

Proverbs 16, Acts 28, Ezekiel 18-24, Zechariah 1-8 (#131)

Proverbs 16— *What does the Lord do in the following verses: 2, 3, 5, 7, and 33?*

Acts 28— They wintered on the island of Malta and were given warm hospitality by the friendly Maltese. Paul survived a poisonous snake bite without any effect and healed many who were sick on the island including the father of Publius, the chief officer of the island. After three months, they set sail for Rome, and Paul arrived at the port of Perteoli about 130 miles south of Rome. As they traveled on foot, they were greeted by Roman believers about 40 miles outside of Rome. In Rome Paul was able to rent his own living quarters with a Roman soldier guarding him. He invited the Jewish leaders from Rome to come to his house, and he declared the gospel of Christ from the Law of Moses and the Prophets. After a full day from morning to evening, some believed and some didn't. From that time on Paul went to the Gentiles to preach the Good News boldly and without hindrance for two years.

How is the attitude of the Jews in Rome different from the Jews in Jerusalem and Asia? How do you account for the difference? #1 p. 1470

Acts 29— This is a chapter which you are writing as you obey His Word and yield to the Holy Spirit's promptings.

Ezekiel 19— Ezekiel is speaking about the rulers of Israel. The lioness is Israel, and the first, strong lion refers to Jehoahaz (vv. 2-4; Jeremiah 22:11-12) who died in Egypt. The second lion probably refers to the current King Zedekiah (vv. 5-9), who was taken to Babylon (Jeremiah. 39), and blinded. After this, there were no kings left who could save the land because they refused to listen to the Word of God. Next, he refers to Israel as a vine. He is speaking to Zedekiah and telling him about how this beautiful vine was going to be plucked up in wrath and withered by the east wind (v 12; 17:10). It would be planted in Babylon (the desert) and the line of David would end at this time. The vine of Judah would have no branches worthy of a scepter (Genesis. 49:8-10) until the birth of Christ (Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:30-33).

What is the significance of calling Judah a lioness and its rulers a lion?

Ezekiel 20— God has Ezekiel recount Israel's history of rebellion and God's history of His faithfulness. He speaks of their time in Egypt, the Exodus, the wilderness, and their conquering of Canaan land. The nation rebelled against God numerous times, and yet He continued to chasten and correct in order to draw them back to Himself. God then highlights how faithful and powerful He is with a series of "I will" statements.

What reason did God give for His continued faithfulness, and how does this give you hope?

Ezekiel 21— God has pulled His sword (Jeremiah 51:20-23) from its scabbard (vv. 1-7), prepared it for battle (vv. 8-17), used it to slaughter and destroy Jerusalem (vv. 18-27), and finally utilized it to consume the Ammonites (vv. 28-32). In verses 18-23, God shows His power over pagans as He overrules their methods of making decisions. God then tells Ezekiel to demonstrate his reaction to these judgments by sighing (vv. 6-7) and wailing (v 12) before the people. *Read 2 Peter 3:10-18. What is your response to the coming judgment of God, and how do you express that to others?*

Ezekiel 22— Ezekiel is told to judge Judah. He lists out the charges against her followed by God's judgment. He then illustrates the smelting furnace and compares Judah to dross. God would gather them up in Jerusalem and melt them. He next speaks of the land or jungle and how the leaders are like lions and wolves seeking to devour the people, and how the priests do not distinguish clean from unclean (Matt. 7:6). The prophets were liars who whitewashed the sins of the people (Ezekiel 13). Lastly, God was looking for someone to build up the wall and stand before Him in the gap (breach) so that He would not have to destroy Judah. *Did God find anyone to stand in the gap so that judgment does not have to fall in Ezekiel's day? What do we need to do to be "gap men"?*

Ezekiel 23— God takes idolatry very seriously. He compares it to prostitution and adultery. Israel had been giving themselves to idols and foreign gods since the time of Egypt. God judged the northern kingdom (Samaria) in 722 B.C. when the Assyrians took them captive. The southern kingdom of Judah did not heed this warning; instead they increased their sins against God. Their sins were all the more grievous to God because He dwelt among them in the temple in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians. 6:19-20). God had delayed His punishment so the people of Judah thought that it meant they would not be punished (Ecclesiastes 8:11). *Are you giving God your undivided devotion (2 Cor. 11:1-4; James 4:1-10)? Is there any area that is competing with God? Be thoroughly honest.*

Ezekiel 24— God revealed to Ezekiel, who was in Babylon, what He was doing in Jerusalem (Amos 3:7; John 15:15). The date mentioned here is January 15, 588 B.C.; the day that Nebuchadnezzar began the siege of Jerusalem. God would burn Jerusalem with the fire of His fury and only after His fury was spent would Jerusalem be clean again. God had Ezekiel demonstrate how the Israelites in captivity should respond to the burning of Jerusalem. In obedience to God, that morning he told the people that his wife would die, who was the delight of his eyes. That night she died, and he did not mourn for her the way that they traditionally mourned. He only groaned silently according to God's command. He was illustrating that they should not mourn for the loss of the city, but rather they should have been mourning over their sins that grieved God. Now it was too late (Isa. 55:6).

How did Ezekiel show his complete obedience to the Lord even though God's command seemed unbearable? How does this relate to us? See Luke 14:26-27, 33.

