

1. The critical point in Ezekiel's narrative has come with the arrival of the messenger from Jerusalem saying that it has fallen and Judah is no more. Ezekiel is now able to speak again at all times, not just when delivering an oracle from God.
2. When the silence is lifted, God reminds Ezekiel that he is still a watchman - that is his calling.
3. The relevance for us of the "watchman" image:
 - A. We are also called to be watchman and call out the warnings of approaching danger.
 - B. We are also held responsible if we do not warn people.
4. In every revival, there has been an unusual sense of the nearness of eternity - this changes perspective.
5. The ones left behind in Judah thought that they would inherit all the land, but they too would be judged.
6. Jesus' Parable of the Good Shepherd (Luke 15) is grounded in Ezekiel 34. God is "the shepherd of Israel"; Jesus is the "Good Shepherd".
 - A. Scripture was the focal point of Jesus' life and it must be ours also.
 - B. This link between Luke 15 and Ezekiel 34 shows us yet another way in which Jesus was claiming to be God.
7. The last part of chapter 34 references the Messiah - God promises His people He will place over them another shepherd and calls him "my servant David." This is after He has said He will deal sternly with the bad shepherds who have lead the flock astray and the bad sheep who harmed other sheep.
8. God says He will bring His scattered sheep Israel back from the places to which they have been scattered. There will be peace for the people of Israel. There will be no more fear. The land will be productive, producing crops. "Then they will know that I, the Lord their god, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people...you are my sheep..."
 - A. Romans 9-11 seems to settle that god has a future plan for the nation of Israel.
 - B. There is an overlap between the Old Testament nation of Israel and the New Testament entity we call the church.
 - C. It seems that Ezekiel 34 is looking forward a day when God is dealing with the nation of Israel as a national entity again.
 - D. Some of this prophecy has not yet happened and will wait until "David" (that is the Messiah) is ruling His people during the millennial reign of Christ.
 - E. 100 years ago, when it seemed impossible, Bible students were confident a a national state for the Jews would be established. Their confidence was based on this passage and others in the Old Testament. They were right! It happened in 1948.

1. The dominant chapter here is Ezekiel 37 with its visions of the Valley of the Dry Bones, and the two sticks joined together.
2. Chapters 35 and 36:
 - A. The theme of the regathering and restoring of Israel as a nation is continued.
 - B. "Mount Seir" is another name for the nation of Edom.
 - C. In the midst of telling Ezekiel that Israel will one day be restored, He tells him that Edom will be desolate forever. A few centuries later, the Nabateans overran Edom and it ceased to exist as a nation forever.
 - D. "The contrast between Israel and Edom could not be more dramatic - only by the supernatural hand of God could a people, denied the right to their homeland for nearly 2000 years, preserve their ethnic and national identity, and then reemerge as a distinct unit after nearly two millennia of persecution and wandering."
3. 12 times in Ezekiel 35-37 we read the phrase: "Then they will know that I am the Lord". God's purpose is to make His name known to all peoples and nations. He judged Israel and Judah out of concern for His Holy Name and He will reestablish them in the last days for the sake of His Holy Name.
4. Ezekiel 36 - A promise of great magnitude: "I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."
 - A. A good example of "overlap" and double fulfillment. It has been partially fulfilled in the church (the new heart of the Christian; the Spirit that came on the day of Pentecost and indwells every believer), and will be fully fulfilled when Israel is completely restored under the rule of the coming Messiah in the millennium.
5. The Vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones: vivid and attention-getting
 - A. Its language is the language of resurrection, but the full development of that concept is found in the New Testament.
 - B. Ezekiel tells us what he saw and how it refers to the future of the people and nation of Israel.
6. The message of the sticks (one representing the northern Kingdom and one the Southern Kingdom) is that they will again become one in the time of the millennial kingdom.
 - A. There will be one shepherd.
 - B. They will follow God's laws.
 - C. "David" will be their prince forever.
 - D. An everlasting covenant will be established.
 - E. Both the "dry bones" and the "sticks" are long-range prophecies fulfilled perhaps in a partial way by the church.
7. If there is a literal fulfillment of Ezekiel 37 in the future, it will be interesting to see how the 10 lost Northern Tribes of Israel will be identified, as they have been "lost" since their captivity.
8. The Northern Kingdom is referred to as "Joseph" in this passage and that will happen again in the Book of Revelation.

1. Today we read a description of the future Battle of Armageddon.
2. There has been much teaching and speculation about just who “Gog” and “Magog” represent. The identifications that some have given them are by no means certain.
3. Gog embodies all that is evil and is intent upon destroying Israel, marching against it with a confederacy that will be like a cloud covering the land.
 - A. God allows this “so that the nations may know Me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.” (Ezekiel 38:16)
 - B. God will Himself destroy the invading armies...”then they will know that I am the Lord.”
4. Revelation 19 is a parallel passage, but the “chronologies” (or lists of events) that are going to take place are not as easy to develop as some might lead us to believe.
5. “The absence of the names Gog and Magog in Revelation 19, coupled with their presence in Revelation 20, would seem to move the Ezekiel passage to the later date. This fact, coupled with the observation that the battle Ezekiel speaks about takes place after the passages describing Israel dwelling in peace and security, would seem to “fit” the theory that says Ezekiel’s battle happens after the millennium.”
6. When we study Daniel and Zechariah, we will have more data to work with, in preparation for our study of the Book of Revelation.
7. Agreement among believers as to events regarding the end time:
 - A. Jesus will physically return to earth one day.
 - B. He will return to the Mount of Olives from which He ascended.
 - C. That return is ‘our blessed hope.’”
 - D. At some point before or after (or before AND after) this return, the forces of evil, supernaturally led by the Antichrist, will confront the people of God in overwhelming force and be supernaturally defeated by God Himself.
 - E. After the final confrontation with Satan, there will be the final judgment of all people.
 - F. There will be a resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous preceding that final judgment.
8. There is disagreement about some of the events the Bible says are yet to come, but these differences should not distract us from all the above things about which all believers agree.

