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## Ezekiel 11.

(2014)

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## Ezekiel 11.

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### Topics.

- The Spirit of God lifts Ezekiel up to the East Gate.
- Jerusalem is a cauldron and the leaders are the meat.
- Ezekiel is told to prophesy against the religious leaders.
- The LORD will give the leaders into the hands of foreigners.
- While Israel is scattered in foreign countries the LORD will be a sanctuary.
- Cyrus the LORD'S anointed shepherd (Ezekiel 11:17-20).
- The cherubim, the wheels and the glory of the God depart from Jerusalem.
- The Commonwealth of Israel.
- The glory of the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel: Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the "likeness" of the LORD". Ezekiel was keenly aware of God's presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem.

After its fall (586), Ezekiel prophesied of hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God's covenant and the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (ch. 37) is a classic picture of God's ability to breathe new life into those who are spiritually dead. Ezekiel is prophesying about the Jews that did not go into captivity to Babylon, but remained against the word of the LORD in Jerusalem.

### NOTE.

Ezekiel's message is primarily directed to the people in the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes), but often it is difficult to separate the message from Judah and Israel (the ten tribes) because much of what the LORD says can be applied to both Judah and Israel because the two are so intertwined and both nations were guilty of the same gross sins.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### The Spirit of God lifts Ezekiel up to the East Gate.

Ezekiel 11:1 ----- <sup>1</sup>The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the house of the LORD, which faces east. And behold, at the entrance of the gateway there were twenty-five men. And I saw among them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

The previous chapter ended with the living creatures, the cherubim, the wheels and the glory of God leaving the earth and the entrance of the temple and re-appearing with the glory of God over them at the entrance of the East Gate of the House of the LORD.

**Jaazaniah, Pelatiah:** and twenty three other corrupt leaders (v2) are now seen standing at the East Gate.

**Jaazaniah:** (means, Jehovah hears) he was one of a band of 25 men who led in the wickedness and idolatry in Israel.

**Pelatiah:** (means Jehovah has delivered) he was one of the princes of the people son of Benaiah (Ezek. 11:1) who along with others devises iniquity and gave wicked counsel in Jerusalem.

Jaazaniah, Pelatiah and twenty three other corrupt leaders (v2) are now seen standing at the East Gate with the living creatures, the cherubim, the wheels and the glory of God.

### **Jerusalem is a Cauldron and the Leaders are the Meat.**

Ezekiel 11:2-3 ----- <sup>2</sup>And he (the LORD) said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and who give wicked counsel in this city; <sup>3</sup>who say, 'The time is not near to build houses. This city is the cauldron, and we are the meat.'

The twenty-five leaders are saying, serving the LORD is a hard job, they are doing it tough, and they feel like meat being boiled in a pot (as if their life is harder life than the common people). These corrupt and greedy leaders and priests are basically telling the people that it is not time for them to be spending money building their own homes, they should be giving the money to their leaders to make their lives more comfortable.

### **Ezekiel is told to prophesy against the Religious Leaders.**

Ezekiel 11:4-6 ----- <sup>4</sup>Therefore prophesy against them (the 25 leaders) (v1), prophesy, O son of man." <sup>5</sup>And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and he said to me, "Say, Thus says the LORD: So you think, O house of Israel. For I know the things that come into your mind. <sup>6</sup>You have multiplied your slain in this city and have filled its streets with the slain.

The LORD says, "I know the things that come into your mind." There is nothing we can hide from the LORD, not even our thoughts. The words, "The twenty five leaders of God's people: have filled the streets of Jerusalem with dead bodies," can apply both literally and spiritually:-

**Literally:** the leaders were perverting justice for their own gain and killing the less fortunate and poor to gain possession of their homes and land.

**Spiritually:** they had established altars and idols in the LORD'S temple and in the streets of Jerusalem leading the people away from God and into pagan worship.

### **Jerusalem is a Cauldron and the Inhabitants Meat**

Ezekiel 11:7 ----- <sup>7</sup>Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Your (the 25 leaders) (v1) slain whom you have laid in the midst of it (the city of Jerusalem) they are the meat, and this city is the cauldron, but you shall be brought out of the midst of it.

