

1. There is a constant repetition of themes and concepts in the Book of Ezekiel.
 - A. God was angry with Israel because of the sin of idolatry...The phrase “then they will know that I am the Lord” is important...Jerusalem will be judged...Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites is also going to be judged...God works in spite of His rebellious people, in defense of the glory of His name...The promise that one day the exile would end.
 - B. The repetition is necessary because:
 1. A new generation was growing up in exile in Babylon who needed to hear what God was doing and why.
 2. There will still those who did not believe (even though they were in exile) and who had not listened to the message, and the message had not changed
 3. So they would understand that God was not answering their prayers because of their sin and rebellion. (That has not changed - it is the same for us).
2. Three important ideas, new to Ezekiel’s prophecy:
 - A. Fresh insight into the purpose of the Sabbath - He commands us to keep the Sabbath (a day set apart for worship, rest and re-creation) so we would remember that He made us holy, set apart for His exclusive use.
 - B. “The mighty hand of God” in 20:33 is stretched out against His people (in Scripture it is almost always stretched out in deliverance of His people), and that is because His people have become His enemies. That mighty hand wields a “terrible, swift sword.”
 - C. The promise that originated in Genesis 49:8-10:
 1. “Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies...the scepter will not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until He comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is His.”
 2. Israel had presumed upon this promise, thinking judgment would not come because of it. Ezekiel (21:8-13), God’s spokesman, has disconnected Israel from its single biggest anchor.
 3. Ezekiel (21:27) says that they will indeed be ruined and the throne of Judah will not be restored until “he comes to whom it rightfully belongs...” The line of the kings will be interrupted, but not totally lost. The Messiah will be of the tribe of Judah.
 4. They thought that no matter what they did, they were untouchable because of the promise. Did God keep His promise? Yes - “The promise to Judah was that the right to rule in Israel would not depart from his tribe until the Messiah came, and it did not. For a period of time, from the Babylonian captivity onward, there was no king in Israel, but the understanding that if there was a king he would be from Judah’s tribe, was not lost. The Messiah would surely be a son of David - from the tribe of Judah.
 5. Presumption - using the promises of God as a shield for sin
Misinterpretation - what we assume to be the implications of His promise may be erroneous.

1. Chapter 23 is an allegory that is shocking in its coarseness and imagery.
 - A. Ohalah (“her tent” - Samaria) and Oholibah (“my tent is in her” - Jerusalem) are sisters, and “tent” points to the tent of meeting, the Tabernacle.
 - B. The theme of sexual immorality and infidelity is chosen because the bond between Israel and her God is a marriage bond.
 1. Political sins - Ohalah looking to Assyria and Oholibah looking to both Assyria and Babylonia (instead of God)
 2. Spiritual sins - idolatry and immorality (listed in chapter 22)
 3. The language is raw, meant to strongly convey God’s disgust at the actions of both Israel and Judah.
 - C. Lessons from this “tale of two sister”:
 1. God means for us to watch how he deals with other nations and people and learn from their experiences, so we do not have to learn via our own difficult experiences. We need to learn and obey God’s Word.
 2. We need to learn from the history of the church since the end of the Bible (90AD). Examples:
 - a. Churches that cease to believe that the Bible is divinely inspired and authoritative lose strength and begin to die...it has happened over and over again.
 - b. When movements of the “the Spirit” are not grounded in God’s Word, they lose their ability to discern what is the voice of God’s Spirit and what is purely human, or the voice of “other spirits.
2. “Then they will know that I am the Lord” (2x in chapter 22, and once in chapter 23)
 - A. All the judgments are meant to bring us to the place that we will:
 1. Know that God is sovereignly controlling His world
 2. Acknowledge that lordship over us by a spirit of reverent obedience
 - B. Isaiah and Paul both say that the day will come when “at the name of Jesus (‘before Me’, Isaiah says) every knee will bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the father.” One of the great messages of Ezekiel is that every human being will know that He is Lord.
3. The plain message of Ezekiel 22 and 23 - both Israel and Judah “played the whore” with other nations and God judged them. Judah should have learned from what happened to Israel first, but she refused to do so.
4. Did it have to be? No - God was looking for someone: “I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so that I would not destroy it, but I found none...” (22:30-31). Godly people are always the God-given solution to turning the tide of wickedness in any nation or community. And it does not take very many to do that.
5. God is still looking for men and women who will stand up for Him and fill the gaps. Will we be gap-fillers?