1. Ezekiel's vision in these chapters happened on April 28, 573BC (by our modern dating system). Ezekiel's book begins and ends with a wondrous vision of God. In the beginning, he is abandoning His Temple; in the end, He is returning to His new Temple. The last 9 chapters of Ezekiel have one dominate subject: the new Temple where God's people will worship Him, and have peace and prosperity that is ushered in by the defeat by God of Gog and his armies.
2. What does all this mean? (from The Expositor's Bible Commentary by Ralph Alexander)
 - A. Is Ezekiel 40-48 historical or referring to the future? Because the dimensions of the Temple do not match those of Solomon, Zerubbabel or Herod's temples, and because the worship procedures are different from anything we know in Israel's history, and because the geographical descriptions do not jive with anything in past or present Israel, the conclusion is that these chapters are talking about the future - the very end of time. (Some Bible scholars treat these chapters as symbolic - an allegory teaching about the church, but his presents a whole new set of problems.)
 - B. To what future is Ezekiel looking, the millennium or the final eternal state? Ezekiel would not have distinguished between the two, so it is hard to answer that question. We make a distinction between the two on the basis of Revelation 20.
4. Parallels with the Book of Revelation:
 - A. Ezekiel, like John, is taken up to a high mountain from which he views the city and the temple.
 - B. The measuring rods in both correspond to each other. John, like Ezekiel, is told to measure the Temple.
5. Flashback to Exodus: The specific dimensions of the Temple given to Moses and Ezekiel.
 - A. A normal cubit is about 18 inches. A long cubit was a cubit plus a handbreadth. A rod equaled 10.5 feet.
 - B. The East Gate (identical to the North and South Gates) is described in detail:
 1. It had 6 small guardrooms and led to a porch about 14'x29' in dimension.
 2. The porch led into the Temple courts.
 3. The gate enclosure was about 44' wide by 88' long.
 4. The wall surrounding the whole Temple area was 10.5' thick, 10.5' high and had 30 rooms along its inner side.
6. Against the Western Wall of the Temple itself were situated the treasure rooms, guarded by another set of walls. There were 3 entrances to the inner court that corresponded symmetrically to the outer gates.
7. There is only one entrance to the sanctuary. Inside it are 90 side rooms - 30 on each level. The Holy Place is called the Outer Sanctuary and the Most Holy Place is called the Inner Sanctum.
8. The only decorations are cherubim (they guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden after the fall - they are the guardians of God's glory) and palm trees (a reminder of Solomon's Temple and the Garden of Eden where man had experienced the kind of fellowship with God for which he was originally created).
9. In Ezekiel's tour of the Temple, he went right to the entrance of the Inner Sanctum, but only the angel went in. It was too holy for Ezekiel to go in. This Temple was never built - perhaps someday, either literally or spiritually, we will see it.

1. Two major ideas in today's reading:
 - A. The return of the Shekinah Glory as God re-inhabits His Temple:
 1. Ezekiel experiences joy inexpressible, as the Glory that signifies God's presence among his people returns.
 2. The people who returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity were disappointed in the Temple they built, because it was so inferior to this one in Ezekiel's vision.
 3. All the promises of restoration made in these chapters will be fulfilled when God's glory returns and His presence is forever among the people of Israel.
 4. The atmosphere of holiness dominates everything about the vision of this new Temple. It will be outside the city, as the Tabernacle had been outside the camp.
 - B. The restitution of the sacrifices in the end-time Temple:
 1. How can there be literal sacrifices occurring in an end-time temple, since Jesus was the final sacrifice for sin once and for all? Some say the sacrifices will just be memorials (like communion is), not atoning sacrifices for sin. Others say that Ezekiel was picturing the sacrifice of worship in the only way he at that time understood, but that literal sacrifices will not be offered in the new Temple, because that would force us to believe that the New Testament teaching on the sufficiency of Christy's death is somehow wrong.
2. Parallels between Ezekiel and revelation:
 - A. The voice of God (43:2), like the "roar of rushing waters," corresponds to John's opening vision of Christ.
 - B. The priests being clothed in linen (44:17) - Revelation 19 says that the guests at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be dressed in white linen (which stands for the righteous acts of the saints).
3. The Levitical priesthood is revived to serve in this end-time temple, but only those of the family of the faithful high priest Zadok are allowed to touch the sacrifices. The others compromised themselves in the days of Judah's rebellion.
4. The "prince" in chapters 44 and 46 cannot refer to Jesus - he is a confusing figure and we do not know who he is.
5. The gate by which the king enters the city is only used by him, so after the Shekinah Glory has come down, the Eastern gate is sealed.
6. There was a strong prohibition against foreigners being allowed to enter the Temple area. This explains the extreme reaction of the Jews in the Book of Acts when they thought Paul had brought "foreigners" with him into the Temple. A foreigner circumcised in heart and flesh was considered a Jew and could enter with no prohibition. Barbarians were not allowed.
7. "If Ezekiel's description is meant to be taken literally to describe the temple that will in fact be built in the millennial kingdom, then the present hubbub over Israel's attempts to rebuild the temple on its present site, with all the ramifications this might have for the continues existence of the Dome of the Rock...is probably meaningless, because the geography in Ezekiel seems different. The dimensions are not the same at all. 'The structures of the current temple area will apparently no longer exist in that day!'"