

letter is used in order and is three times repeated as the initial letter of three successive lines. It is also of interest that in the chapters that have 66 verses each verse has only one third as many poetic measures as are found in the verses of the chapters that have only 22 verses, thus making the same number of measures, whether there are 22 or 66 verses. All of this shows how the poems were wrought with great care and diligence." [J.B. Tidwell, THE BIBLE BOOK BY BOOK, p. 120-121]

With reference to sin the book teaches that 1) sin will certainly be punished, 2) that sin grieves the heart of God, 3) that sin will be triumphed over by God, 4) that sin blinds men to their best interests (cf. II Cor.4:4), 5) that sin turns men against their best friends, and 6) that sin destroys nations as well as individuals. With reference to love the book of Lamentations teaches us that 1) love does not blind us to the faults of those we love, 2) it does not cover up faults, but tries to win us from them, and 3) it does not desert one who, heedless of warning, persists in sin and meets calamity. Throughout the sins and the warnings the Lord still loved Judah. Lamentations also speaks of the sorrows that can weary the righteous. Jeremiah was truly sorry that Judah did not repent, but rather chose to be punished for her sins. Jeremiah sorrowed for those people whom he had tried to warn from judgment to come. It is sad to say that many people today will just as blatantly continue in sin despite the warning of concerned friends, neighbors, and relatives. After they have died in their sin, we may sorrow, but all of the sorrow one can have will not bring them back. With this in mind, we should try ever so hard to do our best each and every day to teach the lost and to restore the erring. The scene at the end of time will not be quite the same as Jeremiah's view in Lamentations. Then, those who are righteous will have no more sorrow or grief (Rev.21:1ff), but those who perish will have the same throughout eternity.

EZEKIEL

You will remember from our previous study that the prophets are divided into three distinct periods of time: 1) pre-exilic, 2) exilic, and 3) post-exilic. Ezekiel is one of the two prophets who served during the exilic period (the period of captivity). For this reason the book of Ezekiel (and Daniel) are quite different in their characteristics when compared to the other books of prophecy. In addition to that, the book of Ezekiel contains a completely different style of writing called apocalyptic writing. This style, similar to the style of the book of Revelation, was a common form of writing that developed during the period of exile. Daniel is another book written in the same manner. Some of the symbols and methods of writing are necessary to learn in order to fully understand much of the material of the book. The following are characteristics of apocalyptic writings: 1) cosmic dualism [The presentation of 2 opposing forces usually personified are locked in combat.]; 2) reflection of a crisis situation in history [e.g. the time of captivity, persecution at the hand of the Romans, et al.]; 3) generally pseudonymous [This trait was common for many of the non-canonical writings, but all of this genre incorporated in the canon bare the author's names.]; 4) they usually claimed to be revelations through visions [Visions are to be noted as separate and distinct from dreams.]; 5) the books are "sealed" [This trait is typical of non-canonical literature, but not of canonical. NOTE: The term canon simply refers to those books which are part of the Bible.]; 6) they are predictive [All of the books of this genre tell of the future outcome of history. Of course, only those that are inspired of God can be depended upon. The rest are only guesses.]; 7) they use a common symbolism [The symbols used incorporate numbers, animals, etc. in order to convey the intended message of the book. The purpose of this sort of writing is highly specialized. Such books, written during a period of crisis, contained a hidden meaning. The meaning, however, was not hidden to the intended readers and recipients of the book, but it was hidden from those who were not supposed to know of the contents of the book. In this way, the truth could be spoken to a specific group of people without the "enemy" finding out. It served, therefore, as an extended "code" by which God's messages were distributed to the people. The key to understanding such writing is the knowledge of the general message, as opposed to an understanding of all of the symbolical details. Each symbolic message conveyed a general thought and was never intended to be scrutinized excessively in order to determine some sort of "secret" code. The intended message is always clear. [cf. TRS classnotes on REVELATION]

CHAPTER ONE

1. The opening verses of the book of Ezekiel inform us of the setting. Ezekiel is in the midst of the captivity during the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiachin. This is following the second stage of the captivity, but preceding the third and last stage of the captivity. (Remember that the Jews were carried away in three successive stages and not all at once.)
2. The reader of the book of Ezekiel may immediately become disillusioned during the opening verses of the book when he is faced with the difficulty of understanding the intricate visions presented therein. There have been numerous interpretations, some of which we will note briefly here, but the primary importance in this book and others like it (cf. Daniel, Revelation) is to understand the gist of the book without becoming bogged down in the details of the highly symbolic and figurative language. Some of the possible interpretations are: 1) the vision represented shows the role of Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar in the subduing of the land of Judah. In this role there are exclusively seen to be the instruments of God. The figures are said to move with the wheels [i.e. the chariot of God (?)] showing that the actions of the nation of Babylon are parallel to God's purpose in punishing Judah and Jerusalem. (cf. Clark); 2) Zerr is of the impression that each of the four creatures represents the four successive kingdoms that Daniel spoke about in Daniel 2; 3) others have thought that the creatures simply portray the glory and grandeur of the creation of God as is the case in the book of Revelation; 4) it is possible that the frame of reference to which all of this points it to the very nature of God. Those who so argue are basing such an interpretation on vs. 1 which states that Ezekiel saw "visions of God". This could, however, be easily mistaken to mean that the visions were actually of/about God, that is that God was the object seen in the visions. Such is not necessarily the meaning (cf. 8:3). It is also quite possible that the phrase simply means the visions which God showed to the prophet as would be the case so frequently in the book of Revelation.; and 5) some reference to the nature of the cherubim (see subsequent chapters) is made. All of these interpretations, however different, center upon a central theme. Ellicott Commentary (Gardiner, p.208) states:

"In considering the general significance of this vision, it is to be remembered that it was seen four times by Ezekiel in various connections in his life-work. First, at this time, when he is called to the exercise of the prophetic office; a second time when, shortly afterwards, he is sent to denounce judgments upon the sinful people, and to foretell the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (chap. iii.23 &c.); again, a year and a half later (chaps.viii.4, x.15), he sees the same vision, while he is made to understand the evils and abominations wrought in the Temple (which is still standing), until the "glory of the Lord" forsakes His house and departs from the city (chap.xi.23), in token that God had given them over to punishment; finally, in the prophecy of future restoration and blessing, he again sees the presence of the Lord, by means of the same vision, re-enter and fill the house (chap.xliiii.3-5). Its meaning, therefore, clearly relates to the whole prophecies of Ezekiel, whether of judgment or mercy; and, without attempting an explanation of the symbolism in detail, we cannot be wrong in assuming that it represents the resistless Divine activity, controlling alike the agencies of judgment and mercy, directed to every corner of the earth, and requiring of all profoundest homage and veneration. The perfect unity of purpose in all God's doings is made especially prominent, and the consistency of His wrath with His love, of His judgments with His mercy; while over all seems to be written, as on the plate of the mitre which he had of old commanded the high priest to wear in His temple, "Holiness unto the Lord."

CHAPTER TWO

1. This chapter further explains the call of Ezekiel and his mission. He was to be sent to the rebellious people of Israel (both kingdoms are implied) to speak the word of the Lord to them.
2. The children of Israel are described as impudent (rude, disrespectful) and stiffhearted.

hard

Ezekiel was told by the Lord that they (i.e. Israel) would be heard to get along with, that they would be difficult as briars, thorns, and scorpions. Nonetheless, Ezekiel was admonished to "be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words."

3. In the closing verses of the chapter we note a reference to a book that was presented to Ezekiel. The book contained writing within and without. [Books as we now have them were unknown at this time in history. The book was most likely a scroll, hence it is referred to in vs. 9 as "a roll of a book".] The scroll was written on both sides (cf. Revelation) and contained lamentations and mourning and woe for Israel. The presentation of such a book often typified the work of the person to whom it was presented. Ezekiel is to bear the message of the book to Israel.