Zechariah— About 520 B.C. the prophet Zechariah partnered with the prophet Haggai to spur on Zerubbabel and the Jews who had returned from the captivity of Babylon to finish the temple project that had been halted due to the opposition from the regional authorities and leaders. The temple was finished about 515 B.C. He also guided Joshua the High Priest to reestablish and purify the priesthood which had not functioned for about 65 years, and also to begin again the worship and sacrificial system. Because of faith, obedience, and the return to moral purity of the remnant, Yahweh again was able to give to them a bountiful harvest and material blessings. In about 480 B.C., Zechariah wrote chapters 9 to 14 which describe many details of the coming king, covering both His first and second advent. His prophecies are both clear and breathtaking and compliment the other prophecies about the Messiah given in the Old Testament, the gospels, and the book of Revelation.

Zechariah 1— Fifteen years after the return of the remnant from Babylon, Zechariah and Haggai valiantly combat the people's apathy, their fear of those who oppose the rebuilding of the temple, the preoccupation of the Jews who were building their own homes, and a general spiritual dullness because of sinful and self-centered lives. The Lord speaks through Zechariah in calling a return of the Jews to the Lord of Hosts and a turning away from their evil deeds and ways (vv. 1-6). On February 15, 519 B.C. God gave Zechariah eight visions during the same night to strengthen God's people and to motivate them to rebuild the temple. The first vision is of the riding horsemen and the man among the myrtle trees. This man is the Angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Christ, who loves and cares for His people, and promises future prosperity, blessing, and mercy to them (vv. 7-17). In the second vision there are four (animal) horns which represented the nations that oppressed Judah, and the four craftsmen are the nations that overthrew these nations (vv. 18-21). *Who might be represented by the horns and the craftsmen?*

Zechariah 2— In the third night vision Zechariah saw a man with a measuring line in his hand (surveyor) to measure Jerusalem. The promise is that Jerusalem would at some time in the future be so full that the walls would not contain people in it. God promised His protection and presence on those in the city. Yahweh warned that those who are still in Babylon should flee and return to Jerusalem because God's judgment would fall on those who stay in the city. Verses 10-13 now focus on a future Messianic time when the Lord comes to dwell with His people, and also many nations will join themselves to the Lord. Now in this future Kingdom, Judah will be called the Holy Land and those within Judah will be called His Holy People (Isaiah 62:12).

Zechariah 3— Chapter three gives the fourth vision of Zechariah in which Joshua the High Priest represents the remnant of Israel that returned from Babylon. Satan, the prosecuting attorney, accuses Joshua and the nation of Israel of its sin. Yahweh, however, in His sovereign grace, has chosen Israel and now saves and cleanses the remnant and clothes her in splendid robes of His righteousness. Although the Lord had forever elected Israel to be

a nation of priests to the world, each individual person in the nation had a personal responsibility to walk in His ways and keep His commandments. The cleansing of Israel and Joshua are a sign that the Lord's servant, the Branch, is about to come. When this happens, God will take away the guilt of Israel in a single day. At that time Israel will dwell in peace, prosperity, and security (Zechariah 13:1). *Who are the different characters given in this vision in chapter three? Explain their roles or who they represent.*

Zechariah 4— Once again during that night of many visions, the Angel of the Lord awakens Zechariah to reveal the fifth vision. In this vision, he sees a solid golden lampstand (Menorah) with a bowl on the top filled with oil to supply the oil to each of the seven branches so that the wicks will continue to burn and provide light. There are two olive trees pictured with one on each side of the lampstand. The oil for the lampstand represents the Holy Spirit. As Zerubbabel continues faithful and depends on the Lord and His power, the temple will be completed. The olive branches of the olive trees are the kingly (Zerubbabel) and the priestly (Joshua) offices through whom God's blessing will flow to Israel and the world.

Zechariah 5— The sixth vision of Zechariah is a flying scroll that was 30 feet by 15 feet (the size of the Holy Place in the Tabernacle). God was announcing the curses on the Jews who disobeyed the 10 Commandments. The two commandments pointed out here were the third and eighth commandments which condemn swearing falsely (using God's name) and stealing. Although these two commandments represent the whole Ten Commandments which are against God (Commandments 1-4) and man (commandments 5-10), the breaking of these two commandments was most likely prevalent among the Jews at this time. God promised severe judgment on those who practiced such sins (vv. 1-4). The seventh vision was that of a woman in a measuring basket that seems to focus on the removal of the wickedness of Israel and to transport it back to Babylon where it started (Genesis 11:1-4), and where someday it will end (Revelation 17-19). This wickedness seems to represent the sinful commercial world system under Satan's control which will ultimately be destroyed by the second coming of Christ at the end of the age (vv. 5-11). *Explain the spiritual significance of these two statements; (1) "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord Almighty (4:6 NIV), and "Who despises the day of small things (4:10 NIV)?"*

Zechariah 6— In this eighth and final vision are seen four chariots pulled by different colored horses. Similar to the four horsemen of Revelation (6:1-8), these colors symbolize various judgments (war, famine, conquest, plagues). This last vision connects with the first vision (1:7-17) and represents God's angelic hosts who go throughout the world to judge the nations before the coming kingdom of the Messiah (vv. 1-8). Gifts of silver and gold are being received from the Jews who still live in Babylon. From this silver and gold they were to make a royal crown and put it on the head of Joshua, the High Priest. Joshua represents a person called "the Branch" who will someday rule both as a king and a priest. This Messiah will build the temple as well as sit on the throne, rule, and intercede for His people. The crown was taken off of the head of Joshua and left in the temple as a reminder that God would fulfill His promise of a King-Priest who will rule in peace and righteousness (vv. 9-15).

