



Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 11

*Theme: Prophecy against Jerusalem's rulers;
Ezekiel's enacting Jerusalem's destruction;
prophecy against pseudoprophets, prophetesses*

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Theme: Prophecy against Jerusalem's rulers; Ezekiel's enacting Jerusalem's destruction; prophecy against pseudoprophets, prophetesses.

Missler: Review

Ezekiel was trained as a priest, but called to the office of a prophet at a time in the history of Israel in which they were partially in captivity. He and His friends were already in Babylon, but Ezekiel was preaching to those who were still back in Jerusalem, who felt their troubles were only temporary, who did not really perceive the inevitability of God's impending judgment on them. God was using Ezekiel not just to talk to those of Judah. There is the possibility that he may here be talking to us as well, in terms of the idols that we worship, and the false prophets that compete for our ears.

McGee: In chapter 11 there is a prophecy against the rulers who were still in Jerusalem. Although most of the people had been carried into captivity, Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed. Zedekiah was still on the throne. Not only were the rulers in rebellion against God, they were in rebellion against the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar.

Chuck Smith Introduction: Now Ezekiel is in Babylon during the time of these prophecies, but the Spirit of God transports him back to Jerusalem. And there he sees things that are transpiring in Jerusalem.

Now as a background, there are some Jewish zealots who are still in Jerusalem who have rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and they are thinking that they are going to be successful in their rebellion. There are false prophets in Jerusalem that are encouraging the people in their rebellion, telling them that they are going to push Nebuchadnezzar right out of the picture. Jeremiah is in Jerusalem saying, "Don't listen to the false prophets. They are prophesying to you lies in the name of the Lord. You'd be much better off to surrender to the Babylonians, because if you try to resist you will be slain by the sword and the pestilence and the famine. So, surrender to Nebuchadnezzar." But Jeremiah is accused of treason and is imprisoned by Zedekiah the king.

But they have sent messengers, the false prophets, to those in Babylon, saying, "Hang loose, it won't be long. We'll defeat the Babylonians and you're going to be allowed to come back to Jerusalem. You'll be allowed to dwell in Jerusalem, so don't build houses. Just hang loose, deliverance is coming soon." But Ezekiel is there in Babylon saying, "Settle down, build houses. It's going to be a long time before there is any return back to Jerusalem. So, just realize that those that are in Jerusalem are going to be destroyed and the false prophets with them."

So, you have a confusing situation in that you have false prophets that are encouraging a soon victory over the Babylonian army. You have the true prophets of God, Ezekiel and Jeremiah, that are speaking God's truth and saying, "No, we are not going to conquer over Babylon, that God is judging the nation Israel for their sins, because they've turned against God and it's going to be a long period of judgment. You're going to be in Babylon," as Jeremiah said, "for seventy years, so make the best of it. Settle down, make the best of it there, because you're not coming back in a hurry."

Now Ezekiel is in Babylon, but there in Babylon occasionally he gets carried by the Spirit back to Jerusalem where he beholds the things that are happening in Jerusalem and

he relates them to the people there in Babylon. And so in chapter 11 we have another one of these instances.¹

OTS: Jerusalem's leaders were diametrically opposed to the revelation which God had given to men like Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In his visionary state, Ezekiel blasted the false counsel that Jerusalem was inviolable. Then he responded to the false confidence of those who wrongly considered themselves the chosen of God.²

Ezekiel 11:1

Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

These were leaders and they were wicked unbelievers.

[lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house] Three times the Spirit lifted the prophet up (Ezekiel 3:14; Ezekiel 8:3; Ezekiel 11:1); once carried him (Ezekiel 37:1); and four times took him up (Ezekiel 3:12; Ezekiel 8:3; Ezekiel 11:24; Ezekiel 43:5).

Dake: [five and twenty men] These could have been the same 25 men mentioned in Ezekiel 8:16. They were the leaders of the people in wickedness (Ezekiel 11:2).

Clarke: At the door of the gate five and twenty men—The same persons, no doubt, who appear, 8:16, worshipping the sun.³

Clarke: Jaazaniah the son of Azur—In 8:16, we find a Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. If Shaphan was also called Azur, they may be the same person. But it is most likely that there were two of this name, and both chiefs among the people. Specific individuals are named who were princes of the people.

ESV: The named individuals are otherwise unknown; on Pelatiah, see v. 13. The Hebrew behind princes of the people (*sare ha'am*) need not refer to royalty, nor does it here; cf. the identical phrase translated "leaders of the people" at Neh. 11:1.

ESV: 1–13 Punishment for Civic Authorities. The new introduction at v. 1 seems to interrupt the vision sequence at this point of tension, with God's glory poised at the threshold. Ezekiel sees 25 men—a different group from 8:16, and at a different location. And unlike the previous group, the problem here is not with worship but with politics, although the precise issue at stake remains elusive. The overall impression is that the thing they fear will come upon them (11:8; like the Tower of Babel in Gen. 11:1–9) and

¹ Chuck Smith, Pastor/founder, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA

² Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 11:1–25). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

³ Adam Clarke, Commentary on the Old Testament

that they have brought divine judgment on themselves. This framework helps make sense of the details.

Chuck Smith: Now, this is not the Jaazaniah among the twenty-five men that he had seen earlier in a vision. That was the son of Shalman, I think it was. But this is a different Jaazaniah, probably a popular name. I don't know why.

The destruction isn't near. The city is like a caldron in which we are protected from the fire. Babylon's fires may burn, but they won't burn us, because the city is the caldron and we are like the flesh. It's going to be a long time before the heat will ever get to us. So just go ahead and build your houses and settle down, because we are protected by this city from Babylon.

LAN: 1-4 God had abandoned his altar and temple (Ezekiel 9-11); here his judgment was complete as his glory stopped above the mountain east of the city (Ezekiel 11:23). The city gate was where merchants and politicians conducted business, so the 25 men may have represented the nation's rulers. Because of their leadership positions, they were responsible for leading the people astray. They had wrongly said that they were secure from another attack by the Babylonians. "This city is a cooking pot, and we are the meat" means they believed that they were the elite, the influential, the ones who would be protected from all harm. Without God our situation is always precarious.⁴

BKC: As God's glory hovered over the eastern gate, the Spirit lifted ... up (cf. 3:8, 14; 11:24; 37:1; 43:5) the prophet and took him to the gate facing east toward the Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives. At the entrance to the gate were 25 men, not the same 25 who were worshipping the sun (8:16).

Among the 25 men at the entrance to the gate were Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah. The gate was the traditional place where the elders of a city sat to administer justice and oversee legal matters. It was a city's "courthouse" (cf. Gen. 23:10, 18; Deut. 21:19; Josh. 20:4; Ruth 4:1-2, 9, 11; Job 29:7, 14-17). "Jaazaniah son of Azzur" is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture and should not be confused with three other Jaazaniahs living at the same time (cf. 2 Kings 25:23; Jer. 35:3; Ezek. 8:11). It is possible (though by no means certain) that this "Azzur" is the man named in Jeremiah 28:1. If so, then the Jaazaniah of Ezekiel 11 was a brother of Hananiah the false prophet who opposed Jeremiah and who delivered the same false message of hope just before Jerusalem's fall (cf. Jer. 28:1-4). Nothing else is known about Pelatiah. Both Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, leaders of the people, probably belonged to Israel's nobility.⁵

Specific individuals are named who were princes of the people.