CHAPTER THREE

1. In the opening verses of chapter three we note that Ezekiel eats the book which was presented to him in the previous chapter. Such simply means that it was his duty to speak the word of the Lord to the people. Jeremiah was said to have consumed the word of the Lord. This did not, of course, mean that he literally ate the word of God, but rather that he had eaten of it in a spiritual sense. It was within him, and it was his responsibility to preach and teach it to others. The Psalmist makes numerous references to the man who hides the word of God within him. The imagery is the same in meaning. (cf. Revelation where the apostle John was to do the same thing.)
2. Ezekiel is further told about the condition of the Jews to whom he is to speak. They were again described as impudent and hardhearted. But the Lord realized that Ezekiel was to be just as strong with them as they would be strong in resisting the word of God.
3. Note that in this chapter, and in several other places, reference is made to the spirit which often transported Ezekiel from one place to another. This is common in apocalyptic literature, and is especially frequent in John's revelation. It simply shows that God was directing the writer/prophet in his work.
4. Note also that further reference is made in vs. 13ff to the images and figures that were encountered in the first chapter of the book. God's plan is being revealed and the image simply bears out that fact.
5. In the following section of the chapter (vs.16ff) we note the responsibility of Ezekiel as a prophet. He is to be a watchman for Israel. Like a sentry that guarded the gates and walls of a city he was to guard and watch for the invasion of unrighteousness and iniquity. The image of the watchman is seen frequently in the Old Testament.
6. Reference is made within this chapter to the individual responsibility of every Jew (vs.18ff). The word of the Lord was to be spoken to all men. The wicked who did not repent would die in their sins. The righteous who turned to unrighteousness would also die in their sins. Likewise, those who repented and those who remained righteous would be delivered. Whatever the case of the Jews who heard the message, Ezekiel would deliver his own soul by doing the work of the Lord. (cf. I Tim.4:16; I Pet.4:8; I Cor.3)
7. Toward the end of the chapter Ezekiel is told of the reproach that he would bear at the hand of his countrymen, but he would later be able to declare unto them the will and the word of the Lord. Note that further reference is made to the stubbornness of the people of Israel. [Remember that Ezekiel is prophesying to the Jews in captivity.]

CHAPTER FOUR

1. In the fourth chapter of Ezekiel the prophet is given a series of signs that deal with the coming destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Remember that he addressed the Jews who were in captivity prior to the fall of Jerusalem. Jeremiah addressed those in Judah and Jerusalem, and at least once had to write to the people in Babylon in order to straighten out their misconceptions about Jerusalem. Ezekiel was a righteous prophet during this period, but there were false prophets who told the people that nothing would ever happen to Jerusalem.
2. Ezekiel gave a sign with reference to the siege that would come upon Jerusalem, a sign with reference to the number of years sin was prevalent in Israel, a sign was given with reference to the situation concerning food and provisions in Judah and Jerusalem. All of these were given for the purpose of instructing the Jews with regard to God's will. They had lived unrighteously and must now, therefore, suffer the consequences.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Continuing the series of signs given to the captive Jews, Ezekiel provides them with an illustration concerning hair. One third of the hair was burnt, one third of it was smitten, and the final third was scattered. This symbolized what happened to the children of Israel. Some of them were slain, some were taken into captivity, and yet others perished during the siege of the city of Jerusalem. In addition to that, there were many others who were scattered abroad throughout the nations.
2. Verses 6ff describe the reason for this punishment. The Jews had changed the judgments of the Lord and brought reproach upon themselves, their true purpose, and ultimately, upon God himself. They did not keep the statutes and the commandments of God, and were therefore more wicked than the nations around them. This was not due to the degree of their sins alone, but was also due to the degree of responsibility that they had. They knew the truth, or at least should have known it, but rather than live in obedience with it, they fell away. Such a sight is quite graphically depicted in II Peter 2. The false prophets and teachers spoken of there denied the very Christ who died for them. Toward the close of the chapter we learn that ^{the} their final condition was worse than when they began...WHY?...because they knew the truth at one time, were responsible for it, but did not live up to that responsibility. Such was the case of the Jews during the time of the prophets.
3. Further reference is given in this chapter to the punishment which would come upon the Jews as a result of their sins. They would be made a waste, a reproach among nations, a taunt. Famine and destruction would come upon them. The Lord had spoken it, therefore it would surely come to pass.

CHAPTER SIX

1. The opening section of this chapter contains prophecies against the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. This is done by predicting what would happen to the mountains of Judah. That may seem to be a strange way of addressing their sins, but it was well understood by the Jews: The city of Jerusalem was built upon a series of hills. Even the temple itself occupied a position of prominence because it too was upon one of the mounts. But rather than exalting the true form of worship upon this mountain (cf. John 4), the Jews, in their idolatry, constructed places of worship, idols, and images upon many of the mountains in the country. To speak against the mountains, therefore, was to speak against the sins of idolatry that the Jews were so much involved in.
2. Note the number of times throughout the book of Ezekiel that the phrase "and ye shall know that I am the Lord" is used. We find it several times in this chapter alone (cf. vs.7,10,13, 14). The point is that God's name, his glory, his power, and his purpose would be recognized through his actions of punishing Israel. Another phrase closely akin to this is "for my name's sake." The Lord not only punished the Jews for their sins, but also to show the purity of his very own nature. He could not tolerate sin, hence for his own name's sake, he punished those who were sinful.
3. Reference is made in the second section of the chapter (vs.8-10) to the remnant who would escape the punishment that would come upon the majority.
4. The chapter closes by speaking even further about the destruction that would come upon the land of Judah and the punishment that would come upon the Jews.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. This entire chapter is devoted to the judgment which would come upon the nation of Israel. Note the emphasis given repeatedly to the thought that they were receiving their just reward. The phrase "I will recompense ^{their} ~~the~~ ways" has specific reference to the punishment that they would receive for their sins. They lived in such a way as to warrant receiving punishment...and they were to get it.
2. Reference is made to the former beauty of the nation both spiritually and, to a lesser extent, physically. In verse 20 reference is made to the beauty of the ornament, that is to Israel. But now, rather than being the beautiful ornament she once was, she was involved in the worship of images and other abominations.
3. The chapter also accentuates the punishment to come. The time is nigh. There is no way to escape it. Famine is on the inside and the sword is on the outside. God is

finally going to give them their just reward. When that time comes the people will be mourning in sackcloth and ashes. The people will be troubled. Their hands shall be feeble and their knees weak as water. They shall seek peace and find none. When the end finally comes, "they shall know that I am the Lord." (vs.27)

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. The visions of Ezekiel continue in this chapter. The book is divided between the visions which Ezekiel is directed to see and the prophecies which he is commissioned to speak with regard to those visions. In this chapter he is given the opportunity to see visions of the wickedness in Jerusalem. (Again, remember that he is a prophet to the Jews in captivity in the nation of Babylon. Though he lived in Judah in earlier years, he certainly was not there at this particular time. He was, therefore, informed of the situation current in the city by means of these visions.)
2. Initially, Ezekiel was taken to see the north door/gate of the city of Jerusalem. There was at this place what is described as an image of jealousy. Exactly what the image was is not made plain, but whatever it was, it was an image of jealousy in the sense that God was a jealous God. The Jews were to have no other gods before him. Any image that they would have placed before God would have been so identified from God's perspective.
3. As the vision continues Ezekiel is made to see the abominations that the house of Israel committed in the temple. After such was manifested to him, he was told that he would see even greater abominations. He then was lead to see the images, the idols, and every form of creeping thing which were described as being on the walls of the court of the temple.
4. Ezekiel was asked by the Lord if he (i.e. Ezekiel) had seen all of the actions of the ancients in the dark. The Lord told him that they (the ancients) said to themselves "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth." From there he was shown even greater abominations. The women were seen to be worshipping the god of flocks. The men were shown to be worshipping the god of the sun.
5. For all of these abominations the Jews would be punished. God would not spare them the wrath of his fury.

CHAPTER NINE

1. We note in this brief chapter the vision of the slaughter of those who were guilty.
2. Ezekiel ^{saw} six men come ~~for~~ from the north (again, a probable reference to the nation of Babylon which lay to the north of Judah) to bring punishment upon the city.
3. Prior to the actual distribution of said punishment, one of the men, who carried an inkhorn, went through the midst of the people to mark those who cried (i.e. were sorrowful) for the sins of the people. The exact marking is not known (cf. Clark), but the purpose was to distinguish those who were righteous from those who were unrighteous. In the book of Revelation, the wicked are said to have received the mark of the beast, thus identifying themselves with the beast. In that same book, the righteous are described as having the mark of the Lord upon them. The whole point is that God knows those who are his (cf. Ephesians 1:13ff w/ref. to the Spirit).
4. After the marking was carried out, the destruction began. In the midst of it all Ezekiel fell to the ground and asked if all would be destroyed. The Lord informed him that the people simply received the just recompense as their reward.