Zechariah 7— A delegation came to Zechariah from the city of Bethel with a question as to whether they should continue to mourn and fast as they had done during their many years in exile in Babylon since the temple is now nearly rebuilt. Even though he doesn't answer their question directly until 8:19, the Lord states that the real reason for their fast was not genuine repentance and mourning for their sin, but more out of self-pity for what they were suffering. What Yahweh really wanted them to do was to "judge fairly, and show mercy and kindness to one another. Do not oppress the widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. And do not scheme against each other (vv. 9-10 NLT)." The real reason for the exile in Babylon is because their ancestors made their hearts as hard as a rock and would not obey the law and the words of the prophets. Because of this, the Lord scattered them among all the nations and made their land desolate. *When do worship, prayer, church attendance, and other spiritual activities become insincere ritual? What do we need to do to keep this from happening?*

Zechariah 8— The Lord looks forward to the kingdom of God which is ruled by the Messiah who returns to Jerusalem where both the old and young will fill the streets. People will come from the east and the west, and the Lord will be their faithful and righteous God (vv. 1-9). Now Yahweh looks to the present people of Judah and Israel and tells them to let their hands be strong and finish the rebuilding of the temple. Now as they are obedient to the Lord and live godly lives in a community of love and respect, God will bless them and not curse them as He did their forefathers. The Lord is determined to do good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah, but they must respond by speaking truth to one another, and not lie and plot evil in their hearts toward their neighbor (vv. 10-17). Now answering the question from the men from Bethel about fasting (7:1-3), the Lord said that the fasts should be turned into feasts in light of God's joyous blessings to His faithful people. During the millennial rule of the Messiah, many will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord's favor. During that time the Jews will be honored and revered by the nations (vv. 18-23). *After reading this chapter, what will be signs that Israel has been restored? See verses 3-4, 7-8, 12, 15-17, 19, and 20-23.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Key Ideas Bible Handbook, Ron Rhodes, c. 2016, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL. 13. Life Essentials Study Bible, c. 2011, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 14. The Message, c. 2002, Eugene Peterson, NavPress Publishing Group, Colorado Springs, CO. 15. NIV Study Bible, c. 2011, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI. 16. Understanding the Bible, c.2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN.

Proverbs 17, Ezekiel 25-30, Zechariah 9-14 (#132)

Proverbs 17— In chapter 17, give the verse where it is found and the wisdom that is expressed about the following themes; (1) grandchildren and fathers, (2) a joyful heart and a crushed spirit, (3) an intelligent and understanding person, (4) two things that are detestable to the Lord, and (5) a friend and a brother.

Ezekiel 25— God first judged His people (Ezekiel 9:5-6), and now turns His attention to the countries surrounding Judah (1 Peter 4:17-18). The Lord begins each of His judgments with the word “because” (v. 3). His judgments are always for a reason. The Ammonites said “Aha” and were happy about the fall of Judah and her captivity. Because of this animosity against Judah, God would destroy them. Moab said “Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations.” The Edomites took vengeance on God’s people by helping the Babylonians as they fought against Israel. The Philistines took revenge upon Judah, and so the Lord will wipe out what remains of these coastal people. *The phrase, “Then you will know that I am the Lord (Yahweh),” or a variation appears 65 times in Ezekiel and four times in this chapter. Why do you think the Lord repeats this phrase so often in Ezekiel?*

Ezekiel 26— The next three chapters are concerned with Tyre. In this chapter God paints a picture of how He will destroy the impregnable city of Tyre like the scraping of a rock. Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned by name as the one who would besiege and destroy the city, and then later, Alexander the Great would wipe it off the face of the earth in 332 B.C. *What sin did this judgment on Tyre attack?*

Ezekiel 27— Ezekiel then describes Tyre as a ship; beautiful and expensively made. It was loaded with riches and grew in wealth because of its location on the sea as well as for its trade routes that intersected all of the other nations. God would break the ship and sink it. The merchants of the nations would lament the loss of the wealth of Tyre because of its financial effect on them. *What sin did this judgment on Tyre rebuke?*

Ezekiel 28— God next rebukes the prince (ruler) of Tyre. The prince thought of himself as a god. His heart was filled with pride. Although verses 11-19 speak of the King of Tyre, it seems evident that Satan was the real person behind the King of Tyre. The Lord weaves the life of the King of Tyre and the history of Satan in such a way that it is difficult to tell which is which. God then addresses the city of Sidon and promises to remove them from the land as well. After these judgments, Israel would no longer have any enemies surrounding her. The final section of this

chapter deals with Israel being secure in their own land and protected by God. *Give the statements in verses 11-17 that seem to go beyond the King of Tyre to actually speak of the history and the person of Satan.*

Ezekiel 29— The next four chapters prophesy against Egypt. The king of Egypt considered himself a great dragon that (crocodile/monster) guarded the Nile. Pharaoh thought that he owned the river and that he “created” it. God would show him who really made the river and who really owned it. Yahweh called Pharaoh a weak reed that never helped Israel when she needed it but only hurt her. As a reward for Nebuchadnezzar fulfilling His prophecy against Tyre, God would give him Egypt to plunder. *Israel turned to Egypt for aid instead of God. Where should we go for refuge in times of trouble?*