OTS (1-6): Ezekiel felt himself being lifted up and transported from the inner court of the Temple to its eastern gate. There he saw twenty-five leaders of the realm. Among them were the princes Jaazaniah and Pelatiah. These most likely are not the same twenty-five men whom Ezekiel saw with their backs to the Temple worshipping the rising sun (cf.

⁴ Life Application Bible Notes

⁵ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 11:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

8:16). The first twenty-five were most likely priests while these twenty-five appear to be lay leaders. They were “men who devise iniquity and give evil advice in this city.” They were arguing that life in Judah would shortly get back to normal. Economic prosperity would enable people to build their houses. Jerusalem, they continued, was like a giant pot. The people within the city were like meat within the pot. They were adequately protected by the city’s massive walls from any threat which the Babylonians might pose. This group of lobbyists was no doubt urging rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, and alliance with Egypt.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Ezekiel in his vision. He was told to declare to those conspirators that God knew the things which they had been saying. He also knew their thoughts. In a predictive accusation, Ezekiel announced that the counsel of these men would result in multitudes of slain filling the streets of Jerusalem (11:4–6).

Constable: The Spirit next lifted Ezekiel up in his vision and transported him to the east (main) gate of the temple courtyards where God’s glory had moved (cf. 10:19). There the prophet saw 25 of the governing leaders of the people of Jerusalem, including Jaazaniah the son of Azzur and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah.¹⁸⁹ These 25 civic leaders were not the same individuals as the 25 sun-worshipping priests whom Ezekiel had seen earlier (8:16). Jaazaniah the son of Azzur does not seem to be the same man as Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan in 8:11. The name was evidently common at this time (cf. 2 Kings 25:23; Jer. 35:3). Gates were the traditional places where city elders administered justice and conducted legal matters.⁶

Ezekiel 11:2

Then said he unto me, Son of man, these *are* the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city:

ESV: 2–3 Unfortunately for interpretation, the wicked counsel announced in v. 2 and quoted in v. 3 is obscure. Verse 3a may be either a statement or a question. If the former, the cauldron and meat metaphor is negative (“we’re cooked!”); but if the latter, the metaphor is positive (“we won’t be burned!”). Since it is unlikely that being cooked is positive, the imagery is best understood to indicate fear, which led to mistrusting God. The metaphor is further developed in ch. 24.SV:

BKC: 2-3. These 25 were plotting evil and giving wicked advice. They should have been providing wise counsel and direction for Jerusalem, but instead were turning the people from the Lord.

Their wicked counsel was summarized for Ezekiel. Will it not soon be time to build houses? This city is a cooking pot and we are the meat. The elders were encouraging the Jerusalemites to forget the prophet’s predictions of the coming Babylonian invasion. They were urging the people to build houses, a sign of peace and safety (28:26). After all, the people were safe in the city (Jerusalem) like meat in a kettle.

⁶ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, 2010 Edition

McGee: In other words, these rulers were saying, “This city is our cup of tea—it’s ours now. Most everybody has left, and we are going to continue. We’re going to have peace and plenty and prosperity.” Theirs was materialism of the worst sort.⁷

Constable: 2-3 The Lord told Ezekiel that these men were those who were planning wickedness and giving bad advice to the residents of Jerusalem. They were encouraging the people either to feel secure by advising them to build homes and plan on living long in Jerusalem (cf. 28:26) or to prepare for battle rather than submitting to the Babylonians. Either interpretation is possible because the unbelieving leadership of Jerusalem was advising both courses of action. The true prophets, like Jeremiah, however, were telling them to submit to the Babylonians (Jer. 21:8-10). Jeremiah wrote the exiles advising them to build homes and settle down in captivity (Jer. 29:5). These wicked leaders were comparing the people of Jerusalem to meat in a clay cooking pot. They were saying that the people were as secure in the city, even though they were uncomfortably “hot,” as meat inside a kettle is safe from the fire outside it. The walls and fortifications of the city, and God Himself, they said, would amply protect the people from the fiery hostility of the Babylonian army.

Ezekiel 11:3

Which say, *It is not near*; let us build houses: this *city is the caldron*, and we *be the flesh*.

Missler: This is an unfortunate translation. The concept that really seems to be here is that the caldron protects in the sense of a wall. They are counseling to build houses to be comfortable and settle right there in Jerusalem.⁸

[It is not near] “It” refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of Judah being predicted by Jeremiah in the city and Ezekiel in Babylon.

Clarke: This city is the caldron, and we be the flesh—See the vision of the seething pot, Jeremiah 1:13. These infidels seem to say: “We will run all risks, we will abide in the city. Though it be the caldron, and we the flesh, yet we will share its fate: if it perish, we will perish with it.” Or they may allude to the above prediction of Jeremiah, in order to ridicule it: “We were to have been boiled long ago: but the fulfillment of that prediction is not near yet.”

The evil counsel given to the people of Jerusalem was that the only right policy was to prepare for war. They said it was most inappropriate to build for peaceful purposes, i.e., houses, when war was impending (vv. 7, 11). “This city is the caldron” refers to Jerusalem as a center of military activity.

⁷ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 11:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

Ezekiel 11:4

Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.

Dake: [Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man ...] The 11th prophecy in the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 11:4-13, fulfilled). The next is in Ezekiel 11:14.

Nine Predictions—Fulfilled: (Dake)

1. I will bring you forth out of the midst of the city (Ezekiel 11:7).
2. I will bring a sword upon you (Ezekiel 11:8).
3. I will bring you out of the midst of the city and deliver you into the hands of strangers (Ezekiel 11:9).
4. They will execute judgments among you.
5. You will fall by the sword (Ezekiel 11:10).
6. I will judge you in the border of Israel (Ezekiel 11:10,11).
7. You will know that I am Jehovah (Ezekiel 11:10,12).
8. This city will not be your caldron.
9. You will not be the flesh in the midst of it (Ezekiel 11:11).⁹

Chuck Smith: Notice that. God says, "I know the things that are coming into your mind, everything." That's sort of a heavy thought isn't it? "I the Lord," He said, "do search the hearts." God knows every thought that comes into your mind; nothing is hid from Him with whom we have to deal. Actually, the Bible says, "All things are naked and open before Him" (Hebrews 4:13). "I know everything that comes into your minds."

BKC: 4-5. Because of this false optimism, God told Ezekiel to prophesy against them. The public statements of confidence only masked the people's underlying fears. They were seeking security from the ever-present danger of Babylon (by talking about building houses), but in their minds they feared such an attack and the consequences it would bring. God said He knew what they were thinking (vv. 5, 8).

God knows even what we are thinking. He knows our thoughts afar off.

Constable 4-6: Ezekiel was to prophesy against these leaders. The Spirit came upon him and instructed him to tell them that the Lord knew what they were thinking (cf. 2:2; 3:24; 13:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:21). God always knows what His people are thinking (cf. Ps. 139:1-6; Dan. 2:30; Acts 1:24). In this case their thinking was in rebellion against what He, through Jeremiah, had told them to do. Furthermore, they had slain many innocent people in Jerusalem by perverting justice and taking advantage of the weak.