CHAPTER TEN

1. The vision initially seen in chapter one, and then alluded to briefly in chapter three, is taken up again in this chapter.
2. The man clothed with linen, who in the last chapter was the bearer of the inkhorn, was instructed to gather coals between the wheels and scatter them over the city. This specific image would have reference to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, which, after the siege, was indeed burned by the Babylonians.
3. Extensive description is given to the creatures and the wheels, but these were already noted in the first chapter. The greatest significance of this vision is in the fact that the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house (vs.18). Remember that one of the interpretations of the vision of the first chapter was that

the entire symbolic figure of the creatures and the wheels represented the glory of the Lord. Here in this chapter that glory is said to have moved, and in its moving, it left the former place and departed the house. The point is that God's presence is seen as departing from the children of Israel. Because of their sins he would no longer be with them as he was before. The tabernacle, the dwelling place of the presence of the Lord, would soon be destroyed. This occurred because of the sins, iniquities, and abominations of the nation of Israel. (cf. Ellicott, Clark, Zerr, Henry, JFB, Barnes, et al.)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Ezekiel is again guided by the spirit to see something else. In this chapter he is lead to see the sins of the princes of Israel, and ultimately commissioned to rebuke them for their evil ways.
2. In verse 5 we note that the spirit of the Lord fell upon Ezekiel and he then informed the princes that God knew the things that came into their minds, every one of them. They were responsible for the deaths of others, and they, too, would die, but not in the same manner. They would be taken from the city and delivered into the hand of strangers who would execute judgments among them. And then they would know that God was the Lord.
3. The following section of the chapter (vs.13ff) speaks of the promise of restoration and renewal that would come upon the Jews following the period of captivity. God would gather them together from the countries to which they were dispersed and give them the land of Israel. He would give to them a new spirit (cf. Jer.31:31/Heb.8) and a new heart. They would walk in his ways and follow after his statutes and he would be their God. Those who did not render their obedience to him would receive their just reward.
4. In the concluding verses we notice that the glory of the Lord moved again. Clark cites the following moves: 1) it was in the temple initially, 2) then it moved from the temple to the gates of the city, 3) it now moved to the mountain to the east of the city (later to be called Mt. Olivet, the same mountain where Christ wept for Jerusalem and from which he ascended), and 4) finally it left completely. Clark's emphasis is place upon the long-suffering of the Lord. He did not leave the Jews all at once, but rather a little bit at a time. In doing so he held out for them to repent at each move, but they did not, after which (according to Clark) the glory of the Lord returned to heaven. (cf. vs.16-little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come [?])
5. Following this vision Ezekiel was returned (figuratively because he was in reality already there) to the nation of Chaldea (Babylon). There he spoke to the captives concerning all of the things which the Lord had shown unto him.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. In this chapter Ezekiel is instructed to act out some signs to the people of the captivity. Remember that there were still some people who believed, that even though some of the Jews were carried away, the city of Jerusalem itself would never be affected.
2. In this intricate sign, Ezekiel acts as if he is gathering together belongings that one would take if he were forced to flee suddenly. He is told to act out these things in the sight of the people so that they would not only see these things, but so they would inquire about them. When this was accomplished, they asked, and Ezekiel was directed by the Lord with regard to the answer.
3. The actions carried out by Ezekiel typified and foreshadowed the actions of Zedekiah, the king of Judah who was still in Jerusalem. He was, however, not a king in the sense of the kings before him, for he was merely subject to the wishes of Nebuchadnezzar. (see Jeremiah) The signs showed that someone would seek to escape Jerusalem through a wall, which Zedekiah did, that someone would be captured, as Zedekiah was, and that they would be brought to this land and die there not having seen the land, which Zedekiah again fulfilled when he was brought captive to the land and his eyes were put out. All of this was done to inform the Jews in captivity that Jerusalem was really going to fall.
4. Toward the latter part of the chapter Ezekiel is instructed to act out the manner of life of the Jews in Jerusalem toward the end of that city. He informed the Jews in

captivity that the destruction of Jerusalem was coming, and that it was coming soon. The word of the Lord concerning this event was no longer going to be prolonged, it would come about soon.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. Ezekiel is now told to speak against the false prophets. The abundance of these prophets has already been discussed in Isaiah (ch.30:8ff), Jeremiah (ch.23), and previously in Ezekiel.
2. These false prophets were described as speaking out of their own hearts, foolish, following their own minds, speaking vanity and lying divination, speaking vain visions, speaking of peace when there was no peace, and other evil traits. The wall of falsehoods which they built would one day tumble down upon them. According to vs. 9, these men would soon know that God was the Lord.
3. The latter part of the chapter speaks against those who were false prophetesses. They were accused of sewing pillows to armholes, that is of sewing pillows (denoting comfort, rest, relaxation) to armholes (i.e. elbows), a figurative way of speaking peace when there was no peace. They, too, are described as lying people (vs.22) who made the heart of the righteous sad. As a result, they, too, would be punished.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. The initial portion of chapter fourteen addresses the subject of those who had set up idols in their hearts, yet who still sought to inquire of the Lord through the prophets.
2. The Lord, who removed himself from them, not due to the changing of his will, but due to their own change of heart, instructed Ezekiel to rebuke those who would so act. Imagine a group of people, who estranged themselves from the Lord by committing idolatry, who would still have the audacity to inquire of a prophet of God as if they were righteous in their lives. Such occurred often, but such was sin. (NOTE: Zedekiah once sought the advice of Jeremiah, cf. Jer.)
3. The Lord said that such people would be cut off from the midst of his people. Then they would know the Lord to be their God.
4. In addition to that, warnings are given concerning those prophets who prophesy falsely.
5. The last part of the chapter (vs.12ff) speaks of the surety of the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. The certainty of such destruction was of such nature that even the presence of such righteous men as Noah, Daniel, and Job could not preserve any souls but their own. The import of this simply shows the degree to which the children of Israel fell in their sins. We learn from Genesis 18 of the preserving power of righteous people. That same thought is echoed in Matthew 5:13 with regard to the followers of Christ being the salt of the earth. Evidently, the sins of Judah were so extreme that the Lord would not preserve them based upon the righteousness of anyone. Those who were righteous would be spared, but their righteousness would save no one else. (e.g. Though Job was an extremely righteous man, he lost all of his family.)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. In this brief chapter Jerusalem is compared to a vine. (cf. ch.17:3ff) Compared to all of the trees of the forest, a vine was of little value. It could not be used in industry for building like the trees of the forest; its value, therefore, was negligible.
2. If, however, the vine were to be burnt, then its worth would be even less than it was before it was burnt, which was already pretty low. The point being made, is that Jerusalem, due to her sins was of little value, but when she received punishment for those sins (i.e. the fire), she would be of even lesser value.
3. Due to such iniquities on the part of Israel, she would become desolate. She would be as worthless as a burnt vine. She would be of no use whatever.
4. All of this was intended to convey the precarious position which Jerusalem and Judah were presently occupying. The time was near for their destruction.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. This lengthy chapter is devoted to the topic of the unfaithfulness of Jerusalem. The Lord, who provided constantly for the needs of the Jews, now laments for the

- once great people. This same sort of lament characterized the Christ's comments with regard to the city of Jerusalem. (cf. MT. 23:37ff).
2. The first section of the chapter pictures Jerusalem in her former state. She was washed with water, clothed with embroidered work, shod with badgers' skin, girded with fine linen and silk. She was decked with ornaments, bracelets, and chains about her neck. She wore jewels, earrings, and a crown. She was arrayed with gold and silver. She ate flour, honey, and oil. She was exceeding beautiful.
 3. But...in her sins she began to play the harlot, with her precious metals she made idols and images, with her food and provisions she committed spiritual whoredom by offering them to idols, with her children she sacrificed to false idols. She constructed high (pagan) places of worship almost everywhere. She engaged in spiritual adultery with other nations. She became worse than a harlot; she was like an adulterous wife. She had left her Lord.
 4. As a result of such grievous sins she would be punished. She would be made to be naked, ashamed, before the nations. All of her adulterous lovers would turn against her. She would be thrown down from an eminent place. She would be stripped of her precious possessions. She will be stoned. Her houses will be burnt. She would become a proverb, a joke among the nations. She had become more corrupt than all those who went before her. She was sister to Sodom, and twice as sinful as Samaria.
 5. But, even though Israel was exceedingly wicked, God would keep his promise and maintain his covenant. Later they would know that he was the Lord.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1. In another case of imagery and figurative language, the Lord, through Ezekiel, reveals to Israel her sinfulness.
2. In this case we have the parable of the eagles and the vine. The first great eagle (vs.3) refers to Babylon. She plucked the high branch of the cedar (Judah and Jerusalem) and carried them off to a land of traffic (a reference to Babylon which was situated in a very commercial area). There the vine grew and prospered, but nevertheless it remained a low vine, it never grew to be beyond the stature of the eagle. The vine later inclined to grow to the second eagle, Egypt. Some of the king's seed, men of great position, made a covenant with the second eagle, and thereby went against the will of God. God informed Zedekiah through the prophet Jeremiah that if he (i.e. Zedekiah) remained in submission to Babylon, everything would be alright. On the other hand, if he (i.e. Zedekiah) were to rebel against Babylon, then he would be taken into the land of captivity.
3. The chapter quite plainly teaches that any attempt to form an alliance with Egypt and Pharaoh (vs.17) would fail. Should such an attempt be made anyway, the Lord would punish those involved. These events did actually occur, as we have already noted in our study of Jeremiah. (cf. Kgs./Chron.)
4. Emphasis is again given to knowing the Lord (vs.21,24). In the latter verse all the trees of the field refer to the nations of the world. They would know that the Lord was God.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. Throughout the book of Ezekiel we have noticed importance being placed upon individual responsibility. In this chapter we see that emphasis brought out even more clearly.
2. At the beginning of the chapter (vs.4) and at the end of the chapter (vs.20), the Lord teaches that every person is responsible for his own sins. The father does not bear the responsibility for the sins of his children, neither do the children bear the responsibility for their parents. Everyone is ultimately responsible for their own actions (II Cor. 5:10), even though they may have been influenced to some degree by the words and actions of others.
3. In between these two pronouncements of biblical truth, the prophet speaking for the Lord provides three examples. He begins first by citing an example of one who lives righteously. When that person dies he will surely live. But, if that person has a son who is truly wicked and who does not walk according to the lifestyle of his father before him, then that son will be judged and will die. As the example continues, if that wicked son, should bear a son of his own, and he (i.e. the second son) be righteous,

then that second son will not bear the iniquities of his father, but shall rather be counted for his own righteousness.

