings. <sup>7</sup> Their legs were straight <sup>14</sup> and they had hoofs like those of a calf's <sup>15</sup> hoofs, <sup>16</sup> which glittered like polished brass. <sup>8</sup> They had human hands under their wings

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<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew text simply says "In the thirtieth year" which does not refer to anything. LXX: "και ηνοι χθησαν." Scholars feel the reference is to the age of Ezekiel. He was a priest and the priestly functions began at the age of thirty which would mark the beginning of priestly duties for him. Like the prophets before him Ezekiel was about to proclaim the judgment of God. He received the call to do so in a vision in Babylon, a vision of the throne-chariot of Yahweh.

<sup>2</sup> This was a canal which diverted the water of the Euphrates, causing it to flow through Nippur, present day Shall en-Nil.

<sup>3</sup> Either verse: 1 or verse 2, presumably verse 2, is from the hand of a later revisionist, though possibly it is simply a later gloss.

<sup>4</sup> Some scholars feel the date would be July 592 BCE.

<sup>5</sup> This could also be translated: "Ezekiel the son of Buzi the priest."

<sup>6</sup> Literally: "I felt the hand of the Lord."

<sup>7</sup> These opening words (verses 1 – 3) signal the difficulty with which the book of Ezekiel is filled. The LXX ends verse three with "in a trance."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. ANET: 109d – 110a.

<sup>9</sup> Ezekiel witnesses a coming storm. The vision experience produces the spectacle of the 'throne-chariot' and glory of Yahweh.

<sup>10</sup> North was considered by many at that time to be the abode of God.

<sup>11</sup> LXX adds: "και ψεγγος εν αυτω."

<sup>12</sup> The exact meaning of the Hebrew word "למִן" is doubtful. LXX: "ηλεκτρον." Vulgate: "electrum" A few translators interpret it as "amber." Possibly the appearance is that of an alloy of gold and silver, i.e. a bright metal.

<sup>13</sup> LXX: "ομοιωμα ανθρωπου επ αυτοις." "The likeness of man was upon them."

<sup>14</sup> So: LXX & Syriac. An attempt to understand an obscure text!

<sup>15</sup> Literally: "soles of their feet were like the hoofs of a calf." TAN: "[fused into] a single leg." MFT: "rounded," not hoofs.

<sup>16</sup> LXX: "and their feet were winged." This is possible with a slight emendation reading  $\rho\kappa$  for  $\rho\eta\kappa$ . In this vision the four living creatures apparently support the platform (vault, firmament v. 21) on which is God's throne. ICC: "and the hands of man were upon the sides of the form of them."

on all four sides,<sup>17</sup> and all four each had four faces and their wings on their four sides (or, in the four directions).<sup>18</sup> Each one's wings touched the others.<sup>19</sup> When each one moved they did not turn, moving straight forward (or, moving in the direction of any of their faces).

As for their likeness: each had the face of a human being in front;<sup>20</sup> the face of a lion on the right side, the face of an ox on the left side and the face of an eagle on the back side.<sup>21</sup> Such were their faces, and their wings were separated upward;<sup>22</sup> each creature's two wings were extended so they touched the wings of the other creatures<sup>23</sup> while their two other wings covered their bodies.<sup>24</sup> [Each was able to turn forward,<sup>25</sup> whenever the spirit (or, wind)<sup>26</sup> impelled them to move. They did so without swerving as they moved.]

In the midst<sup>27</sup> of the living creatures there was something<sup>28</sup> giving the appearance of burning coals,<sup>29</sup> with the appearance of fiery torches<sup>30</sup> that kept moving back and forth between the living creatures. The fire was radiant. Lightning issued from the fire.<sup>31</sup> The living creatures sped back and forth, giving the appearance of flashes of lightning.<sup>32</sup>

As I looked at the living creatures, I saw one wheel on the ground next to each of the living creatures, one wheel with each of the creatures.<sup>33</sup> As for the appearance of the wheels, and their construction: the appearance was like the gleaming of yellow jasper,<sup>34</sup> and the four looked alike. Their construction appeared to be that of a wheel in the midst of a wheel (or, a wheel intersected by a wheel).<sup>35</sup> When they moved, they

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<sup>17</sup> LXX: "and the hand of a man was under their wings on their four sides." In the LXX the word translated "sides" is literally "parts."

<sup>18</sup> Archaeological evidence depicts Assyrian "cherubs" having a similar appearance.

<sup>19</sup> See: I Kings 6:27. LXX: MSS. A adds: "and their faces, and the wings of the four were joined one to another."

<sup>20</sup> Hebrew omits "in front." This is found in the versions.

<sup>21</sup> "at the back" is only found in the versions, not in Hebrew.

<sup>22</sup> LXX: "τοις τεσσαρσιν."

<sup>23</sup> The Hebrew is obscure, possibly this was caused by a corrupt text. NEB: "their neighbors," as a possible translation.

<sup>24</sup> LXX: "their parts," (as, bodies).

<sup>25</sup> Some scholars alter the order of these verses as follows: 10, 9, 12, 8, 11, 13.

<sup>26</sup> The spirit within the living creatures can be interpreted as: 1. The spirit of God. 2. The wind which brought the great cloud from out of the north. 3. The spirit within the living creatures. 4. The 'vital energy or impulse' by which God from His throne acted upon them. Cf. ICC.

<sup>27</sup> So: LXX & Old Latin. Hebrew: "and the likeness of the creatures." LXX: "εν μεσω."

<sup>28</sup> LXX: "ορασις."

<sup>29</sup> For Ezekiel 'burning coals' seem to symbolize judgment.

<sup>30</sup> LXX: "and the living creatures ran and returned at the appearance of Bezee."

<sup>31</sup> A probable reading of an obscure text.

<sup>32</sup> In Hebrew the MT makes virtually no sense. The translation is an attempt to make some sense out of the text. The LXX omits the text entirely, no doubt because of the inability to clearly understand it.

<sup>33</sup> Hebrew obscure! Literally: "one for each likeness." TAN: "each of the four faced creatures."

<sup>34</sup> The Hebrew word "xyxrt" is transliterated as "tarshish." Many translators use "chrysolite." CEV: footnote: "A precious stone that has an olive green color. Possibly some yellow or gold colored precious stone. NEB: "topaz."

<sup>35</sup> TAN: "as of two wheels cutting through each other." JB: "all four looked alike, and seemed to be made one inside the other." LB adds a footnote: "perhaps as a gyroscope."

were able to move in any direction <sup>36</sup> without veering as they went. <sup>18</sup> Their four rims were covered (*or, had spokes*) <sup>37</sup> with eyes all around them. <sup>38</sup> <sup>19</sup> When the living creatures moved the wheels moved alongside them, and when the living creatures were lifted up from the ground the wheels were also lifted up off the ground. <sup>20</sup> Whenever the spirit urged them to go they went and the wheels also were urged to go with the living creatures, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. <sup>39</sup> <sup>21</sup> When these moved the others also moved. When these stood still the others also stood still. When these rose from the ground the wheels also rose from the ground with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. <sup>40</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Above the heads of the living creatures was the likeness of the vault [*of heaven*] <sup>41</sup> glittering with the appearance of crystal <sup>42</sup> spread above their heads. <sup>23</sup> Under the expanse their wings were stretched <sup>43</sup> one toward another; and each creature had two wings covering its body. <sup>44</sup> <sup>24</sup> When they moved I also heard the sound of their wings which was like the sound of a torrent of rain, <sup>45</sup> like the thunder of the Almighty; <sup>46</sup> like a storm, the noise of an army! When they halted they folded their wings. <sup>25</sup> Then a voice came down from the expanse (*or, vault*) that was above their heads, and they lowered <sup>47</sup> their wings.

<sup>26</sup> Above the expanse, over their heads, <sup>48</sup> there was the semblance of a throne, in its appearance it seemed like lapis lazuli <sup>49</sup> fashioned so as to have the semblance of a throne on which was a being that appeared to have human form. <sup>27</sup> I noticed above what would have been the area of his loins that there was the gleam of bronze (*or, the luster of glowing metal*) which appeared as if fire was encasing the area (*or, there was a bright aura around the throne*), extending downward. I saw what seemed to appear to be fire as an encircling radiance surrounding the being [*on the throne*]. <sup>28</sup> A rainbow appeared like one that would appear on a rainy day, its appearance being exceedingly bright. That was

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<sup>36</sup> Literally: “on their four sides.”

<sup>37</sup> So: Versions. Hebrew uncertain! Hebrew literally: “as for their rims, height of them and fear to them.” This can readily be interpreted as “they were high and terrifying.” NRSV: “their rims were tall and awesome, for the rim of all four was...” NEB: “All four had hubs and each hub a projection which had the power of sight.”

<sup>38</sup> This is generally understood as a symbol of the all-seeing Godhead.

<sup>39</sup> The thought in verses 19 – 20 prepares the reader for what is to come, for God is not earthbound.

<sup>40</sup> Some translators and commentators omit this verse since it is a repetition of verse 20. Other scholars omit verses 20 & 21 as a gloss on verse 19.

<sup>41</sup> The Hebrew word “[qx]” = “expanse, an extended surface.” LXX: “ὡσει στεπεωμα” and “ἐπι των πτερωω αυτων” = something made by beating or stomping, as one might planish copper to harden it. Vulgate: “firmamentum.” JB: “vault,” the thought being the vault of heaven. TAN: “a form, an expanse.”

<sup>42</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: “hoar frost” or “ice.” This is a symbolic description of God’s throne.

<sup>43</sup> LXX: “εκταταμεναι πτερουσμεναι” which means clapping or making noise. Codex A adds: “as the sound of the mighty one, when they were there, there was a sound of speech as the sound of an army.”

<sup>44</sup> The MT text of verse 23 is awkward. This is a probable translation.

<sup>45</sup> Literally: “many waters.”

<sup>46</sup> Literally: “the thunder of Shaddai.” NEB: “the voice of Shaddai.” Shaddai was a very early Hebrew word for God – used prior to the introduction of Yahweh. Shaddai is usually translated as “the Almighty.” See: Genesis 17:1.

<sup>47</sup> LXX: “stopped.”

<sup>48</sup> LXX adds: “when they stood their wings were let down.”

<sup>49</sup> So: Hebrew. Many translators use the word “sapphire.” Both sapphire and lapis lazuli are blue.

the appearance of the likeness of the Presence of the Lord. When I saw it I prostrated myself and heard the voice of someone speaking.<sup>50</sup>

<CHAPTER 2>

3. *The Commission 2:1 – 3:27*

a. *The First Commission 2:1 - 2a*

<sup>1</sup> The voice said to me: “Mortal,<sup>51</sup> stand on your feet. I will speak to you.”<sup>2</sup> While speaking to me the Spirit entered into me and caused me to stand on my feet.

b. *Eating the Scroll 2:2b – 3:3*

I heard what was told me.<sup>3</sup> The voice said to me: “Mortal, I am sending you to the Israelites,<sup>52</sup> a nation<sup>53</sup> of rebels, who have revolted [*i.e., become idolatrous*] against me. Not only they but the previous generations also have revolted against me even to this day.<sup>4</sup> I am sending you to the people of Israel who are defiant and obstinate.<sup>54</sup> You will speak to them saying, ‘This is what the Lord God<sup>55</sup> says: <sup>5</sup> Whether they hear or resist (for they are a rebellious house)<sup>56</sup> they will know that there has been a prophet among them. <sup>6</sup> Mortal, do not be afraid of them or of their words.<sup>57</sup> You will realize that you are dealing with persons who are like briars and thorns<sup>58</sup> that press against you. Don’t be frightened even though their threats are sharp and barbed and will give the feeling that you sat on a scorpion, (or, they will be defiant and hateful --- it will be like living with scorpions)<sup>59</sup> --- fearful of their rebellion. Do not become terrified because of the looks they give. They are a rebellious house.<sup>60</sup> <sup>7</sup> You will proclaim my words to them, whether they listen or resist hearing your proclamation. They are a rebellious house.

<sup>8</sup> “Mortal, do what I tell you. Do not become rebellious like the ones who revolted.<sup>61</sup> Open your mouth and eat what I give you.”<sup>9</sup> When I looked, there was a hand that was stretched out before me that was holding a scroll on which was an inscription.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> This is a bold concept. Hebrew thought did not have Yahweh become visible and therefore Yahweh was indescribable. The Israelites felt no ordinary person could set eyes on God and live.

<sup>51</sup> Literally: “Son of man.” At this point in history “Son of man” simply meant “mortal.” It is the usual greeting in Ezekiel. This is a Hebraism which emphasizes Ezekiel’s insignificance and mere humanity. Later the expression came to mean the Messiah. This took place at about the time of the writing of The Similitudes of Enoch which seems to have taken place some time prior to 70 CE.

<sup>52</sup> Literally: “sons of Israel.” LXX: “του οικου,” “The house of Israel.”

<sup>53</sup> So: Syriac. Hebrew: “nations.” The plural might refer to Israel and Judah with contemptuous implications.

<sup>54</sup> Hebrew literally: “the sons, stiff-faced and hard hearted.”

<sup>55</sup> “Lord God” is an unusual combination emphasizing God’s being.” TAN: “I, the sovereign Lord am saying to them.”

<sup>56</sup> Ezekiel uses this terminology to describe the people of Israel 15 times.

<sup>57</sup> LXX: “μηδε εκστης απο προσωπου αυτων.”

<sup>58</sup> LXX: “οτιγθωσ,”

<sup>59</sup> An attempt to translate a difficult Hebrew passage.

<sup>60</sup> The prophet is warned so he could be prepared for bitter opposition.

<sup>61</sup> Literally: “like that rebellious house.”

<sup>62</sup> LXX: “και εν αυτη.” reading “wb” for “H; k/w.”

10 The scroll was unrolled before me and it was inscribed on both front and back,<sup>63</sup> and on it were written words<sup>64</sup> of lamentation, dirges and woe.<sup>65</sup>

<CHAPTER 3<

1 He said to me: “Mortal, eat what is offered to you; eat the scroll, and go, speak to the people of Israel.”<sup>66</sup>

2 I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.<sup>67</sup> 3 He said to me, “Mortal, eat this scroll that I give you, and digest it.”<sup>68</sup> Then I ate it and it tasted sweet as honey in my mouth.<sup>69</sup>

*c. Second Commission 3:4 – 9*

4 He said, “Mortal, go<sup>70</sup> to the people of Israel, and speak to them, using my words.<sup>71</sup> 5 You are not sent to a nation whose speech is unintelligible<sup>72</sup> and difficult but to the people of Israel --- 6 not to a large nation having speech that is unclear and difficult whose words you are unable to understand. (If I sent you to them they would certainly listen to you.)<sup>73</sup> 7 The Israelites will not listen to you; for they refuse to listen to me; because the Israelites are stubborn<sup>74</sup> and defiant. 8 I, however, have made you as determined as they are.<sup>75</sup> 9 I made you determined<sup>76</sup> --- like adamant,<sup>77</sup> harder than flint. Do not fear them or become upset by their looks. (They are a rebellious house.)<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> ICC: An interesting note about a Medieval comment by Nicholas of Lyra: ‘The book was written within and without; without in respect to literal meaning, but within in respect of the mystical meaning that was concealed beneath the literal (sub littera latentem).’

<sup>64</sup> LXX: “θηρος.”

<sup>65</sup> LXX: “καὶ οὐαί.” = “grief or denunciation.”

<sup>66</sup> Literally: “house of Israel.”

<sup>67</sup> LXX: “He opened my mouth and caused me to eat the scroll.” The impact in receiving the words of God were symbolized in the act of eating the scroll which implied acceptance and responsibility to speak as God directed.

<sup>68</sup> Literally: “fill your inward parts with it.”

<sup>69</sup> LXX presents this as a command: “With your mouth you shall eat and your belly shall be filled with this scroll that is given you. So I ate it.”

<sup>70</sup> LXX: “go your way.” The Hebrew can mean “go” or “come.”

<sup>71</sup> LXX: “τοὺς λόγους μου.”

<sup>72</sup> LXX: “a deep tongue.” Hebrew literally: “deep of lip and heavy of tongue” here and in verse t. NAB: “barbarous.”

<sup>73</sup> In many translations an attempt is made to literally translate the Hebrew words: “al ma” meaning “if not.” The LXX and Old Latin omit the attempt to translate these Hebrew words. Literally: “If not I had sent you to them, they would listen to you.” NASB: “But I have sent you to them, who should listen to you (or, refuse to listen to you).”

<sup>74</sup> Literally: “have hard forehead and stiff heart.”

<sup>75</sup> NIV: “But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are.” NEB: “But I will make you a match for them. I will make you as brazen and stubborn as they are.” LXX adds: “and I will strengthen your power (literally: victory) against their power.”

<sup>76</sup> Literally: “I have made your forehead hard.”

<sup>77</sup> Adamant was considered in ancient times to be the hardest material known. Hebrew unclear. “רַיִמָּ” This word is used in Isaiah and is usually translated as “thorn bushes.” It is possible that the same word has two different meanings and usages. The repetition of the Hebrew word “hard” in verses 8 & 9 may be a play on the prophet’s name which means “God strengthens” or “God hardens.”

<sup>78</sup> JB: “I am going to make your resolution as hard as a diamond and diamond is harder than flint. So do not be afraid of them, do not be overawed by them for they are a set of rebels.”

*d. Third Commission 3:10 – 11*

<sup>10</sup> Then he said to me: “Mortal, listen to all my words that I will say to you and accept them, listening closely. <sup>79</sup> <sup>11</sup> Go to your exiled countrymen and say to them, “This is what the Lord says: --- whether they listen or refuse to listen.” <sup>80</sup>

*e. Sequel 3:12 – 15*

<sup>12</sup> Then the Spirit carried me away <sup>81</sup> (and the glory of the Lord arose from his place. <sup>82</sup> Behind me I heard a sound, a loud rumbling: <sup>83</sup> <sup>13</sup> which was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they touched <sup>84</sup> one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them that sounded like a powerful earthquake (*or, a great roaring sound*).) <sup>85</sup> <sup>14</sup> The Spirit lifted me up and carried me away.

I went in bitterness, (in the fury of my spirit, <sup>86</sup> for the hand of the Lord lay heavily upon me.) <sup>87</sup> <sup>15</sup> Then I came to the exiles who resided at Tel-Abib along the River Chebar and I sat in their midst, overwhelmed (*or, stunned*) for seven days. <sup>88</sup>

*F. Fourth Commission 3:16 – 21*

<sup>16</sup> At the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me. <sup>89</sup> <sup>17</sup> “Mortal, I have designated you to be a watchman <sup>90</sup> for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear me speak a word, you must give the house of Israel a warning from (*or, for*) me.

<sup>18</sup> “If I say to the wicked: ‘You will surely die’, <sup>91</sup> and you do not warn him, nor speak to warn the wicked from his evil course (*or, to renounce his evil ways*) --- this wicked person will die in his iniquity: I will be hold you responsible for his death. <sup>19</sup> But if you warn the wicked one and he does not renounce his wicked actions, or his wicked lifestyle <sup>92</sup> he will die in his iniquity but you will have saved your own life. <sup>93</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> A possible translation might be: “record them in your mind.” This allows for possible future revelation to Ezekiel.

<sup>80</sup> Verses 10 & 11 are possibly by an editor since the words “your countrymen (people)” seem to be a typical expression used by an editor.

<sup>81</sup> This was the same divine impulse that had raised him to his feet earlier (2:2). This was no psychic levitation, but a subjective experience of feeling airborne which was coupled with the audible sounds of the whirring wings and rumbling of wheels. Cf. Taylor.

<sup>82</sup> Hebrew obscure. Literally: “blessed be the glory of the Lord,” or, “the Divine presence.”

<sup>83</sup> So: translations. Hebrew adds: “blessed is the presence of the Lord in his place.”

<sup>84</sup> Literally: “kissed.” TAN: “beating against.” LXX: “clapped one against the other.”

<sup>85</sup> The last phrase is possibly dittography.

<sup>86</sup> Hebrew: “ $\text{רמ}$ ” is considered by many to be an interpretive gloss and is omitted by the LXX & Syriac. For the prophet this was a time of feeling caught up in righteous anger as God’s agent against the people. NIV: “I went in bitterness and in anger of my spirit with the strong hand of the Lord on me.” NRSV: “I went embittered in the rage of my spirit.” Skinner (Expositor’s Bible) Ezekiel was in a state of mental prostration.”

<sup>87</sup> JB: “my heart, as I went, overflowed with bitterness and anger.”

<sup>88</sup> NASB: “where they were living causing consternation among them.”

<sup>89</sup> This verse is omitted by the NAB. Silence and fasting were times of preparation for special tasks, as Ezekiel experiences in his preparation for ordination into the prophetic priesthood.

<sup>90</sup> To be a watchman was common for prophets. Cf. Habakkuk 2:2; Isaiah 36:16; Jeremiah 6:17; Hosea 9:8.

<sup>91</sup> LXX: “ $\theta\alpha\nu\alpha\tau\omega\theta\eta\sigma\eta$ .”

<sup>92</sup> LXX: “ $\text{o avomoc ekainoc}$ .”

20 “Now, if a righteous person abandons righteousness and does what is evil, and I lay a stumbling block <sup>94</sup> he will die for his sins, and his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered but you will be held responsible for his death.<sup>95</sup> 21 On the other hand, if you warn the righteous person <sup>96</sup> not to sin, and he does not sin, he will surely live, because he accepted your warning, <sup>97</sup> and you will have saved your life.”

*g. Fifth Commission 3:22 – 27* <sup>98</sup>

22 Then the hand of the Lord was upon me [*in a trance*] and he said to me: “Arise! Go into the plain <sup>99</sup> and there I will speak with you.” 23 The Presence (*or, the glory*) of the Lord appeared, <sup>100</sup> like the Presence which I had seen by the River Chebar; and I prostrated myself. <sup>101</sup> 24 The Spirit entered into me and stood me up on my feet. The Spirit spoke to me and said, “Go --- shut yourself up in your house <sup>102</sup> 25 You, O mortal, will be bound with ropes which are being prepared for you, and you will be bound with them, so that you will be unable to go out among the people; 26 and I will make your tongue stick to your palate so that you will be dumb <sup>103</sup> and unable to warn (*or, reprove*) the people, (for they are a rebellious house). 27 When I speak with you I will open your mouth, and you will speak to them. “This is what the Lord God says: Whoever listens will listen, and whoever refuses to listen will not do so, (for they are a rebellious house).”

<CHAPTER 4>

*B. The Fate of Jerusalem and the Exile 4:1 – 5:17*

*1. Symbol of the Siege 4:1 - 3*

1 “You, O mortal, take a brick <sup>104</sup> and lay it before you, and incise on it a city, namely the city of Jerusalem, <sup>105</sup> 2 and cast siege-works against it and build a siege wall

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<sup>93</sup> The Hebrew word “Xpn” has meanings that range from “throat” to “person,” to “soul.”

<sup>94</sup> Hebrew: “mkXwl.” LXX: “βασανον” = “torment.” The word seems to be one that signifies punishment. JB: “sets a trap.”

<sup>95</sup> Our past good deeds cannot counteract our present iniquity.

<sup>96</sup> Literally: “him, the righteous.”

<sup>97</sup> Hebrew obscure.

<sup>98</sup> Some scholars feel these verses are out of context and should be included in the later stages of the life of Ezekiel – perhaps in chapter 33.

<sup>99</sup> The Hebrew word “h [qk]” is the same word that is used in 37:1, (the valley of dry bones). In Syriac it means “plain.”

<sup>100</sup> Literally: “stood.” LXX adds: “καθος η ορασις και.” = “according to the vision.”

<sup>101</sup> Literally: “fell on my face.” NEB: “fell prone.”

<sup>102</sup> I.e. do not preach or speak in public for the present.

<sup>103</sup> The silence was not absolute. From time to time God would speak and he would pass his message to his people through the prophet. The problem might have been catalepsy, or some other serious nervous disorder which literally interrupted his words. A few scholars attribute Ezekiel’s inability to speak as unwillingness to do so. The context does not hint at this.

<sup>104</sup> The Hebrew word “hnb1” is possibly an Assyrian loan word meaning “brick” or “tile.” In this instance it would be a brick, or portion of a brick wall on which the prophet incised the scene of Jerusalem and its siege.

<sup>105</sup> Some scholars feel the word “Jerusalem” is an explanatory gloss. With sun dried bricks it would be easy to incise the picture that is expected to be produced by Ezekiel.



<sup>106</sup> against it, and cast up a mound against it <sup>107</sup> along with camps, and bring up battering rams around it. <sup>3</sup> Take an iron plate <sup>108</sup> and place it as if it were an iron wall between yourself and the city; and set your face [*in hostility*] against it, and let a state of siege take place against the city. This is an omen for the house <sup>109</sup> of Israel.”

### 2. *Symbol of the Duration of the Exile 4:4 – 8*

<sup>4</sup> “Then lie on your left side, <sup>110</sup> and you will lie on that side as one who bears on yourself the punishment of Israel. The number of days <sup>111</sup> you lie on it you will bear their punishment. <sup>5</sup> I impose three-hundred and ninety days <sup>112</sup> on you which correspond to the number of years of their punishment. <sup>6</sup> When you have completed these, <sup>113</sup> you will lie down a second time, but on the right side and bear the punishment of the house of Judah: forty days are assigned to you, a day for each year.

<sup>7</sup> “You will set your face toward the besieged city of Jerusalem, with arm bared, <sup>114</sup> and you will prophesy against the city. <sup>8</sup> Observe! I will bind you with cords <sup>115</sup> so you cannot turn from this side to the other <sup>116</sup> until you have concluded the time for the correct number of days of seclusion.”

### 3. *Symbol of Rationing Restrictions 4:9 – 11*

<sup>9</sup> “You will mix wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt <sup>117</sup> together in a large container to make [*flour for*] bread. <sup>118</sup> Eat it as many days as you lie on your side; thus for three hundred and ninety days this will be your food. <sup>10</sup> The food you eat will be

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<sup>106</sup> Offensive towers built around a besieged city.

<sup>107</sup> NAB: “set mantelets in position.”

<sup>108</sup> At this point in history it would be likely that each home had an iron griddle. It would be shaped somewhat like a shallow wok or a crepe pan and was a basic family utensil for baking. The utensil would be placed over the glowing embers with the curved side up and the (barley) cakes would be pressed on the rounded top to bake. The iron plate is apparently intended to illustrate the wall which Yahweh has placed between himself and the city.

<sup>109</sup> LXX: “τις υιοις.”

<sup>110</sup> In Hebrew idiom the left is north and the right is south. Israel being the northern kingdom is represented by the prophet’s lying on his left side, and Judah when he lies on his right side.

<sup>111</sup> LXX inserts: “τεντηκοντα και εκατον,” or “a hundred and fifty days during which...”