Ezekiel 30— God next uses the picture of arms. God would break both the arms of Pharaoh and never allow them to heal again. God would also strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon so that Nebuchadnezzar would be victorious over Egypt and all of her allies. *Did God literally break the arms of Pharaoh? Explain.*

Zechariah 9— The first seven verses speak of the judgment of the surrounding nations that oppressed Israel including Damascus, Tyre and Sidon, and the cities of Philistia. This is most likely speaking of the devastation done by Alexander the Great as his army marched through the north and west side of Palestine. Verse eight speaks of God’s supernatural protection of His people (vv. 1-8). Verse nine gives us the remarkable prophecy of Christ’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11) that actually happened 500 years after it was written. Then Ezekiel speaks of Christ’s second coming and how He “will proclaim peace to the nations and His dominion will extend from sea to sea (v. 10 HCSB).” Because of the covenant sealed with blood, God will again establish His relationship with Judah, and she will be repaid two blessings for each of her troubles (v. 12). Going back to the near fulfillment of prophecy, the Jews will have victory over the Greeks (v. 13). This probably happened when the Maccabees defeated the Greeks in 167 B.C. Then the prophet seems to move forward into the far future when the Messiah protects and rescues the Jewish nation at the end of the tribulation period and brings them into His Kingdom where they finally experience peace, joy, and prosperity (vv. 9-17). *In reading verse nine, how was Jesus an example to us? See also Matthew 21:5, John 13:12b-15, and Philippians 2:3-11.*

Zechariah 10— When the people ask for spring rain from the Lord and not from false idols, then He will send them the rain for their crops. Unlike the faithlessness of the false shepherds, the Lord will tend His flock and make them like a majestic horse in battle. The cornerstone, the tent peg, and battle bow will come from the tribe of Judah. At this time a united Israel will be restored by the Lord, and the people will become great warriors in battle because Yahweh is with them. In this second exodus the Lord will gather the Jews from all the nations from which they were scattered, and they will return (v. 9) to populate the land of Israel and will be completely restored (Ezekiel 36:24, 37:21-22). *Who is Zechariah talking about when he speaks of “the cornerstone that will come from Judah?” Give verses from scripture to prove this.*

Zechariah 11— From the glory of the true Shepherd during His millennial kingdom in chapters 9 and 10, this chapter pictures the rejection of the true Shepherd at His first coming when He was sold for 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Exodus 21:32). The Lord commanded Zechariah to play the role of a good shepherd who was to shepherd the sheep that were destined to be slaughtered because of their wicked rulers. Three shepherds were destroyed in one month (v. 8), and these possibly represented the priests, elders, and the scribes who were all killed in 70 A.D. when Titus and the Roman army came and decimated Jerusalem and killed more than one million Jews. Then the Lord told Zechariah to play the role of a foolish and corrupt shepherd who doesn't care or heal the broken, but only slaughters the sheep to make himself fat. *Explain what was meant by two staves called “favor” and “union.” What was the meaning of the breaking in two of the two staves?*

Zechariah 12— The nations of the world will come against Jerusalem and Judah to destroy them at the battle of Armageddon at the end of the tribulation period, but the Lord will be a shield to protect Jerusalem and Judah and make them like a flaming torch that will consume the nations who come against them (v. 1-9). We come now to the significant moment of the mourning, repentance, and conversion of Israel, when the Jews that remain alive recognize Jesus as their Messiah, the one whom they had pierced. The royal line, the priestly line, and all the people will have deep sorrow for their rejection of the Messiah, and the Holy Spirit will be poured out on them (vv. 10-14). *Who is the person “Nathan” mentioned in verse 12, and why was he mentioned instead of Solomon? See I Chronicles 3:5, Luke 3:31, and Jeremiah 22:30.*

Zechariah 13— Finally, Israel as a nation will recognize Jesus as their Messiah, and the Lord will wash away all of their sin and impurity. Idolatry, false prophets, and unclean demonic spirits will be removed from the land. Verses

eight and nine seems to jump ahead to the time of the end when two-thirds of Israel will be cut off because of unbelief, and only a third of the Jews will be saved to enter the Kingdom with the Messiah. This trusting remnant will be refined in the furnace of suffering and will become the Lord's people. *Verse 7b says, "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered (ESV)." Where was this verse quoted in the New Testament, who quoted it, and about whom was it quoted?*

Zechariah 14— This chapter seems to be the clearest teaching in the Old Testament about the Millennial Kingdom. Christ will return to the Mount of Olives, will conquer all the nations that have come against Jerusalem to destroy it, and will become king over all the earth. After the armies of the Lord conquer their enemies at the Battle of Armageddon, there will be a full restoration of Israel as was prophesied throughout the writings of the prophets. At this time Jerusalem will be the most honored city of all, and the survivors of the nations will come up to Jerusalem to worship the King and celebrate the Festival of Booths (Tabernacles) year after year. After thousands of years of the reign of evil, the character of this age will be holiness that will be fully displayed by the King and His people. *Verse 4 says, "On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (NIV)." Where in the New Testament does it speak about Jesus ascending to heaven from the Mount of Olives, and what promise was given by the two men dressed in white after He had ascended? How does this promise apply to your day to day life?*

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Proverbs 18, Ezekiel 31-37, Malachi 1-4 (#133)

Proverbs 18— Verse 22 says, “A man who finds a wife finds a treasure, and he receives favor from the Lord (NLT).” List as many of the good qualities of your wife you can think of, and share them with her. If you are single, list the qualities you would like to see in your wife if you were to marry.