1. Ezekiel: the son of Buzi; a priest and son of a priest; a younger contemporary of Jeremiah; taken captive in 597 BC when Nebuchadnezzar's army captured Jerusalem after a brief siege; removed from the temple and resettled on the dusty plains of Babylon; God's call came to him in the 5th year of his exile to exercise a prophetic ministry to the house of Israel; probably in his mid twenties when the exile began; alive during the reigns of the last 5 kings of Judah; prophesied after Jehoiachin had been exiled to Babylon and during Zedekiah's reign in Jerusalem.
2. Dates: Ezekiel's call - about July 31, 593 BC
Vision of idolatry in Jerusalem (Chapter 8) - September 17, 592 BC
Conversation with the elders of Israel (chapter 20) - August 9, 591 BC
Word of the Lord about the cauldron (chapter 24) - January 15, 588 BC
3. Chapters 12-24 focus on the messages relating to the coming punishment of Israel:
 - A. God's anger was not yet spent.
 - B. The day was coming when the gods of Babylon would be seen as nothing.
 - C. Soon everyone would know "that I am the Lord."
 - D. Repentance on their part would have resulted in God dealing with them in grace.
4. The boiling cauldron:
 - A. The meat is emptied from the pot piece by piece - the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be indiscriminately dispersed. Judah's hour of judgment had finally arrived.
 - B. The final judgment could have been turned aside by repentance, humility and obedience, but Ezekiel says it is now too late.
5. The death of Ezekiel's wife: God is requiring Ezekiel to act out a parable:
 - A. His wife, the "desire of his eyes" is about to die.
The Temple, the "desire of Israel's eyes" is about to be destroyed.
Judah, the "desire of God's eyes" is about to go into exile.
 - B. Ezekiel is not allowed to grieve for his wife.
Israel has refused to grieve over her sins, so she is not allowed to grieve when judgment falls.
The loss of Jerusalem and the Temple were such a profound loss that it went beyond the bounds of human grief.
6. From the time of Ezekiel's call he has been bound to a ritual silence:
 - A. Before Jerusalem falls, he can only speak when he is saying the things that come from God, prefaced with "Thus says the Lord!"
 - B. When the messenger comes to tell him that Jerusalem has fallen, he will be allowed to speak freely again, to shepherd and be a watchman for the people of Israel.
7. Chapter 25 begins a new section of the book:
 - A. Judgments against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia (Tyre, Sidon and Egypt will follow) - 7 nations in all.
 - B. Ammon, Moab, Edom, (from the time of Genesis) Philistia (by the time of the judges) - long-time enemies of Israel
 - C. The judgments came true - Ammon and Moab ceased to exist as nations after being decimated in a war with the Nabateans; Edom was forcibly absorbed into Israel in the time of the Maccabees; the Philistines ceased to exist.