4. The remaining section of the chapter proclaims that the ways of the Lord are just. If the wicked turn from their sins, they shall be rewarded; but if the wicked remain in their sins, they shall be punished. If the righteous turn from their righteousness, they shall be punished; but if the righteous remain in their righteousness, then they shall obtain a reward. The Lord, through the prophet, emphasizes that his ways are just and equal, but the ways of Israel are not so (see vs. 25, 29).
5. The last verse of this chapter emphasizes the fact that the Lord does not have any pleasure in the death of him that dieth. He encourages all to turn...and live (cf. Deut.30:19).

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1. This entire chapter is a lamentation for the princes of Israel (Judah, see Zerr). The chapter, though short in length, is somewhat complicated in application. The princes of Israel (Judah) has reference to the kings of the nation.
2. The reference to the mother, a lioness, is applicable to the nation of Judah itself. The specific whelp referred to in the opening verses of the chapter would most likely have been Jehoahaz (cf. II Kgs.23:30), and the second of the whelps (vs.5) would most likely be a reference to Jehoiakim (cf. Zerr/Clark, et al.). Each of these whelps (kings) were wicked (i.e. they devoured men-vs.3,6), and as a result, they were punished.
3. Finally, the king was taken captive and brought to Babylon. (cf. Zerr, et al.)
4. In the later part of the chapter the imagery changes from that of a lioness, to that of a vine. The mother, that is the vine (Judah), is said to have had strong rods for sceptres that bare rule. She was at one time exalted, but now she was plucked up in fury and was cast down to the ground. This parable simply refers to the previous exalted state of Judah as it is compared to her present state of weakness.
5. The closing verses of the chapter teach us that she no longer has the strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. Though the lineage of the kings would continue, none of them from that point on would actually sit upon the throne of Judah again...until the Christ came. His throne, however, was not a physical one, but a spiritual one.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1. This entire chapter is composed of a history of rebellious Israel, and a prophecy against them.
2. God had chosen Jacob and made them known in the land of Egypt. He delivered them from that land and brought them forth toward the land of milk and honey. But in the day that they were supposed to go in to spy out the land, the nation rebelled against the Lord. As a result, they went to wander in the land of the wilderness. God gave them statutes, commandments, and showed them his judgments. He gave them his sabbaths to be a sign for himself and for them. But they continued to rebel against the Lord. Because of such wickedness the Lord warned them that they might not inherit the land of promise. They were punished in the wilderness, but God did not destroy all of them. He admonished them further to walk in his ways, but they did not listen. He later brought them into the land of promise, but even there they rebelled against the Lord. They worshipped images and engaged in idolatry. They offered their children to false gods and gave gifts to their images. God threatened to remove them from the promised land...but they did not listen. Later they were cast out, but God promised to restore them. Then they began to be the people that God wanted them to be.
3. In the last few verses were verses that spoke against the southern kingdom of Judah. They too were headed in the same direction as their northern relatives.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. In this chapter we note a constant reference to the sword of the Lord. A sword is prepared for the purpose of bringing judgment against the Jews. When they were told of its eventual coming, they fainted and felt weak. But it would still come.
2. The coming of this punishment is described as being a trial at which the judgment of the Lord would be made known. They had already been found guilty for their sins,

but their judgment had yet to come.

3. Note in verse five that these things were being done in order that "all flesh may know that I the Lord have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more." Constant emphasis has been given to this element throughout the book of Ezekiel.
4. Further proof that the sword is to be used in punishment is borne out in vs.10ff. The Jews were told not to make fun of such prophecies, for they were sure to be fulfilled.
5. The Jews were not the only ones that were going to receive punishment. We have already noted that both Isaiah and Jeremiah devoted some time to explaining the judgment which was to come upon other nations (e.g. Egypt, Edom, Babylon, Syria, Ammon, et al.). Here, in Ezekiel, we note the same predictions. In vs. 20ff judgment upon the Ammonites is briefly mentioned, but then in vs.28ff that fact is discussed in more detail.
6. The reference in vs.27 is to the Lord Jesus Christ. An earlier reference (Gen.49) was made to Shiloh, which simply means "until he come whose right it is", as this text reads. The kingdom truly belonged to Christ, not ~~just~~^{not} because he was of the lineage of David, but also because he was the true Son of God.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1. The first major section of this chapter (vs.1-22) details the sins of the city of Jerusalem. As the text indicates, her time was going to come. For her sins of idolatry, adultery, and her general filthiness the Lord was going to bring judgment upon her. She would become the laughing stock of all nations, those near and those afar. She would be gathered and tried like silver, brass, iron, lead, and other metals. The fire of the wrath of God would blow upon her and she would melt beneath such fury...all because of her sinful and wicked ways. Then she would know that the Lord was God (vs.16,22).
2. The second portion of this chapter depicts the sins of the princes, priests, and the prophets. The prophets are pictured as being like roaring lions that devour their prey, but in this case the prey was the souls of men. The priests, like ravening wolves, did not distinguish between the profane (i.e. the common) and the holy. They treated both of them in the same manner, and thus profaned the true form of worship which they were to practice. The princes were involved in the attainment of dishonest gain. The prophets were building weak walls with their lies that would one day fall down upon them. All of the people were oppressing and robbing and vexing the poor and the needy. When the Lord sought for a man to stand in the gap to plug up this sinful tide, he found none. Therefore the Lord poured his wrath upon them.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1. This entire chapter is devoted to an exposition of the sins of Israel and Samaria. In the opening verses these two nations are shown to be Aholah and Aholibah, sisters that are both harlots.
2. The first of these two sisters, Samaria or Aholah, committed her whoredoms with the nations around her and subsequently was punished by the Lord. This was done by delivering her into the hand of her lovers, who later turned against her.
3. The second of these two sisters, Jerusalem or Aholibah, after having seen the sins and the judgment come upon her sister, was even more wicked (vs.11). She, too, revelled in the role of a harlot with the other nations, and as her sister was delivered into the hands of her lovers, so would Jerusalem be delivered into the hand of those whom she formerly loved. The nations, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and others would come against her and she would be destroyed. Her garments would be torn from her. Her jewels would be stolen. Her sons and daughters would be slain. She would be left naked and destitute for all the world to see her and mock her to shame. As her sister before her, she would become drunken with destruction.
4. The last section of the chapter (vs.36ff) details the specific sins of the two sisters.
 - 1) They committed adultery.
 - 2) They committed adultery with their idols.
 - 3) They caused their sons to be offered in fire as sacrifices to false gods.
 - 4) After worshiping in such false manners, they had the nerve to go to the temple and attempt to worship the true God.
 - 5) They lured other nations to themselves by playing the role of harlots.
 As a result of these, and other sins, they were both to become shameful to the world. They would be punished...and then they would know that the Lord was God (vs.49).