⁹ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

Ezekiel 11:5

And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

LAN: God knew everything about the Israelites, even their thoughts. He also knows everything about us, even the sins we try to hide. Instead of worrying about people noticing how we look or what we do, we should care about what God thinks, for he sees everything. Trying to hide our thoughts and actions from God is futile. “Secret” sins are never secret from God. The only effective way to deal with sin is to confess it and ask God to help us overcome it.

The Spirit of the Lord fell upon me. Only here is this expression used in Ezekiel. The prophet was enabled to prophesy while still in the trance.¹⁰

Ezekiel 11:6

Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

[Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain] Five sins of Judah: (Dake)

1. You have multiplied your slain.
2. You have filled the streets with the slain (Ezekiel 11:6).
3. You have not walked in My statutes (Ezekiel 11:12).
4. You have not executed My judgments.
5. You have done after the manners of the heathen round about you.

ESV: Although the judgment that multiplies corpses is divine (9:7), it has been provoked by the people's guilt, and they remain responsible.

Chuck Smith: That is, by their false counsel they have encouraged the people to rebel, but all it's going to do is multiply the number of people that will be killed. As Jeremiah was saying to them, "Surrender and you can save your lives. They will be merciful to you if you surrender. You know, they'll take you to Babylon, give you a nice place to live an all, but surrender to them, don't resist." But these men by their false prophecies encouraging them to resist were only multiplying the number of people who were to be killed.

BKC: 6-12. Ezekiel then altered the elders' imagery of the meat and the pot. Those righteous men who had been murdered in the city (you have killed many people in this city) had been Jerusalem's hope for only they could have rescued the city. The elders thought they were safe as meat in a pot (v. 3). But the slain righteous were the "meat":

¹⁰ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 11:5). Chicago: Moody Press.

the bodies you have thrown there (in the streets, v. 6) are the meat and this city is the pot. Though the elders felt secure within the “pot” of Jerusalem, God would drive them out and give them over to foreigners. Instead of the city being a pot of safety with the people in it being “safe” like meat (v. 11) the city would be smashed and the people dragged away.

God’s judgment by the sword would be executed at the borders of Israel (vv. 10-11). This was fulfilled literally when the captives of Jerusalem were deported to Riblah in Syria and killed (cf. 2 Kings 25:18-21; Jer. 52:8-11, 24-27).

Apparently the rulers have slain those who stood for God.

Ezekiel 11:7

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they *are* the flesh, and this *city* is the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it.

Clarke: Your slain—they are the flesh—Jerusalem is the caldron, and those who have been slain in it, they are the flesh; and though ye purpose to stay and share its fate, ye shall not be permitted to do so, ye shall be carried into captivity.

ESV: 7–12 The focus here is on the distinction between the court officials and the people slain. The outcome here has clarity that the earlier part of the vision lacked: the departure of Zedekiah's court and its destruction at the hands of the Babylonians (see 2 Kings 25:4–7). Note the theological perspective of Ezek. 11:9 (I will bring you out), in contrast to the panicked flight of 2 Kings 25:4.

Chuck Smith: So the people that have already died, they're the only ones that are going to be protected from the fire of Babylon. They are the flesh, they are the ones who are going to be protected, but you are going to be carried away captive. You're going to be led out of this city.

OTS (7-12): In view of the fact that the policy advocated by the twenty-five men would bring disaster on the city, they should take a second look at the pot/meat metaphor which they had been using (cf. 11:3). Jerusalem’s walls would afford no safety. Many would die in the city during the siege. They were the meat in the pot. Others would be brought forth from the walled city by the enemy (11:7).

The “sword” which they feared—the Babylonians—God would bring against them in all of its might. Furthermore, God would deliver them into the hand of these “strangers.” The Lord himself would execute judgments against them. Many would fall “at the border of Israel.” The terrible fulfillment of this prediction would cause God’s people to have the correct perspective on the nature of God (11:8–10). The reference is to the executions ordered by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah on the northern border of the promised land (cf. 2 Kgs 25:18ff.).

These predictions make it clear that Jerusalem would not be “the pot” in the sense that these advisors used the word. The walls would afford no protection from deportation.

Again the prediction is repeated: God would judge the citizens of Jerusalem at the border of Israel. This jarring judgment would force a reassessment of the true nature of God. To know God meant to know his law and to practice his ordinances. This was exactly what Israel had *not* been doing. They had been acting according to the ordinances of the surrounding nations (11:11f.).

Constable 7-9: Jerusalem had become like a cooking pot in that these slain people were like meat in it (cf. Mic. 3:1-3). It was a secure place only for those who had already died there. Nevertheless the Lord would remove the living from the "pot." Jerusalem would provide no refuge for the living. The Lord would bring the sword of the invader down on them. He would bring them out of the city into the hands of the invading enemy soldiers who would kill and capture them. Those who perceive themselves as the cream that has risen to the top are nothing but scum in God's eyes.

Ezekiel 11:8

Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD.

Chuck Smith (8-10): Interesting prophecy, "I shall judge you in the border of Israel." Now, when the Babylonian army came against Jerusalem and conquered it, the king, Nebuchadnezzar, remained in the city of Riblah, which is on the border of Israel. And they brought them to Nebuchadnezzar in Riblah where he judged them. Zedekiah you remember was captured and brought to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, and there Nebuchadnezzar killed his sons, right before his eyes, and then put his eyes out and he took him captive unto Babylon. And so a very fascinating prophecy of Ezekiel who is over in Babylon, really not knowing what's going on except by the Spirit of God, as he is taken back and sees these things and he predicts the fact that they will be judged in the borders of Israel, which indeed they were.

Ezekiel 11:9

And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you.

Clarke: **And deliver you into the hands of strangers**—This seems to refer chiefly to Zedekiah and his family.

Ezekiel 11:10

Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

Missler: Here again is the phrase, "Ye shall know that I am the Lord." While we see it all through this book, in Chapters 38 and 39 it will witness to all the nations.

God's purpose in judgment is that the people might know Him.

Constable 10-12: The Jerusalemites would die violently at the hands of their enemy all the way to the borders of Israel (cf. 2 Kings 25:18-21; Jer. 52:8-11, 24-27), not just in the city. The walls of the city would not defend them from the fires of Babylonian invasion (cf. v. 3). Then they would know that the Lord was God. This punishment would come on the people because they had been unfaithful to the Mosaic Covenant but had followed the laws of their surrounding neighbor nations. This message was exactly the opposite of what Jerusalem's leaders considered appropriate. They saw the exiles as unfortunate victims of their own bad luck and poor judgment for having somehow gotten exiled instead of having been spared as the present leaders had been

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Ezekiel 11:11

This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel:

Clarke: I will judge you in the border of Israel—Though Riblah was in Syria, yet it was on the very frontiers of Israel; and it was here that Zedekiah's sons were slain, and his own eyes put out.

It will not be a protection to you. It's not going to save you from the Babylonian fire.

Ezekiel 11:12

And ye shall know that I am the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.

Chuck Smith: God's indictment against them, "Now, you've not walked in My statutes." So their failure was to not walk in the ways of the Lord, but to follow the patterns of the heathen society around them, or to succumb to the mores.