<sup>112</sup> LXX & Vulgate: “a hundred and ninety days.” This is found also in verse 9. The time is based on the period of suffering for sin which could readily be described as 390 years. The MT and the versions are not in agreement and there is no hint as to a reason for the difference. Some scholars feel the number of days is a later insertion. The question is when does the 390 / 190 year period begin. No significant starting date is agreed upon by scholars. Some scholars feel the 390 days represent the length of the time period of the exile of Israel and Judah combined. This however is not evident when one does the mathematics. The event that prompted the prophet’s 390 day demonstration has been lost in history.

<sup>113</sup> LXX: “these things.”

<sup>114</sup> TEV: “shake your fist at the...” as a symbol of unrestrained power.

<sup>115</sup> LXX: “I have prepared cords.”

<sup>116</sup> A few scholars feel this is a disruption by a temporary paralysis.

<sup>117</sup> The Hebrew word is obscure. LXX: “oats.” TAN: “emmer.”

<sup>118</sup> The odd mixture of grains reflects the extent of the scarcity. This would be a very inferior kind of flour. Verses 9 – 17 describe famine rations which because of the circumstances will be ceremonially unclean.

limited by weight. Twenty shekels of flour are to be used each day <sup>119</sup> and you will eat at a specified time each day. <sup>120</sup> The water you drink will also be measured out: the sixth part of a hin; <sup>121</sup> daily at a fixed time “

#### 4. *Symbol of Unclean Food* 4:12 - 15

<sup>12</sup> “You are to eat it as you would eat a barley cake, baking it over human excrement in the presence of others.” <sup>122</sup> <sup>13</sup> The Lord said, <sup>123</sup> “It is in this way that the people of Israel <sup>124</sup> will eat unclean bread among the nations to which they have been banished.” <sup>125</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Then I said, “O Lord, God, <sup>126</sup> observe, I have never defiled myself (or, *caused myself to be ceremonially unclean*). From my youth until now I have never eaten anything that died of itself <sup>127</sup> or that was torn by beasts, nor has foul flesh. <sup>128</sup> Nothing unclean has entered my mouth.”

<sup>15</sup> Then he said to me: “See, I will allow you to use cow dung instead of human excrement to bake your bread.” <sup>129</sup>

#### 5. *The Rationing Symbolism Interpreted* 4:16 – 17

<sup>16</sup> Moreover he said to me: “Mortal, observe! I will break the staff <sup>130</sup> of bread in Jerusalem. They will eat rationed bread while having anxious fear; and they will drink rationed water in dismay <sup>131</sup> [*because of the impending starvation*]. <sup>17</sup> I will do this so that they may lack bread and water <sup>132</sup> and look at one another in dismay and waste away <sup>133</sup> under their punishment.”

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<sup>119</sup> Archaeologists have found shekel weights from the time of Ezekiel. 20 shekels would be eight ounces, each shekel weighing 11.3 grams. Cf. II Kings 7:1, 4; Jeremiah 37:21; Lamentations 2:20.

<sup>120</sup> ICC: “at stated times.”

<sup>121</sup> A hin was .61 liters or a fraction more than a pint.

<sup>122</sup> LXX: “and you shall eat them as a barley cake: you shall bake them before their eyes on human dung: LB: “Each day take flour from the barrel and prepare it as you would a barley cake.” MFT: “eat it cooked like barley cakes and bake it before their eyes on human dung.” Some scholars alter the position of some verses, inserting 16 – 17 between 11 & 12 along with other slight alterations. See Deuteronomy 22:9 – 12. Certain foods were not to be mixed for this was forbidden by the Law.

<sup>123</sup> LXX: “και ερεις ταδε λεγε. Κυριος, η Θεος του Ισραηλ.” “Thus says the Lord the God of Israel.”

<sup>124</sup> LXX: “Thus shall the children of Israel eat unclean things among the gentiles.” See: Deuteronomy 22:9 – 11.

<sup>125</sup> Some scholars feel verse 13 is a later gloss. See also footnote 122. The famine caused by war in Jerusalem could well have caused persecution of the Hebrew community at Tel – Abib resulting also in famine.

<sup>126</sup> LXX: “Κυριε Θεε του Ισραηλ, δι.” The Greek word “Θεε” is a vocative singular form of “Θεος.”

<sup>127</sup> CB: “carrion.”

<sup>128</sup> LXX “κρεας.” = “meat of uncleanness.” NE B: “tainted meat.”

<sup>129</sup> Human excrement was considered unclean to be used for cooking food. Cf. Deuteronomy 23:12 – 19.

<sup>130</sup> LXX: “support.” The word might seek to convey the thought of limiting the reliance on bread as the main food source.

<sup>131</sup> Water sources were cisterns. Cf. Jeremiah 2:2; 38:6.

<sup>132</sup> TEV: “run out of bread and water; they will be in despair.”

<sup>133</sup> CB: “in dire dismay, till the fall together into a stupor, and pine away under their punishment.”

<CHAPTER 5

6. Symbols of the Fate of Jerusalem 5:1 – 17

a. The Symbolic Action 5:1 – 4

1. “You, O Mortal, take a sharp sword,<sup>134</sup> and use it like a barber’s razor.<sup>135</sup> Pass it over your head and your beard. Then take a balance scale and divide the hair.<sup>136</sup> 2 One third<sup>137</sup> you are required to burn in the midst of the city<sup>138</sup> when the days of the siege are completed, another third you are to take around the city slashing it with the sword,<sup>139</sup> and the last third of the hairs --- you are to scatter to the wind, and I will pursue them with a drawn sword.<sup>140</sup> 3 [[*Reserve*) a few hairs and tie them in the hem of your robe.<sup>141</sup> 4 Of these you are also to take a few of these hairs and throw them<sup>142</sup> into the fire, and burn them in the fire, for out of them fire will flame up on all of Israel.]]

b. Interpretation 5:5 – 17<sup>143</sup>

5 “This is what the Sovereign Lord<sup>144</sup> says: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the center<sup>145</sup> of the nations, with countries surrounding it. 6 She has wickedly rebelled against my rules (*or, ordinances*) more than the other nations, and rebelled against my laws (*or, statutes*),<sup>146</sup> acting more wickedly than the surrounding countries by rejecting my rules (*or, ordinances*) and not obeying my laws (*or, statutes*).’ 7 Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because yours has been a worse rebellion [*against me*] than that

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<sup>134</sup> The Hebrew word “ברק” = “sword” A knife would be: “mywc tbdx”. LXX adds “sharper than a barber’s razor.” TAN: “sharp knife.”

<sup>135</sup> Some scholars feel that “using it like a barber’s razor” is a gloss. Literally: “make it pass over your head.” The text used is based on LXX, Syriac, & Old Latin. LXX adds: “you shall procure it for yourself.” Shaving the head was a sign of mourning.

<sup>136</sup> The action Ezekiel is to take is in 2 stages: 1. verses 1 & 2: weighing and disposing of his hair. 2. verses 3 & 4: Destruction of the city and scattering the people.

<sup>137</sup> The LXX has “a fourth part” each time in verse 2.

<sup>138</sup> Possibly in the center of the map of Jerusalem which had been incised in the brick.

<sup>139</sup> LXX: “και κατακαυσεις αυτο εν μεσω αυτης, και το τεταριον.”

<sup>140</sup> LXX: “empty” or “exhaust.” CEV: “and I will strike it with my own sword.”

<sup>141</sup> Verses 3 & 4 are considered by some scholars to be a later interpolation, hence the double brackets. The word “reserve” is not found in the text. Without that word one must imagine the hair having been thrown to the wind and some of these hairs would have a special use by the prophet. One can see him stooping and searching for a few hairs for this special purpose. The LXX has a fourth portion. Cf. footnote 137. “You shall take thence a few in hairs and shall wrap them in the fold of your garment.” The robe would be a long ankle length tunic.

<sup>142</sup> LXX adds: “εις ερεις.”

<sup>143</sup> The symbols that follow in this chapter contain an explanation of the symbols that were acted out.

<sup>144</sup> Here and in the remainder of this chapter the Hebrew words are: Adonai Yahweh and are translated as “Sovereign Lord.”

<sup>145</sup> The Hebrew word “dwbm” means “center.” LXX: “τον ομφαλος της γης.” At Delphi the site of the oracle is: “ομφαλον γης θεσπιωδον.” In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre there is a kind of cup holding a flattened ball which is said to be at the very center of the earth. The LXX uses the word for ‘navel.’ This is also used in the Pseudoepigraphic Rabbinic literature.

<sup>146</sup> Rules (*or, ordinances*) were civil and legal. Laws (*or, statutes*) were religious and ceremonial.

of the nations that surround you, <sup>147</sup> and you have not obeyed (*or, walked according to*) my rules (*or, ordinances*), but have disobeyed by accepting the laws (*or, ordinances*) of the nations that surround you. <sup>8</sup> Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘Behold, I, even I, am against you; <sup>148</sup> and I will carry out judgments in your midst --- in the sight of your neighbors. <sup>9</sup> Because of all your horrific abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done, and the like of which I will never repeat. <sup>149</sup>

<sup>10</sup> “Therefore [*out of desperation*] parents will eat their children in your presence and children will eat their parents; <sup>150</sup> and I will bring judgment on you and any of you who survive will be scattered in every direction.

<sup>11</sup> “Now then – as I live, declare the Sovereign Lord, <sup>151</sup> surely because you have defiled my holy place (*or, sanctuary*) with all your evil and abominable rites <sup>152</sup> the result will be that I will cut you down <sup>153</sup> (*or, destroy you*). I have seen and I will not show pity. <sup>12</sup> One third <sup>154</sup> of you will die of the plague, <sup>155</sup> or will starve to death because of the famine that is in your midst, one third will die from battle, <sup>156</sup> and I will scatter one third in all directions. <sup>157</sup> I will unsheathe my sword against them. <sup>158</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “It is in this way that my anger will be satisfied <sup>159</sup> and my fury will be released on them. <sup>160</sup> Thus I will be appeased (*or, satisfied*), and they will know <sup>161</sup> that I, the Sovereign Lord have spoken in my jealousy <sup>162</sup> when I dispense my fury on them. <sup>14</sup> Moreover, I will reduce you to a public example (*or, desolation*) <sup>163</sup> and an object of mockery and contempt among the nations <sup>164</sup> that surround you and in the sight of all who pass by. <sup>15</sup> You will be <sup>165</sup> an object of contempt and ridicule; an example and a thing of horror by the nations that surround you, when I carry out my judgments on you in anger,

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<sup>147</sup> The problem stems from the fact that Israel accepted God’s leadership and then rebelled. Cf.: Joshua 24:14 - 22. The other nations simply rebelled for they had not accepted God’s leadership and sovereign power.

<sup>148</sup> TEV: “I am your enemy.”

<sup>149</sup> LXX adds: “based on all your abominations.” This might be a ‘post eventium’ description of the horrors of the siege.

<sup>150</sup> LXX: “πατερας.” Cf. Lamentations 2:20.

<sup>151</sup> Verse 11 no doubt refers to the corrupt practices in the temple during the captivity of Jehoiachin.

<sup>152</sup> I.e.: false gods and their abominable rites and sacrifices.

<sup>153</sup> Literally: “I will unsheathe.” TAN: “I will shear [you] away.” Another reading can be translated as “I will withdraw.” This would possibly be a withdrawal of the glory of Yahweh. This reading, however, seems less probable. LXX reads “l [ga]” “I will be loathed, (or reject).” rather than the MT text: “[rga]”

<sup>154</sup> LXX: “fourth.” This is also found in each of the references to “one third” in the MT.

<sup>155</sup> LXX inserts: “one fourth of you will.”

<sup>156</sup> Literally: “fall by the sword.”

<sup>157</sup> Literally: “I will scatter to all the winds.” The LXX transposes the last two: “scatter them to every wind, and fall by the sword.”

<sup>158</sup> NAB: inserts verses 16 – 17 here.

<sup>159</sup> Literally: “carried out.” LXX: “και η οργη μου.”

<sup>160</sup> TAN: “I will vent my anger and satisfy my fury upon them.”

<sup>161</sup> LXX: “και επιγλωσση.”

<sup>162</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew root word is: “to grow purple in the face.”

<sup>163</sup> Literally: “I will make you to be a scandal.”

<sup>164</sup> LXX: “θυγατερας.”

<sup>165</sup> Literally: “She will be.” LXX, Syriac, Vulgate and Targums read the MT as: “tyyhn” The MT reads: “htyhw.”

fury and furious chastisements. <sup>166</sup> I the Sovereign Lord have spoken! <sup>16</sup> When I release [*my quiver of arrows*] of famine and destruction which I will loose to destroy you, and when I bring repeated occurrences of famine, <sup>167</sup> and destroy your food supply. <sup>168</sup> <sup>17</sup> I will send famine and wild beasts against you, and they will leave you childless; <sup>169</sup> plague and blood will pass through you and I will bring the sword against you <sup>170</sup> for I, the Sovereign Lord have spoken.”

<CHAPTER 6>

*c. Oracle Against the Mountains 6:1 – 14*

*1. Destruction of the High Places 6:1 - 7*

<sup>1</sup> The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>171</sup> <sup>2</sup> “Mortal, set your face toward <sup>172</sup> (*or, direct your attention toward*) the mountains of Israel and prophesy against <sup>173</sup> them, <sup>3</sup> and say, ‘You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines (*or, wadies*) <sup>174</sup> and valleys: Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword against you, and I will destroy <sup>175</sup> your shrines (*or, high places*). <sup>176</sup> <sup>4</sup> Your altars will be demolished, <sup>177</sup> and your incense altars (*or, incense stands*) <sup>178</sup> will be crushed, and I will hurl down your slain before your idols. <sup>179</sup> <sup>5</sup> I will throw the dead corpses of the people of Israel in front of their idols (*or,*

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<sup>166</sup> LXX: “εν εκδικησει θυμοου.” LXX translates: “You will be mourned over and miserable among the nations round about you, when I have executed judgments in you and in the vengeance of my wrath.”

<sup>167</sup> The LXX omits verse 16 up to this point.. NIV: “When I shoot at you with my deadly and destructive arrows of famine I will shoot to destroy you.”

<sup>168</sup> Literally: “break off your staff of bread.” LB: “until every bit of bread is gone.”

<sup>169</sup> Literally: “rob you of your children.” LXX: “και τιμωρησομαι σε.”

<sup>170</sup> LXX: “κυκλουεν.” Note the different aspects of the disaster that would befall Jerusalem: 1. The siege. (4:1 – 3) 2. The duration of the punishment of Israel and Judah (4:4 – 8) 3. The famine conditions of the siege and exile. (4:9 – 17) 4. The fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (5:1 – 4)

<sup>171</sup> In this chapter Ezekiel turns from condemnation of Jerusalem and its residents to concern for the entire land of Judah. Literally: “And the word of Yahweh was unto me saying.” This implies a new section of the oracle of Ezekiel.

<sup>172</sup> A favorite expression of Ezekiel’s. It is used 9 times in the book.

<sup>173</sup> TAN: “to.”

<sup>174</sup> TAN: “streams.” BV: “creek beds.”

<sup>175</sup> LXX adds: “και εζολεθρευθησεται.”

<sup>176</sup> Taylor reminds us that each high place in Canaanite times would have its altar for sacrifice, and perhaps a pillar (*masseba* in Hebrew) which may well have been regarded as a phallic symbol and an image of the Canaanite goddess Asherah or Ashtoreth. These sites were then taken over by the later residents as places for worship. Once worship was established by the Israelites these high places were to be destroyed but this was not always the case. The high places, the incense stands etc. were places of illegal worship during the time of the occupation of the land by the Israelites. They were under the leadership of local priests. When the Israelites first entered the country they were regarded as innocuous since there was no established temple worship in those earliest years but their continuance as places of worship blurred the distinctiveness of Hebrew worship.

<sup>177</sup> LXX: “broken to pieces.”

<sup>178</sup> LXX: “consecrated plots.” JB: “incense burners.” This is often translated as “sun pillars” or “sun fetishes.”

<sup>179</sup> The Hebrew word “mylwlg” is used 39 times in Ezekiel. In other portions of the Hebrew scriptures it is rarely used. The origin of the word is uncertain. It is a favorite word of Ezekiel. It may be a homemade word consisting of the same consonants as the Hebrew word for “a pile of dung.” It is also often translated as “a detestable thing.”

*fetishes*); and will scatter your bones around your altars.<sup>180</sup> 6 Wherever you reside your cities will be destroyed and your shrines (*or, high places*) will be demolished, so that your altars will be laid waste and made desolate. Your idols will be destroyed<sup>181</sup> and your incense altars<sup>182</sup> will be cut down and your works abolished (*or, blotted out*).<sup>7</sup> The slain will fall in your midst and you will know that I am the Lord.”<sup>183</sup>

## 2. *The exile will Remember Yahweh 6:8 – 10*

8 “Despite this I will leave a remnant alive,<sup>184</sup> for there will be some within the nation who will survive and these will be scattered through the countries.<sup>185</sup> 9 Those of you who escape will remember me among the nations where<sup>186</sup> they have been taken captive, when I have devastated<sup>187</sup> their faithless hearts which have turned away<sup>188</sup> from me, and directed their eye toward helpless<sup>189</sup> idols and they will loath themselves for they will realize the evil (*or, all their abominable activities*) they continually committed with all their abominations.<sup>190</sup> 10 They will know (*or, realize*) that I am the Lord,<sup>191</sup> I have not spoken in vain (*or, I am determined*)<sup>192</sup> that I would inflict this evil.”<sup>193</sup>

## 3. *Israel will know Yahweh as God 6:11 – 14*

11 “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: “Clap your hands,<sup>194</sup> and stomp your feet,<sup>195</sup> and say, Alas!<sup>196</sup> Because of all the evil abominations of this house of Israel they will fall by the sword, by famine, and by plague.<sup>12</sup> Whoever is far away will die of the plague and whoever is near will die by the sword,<sup>197</sup> and whoever remains will die of

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<sup>180</sup> Verse 5a is omitted by the LXX and is considered by some scholars as a gloss based on Leviticus 26:30 but this is not a widely held opinion. The presence of a body or bones around an altar would desecrate the altar, rendering it unusable.

<sup>181</sup> CB: “annihilated.”

<sup>182</sup> MFT: “sun pillars.” The verse is somewhat obscure in Hebrew.

<sup>183</sup> JB: “Among you men will fall, and be cut to pieces and so you will learn that I am Yahweh.”

<sup>184</sup> This phrase is omitted in the LXX. The Hebrew is obscure with no object for the verb.

<sup>185</sup> Hebrew obscure.

<sup>186</sup> LXX: “ομωμοκα.”

<sup>187</sup> So: Syriac, Vulgate & Targums. Hebrew: “I have been broken” or “I am broken”: “טרבֵּחַן” “I have broken:” “יִטְרַח.” Many scholars translate the Hebrew word “broken” as “disgraced.” These translations might say: “I have disgraced them.” or “I am disgraced.” Here it is translated as “devastated.”

<sup>188</sup> CB: “apostatized.”

<sup>189</sup> JB: “adulterous.”

<sup>190</sup> LXX: (I have sworn an oath against their heart that goes a-whoring from me, and their eyes that go a-whoring after their practices; and they shall mourn over themselves for all their abominations.”

<sup>191</sup> This is a favorite phrase on the part of Ezekiel, used 60 times as a kind of refrain.

<sup>192</sup> So: Hebrew and Codex A. Other LXX manuscripts have “ and they will know that the Lord has spoken.”

<sup>193</sup> Literally: “to do this evil to.” A possible translation might be “that I would inflict this destruction on them.”

<sup>194</sup> BDB adds: “used here in mockery.” Literally “strike with your hand.” CB: “Clench your fists.”

<sup>195</sup> Possibly these are signs of mourning, though among the Amorites of Ezekiel’s time these were gestures of scornful delight, i.e. a taunt song which is not rare in Hebrew poetry.

<sup>196</sup> If this is a taunt song the Hebrew word translated as “Alas” might carry the thought of “Hurrah!”

<sup>197</sup> The order in the LXX is reversed. Sword and plague.

famine --- this is how I will exert <sup>198</sup> my fury upon them. <sup>13</sup> You will know that I am the Lord, when your slain <sup>199</sup> lie among their idols (*or, fetishes*), lying around their altars, on every high hill on the mountains and under ever green tree, under every leafy oak, <sup>200</sup> and wherever they offered pleasing odor to all their idols. <sup>14</sup> I will strike out my hand against them, and make the land desolate and waste throughout all the habitations from the wilderness to Riblah. <sup>201</sup> They will know that I am the Lord.”

<CHAPTER 7>

*D Prophecy of the Coming End 7:1 – 17*

*1. The End Has Come 7:1 – 13* <sup>202</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>203</sup> <sup>2</sup> “You, Mortal, this is what the Lord the God of Israel says to the land of Israel: <sup>204</sup> Doom! Doom is even coming to the far reaches of the land. <sup>3</sup> Now the doom is upon you. I will let my anger loose against you. I will judge you in accordance with what you have done. I will punish you because of your abominations. <sup>205</sup> <sup>4</sup> I will not look on you with pride. I will punish you for your actions. Your abominations are in your midst. Then you <sup>206</sup> will know that I am the Lord! <sup>207</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: <sup>208</sup> Disaster after disaster! <sup>209</sup> Doom is coming! <sup>6</sup> Doom is coming! The end has come! It has awakened against you --- see it comes. <sup>210</sup> <sup>7</sup> Your doom <sup>211</sup> has come to you, inhabitants of the land. The time has come,

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<sup>198</sup> MFT: “glut my fury.”

<sup>199</sup> JB & NAB add: “of their corpses cut in pieces.”

<sup>200</sup> These were considered to be places of worship by those who were not faithful to Yahweh. Burials were often made under trees and became sites of ancestry worship. A possible translation might be: “Every leafy terebinth where they offered a pleasing odor (*or, fragrant smoke*) to all their fetishes. These were leafy sanctuaries where they offered soothing odors so all their idols.”

<sup>201</sup> An alternate reading is “Diblah.” LXX: “Deblatha.” Riblah was to the extreme north along the Orantes River. The wilderness would be the extreme south (the Negeb).

<sup>202</sup> This passage deals with three short oracles, all being similar. The repetition was needed since the people of Israel felt that Jerusalem was inviolable.

<sup>203</sup> The LXX has a different order in verses 1 – 9. It reads: 1, 2, 6a, 7 – 9, 3 – 5a. The entire text of chapter 7 is uncertain as is also the Hebrew text.

<sup>204</sup> Verses 2b to verse 12 are poetry in Hebrew.

<sup>205</sup> NEB: “I will call you into account for your doings.” TEV: “pay you back for all your disgusting conduct.”

<sup>206</sup> This is a masculine plural in Hebrew.

<sup>207</sup> The thought that Jerusalem might be destroyed was a concept of apocalyptic intensity.

<sup>208</sup> Some scholars feel verses 5 to 7 are a later interpolation by a scribe.

<sup>209</sup> The text has a number of variants in the various manuscripts. NIV: “An unheard of disaster.” Literally in both Hebrew and LXX: “Disaster after disaster.”

<sup>210</sup> There is a play on words with the words translated as “end” and “awakened.” End: “cqh . . .” Awakened: “cyqh.” The LXX simply reads: “for thus says the Lord: Behold, the end has come.”

<sup>211</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word used here by Ezekiel and translated as “doom” is uncertain. Hdypcj is used here and in verse 10. Other than this use by Ezekiel it is found in Isaiah 28:5 where it is translated as “diadem” or “crown.” There is, of course, the possibility that the word was pronounced differently and thus had two meanings. A similar Aramaic word means “morning.” The text is questionable.

the day is near. It is a day of tumult (*or, panic*); not of celebration <sup>212</sup> and shouting on the mountains. <sup>213</sup> 8 I am about to pour my wrath on you and use my anger against you. I will judge you based on your actions and I will requite (*or, punish*) you for all the disgusting things you have done. 9 I will not show you any pity, <sup>214</sup> nor will I show mercy (*or, compassion*). <sup>215</sup> I will requite you because of your actions, <sup>216</sup> while your disgusting acts are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the Lord who strikes. <sup>217</sup>]]

<sup>10</sup> “See the day! See <sup>218</sup> your doom comes. Your doom has begun (*or, is the rod*). <sup>219</sup> Injustice (*or, the rod*) is in full bloom. <sup>220</sup> Pride (*or, insolence*) has budded. <sup>11</sup> Violence has sprung up <sup>221</sup> into the rod of wickedness; <sup>222</sup> but none of these will remain: not their abundance nor their wealth; nor their pre-eminence <sup>223</sup> among them. <sup>12</sup> The time has come, the day draws near. The buyer will be unable to rejoice and the seller unable to regret, for divine wrath lies heavily on the entire multitude (*or, the joy of shopping will cease*). <sup>224</sup> <sup>13</sup> The seller will not regain <sup>225</sup> during his life time, what he has sold, <sup>226</sup> for wrath <sup>227</sup> is on the entire multitude. It will not be averted <sup>228</sup> since it is because of guilt that none can maintain [*an acceptable*]” life. <sup>229</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

<sup>213</sup> The Hebrew is obscure. NEB: “with confusion and the crash of thunder.” The Hebrew word is unintelligible.

<sup>214</sup> Literally: “My eye will not spare.”

<sup>215</sup> NIV: “spare you.”

<sup>216</sup> LXX: “διότι τας οδους σου.”

<sup>217</sup> The Hebrew word for “strike” is “hkm” and should possibly be read as “hkmh” This is the reading used in the translation of the LXX & Syriac. This name is in sharp contrast with Genesis 22:14: {KJ} “Jehovah jireh” = “The Lord will provide.” It is also in sharp contrast to Exodus 17:15 (KJ) “Jehovah-nissi” = “The Lord is my banner (*or, rallying point*).”

<sup>218</sup> LXX: “Ἴδου το περας ηκει ημερα κυριου.”

<sup>219</sup> The difference between the two possible translations is the choice of vowel points. NIB: “Violence has grown into a rod. (*or, the violent one has come*).” An emendation: “The Lord who has provided and protected is about to strike.”

<sup>220</sup> Hebrew uncertain! If the translation is “injustice” it becomes a pun in Hebrew. The budding of a rod is in sharp contrast with the budding of Aaron’s rod. Cf. Number 17:1 – 11. LXX: “Behold the day of the Lord: although the rod has blossomed.”

<sup>221</sup> Literally: “has risen.”

<sup>222</sup> This translation is based on an emendation. LXX: “Pride has spring up and will break the rod (*or, staff*).” This is no doubt again a reference to Aaron’s rod (Numbers 17:10) as a sign for those who rebel.

<sup>223</sup> KJ: “wailing.” The Hebrew word “hn” is uncertain and is possibly a loan word. The Hebrew of verse 11 is virtually unintelligible. This is an attempt to provide a reasonable translation.

<sup>224</sup> Commercial transactions will no longer be important; daily affairs will be meaningless. The phrase “divine wrath ..... multitudes” is omitted in some LXX manuscripts. JB: “for anger rages against all alike.”

<sup>225</sup> Literally: “return.”

<sup>226</sup> LXX: “ο κτωμανος ωδινων τον πωλουντα.” Hebrew literally: “the thing sold.”