They are the meat, and this city is the cauldron means the city of Jerusalem is like a boiling pot and the inhabitants of Jerusalem are like the meat in it. The LORD is basically telling the twenty five leaders (full of iniquity) it is the common people who are having a tough life not them.

### **The LORD will give the Leaders into the Hands of Foreigners.**

Ezekiel 11:8-12 ----- <sup>8</sup>You (the 25 leaders) (v1) have feared the sword, and I will bring the sword upon you, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>9</sup>And I will bring you out of the midst of it (Jerusalem), and give you into the hands of foreigners, and execute judgments upon you. <sup>10</sup>You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel, and you shall know that I am the LORD. <sup>11</sup>This city shall not be your cauldron, nor shall you be the meat in the midst of it. I will judge you at the border of Israel, <sup>12</sup>and you shall know that I am the LORD. For you have not walked in my statutes, nor obeyed my rules, but have acted according to the rules of the nations that are around you."

Acted according to the rules of the surrounding nations refers to all the following sins that permeated the land of Judah and Jerusalem.

- Gross idolatry and Baal altars in the land of Israel.
- Asherim worship, a goddess of love and fertility (her worship was indecent and sexual in an offensive way).
- Acknowledgement of the deity of Moloch and Israel's children were being sacrificed to him in the Hinnom Valley.
- Altars for worshipping the sun, moon, stars and the host of heaven were set up in the temple court for planetary worship.
- Worship of Idols at altars that had been built under shady trees on their hills.
- Innocent people were killed and cheated out of justice.
- Leaders oppressed others for their own selfish gain.
- The less fortunate and poor were deserted and offered no help.

God tells the leaders of Jerusalem that He is going to bring war to the city, many will be slaughtered and their enemy will take them captive into a foreign land. Twice the LORD says: "I will judge you at the border of Israel."

This is absolutely amazing, the LORD tells these people that He will judge them outside of the city of Jerusalem, when Babylon invaded Jerusalem many fled to the hills, but they were captured outside the city walls by Babylonian soldiers and taken into captivity.

**Jerusalem will not be their boiling pot nor will they be the meat in it:** means it will be outside the walls of Jerusalem that their life will be made tough and not within the city of Jerusalem. They are being judged because they have acted according to the rules of the surrounding nations that dwell around them (see verse 12).

**While Israel is scattered in Foreign Countries the LORD will be a Sanctuary.**

Ezekiel 11:13-16 ----- <sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, while I was prophesying, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell down on my face and cried out with a loud voice and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?" <sup>14</sup>And the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>15</sup>"Son of man, your brothers, even your brothers, your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Go far from the LORD; to us this land is given for a possession.' <sup>16</sup>Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while in the countries where they have gone.'

**Pelatiah:** was one of the leaders of the people who along with others devised iniquity and gave wicked counsel in Jerusalem.

**Ezekiel pleads for Israel:** how amazing is this while Ezekiel is prophesying a man falls down dead in front of him, Ezekiel is horrified, he drops to his knees and pleads for the people of Israel, probably thinking God is going to strike them all dead. The LORD answers Ezekiel saying that the entire population of Jerusalem, even his own brothers and kinsman have told Ezekiel many times to leave the city and go far away from them because God has given them the land and the city of Jerusalem for an inheritance.

They did not believe God would remove them from their land and therefore did not want to hear what Ezekiel was prophesying. The LORD comforts Ezekiel by saying even though He has removed Israel from their land and scattered them among foreign countries He will watch over them and keep them while they dwell amongst the people of the foreign countries for a period of time.

**These words of the LORD were fulfilled through Babylon:** Babylon invaded Jerusalem and took its inhabitants (the two tribes of Judah) into captivity later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. Israel and Judah were under Babylonian rule for seventy years. They went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods.

While in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar. They went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His Shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) gave permission to Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to pagan gods again).

**The LORD'S answer to Ezekiel continued: -**

Ezekiel 11:17-20 ----- <sup>17</sup>Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.' <sup>18</sup>And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. <sup>19</sup>And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, <sup>20</sup>that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

**The LORD says He will: -**

- Gather Israel from out of the countries where they have been scattered.
- Give the land of Israel to them.
- Remove all the abominations from the land of Israel.
- Put in the people a new spirit and give them one heart.
- Remove from their flesh the heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.
- Cause Israel to walk in His statutes, keep his rules and obey them.
- Be their God and they will be his people.