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1. Ezekiel continues his efforts to teach the Jews in the midst of captivity via the use of parables. In this chapter we note the parable of the boiling pot. In previous chapters we noted a reference to this figure of speech in which Jerusalem was said to have been a cauldron and their enemies the contents of this said cauldron. In this illustration, however, the parable is not the same. Jerusalem is indeed the boiling pot, but rather than being filled with her enemies (which would show that she was victorious over them), the pot was filled with the luminaries of the city. This would include the prophets (false), the wicked priests, and the wicked princes. They were placed in the pot in order to purify them. When the water came to a boil and the contents began to cook, all of the impurities (the scum) would float to the surface. Through the use of this illustration, Jeremiah once again taught the Jews of the trials and the destruction which would most surely come upon the city of Jerusalem.
2. In vs.7-8 of this chapter, reference is made to the pouring of blood. According to the laws of Moses, when an animal was slain the blood was to be poured upon the ground so that the dirt might soak it up. Along these same lines, the body of a person that died was to be buried with honor and dignity in a respectful way. But the wicked of Jerusalem, who were responsible for the shed blood of many innocent people, are said to have poured that innocent blood upon a rock. This simply meant that all were able to see it. The manner in which they treated the innocent was not even on the level of slaying an animal in the proper fashion. Thus, their sins were that much more glaring.
3. In the last section of the chapter the prophet Ezekiel is told of the death of his wife. He is commanded not to show any physical or outward signs of mourning for her. When the prophet's wife did die, Ezekiel did just as he was commanded. When the actions, or the lack of them, were detected by the Jews, they inquired of Ezekiel with reference to the meaning of these things. Ezekiel informed them that one day a great tragedy would come upon the city of Jerusalem which would be so devastating that the people would be unable to mourn, but would rather just fade and wither away. When that day came (i.e. the day of the destruction of Jerusalem), Ezekiel would speak to the people and they would realize the truths of these prophecies and understand that God is the Lord.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

1. This chapter contains prophecies against the Ammonites, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines.
2. The Ammonites would receive punishment because they rejoiced in the downfall of the land of Judah.
3. The Moabites were going to be punished because they did not recognize that Judah was once the chosen people of God.
4. The Edomites received judgment because they dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance and by bringing offenses upon them.
5. The Philistines, because of their vengeance upon Judah, would also be destroyed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1. This chapter is the first of three chapters that center around prophecies against Tyre. Tyre was the principal city of the land of Phoenicia, which land lay directly to the north of Palestine. From the context of this chapter and the ones to follow, it is evident that Phoenicia was quite prosperous as a center of commerce. Because of the prominence of the city of Tyre, its name was often used to represent the entire country. (References to Tyre and Sidon are made by Christ in Matthew 11:20ff.)
2. Punishment was to come upon this land because of the derision which they heaped upon Jerusalem. Verse 2 makes use of the word "aha" which was simply an expression of derision. Tyre hoped that the downfall of Jerusalem would prove to be beneficial for its own financial prospects. It was for this reason that this nation was to be punished.
3. Much has been said concerning the fulfillment of the prophecies of Tyre and Sidon. Note the following:

"At that time [Alexander's attack in 332 B.C.] Tyre was situated on an island half a mile from the mainland; it was completely surrounded by prodigious [huge] walls, the loftiest portion of which on the side fronting the mainland reached a height of not less than 150 feet; and notwithstanding the persevering efforts of Alexander, he could not have succeeded in his attempt if the harbor of Tyre to the north had not

blockaded by the Cyprians and that to the south by the Phoenicians, thus affording an opportunity to Alexander for uniting the island to the mainland by an enormous mole. (The materials for this he obtained from the remains of the old Tyre, scraping the very dust from her rocks into the sea, as prophesied by Ezekiel, Ezekiel 26:3,4,12, 21 more than 250 years before.)" [Zerr, Vol.IV, p.171]

Even to this day the site of this destruction is nothing more than a place for the fisherman to spread their nets to dry.

4. The Lord promised that Tyre would be made a terror and "thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God." The wickedness of Tyre is not portrayed in these accounts as being vile and full of evil filthiness, but Tyre is pictured as being desirous of ill-gotten wealth. This is just as sinful as if they were involved in whoredom and idolatry.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

1. In continuing prophecies against Tyre, the prophet Ezekiel speaks about the greatness of the city and the depths to which it would fall.
2. Tyre considered itself to be the perfect city. It had ships made of the finest materials. Fir trees of Senir, cedars of Lebanon, oaks of Bashan, benches of ivory, linen from Egypt and other great treasures went into these vessels. Furthermore, these sailing ships were manned by the best sailers, the best pilots, the best repairmen. The armies of Tyre were great. The merchants of Tyre were wealthy. They accumulated precious gems, coral, and valuable linens.
3. Following the listing of all of these impressive features, Ezekiel speaks about the destruction which is to come upon the city. "...all thy company, which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin." (vs.27)

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1. This chapter is one of the very many misunderstood chapters in the Bible. It has often been referred to in order to point out the origin of Satan (cf. Luke 10:18; Is.14; and Rev.12). Many Bible scholars (cf. Gardiner on Ezekiel in Ellicott's Commentary, Clarke, and Barnes) point out that a great majority of this chapter is written in a very ironical way to point out the folly of the ruler of Tyre.
2. That man who ruled Tyre, here referred to as the prince of Tyrus (vs.2), was most vain in his ways. He considered himself to be God, but he was only man. His wisdom was great in his own eyes (cf. authors noted above and Keil and Delitzsch on vs.3), but he was steeped in folly. Though he accumulated great riches through means of commerce among many nations, those nations would one day rebel against him.
3. He seemed to think that he was a perfect man, yet one day he and his country would no longer exist.
4. The last portion of this chapter (vs.20-26) centers around prophecies made against Zidon (also Sidon). She was at one time considered to be a "pricking brier" to the house of Israel, but soon she would be punished. Four times in this brief section reference is made to the fact that they would "know that I am the Lord".

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

1. The last of the prophecies against other nations centers around the country of Egypt. This chapter, as well as the next three chapters, concern themselves with the different aspect of the judgments to be brought against that nation.
2. Several references are made to the rivers of Egypt in chapter twenty-nine. You will remember that the Egyptians worshiped the god of the river Nile, and that this particular god was the subject of one of the plagues that came upon the nation of Egypt while the Jews were held in bondage in that land. Here we notice the same sort of pronouncement made against that god.
3. Egypt would be punished because of their promise to aid Israel which failed. Egypt is therefore referred to as a "staff of reed". They could not meet up to that which was expected of them. As a result, they were punished.
4. Their land would become desolate for a period of forty years. Like the Jews, the Egyptians would be scattered abroad during this period of time. When they returned to their homeland, the Egyptians would no longer be the strong and influential kingdom they once

were, but rather they would be the basest (i.e. the lowest) of the kingdoms. They would no longer rule other nations. Israel would never again place their confidence and trust in them. Then they would know that the Lord was God.

5. Egypt was to be taken by Babylon under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar. When he went against the city of Tyre Nebuchadnezzar did not receive much reward, but that would be recompensed when he went up against the nation of Egypt. Because he wrought for the Lord (i.e. was used as the instrument of the Lord) he would be allowed to take Egypt.
6. The last verse of the chapter speaks of the time when Israel would once again be a horn of strength. Then they shall know that the Lord is God.

CHAPTER THIRTY

1. Chapter thirty continues to present prophecies against the nation of Egypt. This chapter focuses more on the actual fall of that country. The time is said to be near, and from history we learn that the fall of Egypt was only shortly after the fall of the city of Jerusalem.
2. In addition to the land of Egypt receiving punishment from the Lord, we are informed in this chapter that all of the nations that were affiliated with Egypt would also receive punishment. All of them would become desolate and wasted. Then they would know that the Lord is God.
3. We learn from vs.10ff that these things were to be fulfilled through the role which Nebuchadnezzar was to play. This aspect of the punishment was just mentioned in the previous chapter, but it is repeated numerous times in order to impress upon the Jews that this was a prophecy of God. When the fulfillment finally came, the Jews would be without excuse for not knowing that God spoke these things to them through Ezekiel and the rest of the prophets.
4. When Nebuchadnezzar came against Egypt he is said to have filled the country with the slain of that land. You will remember that Jeremiah cautioned the people numerous times that Babylon would come upon Jerusalem. One time, when Babylon's army was approaching, the Egyptians came toward the city and the Babylonians fled. Jeremiah warned the Jews not to think that Babylon would never take the city of Jerusalem. The Jews, thinking that the Babylonians feared the Egyptians, may have thought that Egypt would always be able to protect them...but now that Jerusalem has fallen, Egypt would also fall under the assault of Babylon. Then they would know that the Lord was God.
5. The concluding verses of this chapter emphasize by means of imagery the defeat that would come upon Egypt. Egypt and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, would have their arms broken, that is to say that they would be utterly defeated. On the other hand, the arms of Babylon would be strengthened, they would be ultimately victorious.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

1. This chapter contains more prophecies against the land of Egypt, but it mainly emphasizes those predictions made regarding Pharaoh.
2. A rather extended illustration is given concerning the nation of Assyria as a tree (cf. Matthew 13:31ff). Assyria was pictured as being a great and mighty tree, a tree that towered above all of the rest of the trees (nations). She was a prominent tree, a respected tree, and a lofty tree. But, when this great tree Assyria began to exalt itself above the other trees...it was brought down. All of the birds and the fowl that once lodged in this tree fled from it. It became diseased. The beasts of the field came to devour it. It was no longer the great tree it once was.
3. The illustration serves to impress upon Pharaoh that he too considered himself to be great (like the prince of Tyrus in ch.28). If he continued in such pride and vain glory then he too would become like the tree of Assyria.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

1. The prophecies against the nation of Egypt continue in this chapter. Like the last chapter, this one centers primarily around Pharaoh. As a matter of fact, the chapter is identified as being a lamentation (i.e. mourning) for Pharaoh. Such an appellation indicates that Pharaoh did not heed the warning given in the previous chapter.
2. Pharaoh was described as being like a young lion, but he had burdened and afflicted many.