<sup>227</sup> Literally: “vision.”

<sup>228</sup> Literally: “return.”

<sup>229</sup> Hebrew obscure! TEV: “No merchant will get back what he has lost because God’s anger is on everyone. Those who are evil cannot survive.” Possibly verse 13 is the result of dittography. The last part of the sentence could perhaps be translated: “and [*as for*] a man: the sins in his life make it impossible for him to strengthen himself.” There is much word play in verse 13. One example: “seller will not regain” and “multitude will not be averted” “Regain” and “averted” are the same Hebrew word.



## 2. Punishment for Israel 7:14 – 27 <sup>230</sup>

<sup>14</sup> “They have sounded the tempest and everything is prepared, but no one goes to war, <sup>231</sup> for my wrath is directed against the entire multitude. <sup>232</sup> <sup>15</sup> The sword is an instrument of death on the outside; disease and famine are the instruments of death inside. Those who are in the open fields die by the sword and those who are within the cities will be devoured <sup>233</sup> by famine and disease. <sup>16</sup> If any survivors escape they will flee to the mountains, like mourning doves from the valleys, all of them moaning together <sup>234</sup> about their iniquity. <sup>17</sup> Everyone’s hands are weak, and all knees will be as weak as water. <sup>235</sup> <sup>18</sup> They shall clothe themselves in sackcloth, <sup>236</sup> and horror will cover them. <sup>237</sup> Shame will be evident on their faces (*or, will betray them*). The heads of all will be shaven. <sup>19</sup> They throw themselves (*or, their silver*) <sup>238</sup> into the streets, and their gold will be treated as if it was unclean. <sup>239</sup> Their silver will be unable to save them at that time, nor will their gold, for it is the day of the Lord. They are unable to satisfy their appetites <sup>240</sup> or fill their stomachs because they made their guilt to be a stumbling block (*or, desire for gold was the cause of their sin*). <sup>241</sup> <sup>20</sup> Their <sup>242</sup> beautiful ornament <sup>243</sup> they used for <sup>244</sup> self pride, and they made their <sup>245</sup> abominable images and their detestable worship. Therefore I will make it an unclean thing for them. <sup>21</sup> I will hand them over into the hands of foreigners, who will take their wealth as plunder <sup>246</sup> and will take advantage of them. They will defile your possessions. <sup>22</sup> I will not interfere <sup>247</sup> with them, so they may profane my precious place (*or, secret place, i.e. the temple*). <sup>248</sup> Robbers (*or, the violent ones*) will break in and defile it, <sup>249</sup> <sup>23</sup> and make it a desolation <sup>250</sup> because the land is full of

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<sup>230</sup> Poetry resumes through 19a.

<sup>231</sup> LXX: “και κρινατε τα σομπυντα ο πολεμος.”

<sup>232</sup> Defense is useless.

<sup>233</sup> LXX: “συντελεσει.”

<sup>234</sup> Two Hebrew manuscripts have “you will die.” LXX: “αποκτενω.” The Hebrew in verse 16 is unclear.

<sup>235</sup> Literally: “run with water.”

<sup>236</sup> Sackcloth is rough, dark colored clothing made of goat or camel hair, made for use in grain sacks but used for clothing in times of sorrow or trouble.

<sup>237</sup> NASV: “shuddering will overwhelm them.”

<sup>238</sup> Hebrew unclear! Either translation would be a correct translation of the Hebrew words.

<sup>239</sup> The Hebrew word is used for feminine impurity, expressing revulsion toward the things that previously were held dear.

<sup>240</sup> Literally: “souls.”

<sup>241</sup> With defense being useless all that remains is sackcloth. Money has no buying power. LXX: “Their silver will be cast forth in the streets, and their gold will be dispersed: their souls will not be satisfied, and their bellies will not be filled: for it was the torment of their iniquities.”

<sup>242</sup> So: Symmachus. Hebrew: “He.”

<sup>243</sup> LXX: “κοσμον.”

<sup>244</sup> With different vowel points it could read: “he set it.”

<sup>245</sup> LXX: “εθεντο αυτα.”

<sup>246</sup> The word in the LXX means “to tear apart.” Poetry begins again in Hebrew with verse 21.

<sup>247</sup> Literally: “turn my face”

<sup>248</sup> The Hebrew for “precious place” comes from a root word meaning “to hoard” or “treasure,” thus carrying the thought of “secret.”

<sup>249</sup> One ancient Hebrew manuscript says “your entire country is in confusion.” Another manuscript says: “Get chains ready to drag away the dead bodies of your people.”

<sup>250</sup> Hebrew obscure! This translation “desolation” is based on the Vulgate. Some scholars feel “chains” is the proper translation, others translate: “a feast.”

bloodshed, <sup>251</sup> for the city is full of violence. <sup>252</sup> <sup>24</sup> I will bring the most evil nations to take possession of their houses; I will put an end to their arrogance, <sup>253</sup> and their holy places <sup>254</sup> will be made profane.

<sup>25</sup> "When horror (*or, despair*) comes, they will seek peace --- but there will be none. <sup>26</sup> Calamity follows calamity! Rumor follows rumor! They will continue seeking in vain for a vision from the prophet. There will no longer be guidance in morals proclaimed by the priests, and there will be no counsel from the elders. <sup>27</sup> The king will mourn, <sup>255</sup> the prince will clothe himself (*or, be enveloped*) with despair, and the hands of the rural people tremble with terror. I will deal with them as is deserved, based on their conduct. I will judge them; and they will know that I am the Lord." <sup>256</sup>

#### <CHAPTER 8>

#### *E. The visit to the Temple 8:1 – 11:25* <sup>257</sup>

#### *1. The Vision of Idolatry 8:1 – 18*

#### *a. Setting of the Vision 8:1 – 4*

<sup>1</sup> On the fifth day of the sixth <sup>258</sup> month, in the sixth year [*of King Johoiachin's captivity*], as I was seated in my house with the elders of Judah seated in my presence the Sovereign Lord's power came over me <sup>259</sup> [*in a trance*]. <sup>2</sup> As I looked, a figure having the appearance of a man <sup>260</sup> who, from his waist down appeared to be like fire and from his waist up appeared to have brightness which was like burnished brass (*or, gleaming amber*). <sup>261</sup> <sup>3</sup> He held out the likeness of a hand and took me by a lock of my hair, <sup>262</sup> and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me to Jerusalem, in the trance given by God, going to the entrance <sup>263</sup> to the inner court <sup>264</sup> that faces to the north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy <sup>265</sup> which provokes jealousy. <sup>266</sup> <sup>4</sup> Look! The

<sup>251</sup> Literally: "judgment of blood." NASV: "full of bloody crimes."

<sup>252</sup> LXX: "καὶ ποιησουσι φυρμον." "and they will make confusion." Syriac: "and they will pass through bricks."

<sup>253</sup> LXX: "raging."

<sup>254</sup> LXX: "τα αγια αυτων."

<sup>255</sup> LXX omits: "king...and." Some scholars feel the word "king" is a gloss.

<sup>256</sup> The usual channels of God's guidance will be broken and exile and despair alone remain.

<sup>257</sup> This probably took place on September 7, 591 or September 12, 592 BCE. This vision took place fourteen months after his first vision.

<sup>258</sup> LXX: "in the fifth month." "εν τω πεμπτω μηνι."

<sup>259</sup> Literally: "the hand of the Sovereign Lord fell there upon me."

<sup>260</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: "fiery figure."

<sup>261</sup> LXX: "gleaming amber." NAB omits verses 1, 2 & 4. There are four separate movements in these verses. 1. The image of Jerusalem. 2. Animal worship. 3. Weeping for Tammuz. 4. Sun worship. The latter three resulted in the complete disintegration of the national religion of the people of Israel. TAN: "his appearance was resplendent and had the color of amber." CB: "the appearance of a luster like that of shining metal."

<sup>262</sup> LXX: "my crown."

<sup>263</sup> LXX: "porch." Hebrew: "ambiguous." TAN: "Penemith" with the footnote that the meaning is unclear.

<sup>264</sup> Cf.: I Kings 7:13.

<sup>265</sup> Hebrew: "כַּחַבֵּי" Albright feels it should be "בַּחַבֵּי" = "a niche in which a figured slab is placed." LXX: "where was the pillar of the Purchaser." NEB: "bust" TAN: "Infuriating image that provides fury."

<sup>266</sup> LXX: "η στηλη του κτωμενου." MFT: "where the idol stood which provoked the Eternal to resentment."

presence (*or, glory*)<sup>267</sup> of the God of Israel was there as in the vision I had seen in the plain (*or, valley*).

*b. The Image of Jealousy 8:5 – 6*

5 Then he said to me, “Mortal, raise your eyes in a northerly direction.” So I turned in that direction and looked to the north of the altar gate and in the entrance was an image of jealousy (*or, an infuriating message*).<sup>268</sup> 6 He said to me, “Mortal, do you see what they are doing? They are taking part in great abomination (*or, engaging in disgusting conduct*)<sup>269</sup> that is being committed in the house of Israel to distance me from the sanctuary (*or, to drive me from the sanctuary*). But you will see things that are even more detestable!<sup>270</sup>

*c. Rites Before Pagan Imagery 8:7 – 13*

7 I was brought to the entrance of the court, and when I looked I noticed there was a hole in the wall.<sup>271</sup> 8 Then he said to me, “Mortal, dig into (*or, break through*) the wall and when I dug into (*or, broke through*) the wall there was a door. 9 He said to me, “Enter and see the vile abomination (*or, disgusting conduct*) that they are committing here.”<sup>10</sup> So I went in and saw --- portrayed (*or, incised*) on the wall were disgusting and detestable forms all around of creeping things and repulsive (*or, unclean*) animals and all the idols (*or, fetishes*) of the house of Israel.<sup>272</sup> 11 Before them stood seventy men who were elders of the house of Israel,<sup>273</sup> with Jaazniah<sup>274</sup> the son of Shaphan<sup>275</sup> standing in their midst.<sup>276</sup> Each had his censer (*or, incense burner*) in his hand, and a thick cloud of smoke ascended from the censers. 12 Then he told me, “Mortal, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine<sup>277</sup> of his own carved image? They say, ‘The Lord does not see us; the Lord has abandoned the land.’”

13 He also told me, “You will see things that are even more detestable sacrilege which they commit.”<sup>278</sup>

*d. Worship of Tammuz 8:14 – 15*

14 Then he brought me to entrance of the north gate of the house of the Lord,<sup>279</sup> and there I saw women<sup>280</sup> weeping for Tammuz.<sup>281</sup> 15 Then he told me: “Have you seen this, O Mortal? You will see even filthier practices than these.

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<sup>267</sup> LXX: “εν την ποληνητην προς ανατολος.” Cf.: Luke 2:9.

<sup>268</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain. LXX, Old Latin & Syriac have: “I looked from the north toward the eastern gate” reading “x r z m h” for “x k z m h.”

<sup>269</sup> JB: “filth.”

<sup>270</sup> Manasseh had placed a wooden image of Asherah, the Canaanite goddess in the temple (II Kings 2:7; II Chronicles 33:15). It was removed but reappears in II Kings 23:6 and apparently has returned again during Ezekiel’s time. This is an example of Syro-Mesopotamian syncretism among the religious leaders of Jerusalem.

<sup>271</sup> “Hole in the wall” was omitted in the LXX both here and in verse 8.

<sup>272</sup> The Law of Moses in Leviticus 11 forbids the eating of certain animals that were considered to be unclean. The pictures incised (*and painted*) on the walls possibly depicted Egyptian, Canaanite and Babylonian idols.

<sup>273</sup> These were not the later Sanhedrin but surely a cross section of the leadership who revered foreign deities.

<sup>274</sup> Jaazniah was clearly the black sheep in an otherwise seemingly worthy family in Jerusalem.

<sup>275</sup> Shaphan was possibly Josiah’s secretary. See: II Kings 22:3.

<sup>276</sup> LXX: “εν μεσω αυτων ειστηκει.”

<sup>277</sup> LXX & Syriac: “room.” “τω κρυπτω αυτων.” Hebrew: “rooms.”

<sup>278</sup> NEB: “monstrous abominations.” It seems evident that Israel’s national religion had completely broken down.

e. *Worship of the Sun 8:16 – 17*

<sup>16</sup> He brought me into the inner court of the house of the Lord; and I saw, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, <sup>282</sup> that there where about twenty-five men had their backs toward the altar in the temple of the Lord and these faced toward the east, looking to the sun. <sup>283</sup> <sup>17</sup> Then he told me, “Have you seen this, O Mortal? Is it not bad enough for the house of Judah to practice the abominations which they commit here? Do they need to fill the land with violence (*or, lawlessness*) <sup>284</sup> and stop provoking anger even more? See: they put a branch to their nose. <sup>285</sup> <sup>18</sup> Now: I will deal wrathfully! I will not show them any compassion, and though they cry with a voice that is so loud that I hear, [[I will not listen to them.]]” <sup>286</sup>

<CHAPTER 9>

2. *Slaughter of the Guilty 9:1 – 11*

<sup>1</sup> Then he called out loudly to me, saying: “Come near! You executors <sup>287</sup> of the city, come, each of you, with your deadly weapon in hand.” <sup>288</sup> <sup>2</sup> Six men came from the direction of the upper gate, that was northerly, each man with his weapon for slaughter in his hand. Among these was a man who was clothed in linen, <sup>289</sup> having a writing case (*or, ink horn*) <sup>290</sup> at his waist, and stood beside the bronze altar.

<sup>3</sup> The glory (*or, presence*) of the God of Israel had moved down from the cherubim on which it had rested, going down to the entrance (*or, threshold*) <sup>291</sup> of the house; <sup>292</sup> and he called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing case (*or, ink*

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<sup>279</sup> I.e.: the inner court of the temple.

<sup>280</sup> LXX: “γυναικες.”

<sup>281</sup> Tammuz was a Babylonian god. He was a god who was thought to die when the vegetation died and came to life again the next year. Women would mourn his ritual death. Cf.: ANET pg. 109a. The Sumerians called this god Damuzi. Tammuz was the husband of his sister Ishtar, a goddess.

<sup>282</sup> LB: “between the porch and the brazen altar.”

<sup>283</sup> Cf.: “II Kings 23:11.

<sup>284</sup> LXX: “Iniquity.”

<sup>285</sup> The Hebrew word is: “hrwmz.” See: Numbers 13:25 where the word is “a grape vine” to their nose. MFT: “They are filling my nostrils with their stench.” CB: “they are thrusting this lawless obscenity against my nostrils.” LB: “thumbing their nose at me.” NASV: “See, they are putting the branch to their nose.” LXX: “ως μυκτημιζουτες.” The allusion has been an idiom meaning to harass or irritate. Recent scholarship, based on bas-reliefs from Assyria has discovered that people are depicted as reverently holding branches to their nose. Possibly there is a scribal error: Their nose: “appdm” My nose: “\`appt”

<sup>286</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later insertion into the text by a scribe.

<sup>287</sup> LXX: “The judgment of the city has drawn near and you. All you who punish...”

<sup>288</sup> TAN: “Approach, you men in charge of the city, each bearing his weapons of destruction.” The Hebrew words for “deadly weapons” -- “wcpm ylk” literally would be “a shattering weapon.” or “an implement for war.” The word is virtually the same as the word for “battle axe” which is found in Jeremiah 51:20. TAN: “club.” NEB: “battle axe.”

<sup>289</sup> Linen was ritually clean. Wool might not be ritually clean. The clothing would be suitable for a priest or messenger from God.

<sup>290</sup> The Hebrew word “rpsh tmq” is possibly a loan word which means writing table: writing instruments: pen, ink and a wax writing tablet. LXX: “a long robe down to his feet and a sapphire girdle was on his loins.” MFT: “a writer’s ink horn at his side.”

<sup>291</sup> TAN: “platform.” A footnote says: “The raised platform on which the temple stood.” Cf. 47:1.

<sup>292</sup> NEB: “then the glory of the God of Israel rose above the cherubim. He came to the terrace of the temple.” LXX Codex Alexandrinus: “τωβ χερουβιν η ουσσα επ αυτων.”

horn) at his waist. 4 The Lord said to him, “Go through the city --- through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the forehead <sup>293</sup> of the people who moan and groan because of all the abominations that are committed’.” <sup>294</sup> 5 To the others I heard him say, “Pass though the city, following him (*the man wearing linen clothing*) and kill! Show no compassion! Do not show any pity! 6 Kill the old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, <sup>295</sup> but do not harm those who have the mark. Begin in my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were in front of the house. 7 Then he told them, “Defile my house! <sup>296</sup> Fill the courtyards with the dead. Go!” So they went out <sup>297</sup> into the city. 8 While they were killing, I was left alone (*or, remained alone*). <sup>298</sup> I prostrated myself in prayer and cried out, “Oh Sovereign Lord God, will you annihilate <sup>299</sup> all the remnant <sup>300</sup> in Israel in the outpouring of this wrath on Jerusalem?”

9 Then he replied: “The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is enormous; and the land is full <sup>301</sup> of bloodshed. <sup>302</sup> The city is filled with injustice; <sup>303</sup> for they say, ‘The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see.’ 10 As for me: I will not show any pity or compassion but I will give them what they deserve!”

11 Then the man clothed in linen who had a writing case (*or, an ink horn*) at his waist, brought back a message, saying: “I have done as you commanded me.” <sup>304</sup>

#### <CHAPTER 10>

#### 3. Departure of Yahweh’s Glory 10:1 – 22 <sup>305</sup>

1 Then I looked and saw in the expanse <sup>306</sup> that was above the heads of the cherubim, something which appeared to be sapphire <sup>307</sup> and which had the likeness of a throne in its shape above them. 2 He spoke to the man who was clothed in linen <sup>308</sup> saying, “Go in among <sup>309</sup> the whirling wheels <sup>310</sup> which were underneath the cherubim. <sup>311</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> In Jeremiah the mark is a “ט” the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It was also the first letter of the word Torah (*or, the Law*). This is supported in notations in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The people did not receive an “X” which later Christians considered to be a sign of the cross as was done in the Middle Ages.

<sup>294</sup> LXX: “groan and grieve for all the iniquities that are done in the midst of them.”

<sup>295</sup> There was to be no exemption. The mark on the foreheads alone would provide the distinction concerning who should be put to death.

<sup>296</sup> LXX: “τας οδους.”

<sup>297</sup> LXX: “εκπορευομενοι και κοπτετε.”

<sup>298</sup> The Hebrew MT text says “ραχανα” which might possibly be a copyist error. “waxan” which would give the thought of an expression of despair.

<sup>299</sup> LXX: “are you the destroyer.”

<sup>300</sup> i.e.: all those left in Judah and Israel including those who survive at this moment.

<sup>301</sup> LXX: “οτι επλησθη.”

<sup>302</sup> TAN: “The land is full of crime and the city is full of corruption.”

<sup>303</sup> LXX: “και ακαθαρσιας.” NRSV: “perversity.”

<sup>304</sup> NAB: transposes 11:24 – 25 to this point in Ezekiel. Chapters 8 – 11:25 are woven together into one chapter, numbered chapter 10.

<sup>305</sup> This passage appears to be interrupted by chapter 11:1 – 21 and appears to continue with 11:22 – 25.

<sup>306</sup> JB: “vault.” NRSV & TEV: “the dome.”

<sup>307</sup> Hebrew: “lapis lazuli.”

<sup>308</sup> “linen” is omitted in the LXX.

<sup>309</sup> Hebrew “συνρωα” This verse is explained later in the chapter.

<sup>310</sup> TAN: “wheelwork.”

<sup>311</sup> There is possible dittography in this verse. “He spoke” is omitted in the LXX. For “the cherubim” the LXX has: “τον χερουβιν.”

Fill your hands with glowing coals from between the cherubim, and scatter these over the city.”

I watched as this took place. <sup>3</sup> The cherubim were standing on the south <sup>312</sup> side of the house [*of the Lord*], when the man went in, and a cloud <sup>313</sup> filled the inner court. <sup>4</sup> The presence (*or, glory*) of the Lord <sup>314</sup> went up, <sup>315</sup> being reflected by the cherubim, to the platform (*or, threshold*) of the house [*of the Lord*], the house was filled with the cloud, and the courtyard was full of the radiance of the glory of the Lord. <sup>5</sup> The sound of the cherub’s wings was heard as far as the outer court [*of the house of the Lord*], sounding like the voice of the Almighty <sup>316</sup> when speaking.

<sup>6</sup> Then the man wearing the linen <sup>317</sup> received a command: “Take fire from between the whirling wheels which are between the cherubim.” He went in and stood beside a wheel. <sup>7</sup> A cherub <sup>318</sup> stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire <sup>319</sup> that was between the cherubim, and took some of the glowing embers and placed them into the hands of the man clothed in linen. Then he took the glowing embers and left. <sup>8</sup> (Under the cherub’s wings there seemed to be something having the form of human hands.) <sup>320</sup>

<sup>9</sup> I looked, and there were four wheels <sup>321</sup> along side the cherubim, one beside each cherub and the appearance of the wheels was like gleaming beryl. <sup>322</sup> <sup>10</sup> As for their appearance, the four cherubim had the same appearance. As to the wheels they were one wheel within another (*or, in the midst of another*). <sup>323</sup> <sup>11</sup> When they moved, they went in any direction they faced without turning as they proceeded, but in whatever direction the front wheel faced the others followed. They did not veer from each other. <sup>12</sup> The wheels of the four cherubim: rims, spokes together with the entire wheel were filled with eyes which covered them. <sup>324</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> LXX: “right.”

<sup>313</sup> This was no doubt the “Shekinah” or “Presence” of God. It was thought of as a sign of God’s presence in a very special and personal way. However it also had the idea of divine transcendence for God was too holy to be confined within a temple or to be within human touch. The birth narrative of Jesus speaks of “the glory of the Lord.” Luke 2:9.

<sup>314</sup> TEV: “the dazzling light of the Lord’s presence.”

<sup>315</sup> LXX: “departed from.”

<sup>316</sup> “El Shaddai” Cf. Genesis 17:1.

<sup>317</sup> LXX: “the sacred robe.” Also: verse 8.

<sup>318</sup> This is omitted by the LXX. If omitted it would read: “And he stretched out his hand to the fire that was between him and the cherubim.”

<sup>319</sup> LXX: “εις μεσον του πυρος.”

<sup>320</sup> Verse 8 seems awkward as it follows verse 7. Possibly the editor wanted to give a detailed explanation.

<sup>321</sup> Verses 9 – 13 are parallel to 1:15 – 18.

<sup>322</sup> LXX: “carbuncle stone.” NASV: “tarshish stone.” NRSV: “beryl.” TAN: “beryl stone.” NEB & MFT: “topaz.” IDB: “Chrysolite, alternately: Beryl.” Hebrew: “XyXrt.” LXX: “λιθου ανθρακος” in Ezekiel 10.

<sup>323</sup> See: 1:16: footnote 35. TAN: “cutting through each other.” TEV: “Each one had another wheel which intersected it at right angles.”

<sup>324</sup> The Hebrew is obscure. Some scholars feel the eyes were found on the cherubim, not on the wheels. KJV: “And their whole body and their backs and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels [*were*] full of eyes round about, [*even*] the wheels that they four had.” NIV: “Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands, and their wings, were completely full of eyes, as were the four wheels.”

13 As for the wheels, I heard that they were called [*Geigel*]<sup>325</sup> whirling wheels. 14 Each cherubim had four faces: the front face was that of a cherub.<sup>326</sup> The second was the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth was that of an eagle.<sup>327</sup>

15 The cherubim ascended (*or, were lifted*) up. (These were the living creatures I had seen by the river Chebar.) 16 When the Cherubim went the wheels went beside them, and when the cherubim lifted their wings to ascend from the earth the wheels that were beside them did not veer in different directions. 17 When they stood still, the wheels remained still, and when they ascended the wheels ascended with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in them.<sup>328</sup>

18 Then the presence (*or, glory*) of the Lord extended beyond<sup>329</sup> the threshold<sup>330</sup> of the house [*of the Lord*], and the presence (*or, glory of the Lord*) also covered the cherubim. 19 The cherubim lifted up their wings and rose from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them,<sup>331</sup> and they<sup>332</sup> stood at the door of the east gate<sup>333</sup> of the house of the Lord.<sup>334</sup> The presence (*or, glory*) of the God of Israel was over them.<sup>335</sup>

20 These were the living creatures that I saw beneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar, and I realized that they were<sup>336</sup> cherubim. 21 Each had four faces, and each had four wings, and beneath their wings was something that appeared like human hands. 22 With regard to their faces,<sup>337</sup> they were the very same faces whose<sup>338</sup> appearance I had seen<sup>339</sup> by the river Chebar. Every one went straight forward.

#### <CHAPTER 11>

#### 4. Judgment and Hope 11:1 – 25

##### a. The Wicked Leaders 11:1 – 13<sup>340</sup>

1 The spirit lifted me up, and brought me to the gate<sup>341</sup> of the house of the Lord which faces toward the east. At the entrance of the gate I saw there were twenty-five<sup>342</sup> men;<sup>343</sup> and among them I saw Jaazaniah, the son of Azzur, and Pa\elatiah the son of

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<sup>325</sup> The Hebrew word for a wheel of intricate design, not an ordinary wheel was “Geigel.” The word is also used in 1:15. In 10:15 the Hebrew word “ophan” is used which is the word for an ordinary wheel.

<sup>326</sup> In 1:10 the appearance was that of an ox.

<sup>327</sup> This verse appears to be somewhat corrupt. The translation is an attempt to make a reasonable translation from an imperfect text. The LXX omits verse 14.

<sup>328</sup> The wheels seem to have become an integral part of the cherubim’s being.

<sup>329</sup> JB: “came out from.”

<sup>330</sup> LXX Codex Alexandrinus: “porch.”

<sup>331</sup> A possible translation based on the LXX might be: “joined to them.”

<sup>332</sup> Literally: “and it stood.” LXX: “they stood.”

<sup>333</sup> Literally: “opposite.” LXX: “front gate.”

<sup>334</sup> LXX: “θηου.” Codex Alexandrinus: “κυριου.”

<sup>335</sup> Verses 18 & 19 appear to be a parallel recension of 11:22 - 23.

<sup>336</sup> LXX inserts “the.”

<sup>337</sup> LXX: “και αυτα.” Vulgate: “et impetus.”

<sup>338</sup> The Hebrew text is in question. “hnhw” = “and they” which could easily be emended to “stacb” = “and they went forth.”

<sup>339</sup> LXX: “υποκατω της δοξης θεου Ισραηλ.”

<sup>340</sup> Verses 1 – 8 seem to complete the narrative of Chapter 8.

<sup>341</sup> LXX: “front gate of the house of the Lord, that looks eastward.”

<sup>342</sup> LXX: “ως εικοσι και πεντε.”

<sup>343</sup> These were evidently not the same twenty-five men of 8:11.