1. The prophecies in Ezekiel 26-28 are interesting because of the way in which they came to pass.
2. The very fact of prophecies that are later fulfilled is evidence of the supernatural origin of the Bible.
3. The prophecy concerning Tyre (means 'rock') happened in stages - over several centuries.
 - A. God judged Tyre because she gloated over the destruction of Jerusalem. - they were competitors for trade and Jerusalem's fall was seen as profitable for Tyre.
 - B. Tyre and Jerusalem were both commercial cities. Tyre had 2 sites with great natural harbors - one on the mainland and on that they thought was an impregnable island fortress.
 - C. Tyre was rich and dominated the sea trade on the Mediterranean sea.
 - D. Jerusalem had no port, but was called "the gate to the nations." The overland trade routes passed through Israel.
 - E. Proverbs 19:5b: "Whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished."
4. Specific prophecies concerning Tyre:
 - A. Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the mainland part of the city. (Three years later, this began and the siege took 13 years before it surrendered. The city was mostly empty. They had fled to the island fortress).
 - B. Many nations will come against Tyre. (333 BC - Alexander the Great destroyed the mainland city, threw the debris into the water and built a causeway to the island fortress. He took a fleet of ships from other cities and conquered the island, killing 70,000 and enslaving 30,000 people. But Tyre still existed and many others came against her.)
 - C. Tyre will become a bare rock. (The island ceased to be inhabited - present-day Tyre is on a different site.)
 - D. Fisherman will spread nets over the site. (Today the original site is only a fishing village.)
 - E. The debris of the city will be thrown into the water. (see B)
 - F. Tyre would never be rebuilt. (This is curious, given the 2 natural harbors and abundance of fresh water there, but it has never been rebuilt.) Sidon has always been on the same site - it was NOT prophesied that it would not be rebuilt.
5. Daniel's name appears again in the rhetorical question to the King of Tyre: "Are you wiser than Daniel?" Though he was young, he was already known for his stand for righteousness and his wisdom because of his two earliest encounters with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
6. Ezekiel 28:11ff:
 - A. These verses sound a lot like Isaiah 14 - the "son of the morning" passage that some biblical scholars think refers to Satan.
 - B. This Ezekiel passage is thought by some to be talking about a "spiritual" King of Tyre (Satan), not the physical one.
 1. He is "thrown down" by God because of the sin of pride, and an attempt to establish himself as a god.
 2. This description fits both Satan and the King of Tyre.
 3. The language of these verse points back to Genesis and forward to Revelation.

1. Ezekiel 29-32 contains the entire message concerning Egypt.
 - A. Judah's life was bound up with the foreign policies of the nations around her.
 - B. Ezekiel points out that the final say in her destiny was God's, not the will of the nations surrounding her. Christians today may be becoming a minority, feeling dwarfed by the forces around us, but God has the final say in our destiny as well - not the crowd around us.
2. "Words from the Lord" to the nation of Egypt and its leader, Pharaoh.
 - A. The earliest word - January 587 BC; the latest word - New Year's Day, 581 BC.
 - B. Nebuchadnezzar took his armies to Egypt because they got no reward from the campaign against Tyre (the city was empty after their 13-year siege.)
 - C. Egypt would fall into a 40-year captivity from which they would never recover as a power until "they know that I am the Lord." The grandeur days of Egypt have never returned.
 - D. Imagery - Egypt is a "dragon" lying in the streams. God is going to pull her out with hooks and leave her high and dry..." The dragon may be referring to huge crocodiles in the Nile.
 - E. Imagery - Egypt is a broken reed that fails all who trust her. (Refers back to Isaiah 36).
 - F. Imagery - Pharaoh is pictured as a warrior trying to wield a sword with 2 broken arms. God has already broken one arm with Egypt's defeat at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. The other break is about to come.
 - G. Imagery - the great spreading cedar tree (same picture used in Ezekiel 17, Isaiah 14, Daniel 4, and by Jesus in the Parable of the Mustard Seed) is going to be cut down because of its overweening pride.
 1. Pride was the reason given for Tyre's fall.
 2. Pride is the reason Isaiah said that Babylon would fall.
 3. Pride is the reason that Pharaoh in Moses' time fell.
 4. Pride is behind the fall of the Pharaoh of Ezekiel's day.
 5. Pride makes men think and act like they own it all - Egypt is accused of thinking it owns the Nile.
 6. Pride also makes men think and act like they are gods. It robs God of His rightful glory and causes Him to bring rulers down who think this way so that "then they will know that I am the Lord."
3. From this time forward, Egypt ceased to be a dominant world power.
4. "'Then they will know that I am the Lord.' That was God's purpose in all of His dealings with Israel and Judah, and with Babylon, Egypt and every other nation on the face of the earth. He wants to be known and worshipped by all men everywhere. That is the goal. 'Then they will know that I am the Lord.' "