- The Lord, therefore, would spread a net of other nations over him to gather Pharaoh up. Like the fallen tree of Assyria, the other nations would destroy Pharaoh and Egypt. Many of those nations would be amazed at the fall of Egypt, just as many nations were astounded at the fall of Israel and Judah. They (i.e. the other nations who witnessed and heard of the fall of Egypt) would tremble and marvel, thinking that such events might one day come upon them.
3. Babylon is again identified as the executioner of Egypt. She would come and remove all of the pomp of Egypt and Egypt would then be left desolate. No longer would she be full of riches, but rather she would now be empty...and all those associated with her would be in the same condition. All would lament over Pharaoh then.
 4. The second section of the chapter contains another lament, this one directed mainly at the nation of Egypt and not so much at Pharaoh. The lamentation is directed not only at Egypt, but also at her fallen cohorts. All of them will be cast into the pit together. None of them will be exalted or beautiful any longer.
 5. The other nations to which such prophecies apply are Asshur, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, the Zidonians...all of them would fall as well. Pharaoh would be comforted (ironically) by their presence with him.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

1. The first section of this chapter (vs.1-9) list the responsibilities of the watchman, the title and work of the prophet Ezekiel.
2. The watchman of the city of Jerusalem served in the capacity which his name implies, he simply served as a lookout. When invaders or some like threat were spotted, then he would warn the inhabitants of that possibility. The spiritual watchman had the same sort of responsibilities, only they were applied to the souls of men. Ezekiel as a watchman had the job of warning the Jews of impending spiritual danger. As a watchman, he was responsible to tell the Jews of those things which God directed him to tell the Jews. If he did not, then he would be responsible for their souls. If, however, he performed his duty, but the Jews did not heed his warnings, then they would be judged accordingly but he would save his own soul.
3. The second section of the chapter (vs.10-20) recapitulates the main theme of chapter 18. If a man sins, then that man is responsible for his sin. If he continues in sin, he will be lost; but if he repents of the sin and becomes a righteous man then he will be forgiven. If a man is righteous, he is responsible for his behaviour as well. If he remains a righteous man, then he will not die in eternal hell. If, however, he changes his lifestyle and adopts the ways of the unrighteous, then that man, being responsible for such actions, would be lost. Emphasis is again given to the justice of God concerning these matters. The Jews thought that the ways of God might be unequal, but that is not the case. God's ways were/are equal, the ways of man are not (i.e. they are not ultimately equal or just).
4. The third section of the chapter (vs.21-29) addresses itself to the news of the fall of Jerusalem. Ezekiel had been warning the Jews in captivity for years that this event would happen...and it finally did. The Jews were under this sort of impression: if Abraham, being one man, receive the fulfillment of the promise of God concerning the land of Canaan, then we the Jews, being many people, would most certainly retain the land of Canaan. Such fallacies of logic caused the Jews to deceive themselves. The promises of God, when conditional, do not find those conditions based sheerly upon the numbers of the people involved, but rather upon the righteousness of the people involved. Abraham was judged to be a righteous man, but Israel in its present condition was far from righteousness. For this reason God allowed the Jews to be taken into captivity and the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem to be desolated.
5. The final section of the chapter proves to be a vindication for the prophet Ezekiel. Like most of the prophets, Ezekiel was not overwhelmingly accepted by the Jews. They simply did not believe that that was the way that everything was going to be. Verses 31 and 32 quite accurately portray the condition of the Jews during his day. They came to hear the words of the Lord, but they would not do them. With their mouths they show much love, but their heart went after covetousness. The words of the Lord were like a sweet music to their ears. Ezekiel played well...for they heard the words, but did not do

them. The last verse of the chapter is the verse that proves Ezekiel to have been correct all along. "And when this (i.e. the destruction of Jerusalem) cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them." [The underlined portion of this was inserted by me in order to explain the referent of the word this.]

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

1. This entire chapter is a series of prophecies against the shepherds (i.e. those who were sinful) of the nation of Israel.
2. Verse two correctly indicates the status of such false shepherds. "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"
3. These shepherds (the word is not a specific reference to any one person or group of people, but rather is a reference to all of those who were in a position to help the nation of Israel. This would include the princes, prophets, priests, et al.) did not help the diseased (spiritually), they have not healed the sick, they did not bound up that which was broken, and they did not seek that which was lost. Rather than keep these responsibilities, they were making the flock (the nation) a prey to all. As a result of all of these insufficiencies in the work of these shepherds, the Lord was against them.
4. The latter half of the chapter indicates that the Lord would care for his flock. He would care for them, seek after them when they were lost (Luke 19:10, Matthew 18:11), he would destroy those who sought to harm them, he would take care of the weak and the sick, and he would feed them with judgment.
5. He promised a shepherd who would guide them (vs.23-24). This, of course, was ultimately fulfilled in the coming of the good shepherd, the Christ (cf. John 10:1ff).
6. God would make with his flock a covenant of peace. He would cause the predators to be cast out of the land. He would enable his flock to dwell in the land and he would give unto them showers of blessing. All of the trees would yield their fruit for Israel once again, and then all would ~~no~~ ^{know} that the Lord was indeed God.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

1. This brief chapter is a prophecy against Mount Seir. When we remember that Mount Seir was the abode of the descendants of Esau, then this chapter will make more sense to us.
2. Esau's descendants were later referred to as the Edomites (Edom being another name for Esau), and their nation was later called Edom. That same nation was even later referred to as the land of Idumea (vs.15).
3. The reason for this judgment to be brought against Mount Seir is amply portrayed in verse five of the chapter. They (i.e. the Edomites) had a perpetual hatred against the children of Israel. If we stopped and traced the history of the Jews, we would note that they ran into conflicts with the Edomites numerous times.
4. Because of such hatred the Edomites would be punished. Their land would become desolate. When the rest of the earth was rejoicing, they would be in sorrow. Then they would know that the Lord was God.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

1. This entire chapter is devoted to an explanation of the future restoration of the nation of Israel.
2. God promised that Israel would once again be a prosperous nation. No longer would the nations around them hold them in derision. Israel would once again be exalted, and the nations would marvel.
3. Israel would be given a new heart, a new spirit. The reference to this is quite similar to the new covenant that was previously spoken of in the book of Jeremiah and in the book of Ezekiel. There would be some significant changes made. The Jews, though they may not have understood these changes would begin to move much more closer to the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12. The seed, that is the Christ was now much more closer than before.
4. The Jews, who were once scattered among the heathen, would be restored to the land of

Canaan. The land would once again be fruitful for them. It was once desolate, but now it would become like the garden of Eden (by comparison-not in actuality).

5. When Israel was restored the heathen would then know that the Lord was God, and, in addition to that Israel would also know (vs.36 & 38).

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

1. Two visions are given within this chapter, each of which pertains to the future restoration of the children of Israel. This initial vision centers around a valley of dry bones, an obvious reference to the nation of Israel in the midst of captivity. God would restore the nation just as the dry bones (dead men) were restored in the vision. He would give them life and breath and all that they needed in order to be sustained. The vision, therefore, was to signify to the Jews in captivity the certainty of the coming restoration.
2. The second of the two visions in the chapter involves two sticks, the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph (Ephraim). The stick is also referred to as Ephraim because 1) Ephraim was one of the sons of Joseph and 2) the name Ephraim was later commonly applied to the northern kingdom of Israel. The importance of this vision is quite significant. The plain teaching is that Israel would once again be a nation composed of all of the Jews. No longer would there be two divisions of the kingdoms, the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel. The joining of the two sticks into one is simply a reference to the uniting of the two previously divided sections of the kingdom. It is a fact of history, both secular and religious, that the Assyrians carried the northern kingdom into the same place that the Babylonians (who later conquered the Assyrians) carried the southern kingdom. The Jews, therefore, which were in captivity were Jews from both kingdoms of Israel. When the period of captivity was over and the period of restoration began, both groups of Jews returned to a united land. The passage is not a reference, as the Mormons claim, to the Bible (the stick of Judah) and the book of Mormon (the alleged stick of Joseph). Such an interpretation fits neither the context nor the purpose of this passage. The text itself in verse 22 states: "And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all;..." Note also that the following passages indicate that all of Israel returned to the land of Canaan following the period of captivity. (cf. Ezra 2:70, 6:17, 8:35; Ezek.39:25; et al.)
3. The last portion of this chapter indicates the differences that would exist in Israel following the period of restoration. The emphasis upon the spiritual aspect of their relationship to the Lord is pointed out once again. Reference is also made to "David" who would reign over them. The point is that the seed of David (the Christ) would ultimately reign over not only the Jews, but the whole world as well.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