Benaiah who were leaders of the people. <sup>2</sup> He <sup>344</sup> said to me: “Mortal, these are the men who plot evil actions <sup>345</sup> and who devise wicked counsel for the city; <sup>346</sup> <sup>3</sup> who say, ‘The time is not right to build houses. <sup>347</sup> This city is a cauldron (*or, stew-pot*) <sup>348</sup> and we are the meat in it.’ <sup>349</sup> <sup>4</sup> Therefore prophesy against them! Prophesy, Mortal!

<sup>5</sup> The Spirit of the Lord fell on me and he told me: “Speak! This is what the Lord says: Your thoughts, O house of Israel assume you know everything that pops into your minds. <sup>350</sup> <sup>6</sup> You have killed many in this city and have filled the streets with piles of corpses. <sup>7</sup> Therefore this is definitely what the Lord says: “These corpses which you have piled up in the midst [*of Jerusalem*] are the meat, and this city is the cauldron (*or, stew-pot*); but you will be taken away (*or, removed*) <sup>351</sup> from the city. <sup>8</sup> You have feared war. <sup>352</sup> I will bring warfare to you declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup> I will bring you out [*of the city*] and give you over into the hands of strangers (*or, foreigners*) and carry out justice toward you. <sup>10</sup> You will be killed in war; <sup>353</sup> I will punish you at the border of Israel! You will know that I am the Lord! <sup>11</sup> This city will not be your cauldron (*or, stew pot*) nor will you be the meat in the midst of it. <sup>354</sup> I will punish you at the border of Israel. <sup>12</sup> You will know that I am the Lord whose laws you have not followed and whose rules you have not obeyed but instead you have followed the teachings of the nations that surround you.”

<sup>13</sup> It happened that while I was prophesying Pelatiah the son of Benaiah suddenly died. Then I prostrated myself <sup>355</sup> [*in prayer*] and cried out loudly, saying; “Oh Lord, will you destroy the last remnant of Israel?”

#### *b. Hope for the Exiles 11:14 – 21*

<sup>14</sup> The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>15</sup> “Mortal, your relatives, your blood relatives, <sup>356</sup> fellow exiles who are of the house of Israel, all of those who are inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘They have stayed away <sup>357</sup> from the Lord for this land has been given to us as our heritage.’ <sup>16</sup> Therefore I say: This is what the Lord God says: Even

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<sup>344</sup> LXX: “κυριος.”

<sup>345</sup> LXX: “vanities.”

<sup>346</sup> JBJ: “these are the wicked schemers who are spreading their bad advice through the city.” NEB: “were planning mischief and plotting trouble within the city.” The wicked counsel would induce rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar and an alliance with Egypt. TEV: “give bad advice.”

<sup>347</sup> Some scholars interpret this Hebrew word to be “fortification.” The phrase can also be translated: “Is not this the time.”

<sup>348</sup> The Hebrew seems to imply that Jerusalem is thought to be like a protective cauldron.

<sup>349</sup> The Hebrew of verse 3 is difficult. The text can be an attempt to convince the people of Jerusalem that they are secure. The opposite can also be a possible translation. TEV: “The city is like a cooking pot and we are like the meat in it, but at least it protects us from the fire.”

<sup>350</sup> Literally: “what comes up in your spirit.” LXX: “These are the devices of your spirit.”

<sup>351</sup> The MT reads: “aycwq” The versions read it as “aycwa” “I shall bring you forth.”

<sup>352</sup> Literally: “the sword.”

<sup>353</sup> Literally: “you will fall by the sword.” Some LXX manuscripts omit verses 10 - 12. It is possible that verses 11 – 12 were added by a later editor. Verses 11 – 21 are an oracle of hope.

<sup>354</sup> The JB quotes an ancient proverb: “We are as safe inside our walls as meat in a pot is safe from the fire.”

<sup>355</sup> Literally: “I fell on my face” which was a way of showing heartfelt prayer concerns.

<sup>356</sup> Literally: “man of your kindred” or “man of your redemption.”

<sup>357</sup> LXX: “αρχμαλωσιτας” in Codex Alexandrinus, or: “those to whom the people of Jerusalem have said.”



though I disturbed them and moved them to foreign nations, and even though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I have been sending them in numbers <sup>358</sup> to countries into which they have gone. <sup>359</sup> 17 Therefore say, This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: I will gather you (*i.e. the exiles*) <sup>360</sup> from among the peoples and gather you from the countries where you have been <sup>361</sup> scattered and I will give you the land of Israel! <sup>362</sup> 18 When they return they will be purged of their filthy practices (*or, remove the vile images and detestable idols*). 19 I will give them a united purpose (*or, I will bring about restoration*) <sup>363</sup> and put a new spirit within them: I will remove their stubborn unfaithfulness (*or, extract their heart of stone*) and they will be my people, and I will be their God. 21 However, those whose determination is <sup>364</sup> for the detestable things --- their abominations --- I will repay them for their actions says the Sovereign God.”

*c. Departure of Yahweh's Glory 11:22 – 25* <sup>365</sup>

22 Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, their wheels being beside them. The Presence (*or Glory*) of the Lord of Israel was above them. 23 The Presence (*or, Glory*) of the Lord rested on the mountain (*or, hill*) which is on the east side of the city (*i.e. the Mount of Olives*). 24 The Spirit of God lifted me and carried me <sup>366</sup> in a trance to the exiles in Chaldea (*or, Babylonia*). <sup>367</sup> It was then that the trance I had experienced departed from me, 25 and I told the exiles all the things that the Lord had shown me.

<CHAPTER 12>

*F. Symbols of the Exile and of Doomsday 12:1 – 28*

*d. The Exile 12:1 – 10*

1 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Mortal, you reside in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear, 3 for they are a rebellious house. <sup>368</sup> Therefore, Mortal, prepare yourself [*to demonstrate to them, using*] the baggage (*or, gear*) of an exile. <sup>369</sup> Go into exile <sup>370</sup> by day in their presence (*or, so your action can be witnessed*). You will go like an exile from one place to another as they watch you. Perhaps <sup>371</sup> they will understand <sup>372</sup> that they are a rebellious house.

<sup>358</sup> The translation could rightfully include a thought that this was not particularly of importance.

<sup>359</sup> An interesting thought found in ICC: “If the home coming Jews *put away* the external obstacles (v. 18) Jahweh will *put away* the internal.”

<sup>360</sup> LXX: “αυτους.” Hebrew: “מְקַטְא.” So also: in the remainder of the sentence.

<sup>361</sup> LXX: “διεσπειρα αυτους.”

<sup>362</sup> TOTC: “The preparation for God’s work in man was to be man’s willingness to repent and to take practical steps to demonstrate his repentance.”

<sup>363</sup> The Hebrew can be read in two ways, based on the vowel points: “a new way” or, “another heart.”

LXX: “ετεραν.” Hebrew: “דְּחָא.” NIV: “an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them.”

<sup>364</sup> Literally: “to the heart of their detestable things and their abominations their heart goes.”

<sup>365</sup> Verses 22 – 25 continue the narrative of chapter 10.

<sup>366</sup> LXX: “και ανεβην απο.”

<sup>367</sup> Originally Chaldea was only the name for the southern portion of Babylonia but later became the name for the entire land.

<sup>368</sup> TAN: “breed.”

<sup>369</sup> An exile could salvage very little to take along when going into exile.

<sup>370</sup> This phrase is omitted by the LXX. It is possibly dittography.

<sup>371</sup> This word is omitted by the LXX which substitutes: “that they might see you.”

<sup>372</sup> Literally: “see that they are.”

<sup>373</sup> 4 You will bring out your baggage (*or, gear*) by day in their sight, (the baggage (*or, gear*) for exile); and you, yourself, will go out in the evening when they can observe you, just as would be done when going into exile. <sup>374</sup> 5 Dig through the wall <sup>375</sup> while they watch, and go <sup>376</sup> (*or, bring out [your gear]*) though it. <sup>377</sup> 6 You will lift the baggage (*or, gear*) in their sight and carry it on your shoulder, carrying it out in the land: you will have your face covered that you may not see the land. I have made you be a sign (*or, portent*) for the house of Israel.” <sup>378</sup>

7 I did as I had been commanded, <sup>379</sup> bringing my baggage (*or, gear*) by day, as baggage (*or, gear*) for exile, and in the evening I dug through the wall with my own hands. <sup>380</sup> I went out in the dark, carrying my gear in their sight on my shoulder. <sup>381</sup>

8 In the morning the word of the Lord came to me: 9 “Mortal, has not the house of Israel, that rebellious house, never asked you, ‘What are you doing?’ Say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: ‘This oracle is directed against the prince in Jerusalem, <sup>382</sup> and all the house of Israel who are within the city.’ 11 Say: ‘I am a sign (*or portent*) <sup>383</sup> for you. I have done this and this will happen for them for they will go into exile, into captivity, 12 [*for it applies to*] the prince who is among them and will lift his baggage (*or, gear*) <sup>384</sup> on his shoulder in the darkness and will go [*into exile*]. He <sup>385</sup> will dig through the wall and go <sup>386</sup> out through it. He will have his face covered that [he will not see the land (*or, lest he be seen by anyone*).] <sup>387</sup> 13 I will spread my net over him, and he will be caught in my snare <sup>388</sup> and I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, <sup>389</sup> yet he will not see it, <sup>390</sup> and he will die there. 14 I will scatter all who are around him in the wind: his assistants and all his troop, and people (*i.e. the Babylonians*)

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<sup>373</sup> To have Ezekiel act out a prophecy is not unusual after the action of the early chapters, lying on one side and then another, for example. Surely this prompted the people to keep an eye on him to see what further ‘strange’ action he might undertake.

<sup>374</sup> The trek as an exile would have begun in the evening when it would be cooler to begin the trek.

<sup>375</sup> The Hebrew word used here would be one that would be used to dig through the wall of a house. A different Hebrew word would be used for digging through a city wall.

<sup>376</sup> So: LXX, Syriac, Vulgate and Targums. Hebrew: “bring it out.”

<sup>377</sup> The intent was to demonstrate and declare that the exiles would leave Jerusalem though the broken wall of the ruined city.

<sup>378</sup> LXX literally: “you shall be lifted up on man’s shoulders and you shall go out in secret (*or, hidden*).” A possible translation would be “You will cover your face, and will not see the ground because I have made you a sight for the house of Israel.”

<sup>379</sup> LXX: “κατα παντα οσα ενετειλατο μαι, και.”

<sup>380</sup> The phrase “I dug ... hands” is omitted in LXX Codex B and Syriac. It is possible that it is dittography.

<sup>381</sup> The LXX could be translated as: “I was taken on men’s shoulders before them.”

<sup>382</sup> LXX: “Ο αρχων και ο αφητουμενοζεν ιερουσαλημ.” Codex A: “say to the prince and the ruler in Israel, and to the house...” Zedekiah was not really considered to be the king by the people of Israel. Thus he is spoken of here as a “prince.”

<sup>383</sup> Literally: “your sign.” CB: “an omen for them.”

<sup>384</sup> LXX: “the prince will be carried on the shoulders.”

<sup>385</sup> So: LXX & Syriac. LXX: “το ο εξελθειν αυτον.”

<sup>386</sup> So: LXX, Syriac & Targums. MT: “bring.”

<sup>387</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later insertion by an editor.

<sup>388</sup> LXX: “seize” or “hem in.”

<sup>389</sup> See 11:24: footnote 367.

<sup>390</sup> Cf.: II Kings 25. Zedekiah was blinded by Nebuchadnezzar before departing for Babylon.

will unsheathe their swords against them.<sup>391</sup> 15 They will realize that I am the Lord, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through various countries. 16 But I will let a few of them escape<sup>392</sup> war, famine and disease so that they may repent of all their abominable deeds among the nations where they have gone and know that I am the Lord.”

### 2. *Fear by the People 12:17 – 20*

17 Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me: 18 “Mortal, eat your bread with trembling,<sup>393</sup> and drink your water with anxiety and fear;<sup>394</sup> 19 and say to the people of Israel (*or, of the land*),<sup>395</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord says concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the land of Israel: They will eat [*what is rationed out to them*] their bread in fearfulness<sup>396</sup> and drink their water in desolation because the land will be desolate, stripped of all crops, because of the violence of all those who dwell on it.<sup>397</sup> 20 The inhabited cities will be a dark waste, and the land will become like a desolate. You will know that I am the Lord!”

### 3. *The End is at hand 12:21 – 28*<sup>398</sup>

21 The Word of the Lord came to me: 22 “Mortal, what is the proverb<sup>399</sup> you have about the land of Israel<sup>400</sup> – ‘The days grow long<sup>401</sup> and every vision comes to naught’?<sup>402</sup> 23 Tell them therefore: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will put an end to the proverb, and it is not to be used as a proverb [*in the land*] of Israel.’ But: tell them the time is near for the fulfillment of the word of the Lord and of every vision. 24 There will be no more fake visions or soothing divinations<sup>403</sup> (*or, misleading prophecies*) within the house of Israel. 25 Whenever I, the Lord, will speak the word I will speak it will be performed without delay.<sup>404</sup> It will take place in your lifetime! O rebellious house, I will speak the word and carry it out, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

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<sup>391</sup> So: LXX, Syriac & Targums. Hebrew: “his help.” TEV: “all the members of his court and his advisors and body guards, and people will search for them and kill them.”

<sup>392</sup> Literally: “I will spare a few.”

<sup>393</sup> LXX: “sorrow.”

<sup>394</sup> LXX: “torment and affliction.” JB: “behave restlessly and anxiously as you drink your water.” This is possibly a description of the prophet and how he ate his ‘economy rations’ which had been allotted to him in 4:9 – 11.

<sup>395</sup> These words in Hebrew: “people of the land” refer to the peasant population of Judah as distinguished from the ruling class. Many of these people were left behind in Judah.

<sup>396</sup> LXX: “scarcity.”

<sup>397</sup> LXX: “for all that dwell in it are ungodly.”

<sup>398</sup> Some scholars question the written source of 12:21 – 28.

<sup>399</sup> LXX: “parable.”

<sup>400</sup> The Hebrew appears to be a threat as one reads it. An attempt to show it would be: They-lengthen the days (subject) – and it – does every – vision. TOTC

<sup>401</sup> TAN: “draw near and the fulfillment of every vision.”

<sup>402</sup> Some used these words and verse 27 against Ezekiel because it is assumed that the words are not being fulfilled. The message was considered by the people to be unacceptable and threatening to the people of Judah. His hearers were prejudiced against him, yet he spoke out as a true prophet of God.

<sup>403</sup> The Hebrew word for divinations implies that false prophets were using mechanical means of obtaining prophecies. The oracle using lots, throwing arrows in the air and studying how they fell, or other means of augury such as examining the entrails of sacrificed animals were all banned.

<sup>404</sup> LXX: “λαλληλσαι και ποιησω.”

26 Again the hand of the Lord was placed on me. 27 “Mortal, observe! Those who are a part of the House of Israel say, ‘The vision that he sees is for the distant future and he prophesies about a distant time that is far off.’ 28 Assuredly, therefore tell them: “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: There will be no further delay of my words. The time of fulfillment has come! The Sovereign Lord has spoken!”

<CHAPTER 13>

G. Oracles against Prophets and Prophetesses 13:1 – 23

1. Oracle against False Prophets 13:1 - 16

1 The word of the Lord came to me; 2 “Mortal, prophesy<sup>405</sup> against the prophets of Israel, prophesy, speaking to those who prophesy<sup>406</sup> out of their own imaginations.<sup>407</sup> Hear the word of the Lord!<sup>408</sup> 3 This is what the Sovereign Lord says: 4 Woe to the senseless<sup>409</sup> prophets that follow their fancy without having a vision. 4 You prophets are as useless as foxes (*or, jackals*) [*looking around*] among the ruins,<sup>410</sup> O Israel. 5 You have not gone up into the breaches [*of the city wall*] or repaired (*or, rebuilt*) the wall [*to fortify*] the house of Israel, that it might repulse the battle on the day of the Lord. 6 They have prophesied falsehood<sup>411</sup> and devised a lie.<sup>412</sup> They say, ‘The Lord says’ even though the Lord has not sent them, and yet they expect him to fulfill their word.<sup>413</sup> 7 Have you not seen an empty vision and spoken a false divination whenever you said: ‘The Lord says:’<sup>414</sup> although I have not spoken.”<sup>415</sup>

8 Assuredly the Sovereign Lord declares: “Because you have spoken delusions and seen lies, be assured that I am against you, declares the Lord God. 9 My hand<sup>416</sup> will be against the prophets who see visions that are not genuine (*giving them a sense of power and authority*) and who lie as they make divinations. They will not remove the council of my people,<sup>417</sup> nor are they inducted (*or, admitted*) into the records of the house of Israel, nor will they enter into the land of Israel; and you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord.<sup>418</sup> 10 Because they have seduced<sup>419</sup> my people, saying “Peace” when

<sup>405</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew literally: “who prophesy.” The LXX reads “abwh” for “syAnh.” LXX Codex A reads: “That prophesy, and you will say to the prophets they prophecy out of their heads.”

<sup>406</sup> LXX: “τοὺς προφητεῦσιν ἀπο κρδίου αὐτῶν.”

<sup>407</sup> LXX: “πρὸς οὐτοῦς.” LB: “inventing their own version.”

<sup>408</sup> Some scholars rearrange the order of the verses as follows: 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 3, 4, 8, 9.

<sup>409</sup> Hebrew: “lbn.” The Hebrew word means much more than “stupid” --- both spiritually and morally; insensitive and inclined to blasphemy -- the antithesis of being wise. NIV footnote: “wicked prophets.”

<sup>410</sup> LXX: “in the desert.”

<sup>411</sup> Literally: “vanity” here and in verses 8 & 23. LXX: “in the day of the Lord have not stood (up) seeing false (visions).”

<sup>412</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: “the divination of a lie.”

<sup>413</sup> The false prophets were victims of delusion. Skinner: “The true prophet knew he had authoritative inspiration, but the false prophets could not know that he lacked it. This is a quandary of all religious beliefs where objective tests often are lacking.”

<sup>414</sup> Literally: “an oracle of the Lord.”

<sup>415</sup> Verse 7 is possibly a gloss on verse 6.

<sup>416</sup> LXX: “καὶ ἐκτενω.”

<sup>417</sup> LXX: “shall not partake of the instructions (*or, correction*) to my people.”

<sup>418</sup> The false prophets will: 1. Lose the place of honor as leading citizens. 2, He will be removed from the civil register of full citizens, thus losing the cherished rights of all Israelite males.

<sup>419</sup> The word is an Aramaean loan word, the root of which is “h[m]” and in Hebrew would be “h[t].”

there was no peace; and when the people built a flimsy wall <sup>420</sup> these prophets daubed it with plaster. <sup>421</sup> 11 Tell those who are daubing the wall with plaster <sup>422</sup> that it will fall! <sup>423</sup> There will be a downpour <sup>424</sup> of rain, a powerful hail storm, <sup>425</sup> and a strong wind will arise; <sup>426</sup> 12 and when the wall collapses will you not be asked, ‘Where is the plaster that you daubed on it?’<sup>427</sup> 13 The result is: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will make a tornado bust forth, there will be a driving rain, and great hailstones which will raze the wall <sup>428</sup> because of my wrath. 14 I will demolish the wall that you have daubed with plaster and will raze it <sup>429</sup> down to its foundation stones, for it will be totally destroyed. When the wall falls you will be crushed and you will know that I am the Lord. 15 When I will have spent my fury on the wall and on those who have daubed it with plaster I will say to you: <sup>430</sup> The wall is no more, and the plasterers are no more. 16 This is also how it is with the prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her when there was no peace says the Sovereign Lord.”

## 2. Oracle Against Prophetesses 13:16 – 23

17 “And you, Mortal, direct your attention toward the daughters of your people; who prophesy based on their own imagination. <sup>431</sup> Prophecy against them! 18 Say: This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Woe to the women who sew magic amulets <sup>432</sup> on the wrists <sup>433</sup> and make veils for the heads <sup>434</sup> of persons in all positions of status <sup>435</sup> in an attempt to gain followers (*or, to assure the people that thereby they will be safe*) you are bringing destruction on individuals who belong to my people and seeking to provide safety for your followers and thereby obtain a profit? <sup>436</sup> 19 You have dishonored my

<sup>420</sup> The Hebrew word “*cyx*” is a hapax legomenon which apparently designates an inferior partition.

<sup>421</sup> The Hebrew word is for “un-tempered mortar.” The word shares a root word with “to plaster over.” The un-tempered mortar was a form of plaster that should not be applied on the outside of a building but rather to do ‘finish work’ within a room. JB: “slap on plaster.”

<sup>422</sup> This is omitted by LXX & Syriac.

<sup>423</sup> LXX: “*καὶ αὐσὼ*.”

<sup>424</sup> There is a double meaning: 1. Downpour of rain. 2. Washing off the plaster of v. 10, leaving a flimsy wall exposed to the hail.

<sup>425</sup> The Hebrew literally is: “rain and you” which, when re-pointed reads: “I will cause great hailstones to fall.” The word “hail” is omitted by the LXX.

<sup>426</sup> LXX: “*ραγησεται*.” Verse 11 in Hebrew surely suffers from corruption but its sense is clear.

<sup>427</sup> NEB: “Where is the plaster you should have used?”

<sup>428</sup> NIV”

will fall with destructive fury.”

<sup>429</sup> “It” could refer to either the wall or the city.

<sup>430</sup> NEB: “The people will say, ‘the building is gone and the men who daubed it are gone.’”

<sup>431</sup> Literally: “heart.”

<sup>432</sup> The Hebrew words translated as “amulets” and “veils” are hapax legomena and thus the meaning is not certain though the concept is clear. LXX: “*χειροσ*.” “Woe to the (*women*) that sew pillows under every elbow, and make kerchiefs on the head of every stature.” The Hebrew word used here and translated as “amulets” is the same word that is used for ‘pillows’ or ‘cushions’ in modern Hebrew.

<sup>433</sup> Literally: “all joints of the hands.”

<sup>434</sup> TAN: “bonnets.” The significance of these amulets and veils has been lost in history. Were they worn by the sorceress or by the client?

<sup>435</sup> Literally: “persons of every stature.”

<sup>436</sup> The Hebrew is obtuse. NEB: “the heads of people of every age; are you to hunt the lives of my people; and keep your own lives safe?”

name among my people for a hand full of barley and a few pieces of bread, <sup>437</sup> causing the death of persons who should survive and keeping persons alive who should not live, doing so by your lies to my people who listen to your lies.

<sup>20</sup> “Assuredly this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Be attentive! Realize that I am against your magic amulets <sup>438</sup> with which you hunt the souls <sup>439</sup> and I will tear the amulets from your arms; and I will let the souls that you hunt go free like birds. <sup>440</sup> <sup>21</sup> I will tear your veils off and rescue my people from your hand, and they will no longer be prey in your hand. You will know that I am the Lord. <sup>22</sup> Because you have falsely discouraged the righteous, (even though I have not discouraged them,) you have encouraged <sup>441</sup> the wicked that they should not turn from their wicked lifestyle to save their lives. <sup>23</sup> Assuredly, you will no longer have misleading visions nor public divination: I will deliver my people out of your hand! Then you will know that I am the Lord.” <sup>442</sup>

#### <CHAPTER 14>

##### *H, Judgment on Idolaters and Jerusalem 14:1 – 23*

##### *1. Punishment for Idolaters 14:1- 21*

<sup>1</sup> Then certain of the elders of Israel <sup>443</sup> came to me and sat in my presence. <sup>2</sup> The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>3</sup> “Mortal, these people <sup>444</sup> are idolatrous (*or, have great love for their idols*) <sup>445</sup> causing their iniquity <sup>446</sup> to be a stumbling block to them. Should I, myself, even be consulted by them? <sup>4</sup> Therefore speak to them and tell them: This is what the Sovereign Lord says. Any person who is of the house of Israel. and who turns his loyalty to idols (*or, fetishes*), and thereby this iniquity presents a stumbling block (*or, thereby a stumbling block of iniquity*).. Yet [*he has the courage*] to come to speak with a prophet! I the Lord will reply because of the multiplicity of idols, <sup>447</sup> <sup>5</sup> in order that I may catch hold of the people of the house of Israel in their own devices because they are estranged from (*or, have deserted*) me through all their idols.

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<sup>437</sup> This would be payment in kind which the prophetesses received.

<sup>438</sup> JB: “frills around wrists.”

<sup>439</sup> So: “LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: “souls for birds.” TAN: “hunt down lives like birds.”

<sup>440</sup> So: the versions. Hebrew: “the birds.” Verse 20 in the LXX reads: “Therefore thus says the Lord God, Behold I am against your pillows whereby you confound souls and I will tear them away from your arms and will set at liberty their souls which you pervert to scatter them.”

<sup>441</sup> Literally: “strengthen the hands of.”

<sup>442</sup> TOTC describes the false prophets / prophetesses as “moral bloodsuckers at a time when people needed, as never before, to lean upon the one holy God who treats them as individuals with the strictest fairness and impartiality.”

<sup>443</sup> These were surely representatives of the house of Israel, not solely elders of the former Northern Kingdom.

<sup>444</sup> In Hebrew it comes across as a contemptible comment. Nothing had caused them to change their attitude and actions concerning their love for idols.

<sup>445</sup> Ezekiel often calls them “detestable idols.” These are what Ezekiel calls the “stumbling block” to dealings with idolaters. JB: “enshrined their own idols in their heart.” TAN: “These men have turned their thoughts upon the fetishes and set their mind upon the sin through which they stumbled.” LXX: “have conceived their devices in their hearts, and have set before their faces the punishment.”

<sup>446</sup> The expression “their iniquity” is used six times by Ezekiel 7:13; 14:3,4, 7; 18:30; 44:12.

<sup>447</sup> Hebrew uncertain. LXX: “I the Lord will answer him [*according to the things*] in which his mind is entangled.”

6 “Therefore say to the house of Israel: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Repent <sup>448</sup> and turn away <sup>449</sup> from your idols. Turn back!<sup>450</sup> Leave your disgusting idols (*or, detestable practices*). 7 Any who are of the house of Israel, or who are resident aliens <sup>451</sup> in Israel, who separate themselves from me, centering their attention on idols, and thereby placing a stumbling block of iniquity, and even then comes to a prophet to inquire for himself of me, the Lord --- that person I will answer personally. 8 I will deal directly with that person and make that individual an example and a byword <sup>452</sup> and I will remove him from the midst of my people; and you will know that I am the Lord.

9 ”If the prophet has been enticed (*or, beguiled*) and speaks a prophetic word, I, the Lord, have enticed (*or, beguiled*) that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. <sup>453</sup> 10 Both the prophet and the inquirer will be punished for both are equally guilty. 11 May the house of Israel never stray (*or, apostatize*) from me nor defile themselves, thus adding to all their transgressions, and become my people I will be their God, says the Sovereign Lord.”