Ezekiel 31— God now speaks directly to Pharaoh and his pride. Pharaoh thought Egypt was indestructible. God reminds him of another nation that thought the same thing, Assyria. God pointed out to Pharaoh of what He did to Assyria and said that He would do the same to Pharaoh and Egypt. The Lord would cut them down like a tree, strip them of their glory, and cast the nation into Sheol (hell). *What was the great nation of Assyria compared to? See verse 2b, 3. Why?*

Ezekiel 32— Pharaoh considered Egypt to be a strong lion among the nations. God considered Egypt a sea serpent. The Lord would cause His nets to capture Egypt and drag her down to the Pit. All the nations would see what happens to Egypt and tremble for their own safety. *What is “Sheol” as found in 31:16 and 32:21?*

Ezekiel 33— God had ordained Ezekiel as a watchman (3:16). The Lord instructed Ezekiel that if he knew the sword was coming and sounded the warning, and if the people do not listen, their blood would be on their own hands. But if he sees the sword coming and does not give the people a warning and a chance to repent, then their blood will be on his hands. Ezekiel did not speak any words for seven years other than the words that God gave him to speak. When God finally released him to speak, his first words were a warning about their sins. *Does God take joy when people eternally perish? See verse 11 and II Peter 3:9. Explain.*

Ezekiel 34— Ezekiel was a watchman and served the people when they were in danger. The leaders of Israel were to be shepherds and care for the people day by day. The religious leaders and rulers were supposed to be feeding the sheep, protecting them, and helping to unite them. Instead, they were plundering them in order to gorge their own appetites. Even though the leaders failed, one day God will be their shepherd, and He will never fail them. Notice the “I will” statements of God throughout this chapter and take assurance from them. *Starting with verse 22, Ezekiel jumps ahead to the Kingdom age when Israel will have a perfect shepherd to care for them. Who is this shepherd, and what will this Shepherd do for Israel? See verses 22-31.*

Ezekiel 35— God again has a message for Edom (Mount Seir). The Edomites were guilty of the sins of hatred, anger, envy, and pride. Their hatred stems from a grudge that began in Genesis 27 with Esau and Jacob, and

continued on to that very day. Because of their hostility and rivalry, Edom helped Babylon ravage Jerusalem (Obad. 10-14). In Obadiah 1-4, Edom boasted of their security in the rocks, but in the 49th chapter of Jeremiah God humiliates them. Read 1 Peter 5:5b.

Ezekiel 36— Beginning with this chapter until the end of the book, Ezekiel focuses on returning to the land, rebuilding the temple, and restoring the kingdom to the glory of God. God will restore the land (vv. 33-36) and His people (v. 24-29). Yahweh will do this to bring glory to His holy name (vv. 20-23). God promises that “I am for you” in verse 9 (Rom. 8:31). *How did Israel profane the name of the Lord? #7 p. 1239. Also see Romans 2:21-24. Do you profane the name of Jesus Christ by the way you talk and live among the unbelievers?*

Ezekiel 37— Ezekiel prophesies the miraculous resurrection, restoration, and unification of Judah and Ephraim in the latter days. In a vision, the prophet saw a valley of dry bones which represented the Jews who were scattered to the four winds. Then the bones come together, and God put tendons and flesh on them, but they still were lifeless. Next, God breathed into them the breath of life, and with God’s Spirit in them they stood to their feet and became a vast army. Yahweh will restore the Jews from all the nations where they had gone, and bring them back to their land. They will again be one united nation with one king and one temple. *What is one event in recent history that makes the future fulfillment of the prophecy of chapter 37 possible?*

Malachi— This book, written about 430 B.C., was the last book in the Old Testament, and Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets. This prophecy was written to confront God’s people with their sins and to restore their relationship to the Lord. The writing style of Malachi was to use a series of questions and answers by both God and the people, in order to awaken the people to their disobedience and unfaithfulness. His purpose was to bring them to genuine repentance. In the last chapter, Malachi announces the coming of the prophet Elijah before the dreadful day of the Lord. After Malachi, the next prophet to appear (400 years later) was John the Baptist who came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for the first coming of Jesus the Messiah.

Malachi 1— In the previous 85 years, the temple and the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt but the people began to cool off spiritually and allow old sinful patterns to return. First, the Lord shows His love for Israel by choosing Jacob over Esau (vv. 1-6). Israel did not reciprocate that love, but rather despised His name by offering blind and crippled sacrifices that demonstrated an attitude of almost indifference toward their relationship with Yahweh. The Lord of Hosts wants His name to be great among the nations everywhere, but Judah had profaned His name by offering defective sacrifices (vv. 7-14). *Israel despised the Lord by offering defective animals as a sacrifice thinking that any animal would be acceptable to God. How do we as Christian offer defective sacrifices to the Lord instead of giving Him our best? Is the Lord really worth our best in every area of our lives? Is there any area you personally fall short?*