Now, there is strong pressure upon us as Christians to forsake the statutes of God and to walk according to the popular mores of our society. There's tremendous pressure in our society today to accept things that God has condemned. And this pressure of the society

is such that if you dare to condemn those things that God has condemned then you're looked upon as some kind of a religious nut, a prude, a backwards individual. "Don't you realize that times have changed? We're not living back in the Victorian age any longer. This isn't a Puritan society." And this tremendous pressure, to do what? Exactly what the children of Israel did that brought their destruction. Forsake the commandments, the statutes, the judgments of God, and start living like the people around you. But we dare not, for as sure as God did judge the nation Israel, so will He judge us if we do the same things.

LAN: From the time they entered the promised land, the Israelites were warned not to copy the customs and religious practices of other nations. Disobeying this command and following pagan customs instead of God's laws always got them into trouble. Today, believers are still tempted to conform to the ways of the world. But we must get our standards of right and wrong from God, not from the popular trends of society.

Ezekiel 11:13

And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

Dake: [**wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?**] this is Question 8 in the Book of Ezekiel. The next question is in Ezekiel 12:9.

Missler: WOW. Can you imagine that while Ezekiel is prophesying these things, one of them actually passes away during the prophecy. He then changes the subject to the Remnant of Israel.

Clarke: **Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died**—Most probably he was struck dead the very hour in which Ezekiel prophesied against him. His death appears to have resembled that of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1, etc.

ESV: The impact of the death of Pelatiah the son of Benaiah on Ezekiel is not immediately obvious. Perhaps it is due to Ezekiel's shock at seeing such an immediate judgment from God in fulfillment of his prophecies. Its significance may also lie in the symbolism of the name itself: "The Lord delivers," the son of "The Lord builds," has died.

Chuck Smith: So while he was there prophesying to them, this guy fell over dead. That's powerful preaching. Now, it wasn't something that Ezekiel was expecting, because it shocked him. Are you going to wipe them all out, Lord?

BKC: 13-15. As Ezekiel prophesied against those elders and the city, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. This was a confirmation of Ezekiel's message and foreshadowed the judgment that would soon destroy all Jerusalem's wicked leaders. Ezekiel, understanding

the significance of that event, responded by again pleading to God for mercy (cf. 9:8): Ah, Sovereign LORD! Will You completely destroy the remnant of Israel?

God's response to Ezekiel was twofold. First, He showed Ezekiel that the remnant would not be destroyed. Those already in exile would be preserved. They were his brothers, his blood relatives. The phrase "your blood relatives" (*ge'ullātekā*) is translated "fellow exiles" in the Septuagint and Syriac texts (which has *gālūtekā*). This makes better sense in the context. Ezekiel's brothers in exile were the true remnant.

The second part of God's response was to show Ezekiel the need for judgment on Jerusalem. Jerusalem's moral compass needle was bent. They felt that those in exile (whom God had just said were the true remnant) were far away from the LORD. They localized God and thought in terms of geographical rather than spiritual proximity. They also assumed that their right to the land was absolute since it was given to them as their possession. This was a correct but incomplete statement. God had given Israel the land, but He had also threatened to remove them from it for disobedience (cf. Deut. 28:36, 64-68). God would spare a remnant (Ezek. 6:8; 12:16), as Ezekiel asked, but it would not include the smug, self-righteous leaders of Jerusalem.

OTS: As Ezekiel delivered his sermon in his vision, Pelatiah, one of the twenty-five counselors, dropped dead. Ezekiel was shocked. He immediately assumed the posture of an intercessor. He fell on his face and cried out with a loud voice, "Alas, Lord God!" He asked the Lord a question which really constituted an oblique petition: "Wilt Thou bring the remnant of Israel to a complete end?" Ezekiel interpreted the death of Pelatiah as a signal that the judgment was beginning to unfold. He was praying for a postponement or at least a softening of that fateful blow.

Though his identity is uncertain, Pelatiah was obviously well known in Jerusalem. News of his sudden death would bring fear and anxiety upon the people. Also, news of his death brought to the exiles in Babylon would confirm the validity of Ezekiel's prophecy.

Constable: In his vision Ezekiel saw Pelatiah ("Yahweh rescues" or "Yahweh provides escape") die (cf. v. 1). Evidently Pelatiah really did die in Jerusalem when Ezekiel saw this vision or shortly after that. Ezekiel was able to see this real event happening in Jerusalem. This was a sign that God would judge the people as He had said.

Because Pelatiah's name means 'the Lord rescues,' perhaps Ezekiel saw his death as an ironic and bad omen.

Pelatiah's death greatly affected Ezekiel (cf. Acts 5:5). He wondered if God would deliver anyone in Jerusalem. He fell on his face before the Lord and asked Him if He was going to destroy the godly remnant of the nation as well as the wicked (cf. 9:8). The compassion of Ezekiel came out again as he saw God judging the sinful Jews of Jerusalem.

Perhaps Ezekiel felt that Pelatiah's sudden death signaled a decision by God that there would be no remnant, hence his cry, 'Will you completely destroy the remnant of Israel?' (v. 13).

All societies tend to put in leadership or allow to rise to leadership individuals who reflect, appeal to, and will carry out the expectations and values of the majority. These judgments on Israel's leaders view them as reflections of and manifestations of a corrupt

society. Ezekiel saw in the death of its leaders the death of all the people, whom the leaders represented.

Ezekiel 11:14

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Dake: [Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying ...] The 12th prophecy in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 11:14-21; Ezekiel 11:14-16 fulfilled; Ezekiel 11:17-21 unfulfilled). The next prophecy is in Ezekiel 12:1.

One Prediction—Fulfilled:

Although I have cast them off among the heathen, and scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they will come (Ezekiel 11:16).

Eight Predictions—Unfulfilled: (Dake)

1. I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered (Ezekiel 11:17).
2. I will give you the land of Israel.
3. They will be gathered to their own country and will take away from it the detestable things and all the abominations (Ezekiel 11:18).
4. I will give them one heart (Ezekiel 11:19).
5. I will put a new spirit within you.
6. I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh.
7. They will be My people, and I will be their God (Ezekiel 11:20).
8. I will recompense the way of the wicked upon his own head (Ezekiel 11:21).

ESV: 14–21 Promise of a New Heart, Spirit. Ezekiel's outcry of v. 13 apparently prompts one of the most important statements of hope in the book, one closely connected to the famous “new heart” passage in 36:22–32. In 11:15 the voice of those left in Judah is heard baiting the exiles. The divine response of v. 16 both asserts God's own action in bringing about the exile (I removed ... I scattered) and redefines the relationship between God and the remnant: the real sanctuary is not the temple but God himself. That new relationship is marked by a new spirit and a heart of flesh (v. 19) provided by God himself, which enables faithful living previously impossible with a heart of stone. There is a theological tension in Ezekiel between divine provision (here and 36:26–27) and human endeavor (“make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit,” 18:31).

LAN: God promised the exiles in Babylonia that he would continue to be with them even though they were not in Jerusalem. This was a major concern to the Jews because they believed that God was present primarily in the temple. But God assured them that he would continue to be their God regardless of where they were. In the midst of Ezekiel's burning message of judgment stands a cool oasis—God's promise to restore the faithful few to their homeland. God's arms are now open to receive those who will repent of their sins.