## 2. *The Righteous Save Only Themselves 14:12 – 23* <sup>454</sup>

12 The word of the Lord came to me: 13 “Mortal, when the country (*or, nation*) sins against me by acting faithlessly, and if I would stretch out my hand against it, I would destroy the food supply <sup>455</sup> and send famine on the land, causing starvation for people and animals. 14 Even if three men: Noah, Daniel, <sup>456</sup> and Job were in the land they would be able to have their own lives spared <sup>457</sup> because of righteousness (*or, integrity*) says the Sovereign Lord. <sup>458</sup> 15 If I were to unleash wild animals to roam through the land to ravage it, <sup>459</sup> and the land would become desolate <sup>460</sup> so that no one would be able to pass through because of the wild animals, 16 even if these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, they would be unable to save their children. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate. 17 Or: if I were to bring a sword against that land and say, Let a sword go through the land; and I wiped out people and animals; 18 though these three men were in the land, as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, they would be unable to save their own children. 19 Or: if I were to send an epidemic into the land and pour out my wrath on it with disease, <sup>461</sup> bringing death to people and animals; 20 even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, says the Sovereign Lord,

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<sup>448</sup> Hebrew literally: “return.” LXX: “be converted.”

<sup>449</sup> Hebrew literally: “turn back.”

<sup>450</sup> The Hebrew word used here is “to reject” which includes the thought of grief along with change.

<sup>451</sup> A resident alien had limited rights and obligations. LXX: “proselyte.”

<sup>452</sup> Literally: “proverb.”

<sup>453</sup> See ICC for understanding of this verse. If a prophet responds to a question by an inquirer of this sort it is a clear indication that this is a false prophet. He is discovered because he has lost his spiritual perception.

<sup>454</sup> Verses 12 – 22 are thought to be Hebrew poetry.

<sup>455</sup> Literally: “break the staff.”

<sup>456</sup> Most manuscripts say “Dan el” here and in verse 20. Is this Daniel (of the book of Daniel) or is this “Dan el” in ancient Canaanite writings found in 1930 at Ras Shamra, written in ancient Ugarit, dating ca. 1400 BCE.

<sup>457</sup> LXX: “σωθησονται.”

<sup>458</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 144d; 144 – 155. Documents of Old Testament Times: pp. 124 - 128.

<sup>459</sup> TAN: “depopulate it.”

<sup>460</sup> Literally: “bereft of children.”

<sup>461</sup> Literally: “blood.” NAB: “pouring out upon it my bloodthirsty fury.”

they would be unable to save their own children. Their own lives would be spared solely by their righteousness.<sup>462</sup>

<sup>21</sup>”This is what the Sovereign Lord says: How much worse it will be when I send on Jerusalem my four deadly<sup>463</sup> acts of judgment:<sup>464</sup> sword, famine, wild animals, and epidemic (*or, pestilence*) to destroy people and animals!<sup>465</sup> <sup>22</sup> Yet: if there should be survivors<sup>466</sup> to save the children<sup>467</sup> when they come to you, and you see their ways and their actions,<sup>468</sup> you will be consoled<sup>469</sup> regarding the evil (*or, disaster*) I have brought on Jerusalem, (for all that I have brought upon it). <sup>23</sup> They will console<sup>470</sup> their actions and you will know that there was a good reason for every one of my actions, which have not been done without a cause. I have done it, says the Sovereign Lord.”

<CHAPTER 15>

*J. The Visit 15:1 – 8*

<sup>1</sup> The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup> “Mortal:<sup>471</sup> how much is the wood of a grapevine worth? Is it better than other wood? How much is the branch of a grapevine worth? Is it worth more than the wood found in the forest? <sup>3</sup> Is the wood such that it can be used to make anything? Can anyone make a peg<sup>472</sup> on which something can be hung? <sup>4</sup> Suppose it was thrown into the fire as fuel. When the fire has consumed both ends and has charred the middle, is it useful<sup>473</sup> for anything? <sup>5</sup> Look! When it was whole, it was not useful for anything. When it was burned it was even more useless.<sup>474</sup>

<sup>6</sup> “Assuredly<sup>475</sup> this is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Just as I have designated that the wood of the grapevine, from among all the trees of the forest, is suitable for fuel, in a similar way I will deal with the inhabitants of Jerusalem.<sup>476</sup> <sup>7</sup> I will set my face against them (*or, I will punish them*). Though some had escaped the fire, now the fire will consume them. When I set my face against them, they will know that I am the Lord. <sup>8</sup> Because they have acted treacherously (*or, acted faithlessly*) I will make the land desolate (*or, a wasteland*). The Sovereign Lord has spoken!”<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 149d.

<sup>463</sup> Literally: “evil.”

<sup>464</sup> LXX: “four sore judgments (*or, vengeance*).

<sup>465</sup> Cf.: ANET p.95.

<sup>466</sup> Literally: “escaped ones.”

<sup>467</sup> LXX: “οἱ ἐξαγουσιν.”

<sup>468</sup> There are three ways of understanding these ways and their deeds: 1. Righteous acts. 2. Fate and sufferings of the survivors. 3. Unrighteous doings for which due punishment is to be meted out.

<sup>469</sup> LXX: “mourn over” or “repent over.”

<sup>470</sup> This word in Hebrew means “take a deep breath.” The word is rarely used, but it signifies: “to sooth” or “to calm down.”

<sup>471</sup> LXX: “καὶ συ.” “and you.” Some scholars feel verses 2 – 8 are poetry though the usual signs of Hebrew poetry are not evident. Verses 2 – 5 present an allegory. Verses 6 – 8 interpret the allegory.

<sup>472</sup> The Hebrew word is also used for a “tent peg.” Here it is used for a wooden peg that is fixed into a wall for hanging vessels or clothing.

<sup>473</sup> The Hebrew literally is “work.” This is also the case twice in verse 5. LXX: “It is only given to the fire to be consumed. The fire consumes that which is pruned annually and its utility is gone.”

<sup>474</sup> CEV: “The wood is useless before it is burned and afterwards it is completely useless.”

<sup>475</sup> LXX: “εἶπον.”

<sup>476</sup> No part of Israel will be unaffected by the searing experiences the country and its people have and will undergo.

<sup>477</sup> Jerusalem is not spared of being destroyed in 587 BCE.



<CHAPTER 16>

K. The Allegory of the Unfaithful Wife 16:1 – 62 <sup>478</sup>

1. The Unwanted Foundling 16:1 – 7

<sup>1</sup> The word of the Lord came to me again: <sup>2</sup> “Mortal: Make known the loathsomeness <sup>479</sup> of Jerusalem <sup>480</sup> <sup>3</sup> and say: This is what the Sovereign Lord says to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth were from the land of the Canaanites: <sup>481</sup> your father was an Amorite, and your mother was a Hittite. <sup>4</sup> As for your birth, on the day you were born your umbilical cord was not cut; <sup>482</sup> you were not washed with water to cleanse <sup>483</sup> you; you were not rubbed with sale; you were not swaddled. <sup>484</sup> <sup>5</sup> No one pitied you, and did any of those things to you but you were rejected (*or, expelled*), lying in an open field <sup>485</sup> for you were abhorred <sup>486</sup> on the day you were born.

<sup>6</sup> “When I passed by you, and saw you squirming (*or, wallowing*) in your own blood, I said to you [in your blood] <sup>487</sup> Live, <sup>488</sup> <sup>7</sup> and grow up <sup>489</sup> like a plant <sup>490</sup> of the field, and you grew up and became tall, and you attained womanhood, <sup>491</sup> your breasts were shapely and your [*pubic*] hair had grown, yet you were naked and bare.”

2. Marriage and Adornment 16:7 – 14

<sup>8</sup> “When I passed you again <sup>492</sup> I looked upon you. You were of marriageable age. <sup>493</sup> I spread my skirt over you, <sup>494</sup> and covered your nakedness. Yes, I claimed you in

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<sup>478</sup> There is an indelicate realism in Ezekiel’s criticism of Jerusalem in times of spiritual unfaithfulness. He speaks of ugly sins and makes his allegory fit the facts.

<sup>479</sup> LXX: “iniquities.” JB: “filthy crimes.”

<sup>480</sup> Jerusalem’s beginnings were that of a Canaanite city.

<sup>481</sup> Canaanite was a term used as a byword for moral decadence. Canaanites and Hittites were considered by the Israelites to be people who were immoral and idolatrous. In later times their religious forms were absorbed by the Hebrew people. Amorites means “western.” See: Deuteronomy 26:5. They were nomadic western Semites who invaded the fertile crescent ca. 2000 years BCE, and later invaded Syria and Babylon.

<sup>482</sup> LXX: “ἐδησαν τοὺς μαστοὺς σου.”

<sup>483</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word: “ $\gamma\chi\mu\lambda$ ” is uncertain. KJV: “supple.” TAN: “to smooth you.” An Akkadian word has a similar root word meaning “to anoint.”

<sup>484</sup> The procedure has been continued over the centuries. The midwife cuts the umbilical cord, then rubs the child with salt water and oil and swaddles it in cloth for seven days. See: ICC for a description by and M. D. of present day customs in some parts of the Middle East. The purpose of the salt was to assist in the cleansing process and / or to toughen the baby’s skin.

<sup>485</sup> Literally: “a sacrifice.”

<sup>486</sup> LXX: “because of the deformity of your person in the loathing of your soul.”

<sup>487</sup> This phrase is omitted by 5 Hebrew manuscripts and by the LXX and Old Latin versions.

<sup>488</sup> LXX: “I passed by you and saw you polluted in your blood; and I said, Let there be life out of your blood.”

<sup>489</sup> So: LXX & Syriac. Literally: “I made you a myriad.” LXX: “ $\pi\lambda\eta\theta\omicron\upsilon\nu\omicron\upsilon$ .” Live and grow up like a plant of the field I have made you.”

<sup>490</sup> NEB: “evergreen plant, like something growing in the field.”

<sup>491</sup> So: some versions. Hebrew uncertain. Literally: “ornament.” Possibly: “you came into puberty.” A slight emendation would read: “you came to the time of menstruation.” Some translate the word as “long hair.”

<sup>492</sup> The significance of “again” is not agreed upon by commentaries. Thus answers range from the time of the patriarchs to the time of Solomon. One possibility is when Joseph was in Egypt through the time of the wilderness wanderings.

<sup>493</sup> Literally: “your time was.”

marriage and entered into a covenant with you, <sup>495</sup> declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine. <sup>9</sup> Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood <sup>496</sup> and anointed you with [*olive*] oil. <sup>10</sup> I also clothed you with embroidered (*or, brocade*) garments and furnished <sup>497</sup> dolphin leather sandals. I swathed you in fine linen, <sup>498</sup> and dressed you in costly clothing. <sup>499</sup> <sup>11</sup> I decked you out with ornaments, and put bracelets on your arms, and a chain around your neck. <sup>12</sup> I put a ring <sup>500</sup> on your nose and earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. <sup>501</sup> <sup>13</sup> Then you were adorned with gold and silver; and your apparel was of fine linen and rich fabric, <sup>502</sup> and embroidered cloth. Your food was made of choice flour, <sup>503</sup> honey and oil. You grew more and more beautiful and became fit for royalty. <sup>504</sup> <sup>14</sup> Your beauty was renowned among the nations, for it was perfect because of the splendor I bestowed on you, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

### 3. *The Brides Unfaithfulness 16:15 – 39*

<sup>15</sup> “You became infatuated with your beauty and fame and began lavishing your favoritism <sup>505</sup> as a prostitute with every passerby. <sup>506</sup> <sup>16</sup> You even took some of your garments and made yourself lavishly decorated shrines <sup>507</sup> and used them for prostitution; the like of which has never been seen. <sup>508</sup> <sup>17</sup> You also took your beautiful jewels, <sup>509</sup> made of my gold and of my silver which I had given you and made for yourself images of men <sup>510</sup> with which you fornicate. <sup>18</sup> You took your embroidered garments using them to cover [*the places where idols were worshiped*]. You used my oil and my incense before these idols. <sup>19</sup> The bread which I had given you, made with choice flour, oil and honey

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<sup>494</sup> The act was symbolic of the intent of marriage. Also it was a symbol of protection and identification with an individual. TAN in a footnote says: “symbolic espousal.” To claim marriage. Cf. Deuteronomy 23:1; Ruth 3:3.

<sup>495</sup> This is an expression for the marriage contract. Cf.: Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14.

<sup>496</sup> Is this a reference to menstrual blood? If so this was not the usual duty of a husband.

<sup>497</sup> LXX: “clothed.” 1 LXX manuscript: “shod.” TAN: “gave you sandals of dolphin leather.” Dolphin leather was considered to be the best leather. The Hebrew word for the kind of skin: “Xxt” is the same word used to cover the tabernacle in the wilderness. MFT: “Egyptian leather.”

<sup>498</sup> Possibly this could be a fine linen turban.

<sup>499</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain. NEB: “lawn.” Many translators use the word “silk.”

<sup>500</sup> Literally: “an earring.”

<sup>501</sup> This jewelry would describe bridal jewelry.

<sup>502</sup> The Hebrew adds: “let it be his.” NAB: “linen, lawn, and brocade.”

<sup>503</sup> LXX: “semolina flour.”

<sup>504</sup> Verse 13 is reminiscent of God’s bounty.

<sup>505</sup> JB: “used your fame to make yourself a prostitute.”

<sup>506</sup> So: 1 Hebrew manuscript, LXX & Syriac. The latter add: “such a thing should not happen.” The fornication described here (prostitution) often refers to the sexual rites of Canaanite cults and the association of the Hebrew people with such events. NEB: “committed fornication, offering yourself freely.” The NEB uses the words “fornication” and “intercourse” in this chapter rather than “prostitution.” The warning in Deuteronomy 6:10 – 12 had been forgotten.

<sup>507</sup> The Hebrew is unclear. Ezekiel sees these gaily decorated shrines (or, colorful tents) as places for feasting, prostitution, idolatry and child-sacrifice. See: II Kings 23:7.

<sup>508</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain. Literally: “things which had not happened will be.” Vulgate: “sicut non est factum neque futurum est.” LXX: “και ου μη εις ελθην, ουδε μη γενηται, ου ουκ εγενετο ουδε εαται.” TAN: “not in the future not in time to come.”

<sup>509</sup> Literally: “articles of beauty.” LXX: “the ornaments for boasting.”

<sup>510</sup> These were possibly phallic symbols. TAN: “phallic images.”

you set before these idols for a pleasing odor: <sup>511</sup> and this is how it was, declares the Sovereign Lord. <sup>20</sup> You even took your sons and daughters who were also my children and you sacrificed them as if they could be devoured like food and that your prostitution was inconsequential. <sup>512</sup> <sup>21</sup> Wasn't the idolatry enough? You slaughtered my children and gave them as an offering by fire to idols. <sup>513</sup> <sup>22</sup> In all <sup>514</sup> your abominations and your prostitution <sup>515</sup> you never remembered the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, squirming in your own blood.

<sup>23</sup> "After all that evil (you are doomed) <sup>516</sup> says the Sovereign Lord. <sup>24</sup> You built a place of worship for yourself, <sup>517</sup> and you made for yourself raised altars (*or, mounds*) <sup>518</sup> in every square. <sup>25</sup> At all the major street crossings you built a lofty place <sup>519</sup> and sullied your beauty, <sup>520</sup> offering yourself <sup>521</sup> to any passerby, and being a prostitute numerous times. <sup>26</sup> You also gave yourself to your lustful <sup>522</sup> neighbors, the Egyptians, thereby multiplying your infidelity and thereby provoking me to anger. <sup>523</sup>

<sup>27</sup> ["Now then: I stretched out my hand to punish you, <sup>524</sup> and I have taken away your allotted portion, <sup>525</sup> and you have been given over to the greed of your enemies, the Philistine women, who were ashamed of your disgusting morals (*or, lewd behavior*).] <sup>526</sup> <sup>28</sup> Not being satisfied, you turned to the Assyrians because you were insatiable; yes, you acted as a prostitute with them; and yet you were unsatisfied. <sup>29</sup> You added to your lewd behavior in your dealings with the Chaldeans and even then you were not satisfied.

<sup>30</sup> "Your passion engulfs you, <sup>527</sup> declares the Sovereign Lord, since you act the way you do. These are the actions of a self-willed (*or, shameless*) prostitute, <sup>528</sup> <sup>31</sup> building your lofty places at the head of every crossroad, and placing your raised altars in

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<sup>511</sup> I.e.: as a sacrifice.

<sup>512</sup> LXX: A possible alternate translation would be: "You committed your harlotries a small amount."

<sup>513</sup> NAB: "You slaughtered and immolated my children to them, making them pass through fire."

<sup>514</sup> LXX: "τουτο παρα."

<sup>515</sup> LXX: "εζησας."

<sup>516</sup> Literally: "Woe, Woe to you." NAB: "Oh! The pity of it." The words in parenthesis are thought by some scholars to be a later addition.

<sup>517</sup> The meaning of this phrase in Hebrew is uncertain. "חֲסֵר" possibly means a platform. Traditionally it has been translated as "a vaulted chamber." This might be a reference to roof top shrines used by fertility cults in connection with Canaanite religion. "A place of worship" seems to be a suitable translation for a difficult passage.

<sup>518</sup> The raised altar or mound is thought to be borrowed from Canaanite practice as a place where prostitution could take place (as a form of worship). CB: "resorts" is used here and through the entire chapter.

<sup>519</sup> MFT: "a resort."

<sup>520</sup> NAB: "you used your beauty obscenely."

<sup>521</sup> Literally: "spreading your legs wide."

<sup>522</sup> Literally: "great of flesh." MFT: "sensual."

<sup>523</sup> The evil speaks not only of religious infidelity – but moves on to political intrigue. The Taylor Prism tells of Sennacherib (in 701 BCE) doing exactly what Ezekiel warns about. See also: Documents from Old Testament Times p. 67 & appendix 1 of my translation of Chronicles.

<sup>524</sup> Literally: "against you."

<sup>525</sup> LXX: "I will abolish your statute." TAN: "to withhold your maintenance."

<sup>526</sup> Some scholars feel this is an interpolation by a later editor.

<sup>527</sup> LXX: "τι διαθω την θυγατερα σου." Codex L: "καθαριω την καρδιαν σου." With different vowel points the Hebrew would read: "How furious I was with you." The opening words of this verse are not clear in Hebrew. NAB: "How wild your lust."

<sup>528</sup> An apt translation might be: "a domineering harlot."

market squares. Yet you were not like a common prostitute because you disdained payment. <sup>32</sup> [You adulterous wife: you commit <sup>529</sup> adultery with strangers instead of being faithful to her husband!] <sup>530</sup> <sup>33</sup> Men <sup>531</sup> always give gifts to prostitutes but you give your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from all directions to have pleasure with you. <sup>37</sup> Thus you are a special sort of prostitute from others in your harlotry. You solicit instead of being solicited and make payment to be hired instead of being paid. Therefore you are truly different.” <sup>532</sup>

#### 4. Israel's Punishment 16:35 – 43

<sup>35</sup> “Wherefore, O prostitute, hear the word of the Lord: <sup>36</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Because your shame <sup>533</sup> was laid bare and your nakedness was uncovered, offering your promiscuity to all who loved your harlotry because of all your idols, and had your children offered to idols, <sup>37</sup> therefore I will assemble all your lovers to whom you granted favors; <sup>534</sup> the ones you loved and all those you loathed, I will amass them against you on all sides <sup>535</sup> and strip you of your clothing, and allowing them to see your nakedness. <sup>536</sup> <sup>38</sup> I will punish you (*or, put you on trial for adultery*) as one who commits adultery; therefore <sup>537</sup> my bloody fury and indignation <sup>538</sup> will come on you. <sup>39</sup> I will deliver you into the hand <sup>539</sup> of your lovers, and they will tear down (*or, level*) your lavishly decorated shrines and demolish your raised altars (*or, mounds*) and will strip you of your clothing and take your dazzling jewels and leave you naked and bare. <sup>40</sup> They will assemble <sup>540</sup> a mob against you, and will stone you <sup>541</sup> and slash you to pieces with their swords. <sup>41</sup> They will burn your houses (*or, apartments*) and carry out punishment on you in the sight of many women; I will put a stop to your being a prostitute, and you will be halted from giving additional gifts to lovers. <sup>542</sup> <sup>42</sup> When I appear my fury toward you and my jealousy will depart from you, for I will be calm (*or, tranquil*) and will no longer be angry. <sup>43</sup> Because you did not remember the days of your youth but have enraged <sup>543</sup> me with all these things; I will pay you back for your actions, says the Sovereign Lord.

<sup>529</sup> LXX: “μικθωματα.”

<sup>530</sup> Some scholars feel this verse is a later insertion.

<sup>531</sup> Literally: “they.”

<sup>532</sup> LXX: “perverseness took place in you” or “was it contrary with you?” Ellison: Ezekiel the Man and His Message: p. 63. “The adulteress may by some be excused by the strength of passion and blind love, but for a harlot there is no excuse except that of stark necessity. But for Israel there is not even this excuse. She has not been paid by her lovers, but she has paid those that have taken their pleasure of her.”

<sup>533</sup> The Hebrew word “טַחֲכָה” is uncertain. In other writings the word means “copper” or “bronze.” TAN: “brazen effrontery.” NIV: “because you have poured out your wealth (or, lust) and exposted.”

<sup>534</sup> LXX: “τας κακιας σου.”

<sup>535</sup> NEB: “I will gather all those lovers to whom you made advances.” A footnote adds: “or, whom you claimed.”

<sup>536</sup> This is reminiscent of the ravages by the Babylonian armies under Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>537</sup> LXX: “καιθησω σε εν αιματι θυμου και ζηλου.”

<sup>538</sup> LXX: “I will be avenged concerning you with vengeance due to you as an adulteress and I will bring blood, fury and judgment on you.”

<sup>539</sup> Literally: “their hands and they.”

<sup>540</sup> Literally: “bring up an assembly.”

<sup>541</sup> This was the punishment for adultery as prescribed by the Law of Moses.

<sup>542</sup> LXX: “I will turn you back from harlotry and no longer give you any rewards.”

<sup>543</sup> Literally: “are angry against.”

“You have committed sexual immorality (*or, lewdness*) in addition to all your disgusting actions.”

#### 5. Sodom and Samaria 16:44 – 52 <sup>544</sup>

<sup>44</sup> ”Take note! Everyone who uses proverbs will use this proverb about you: ‘Like mother, like daughter.’ <sup>545</sup> <sup>45</sup> You truly are your mother’s daughter. She rejected her husband and her children, and you are like your sisters, who rejected their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. <sup>546</sup> <sup>46</sup> Your older sister, Samaria, <sup>547</sup> lives with her daughters <sup>548</sup> to the north <sup>549</sup> of you, and your younger sister, who lives to the south <sup>550</sup> of you, Sodom, <sup>551</sup> with her daughters. <sup>47</sup> Weren’t you content to follow in their footsteps and join in doing their disgusting actions? It did not take long for you to have your actions become even worse! <sup>552</sup> <sup>48</sup> The Sovereign Lord declares: Surely your sister <sup>553</sup> Sodom and her daughters were not as evil as you and your daughters have been! <sup>49</sup> Take note! This was the crime of your sister, Sodom; she and her daughters were proud because they had an ample supply of food, lived in peace and quiet but they were unconcerned about the poor and needy. <sup>554</sup> <sup>50</sup> In their haughtiness they did detestable impieties before me. Therefore I destroyed them when I saw it. <sup>555</sup> <sup>51</sup> Samaria has not committed half your sins. You have committed more abominations than they. The disgusting acts you have done make the actions of your sisters seem innocent by comparison. <sup>556</sup> <sup>52</sup> Now you must endure your disgrace for you have been a favorable advocate <sup>557</sup> for your sister because the evils in which you have been involved are more abominable than theirs. They are more correct than you, so be ashamed! Additionally you bear the disgrace because you have made your sister appear to be righteous.”

#### 6. Restoration 16:53 – 59

<sup>53</sup> ”I will restore your prosperity along with the fortunes of Sodom, and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters (and I will restore your fortunes <sup>558</sup> in the midst of them), <sup>559</sup> <sup>54</sup> that you will be ashamed of yourself and be disgraced (*or, abashed*) by all that you have done which will be a consolation to them. <sup>55</sup> As for your sister Sodom and her daughters, she will return and again become prosperous and Samaria and her daughters will return to their former state and (you and your daughters

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<sup>544</sup> This seems to be a completely new allegory.

<sup>545</sup> Many scholars feel that the hand of an editor is evident in verses 44 – 63.

<sup>546</sup> Cf.: verse 3.

<sup>547</sup> This is possibly a reference to the Northern Kingdom.

<sup>548</sup> The word “daughters” in this section of chapter 16 no doubt signifies “villages.”

<sup>549</sup> Literally: “to the left.”

<sup>550</sup> Literally: “to the right.”

<sup>551</sup> Cf.: The story of Abraham and Lot. Genesis 19.

<sup>552</sup> The Hebrew is unclear.

<sup>553</sup> The LXX Codex A has: “your sisters.”

<sup>554</sup> Ezekiel describes the crime of Sodom as pride, gluttony, arrogance, and complacency. The sin of Sodom is described very differently from the interpretation of Genesis 19.

<sup>555</sup> A number of Hebrew MSS and versions have: “as you have seen.”

<sup>556</sup> MFT: “Your [sins] serve to palliate your sister’s crimes.”

<sup>557</sup> Literally: “mediated for.”

<sup>558</sup> Literally: “the captivity of our captivity.”

<sup>559</sup> Literally: “in their midst.”

will return to your former state). <sup>56</sup> Did you not make disparaging remarks about your sister Sodom during the time when you were filled with pride? <sup>560</sup> <sup>57</sup> That was prior to the exposing of your wickedness. Now <sup>561</sup> you have become <sup>562</sup> like her; <sup>563</sup> an object of mockery for the daughters of Edom, <sup>564</sup> for her neighbors <sup>565</sup> and for the daughters of the Philistines: those who are around you to despise you. <sup>58</sup> You will suffer for the obscenities; the disgusting things you have done, says the Lord.”

### 7. *The Everlasting Covenant 16:59 – 63*<sup>566</sup>

<sup>59</sup> “Yes, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will deal with you as you have dealt, for you have despised your vows by violating the covenant; <sup>60</sup> yet I will remember my covenant which you made in the days of your youth, and I will establish <sup>567</sup> an everlasting covenant with you. <sup>61</sup> Then you will remember your ways, and feel ashamed when I <sup>568</sup> take your sisters and give them to you as your daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. <sup>569</sup> <sup>62</sup> I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the Lord. <sup>63</sup> Then you will remember and will be confounded, and you will never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I forgive you of all that you have done. This is the word of the Sovereign Lord.” <sup>570</sup>

## <CHAPTER 17>

### *L. Two*

### *L. Two Eagles and the Cedar 17:1 – 24*<sup>571</sup>

#### *1. Allegory of the Two Eagles 16:1 – 10*

<sup>1</sup> “The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup> “Mortal, prepare a figurative saying (*or, an allegory*) and tell this allegory in the house of Israel; <sup>3</sup> say: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: A large eagle (*or, vulture*) <sup>572</sup> with powerful wings and full, colorful <sup>573</sup> plumage came to Lebanon and took the top of a cedar. <sup>574</sup> <sup>4</sup> He broke off the topmost young twigs and carried it to a land of commerce and set it in a city of shopkeepers. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>560</sup> CB: “as the name of your sister Sodom was never heard on your lips in your heyday of pride.”