1. This chapter and the next are directed against Gog and Magog. Gog is the name of the ruler and Magog is the name of the land. The exact identification of Gog is not known and may have been a title applied to the ruler in much the same way that Pharaoh was the title applied to the rulers of Egypt. Magog is a land north of Israel and is mentioned only a few times in the Bible (cf. Gen, Chron., Rev.).
2. After the Jews returned to their home land of Canaan Gog and his armies came against them and battled against them. There seems to have been the thought in the mind of the invaders that Israel would be quite weak due to their recent return from captivity.
3. The chapter quite plainly indicates that the Jews would be brilliantly victorious over the people of Magog and would soundly beat them back. The destruction, once complete, would take 7 years to clear. The weapons captured would supplant firewood for the coming years and bodies would be strewn everywhere.
4. Verse 17 informs us that the prophets (which ones are not indicated) prophesied of this event in Israel's history. Furthermore, it is pointed out that God allowed these things to occur in order to further "cleanse" Israel from their former bad reputation. The defeat of these ruffians would provide a "feather in the cap" of Israel, thus showing their surrounding neighbors that they were once again the awesome nation they used to be.

5. Note again the references in this chapter to the knowledge that would be brought to Israel and the nations through these events (cf. vs.14,23),

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

1. This chapter continues the prophecy against Gog and Magog, The victory of the Jews over the people of Magog is pictured to be quite devastating. The mountains are said to have fallen on Magog. All of the beasts of the field in conjunction with the fowls of the air are depicted as joining in on the battle and the resulting victory.
2. The import of these events is once again emphasized in this chapter. Verse 6 teaches that "they shall know that I am the Lord". The following verse shows that "the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel". Verse 13 states that these things will be done "that I shall be glorified saith the Lord God."
3. A portion of the chapter pictures men who would go from one end of the land to the other just identifying the places where fallen people were lying. By placing a marker by the remains, the Jews knew where to go to bury the defeated warriors of Magog.
4. The last few verses of the chapter point out the significance of these events as they specifically related to the children of Israel. Verse 22 says: "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward." In addition to that reference is made to the renewed mercy which would once again be made manifest to the Jews (vs.25). God would no more hide his face from them (a figurative expression meaning that God would refuse to bless them) as he had in the past. Now he would pour (expression of abundance) his blessings and his spirit upon the house of Israel (vs.29).

CHAPTERS FORTY, FORTY-ONE, & FORTY-TWO

1. It serves us well to discuss these three chapters as one unit for they all deal with the same subject, that is the temple.
2. The introductory verses of chapter forty inform us that Ezekiel was taken in a vision (vs.2) as "the hand of the Lord" was upon him. This simply indicates that something was being revealed unto him in a miraculous sort of way. Jacob, Abraham, Daniel, and other Old Testament characters saw visions as the Lord revealed unto them select subjects.
3. This vision, however, is not quite the same as those previously mentioned, but it does bear a remarkable resemblance to the visions of the apostle John as they are recorded in the book of Revelation. In this book John beheld a vision of God (ch.4), visions of heaven (ch.20-22), and of the temple (ch.11ff). The existence of the temple in the book of Revelation has lead many Bible scholars on a "wild goose chase" concerning the dating of the book, but such was not even the primary purpose for the inclusion of that vision. The apostle John saw the temple as it was being measured, in much the same way that Ezekiel in these chapters saw it.
4. The act of measuring in the Bible can have one of two different meanings when it is found within a vision. The simple act of measuring outside of visions bears no real significance. For example, the measurements given to Noah concerning the proportions of the ark did not carry with them some deep dark meaning or secret. They were quite simply the measures that God wanted and which Noah used in the construction of the ark.
5. The act of measuring, as just mentioned, in visions relates to either: 1) the anticipation of building or 2) the anticipation of destruction. Several Old Testament passages present a city or a nation as it is being marked off (measured) for the purposes of destruction. In much the same way an explosive expert calculates the size, height, and proportions of a dilapidated building in order to determine the proper amount of dynamite to be used in its ultimate demise. On the other hand, the act of measuring in visions quite frequently refers to the construction of something. Such is the meaning in this passage and in the passage in Revelation.
6. The specific item discussed in this passage is, of course, the temple. It was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's armies when they came upon Jerusalem and Judah for the third time. Its precious objects and valuable pieces were taken and brought to the land of Babylon where they remained until some of them were returned during the restoration.

7. The temple, as you are well aware, served as the focal point of Jewish worship to the Lord. The re-construction of this important facility simply signified the guarantee of the future restoration of the nation of Israel to Canaan. Note that the specific dimensions are given to Ezekiel. The tabernacle which was built in the wilderness at the base of Mount Sinai was also built in accordance with God's plan (Heb.8:5), and the first rendition of the temple was built as God had instructed David and Solomon. (Solomon was the actual builder of the temple, but his father David had collected many of the materials for its construction prior to his death which were subsequently used by his son.)
8. Toward the end of the 42nd chapter Ezekiel is given instructions for the specific uses of the temple, which would of course correspond to the usage in effect prior to the destruction of the first temple.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

1. Within the same vision that was described in the previous three chapters, we note that Ezekiel sees the glory of the Lord as it fills the temple. When the children of Israel were initially instructed to build the tabernacle and keep the system of worship that God commanded at that time, it was all in order that God might dwell in their midst (figuratively). All of the book of Leviticus shows to what extent the Jews were expected to fulfill the wishes and desires of the Lord. When all of these statutes, commands, precepts, etc. were kept, then the Lord dwelt in their midst. We noted previously that the Jews were very much conscious of this presence of the Lord. Jeremiah 7 informed us that the Jews were under the impression that the presence of the Lord in their temple would save them, perhaps in much the same way that their ancestors thought that the presence of the ark of the covenant in battle would enable them to defeat the armies of the Philistines. God never made any such guarantee. God sought for the children of Israel to be faithful and obedient to his commands. They were not to trust in other nations, gods, idols, themselves, or any object used in worship (the temple, etc.). For this reason, when the children of Israel grew hardened of heart, God gave them up to the spoilers and enemies of the nation. We noted previously that the presence of the Lord left the temple and moved outside of its premises. It then moved outside of the wall of the city, and then finally returned to its source and place of origin, to God himself. This exit was made through the east gate of the city, the same gate that is mentioned in the introduction of this chapter.
2. The point to be made is simply that the renewal of religious fervor in the Jews would bring once again the blessing of God, part of which was the presence of the Lord that dwelt in the Holy of Holies in the temple.
3. The greater portion of chapter forty-three (vs.6-27) contains laws regulating the use of the temple. Such subjects as the manner of sacrifice, the use of the altar of incense, the size of the various articles of furniture, etc. are discussed.
4. The chapter closes by saying "and I will accept you, saith the Lord God." This same thought was given to the Jews when they initially erected the tabernacle, and then again when the first temple was built. God promised to be with the Jews when they evidenced a faithfulness to him.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

1. The person or being who guided Ezekiel in this series of visions led him out of the east gate which was then closed. Ezekiel was then informed that the gate was not to be used by the general public, but following verses inform us that it would be used by the prince. The term "prince" has no reference to any specific person, but simply refers to the leader (political, religious, social, etc.) of the city or nation at that time. [Remember that no descendant of David ever sat upon the throne of David subsequent to the period of captivity. Though they had the legal right to reign, there was no king in Israel until the coming of the Christ, who would reign forever over the spiritual kingdom.]
2. The Jews were warned about abusing the temple and the sanctuaries of the temple by bringing "unclean" (Gentile) people into its premises.
3. The bulk of the chapter (vs.9-31) contains instructions for the priests. They are told to keep themselves pure, to refrain from idols, to minister in the temple, to wear

the prescribed clothing, to abstain from the use of wine, to keep from shaving their heads, whom to marry and whom not to marry, to teach the people, to sit in judgment (not a reference to criticizing needlessly or passing final judgment) upon the affairs of the people, and to keep the laws and statutes of the Lord.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

1. When the people returned to their homeland, there would of necessity be some manner in which the Lord wanted the land to be divided. That manner is explicated here and, in general, it follows the distribution of the land as was carried out during the days of Joshua...with one exception. In numerous instances the children of Israel were required to give of the first of their increase. When harvest came, they were expected to give of the best of the harvest. With regard to their cattle, sheep, camels, etc., the Lord demanded of them the best of the herd/flock. In this manner the children of Israel provided for the priests and the work of the temple. Here, as the nation was about to return to the land of Canaan, a specified portion of ground is set aside to be used as a "holy portion of the land". Within this space the sanctuary would stand and the priests would abide. Additional specific uses are further spelled out in the first six verses of the chapter.
2. In addition to a portion of land to be designated as a "holy portion", there were rules given regarding the status and judgments of the "princes" of the land. The princes, or rulers, were commanded to refrain from oppressing the the people and were told to maintain a just (i.e. fair) system of weights and measures in business.
3. The latter portion of the chapter describes the princes relationship to the temple. Certain offerings were expected of him that were not expected of the rest of the people. Beside that, the priest was required to participate in certain functions in the offering of sacrifices.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