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**Cyrus the LORD'S Anointed Shepherd (Ezekiel 11:17-20).**

To achieve these promises the LORD used Cyrus the King of Media Persia. The following verses show that God used Cyrus to fulfill His promises.

**The LORD calls Cyrus His Anointed Shepherd.**

- Thus says the LORD *to his anointed, to Cyrus*, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed (Isaiah 45:1).

God calls Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd and Isaiah pictures the LORD holding Cyrus's right hand while he opens all doors that no man can shut while Cyrus subdues all nations (Isaiah 45:1, 28).

**The LORD calls Cyrus by Name.**

- I (the LORD) will go before you (Cyrus king of Persia) and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, <sup>3</sup>I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you (Cyrus king of Persia) by your name.

<sup>4</sup>For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you (Cyrus king of Persia) by your name, I name you, though you do not know me (Isaiah 45:2-4).

The LORD says, even though Cyrus (a secular king) does not know Him, He calls Cyrus by name and will go before Him (Isaiah 45:2-3).

### **The LORD will equip Cyrus.**

- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you (Cyrus king of Persia) though you do not know me, <sup>6</sup>that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other (Isaiah 45:5-6).

### **God is in Cyrus.**

- Thus says the LORD: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabceans, men of stature, shall come over to you (Cyrus) and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you (Cyrus). They will plead with you, saying: 'Surely God is in you (Cyrus), and there is no other, no god besides him (Isaiah 45:14).

Isaiah is speaking to Israel who is held captive in Babylon. The focus is Cyrus King of Persia. God used Cyrus His anointed shepherd to set His people free, Cyrus after Conquering the Empire of Babylon gave Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the temple of God. But Isaiah's message transcends the era of Isaiah and Cyrus and echoes a future King, who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd, and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ, in who God is also building a temple made up of Jews and Gentiles (also called a new nation and new creation in Christ).

### **For further information see the title: -**

- The Commonwealth of Israel (at the end of this chapter).

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### **People Reap what they Sow.**

Ezekiel 11:21 ----- <sup>21</sup>But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord GOD."

People determine their own judgment by their actions, behaviour and lifestyle.

### **The Cherubim, the Wheels and the Glory of the God depart from Jerusalem.**

Ezekiel 11:22-25 ----- <sup>22</sup>Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. <sup>23</sup>And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city. <sup>24</sup>And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to the exiles. Then the vision that I had seen went up from me. <sup>25</sup>And I told the exiles all the things that the LORD had shown me.

In the previous verses God's glory left the Most Holy Place and went to the entrance of the temple and on into the outer court, this is symbolic of God removing His presence and His mercy from the temple and replacing it with His judgment on the priest of the Most Holy Place, the priests who served the LORD in the Holy Place and the priests who served the temple (Ezekiel 10:3-4). Now the cherubim are pictured taking the LORD'S glory totally out of the temple and out of the city of Jerusalem altogether.

**When the cherubim left the earth the wheels went with them:** the cherubim are a symbol of God's presence; His mercy and His will. God through His prophets warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem countless times that if they did not turn from their rebellion and gross wickedness He would bring a nation from the north (Babylon) against them and they would be defeated and taken into captivity for

seventy years. Sadly the people of Judah made their hearts diamond hard and refused to listen to the prophets so now Ezekiel is seeing in vision and symbolic form the climax of God's judgment against the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The people of Judah are being carried away captive for seventy years in Babylon symbolised by the cherubim (God's will and judgment) and the wheels (Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his armies) rising from the earth and leaving the temple of God.

**For greater detail see: -**

- Ezekiel chapter one in, Commentary Old Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).
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### **The Commonwealth of Israel.**

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). <sup>17</sup>And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). <sup>18</sup>For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone <sup>21</sup>in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

**The practical application of what this means to you:** if you belong to Christ, all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to you. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

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### **The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ.**

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity. When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in. It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building.

Peter wrote: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him Will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

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End.