<sup>561</sup> Literally: “at the time of.”

<sup>562</sup> This is an emendation of the Hebrew which an attempt to establish an understandable text.

<sup>563</sup> So: Versions. Hebrew uncertain.

<sup>564</sup> Another reading is “Aram.” The MT has “Syria.”

<sup>565</sup> LXX: “κυκλω σου.”

<sup>566</sup> Some scholars feel this passage would fit the later portion of Ezekiel better than here. After the threat of doom there is hope, as found in this section of chapter 16.

<sup>567</sup> Literally: “raise up.”

<sup>568</sup> So: Syriac. Hebrew: “you.” LXX: “utterly disdain.” “εν τω αναλαβειν με.”

<sup>569</sup> LXX: “Then you will remember your way and will be utterly dishonored when you receive your older sister with your younger ones; and I will give them to you for building up but not by your covenant.”

<sup>570</sup> TOTC: “Not even a justified sinner should forget that he has a past of which his is right to be ashamed.”

<sup>571</sup> Scholars feel that at least a portion of chapter 17 is poetry but there is no consensus about which verses are poetry. Some scholars feel verses 1 – 10 are poetry. Other feel verses 22 – 27 are poetry. Some accept both as poetry. The theme of the chapter is the treachery of Zedekiah who replaced Jehoiachin through appointment by Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>572</sup> The Hebrew word “רענ” is used for a raptor – vulture or eagle. Perhaps the reference is that of a golden eagle since a vulture’s plumage is dark.

<sup>573</sup> JB: “speckled feathers.” LXX: “large wings spreading out very far with many talons, which has the intention of entering Lebanon.”

<sup>574</sup> Scholars feel this is a reference to Jehoiachin.

Then he took a native seedling of the land <sup>575</sup> and planted it in fertile soil, <sup>576</sup> and placed it beside abundant water. <sup>577</sup> He set it as one would set a willow twig, <sup>578</sup> and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine, <sup>579</sup> and its trailing boughs turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine and sprouted new branches and foliage.

<sup>7</sup> “But there was another <sup>580</sup> large eagle <sup>581</sup> with powerful wings and full plumage <sup>582</sup> and now the vine twisted its roots in his direction so that he might water it more than had been done where it was planted. <sup>8</sup> He then transplanted it <sup>583</sup> to good soil and abundant water so that it might bring forth branches and fruit and become a magnificent vine.

<sup>9</sup> “Say: <sup>584</sup> this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Will it thrive? Will its roots break and its fruit fall off its branches [*prior to ripening*]? Will its leaves wither? Will it wither because of stress by people on its roots? <sup>585</sup> <sup>10</sup> Be aware! Can it flourish when it is transplanted? Will it not wither completely when the east wind <sup>586</sup> strikes it? It will surely wither away on the soil in which it grew!”

## 2. Interpretation 17:11 – 21

<sup>11</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>12</sup> “Tell <sup>587</sup> the rebellious house: <sup>588</sup> Do you not know what these things mean? Tell them: Look! The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and carted away the king and the royal family, <sup>589</sup> and brought them <sup>590</sup> to them in Babylon. <sup>13</sup> He took one of the members of the royal family and made a covenant with him, imposing an oath on him. <sup>591</sup> (He had already taken away the important men from the land as hostages. <sup>14</sup> The oath was intended to make the kingdom be humble (*or, a modest one, with no aspirations*) <sup>592</sup> so as not to exalt anyone but to keep the covenant that it might endure.)

<sup>15</sup> That prince rebelled against him by sending envoys to Egypt, that they might give him horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Can a man survive who does such a

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<sup>575</sup> So: emended. Literally: “cedar.”

<sup>576</sup> Literally: “a field of seed.”

<sup>577</sup> The Hebrew words: “sbr sym” usually means primordial sea,” LXX adds: “in a conspicuous place.”

<sup>578</sup> Willow twigs thrust into the ground, under the right circumstances, will grow into a tree.

<sup>579</sup> LXX: “weak.” LXX Codex A: “flourishing.”

<sup>580</sup> The Hebrew word “dxa” means “one.”

<sup>581</sup> Some scholars feel the reference is to Hophra, Pharaoh of Egypt.

<sup>582</sup> LXX: “and many talons” instead of “full plumage.”

<sup>583</sup> So: the versions. Hebrew: “it was transplanted.”

<sup>584</sup> LXX: “δία τοτο.”

<sup>585</sup> LXX: “all her early shoots will be dried up so that neither a mighty army nor many people are needed to tear her up from the roots.”

<sup>586</sup> Scholars feel this is a reference to king Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>587</sup> LXX: “Υτε ανθρωπου.”

<sup>588</sup> TAN: “breed.”

<sup>589</sup> Literally: “the king and his prince.” Zedekiah, king of Judah was not really recognized as king, thus he is described here as “prince.” TAN: “its king and officers.”

<sup>590</sup> LXX: “shall take them with him to Babylon.”

<sup>591</sup> Literally: “causing him to enter into an oath.”

<sup>592</sup> NEB: “to put it into subjection.”

thing? Can he break <sup>593</sup> the covenant and go unpunished? <sup>594</sup> <sup>16</sup> The Sovereign Lord declares: Surely in the homeland where the king resides, the king who made the oath is despised, and the covenant that was made with him has been violated. He will die in Babylon. <sup>17</sup> Pharaoh <sup>595</sup> with his mighty and powerful army will not help in any way when the ramps are built and the siege works erected to destroy many lives. <sup>18</sup> Because he spurned <sup>596</sup> the oath and broke the covenant; because of his giving a pledge <sup>597</sup> yet did all these things he will not escape!

<sup>19</sup> "Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord declares: I declare that my oath which has been despised by breaking my covenant will remain as a record on his head (*or, He had submitted and yet he broke the covenant. He will not survive*). <sup>20</sup> I will spread my hunter's catching net on him and he will be taken into my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon and I will carry out justice with him because of his treason. He has been unfaithful to me. <sup>21</sup> All the crack troops <sup>598</sup> of his finest battalion will fall to the sword and the survivors will be scattered in every direction. <sup>599</sup> You will know that I, the Lord have spoken." <sup>600</sup>

### 3. Messianic Allegory of the Cedar 17:22 – 24

<sup>22</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord says: "I myself will take a slip from the crown of the cedar and I will set it out. <sup>601</sup> I will break off the topmost twig, a young twig, a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a lofty highland: <sup>23</sup> on the tall mountain of Israel. I will plant it that it might sprout branches and have abundant growth <sup>602</sup> and become a magnificent cedar, and all kinds of animals will live in the shade of its branches and birds of every sort will nest in the branches. All the trees of the field will know that the Lord has abased the lofty tree and exalted the low tree. He has dried up, the green tree, and made the dry one to flourish, I the Lord have declared it." <sup>603</sup>

## <CHAPTER 18>

### M. Individual Responsibility or Retribution 18:1 – 32

#### 1. All Lives are Mine 18:1 – 4

<sup>1</sup> The word of the Lord came to me again: <sup>2</sup> "Mortal: <sup>604</sup> what do you mean when you quote the proverb concerning the Sovereign of Israel: 'The fathers have eaten <sup>605</sup> sour

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<sup>593</sup> LXX: "και παραβαινων."

<sup>594</sup> LXX: "σινθησεται." Cf.: ANET pp. 486 - 490. Numbers: 270, 271, 286, 288.

<sup>595</sup> This is probably a reference to the Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt.

<sup>596</sup> TAN: "flaunted" here and in verse 19. JB: "ignored."

<sup>597</sup> Literally: "gave his hand."

<sup>598</sup> The MT has: "fugitives." "wxrb, "" TAN uses "fugitives." The translation above is an emendation, using the Hebrew word: "wyrxbm."

<sup>599</sup> Literally: "to every wind."

<sup>600</sup> Agreements entered into and obligations incurred by worshipers of God are as binding as if they were made with God in person. What applies for nations also is binding for social and personal relationships.

<sup>601</sup> The phrase "I will set it out" is omitted by the LXX and 1 Hebrew manuscript.

<sup>602</sup> Literally: "might sprout branches and have fruit" but since cedar trees do not have fruit the above translation is an attempt to provide an acceptable translation.

<sup>603</sup> LXX: "And all the trees of the field will know that I am the Lord that brings you the high tree, and exalt the low tree, and wither the green tree, and cause the dry tree to flourish." The powerful nation (the high tree) will wither and fail.

<sup>604</sup> LXX: "υιε ανθρωπου." Omitted in Hebrew.



(*or, unripe*) grapes and their children's teeth are set on edge.<sup>606</sup> 3 As I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, the proverb will no longer be used<sup>607</sup> by you in Israel. 4 Consider this: all lives<sup>608</sup> are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: only the person who sins will die."

### 2. *The Righteous Man will Live 18:5 – 9*<sup>609</sup>

5 "If a man is righteous<sup>610</sup> and does what is just (*or, lawful*) and right<sup>6</sup> and does not feast at mountain shrines,<sup>611</sup> nor raise up his eyes<sup>612</sup> to the idols (*or, fetishes*) of the people<sup>613</sup> of Israel, does not seduce another man's wife, have intercourse with a menstrous woman,<sup>614</sup> 7 does not wrong anyone but returns the security pledge to the debtor,<sup>615</sup> commits no robbery, gives his bread (*or, food*) to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked,<sup>616</sup> 8 does not lend at advanced interest or takes accrued interest,<sup>617</sup> abstains from wrongdoing, executes true justice between individuals, 9 lives according to my rules and is careful to observe my regulations --- he is righteous! He will surely live, says the Sovereign Lord."<sup>618</sup>

### 3. *The Wicked Son of the Righteous Will Die 18:10 – 13*<sup>619</sup>

10 "Now suppose this man has an evil son who is a ruffian (*or, brigand*),<sup>620</sup> a murderer,<sup>621</sup> even though his father himself does none of these actions.<sup>622</sup> 11 [*The son*]

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<sup>605</sup> LXX: "εφαγο." The Hebrew has a form that differs from the word form used in the same quotation in Jeremiah 31:29.

<sup>606</sup> Literally: "blunted." The proverb is saying that the sufferings of one generation are due to the misdeeds of their forebears. To Jeremiah and Ezekiel this is a pernicious doctrine. TEV: "The parents ate the sour grapes but the children got the sour taste." CEV: "Sour grapes eaten by parents have a sour taste in the mouths of their children." While this might be true of events in the national and international sense, Ezekiel reminds the people that they are individuals, and judgment is for the individual. He also says that this proverb does not pertain to the moral issue. He points out a new life through union with God.

<sup>607</sup> TAN: "be correct among you."

<sup>608</sup> Literally: "souls." The Hebrew word represents the entire person or the living force within the individual.

<sup>609</sup> Some scholars feel that verses 5 – 9 are poetry.

<sup>610</sup> The list of righteous dealings includes the religious and moral offenses. You will note that the three listings in this chapter of Ezekiel: 18:5 – 9; 23:6 – 12 & 33:15 provide more than one version.

<sup>611</sup> The Hebrew word: "rhh la" should perhaps be emended to read: "mdh l" "with the blood." As in 33:25 or the latter should be emended. NAT: "If he does not eat meat with blood in it and adore the idols of flesh. This is a euphemism used to denounce idolatry.

<sup>612</sup> This is presumably about prayer or some kind of subservience toward God. The Hebrew word: "sywlh" gives the thought of idols. LXX: "devices." The same holds true for the several times this expression is used in this chapter.

<sup>613</sup> Literally: "house of Israel." "People of Israel" will be used throughout this chapter.

<sup>614</sup> Cf.: Leviticus 15:19 – 20; 18:13; 20:18. LXX: "will not draw near to her that has been removed."

<sup>615</sup> See: Exodus 22:26; Deuteronomy 24:6; Amos 2:8.

<sup>616</sup> Cf.: ANET: p. 374a.

<sup>617</sup> Interest in Hebrew is "a portion bitten off" the loan in advance. Usury was not permitted in loans to the people of Israel. It was, however, permitted in loans to foreigners. See also verses 13 & 17.

<sup>618</sup> Scholars are not in agreement concerning the meaning of "live" and "die" in this chapter. Does "live" suggest a long and full life --- or "live" in eternity with God. "Death:" Does it mean premature death or spiritual death and its consequences.?

<sup>619</sup> The implication in verses 10 – 13 is that a good father does not pile up "merit" for his son. Verses 9 – 13 hardly make sense in Hebrew. Possibly this is due to dittography or a scribal gloss.

<sup>620</sup> LXX: "mischievous son." NASV: "a violent son."

feasts at mountain shrines, <sup>623</sup> seduces another man's wife, <sup>12</sup> wrongs (*or, cheats*) the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore <sup>624</sup> a pledge (*or, security*) <sup>625</sup> to the poor, adores the idols (*or, fetishes*), committing abominations, <sup>13</sup> lends but deducts the interest which is excessive. <sup>626</sup> Will he live? <sup>627</sup> He has practiced these abominable things! He will surely die; <sup>628</sup> He will be responsible (*or, to blame*) for his own death." <sup>629</sup>

#### 4. *The Righteous Son of the Wicked One Will Live 18:14 – 21*

##### a. *The Righteous Son 18:14 - 17*

<sup>14</sup> "Now suppose [*the evil man*] had a son who witnessed all the evil done by his father and renounced his father's behavior, and did not follow his father's example. <sup>15</sup> He does not feast at the mountain shrines or raise his eyes to the idols (*or, fetishes*) of the people of Israel, nor seduce another man's wife. <sup>630</sup> <sup>16</sup> He does not wrong anyone, keeps no pledge (*or, security*), <sup>631</sup> commits no robbery, but gives his food to the hungry and clothes the naked with a garment, <sup>632</sup> <sup>17</sup> refuses to do evil, <sup>633</sup> exacts no advanced interest or accrued interest, but rather observes my rules and obeys my commandments. He will not die for his father's iniquity! He will surely live."

##### b. *The Case of the Changed Life 18:18 – 22*

<sup>18</sup> "Be assured: his father dies because he practiced fraud, robbed others <sup>634</sup> and acted wickedly toward everyone. <sup>635</sup> Assuredly, he will die for the sins he has committed. <sup>636</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "Yet you wonder <sup>637</sup> 'Why shouldn't the son suffer for the guilt <sup>638</sup> of his father?' When the son has been law-abiding and honest and has been careful to keep all my commandments, he will surely live!

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<sup>621</sup> Literally: "blood and he does any one of these things."

<sup>622</sup> The Hebrew is unintelligible. A possible translation might be: "who does any of these things." Cf. footnote 620.

<sup>623</sup> LXX: "εν τη οδω του πατρος αυτου του δικαιου ουκ επορευθη." A possible emendation would read: "with the blood." Some scholars feel verses 11 – 13 are poetry.

<sup>624</sup> LXX: "απεδωκεν."

<sup>625</sup> The pledge might be the poor man's coat. It was to be returned to him at night so he would have a bed and blanket as he slept.

<sup>626</sup> LXX: "he has lent upon usury and taken usurious increase."

<sup>627</sup> LXX: "ουτος ζωη."

<sup>628</sup> The MT has "טמוץ" which is usually translated as "death." In Proverbs a similar statement seems to refer to premature death. Cf. also verses 17, 21, 24, 28, all of which use the same word.

<sup>629</sup> TAN: "He has forfeited his life."

<sup>630</sup> Some scholars feel verses 15 – 17a are poetry.

<sup>631</sup> See footnote 625.

<sup>632</sup> Literally: "he turned his head back from the poor." A possible emendation would be: "abstains from wrongdoing" as in v. 5.

<sup>633</sup> NRSV: "iniquity."

<sup>634</sup> Literally: "a brother." The Hebrew word "אח" can mean either "a brother" or can mean, "alas." The text appears to be somewhat corrupt.

<sup>635</sup> LXX: "του λαου μου." Vulgate: "populi soi."

<sup>636</sup> LXX: "But if his father grievously afflicts (or plunders), he has caused enmity (or, transgression) in the midst of my people and will die in his iniquity."

<sup>637</sup> Literally: "say."

<sup>638</sup> Literally: "in the guilt of." LXX: "την αδικιαν."

20 “The person who sins will die! The son (*or, the child of the wicked man*) will not share the guilt of the parent nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness will be solely that of the righteous person. The unrighteous (*or, evil*) persons will be solely responsible for their evil ways. Each will account for himself alone.”

#### 5. *The Wicked Man who became Righteous Will Live 18:21 – 24*

21 “However, if an evil person repents of all sins which have been committed and keeps my commandments and does what is law-abiding and honest, that person will surely live. He will not die.<sup>639</sup> 22 None of the evil which has been committed will be remembered and held against the person, for the righteousness which has been done by that person will provide that he will live. 23 Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Sovereign Lord, and would I not rather that he should repent from his evil ways?<sup>640</sup> 24 But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and does evil and does the same abominable things<sup>641</sup> that the wicked men do --- will he live?<sup>642</sup> None of the righteous deeds which had been done will be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness<sup>643</sup> and sinfulness of which that person is guilty and because of this he will die.”

#### 6. *The way of the Lord is Just 18:25 – 29*

25 “None-the-less you say: ‘What God does is unfair’. Listen, people of Israel: Is my way unjust (*or, unfair*)? Are not your ways unjust (*or unfair*)?<sup>644</sup> 26 When a righteous person stops doing good and turns to evil ways he will die for it,<sup>645</sup> because of the evil that has been committed<sup>646</sup> he will die. 27 Again, when an evil person stops sinning and becomes law-abiding he will save his life.<sup>647</sup> 28 Because he realized and turned away from all the sins which he had committed, he will surely live, he will not die. 29 Yet the people of Israel say: ‘The way of God is not just.’ Oh, people of Israel, are my ways not just? Your ways are not just?”

#### 7. *A New Heart and a New Spirit 18:30 – 32*

30 “Therefore I will judge you, people of Israel, each one according to their ways, says the Sovereign Lord. Turn! Turn away from all your evils (*or, offences*), lest your evil practices destroy you (*or, so that they will not be a stumbling block of iniquity to you*).<sup>31</sup> Give up the evil which you have committed against me, and get yourselves new hearts and minds (*or, spirit*); why will you die,<sup>648</sup> O people of Israel? 32 I am not pleased with your deaths, says the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!”<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> Earlier wickedness should not be counted against one who repents.

<sup>640</sup> LXX: “της πονηρας.”

<sup>641</sup> TAN: “practices every kind of filth.”

<sup>642</sup> The LXX, Syriac & Arabic omit the last phrase.

<sup>643</sup> JB: “He has broken faith and committed sin.”

<sup>644</sup> LXX: “Is not our way straight?” Codex A: “will not our way be not straight?”

<sup>645</sup> The last phrase is omitted in Syriac but included in the LXX. Literally: “because of them.”

<sup>646</sup> LXX adds: “εν αυτω.” The Hebrew text of this verse is uncertain.

<sup>647</sup> Individual judgment is never so final that it cannot be reversed by a change of heart and of conduct.

<sup>648</sup> LXX: “why should you die” or “do you die.”

<sup>649</sup> Ezekiel tells us that God’s grace is dependent on repentance. The LXX omits “Repent and live” but it is included in Codex A.

<CHAPTER 19>

*N. The Lioness and the Vine 19:1 – 14*

*A. Fate of Jehoahaz 19:1 – 4* <sup>650</sup>

- 1 “Take up a lamentation <sup>651</sup> for the princes of Israel, 2 and say:  
What a lioness your mother was among lions!  
She made her lair in the midst of young lions,  
rearing her cubs. <sup>652</sup>
- 3 She raised one of her cubs; <sup>653</sup>  
who became a young lion,  
and he learned to hunt prey;  
he became a man eater.
- 4 The nations united against him; <sup>654</sup>  
he was caught in their snare, <sup>655</sup>  
and they dragged him off with hooks  
to the land of Egypt.”

*2. Fate of Jehoiachin 19:5 – 9* <sup>656</sup>

- 5 “When she saw that she was frustrated; <sup>657</sup>  
that her hope was defeated,  
she took another cub,  
and made him a young lion. <sup>658</sup>
- 6 He stalked among the lions;  
he became a young lion,  
and he learned to hunt prey;  
he became a man eater.
- 7 He ravaged their strongholds, <sup>659</sup>  
and devastated their cities,  
and the land was aghast at the sound of his roaring.

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<sup>650</sup> Cf.: II Kings 23:30 - 34

<sup>651</sup> The LXX begins with: “υιε ανθρωπου.” The Hebrew word “הננח” is: “a lamentation, elegy or dirge.”

<sup>652</sup> The lioness in this allegory is surely not Hamutal the wife of Josiah, the mother of Jehoahaz but the nation who mothered their kings. The throne in Jerusalem was decorated with lions as royal symbolism. LXX: “Why has your mother become a whelp in the midst of lions? In the midst of lions she has multiplied her whelps.” An alternate translation of verse 2 might be: “Why did your mother, a lioness, lie down among the lions, among the young lions; near her cubs?”

<sup>653</sup> LXX: “και απεπηδησεν.” Poetic license is used in this dirge. Both kings reigned only three months each.

<sup>654</sup> Literally: “shouted at him (or, heard a report about him).”

<sup>655</sup> The word translated as “snare” literally is translated as “destruction.” Pharaoh Neco of Egypt deposed Jehoahaz who had ruled for three months in 609 BCE.

<sup>656</sup> Cf.: II Kings 24:8 – 16. It is to be noted that Jehoiakim ruled between Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin. Possibly because Jehoiakin died in Jerusalem Ezekiel did not select him as the second lion cub in his allegory.

<sup>657</sup> Literally: “was wasted.” The Hebrew word is rare and its meaning is unclear. LXX: “απωσται.” Vulgate: “infitmata est.”

<sup>658</sup> LXX: “And she saw that he was driven away from her, and her hope of him perished, and she took another of her whelps; she made him a lion.”

<sup>659</sup> LXX: “και ενεμετο τω θρασει αυτου.”

8 Then the surrounding nations arrayed themselves against him,  
surrounding him with snares.<sup>660</sup>  
They spread hunting nets over him,  
and he was caught in their trap.  
9 They put him in a cage, using hooks,<sup>661</sup>  
and brought him to the king of Babylon;  
confining him in a fortress,  
that his voice never again might be heard  
on the mountains of Israel.”

3. *The Fate of Zedekiah 19:10 – 14*<sup>662</sup>

10 “Your mother was like a vine in a vineyard  
transplanted by the water,  
fruitful and filled with luxuriant branches,  
because of an abundance of water.  
11 She became a mighty stem;  
she has become, like a ruler’s scepter;  
towering over all because of her height,  
with a mass of branches.<sup>663</sup>  
12 However, the vine was pulled up in fury,  
and hurled down to the ground;  
the east wind dried it up,  
and its fruit was stripped off.<sup>664</sup>  
The mighty rod withered;  
and the fire consumed it.<sup>665</sup>  
13 Now it is transplanted<sup>666</sup> in the desert,  
in a parched and arid land.  
14 Fire blazed from its stem,  
which has consumed<sup>667</sup> its branches and fruit,  
so that no strong stem remains:  
no scepter with which to rule.  
This is the lament (*or, dirge*) and it is to be sung as a dirge.”

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<sup>660</sup> The Hebrew is difficult. Literally: “from the provinces.”

<sup>661</sup> The Hebrew word for “hooks” is an Akkadian loan word. The cage very likely would be an animal’s cage. The Hebrew word for “hooks” in modern Hebrew is the word used for a “dog collar.”

<sup>662</sup> Some scholars feel verses 10 – 14 are a later addition, possibly inserted into the text by Ezekiel.

<sup>663</sup> The Hebrew of verses 10 & 11 is difficult to discern. LXX: “and she became a rod of strength for a tribe of princes and was elevated in her bulk in the midst of (other) trees and she saw her bulk in the multitude of her branches.”

<sup>664</sup> Some translate: “her branches.” LXX: “τα εκλεκτα αυτης.”

<sup>665</sup> LXX: “But she was broken down in wrath, she was cast upon the ground and the east wind dried up her choice [*branches*]; they were avenged and the rod of her strength was withered, fire consumed it.”

<sup>666</sup> LXX: “πεφετεωκαν αυτην.”

<sup>667</sup> LXX: “και κατεφαγεν αυτην.”

<CHAPTER 20> <sup>668</sup>

*O. Apostasy and Restoration of Israel 20:1 – 44*

*1 Oracle to the Elders 20:1 – 4*

<sup>1</sup> In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, <sup>669</sup> certain elders of <sup>670</sup> Israel came to inquire of the Lord, <sup>671</sup> and seated themselves before me. <sup>672</sup> <sup>2</sup> The word of the Lord came to me.

<sup>3</sup> “Mortal: speak to the elders (*or, leaders*) of Israel and tell them this is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Have you come to inquire <sup>673</sup> of me? As I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I will not reply to your inquiry. <sup>4</sup> Will you judge them, Mortal, will you judge them? <sup>674</sup> Then confront them with the abominations of their fathers.”

*2. Apostasy in Egypt 20:5 – 8a*

<sup>5</sup> “Say to them: This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: On the day on which I chose Israel, I vowed <sup>675</sup> with uplifted hand before the people of Israel [*yet unborn*] making myself known to them in the land of Egypt. I vowed with uplifted hand, saying, I am your Sovereign Lord. <sup>6</sup> On that day I vowed that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into the land that I had prepared <sup>676</sup> for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most remarkable <sup>677</sup> of all lands. <sup>7</sup> I told the people that on their part they must reject the detestable things (*or, horrors that*) attract every one of you, and do not make yourselves unclean (*or, pollute yourselves*) with the fetishes (*or, idols*) of Egypt: I am the Lord your God! <sup>8</sup> However they rebelled (*or, revolted*) against me and would not listen to me. They did not cast away the detestable things on which their eyes feasted, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt.” <sup>678</sup>

*3. Apostasy in the Wilderness 20:8b – 26*

“Then I resolved that I would pour out my fury on them and I would vent my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> But I acted in a way intended not to bring dishonor to my name: <sup>679</sup> that my name should not be profaned in the sight of the

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<sup>668</sup> In the Hebrew Bible this chapter consists of verses 1 - 44. Verses 45 – 49 are a part of chapter 21. This is noted 45 [H21:1] for verse 45 in the English Bible.

<sup>669</sup> Scholars have dated this as July/August 59. BCE. Other scholars date it as September 1, 590 BCE or August 9/10 591 BCE. LXX Codex A has “fifth month, 10<sup>th</sup> day.” Most LXX MSS have the 15<sup>th</sup> day.

<sup>670</sup> LXX adds: “οικου” here and in the other verses of this chapter where Israel is used.

<sup>671</sup> In effect the passage 1 – 44 is intended to reacquaint the people of Israel with their past and appears in the form of a sermon to the Diaspora Jews.