McGee: God says, “There will be a remnant who will see Me. When they do, I’m going to be a little temple, a little sanctuary, and they will be able to approach Me.” This was God’s arrangement during the time the temple was destroyed. Daniel and many others were among those who sought the LORD during this period.

OTS (14-21): The Jerusalem Jews felt superior to the ten thousand who had been taken captive in 597 B.C.. They regarded themselves as the chosen of God because they had been spared such humiliation. In regard to the captives the Jerusalemites were saying in effect, “Good riddance! Their departure just gives us more land to divide among ourselves” (11:14f.). Partly to refute these claims upon the land of Israel, and partly to respond to Ezekiel’s prayer-question about the remnant (11:13), the Lord revealed to the prophet an optimistic forecast regarding his people who were in captivity.

God had a very positive attitude toward the captives of Judah in Babylon. He acknowledged that the deportation of these people was a divine work. That, however, did not mean that the Lord had rejected the captives. Though these thousands had been denied access to the physical Temple in Jerusalem, God promised that he himself would be their sanctuary “for a little while,” i.e., during the duration of their captivity (11:15f.). The point is that one did not have to live in Palestine in order to have a vital relationship with the Lord.

God had a plan for his people after the exile. He would gather and assemble them. He would give to the exiles the land of Israel. The converted captives would return to cleanse the land of all her “detestable things” and “abominations.” Those returnees would be united in heart. This unity would be achieved through a “new spirit” of fidelity to God. “A heart of flesh,” i.e., a submissive heart, would replace the old “heart of stone,” i.e., stubborn heart. God’s people would live a new life. They would walk in the “statutes” of the Lord and observe his ordinances. Because of all this, a new relationship would exist between God and Israel. They would claim Yahweh as their God, and he would acknowledge them as his people. On the other hand, God assured those who clung to idols that he would “bring their conduct down on their heads” (11:19–21).

Constable 14-15

with the Jews in Jerusalem rather than with the Jews in exile.

Ezekiel 11:15

Son of man, thy brethren, *even* thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, *are* they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.

Clarke: **Get you far from the Lord**—These are the words of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, against those of Israel who had been carried away to Babylon with Jeconiah. Go ye far from the Lord: but as for us, the land of Israel is given to us for a possession, we shall never be removed from it, and they shall never return to it.

Chuck Smith: They're saying that this land is ours, we are not going to be defeated; we are not going to fall.

LAN: 15-21 God's messages through Ezekiel are full of irony. Here God says that the Jews in captivity are the faithful ones, and those in Jerusalem are the sinful and wicked ones. This was the opposite of the people's perception. Appearances can be deceiving. God will evaluate your life by your faith and obedience, not by your apparent earthly success. Furthermore, we should not judge others by outward appearances.

Election, Remnant—The law of judgment is followed by the gospel of hope. God does not practice total destruction. He saves the remnant and gives them undivided commitment to Him. God does everything possible to create a people who will freely let Him be their God. Those serving other gods do not qualify for the elect remnant.

Ezekiel 11:16

Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

[I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come] God was to serve as their sanctuary while they were scattered among the nations, which indicated that they would abide many days without a sacrifice or temple, as predicted in Hosea 3:4-5.

Clarke: Yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary—Though thus exiled from their own land, yet not forgotten by their God. While in their captivity, I will dispense many blessings to them; and I will restore them to their own land, verse 17, from which they shall put away all idolatry, verse 18.

Chuck Smith: God said, "I will watch over them in the lands where they've been driven. I will be to them a little sanctuary there." God will preserve His people even though they've been driven throughout the world.

Now, that of course, again, is another amazing prophecy, because though the Jews have been hated, scorned, discriminated against, perhaps more fiercely than any other nationality, yet, in spite of two thousand years without a homeland, they have continued to exist as a race of people. Nothing short of a divine miracle. There has been no other national ethnic group in the history of man that has been able to remain as a national identity for more than five generations without a homeland. If they don't have a nation that they can say, "That's our homeland," they have lost their national ethnic identity in five generations. That is why you never meet an Ammonite, a Hittite, Perizzite, or any of these other people that were once great and powerful nations. Because without a national homeland, they've lost their national ethnic identity. And yet the Jew remain because God made them a little sanctuary. God was watching over to preserve them and they remained an ethnic group, a national identity, for more than two thousand years after having been driven from their homeland in the first captivity of Nebuchadnezzar. Of course, they went back for a period of time, but then since 70 A.D. they've been driven out of the land and still to the present day, whether they be in China, whether they be in Germany, whether they be in Russia, whether they be in Yemen or Africa, or the United States, the Jew has

been able to maintain his national identity because God has made them a sanctuary. And you can only explain it by that fact. Because no other nation, no other ethnic group has been able to maintain an identity. So the Lord promises to be a little sanctuary in all of the lands where they've been scattered.

LAN: God was a sanctuary for the righteous remnant. Idolatrous people, even though they worshiped in the Jerusalem temple (Ezekiel 11:15), would find no true sanctuary; but the faithful exiles, even though they were far from home, would be protected by God. Likewise, our external circumstances do not truly indicate our standing with God. Those who appear safe and secure may be far from him, while those going through difficult times may be safely under God's spiritual protection. We can depend on God to keep us safe if we pledge ourselves to his care.

BKC: God had emphasized the coming judgment of the people who remained in Jerusalem (vv. 1-12). He assured the prophet that He would preserve a remnant, but it would be comprised of those in captivity, not those in Jerusalem (vv. 13-15). As a sign of His faithfulness, God promised to restore the remnant to the land (vv. 16-21).

The proof of God's blessing on the remnant in captivity involved (a) what He had already done for them (v. 16) and (b) what He would do for them in the future (vv. 17-21). Though God had sent His people far away among the nations, He had not abandoned them. They had lost access to the "sanctuary," the temple in Jerusalem; but God Himself had been a sanctuary for them in those foreign countries. God was accessible to faithful Jews wherever they were geographically.

A literal, though partial, fulfillment of this prophecy came in the restoration of the temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Christ Himself is the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. He became the "sanctuary" of Israel and of the church. Ezekiel learned that the presence of YAHWEH makes the building a "sanctuary," but the "sanctuary," or building, does not insure His presence.

Constable: Ezekiel was to respond to these Jerusalem Jews by saying that though God had driven the exiles from their land He would be with them and would provide a refuge for them in Babylon. He Himself would be a sanctuary for them even though they were far from the temple sanctuary in Jerusalem. Israel's future did not lie with the Jews still in Jerusalem but with those in Babylon.

Even in drastic judgment, as in the case of the dispersion of Israel, God provides for His people a place of refuge. This refuge, called here 'a little sanctuary [AV],' is the LORD Himself (cp. Ps. 90:1; 91:9; Isa. 4:6). So with all of God's own, Gentile as well as Jew, in the midst of deserved judgment there is still a sanctuary of refuge and peace in Him.

Ezekiel 11:17

Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

Missler: “I will give it to you.” It is God’s to give. He is giving the land to the remnant. God gave the land to Abraham in Gen 15, and He reconfirms it many times. Here He prophetically calls His people from the countries back to the Land. They still do not understand this concept completely, but Chapters 34 - 37 will explain the concept very clearly. Then in Chapter 38 and 39 there will be an event that clearly makes the people understand the God miraculously spared them.