Malachi 2— Since the priests were not honoring the name of the Lord of Hosts, they would be cursed. In place of clearly teaching God’s Word, they caused many to stumble by their instruction. Instead of being a messenger of the Lord, they had violated the covenant of Levi and showed partiality in the way they have carried out their ministry. Because of this evil, the descendents of the priests would suffer, would be despised, and would be humiliated before the people (vv. 1-9). After condemning the priests, the Lord now speaks of the ways the people have lived faithlessly. First of all, they have married foreign wives who serve alien gods. “May all men who do this be cut off from Judah with their descendents (v. 12)!” A second evil the men are committing that makes their sacrifices offered to the Lord unacceptable is that they have acted treacherously against the wife of their youth. Instead of being faithful to the covenant made before the Lord, they have divorced their wives even though the wives have continued faithful to them. The Lord’s desire is to have godly offspring from the marital union (vv. 10-16). The people expect God to bless them even though they do evil and disavow the covenant He made with them (v. 17). *Why did God say that He “hates divorce” according to this chapter? See verses 13-16 (NKJV, NIV 84, and NLT).*

Malachi 3— Verse 1 gives us two messengers, John the Baptist (Matthew 11:10) and the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The emphasis of these verses is Christ’s second coming when He comes in judgment. He will purify the priests of Levi so that they will present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Malachi then lists a series of sins committed by those who do not fear the Lord (vv. 1-6). A major responsibility of the Jews was to bring the tithes and offerings to the temple to support the priests so that they can fully dedicate themselves to the Lord. Malachi says they were robbing God because the tithe belongs to the Lord. If they would but test the Lord, He would rebuke the devourer of the crops and bless them with bountiful harvests (vv. 7-12). Then the Jews say “It is useless to serve the Lord!” Instead of serving God for who He is, they selfishly said, “If I serve God, what will I get out of it?” God responds by saying that those who honor and serve Him will have their names written in a book of remembrance, and that this remnant will be His special possession and receive His compassion (vv. 13-18). *Although tithing was never given as a command in the New Testament, it is a principle of giving that was begun before the Law (Genesis 14:18-20, 28:20-22), and was given to Israel under the law (Leviticus 27:30-33). Do you give the full tithe or more of your earnings to the Lord? If not, are you willing to test the Lord in this? Principles in the New Testament about giving are found in Luke 6:38 and II Corinthians 9:6-8. This is a personal question.*

Malachi 4— As the Old Testament comes to an end, the Lord gives a final warning for those who choose to live wicked lives. However, for those who fear the name the Lord of Hosts, there will be healing and blessing. The people of Judah are commanded to follow the statutes and ordinances that Moses gave at Mount Horeb (Sinai). Now God’s prophets will be silent for 400 years, but Malachi announces the next prophet to come, John the Baptist, who comes in the spirit of Elijah. Elijah, however, will come before the great and awesome Day of the Lord. *The name, “The Lord of Hosts” appears 23 times in this small book, and more frequently than any other book in the Old Testament. Why is God called the “Lord of Hosts,” and why is this name for God so important in the postexilic (after exile) period? See II Kings 6:17 and Matthew 26:53. Why is the fact that God is the “Lord of Hosts” such a comfort to us?*

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Proverbs 19, Ezekiel 38-43, Joel 1-3 (#134)

Proverbs 19— *What are the two verses in this chapter that deal with the 9th commandment?*

Ezekiel 38— Israel and God's people will have enemies until the very end of this age. This chapter and the next one speak of a coalition of nations (Gog) coming against Israel in the latter days (v. 16). As they begin to attack a wall-less Israel when she is at peace, Yahweh will rise up against the invaders and destroy them completely (v. 14). God will show His wrath before the nations through an earthquake (vv. 19-20), a storm including hailstones and fire (v. 22), by confusing the enemy, and causing them to destroy each other (v. 21). *In verses 18 to 23, the Lord will rise up and miraculously defend Israel when it is attacked by a coalition of nations. Share a story how the Lord has miraculously defended or protected you or someone you know.*

Ezekiel 39— God continues to speak of His coming judgment against those who have invaded Israel. He will utterly destroy them and cause the birds and the beasts to eat their flesh and drink their blood. In doing this, God will make the nations know that He is the Lord (vv. 6-7), the Holy One of Israel (v. 7). He will also make known to Israel that He is their God (vv. 21-22). The Lord has punished Israel by hiding His face from them (vv. 23-24); but in this day, He will reveal Himself to them in such a way that they can no longer deny or turn away from Him, and He will pour out His Spirit on them (v. 29). *When does this battle take place? See Revelation 16:16-21, 19:19-21, and Zechariah 14:1-15.*

Ezekiel 40— The rest of the book of Ezekiel describes the future state of Israel in the latter days when God builds the Millennial temple in Jerusalem. Israel, and particularly Jerusalem, had been destroyed in 586 B.C. The people were taken into exile in Babylon. Surrounded by this doom and gloom, God called Ezekiel to look forward to the glorious future of Israel that God had planned. The remnant returned in 538 B.C. to build the temple. The temple, however, that Zerubbabel finally built in 515 B.C. cannot compare with the grand vision that Ezekiel describes here. The glory of the Lord did not reside in the temple of Zerubbabel, but it did reside in the temple described by Ezekiel in chapter 43. There are so many details given in these nine chapters that are vastly different from the temple of Zerubbabel including its size (875 feet on each of the four sides), a governing prince, and the river that flows from the threshold of the temple into the Dead Sea that causes it to become fresh. The measurements of the new temple outer court, East Gate, North Gate, South Gate, Inner Court, Chambers for the priests, and Vestibule are all described in detail. *If this indeed is the Millennial Temple where Jesus will dwell, why do they need to return to animal sacrifices that are described in verses 38 to 43 since Jesus made one perfect offering for all sins for all time?*