<sup>672</sup> Why the elders came is not known but some scholars feel they were endorsing a syncretism of beliefs as is expressed in v. 32 and sought Ezekiel’s support.

<sup>673</sup> LXX: “Did you come to inquire of me?” TEV: “to ask my will.” NRSV: “Why are you coming? To consult me? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be consulted by you.”

<sup>674</sup> LXX: “Mortal: Should I utterly take vengeance on them? Testify to them of the iniquities of their fathers.” TAN: “Arraign, arraign them, O mortal. Declare to them the abhorrent deeds of their fathers.”

<sup>675</sup> Literally: “I raised my hand” in the making of an oath.

<sup>676</sup> Hebrew: literally: “spied.” LXX: “I prepared for them a land.”

<sup>677</sup> LXX: “abundant beyond honeycomb.” JB: “noblest of them all.”

<sup>678</sup> Cf.: Joshua 24:14.

<sup>679</sup> This expression is echoed in many prophetic writings of Hebrew Scripture.

nations among whom they resided, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt. <sup>680</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "Therefore I led them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. <sup>11</sup> I gave them my laws and showed them my rules, by whose observance a person will live. <sup>12</sup> Moreover I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign to be shared between us, that they might know that I am the Lord, (I made them holy) <sup>681</sup> (*or, sanctified them*). <sup>13</sup> But the people of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness; they did not follow <sup>682</sup> my laws, but rejected my rules, by whose observance people will live; and they greatly desecrated my Sabbaths.

"Then I thought I would pour out my fury on them in the wilderness, to be rid of them (*or, to destroy them*). <sup>683</sup> <sup>14</sup> However for the sake of my name I determined that my name should not be profaned in the nations <sup>684</sup> in whose sight I had brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. <sup>15</sup> Additionally I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land which I had assigned (*or, given*) them, --- a land flowing with milk and honey --- the most remarkable <sup>685</sup> of all lands. <sup>16</sup> They rejected my rule and did not follow my laws and desecrated my Sabbaths; for their heart went after fetishes (*or, idols*), <sup>17</sup> yet as I considered them <sup>686</sup> I did not destroy them nor end their lives in the wilderness.

<sup>18</sup> "I informed their children in the wilderness: Do not follow the practices of your parents, nor observe their rules, or defile yourselves with their fetishes (*or, idols*). <sup>19</sup> I am the Sovereign Lord: obey my laws and be careful to observe my rules, <sup>20</sup> and make my Sabbaths special that each one might be a holy day, a sign of fellowship between us, that you might remember the Lord your God.

<sup>21</sup> "The children rebelled (*or, despised*) me; not observing my rules and were not careful to observe my laws, by the observance of which a person would live. They profaned my Sabbaths!

"Then I resolved that I would discharge my fury against them in the wilderness. <sup>22</sup> However, I restrained, <sup>687</sup> and out of regard for my name I determined not to be profaned in the sight of the nations in whose sight I had led them out [*of Egypt*]. <sup>23</sup> Moreover I made another decision about them in the wilderness: that they would be scattered among the nations, dispersing them through the countries <sup>24</sup> because they rejected <sup>688</sup> my rules; and my laws and profaned my Sabbaths and they longed for the idols of their parents. <sup>25</sup> Moreover, I gave them laws that were not good and rules by which they could not live.

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<sup>680</sup> LXX: Codex A adds: "and I brought them out of the land of Egypt." Other LXX Mss read: "to bring them out."

<sup>681</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later gloss.

<sup>682</sup> Literally: "walk in."

<sup>683</sup> LXX: "I said to the house of Israel in the wilderness: walk in my ordinances but they would not walk in them, and they rejected my ordinances, which if a man should do, he will even live in them and they previously profaned my Sabbaths and I saw that I would pour out my wrath on them in the wilderness to consume them."

<sup>684</sup> LXX: "gentiles."

<sup>685</sup> The thought in the LXX is "sweeter than honeycomb." TAN: "fairest."

<sup>686</sup> Literally: "my eye spared them."

<sup>687</sup> Literally: "I withheld my hand."

<sup>688</sup> Literally: "had not executed."

<sup>689</sup> <sup>26</sup> I defiled them through their making of sacrifices, in that they offered their first-born  
<sup>690</sup> sons by fire that I might make them guilty. <sup>691</sup> I did this so that they would know that I  
am the Lord.”

#### 4. *Apostasies in Canaan 20:27 – 29*

<sup>27</sup> “Therefore, Mortal, speak to the people of Israel and declare to them: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: If you defile me (*or, blaspheme me*) as your parents blasphemed me, <sup>692</sup> <sup>28</sup> when I brought them into the land which I vowed to give them, but then whenever they saw a high hill or any leafy tree they offered (*or, slaughtered*) their sacrifices and presented offensive offerings. <sup>693</sup> At these sites they prepared their soothing odors and poured out their offensive drink offerings. <sup>29</sup> (I said to them what is [*the name of*] the high place to which you go? So the name is called Bamah to this day.” <sup>694</sup>

#### 5. *The Lord will not be Inquired of 20:30 – 31*

<sup>30</sup> “Now: Tell the people of Israel: This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Will you defile yourselves in the same manner as your parents did and lust after <sup>695</sup> their detestable deeds? <sup>31</sup> When you offer <sup>696</sup> your gifts <sup>697</sup> and sacrifice your sons by fire (*or, by making your children pass through fire*), you defile yourselves with all your fetishes (*or, idols*) to this day, and do you have the right to question me, O people of Israel? As I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will not respond to you!” <sup>698</sup>

#### 6. *Israel will be Purged 20:32 – 39*

<sup>32</sup> “What you have on your mind <sup>699</sup> will never happen: if you think: Let us be like the nations, like the tribes of the lands, worshiping wood and stone. <sup>700</sup>

<sup>33</sup> “As I live <sup>701</sup> declares the Sovereign Lord: I will reign over you with power and much fury, <sup>702</sup> and I will be the ruler over you. <sup>34</sup> I will bring you out from the people and

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<sup>689</sup> The reference assumed by scholars is that God tolerated that the people would worship idols for a time, with the understanding that they would return to the worship of God as was expected of them.

<sup>690</sup> Literally: “that which opens the womb.”

<sup>691</sup> “Make them guilty” is an emendation. Literally: “I might horrify them.”

<sup>692</sup> CB: “in still another way did your fathers blaspheme me --- by dealing treacherously with me.”

<sup>693</sup> Some scholars feel the words “they offered ...offensive offerings” is a gloss and place this phrase in parentheses. The sentence would read “any leafy tree they prepared their soothing...”

<sup>694</sup> There is a play on words here. The Hebrew word for “high places” sounds like the Hebrew word for “where to go.” The name of the place then takes the combination of the two words as the source of its name. NEB: ‘What is this hill shrine to which you are going up? And ‘hill-shrine’ has been its name ever since.’ MFT: “What is the high place you hie to?”

<sup>695</sup> The Hebrew word “*synz*” “to reject” is the same word the prophets use to “play the harlot” or “to lust after.” The reference would be to sexual rites that were considered unacceptable in Israelite faith.

<sup>696</sup> Literally: “in your lifting up.”

<sup>697</sup> The LXX begins the verse with: “και ταις απαρχαις των δοματων υμων εν τας αφορασμοις.”

<sup>698</sup> LXX: “Do you pollute ourselves with the first fruits of your gifts, in the offerings wherewith you pollute yourselves in all your imaginations until this day; and will I answer you O house of Israel?”

<sup>699</sup> Literally: “upon your spirit.”

<sup>700</sup> LXX: “It will not be as you say, We will be as the nations, and as the tribes of the earth, to worship sticks and stones.” TEV: “You have made up your minds that you want to be like the nations, like the other nations, like people who live in other countries that worship trees and rocks but that will never be.

<sup>701</sup> LXX: “δια τουτο.” “Therefore.”

<sup>702</sup> TAN: “overflowing fury” or “the discharge of my rage.”



gather you from the countries where you have been dispersed (*or, scattered*). I will pour out my fury on you with the discharge of my anger. <sup>35</sup> I will bring you into the wilderness of the people <sup>703</sup> and there I will enter into judgment <sup>704</sup> with you face to face <sup>36</sup> as I did with your ancestors in the Sinai Desert near the land of Egypt. Judgment will take place, says the Sovereign Lord. <sup>37</sup> I will make you pass under the rod, <sup>705</sup> and I will let you go in by number. <sup>706</sup> <sup>38</sup> I will remove (*or, purge*) the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me: <sup>707</sup> I will bring them out of the land where they reside as aliens, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

<sup>39</sup> “As for you, O people of Israel, this is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Every one of you is to go and serve your idols <sup>708</sup> and thereafter you will not listen to me; but [*the day will come when*] you will not profane my holy name, with your gifts and idols.”  
<sup>709</sup>

### 7. Restoration of the People of the Land of Israel 20:40 – 44

<sup>40</sup> “For on my holy mountain, <sup>710</sup> the mountain height of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord, all the people of Israel, without exception, will serve me in the land. There I will accept them and there I will require your contributions <sup>711</sup> and your choice gifts <sup>712</sup> along with all your sacred (*or, wave*) offerings. <sup>41</sup> As a pleasing odor I will accept you and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will manifest <sup>713</sup> my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. <sup>42</sup> Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country which I vowed to give to your ancestors. <sup>43</sup> There you will remember your ways and all the actions with which you defiled (*or, polluted*) <sup>714</sup> yourselves; and you will be disgusted (*or, loathe*) <sup>715</sup> yourselves for all the evils you have committed. <sup>44</sup> You will know that I am the Lord, when I deal with you for my name’s sake, and not according to your evil ways nor according to your corrupt actions, O people of Israel, says the Sovereign Lord.”

<sup>703</sup> TAN: “the ‘Desert of the people’.” Perhaps the countries (*or, regions* between Judah and Babylon or the area in which the Diaspora Jews were located (*the Syrian – Arabian desert*) that name no doubt being deliberate abuse.

<sup>704</sup> LXX: “and I will plead with you face to face.”

<sup>705</sup> The LXX has “εν αριθμω” perhaps reading “rpsmk” for “trsmk” The Hebrew seems to omit a letter, having “tydnd” which results in the LXX translation. A shepherd counted his herd by having them enter the sheep fold under his staff when he brought them home at nightfall making them “pass under the rod” as is found here.

<sup>706</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew unclear! Literally: “bring you into the bond of the covenant.” BV: “and bring you into the bond of the covenant” with an added footnote: “The yoke of God’s mercy and of man’s duty.” Some scholars feel this is a reference to being mustered into the army (*i.e. the covenant of God*).

<sup>707</sup> Literally: “choose out from you.” LXX: “separate from among you the ungodly and the revolvers.”

<sup>708</sup> LXX: “put away each one of you his evil practices.” “εξαρκατε και μετα ταυτα.”

<sup>709</sup> The Hebrew meaning is uncertain. CEV: “You will have no choice but to obey me!” A footnote adds: “One possible meaning of the difficult Hebrew text of verse 39.” As translated above it gives the thought that God allows continuation of the evil ways but promises judgment.

<sup>710</sup> I.e. Mount Zion, the location of the temple.

<sup>711</sup> Hebrew: “skytmwrt” Ezekiel uses this word for “holy” matters that are set aside: “holy district” or “holy portion.”

<sup>712</sup> Hebrew: “tyXar” best – as for example the first fruits.

<sup>713</sup> TAN: “be sanctified through you in the sight of the nation.”

<sup>714</sup> MFT: “you befouled yourselves.”

<sup>715</sup> LXX: “bewail.” Literally: “beat your faces.”

8. Oracle Against the South 20:45 – 49 [H. 21:1 – 5]

<sup>45</sup> [H. 21:1] The Word of the Lord came to me: <sup>46</sup> [H. 21:2] “Mortal, set your face toward the south <sup>716</sup> and preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land in the Negeb. <sup>47</sup> [H. 21:3] Say to the forest <sup>717</sup> of the Negeb: Hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Behold I will light a fire in you and it will devour every green <sup>718</sup> tree in you and every dry tree, the blazing fire will not be quenched, and all faces from south to north will be scorched by it. <sup>48</sup> [H. 21:4] All flesh will see that the Lord has kindled it; it will not be quenched.” <sup>49</sup> [H. 21:5] Then I protested, “Oh Sovereign Lord, they are saying of me, ‘Isn’t he a creator of allegories?’” <sup>719</sup>

<CHAPTER 21>

*Prophecies on the Sword 21:1 – 22 [H.21:6 – 37]*

<sup>1</sup> [H. 6] The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>720</sup> <sup>2</sup> [H. 7] “Mortal, set your face toward Jerusalem and make a proclamation against the sanctuaries. <sup>721</sup> Prophesy against the land of Israel. <sup>3</sup> [H. 8] Say to the land of Israel: This is what the Lord declares! <sup>722</sup> Be attentive! I am against you, <sup>723</sup> and will draw my sword <sup>724</sup> from its scabbard and will destroy <sup>725</sup> both the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>726</sup> <sup>4</sup> [H. 9] I will destroy both the righteous and unrighteous among you. My sword will be unsheathed against all flesh from south to north. <sup>5</sup> [H. 10] All flesh will know that the Lord has drawn his sword from its scabbard: it will never be sheathed again.

<sup>6</sup> [H. 11] ”Sigh (*or, wail*), O Mortal, Sigh (*or, wail*) with a broken heart and bitter grief before your eyes. <sup>727</sup> <sup>7</sup> [H.12] When the people ask you: ‘Why do you sigh (*or, groan*)?’ answer: Because of the report that has (*or, tidings that have*) come. Every heart will melt <sup>728</sup> and all hands will be limp, and courage will fade away and all knees will

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<sup>716</sup> The LXX and some translators simply transliterate the Hebrew word. “θαμον.” “Thaemon.” LXX: “set your face toward Thaemon and look toward Daron and prophesy against the chief forest of the Negeb.” These are terms for the south. The Negeb is the desert area to the south of Judah (southern Palestine or Israel).

<sup>717</sup> TAN: “Brushland.”

<sup>718</sup> Literally: “moist.”

<sup>719</sup> Hebrew: “myLXm” LXX: “And I said: Not so, O Lord God! They say to me, ‘Is not this he that is speaking in parables?’” TEV: “Sovereign Lord do not make me do it! Everyone is already complaining that I always speak in riddles.” BV: “is he not an inventor of allegories?” TAN: “They say of me: he is just a riddle-monger.”

<sup>720</sup> The LXX inserts: “δια τουτο προφητευσον.”

<sup>721</sup> The reference is no doubt to the high places for the worship of idols. Hebrew: “syXdqm”. The LXX reads: “sXdqm” “their sanctuary,” as do four Hebrew Mss and Syriac Mss. referring to Jerusalem.

<sup>722</sup> TOTC: “The phraseology of vss. 2 – 5 is designed to match that of 20:40 – 46. The South becomes first *Jerusalem* then the *Sanctuaries* and finally *the land of Israel*. The forest fire becomes the *sword*. Which will slay the *righteous* and the *wicked* (the green tree and the dry tree) and all *flesh* will recognize that it is the Lord who has done all this. (v. 5).

<sup>723</sup> TAN: “I am going to deal with you!”

<sup>724</sup> LXX: “dagger.”

<sup>725</sup> Literally: “cut off.” LXX: “wipe out.”

<sup>726</sup> LXX: “unrighteous” or “unjust.” “αδικον.”

<sup>727</sup> LXX: “groan with the breaking of your loins and even groan heavily in their sight.” TAN: “with tottering limbs and bitter grief.”

<sup>728</sup> Literally: “be dim.” LXX: “break.” I.e.: filled with fear.

turn to water; <sup>729</sup> Remember! This will take place. It will be fulfilled.” This is what the Sovereign Lord declares! <sup>730</sup>

2. *Song of the Lord's Sword 21:8 – 17 [H. 21:13 – 22.]* <sup>731</sup>

8 [H. 13] The word of the Lord came to me: 9 [H. 14] “O Mortal, prophesy and say: This is what the Lord declares:

A sword, a sword is whetted and polished,

10 [H. 15] whetted for slaughter;  
polished to flash like lightning. <sup>732</sup>

How can we refuse?

You have scorned (*or, disregarded*) the scepter (*or, rod*), my son,  
with everything of wood. <sup>733</sup>

11 [H. 16] The sword is given to be burnished, <sup>734</sup>  
to be given into the hand of the executioner.

12 [H. 17] Howl and wail, O mortal, for it is happening to my people,  
it is against all the princes of Israel:  
they are delivered <sup>735</sup> over to the sword with my people. <sup>736</sup>  
therefore smite your thigh. <sup>737</sup>

13 [H. 18] I am testing my people. <sup>738</sup>  
What could it happen if you despise the scepter (*or, rod*)?  
says the Sovereign Lord. <sup>739</sup>

14 [H. 19] “Prophesy therefore, O Mortal,  
clap your hands,  
let the sword strike twice,  
yes, three times, The sword is for those who will be killed.  
It is the sword for the great carnage which encompasses them! <sup>740</sup>

15 [H. 20] They lose courage and many fall <sup>741</sup> at the gate,

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<sup>729</sup> LXX: “and all the thighs will be defiled with moisture.”

<sup>730</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 147d.

<sup>731</sup> Some verses of this section are poetry but it is impossible to discern the original poem from the prose comments that are interspersed. C. G. Howie: Laيمان's Bible Commentary feels this passage was said by Ezekiel as the prophet was brandishing a sword.

<sup>732</sup> LXX: “that you may slay victims: be sharpened that you may be bright, ready for slaughter [*literally: paralyzing*], kill, destroy, destroy every tree.” Lightning in Hebrew: “qdk” Literally: “lightning to be to her.” Older translations translated it as “glitter.” Literally: “It has been polished in order that...”

<sup>733</sup> Hebrew unclear. Literally: “or shall we rejoice the rod of my son despising every tree.”

<sup>734</sup> LXX: “and he made it ready for his hand to hold.” JB: “polished only to be wielded, shaped and polished to fit the slaughterer's hands.? NIV adds a footnote: “Shall we rejoice in the Scepter of my son Judah? The sword despises every such stick.”

<sup>735</sup> Reading “yrgm” for “yrwgm”

<sup>736</sup> LXX: “They will be as aliens (*or, strangers*) for a sentence has been passed.”

<sup>737</sup> A sign of grief and shame.

<sup>738</sup> LXX: “What if even the tribe be rejected? It will not be says the Sovereign Lord.”

<sup>739</sup> Hebrew obscure. Possibly the text became corrupted over the centuries in verses 13 – 15.

<sup>740</sup> Hebrew unclear. LXX: “Take a second sword: the third sword is the [*sword*] of the slain, the great sword of the slain, and you will strike them with amazement [*Codex A adds: that their heart should be broken*] but their heart should faint.” JB: “Let the sword be twice, three times as cruel, the butcher's sword, the great sword of slaughter, menacing all around.”

threatening the city with the burnished sword.  
 Ah! It is made like lightning,  
 burnished for slaughter.  
 16 [H. 21] Slash to the right and to the left!  
 What is your direction? <sup>742</sup>  
 17 [H. 22] I will also clap my hands;  
 and I will satisfy <sup>743</sup> my fury!  
 I, the Lord have spoken! <sup>744</sup>

### 3. *The Sword of the King of Babylon 21:18 – 24 [H. 21:23 – 29]*

18 [H. 23] The word of the Lord again came to me. 19 [H. 24] “Mortal, select (*or, mark*)  
<sup>745</sup> the two roads for the sword of the king of Babylon to advance. Both of these armies  
 will come from the same land. Make a signpost. <sup>746</sup> 20 [H. 25] Choose a way for the sword  
 to advance to Rabbah of the Ammonites <sup>747</sup> and to Judah and fortified Jerusalem. 21 [H. 26]  
 The king of Babylon stands where the two roads divide: the place where the roads  
 separate. He uses divination. He shakes the arrows, <sup>748</sup> consults the teraphim, and looks  
 at the liver. 22 [H. 27] The divination against Jerusalem <sup>749</sup> appears in his right hand as an  
 omen (even though they have sworn allegiance); <sup>750</sup> but this recalls its guilt, and because  
 of its guilt it will be captured. <sup>751</sup>

24 [H. 29] “Assuredly, this is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Because you have  
 recalled your guilt and remembered your transgressions and revealed all your misdeeds,  
 and have brought these to your remembrance you will be captured.” <sup>752</sup>

### 4. *The Prince of Israel. 21:25 – 27 [H. 21:30 – 32]*

25 [H. 30] “You, O profane (*or, dishonored*) wicked prince of Israel,  
 whose day has come,

<sup>741</sup> LXX: “οἱ ἀσθενουντες.” “Lose courage” Some translators prefer ‘stumble.’ MFT: “The dead heaped at every gate.”

<sup>742</sup> LXX: “οξονου.” Hebrew uncertain.

<sup>743</sup> LXX: “relax.”

<sup>744</sup> NAB: “Then I too, shall brush one hand against the other.” A footnote adds: A gesture signifying the rejection of responsibility.

<sup>745</sup> Literally: “place for yourself.” Some scholars translate this as “appoint.” The Hebrew word does not seem that strong. The same Hebrew word appears in verses 19, 20 and twice in verse 22. The translations vary in the light of the context.

<sup>746</sup> Literally: “cut out a hand.” LXX adds: “and there will be a force at the top of the way of the city, you will set it at the top of the way.”

<sup>747</sup> Rabbah was the capital city of the Ammonites, modern Ammon, Jordan.

<sup>748</sup> This form of divination is called *belomancy*, the first of three methods of divination used in this sentence. The second is consulting a household god. These household gods also served symbolically as deeds to the property. The third is *nepatoscopy*, the examination of the markings of the liver and entrails of a sacrificial animal. Numerous clay models of such animal parts have been found by archaeologists. These were possibly used as ways of instructing those who followed such practices. The practice was common in the ancient Near East and moved from there to Rome which also practiced *nepatoscopy*.

<sup>749</sup> Hebrew unclear. Literally: “Jerusalem, to set battering rams.”

<sup>750</sup> The phrase in parentheses is omitted in the LXX. It is possibly an interpolation. Literally: “Oaths of oaths to them.”

<sup>751</sup> MFT: “Jerusalem thinks it is a lot cast in vain.”

<sup>752</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: “with the hand.”

this is the final doom, the day of punishment.

26 [H. 31] The Sovereign Lord declares:

Remove the turban<sup>753</sup>

and take off the crown:

Things will not remain as they are.

Exalt that which is low,

and abase that which is high.<sup>754</sup>

27 [H. 32] I will cause ruin, ruin, ruin!<sup>755</sup>

There will not even be a trace remaining,<sup>756</sup>

until he comes whose right it is;

and I will give it to him.”<sup>757</sup>

### 5. *The Tribe of the Ammonites 21:28 – 32 [H. 21:33 – 37]*

28 [H. 33] “You, O Mortal, prophesy, and say: This is what the Sovereign Lord declares concerning the Ammonites and concerning their blasphemies. Proclaim: A sword! A sword is unsheathed for the slaughter,<sup>758</sup> burnished,<sup>759</sup> glittering and flashing like lightning.<sup>760</sup> 29 [H. 34] In spite of false prophecies about you, dealing deceitfully concerning you, planning to lay blame on your necks for ungodly transgressions. The day has come: the time of final punishment! 30 [H. 35] Return the sword to its scabbard,<sup>761</sup> for I will judge you in the land in which you were conceived, the land of your birth. I will judge you! 31 [H. 46] I will pour out my indignation (*or, wrath*) on you; I will blow on you with my fiery wrath; and I will hand you over into the hands of brutal men<sup>762</sup> who are experts in destruction (*or, artisans of destruction*). 32 [H. 47] You will be as food for the fire; you will experience bloodshed in the midst of your own land; no one will be concerned (*or, remember*) you, for I, the Lord have decreed it!”

## <CHAPTER 22>

### *Q. Indictment of Jerusalem 22:1 – 31*<sup>763</sup>

#### *1. The City of Blood 22:1 – 16*

1 Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 2 “You, O Mortal, will you judge (*or, arraign*)?<sup>764</sup> Will you judge (*or, arraign*) the bloody city?<sup>765</sup> Declare to her

<sup>753</sup> LXX: “miter.” The Hebrew root word means “to wind.” In the past translators used “diadem.”

<sup>754</sup> MFT: “Nothing shall be as it was! Up with the low and down with the high.”

<sup>755</sup> LXX: “injustice.”

<sup>756</sup> Literally: “not even this.” LXX: “τοιαυτη εσται.”

<sup>757</sup> Ezekiel declares the end of the royal line.

<sup>758</sup> LXX: “victims.”

<sup>759</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: “with the hand” which is possibly reading “l<sub>x</sub>h<sub>l</sub>” for “l<sub>y</sub>kh<sub>l</sub>.”

<sup>760</sup> This translation results from the change of one vowel point in the MT. “beroq” instead of “baroq.”

<sup>761</sup> LXX: “μη καταλουςης.” Other LXX Mss read: “εις του κολεον σου.”

<sup>762</sup> LXX: “barbarians.”

<sup>763</sup> There are three oracles in this chapter. Each begins with: “The word of the Lord came to me.” These might have been grouped by an editor. A number of scholars feel the third oracle is a later composition.

<sup>764</sup> JB: “Are you prepared to judge?” The repetition is possibly dittography and is missing in four Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX and Syriac.

<sup>765</sup> To a degree the bloodshed was due to human sacrifice. MFT: “arraign the bloody city.” The two great sins of Jerusalem were cruel bloodshed and gross idolatry.

all her abominable deeds. <sup>766</sup> <sup>3</sup> You will say: This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: O city, where in your midst unnecessary blood is shed, your time has come and the making of fetishes (*or, idols*) for yourself has defiled you. <sup>4</sup> You have become guilty because of the blood which you have shed, and defiled yourself by the fetishes (*or, idols*) which you have made; and have brought your judgment day on yourself for the appointed time has come. <sup>767</sup> This has made you the reproach (*or, mockery*) of the nations and a scorn to all the countries. <sup>5</sup> Those near and far will ridicule you for you are infamous and filled with tumult. <sup>768</sup>

<sup>6</sup> “Be aware: the rulers of Israel, every one of them, based on their power <sup>769</sup> (*or, authority*) have been determined to shed blood. <sup>7</sup> Parents are treated with contempt in your midst; the alien residents <sup>770</sup> have been cheated; fatherless and widows have been wronged within you. <sup>8</sup> You have despised my holy things and desecrated my Sabbaths. <sup>771</sup> <sup>9</sup> There are people in our midst who will slander so that they can commit murder, <sup>772</sup> and people who eat on the mountains, <sup>773</sup> committing lewdness in your midst. <sup>10</sup> In you men uncover their father’s nakedness; <sup>774</sup> and you have ravished women who are menstruating. <sup>775</sup> <sup>11</sup> One commits abhorrent acts with his neighbor’s wife, another lewdly seduces his daughter-in-law, another defiles his half-sister, (his father’s daughter). <sup>776</sup> <sup>12</sup> People commit murder for hire. Interest and usury are exacted to make gain through extortion of your neighbors. You have forgotten me says the Sovereign Lord.