[even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered] See Isaiah 11:10-12.

Dake: **[I will give you the land of Israel]** This certainly speaks of a future time when Israel is fully restored to her own land—the land of Israel, not England and America, as some suppose. Such prophecies are beginning to be fulfilled now and will continue so until the final fulfillment in the Millennium under the Messiah. The term "the land of Israel" is found 15 times in the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 11:17; Ezekiel 12:19,22; Ezekiel 13:9; Ezekiel 18:2; Ezekiel 20:38,42; Ezekiel 21:3; Ezekiel 25:3,6; Ezekiel 33:24; Ezekiel 36:6; Ezekiel 37:12; Ezekiel 38:18,19). Compare "unto the land" (Ezekiel 7:2; Ezekiel 21:3).

Chuck Smith: Now this is not referring to the re-gathering after the Babylonian captivity, but is more of a reference to the present re-gathering.

BKC: Yet there is to be a distinct future for Israel nationally. God promised, I will gather you ... from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again. The remnant of Israel could look forward to a national restoration to the Promised Land. A partial restoration took place after the Babylonian Captivity (cf. Ezra; Neh.), but Ezekiel 11:17-21 goes beyond that return and points to a future gathering of Israel at the beginning of the Millennium (cf. 36:24-38; 37:11-28).

McGee: God would return the people to the land. Who was it that came back? Those who were seeking God. There were less than 60,000 in the remnant which returned at the end of the seventy-year captivity.

Though the restoration will be physical, i.e., the land, it will also involve spiritual renewal. The purging of sin results in a new “heart” (*lev*, Heb.), referring to the “will” or “seat of volitional choice” (v. 19; cf. 36:22-38). This prophecy (vv. 17-19) has an initial fulfillment in the believers of the present dispensation. Complete fulfillment awaits the millennial kingdom, when Israel will be restored.

Constable 17-18: The Lord also promised to assemble the Jews in exile from the various

places where they had scattered from the Promised Land and to give them that land again. This is the first mention of Israel's future restoration in Ezekiel. When they came back into the land they would purify it of all the things that made it detestable and abominable to the Lord (cf. 5:11; 7:20).

Such words have a Mosaic ring about them, as if the promised land of Canaan is being held out to the wilderness wanderers once again. The desert experience would not last for ever: one day they would possess the land—not by arrogant claim (as in verse 15), but by a gracious gift of God—and their worship would be purified of all the foreign, corrupting influences that had beset the Israelites since Joshua's day.

The promise of restoration to the land, though declared in the blessings of the Mosaic covenant (Lev 26:40-45; Deut 30:1-10), was based on the eternal covenants to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), David (2 Sam 7:12-16), and Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34)."

Ezekiel 11:18

And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

Missler: Nicodemus

See John 3:1-9. Here Nicodemus was a Pharisee, one of the most learned teachers around. He comes to Jesus by night, so as not to be seen, privately. Nicodemus asks about being born again, and Jesus explains (v. 5-9). Jesus points out that it is a spiritual concept not a fleshly thing. Then Jesus rebukes him for not knowing these things (v. 10) as he was a teacher. Thus, the concept of being born again is not a New Testament idea, it is found in the Old Testament. See Deut 30:6; Jer 31:31-33; Jer 32:37-40; Ezek 36:24-26; Zech 7:11-12; Isa 53:2-6. And as prophesied in Isa 53:9, the body of Jesus was to be buried in the grave of a rich man; the grave belonged to Joseph of Arimathea.

Dake: [And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence] The gathering of Israel in fulfillment of this prophecy has not progressed this far yet—to the place where all the detestable things and the abominations have been removed from the land of Israel. This will not be completed until after the second coming of Christ to the earth—when all Israel will be saved (Zech. 12:10-13:1; Zech. 14:1-21; Romans 11:25-29).

Chuck Smith: Now, that has not yet been fulfilled. God is gathering them back in the land, but this new Spirit that God has promised has not yet been fulfilled. It will take place when God defeats Russia's invasion of Israel. And we'll get to that as we move on in Ezekiel chapter 39, the last verse of 39, God declares that in the day in which He is sanctified before the nations of the earth, He will again put His Spirit upon the nation of Israel. So this prophecy is relating to chapter 39 and to a day that is yet future, when God manifests Himself unto these people in such a dramatic way and He puts His Spirit upon them again.

LAN: 18-19 “Undivided heart” indicates a unanimous singleness of purpose. No longer will God’s people seek many gods; they will be content with God. The hard, deaf, immovable heart of stone will be radically transplanted with a tender, receptive, and responsive heart of flesh (see Jeremiah 32:39; Ezekiel 18:31; Ezekiel 36:26). This new life can only be the work of the Holy Spirit. It is God’s work, but we must recognize and turn from our sin. When we do, God will give us new motives, new guidelines, and new purpose. Have you received your new heart?

BKC: 18-19. Israel’s physical **return** will be accompanied by a spiritual renewal. When they come back to the land, they will ... remove all ... vile images and detestable idols (cf. v. 21). The land will be purged of idolatry, and the people will be purged too. For God said, I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them. Israel’s external difficulties resulted from her internal condition. God promised to correct that.

Ezekiel’s promise refers to the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Israel (“spirit” could read “Spirit”). Before the Church Age the Holy Spirit indwelt select individuals; this was generally a temporary enablement for a special task (see comments on 2:2). However, in the Millennium the Holy Spirit will indwell all believing Israelites (cf. 36:26-27; cf. Joel 2:28). The inauguration of the New Covenant, which includes this permanent indwelling (cf. Jer. 31:31-34), began with the death of Christ (cf. Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15; 10:14-16; 12:24); but the ultimate fulfillment awaits the national regathering of Israel. The church today is participating in the *spiritual* (not the physical) benefits of the covenant through its association with Christ.

The results of the new “heart” (**a heart of flesh** instead of a **heart of stone**) for Israel will be new actions and a new relationship.

Ezekiel 11:19

And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

[I will give them one heart ...] See Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 32:39.

Dake: [give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh] Six things Jehovah will do for Israel:

1. Gather them from all countries where they are scattered (Ezekiel 11:17).
2. Give them the land of Israel.
3. Give them one heart (Ezekiel 11:19).
4. Put a new spirit within them.
5. Take the stony heart out of their flesh.
6. Give them a heart of flesh.

Clarke: **And I will give them one heart**—A whole system of renewed affections.

Clarke: And I will put a new spirit within you—To direct and influence these new affections.

Clarke: And I will take the stony heart out of their flesh—That which would not receive the impressions of my Spirit.

Clarke: And will give them a heart of flesh—One that is capable of receiving and retaining these impressions.

Chuck Smith: Now Paul the apostle tells us in the New Testament that blindness has happened to Israel in part until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. God's Spirit in the present time is working primarily among the Gentile nations, among you who have been called of God. Actually, among all men. Not that the Jews are excluded, because the gospel is open to all men, but there seems to be a national blindness on these people in regards to Jesus Christ. And it is interesting, I have talked to some of them who are extremely knowledgeable of the scriptures. And you wonder, when they know the scriptures so well, why is it that they do not see that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah? You wonder how they can just explain away those prophecies, Daniel chapter 9, Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Zechariah chapters 11 through 12 and all. You wonder, how can they not see the truth that Jesus is indeed the promised Messiah? And there can only be one explanation, and that is what Paul gave us, that there is a blindness that has happened to these people.