Ezekiel 41— Ezekiel now turns his attention to the Inner Temple. With this chapter through the end of Ezekiel, the word *holy* is given thirty-five times. God's temple will be holy. His people will be holy. The land will be holy. The reason that all these are holy is because God Himself is holy and He will make everything in His presence holy for His name's sake. Ezekiel gives exacting measurements for the Inner Temple and Holy of Holies. The whole structure is carved with cherubim and palm trees. Ezekiel started by describing the outside of the temple and then moved to the inside of the temple. God's holiness will be reflected in all of it. *Is the holiness of God reflected in your outward actions as well as your inward thoughts? Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind anything that displeases Him (Psalm 39:23-24). For personal reflection only.*

Ezekiel 42— For a great verse-by-verse 3-D animation of the temple visit <http://www.bibliaprints.com/>. It really helps to visualize the temple. This chapter deals with the chambers and galleries for the priests to eat and to serve. The priests and the place they are in are holy. Even their clothes are holy and, therefore, they must change their clothes before leaving the temple complex to be with other people. The final verse speaks of a wall to make a separation between the holy and the common. *Verse 20 says, "He measured the temple complex on all four sides. It had a wall all around it, 875 feet long and 875 feet wide, to separate the holy from the common (HCSB)." What was holy, and what was common, and how did the wall separate it? #7 p. 1250*

Ezekiel 43— In Ezekiel 11:22-23, we see the glory of the Lord leaving the temple. Now, in chapter 43, the glory of the Lord returns to dwell as long as the earth lasts. In the temple there will be singing, worship, and the offering of sacrifices. It will be the place where God's glory dwells. The soles of His feet will rest there (v. 7). *The presence and glory of the Lord returns to the Millennial temple so God can dwell with His people. Where does God dwell today on earth? Where will God dwell after the Millennium? See I Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 2:19-22, I Corinthians 3:16, and Revelation 21:3.*

Joel— The name Joel means, "The Lord (Yahweh) is God." It is believed by most scholars that Joel was written somewhere between 835 B.C. and 796 B.C., possibly during the reign of King Joash. The immediate setting of the book was a day of the Lord's judgment when an invasion of locusts came and destroyed all of the crops. He calls the people to fasting and repentance because of their sin which has caused this plague. Joel goes from present day

devastation to a future time when the fortunes of Israel will be restored and God will pour out His Spirit on all humanity. At the same time, the Lord will send judgment on the nations for their wickedness when He swings His sickle because the harvest is ripe (3:13). With all of the doom and gloom in the first half of the book, the second half speaks of God's blessing and final restoration of Judah and Jerusalem with the promise of security, peace, and prosperity from generation to generation.

Joel 1— The prophet Joel speaks for the Lord and tells the people that the plague of locusts that has come is a sign of God's judgment on the people of Judah for their sins. After the swarms of locusts had gone, not only were all of the vegetation, the leaves from the trees, and the crops destroyed, but even the bark of the trees was stripped off. Without figs, grapes, olives, dates, wheat, barley, and various fruit trees, there was no food for man or animals. Judah needs to proclaim a sacred fast, cry out to the Lord, and repent of their evil ways. *The people of Judah were told to "cry out to the Lord" in this time of devastation. Have you ever cried out to the Lord when you were in a time of great distress? If so, share the story with your group. See also Psalm 34:6 and Psalm 145:19.*

Joel 2— As a watchman on a wall, Joel was sounding the alarm for the Day of the Lord was coming, and in fact is very near. The plague of locusts is like a forest fire that consumes everything in its path and the nations writhe in horror before it. This day of the Lord's judgment is terrible and dreadful (vv. 1-11). However, if the people of Judah will turn to Yahweh with all their hearts with genuine fasting, weeping, and mourning, then He might relent from sending disaster and have pity on His people (vv. 12-17). Now Joel changes from proclaiming doom and despair to the declaring of victory, salvation, and prosperity. Even when a great northern army (Ezekiel 38-39) comes against them, this army would be banished to the two great seas. The Lord would repay them for the years that the locusts have eaten and will restore them so that they would never again be put to shame (vv. 18-27). Joel continues to look forward into the future when God's Spirit will be poured out on all people during this awe-inspiring Day of the Lord's judgment, and His rule over all the earth (vv. 28-32). *Where in the New Testament do we find a partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecies of verses 28-29? Where in the New Testament do we see verse 32 quoted?*

Joel 3— At this time, God will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem when all the nations are gathered to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (the Lord will Judge) to be judged for their great wickedness against God's people. The nations scattered the Israelites, selling them into slavery, and taking their gold to beautify the temple of their gods (vv. 1-13). "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the Day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision (v. 14 ESV)." The Lord will take vengeance on those who oppressed His people, but will be a refuge and stronghold for the Israelites. During this Kingdom age as the Messiah rules, the Jews will have the very presence of the Lord, great material prosperity, and the forgiveness of their sins. This righteous kingdom will not end, but will continue on from generation to generation as long as the earth lasts (vv. 14-21). *How is the prophecy of Joel*

similar to the prophecy of Ezekiel and Zechariah? Compare Joel 3:18, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Zechariah 14:8. How do the verses of Joel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah differ from Revelation 22:1-2.