<sup>13</sup> “Now: be alert! I strike my hands together <sup>777</sup> because of the dishonest profit you have made and because of the blood that was shed in your midst. <sup>14</sup> Will your courage last? Can you remain strong? In the days ahead I will deal with you! The Lord has declared this! How bold will you be when I come to deal with you? I will do this! <sup>15</sup> I will scatter you among the nations and scatter you in other countries and I will remove your foulness from you! <sup>16</sup> Through you I have been profaned in the sight of the nations: <sup>778</sup> you will know that I am the Lord.”

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<sup>766</sup> TEV: “make clear to her all the disgusting things she has done.”

<sup>767</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain. NEB: “You have shortened your day by this and brought the end of your years near.” Ancient Babylonian manuscripts use the expression: “The time of your years has come.”

LXX: “καὶ ἠγαγες.” Vulgate: “et addigisti.”

<sup>768</sup> The LXX is notoriously unclear. “abundant in iniquities.”

<sup>769</sup> LXX: “πρὸς τοὺς σογγενεῖς αὐτοῦ.” Literally: “arm.”

<sup>770</sup> Possibly proselytes.

<sup>771</sup> NEB: “What is holy to me you have spurned, and my Sabbaths you have desecrated.”

<sup>772</sup> TAN: “Base men are in your midst.” MFT: “You harbor men who murder their fellows by false evidence.”

<sup>773</sup> I.e. worship idols in shrines located on high places. An emendation would read: “with the blood.” Cf.: Leviticus 19:26.

<sup>774</sup> TAN footnote: “I.e. have cohabited with a former wife of their father. Leviticus 18:7 – 8.” MFT: “Within you men live lasciviously.” Some translate: “you take your father’s concubine.”

<sup>775</sup> Or: had recently given birth.

<sup>776</sup> Sexual relations are strictly regulated in Leviticus 18:7 – 20; 20:10 – 21 and Deuteronomy 11:22 – 23, 30; 27:22.

<sup>777</sup> To strike one’s hands together was a symbol of anger. Cf. 6:11; 21:14, 17. TAN: “I will deal with you.”

<sup>778</sup> NIV: “When you have been defiled in the eyes of the nation you will know that I am the Lord.” A footnote gives a possible alternate translation: “When I have allotted you your inheritance.”

## 2. *The Fire of the Lord's Wrath 22:17 – 22*

<sup>17</sup> The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>18</sup> “Mortal, the people of Israel have become dross <sup>779</sup> to me, all of them! They are like silver, bronze, tin, iron, and lead in the furnace, becoming dross. <sup>780</sup> <sup>19</sup> Therefore <sup>781</sup> this is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Because you have become dross, I will collect you into the midst of Jerusalem. <sup>20</sup> Just as people gather silver, bronze, iron, lead and tin in a furnace, to blow the fire on it in order to smelt it, so I will gather you in my wrath and I will put you in a furnace and smelt you. <sup>21</sup> I will surely gather you <sup>782</sup> and blow on you with the fire of my wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it, <sup>22</sup> just as silver is melted in a crucible, so you also will be melted in the midst of my wrath and you will know that I the Lord have poured out my wrath on you.” <sup>783</sup>

## 3. *Indictment of all Classes 22:23 – 31*

<sup>23</sup> The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>24</sup> “Mortal, say to her: You are a land that has not been cleansed nor washed with rain in the time of [my] indignant wrath. <sup>784</sup> <sup>25</sup> The local leaders <sup>785</sup> in her midst all are like a roaring lion tearing at its prey. They have devoured human [lives] when they seized treasure and precious things [in their greed]. They have caused many among them to become widows. <sup>26</sup> Her priests have violated my law and have profaned what is sacred to me. They have made no distinction between that which is consecrated and that which is unconsecrated. They have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean. They have treated my Sabbath like a week-day so that I am dishonored even by them. <sup>786</sup> <sup>27</sup> The officials within her [Jerusalem] are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives, and getting dishonorable gain. <sup>28</sup> Her prophets <sup>787</sup> have daubed over their errors with whitewash (or, plaster) <sup>788</sup> pretending to have visions that are false and performing divinations, saying, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says’ when the Lord has not spoken! <sup>29</sup> The people of the land have practiced extortion and have committed robberies. They have opposed the poor and needy and extorted from the resident aliens without redress.

<sup>30</sup> “I have searched for a person among the people of Jerusalem for someone who would be able to build a barricade or stand in the breach before me, to prevent me from the destruction of the land, but I did not find anyone.

<sup>31</sup> “Therefore I poured out my wrath on them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; they will receive what I have threatened says the Sovereign Lord.” <sup>789</sup>

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<sup>779</sup> JB: “base metal.” NAB: “scum and waste matter.”

<sup>780</sup> Literally: “the dross of silver.” In this translation the word for “silver” is moved. Some scholars feel the Hebrew word for “silver” is a gloss.

<sup>781</sup> LXX: “ειπον.”

<sup>782</sup> This phrase is omitted by the LXX.

<sup>783</sup> TOTC: “Israel has no silver in it: she is utterly worthless, all dross.”

<sup>784</sup> This verse has a number of linguistic problems. The translation is an attempt to make a meaningful translation.

<sup>785</sup> So: LXX: “ης οι αφηγουμενοι” “whose chieftains.” Hebrew: “A conspiracy of her prophets.”

<sup>786</sup> Cf.: Leviticus 19:8; 20:25; 22:15; 26:34, 43.

<sup>787</sup> TAN: “Her gang of prophets.”

<sup>788</sup> Cf.: 13:10ff. JB: “Her prophets have whitewashed these crimes with their empty visions and lying prophecies.”

<sup>789</sup> God looks in vain over the universal corruption for one person who will try to interpose himself to stop the national ruin. There was no one with moral courage.

<CHAPTER 23> <sup>790</sup>

R. The Unfaithful Wives of the Lord 23:1- 49

1. Introduction 23:1 - 4

1 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Mortal, there were two women, the daughters of one mother. 3 They became prostitutes in Egypt; already harlots when they were young. Their breasts were squeezed and their virgin nipples were fondled. <sup>791</sup> 4 Oholah was the name of the older and Oholibah the name of her sister. <sup>792</sup> They became mine (*or, they became married to me*), and they had sons and daughters. As for their names Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem.” <sup>793</sup>

1. Oholah 23:5 – 10

5”Oholah already acted as a prostitute while she was mine, <sup>794</sup> and she lusted after lovers among the Assyrians, <sup>795</sup> 6 warriors <sup>796</sup> clothed in purple (*or, blue*) uniforms, commanders --- all of them Assyrian elite --- handsome cavalry officers, riding their horses. <sup>797</sup> 7 She granted her favors (*or, fornication*) to all of them; the elite of the Assyrians, <sup>798</sup> and she defiled herself by being devoted <sup>799</sup> to all their fetishes (*or, idols*). 8 She did not give up her prostitution which she had continued since her days in Egypt; <sup>800</sup> for in her youth men had slept with her (*or, they deflowered her*) and fondled her virgin nipples and had intercourse with her freely. <sup>801</sup>

9”Because of this I gave her over to her lovers (*or, abandoned her to her lovers*), the Assyrians, for whom she lusted. 10 They enjoyed her nakedness (*or, they ravished her*) and seized her sons and daughters, and killed her with the sword; and she became a byword <sup>802</sup> among women, when judgment had been inflicted on her.” <sup>803</sup>

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<sup>790</sup> The language of this allegory is indelicate. The theme of the allegory is distasteful but obviously it is a symbol of unsurpassable disgust. Some scholars feel this allegory in its original form was a vision and cite some references in the Hebrew text for their theories but this theory is not widely accepted.

<sup>791</sup> LXX: “there their breasts fell, there they lost their virginity.”

<sup>792</sup> Oholah means “She who has a tent.” Oholibah means “tent in her.” It is possible that Ezekiel used these names as an allusion to the period of wandering in the wilderness or because of the pagan practices that were prevalent.

<sup>793</sup> These were the two capitals: Samaria of the Northern Kingdom and Jerusalem of the Southern Kingdom, and are thus represented in this allegory.

<sup>794</sup> Literally: “when she was under me.” The versions read the Hebrew word “*ytxtm*” with different vowels than the MT and translate it as “faithless to me.”

<sup>795</sup> Cf.: The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (*Appendix 1*). The obelisk depicts Jehu, king of Judah prostrating himself before the Assyrian king (ca. 840 BCE) at the beginning of Jehu’s reign. Cf.: ANET pp. 281 – 284.

<sup>796</sup> Hebrew uncertain.

<sup>797</sup> JB: “all of them young and desirable and skilled horsemen.”

<sup>798</sup> Literally: sons of Asshur” here and in all other verses wherever “Assyrians” is used.

<sup>799</sup> NEB: “wherever her heart led her.”

<sup>800</sup> LXX: “She forsook not her fornication with the Egyptians.”

<sup>801</sup> NEB: “and overwhelmed her with their fornication.”

<sup>802</sup> LXX: “they shun her with the sword.” “*λαλημα*.”

<sup>803</sup> LXX: “and they carried out vengeance in her for the sake of the daughters.”



### 3. Oholibah 23:11- 21

11 “Her sister Oholibah saw this and yet she lusted even more, being more depraved than her sister in her prostitution, which was worse than that of her sister. 12 She lusted after the Assyrians: governors, commanders, warriors who were impeccably clothed, cavalymen who were mounted on their horses, all of them being young and desirable. 13 I saw that she herself was unchaste<sup>804</sup> for they both followed the same path.<sup>805</sup>

14 “She carried on her prostitution more than ever. When she saw men portrayed on a wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion,<sup>806</sup> 15 wearing waist cloths<sup>807</sup> covering their loins, and with a flowing<sup>808</sup> turban on their heads, all of whom looked like officers; a picture (*or, likeness*) of Babylonians whose native land was Chaldea, 16 she lusted after them, and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. 17 The Babylonians came to her for lovemaking and used her to the point that despite her lust she became disgusted with them and having been defiled by them, when she was sated she turned away from them in revulsion..<sup>809</sup> 18 She openly flaunted her wiles and exposed herself publicly.<sup>810</sup> I turned away in revulsion just as I had turned away from her sister.<sup>811</sup> 19 Yet she increased her prostitution, recalling the days of her youth, when she was a prostitute in the land of Egypt. 20 She lusted for concubinage with those whose genitals<sup>812</sup> were like those of a donkey and whose emission<sup>813</sup> was like that of a stallion. 21 Thus Oholibah hankered for the debauchery of her girlhood, when the Egyptians played with her youthful breasts and fondled her young nipples (*or, where she lost her virginity*).<sup>814</sup>

### 4. The Fate of Oholibah 23:22 – 35

22 “Assuredly, O Oholibah this is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Be attentive! I will call up your lovers against you from whom you turned in disgust and I will bring them against you from all sides! 23 The Babylonians and the Chaldeans along with people from Pekod, Shoa and Koa<sup>815</sup> and all the Assyrians with them: handsome young men, governors, commanders, officers and warriors,<sup>816</sup> all of whom were officers with top rank. 24 They will attack you from the north<sup>817</sup> with chariots<sup>818</sup> and wagons with a host

<sup>804</sup> TEV: “was completely immoral.”

<sup>805</sup> TAN: “both of them followed the same course.”

<sup>806</sup> LXX: “painted with a pencil.”

<sup>807</sup> Literally: “overhanging” This was a part of the warrior’s clothing.

<sup>808</sup> LXX: “richly dyed [*attire*] on their heads.”

<sup>809</sup> This verse reflects a pendulum like swing from a pro-Assyrian policy to an anti-Babylonian policy that marked the previous period.

<sup>810</sup> NEB: “she stripped naked.”

<sup>811</sup> LXX: “And she exposed her fornication and exposed her shame; and my soul was alienated from her, even as my soul was alienated from her sister.”

<sup>812</sup> BDB: “the male organ of generation” (Surely a polite euphemism!)

<sup>813</sup> Hebrew uncertain. NAB: “heat.” JB: “ejaculating as violently as a stallion.” MFT: “she doted upon her paramours who were like asses and stallions in the grossness of their lust.”

<sup>814</sup> The Hebrew is not entirely clear. LXX: “where were the breasts of your youth.”

<sup>815</sup> These are usually identified as Paqudu, Sutu, and Qutu: Aramean tribes east of the Tigris according to cuneiform sources.

<sup>816</sup> LXX: “and all the sons of the Assyrians with them; choice young men, governors and captains, all princes of renown.”

<sup>817</sup> Hebrew unclear. LXX: “απο βορρα.”

of troops. They will set themselves against you on all sides <sup>819</sup> with large and small shields and helmets (*or, fully armed*), <sup>820</sup> and I will entrust your punishment to them and they will inflict their punishment on you as they see fit. <sup>25</sup> O will direct my anger against you, for they may deal with you in fury. They will cut off your nose and your ears, and the last remnant among you will die with the sword. They will seize your sons and your daughters, and your remnant will be destroyed by fire. <sup>821</sup> <sup>26</sup> They will also strip you of your clothing <sup>822</sup> and take away your fine jewels. <sup>27</sup> Therefore I will put an end to your wantonness and your prostitution from the land of Egypt, so that you will not long for <sup>823</sup> Egyptians or remember them any more. <sup>28</sup> This is what the Lord says: Look! I will give you over into the hands of those who hate you, into the hands of those from whom you have turned in disgust; <sup>824</sup> <sup>29</sup> and they will treat you with hatred and take away everything for which you had labored, leaving you naked --- completely naked, and the nakedness of your idolatry will be exposed like a prostitute and your lewdness and promiscuity <sup>30</sup> will be exposed because you played the harlot with the nations, and defiled <sup>825</sup> yourself with their fetishes (*or, idols*). <sup>31</sup> You have followed the way of your sister. Therefore I will transfer her cup into your hand. <sup>826</sup> <sup>32</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord declares!

You will drink your sister's cup  
which is deep and large.

You will be laughed at and held in scorn  
for it contains much.

<sup>33</sup> You will be filled with drunkenness <sup>827</sup> and woe;  
a cup of desolation and horror,  
for this is the cup of your sister, Samaria.

<sup>34</sup> You will drink it and drain it,  
and tear out your hair and tear at your breasts,  
for I have spoken, says the Sovereign Lord.

<sup>35</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Because you have forgotten me and cast me away <sup>828</sup> you must bear the consequences of your lewdness and idolatry."

#### *J. Judgment of Oholah and Oholibah 23:36 – 49*

<sup>36</sup> The Lord said to me: "Mortal: Arraign Oholah and Oholibah. Charge them with their detestable practices. <sup>37</sup> They have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. With their fetishes (*or, idols*) they have committed adultery and have even offered up their sons whom they had borne [*which were mine*] for food (*or, even made their*

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<sup>818</sup> TAN: "with their fleets of wheeled chariots."

<sup>819</sup> LXX: "to watch against you round about."

<sup>820</sup> MFT: "shields, targes and helmets."

<sup>821</sup> Cf.: ANET: p. 215d.

<sup>822</sup> LXX: "the vessels of your glory (*or, boasting*)."

<sup>823</sup> Literally: "lift up your eyes."

<sup>824</sup> Literally: "your soul was alienated."

<sup>825</sup> LXX: "εμιαινου."

<sup>826</sup> "The cup" in ancient Ugaritic texts might be a reference to "the cup of fate." LXX: "Drink your sister's cup deep and large [Codex A adds: "it will be for derision.] and you will be thoroughly weakened; and the cup of destruction the cup of my sister Samaria."

<sup>827</sup> Some scholars read the Hebrew word as: "breaking (of the heart)."

<sup>828</sup> Literally: "behind your back."

*children they bore to pass through fire*).<sup>829</sup> 38 [During this same time they had done the following to me: They defiled my sanctuary, profaned my Sabbaths; 39 they had slaughtered their children in sacrifices to their fetishes (*or, idols*), at the same time entering into my sanctuary to desecrate it. That is what they did in my house!

40 "They even sent for men to come from a distance, inviting them by messenger, and when they came they bathed themselves, put on mascara and adorned themselves with jewelry;]<sup>830</sup> 41 and you sat on an elegant couch<sup>831</sup> having a table spread before you on which you placed<sup>832</sup> my incense and my oil. 42 The noise is heard of a carefree multitude<sup>833</sup> that is with you: men of a common sort<sup>834</sup> were brought from the desert; and they put bracelets on your hands and beautiful tiaras for your head."

43 Then I said, "Even now men keep on committing adultery for they are continuing in their fornication with her.<sup>835</sup> 44 They have gone in as men go in to a prostitute. They went in to Oholah and to Oholibah to commit lewdness.<sup>836</sup> 45 But the righteous men will pass judgment on them with the sentence of adulterers and with the sentence of women who shed blood because they are adulterers, and their hands are stained with blood."

46 This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: "Bring up an army against them, and make them the object of terror and looting. 47 This army will stone them and destroy them with their swords; they will kill their sons and daughters, burning their houses. 48 They will purge the land of wantonness (*or, debauchery*) that all women may take the warning and not commit lewdness as has been done. 49 Your wantonness will be punished<sup>837</sup> and you will suffer the penalty for your sinful idolatry; and you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord."

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<sup>829</sup> LXX: "with their devices, and they passed through the fire to them their children which they bore to me."

<sup>830</sup> Some scholars feel verses 38 – 40 are a later gloss.

<sup>831</sup> LXX: "εστρομενης."

<sup>832</sup> LXX: "εναυτοις."

<sup>833</sup> LXX Codex A adds: "inflamed with wine." Hebrew Unclear.

<sup>834</sup> Literally: "men of the multitude of men." The Kettib: "drunkards." The Qere: "drinkers" or "Sabeans."

<sup>835</sup> LXX: "Do they not permit adultery with these? And has she also gone a-whoring after the manner of a prostitute?" NIV: "Then I said concerning her who was worn out by adultery, Will they not commit adultery with her when she is thus?" NIV: "Then I said about the one worn out by adultery, 'Now let them use her as a prostitute, for that is all she is.'"

<sup>836</sup> Hebrew unclear. LXX: "του ποιησαι ανομιαν."

<sup>837</sup> MFT: "I will requite your sensual ways and you will have to bear the consequences of your sinful idolatry, and so learn that I am the Lord, the Eternal."

<CHAPTER 24>

*S. The Caldron on the Fire 24:1 – 14*

<sup>1</sup> In the ninth year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, <sup>838</sup> the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup> “Mortal: make a record of this day, for on this exact day <sup>839</sup> the king of Babylon has begun his siege of Jerusalem. <sup>840</sup> <sup>3</sup> Prepare an allegory concerning the rebellious house and say to them: This is what the Sovereign Lord declares:

Set on the pot, <sup>841</sup> set it on,  
and pour in water.

<sup>4</sup> Put in pieces of meat,  
all the good parts, the thigh and shoulder.  
Fill it with choice cuts and bone. <sup>842</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Take the choicest part of the flesh out of the flock.  
Put the logs <sup>843</sup> under it.  
Boil the pieces; <sup>844</sup>  
even seethe the bones! <sup>845</sup>

<sup>6</sup>”Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord declares:

Woe to the city of blood.

Woe to the pot which has scum within it,  
for the scum <sup>846</sup> has not gone out.

Empty it, one piece at a time;  
without carefully selecting the pieces (*or, without making a choice*). <sup>847</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> [For the bloodshed is still going on within her,  
and she poured the blood on a bare rock <sup>848</sup>

<sup>8</sup> to rouse my wrath that I might take vengeance.

I <sup>849</sup> have left [*the blood she has shed*] on the bare rock  
that it might not be covered.] <sup>850</sup>

<sup>9</sup>”Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord declares:

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<sup>838</sup> The date is January 15, 588 BCE. This day marked the onset of the siege of Jerusalem. See also: II Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 52:4. These have the same date.

<sup>839</sup> Some scholars feel this is dittography. This phrase is omitted in some early versions.

<sup>840</sup> LXX: “Write for yourself daily from this day on which the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem even from this day.”

<sup>841</sup> The Hebrew word for “pot” is “רַיִסָּם” which could mean either a metal or an earthenware pot. The same word is used again in v. 6.

<sup>842</sup> LXX: “ἐκσεσαρκισμένα ἀπο τῶν ὀστέων.”

<sup>843</sup> The use of the word “logs” is the result of an emendation. Reading: “syc[h]” for “symc[h],” which is in the MT and means “bones.”

<sup>844</sup> The Hebrew word is a hapax legomenon.

<sup>845</sup> There is some question concerning the extent of the poetry in this chapter. BHS has verses 3 – 5 as poetry. KIT has verses 3 – 10. The Hebrew seems to be poetry through verse 13 to many translators. Verse 14 is so similar in its form that it is also entered as poetry in this translation.

<sup>846</sup> Literally: “disease.” The word used in the LXX could mean “scum, blight or rust.” This was presumably a type of corrosion on the copper. Modern metallurgy calls a specific type of corrosion “copper disease.”

<sup>847</sup> Literally: “no lot has fallen on it.” CB: “Woe to the blood city, a pot full of filth, whose filth never leaves her on each of her pieces.”

<sup>848</sup> This would be a sign of vengeance.

<sup>849</sup> Some translators have “she.”

<sup>850</sup> Some scholars feel verses 7 & 8 are a later interpolation.

Woe to the city of blood!  
 I will make the pile great (*or, I will make a great blaze*)! <sup>851</sup>  
 10 Keep logs on the fire,  
 light the fire,  
 complete boiling the meat,  
 and empty out the broth (*or, put in the spices*), <sup>852</sup>  
 until the bones are scorched. <sup>853</sup>  
 11 Then set it on the embers, empty  
 so that it will become hot,  
 until the copper glows.  
 It will become [*ritually*] clean  
 when the corrosion is burned off. <sup>854</sup>  
 12 I have caused myself to become frustrated in vain.  
 It's thick scum does not disappear in the fire, <sup>855</sup>  
 13 It's scum is your filthy debauchery! <sup>856</sup>  
 I would have tried to cleanse you,  
 but you would not be cleansed of your filthiness.  
 You will never again be cleansed  
 until I have satisfied my fury toward you. <sup>857</sup>  
 14 I the Lord have spoken!  
 It will come to pass! I will do it!  
 I will not alter my decision!  
 I will not have mercy!  
 I will not repent  
 because of your actions.  
 I will judge you, says the Sovereign Lord." <sup>858</sup>

*T. The Death of Ezekiel's Wife 24:15 – 27*

*1. Dramatic Action Oracle 24:15 – 24*

15 The Word of the Lord came to me. <sup>16</sup> "Mortal, I am about to take the delight of  
 you eyes (*or, the love of your life*) from you very suddenly. <sup>859</sup> You, however, are not to

<sup>851</sup> LXX: "I will make the firebrand great."

<sup>852</sup> The versions use the thought of "broth." LXX: "and the broth cooked away."  
 "και ελαπτωθη ο ζωμος"

<sup>853</sup> TAN: "Cook the meat trough and stew it completely and let the bones be charred."

<sup>854</sup> Knox in his paraphrase has: "So deep is that rust, even the fire will not drive it away" and in a footnote  
 adds: "But it is not clear that this is the meaning." Cf.: NRSV.

<sup>855</sup> Hebrew uncertain. LXX: "Her abundant scum may not come from her." NEB: "Try as you may the  
 corrosion is so deep that it will not come off."

<sup>856</sup> LXX: "ανθων εμιαινου συ και τι." NAB: "Because you have sullied yourself with  
 lewdness when I would have purified you, and you refused to be purified of your uncleanness."

<sup>857</sup> The difficulty in the translation of verses 12 & 13 is possibly dittography from the end of verse 11.  
 That portion of verse 11 is omitted in the LXX.

<sup>858</sup> Several Hebrew MSS have "they will judge you." JB: "I intend to judge you in your conduct as your  
 conduct and actions deserve." LXX adds: "according to your bloodshed and according to the devices I  
 will judge you, you unclean, notorious and abundantly provoking one."

<sup>859</sup> LXX: "by violence." Literally: "in battle array" TAN: "through pestilence." Apparently the death of  
 the prophet's wife came with no physical warnings to prepare him for his loss.

lament or weep nor are you to mourn. <sup>17</sup> Sigh softly, not loudly; do not observe [*the traditional time of*] mourning for the dead. Put on your turban and tie your sandals on your feet. Do not cover your upper lip nor eat the bread of mourners. <sup>860</sup> <sup>18</sup> So: I spoke to the people in the morning and in the evening my wife died. The next morning I did as had been commanded [*by the Lord*].”

<sup>19</sup> The people said to me: “Won’t you tell us what these things mean that prompt your acting as you do?” <sup>20</sup> Then I responded: “The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>21</sup> Tell the people of Israel: This is what the Sovereign Lord declares: Be attentive! I will desecrate my sanctuary, the pride of your people, the delight of your eyes and the desire of your soul, <sup>861</sup> and your children (*your sons and daughters*) whom you left behind will die with the sword. <sup>22</sup> [You will do as I have done. You will not cover your upper lip nor eat the bread of mourning. <sup>862</sup> <sup>23</sup> Your turbans will be on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not lament or weep, but you will be heartsick because of your iniquities and lament to (*or, for*) one another, <sup>863</sup> <sup>24</sup> Thus Ezekiel will be a warning (*or, sign*) <sup>864</sup> according to all that he has done, for that is what you are to do when this takes place. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord.”

## 2. News of Jerusalem’s fall 24:25 – 27 <sup>865</sup>

<sup>25</sup>”Mortal, on that day I take from them their stronghold, their joy and their glory, <sup>866</sup> the delight of their eyes and their heart’s desire, <sup>867</sup> along with their sons and daughters. <sup>26</sup> On that day a fugitive will come to you to report the news to you. <sup>27</sup> On that day your ability to speak will be restored and you will speak with the fugitive, and you will regain your ability to speak aloud and no longer be mute. Thus you will be a sign to them; and they will know that I am the Lord.”

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<sup>860</sup> The last three words are based on the Vulgate and the Targums. Literally: “men” here and in verse 22. MFT “funeral food.” LXX: “you will groan for blood, and have mourning in your loins; your hair will not be braided, your sandals will not be on your feet; under no circumstances will you be comforted by their lips and you will not eat the bread of men.” To walk around bareheaded and without sandals etc. would be a sign of being in mourning.

<sup>861</sup> Several MSS have: “companion of your soul.”

<sup>862</sup> Some scholars feel the fall of Jerusalem was so sudden that there was no opportunity to mourn its fall.

<sup>863</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

<sup>864</sup> Some scholars move verse 24 between verses 21 and 22 for the sake of clarity.

<sup>865</sup> These verses almost seem to be an editorial expanded commentary. One receives the idea that from the onset of the siege until the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel was silent. This was a restriction placed on him (v. 27) by the Lord of all. This also marks a turning point in Ezekiel’s life. He will not prophesy doom but will be a shepherd and a watchman for his people

<sup>866</sup> Literally: “beauty.”

<sup>867</sup> Literally: “the lifting up of their soul.”