A couple of years ago when we were in Israel and I was speaking at a congress in which the Christians from all over the world were seeking to demonstrate to Israel our support of them as a people, I received a letter from one of the rabbis in Jerusalem. And the letter was a rebuke for my being there at that congress showing support for the nation of Israel. He said, "You have no right being here, for Israel has no right to be existing as a nation." This same rabbi had sent a letter to King Hussein in Jordan and asked the Jordanian king to annex Measharim into Jordan, because they wanted nothing to do with the modern state of Israel. They said, "Israel has no right being a state, and you as a minister have no right being here supporting the nation of Israel."

Well, I had been witnessing to these guides for quite some time and they do know the scripture quite well. And I showed them the letter and I said, "Look what one of your rabbis sent me." And they read the letter and they were horrified, because they appreciate the fact that I love Israel and had been supporting Israel. And they said, "Ah, don't pay any attention to that, Chuck, they're a bunch of religious nuts. They're radicals, you know. They don't know what they're talking about. They're just religious radicals. Don't pay any attention to that." I said, "But they're rabbis." "Ah, it doesn't make any difference. They're nuts, you know, just don't pay any attention to them." And I said, "Have you ever stopped to think that those rabbis that rejected Jesus from being the Messiah were perhaps just like them, some religious fanatics? And that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, but these religious fanatics rejected Him, and here you are two thousand years later, in spite of all of the evidence, still following the religious nuts of those days." They didn't have any answer. But surely anyone looking at the evidence of prophecy and of the life of Jesus Christ must conclude that if Jesus wasn't the Messiah, there never will be a Messiah. It would be impossible for any man to come along today and prove that he was of the

lineage of David. No one has his genealogy and can trace it back to David any longer. So, God is going to change their hearts, though. This stony heart is going to be turned to a heart of flesh.

Ya know, one thing about the Jewish people is that they are a very dynamic people. They're very alive. They love to sing, they love to show their feelings in dancing and in singing. And quite often over there, the bus drivers and the guides, they'll get together and they'll sit at a table and they'll start singing their Jewish, typically Jewish, songs and they really get into it. I mean it's a ya know, "Hah..." and the whole thing ya know and the dancing and they get up and they start dancing around and singing. They really get into it. And it's a lot of fun, because they are such a dynamic people. They're exciting to be around. Oh, I can hardly wait until they get turned on to Jesus Christ. With all of that excitement and all of that expression that they have when they really discover the true Messiah, what a glorious day when the heart of stone is replaced; God does a heart transplant and He puts in a heart of flesh.

Constable 19-20: The Lord also promised to give His people a united desire and commitment (cf. 36:26; Exod. 14:5; 1 Sam. 14:7; 27:1; 2 Sam. 7:3; Jer. 32:39). He would put a new attitude within them (cf. Ps. 51:10). This "spirit" would enter into them when God would pour out His Spirit on them (36:26-27; Deut. 30:6; Jer. 31:33; Joel 2:28-29). He would remove their hard hearts and give them hearts that were responsive to Him so they would obey His commands and do His will. Then they would enjoy an intimate relationship with God and He with them. On the individual level this change takes place through a new birth (cf. John 3:3-10). On the national level it will happen when the nation of Israel experiences a new birth (cf. Rom. 11:25-27).

The term *berit* [covenant] is absent, but in the declaration *They will become my people, and I will become their God*, the reader is introduced for the first time to what is generally known as 'the covenant formula.' Derived from ancient legal terminology, specifically the marriage ceremony, this formula expresses a relationship of commitment and intimacy. It's prominence in both Ezekiel and Jeremiah is based on a long history, beginning with Yahweh's commitment to be the God of Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:7-8).

After the exile when many Jews returned to a restored province of Judah in fulfillment of prophecy (Ezra 1:1), they were careful to avoid idolatry (Ezra 4:1-3; 6:19-21; Neh 8—10). Nevertheless, their obedience was not complete (Ezra 9:1-2, 10-15; 10:15, 44; Neh 5:1-9; 13:7-29), nor was their experience of promised blessings (Ezra 9:8-9; Neh 9:32-37). Thus the radical spiritual transformation of the people and the associated physical blessings promised in this and other prophecies of the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 34:20-31; 36:24-38; 37:15-28) await fulfillment in a future messianic age.

Many amillennialists take the fulfillment as happening on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).²⁰⁰ Single-minded devotion to God is what He always requires and what His grace makes possible (cf. Matt. 4:10; 6:24-34; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22).

Ezekiel 11:20

That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Missler: While this was spoken to Israel, it does apply to us personally. Jesus expected Nicodemus to apply it personally. We are in a unique position, if we will but commit our way to Him, He will give us a new heart. We do not get saved by being obedient; we are obedient because we are saved. Obedience is an evidence, not a cause. Our works are evidence of the work that God has already done in us. He gives us a new heart so that we may walk in His statutes and keep His ordinances.

This is the thing they had failed to do and that's why the judgment was coming.

Dake: [That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God] Four blessings of conversion:

1. Walk in My statutes.
2. Keep and do My ordinances.
3. They will be My people.
4. I will be their God.

Clarke: **That they may walk in my statutes**—The holiness of their lives shall prove the work of God upon their hearts. Then it shall appear that I am their God, because I have done such things in them and for them; and their holy conduct shall show that they are my people

Chuck Smith: Now, at this point, these cherubims representing the glory of God and the presence of God that was once there in the temple but was lifted from the temple, out to the porch, from the porch to the east gate. Now he watches as the Spirit of God is removed even from the east gate of the temple to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

BKC: 20-21. In their actions the people of Israel will be obedient; they will follow God's decrees and ... keep His laws. Their new internal condition will produce righteous actions. Also it will result in a new relationship with God: They will be My people, and I will be their God (cf. 14:11; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Hosea 2:23).

God ended this discourse by bringing Ezekiel back to the reality of sin. The remnant in captivity could look forward to restoration and blessing, but those in Jerusalem devoted to their vile images and detestable idols (cf. Ezek. 11:18) could expect only judgment for their sin. This reminded Ezekiel of the sinful actions he had just witnessed that caused God's glory to depart from His city (chaps. 8-11).

Ezekiel 11:21

But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

The detestable things and the abominations are partially listed in Ezekiel 8:5-17.

Clarke: But as for them whose heart walketh—Them whose affections are attached to idolatry, they shall have such reward as their idols can give them, and such a recompense as Divine justice shall award them.

McGee: The judgment of God is coming. It is a great tragedy today that the ministry ignores the fact that judgment is coming upon this earth. God's judgment is one of the sure proofs of His existence.

In the present, the Lord promised to bring judgment down on those who pursued the detestable and abominable idolatries that had polluted His people.

Ezekiel 11:22

Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

Dake: [Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them] Then—after Ezekiel had been shown all the sins committed in the temple (Ezekiel 8:4-17), after judgment upon the people of Judah and the total destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple had been predicted (Ezekiel 8:18-9:11; Ezekiel 11:4-13), and after a latter-day restoration of Israel had been revealed (Ezekiel 11:17-21), the glory departed from the doomed city and temple, not to return until the millennial temple is built at the time of the second coming of Christ (Ezekiel 11:22-25 with Ezekiel 43:1-7).