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Proverbs 20-26, Ezekiel 44-48 (#135)

Proverbs 20— Read the following verses; Proverbs 6:9-11, 19:15, 20:4, 13, 22:13, and 24:32-34. What is the lesson that these verses teach us? What did Paul teach about this theme? See II Thessalonians 3:6-10.

Ezekiel 44— God gave Ezekiel instructions on who was to serve in the new temple and how they were to serve. God is very exact in His instructions and demands holiness from those who serve Him. One of the reasons that the presence of the Lord left the old temple was because the priests were not serving Him in the way that He had prescribed. They were actually worshipping idols within the Lord's temple. The Levites squandered their privilege to serve the Lord God Almighty, and they will live with their punishment during the Kingdom age. They will not be able to serve the Lord directly, but will stand as an example to Israel and be required to teach Israel all the laws of God as they should have done while Solomon's temple was still standing. Those priests who are descendents of Zadok, who faithfully served God even while others did not, will be honored to serve Him face-to-face. The duties and privileges of the faithful priests are enumerated including the type of fabric the clothes were made of, their type of hairstyle, who they should and should not marry, and the laws and statutes that they should keep. *What may be the reason the east gate will remain forever closed after the glory of the Lord enters through that gate and fills the Most Holy Place in the temple (43:1-5)?*

Ezekiel 45— A sacred district that is approximately 55 square miles is set aside as holy to the Lord for the temple area, the priests of Zadok, the Levites, and the prince. God has Ezekiel go into great detail about the sacrifices and offerings that are to be presented to the Lord. Yahweh wanted to make clear what His expectations were for justice and fairness. He detailed down to the ounce how His people were to measure everything, and how much they were to give as an offering. The special feasts are delineated in verses 18 to 25. *What are the feasts (festivals) that will be celebrated during the Millennial Kingdom? Extra question: What feasts will be missing during the Millennium from those that were given by Moses to be celebrated by Israel in the Old Testament? See Leviticus 23. Why do you think these feasts are missing?*

Ezekiel 46— God's temple will be so holy that the prince may only worship at the threshold of the gate and the people only at the entrance (vv. 2-3). On the Sabbath days and New Moons the prince will lead all the people in worship by presenting burnt and fellowship offerings that will be given to the priests to sacrifice on his behalf. When the people enter the outer court of the temple to worship God on the Sabbath day (north or south gates), they are required to leave through the opposite gate of that which they had entered (v. 9). The priests also are to offer a burnt and a grain offering to the Lord every morning (v. 13, Rom. 12:1-2). *Who is the prince mentioned in 44:3, 45:22, 46:16 and other passages, and what is his function?*

Ezekiel 47— The prophet sees a stream of water flowing from beneath the temple from the east and the south, and this water flows with increasing depth as it moves toward the Dead Sea. This water causes the salty Dead Sea water to become fresh, and there will be life everywhere the water goes. The trees next to river will be for food, and the leaves of the trees will be for healing (vv. 1-12). The Lord describes the boundaries of the land of Israel during the kingdom age which are substantially larger than described by Moses (Numbers 34:1-5). Resident aliens will be treated like native-born Israelites and will be entitled to own property (vv. 13-23). *The water that flows from the temple will have life-giving properties for physical healing and prosperity. Of what spiritual significance does this water remind us? See John 7:37-39.*

Ezekiel 48— God lays out the land of Israel and assigns each tribe and family their inheritance (Psalm 47:4). The Lord will ultimately keep His promise to Abraham (Genesis 13:14-17; 15:17-21) and give Israel all the land that was sworn to them. The tribes will surround the holy city on the north and south, and the prince shall own a swath running east to west. The Holy City will be in the center of Israel. The most important distinction of this city will be the awesome presence of Yahweh/Jehovah among His people. Therefore the city will be renamed Jehovah Shammah – the Lord is there! (48:35). *There are seven principal compound names for Jehovah/Yahweh in the Old Testament. Besides Jehovah Shammah, give the meaning of the other six compound names for Jehovah. Jehovah Jireh means, “the Lord will _____” (Genesis 22:13-14). Jehovah Rapha means, “the Lord who _____” (Exodus 15:26). Jehovah Shalom means, “the Lord is _____” (Judges 6:24). Jehovah Tsidkenu means, “the Lord is our _____” (Jeremiah 23:6). Jehovah Nissi means, “the Lord is my _____” (Exodus 17:8-15). Jehovah Ra’ah means, “the Lord is my _____” (Psalm 23:1).*

Proverbs 21— *Explain three ways the power of the Lord is manifested. See verses 1, 30, and 31.*

Proverbs 22— *Verse 6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it (ESV).” Briefly give some of the elements necessary in order to properly train a child so that he or she will live a godly life when that child becomes an adult?*

Proverbs 23— *What are the consequences of becoming addicted to alcohol or any other substance? See verses 29-35.*

Proverbs 24— *What should be our reaction when thugs, rapists, terrorists, murderers, evil people, or even our personal enemies receive justice? How can we keep from gloating? See verses 17-18.*

Proverbs 25— *How are we to treat our enemies and those that do evil to us? See verses 21-22, Matthew 5:44, and Romans 12:19-21.*

Proverbs 26— *What are the sins caused by the tongue in verses 20 to 28?*

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