1. This entire chapter further explains the worship to be conducted at the temple.
2. Reference is made in this chapter to: 1) the manner of preparing and sacrificing the burnt offering, 2) the manner of preparing and sacrificing the meat offering, 3) the method of keeping the solemn feasts, 4) the animals, meats, and grains to be used in each specific sacrifice, 5) the manner of preparing and sacrificing the guilt offering, and 6) the role of the priests and Levites in the temple area.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

1. Further reference is made to the "he" that was guiding Ezekiel in this vision. The book of Revelation makes frequent references to angels and their role in the unveiling of the visions to the apostle John, but thus far no indication has been given as to the identity of Ezekiel's "guide".
2. Outside of the temple area that Ezekiel was previously privileged to witness in his vision, there lay a vast river. He was taken to see this river and as the journey progressed the river became progressively deeper. First it was only ankle deep, next it was knee deep and waist deep, and finally it could not be passed over. As he glanced around he noticed that there were very many trees on both sides of the river. Verses 9-12 inform us that every living thing that moved which drank of the river lived and that the river was the site of numerous and abundant fruits and meats and medicines.
3. The significance of such a vision is quite obvious. In the garden of Eden there were rivers that watered the garden. In the midst of the garden were trees and all manner of foods that were suitable for consumption. A great majority of these foods were taken away when Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden. The earth received a curse and would not yield her fruits as freely as before; now man would have to toil and sweat in order to obtain food. Toward the close of the book of Revelation we are made aware of a great change in the state of things. In heaven we are once again able to partake of the great fruits and blessings which were formerly in the garden of Eden. The last chapters of the Bible even informs us of the restoration of the tree of life which also was in the garden of Eden. This chapter of Ezekiel simply

addresses the blessings which would once again flow upon the children of Israel when they were restored to their homeland. (cf. Eph.3:20).

4. The last part of the chapter makes further reference to the boundaries and the divisions of the land and how it was to be divided. Notice that verse 21 indicates that the land would be divided "according to the tribes of Israel." If this had reference to only two of the tribes (Judah and Benjamin), then the division would not seem to be quite so difficult. We learn, however, in the following chapter that the division of the land was to be among all of the tribes of Israel. If ~~the~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ tribes of Israel (usually thought to be the ten northern tribes) were "lost", then there would be no need to mention all twelve of the tribes.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

1. The final chapter of the book of Ezekiel gives further information about the division of the land of Canaan when the Jews returned from the period of captivity.
2. Further instructions regarding the services of the priests are given as well as further details about the "holy portion" of land.
3. The last verses of the chapter contain more information about the division of the land among the tribes of Israel and also indicates that the twelve gates of the city would bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. This corresponds with the last chapters of Revelation where we are also informed that the city new Jerusalem would have the names of the twelve apostles upon the foundations of the city.

EZEKIEL: A REVIEW

In the introduction to this book (cf. pg.201) a great deal of time was spent in discussing the genre of literature to which Ezekiel belongs. You may want to consult that page in order to understand the nature of apocalyptic literature. Ezekiel, as we previously mentioned, was a prophet that labored during the days of the Jewish captivity in the nation of bondage. He is, therefore, properly identified as an "exilic prophet". He was a contemporary of both Jeremiah, a prophet in Judah, and Daniel, another "exilic prophet". Because of his location in Babylon, Ezekiel addressed the situation regarding Israel's relationship to God from a different perspective. In this regard Ezekiel's messages are more visionary than they are prophetic. That is not to say that Ezekiel's messages are not prophetic, but that they are prophetic in quite a different way. The book of Ezekiel is replete with visions, metaphors, allegories, and the like. His predictive messages make a greater impact due to this particular style. The book opens with a grandiose vision of the glory of God, which is repeated three times before the book concludes. Ezekiel, the watchman, is commissioned to watch over Israel and to warn and inform them of impending danger. His messages contained numerous predictions of judgments to be brought against the nations for their sins. The book also mentions the remnant of the nation of Israel that would be allowed to escape and one day return to the land. He quite vividly portrays God's departure from the temple and then toward the close of the book depicts the return of the Lord's presence subsequent to the restoration of the nation. Like Jeremiah and Isaiah before him, Ezekiel gives a stern rebuke to false prophets in the land. He speaks of Jerusalem in a manner that the Jews would not be able to misunderstand. Jerusalem is shown to be just what she was in the sight of God, unfaithful and useless. Toward the end of the book a great deal of space is devoted to the restoration of the nation of Israel, both kingdoms included. Different parables such as the vision of the dry bones and the union of the two sticks are given in order to illustrate the coming glory that would be Israel's. Extensive time is given to an explanation of the future temple, its dimensions, its usages, and its re-acquaintance with the presence of the Lord. Concerning his teaching:

"He repeats all the great teachings of those who preceded him, laying special emphasis upon such matters as justice, morality, and spiritual religion, but manifesting less interest in ceremonialism. ... He joins Jeremiah in declaring the moral responsibility of the individual, and formulates in considerable detail the doctrines of repentance and forgiveness, particularly showing that repentance is necessary to salvation. ... He proclaims the necessity of a new heart and a new

spirit... As a Messianic prophet he looked for the full and glorious restoration of the Jews under a theocracy with a complete national system centered in the temple, which has the services of both priest and Levites... Both as priest and as prophet he desired to promote popular holiness and to correct some of the abuses that endangered the nation. In doing this he denounced Judah's sins and predicted the downfall of Jerusalem..., and proclaimed coming judgments over foreign nations..." [Kidwell, p.124]

DANIEL

Daniel, like Ezekiel, labored during the time of the Jews' captivity in the land of Babylon. Unlike Ezekiel, Daniel became a prominent figure in the government of the Babylonians and later in the government of the Medes and the Persians. In this facet of his life he was like Nehemiah. The book of Daniel contains the same sort of figurative language that we noticed in the book of Ezekiel. Daniel makes specific ^{reference to the} restoration to the future history of Israel and the Jews, paying specific attention to the kingdom which was to come through the Christ. In this regard he emphasizes the role that God plays in the establishing of nations and the demise of those same nations. The faithfulness of Daniel and his friends contains numerous lessons in themselves.

CHAPTER ONE

1. The opening verses of the book of Daniel set the stage for the remainder of events to be discussed later. Daniel was a Jew in captivity in the hands of the Chaldeans. He was among the children of Judah (vs.6) that were found in the favor of the king and subsequently was in a greater position than most of the Jews. Incidentally, Daniel is the Jewish name of the main character of the book. His Babylonian name was Belteshazzar. The other three names listed in verse 6 are the Hebrew names of the three men that we know better as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
2. In verse 8 of this chapter we note that the character of Daniel is similar to that of the priest Ezra (cf. Ezra 7:10). Daniel didn't have to wait to decide whom he was going to serve. He already determined to serve the Lord regardless of what might come his way.
3. We learn in this chapter that the people who served in the court of the king were expected to eat of the king's food. Because these things were not allowed to be eaten by the Jews, Daniel and his friends refused to eat them. When the steward informed them that the king would find out about this matter, Daniel and his friends asked that they be tested. They went for a period of ten days eating some sort of cereal mixture and their countenance (appearance) did not diminish, but rather it improved.
4. We also learn from verse 17 that God gave these four Hebrew men wisdom and knowledge which even exceeded the wisdom of the court of the king (cf. vs.20).

CHAPTER TWO

1. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had a dream that disturbed him, but when he awakened he could not recall what it was that he dreamed. He called for the magicians and astrologers of his court to bring these things to his remembrance, and when they could not do so the king threatened to kill all of the wise men of the nation.
2. When Daniel learned of this he was about to be slain for he was one of the wise men of the court. He informed his three friends of the matter and they all beseeched the Lord that they might learn of this matter so that their lives would be spared. In verse 19 we learn that the Lord revealed the contents and the meaning of the dream to Daniel in a night vision.
3. Daniel, therefore, went before the king of Babylon and informed him of the dream which he had and the significance of that dream. The dream was of an image composed of different elements, each of which represented a kingdom and the first standing for the present kingdom of Babylon.
4. In addition to the image, Nebuchadnezzar beheld a stone that was cut without hands (of miraculous origin) which smote the image and destroyed it. The stone went on to become a great mountain (cf. Is.2, Mic.4).