[the glory of the God of Israel was over them above] The seventh vision of the glory of God (Ezekiel 1:4-28; Ezekiel 3:12-14,22-23; Ezekiel 8:1-4; Ezekiel 9:3; Ezekiel 10:1-22; Ezekiel 11:22-25).

ESV: 22–25 The Glory of the Lord Departs. The vision concludes on a tragic note: the departure of the God of Israel from his city denotes divine absence and thus death for the people. The mountain . . . on the east is the Mount of Olives. Both the action and location confirm that the emphasis falls on divine absence from Jerusalem rather than (by inference) presence with the exiles. God's absence persists until 43:1–5. The concluding report (11:25) links back to the setting of 8:1.

Chuck Smith (22-25): So, he was taken by the Spirit, went through these interesting experiences, and then brought back and shared with these people that were around him there the vision that God did give to him.

Now, it is interesting, the glory of the Lord, the last place there on the mount to the east of Jerusalem. It was on this same mountain that Jesus ascended into glory. It was on this same mountain that Jesus came in His entry to Jerusalem as the King, as the Messiah, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah, "Behold, rejoice greatly, oh daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee, but He is lowly, sitting on the colt, the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9). And it is upon this same mount that Jesus will return. As Zechariah said, "And He shall set His foot in that day on the Mount of Olives, and it will split in the middle" (Zechariah 14:4), an all, and right there where he saw the glory of the Lord departing from the mountain there on the east, there is where the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ will come. And again, as He comes into Jerusalem, the glory of God's presence once more returning to the land and the beautiful restoration of God and the glorious kingdom of God when it comes.

BKC: 22-25. God's glory then continued its departure. The glory of the LORD (cf. comments on 1:28) went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it. As God's glory left Jerusalem, it passed over the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. This departure signaled Jerusalem's doom. The city would be devoid of God's blessing till the glory will return via the Mount of Olives (cf. 43:1-3). It is no coincidence that Christ ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12) and promised to return to the same place (Acts 1:11; cf. Zech. 14:4).

Ezekiel's vision ended and he was transported by the Spirit (cf. 3:14; 8:3; 11:1; 37:1; 43:5) back to the exiles in Babylonia. As the vision ... went up from him he told the exiles everything the LORD had shown him.

Constable 22-23: Ezekiel then saw in his vision the glory of God depart from the temple gate and from the city of Jerusalem. He saw the cherubim under Yahweh's throne-chariot bear the Lord east from the entrance of the temple to the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem. This was the eastern horizon from the perspective of someone in Jerusalem. The removal of God's blessing signaled the end of His longsuffering with His sinful people, and it opened the way for His judgment to fall on them (cf. Rom. 1:18-32). From this point on in Ezekiel—until 43:1-4, in which the prophet saw in another vision the glory of God returning to the city—the prophet saw the Lord's presence and glory removed from Jerusalem.

The departure of the divine glory (the visible symbol of God's presence) from the Temple, marks the end of the theocratic kingdom in O.T. history. On the mount of transfiguration the glory of God was manifested to our Lord's disciples (Mt. 17:1-5; cp. also Jn. 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:6; Jas. 2:1; 2 Pet. 1:16-18). The visible glory will return when the kingdom is restored to Israel (Ezek. 43:1-7; Rev. 21:22-24).

"There is an interesting Midrash (commentary) which reads: 'Rabbi Jonathan said, Three years and a half the Shekinah stayed upon the Mount of Olives, in the hope that Israel would do penance; but they did none.' All readers of the New Testament know this was the length of the earthly ministry of our Lord to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Sadly enough, they did not repent and He did depart from them (cf. Hosea 5:15 with Matt. 23:37-39). . . . From this very place the Lord Jesus Christ left the earth (Acts 1) and

to it He will return (Zech. 14; cf. also Luke 21:20 with Matt. 24:3; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:11-12).

Perhaps the Lord's presence stood over the Mount of Olives, rather than departing from it (v. 23), because the Lord was waiting to execute His judgment on the city (cf. Zech. 14:4; Luke 19:41).

Ezekiel 11:23

And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which *is* on the east side of the city.

[went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountains which is on the east side of the city] This and many other passages make it clear that God travels physically from place to place like other beings. No scripture teaches the omni-body of God, but many passages teach His omnipresence (Genesis 3:8; Genesis 17:22; Genesis 18:2,33; etc.).

Clarke: The glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city—This vision is no mean proof of the long-suffering of God. He did not abandon this people all at once; he departed by little and little.

FIRST, he left the temple

SECONDLY, he stopped a little at the gate of the city.

THIRDLY, he departed entirely from the city and went to the Mount of Olives, which lay on the east side of the city. Having tarried there for some time to see if they would repent and turn to him—

FOURTHLY, he departed to heaven. The vision being now concluded, the prophet is taken away by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, and there announces to the captive Israelites what God had showed him in the preceding visions, and the good that he had spoken concerning them; who at first did not seem to profit much by them, which the prophet severely reproves.

LAN: God's glory left Jerusalem and stood above a mountain on the east side of the city—almost certainly the Mount of Olives. Ezekiel 43:1-4 implies that God will return the same way he left, when he comes back to earth to set up his perfect kingdom.

The glory of the Lord moves from Jerusalem out to the Mount of Olives east of the city.

The *shekinah* (Heb.), or “glory-cloud,” the chariot-throne of God (cf. Num 9:15, note), stopped over “the mountain, which is on the east side of the city,” i.e., the Mount of Olives (2 Sam 15:30; Zech 14:4). This is the same mountain where Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), from which He, the manifestation of the shekinah, ascended into heaven, and to which He will return (Zech 14:4).

Ezekiel 11:24

Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.

Dake: [brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea] This completed his round trip from Babylon to Judea and back again (Ezekiel 8:3 with Ezekiel 11:24); it was accomplished in vision, which he made known to his people (Ezekiel 11:24-25).

OTS: Once again the *merkabah* began to move. The cherubim “lifted up their wings.” The “wheels” moved beside them. The “glory of God” atop the *merkabah* moved from Jerusalem to “stand over the mountain which is east of the city,” i.e., the Mt. of Olives. In his actual experience in the land of captivity Ezekiel already had learned that the ultimate destiny of the *merkabah* was Babylon (11:22f.).

In his vision Ezekiel then felt himself being transported “in the Spirit of God” back to the captives in Babylon. So the lengthy vision which commenced in chapter 8 came to an end. Ezekiel then reported to his fellow captives all the things which God had showed him in the vision (11:24f.).

The Spirit then returned Ezekiel in his vision to Babylon. The vision was over, and the prophet related everything God had shown him to his fellow exiles.

Ezekiel is brought back to Babylon where he began.

Ezekiel 11:25

Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had showed me.

McGee: He returns to tell the people that the false prophets have lied to them. He has seen the vision—Jerusalem will be destroyed, and full captivity is near at hand. He will be able to tell them why God will judge them. The people are not going to listen to Ezekiel, but he is to continue to be a sign unto them.